



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE GIDA INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WORKSHOP MEETING IN COLPOS, MEXICO

FEBRUARY 25-27, 2026

TE MANA
RARAUNGA

OUR SUPPORTERS AND COLLABORATORS



Colegio de
Postgraduados



FNIGC / CGIPN

First Nations Information Governance Centre
Le Centre de gouvernance de l'information des Premières Nations



Ma'am nayri Wingara

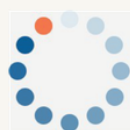


Te Kotahi
Research Institute

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO



Indigenising Trade



11th Hour Project

The Schmidt Family Foundation



TE MANA
RARAUNGA

Māori Data Sovereignty Network

GIDA-Sápmi

GIDA-Inuit,
First Nations
and Métis

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Suggested citation:

Te Mana Raraunga (2026). Summary of findings from the GIDA IDSov and AI workshop meeting in COLPOS, Mexico. <https://doi.org/10.15663/ltcx.33621>

1.0 Purpose

This report describes the key points from a workshop between [Global Indigenous Data Alliance \(GIDA\)](#) network members on Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The report is focused on the Aotearoa New Zealand context and aimed at Te Mana Raraunga (TMR; Māori data sovereignty network) members. The Māori Data Sovereignty (MDSov) movement is grounded in foundational national key documents such as He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Each assert Māori sovereignty and determine a partnership between Māori and the Crown. These are complemented by international documents such as the Mātaatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): both state that Indigenous peoples must have control over our knowledge systems, data, and resources. Together, these documents provide the legal and ethical rationale for Māori and Indigenous Data Sovereignty and have shaped its development within Aotearoa. Te Mana Raraunga, founded in 2015, has advocated for Māori rights and interests in data, and is a network of hundreds of ‘members’ consisting of researchers, practitioners and community members. Te Mana Raraunga’s [Principles of Māori Data Sovereignty](#) have formed the basis of much of the MDSov movement. TMR also contributes to the global Indigenous Data Sovereignty movement.

The AI and IDSov workshop follows a legacy of similar events. The Workshop “International Law, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Indigenous Data Sovereignty” was hosted in Oñati in 2019. That workshop brought together participants from seven nation states including representation from the Maïam nayri Wingara Collective (Australia); Te Mana Raraunga (Aotearoa); and the United States Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum for international Indigenous Data Sovereignty scholars and practitioners to collaboratively advance the legal principles underlying collective and individual data rights in the context of the UNDRIP. The formation of the Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA) was one of the outcomes of this gathering.

Seven years on, the kaupapa (agenda) for the 2026 GIDA gathering focused on how Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDSov) is impacted by AI. There is an urgent need for policy and research that can speak to IDSov and AI, something which the Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA) has seen the need to advance in local Indigenous contexts. Together, we recognise the increasing influence of AI technologies and the urgent need for Indigenous-led frameworks to inform their development and governance. New challenges arise from the use of generative AI, synthetic data, and agentic AI, for which Indigenous-led solutions are essential to maintain cultural values and support initiatives that fit with diverse contexts. Approaches to ‘Responsible AI’ that do not address MDSov or data equity will not build trust with Māori and unlock the potential economic and social benefits for Māori communities. Given these challenges, and growth in the global movement, GIDA convened a workshop on these topics.

2.0 Objectives of the workshop

[GIDA](#) led a three-day closed workshop from the 25th to the 27th of February 2026 on IDSov and AI, hosted at the [Colegio de Postgraduados](#), Texcoco, Mexico. The workshop aimed to create guidance for IDSov and AI, build international research networks, and explore opportunities for further research collaborations, establish a shared understanding in the current discourse for Indigenous Data Sovereignty and AI. The gathering also functioned as a capacity building event for members of the Global Indigenous Data Alliance to grow understandings of the intersection of IDSov and AI.

3.0 Acknowledgements

This workshop was funded by [The Royal Society of New Zealand](#) Te Apārangi Catalyst Seeding fund (25-MNA-002-CSG; ‘Artificial Intelligence and Indigenous Data Sovereignty: A Global Indigenous Research Partnership’) and the 11th Hour Project from the Schmidt Family Foundation.

Additional funding was provided for by [Tauhokohoko](#) (MBIE Endeavour project UOWX2308). [Moana Connect](#) provided administrative support for the event, with [iNZight Analytics](#) providing administrative support for Te Mana Raraunga.

The initial grant from Te Apārangi was co-led by the [Pacific Data Sovereignty Network](#) and [Te Mana Raraunga Māori Data Sovereignty Network](#), to bring together NZ-based experts in IDSov and AI, linking with international IDSov networks: the U.S. Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network (USA), Maïam nayri Wingara (Australia), GIDA-Sápmi (Norway, Sweden, and Finland), the First Nations Information Governance Centre in Canada, GIDA-Inuit, First Nations and Métis (Canada), and the Red Latinoamericana para la Soberanía de Datos Indígenas (RELASDI; Latin America).

Additional attendees were supported by the [Indigenous Data Exchange](#), which is funded by the [US National Science Foundation](#). This allowed wider participation at the gathering, including the attendance of participants from Africa, Asia, and Te Kāhui Raraunga (Aotearoa).

The writing of this report was funded from [MBIE Horizon Europe](#) overheads top-up funding awarded to Associate Professor Lara Greaves as part of the EU-CIEMBLY project. Larissa Renfrew led the writing of the report.

We would like to acknowledge two other key groups – the organising committee for the event, made up of GIDA nominees from the various networks; and to Oscar Luis Figueroa Rodríguez and his team at Colegio de Postgraduados for hosting the event.

4.0 Workshop summary

The organising committee met in the months leading up to the event to determine the main subject areas for the gathering, sessions, and facilitators.

4.1 Subject areas

- IDSov and AI,
- Governance, equity and preventing extractive (social) practices,
- Cultural/IP rights protection and benefit sharing,
- Sustainability and AI,
- Digital trade and digital identity,
- Synthetic data,
- Capacity and capability, and
- Generative AI

4.2 Key themes and facilitators

The workshop consisted of the following sessions:

- The context: IDSov and AI – What is happening in each national context? Past work, recommendations and guidance. (Facilitators: Tahu Kukutai, Maggie Walter and Stephanie Russo Carroll; with presentations from each network and leadership from Te Taka Keegan)
- Governance, equity, and preventing (social) extractive practices (Facilitators: Skylee-Storm Hogan-Stacey and Larissa Renfrew)
- Cultural / Intellectual Property (IP) Rights: Protection and benefit sharing (Facilitators: Amio Matenga-Ikihele, Sam Manuela & Cas Sedran-Price)
- Sustainability and AI (Facilitators: Corey Ruha and Lydia Jennings)
- Digital trade and digital identity: Challenges and actions (Facilitators: Paul Brown and Engie Matene)
- Synthetic data: Inequities and opportunities (Facilitators: Maui Hudson and Daniel Wilson)
- Capacity and capability: Movement and growing the network (Facilitators: Bobby Maher, Larissa Renfrew, and Riley Taitingfong)
- Generative AI: Issues arising (Facilitators: Te Taka Keegan and Rose Barrowcliffe)
- GIDA summary: Issues, principles and actions (Facilitators: Logan Hamley)
- Next steps: Dissemination and beyond (Facilitators: Logan Hamley and Bobby Maher)

The report describes the key themes from each of these sessions.

4.2.1 The Context: IDSov and AI GIDA the network of networks

This initial stream provided the context for the overall workshop, gave a history of the IDSov movement and offered space for each IDSov network/collective to summarise their work related to IDSov and AI.

The session began with a presentation from Te Taka Keegan giving a high-level overview of AI, particularly generative AI. During this session it was identified that GIDA needed a specific definition for AI as part of developing any GIDA outputs related to AI. Conversation within this session explored navigating GenAI when its development often violates IDSov.

A key takeaway from this session was that AI provides a new and complex situation for IDSov advocates as private companies are the major driving forces behind AI development today. While the language and practice of IDSov has been established and implemented for nation-states, engaging with private companies require us as IDSov advocates to draw on different tools and frameworks to enable benefits and mitigate risks for Indigenous peoples.

The Context in Aotearoa New Zealand

Hui attendees from Te Mana Raraunga, the Pacific Data Sovereignty Network, and Te Kāhui Raraunga reported on the context in Aotearoa New Zealand, including the Pacific Data Sovereignty network's report [Preserving our Heritage in the Light of Innovation](#) and Te Kāhui Raraunga's leading work on [The Māori AI Governance Framework](#)



4.2.2 Governance, Equity, and Preventing social extractive practices

This session hinged on a specific question: what do we mean by the Indigenous Data Governance or Indigenous Data Sovereignty of AI? Defining what this means from a global Indigenous context then brings a shared understanding back to our nations to see how this reflects our whānau, hapū, and iwi aspirations.

There were also concerns regarding the immense amount of data needed for training new models. This meant that content of questionable quality has been used for training, included AI generated data. These data in turn could generate specific risks to Indigenous communities through both biases embedded within training datasets, but also how Indigenous data are misappropriated and decontextualised within generative AI.

Indigenous Data Governance represents an important mechanism to ensure Indigenous peoples maintain stewardship over our data and are able to use it for good as data is increasingly used to train generative AI. This session described Indigenous Data Governance of AI as the structures, processes, and authorities that determine how Indigenous data is accessed, used, and controlled in AI contexts. Governance includes who has the power to make decisions about data (at local, national, and international spheres), how consent is given or withheld, and how Indigenous communities assert their rights and maintain control over their data, knowledge, and resources in the face of external pressures. As highlighted by one participant, “Governance is not us being one voice on a decision panel but us actively making the decisions.”

One key focus during the session was preventing the exploitation of Traditional Knowledge (TK) in the development of AI. Traditional Knowledge (TK) extraction happens when TK is used as part of the training dataset. Ensuring that AI development does not exploit Indigenous data, knowledge, languages or cultural expressions without consent is critical. Additionally, where consent is given there must also be benefit sharing with the community. This means moving away from extractive models toward processes grounded in Indigenous protocols, informed consent reciprocity, and respect for Indigenous rights.

The final part of this session focused on how to support community engagement with AI. If we accept the premise that AI holds benefit for our iwi and hapū (nations), what would beneficial applications of AI be? What are ways we can make these models accountable to us? And how can we encourage these models to be built with the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples in mind? This will require substantial capacity and capability development within Indigenous nations and also within AI companies and universities.

4.2.3 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights

The workstream began by establishing a shared understanding of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights (ICIP), including what is meant by Indigenous cultural and intellectual property and how ICIP copyright has been embedded in practice. Examples were drawn from research institutes where ICIP provisions had been built directly into contracts between Indigenous communities and research organisations. From there, the conversation expanded outward, exploring how ICIP operates across different levels of society, from the individual, family, and community, through to national and international contexts. To explore these different scales more deeply, participants split into two groups: one focused on grassroots and community-level considerations, and the other on organisational and national dimensions.

The community-focused group gave significant attention to the tension between using AI as an individual and using it as a representative of one's community. Participants reflected on what it means to walk that edge, and the importance of having clear personal and collective boundaries in place when doing so. A strong theme centred around education and awareness: how do we equip our families with the knowledge they need to understand what information they are sharing with AI systems, and what control – or lack of control – they may have over how that information is used going forward? The group identified both quick-win opportunities and longer-term advocacy work in this space, particularly around how communities can be supported to make informed decisions about their engagement with AI tools in their everyday lives.

The national and organisational group focused on how Indigenous copyright could be embedded into existing policies and, importantly, into procurement processes for research organisations. There was a clear call for mandatory disclosure of AI use, alongside stipulations about what constitutes appropriate use, and mechanisms that would allow contracts to be terminated in the event of a breach. The group also grappled with the complexity of implementing protections at a global level, given the number of international bodies involved and the varying legislative environments across different countries. Participants recognised the strength of existing as a global Indigenous collective; one that could take learnings from this workshop back to their respective regions and adapt them to local contexts and needs.

Across both groups, there was an honest acknowledgement that this work would unfold at different speeds. Some initiatives were identified as easily enacted, while others would require sustained, long-burning advocacy over time. One practical idea that gained traction was the development of templates that could be adapted by Indigenous groups around the world to help embed copyright protections into their own practices and agreements. This was seen as a tangible way GIDA could support its member communities; making it easier for groups at different stages of the journey to have tools that protect their cultural and intellectual property, without having to start from scratch.

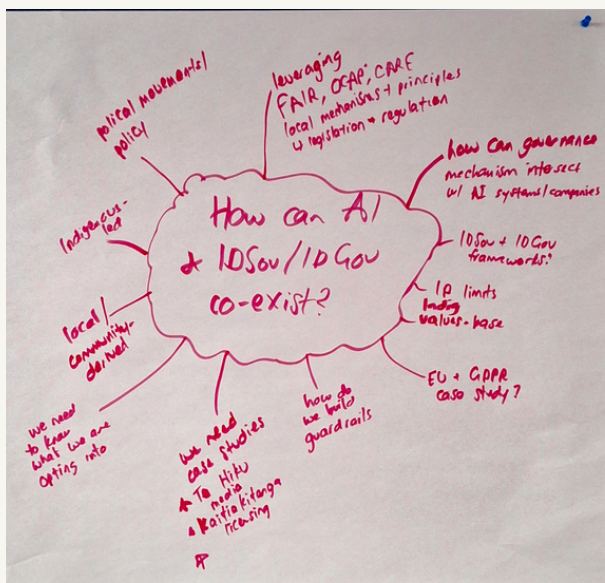
4.2.4 Sustainability and AI

The workstream opened by exploring what sustainability means from Indigenous perspectives. Participants discussed how sustainability is inherently cyclical and rooted in the principle of reciprocity: that any act of extraction must be balanced by an act of return. The group reflected on the full life cycle of AI systems and considered what it means to be in genuine relationship with maunga, wai, and whenua (nature).



A key tension that emerged was around the extent to which humans, their values, and personalities are the problem: raising the question of how we manage people rather than simply managing technology. Conversations touched on power, who holds it, how it shapes international outcomes, and what the implications are for Indigenous peoples navigating AI on a global stage. The phrase *ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au* (I am the land, the land is me) grounded the discussion in a relational worldview that stood in contrast to extractive approaches to both land and data.

The group examined the visible and invisible harms caused by AI systems, with particular attention to water, precious earth minerals, and the environmental toll of large data centres. It was noted that much of this damage is driven not only by high-stakes applications but by everyday use: meme generators, image tools, and high school homework, making the hidden costs easy to overlook.



There was strong agreement that clearer protections are needed around when AI is and is not appropriate to use. The conversation also surfaced concerns about how AI models are being trained and whether they risk being weaponised, especially in relation to Indigenous data and imagery.

A specific concern was raised around the importance of keeping humans, particularly those with cultural knowledge, in the loop when AI is applied to sensitive contexts such as medical imaging from Indigenous communities, including CT scans.

When the group turned to what needs to change, the scope was ambitious. A global value shift was identified as essential, one that prioritises people and place over profit. There was humour in the room around ideas like eradicating capitalism and nationalising AI companies, but beneath that sat a serious call for governments, policies, protocols, and copyright mechanisms to be accountable to Indigenous communities. The group identified individuals, national governments, and Indigenous peoples as the key actors who needed to step up. Indigenous leaders, it was felt, needed to be at the front of driving this change for their communities, not as passive participants in someone else's framework, but as knowledge holders bringing their own technical capacity and relational models to the table. There was also a call to form networks within bioregions and to respect that different communities are at different points in this journey.

Finally, the group reflected on GIDA's role going forward. GIDA was seen as having a responsibility to continue facilitating workshops like this one, to develop and share tools and knowledge for Indigenous peoples, and to advocate on global platforms for epistemic justice. Clarifying GIDA's position on AI was identified as a priority, as was building the capacity to draw on the collective knowledge, experience, and expertise across the network. The workstream closed with a recognition that spiritual and relational dimensions: relationship building, community dialogues, and bringing Indigenous voices to the fore; are not peripheral to this work, but central to it. AI, when approached with the right values, was seen as holding real potential: already being used for deforestation mapping, planting projects, and broader environmental and social good, with much more possible when Indigenous peoples are empowered to shape how these technologies develop.

4.2.5 Digital Trade and Digital Identity

The workstream opened by examining Indigenous participation in digital trade, with early discussion centring on questions of authenticity, digital identity, and the implications these carry for Indigenous data sovereignty. A foundational concern was the protection of Indigenous Knowledge within a global trade environment, particularly in contexts where commodities being traded also carry embedded cultural knowledge. The group noted that raw data now constitutes a significant and growing component of global trade, and that this reality sits largely unaddressed in existing regulatory and trade frameworks.

A recurring theme was the challenge of quantifying the value of Indigenous data within trade systems, with the group identifying this as a potential lever for driving regulatory movement, including within trade agreements. Balancing benefits and risks emerged as a central point of discussion: how do Indigenous peoples engage meaningfully in digital trade and economic development while retaining the ability to protect their knowledge? This question drew on a growing body of work exploring Indigenous perspectives on digital trade, and it did not resolve neatly, but sat as a productive tension throughout the session.

The conversation broadened to include digital and network sovereignty. The group drew an important distinction: network sovereignty is about more than who owns the data; it is about who controls the infrastructure through which trade flows. Owning the data while remaining dependent on someone else's infrastructure leaves communities exposed, and the group was clear that Indigenous data sovereignty requires both.

When the discussion turned specifically to AI, the group reflected on how deeply data is embedded in the mechanics of modern global trade. AI applications such as optimising shipping routes and generating predictive weather models are already shaping how goods and services move around the world. As AI becomes more prominent in these systems, the need for Indigenous data sovereignty within global trade contexts becomes more urgent and consequential. GIDA members acknowledged this as a rapidly developing area that remains under-explored, and one where Indigenous communities risk being further marginalised if proactive steps are not taken now.

Looking ahead, the group identified a set of interrelated priorities. Embedding Indigenous values into the development of digital trade infrastructure was seen as essential, as was understanding the balance between protection and opportunity, and ensuring that any benefits gained through participation in digital trade are distributed fairly to communities. On the practical side, discussion turned to Indigenous digital identity infrastructure, and specifically to the development of identity protocols that reflect Indigenous relational values. Rather than relying on centralised, government-authorised systems to confirm identity and enable access to services and participation in society, the group explored the possibility of communities building and controlling their own digital identity systems. The view expressed was clear: digital sovereignty and data sovereignty are deeply interconnected goals, and digital sovereignty is needed for the expression of IDSov.



4.2.6 Synthetic Data

The workstream opened with a grounding question: what actually is synthetic data, and why does it matter for Indigenous communities? Synthetic data, in short, is data that is artificially generated to replicate the statistical properties and structure of real-world data. It is increasingly used to fill gaps where real data is limited or sensitive, to protect privacy, and to enable testing at scale. On the surface, these applications sound promising, however, the reality is considerably more complicated.

The group examined a core risk: if synthetic data is modelled on datasets that already contain bias, the resulting AI systems are effectively being trained to replicate, and in some cases amplify, that harm. This can lead to data harm for Indigenous communities; who are frequently underrepresented or misrepresented in the original datasets that synthetic data draws from. A model that overlearns from inaccurate synthetic data will perform poorly when it encounters real-world complexity, and for Māori and other Indigenous peoples, that complexity is profound. Synthetic data that does not accurately reflect the histories of Aotearoa, the significance of te Tiriti o Waitangi, or the relational structures of te ao Māori is unlikely to produce useful or trustworthy outcomes for Iwi Māori. It may actively produce harmful ones.

A further misconception the group addressed directly was the assumption that synthetic data is inherently private. It is not. Synthetic data can leak information about the real data it was derived from, and it remains vulnerable to privacy attacks. Outliers and rare events, which are often the most statistically significant and culturally distinctive data points, are particularly difficult to anonymise within synthetic datasets. Their uniqueness makes them both valuable for model training and potentially identifiable when synthesised. Crown agencies and other institutions adopting AI tools built on synthetic data must understand this challenge to ensure greater implementation than just surface-level assurances of anonymisation.

The discussion also considered synthetic data through the lens of data equity. Data equity is understood as a shared responsibility for fair data practices that respect and promote human rights, opportunity, and dignity. Data equity is already a significant challenge in AI development given the historic and ongoing imbalances in how data has been collected. Synthetic data is sometimes promoted as a solution to these imbalances, and in some applications it may genuinely help. But the group was careful to note that both AI and synthetic data tend to aggregate rather than distribute resources and power, which sits in tension with the equity outcomes Indigenous communities are seeking. A key question around synthetic data is what conditions, and what safeguards are needed for it to advance data equity and IDSov.

For synthetic data to be appropriate in Indigenous contexts, the group identified a set of key considerations. These included ensuring that any generation of Indigenous synthetic data aligns with desired governance outcomes and involves meaningful Indigenous community and expert input into data definition and classification. Identifiers used in synthetic datasets must allow for flexible disaggregation that is meaningful to Indigenous communities. The provenance of all synthetic data used in AI systems must be clearly articulated, including any restrictions or obligations attached to its various sources. And critically, the use of synthetic Indigenous data in any algorithmic or AI system must be assessed for whether it will genuinely benefit Indigenous groups, and must conform to the principles of free, prior, and informed consent. Systems that do not meet this standard should not be supported.

The session closed with a chain of thinking that captured the layered risk synthetic data introduces when not carefully governed. An information gap, if left unaddressed, becomes a credibility gap, which becomes an influence gap, which becomes a wisdom gap. For Indigenous communities already navigating significant power imbalances in the data ecosystem, each of these gaps carries real consequences. Synthetic data itself is not inherently good nor inherently harmful; it needs the same IDSov and values-aligned governance as any other dimension of the AI landscape.

4.2.7 Capacity and Capability

The workstream opened with a shared recognition that AI is currently one of the most prominent topics across both government and private sectors, with significant investment being directed toward its implementation. Against this backdrop, the group began by establishing a collective framework, affectionately termed "cap and cap": capacity, understood as the available time, resources, and energy a community can bring to bear, and capability, understood as the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to act effectively. This shared language became the foundation for everything that followed.

From there, the discussion was structured around three guiding questions: how to build capacity and capability within Indigenous communities in relation to AI; how to build it within AI and technology spaces in relation to Indigenous data sovereignty and governance; and how to build it within the policy, legislative, and power structures that shape how AI develops and is governed. These questions were explored through the lens of both opportunity and challenge, with the group reflecting honestly on where things are going well and where significant barriers remain.

On the opportunities side, several strategic directions emerged. There was appetite for leveraging the current momentum around AI by forming cross-community partnerships and pursuing long-term, sustainable funding mechanisms for Indigenous-led AI initiatives. The group stressed the importance of acting now to codify Indigenous data protections within AI governance frameworks, using the sovereign authority of tribal and Indigenous governments and organisations to embed these protections before the window narrows. Investment in infrastructure and talent pipelines was identified as critical, including the development of sovereign data storage and computing systems, alongside training pathways such as youth scholarships, early career internships, and returning-to-community models. Addressing the opacity of AI systems, the so-called black box problem, was also raised as an area where capacity and capability building through workshops, training, and accessible resources could help to advance the goals of the IDSov movement.

A consistent thread through the discussion was the need for adequate funding and protected time and space for Indigenous practitioners, providers, administrators, and decision-makers to participate and advocate. The group acknowledged that the terrain of capacity and capability is vast, and that with relatively few people currently working across it, the weight can feel significant. This made the case for collective approaches all the more important. The group reflected on how AI has now entered the Indigenous data life cycle and ecosystem in ways that cannot be ignored or deferred. This means that Indigenous engagement is needed, especially consideration of how to engage, and across what and whose timeframes. The group began sketching what this might look like in the short, medium, and long term, working from an Indigenous data lens.

For GIDA specifically, the discussion turned to its potential as a network of networks. There was strong support for GIDA creating more dedicated spaces, both at international convenings and through ongoing sessions, to enable substantive work on Indigenous data sovereignty and AI, and to play a meaningful role in setting standards in this space. Conferences and workshops were recognised as spaces to create these relationships and the necessary momentum. With so much ground to cover and relatively small numbers driving the work, the group was clear: many hands make light work and sustaining that collective energy is itself a form of capacity building.

4.2.8 Generative AI

This was one of the larger workshops of the gathering, and it began with a grounding exercise: what are people actually using? Across the room, participants named tools including Claude, ChatGPT, Copilot, and various AI-powered summaries and assistants. The picture that emerged was one of fairly broad engagement with generative AI across different fields and contexts, and it set the stage for an honest and wide-ranging conversation about what that experience has actually been like.

Fears around the homogenisation of cultures surfaced early and with some force. Participants shared concrete examples of generative AI producing clearly incorrect information about Aboriginal peoples, raising immediate questions about who is building these models, whose knowledge is shaping them, and whose communities bear the cost of getting it wrong. So-called ‘hallucinations’, where AI systems produce confident but false outputs, were named as a specific concern, particularly in contexts where representing cultural knowledge accurately is important.

The group also grappled with a more subtle tension: some participants described actively trying to avoid using AI altogether. While this impulse is understandable, the group reflected on the complexity of that position in a world where these tools are becoming increasingly embedded in how society functions. Avoidance, in some contexts, may carry a cost. Alongside this was a concern about over-reliance, particularly the risk that leaning too heavily on AI as a source of information could erode critical thinking and digital literacy over time. Fear about the use of Indigenous languages within AI systems was also raised, reflecting deeper concerns about cultural integrity and control.

— generative AI ‘hallucinates’
↳ you have to know what you are looking for.

— Where does accountability lie when algorithms are a ‘data actor’

— There is no existing foundation for Indigenous Peoples around identity and now we are further complicating it.

— Culture differences (+ language) makes algorithm development a challenge because human logics are not Indigenous/recognize Ind.

Environmental impacts – rare earth minerals, illegal acts, human rights violation, trafficking
→ mining – whole infrastructure



At the same time, the group was clear about the genuine utility these tools can offer. Participants noted current uses including biodiversity tracking and monitoring, language work, and general productivity support. One of the most important practical observations made was that generative AI can be a genuinely valuable resource for under-resourced Indigenous communities, and that this reality deserves to be taken seriously rather than dismissed in favour of a purely critical stance.

The needs that emerged from this were consistent with themes across the wider gathering: capacity building, training opportunities, and education pathways that bring Indigenous people into this space as leaders and shapers. The group stressed the importance of digital sovereignty partition tools, where Indigenous data can be held in data sovereign contexts. This pushes back on the assumption that engaging with AI necessarily means surrendering data to large centralised models. Data rights agreements, and both intra- and inter-tribal agreements, were identified as important mechanisms for maintaining control while still being able to participate.

One key insight of the session was that currently many commonly used AI models are built to be all things to all people, and in that ambition they will always fall short. This is because the layers of nuance, specificity, and difference between and within communities, tribes, and nations cannot be flattened into a single system. The group's response to this was to consider alternatives. There was a call for a micro-economies-of-scale approach: developing tools that work well for specific communities and specific purposes and share them across Indigenous networks.

The session closed with three questions that felt less like conclusions and more like ongoing obligations: (1) how do we create sustainable difference? (2) How do we protect our information? And: (3) how do we bring these conversations into community in ways that meet people where they are, including those who may not yet trust these tools, may not fully understand their long-term implications, or who are simply trying not to be left behind by the pace of change? These questions were left open, deliberately, as work still to be done.

4.2.9 Next steps

This session focused on identifying next steps for the GIDA network, where a communiqué outlining GIDA's position on IDSoV and AI became the priority. To begin this process a definition of AI was developed, namely: Artificial Intelligence refers to the theory and development of computer systems that use data to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, including perception, learning, decision-making, and natural language processing.

Following this definition, work began to develop the communiqué collaboratively before a smaller group was delegated to develop and expand on the initial draft points. This communiqué provides context that informs the rationale for a GIDA and communiqué before providing 13 calls to action for a range of AI actors.

5.0 Conclusion

Across the two days of workshops, the groups generated a set of shared understandings that now form the foundation for collective action related to IDSov and AI. This understanding shaped everything that followed. The workshops were both a forum for raising concerns, and a space for building toward action. What emerged was a set of calls directed at governments, technology companies, and the international community. This led to the writing of a GIDA communiqué, which summarised the main messages. The IDSov and AI communiqué is available here with the calls to action listed below.

5.1 Our Calls to Action

Our first collective direction for the communicate was to the technology industry: stop building AI on Indigenous data without Indigenous governance. Transparency is not optional. Those who build AI systems must be open about where their data comes from and how it is used. Indigenous land is Indigenous data, and the extraction of one cannot be separated from the extraction of the other.

To international and regional governments, GIDA calls for the urgent development and implementation of policies that protect Indigenous Peoples' rights in data across the full lifecycle of AI development, use, and application, whether in public, private, or commercial contexts.

Privacy regulations must be extended to protect not only individual privacy but collective privacy and intellectual property for Indigenous Peoples. Local protocols must be respected, not treated as optional or peripheral to compliance frameworks. [GIDA CARE directs us home](#) is an example of GIDA mandating the prioritisation of local contexts, frameworks, and knowledges of how to enact Indigenous data sovereignty.

To all those who create or use AI systems built on Indigenous data, there is a corresponding responsibility to provide funding and resources for capacity and capability building. The workshops made clear that the demands on Indigenous communities navigating this space are significant, and that the burden of engagement cannot continue to fall on communities without adequate resourcing. Capacity and capability needs differ across spheres of influence, and responses must be calibrated accordingly.

Running through all of these calls is a recognition that the environmental and sustainability dimensions of AI cannot be decoupled from the broader conversation. The resource costs of AI systems, in water, energy, and precious minerals, fall disproportionately on the lands and communities least responsible for driving demand, and most likely to bear the consequences of environmental harm. Climate change and ecological sustainability are part of the same web of relationships and responsibilities.

The workshops closed with a sense of both urgency and possibility. The challenges are real and the stakes are high, but so too is the collective knowledge, experience, and determination in the room. GIDA leaves this gathering with a mandate to carry these calls forward, to advocate on global platforms and with communities we belong to, to support the development of Indigenous-led tools and frameworks, and to continue building the networks and relationships that group the global Indigenous data sovereignty movement.



