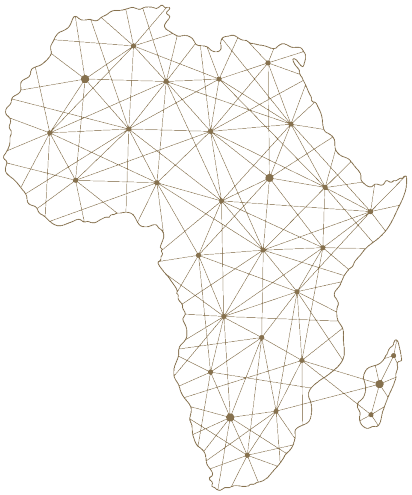


AFRICAN DATA SCIENCE CONFERENCE

24-26 JUNE 2026

WITS UNIVERSITY

Standing Governance Framework

and Terms of Reference

African Data Science Conference 2026 (ADSC 2026)

Theme: African Data Science, for Africa

This instrument establishes the standing governance structure, committee architecture, reporting lines, and formal terms of reference for the African Data Science Conference 2026.

Prepared under the authority of the Conference Chair

Conference Dates	Host Institution	Venue
24–26 June 2026	University of the Witwatersrand	Wits Science Stadium

Preamble

WHEREAS the African Data Science Conference 2026 ("ADSC 2026") is intended to serve as a scholarly, professional, and institutional platform for engagement in the fields of data science, artificial intelligence, machine learning, statistics, analytics, and related interdisciplinary domains;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary and expedient to establish a formal governance framework in order to regulate the constitution, authority, reporting lines, functions, and continuing operation of the several bodies established for the proper conduct of ADSC 2026;

NOW THEREFORE this Standing Governance Framework and Terms of Reference is hereby adopted as the formal instrument governing the structure, powers, duties, and internal relationships of the several committees and advisory bodies of ADSC 2026.

1. Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 In this Framework, unless the context indicates otherwise:

1.1.1 "Advisors" means the body established in terms of Clause 4 for the purpose of providing high-level strategic and institutional guidance;

1.1.2 "Conference" means the African Data Science Conference 2026, being ADSC 2026;

1.1.3 "Conference Chair" means the person designated to provide overall leadership and coordination of the Conference;

1.1.4 "Conference Leadership" means the Conference Chair and the chairpersons of the principal committees established under this Framework, acting collectively where the context so requires;

1.1.5 "Conference Proceedings Editors" means the editorial body established in terms of Clause 8;

1.1.6 "Framework" means this Standing Governance Framework and Terms of Reference, including any schedules hereto;

1.1.7 "Fundraising Committee" means the committee established in terms of Clause 10;

1.1.8 "Organising Committee" means the committee established in terms of Clause 9;

1.1.9 "Programme Committee" means the committee established in terms of Clause 7;

1.1.10 "Scientific Committee" means the principal academic body established in terms of Clause 6;

1.1.11 "shall" denotes a mandatory obligation, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

1.2 Headings and titles are inserted for convenience only and shall not affect the interpretation of this Framework.

1.3 Unless the contrary intention appears:

1.3.1 words importing any one gender shall include the other genders;

1.3.2 words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa;

1.3.3 any reference to a committee shall include its duly authorised chairperson and any person lawfully acting under delegated authority.

1.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the Programme Committee and the Conference Proceedings Editors shall operate under the authority, oversight, and academic direction of the Scientific Committee.

2. Purpose, Scope, and Status of this Instrument

2.1 The purpose of this Framework is to establish a formal governance structure for ADSC 2026 and to prescribe the composition, powers, duties, reporting relationships, and operating procedures of the several bodies constituted thereunder.

2.2 This Framework shall serve as a standing governance instrument for ADSC 2026 and shall remain in force unless amended, withdrawn, replaced, or superseded by a lawfully adopted subsequent instrument.

2.3 This Framework shall apply to all persons appointed, designated, or otherwise serving in any governance, advisory, scientific, organising, programme, fundraising, or editorial capacity under ADSC 2026.

2.4 This Framework shall be construed as an internal institutional governance instrument and shall regulate the relationships and responsibilities of the committees and office-bearers constituted herein.

3. Establishment of the Governance Structure

3.1 The governance structure of ADSC 2026 is hereby established and shall comprise the following bodies:

3.1.1 the Advisors;

3.1.2 the Scientific Committee;

3.1.3 the Programme Committee;

3.1.4 the Conference Proceedings Editors;

3.1.5 the Organising Committee; and

3.1.6 the Fundraising Committee.

3.2 The governance hierarchy shall be read subject to the provisions of this Framework and the organogram contained in Schedule A.

3.3 The detailed composition of the aforesaid bodies shall be as set out in Schedule B, subject to any lawful amendment effected in terms of Clause 15.

4. Advisors

4.1 The Advisors are hereby constituted as a strategic advisory body to the Conference.

4.2 The Advisors shall provide high-level counsel on the positioning, institutional stature, scholarly standing, and strategic direction of ADSC 2026.

4.3 The Advisors shall not ordinarily exercise day-to-day managerial or operational authority over the Conference, save where specifically requested to do so by the Conference Chair or where otherwise provided in this Framework.

4.4 Without limiting the generality of Clause 4.2, the Advisors may:

4.4.1 advise on institutional partnerships and stakeholder engagement;

4.4.2 strengthen the credibility and external standing of the Conference;

4.4.3 provide counsel on strategic risks, opportunities, and long-term development;

4.4.4 offer guidance on matters referred to them by the Conference Chair or the Scientific Committee.

5. Conference Chair

5.1 The Conference Chair shall provide overall leadership, direction, and coordination of ADSC 2026 and shall serve as the principal office-bearer within the Conference leadership.

5.2 Without prejudice to the functions vested in other committees under this Framework, the Conference Chair shall:

5.2.1 oversee the implementation of this Framework;

5.2.2 facilitate coordination among the several governance bodies;

5.2.3 act as the principal point of institutional accountability in relation to Conference planning and execution;

5.2.4 ensure that scientific, programme, editorial, organisational, and fundraising functions remain aligned to the objectives of ADSC 2026.

6. Scientific Committee

6.1 The Scientific Committee is hereby established as the principal academic and scholarly authority of ADSC 2026.

6.2 The Scientific Committee shall be chaired by the person designated in Schedule B and shall comprise the members listed therein, subject to amendment in terms of this Framework.

6.3 The Scientific Committee shall be responsible for the academic integrity, intellectual direction, and scholarly quality of the Conference.

6.4 Without limiting the generality of Clause 6.3, the Scientific Committee shall:

6.4.1 determine or approve the academic themes and scholarly scope of the Conference;

6.4.2 oversee peer review standards, review procedures, and academic selection criteria;

6.4.3 provide academic oversight of accepted abstracts, papers, panels, workshops, and related scholarly content;

6.4.4 supervise the work of the Programme Committee;

6.4.5 supervise the work of the Conference Proceedings Editors;

6.4.6 ensure coherence between the academic programme and the publication pipeline;

6.4.7 advise the Conference Chair on scientific and scholarly matters arising from time to time.

6.5 For the avoidance of doubt, the Programme Committee and the Conference Proceedings Editors shall report to, and operate under, the authority and academic oversight of the Scientific Committee.

6.6 The decisions of the Scientific Committee on academic matters shall, subject to this Framework, be binding on all subordinate bodies acting in the academic domain of the Conference.

7. Programme Committee

7.1 The Programme Committee is hereby established as a committee subordinate to the Scientific Committee.

7.2 The Programme Committee shall give practical and structural effect to the scientific priorities and academic direction determined by the Scientific Committee.

7.3 The Programme Committee shall have no independent status apart from the authority delegated to it by this Framework and by the Scientific Committee.

7.4 The Programme Committee shall:

7.4.1 prepare and refine the draft conference programme;

7.4.2 recommend the sequencing and structuring of plenaries, technical sessions, panels, workshops, and other academic activities;

7.4.3 coordinate the programme architecture in a manner consistent with the scholarly objectives of the Conference;

7.4.4 liaise with the Scientific Committee on programme revisions, balance, and coherence;

7.4.5 perform such additional programme-related duties as may be assigned by the Scientific Committee or the Conference Chair.

7.5 All recommendations or determinations of the Programme Committee shall be subject to the oversight, revision, and approval of the Scientific Committee.

8. Conference Proceedings Editors

8.1 The Conference Proceedings Editors are hereby constituted as the editorial body responsible for proceedings and publication oversight in relation to ADSC 2026.

8.2 The Conference Proceedings Editors shall operate under the authority of the Scientific Committee and shall be accountable thereto in all editorial and scholarly publication matters.

8.3 The Conference Proceedings Editors shall:

8.3.1 establish and maintain editorial quality standards for conference proceedings;

8.3.2 ensure consistency, integrity, and scholarly coherence in the editorial process;

8.3.3 advise on publication readiness, formatting compliance, and academic presentation;

8.3.4 work in concert with the Scientific Committee to ensure that publication outputs are aligned with approved scholarly standards;

8.3.5 perform such editorial and publication-related functions as may be assigned by the Scientific Committee.

8.4 No editorial determination shall be made in a manner inconsistent with the academic oversight of the Scientific Committee.

9. Organising Committee

9.1 The Organising Committee is hereby established as the principal operational and implementation body of ADSC 2026.

9.2 The Organising Committee shall be responsible for the practical planning, administrative coordination, and logistical execution of the Conference.

9.3 Without limiting the generality of Clause 9.2, the Organising Committee shall:

9.3.1 coordinate operational planning and implementation;

9.3.2 support venue, registration, scheduling, and administrative processes;

9.3.3 facilitate communication across the relevant internal and external stakeholders;

9.3.4 attend to practical arrangements necessary for the proper conduct of the Conference;

9.3.5 support the implementation of programme-related decisions once duly approved.

9.4 The Organising Committee shall exercise its functions in a manner consistent with the academic decisions of the Scientific Committee and the overall direction of the Conference Chair.

10. Fundraising Committee

10.1 The Fundraising Committee is hereby established as the body responsible for sponsorship development, donor engagement, and resource mobilisation on behalf of ADSC 2026.

10.2 The Fundraising Committee shall:

10.2.1 identify, cultivate, and engage potential sponsors, supporters, and institutional partners;

10.2.2 advise on fundraising strategy and sponsorship opportunities;

10.2.3 support the financial sustainability and expanded reach of the Conference;

10.2.4 work with the Conference Chair and Organising Committee in relation to approved sponsorship and funding arrangements.

10.3 The Fundraising Committee shall act subject to applicable institutional requirements, internal approvals, and governance constraints relevant to fundraising and external engagements.

11. Composition, Appointment, and Membership

11.1 The composition of each committee or other structure constituted under this Framework shall be as set out in Schedule B.

11.2 Appointment to any body constituted under this Framework shall take effect upon approval or confirmation by the Conference leadership or such duly authorised authority as may be designated for that purpose.

11.3 Membership may consist of academic staff, institutional officers, external scholars, industry representatives, or such other persons as may be deemed necessary for the proper functioning of ADSC 2026.

11.4 A member may serve on more than one committee or body established under this Framework, provided that the duties thereof are not incompatible and that the relevant reporting lines remain respected.

11.5 A vacancy arising on any committee shall not invalidate the existence or lawful functioning of that committee, provided that the committee remains reasonably constituted for the performance of its functions.

12. Delegation of Authority

12.1 Any committee established under this Framework may, subject to the terms hereof, delegate specific tasks or functions to a member, sub-group, or designated office-bearer.

12.2 No delegation in terms of Clause 12.1 shall be construed as divesting the delegating body of ultimate responsibility or accountability for the proper discharge of the delegated function.

12.3 No subordinate body may act beyond the authority expressly or impliedly conferred upon it by this Framework or by a lawful decision of a superior body.

13. Meetings, Quorum, and Decision-Making

13.1 Each committee or body shall meet as often as may reasonably be necessary to discharge its functions effectively.

13.2 Meetings may be held in person, virtually, or in hybrid form, provided that adequate opportunity is afforded to all members to participate meaningfully.

13.3 The chairperson of each committee shall ordinarily convene meetings and preside thereat.

13.4 In the absence of the chairperson, the members present may designate one of their number to preside over the relevant meeting.

13.5 Unless otherwise determined by the relevant body, decisions should be made by consensus where reasonably possible.

13.6 Where consensus cannot be achieved, a decision may be taken by a majority of members present and participating.

13.7 A simple majority of the appointed members of a body shall constitute a quorum, unless the body determines a different threshold consistent with good governance.

13.8 Minutes or a written record of decisions shall be maintained for each duly constituted meeting.

14. Vacancies, Resignations, and Replacement of Members

14.1 A member may resign from any committee or body by written notice to the Conference Chair or to the chairperson of the relevant committee.

14.2 Where a vacancy arises by reason of resignation, incapacity, withdrawal, non-acceptance, conflict, or any other cause, the Conference leadership may appoint a replacement member.

14.3 Pending the appointment of a replacement, the remaining members may continue to discharge the functions of the relevant body, provided that the requirements of quorum and functional capacity are satisfied.

14.4 Where a chairperson vacancy arises, an acting chairperson may be designated until such time as a substantive appointment is made.

15. Amendment of the Framework

15.1 This Framework may be amended by formal decision of the Conference leadership, acting in consultation with the relevant governance bodies where appropriate.

15.2 Any amendment shall be recorded in writing and shall specify the clause or schedule amended, substituted, deleted, or inserted.

15.3 Amendments to the composition of any committee may be effected without requiring wholesale re-adoption of the Framework, provided that such amendments are duly recorded and communicated.

16. Interpretation, Conflict, and Residual Authority

16.1 Any question concerning the interpretation of this Framework shall be referred in the first instance to the Conference Chair.

16.2 In any matter affecting academic authority, the view of the Scientific Committee shall carry determinative weight, subject always to any superior institutional requirement lawfully applicable to the Conference.

16.3 In the event of conflict between operational convenience and academic integrity, academic integrity shall prevail.

16.4 Any matter not expressly provided for in this Framework shall be determined in accordance with principles of good governance, institutional propriety, and the objects of ADSC 2026.

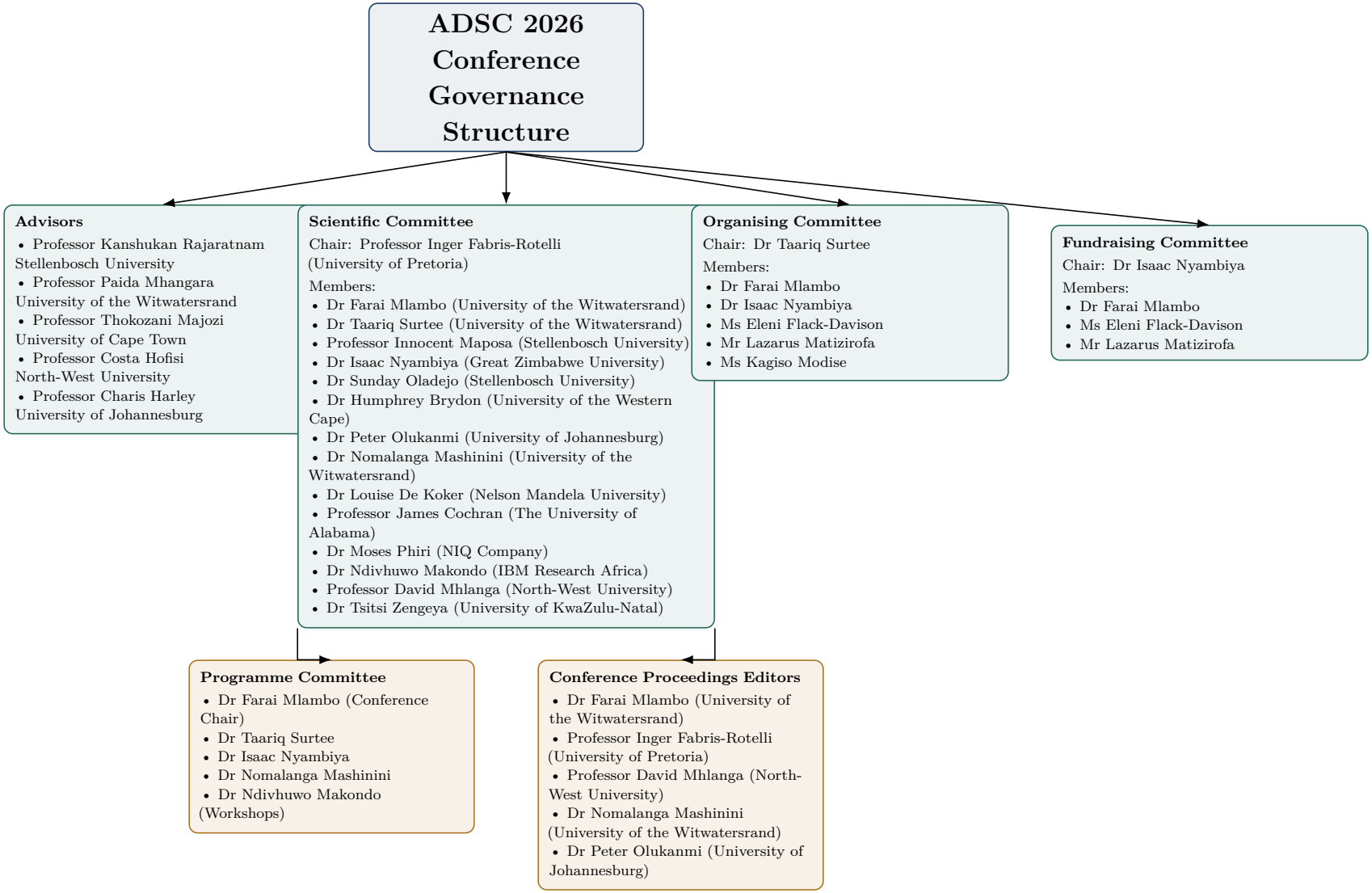
17. Commencement and Duration

17.1 This Framework shall come into operation on the date of its formal adoption by the Conference leadership.

17.2 This Framework shall remain in force for the duration of ADSC 2026 and for such period thereafter as may be necessary to conclude proceedings, publications, reporting, or residual governance matters arising therefrom, unless earlier amended or revoked.

17.3 Nothing in this Clause shall prevent the Conference leadership from adopting, with appropriate amendments, this Framework or a version thereof for future iterations of the African Data Science Conference.

Schedule A: Organogram of the ADSC 2026 Governance Structure


ADSC 2026 Conference Governance Structure
Advisors
• Professor Kanshukan Rajaratnam Stellenbosch University
• Professor Paida Mhangara University of the Witwatersrand
• Professor Thokozani Majozi University of Cape Town
• Professor Costa Hofisi North-West University
• Professor Charis Harley University of Johannesburg
Scientific Committee
Chair: Professor Inger Fabris-Rotelli (University of Pretoria)
Members:
• Dr Farai Mlambo (University of the Witwatersrand)
• Dr Taariq Surtee (University of the Witwatersrand)
• Professor Innocent Maposa (Stellenbosch University)
• Dr Isaac Nyambiya (Great Zimbabwe University)
• Dr Sunday Oladejo (Stellenbosch University)
• Dr Humphrey Brydon (University of the Western Cape)
• Dr Peter Olukanmi (University of Johannesburg)
• Dr Nomalanga Mashinini (University of the Witwatersrand)
• Dr Louise De Koker (Nelson Mandela University)
• Professor James Cochran (The University of Alabama)
• Dr Moses Phiri (NIQ Company)
• Dr Ndivhuwo Makondo (IBM Research Africa)
• Professor David Mhlanga (North-West University)
• Dr Tsitsi Zengeya (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
Organising Committee
Chair: Dr Taariq Surtee
Members:
• Dr Farai Mlambo
• Dr Isaac Nyambiya
• Ms Eleni Flack-Davison
• Mr Lazarus Matizirofa
• Ms Kagiso Modise
Fundraising Committee
Chair: Dr Isaac Nyambiya
Members:
• Dr Farai Mlambo
• Ms Eleni Flack-Davison
• Mr Lazarus Matizirofa
Programme Committee
• Dr Farai Mlambo (Conference Chair)
• Dr Taariq Surtee
• Dr Isaac Nyambiya
• Dr Nomalanga Mashinini
• Dr Ndivhuwo Makondo (Workshops)
Conference Proceedings Editors
• Dr Farai Mlambo (University of the Witwatersrand)
• Professor Inger Fabris-Rotelli (University of Pretoria)
• Professor David Mhlanga (North-West University)
• Dr Nomalanga Mashinini (University of the Witwatersrand)
• Dr Peter Olukanmi (University of Johannesburg)

18. Transition to Future Iterations of the Conference

18.1 Upon the conclusion of ADSC 2026, the Conference leadership shall, within a reasonable period, undertake a formal review of the governance, scientific, editorial, operational, and fundraising arrangements implemented under this Framework.

18.2 Such review shall include consideration of:

18.2.1 the effectiveness of the Advisors in providing strategic and institutional guidance;

18.2.2 the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee in safeguarding academic quality, peer review integrity, and scholarly direction;

18.2.3 the effectiveness of the Programme Committee in structuring and coordinating the conference programme;

18.2.4 the effectiveness of the Conference Proceedings Editors in overseeing editorial processes and publication readiness;

18.2.5 the effectiveness of the Organising Committee in delivering operational and logistical execution; and

18.2.6 the effectiveness of the Fundraising Committee in securing sponsorship, partnerships, and financial support.

18.3 A written post-conference report may be prepared under the authority of the Conference Chair and may include recommendations concerning governance continuity, committee composition, succession planning, risk management, institutional partnerships, sponsorship strategy, and operational improvement for any subsequent iteration of the African Data Science Conference.

18.4 For any subsequent iteration of the Conference, the governance structure established in this Framework may serve as the provisional template, subject to such amendments as may be necessary to reflect the scale, host institution, venue, dates, thematic priorities, partnerships, and operational requirements of the subsequent conference.

18.5 The Advisors, Scientific Committee, Programme Committee, Conference Proceedings Editors, Organising Committee, and Fundraising Committee for any subsequent iteration of the Conference may be:

18.5.1 reappointed in whole or in part;

18.5.2 reconstituted with revised membership;

18.5.3 expanded or reduced in number according to operational need; or

18.5.4 replaced by newly appointed bodies established under an amended or successor governance instrument.

18.6 In constituting the governance bodies for a subsequent conference, due regard shall be had to:

18.6.1 continuity of institutional memory;

18.6.2 scholarly credibility and disciplinary breadth;

18.6.3 regional, institutional, and sectoral representation;

18.6.4 operational capacity and availability of members; and

18.6.5 the strategic objectives of the subsequent conference.

18.7 Unless otherwise determined by the duly authorised conference leadership for the subsequent iteration, the reporting lines established in this Framework shall continue to apply, including the principle that the Programme Committee and Conference Proceedings Editors shall operate under the academic authority of the Scientific Committee.

18.8 The Conference Chair for a subsequent iteration may, upon recommendation of the relevant leadership, establish additional committees, subcommittees, or special advisory structures where required for sponsorship, publications, industry engagement, student activities, workshops, communications, or any other matter necessary for the effective conduct of the subsequent conference.

18.9 All records, minutes, review outcomes, sponsorship materials, programme documentation, editorial correspondence, and other governance-related instruments generated under ADSC 2026 should, insofar as is reasonably practicable, be preserved and transferred in an orderly manner so as to support continuity, accountability, and institutional learning for future iterations of the Conference.

18.10 Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating an automatic entitlement to office, membership, or reappointment in any future iteration of the Conference, and all such appointments shall remain subject to lawful approval under the applicable governance arrangements then in force.

Schedule B: Composition of Committees and Advisory Structures

This Schedule sets out the membership of the several committees, advisory structures, and editorial bodies constituted under this Framework.

B.1 Advisors

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Member	Professor Kanshukan Rajaratnam, Stellenbosch University
Member	Professor Paida Mhangara, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Professor Thokozani Majozi, University of Cape Town
Member	Professor Costa Hofisi, North-West University
Member	Professor Charis Harley, University of Johannesburg

B.2 Scientific Committee

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Chair	**Professor Inger Fabris-Rotelli, University of Pretoria**
Member	Dr Farai Mlambo, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Dr Taariq Surtee, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Professor Innocent Maposa, Stellenbosch University
Member	Dr Isaac Nyambiya, Great Zimbabwe University
Member	Dr Sunday Oladejo, Stellenbosch University
Member	Dr Humphrey Brydon, University of the Western Cape
Member	Dr Peter Olukanmi, University of Johannesburg
Member	Dr Nomalanga Mashinini, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Dr Louise De Koker, Nelson Mandela University
Member	Professor James Cochran, The University of Alabama
Member	Dr Moses Phiri, NIQ Company
Member	Dr Ndivhuwo Makondo, IBM Research Africa
Member	Professor David Mhlanga, North-West University
Member	Dr Tsitsi Zengeya, University of KwaZulu-Natal

B.3 Programme Committee

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Chair	**Dr Farai Mlambo, University of the Witwatersrand**
Member	Dr Taariq Surtee, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Dr Isaac Nyambiya, Great Zimbabwe University
Member	Dr Nomalanga Mashinini, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Dr Ndivhuwo Makondo, IBM Research Africa

B.4 Conference Proceedings Editors

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Editor	Dr Farai Mlambo, University of the Witwatersrand
Editor	Professor Inger Fabris-Rotelli, University of Pretoria
Editor	Professor David Mhlanga, North-West University

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Editor	Dr Nomalanga Mashinini, University of the Witwatersrand
Editor	Dr Peter Olukanmi, University of Johannesburg

B.5 Organising Committee

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Chair	**Dr Taariq Surtee, University of the Witwatersrand**
Member	Dr Farai Mlambo, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Dr Isaac Nyambiya, Great Zimbabwe University
Member	Ms Eleni Flack-Davison, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Mr Lazarus Matizirofa, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Ms Kagiso Modise, University of the Witwatersrand

B.6 Fundraising Committee

Position	Name and Institutional Affiliation
Chair	**Dr Isaac Nyambiya, Great Zimbabwe University**
Member	Dr Farai Mlambo, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Ms Eleni Flack-Davison, University of the Witwatersrand
Member	Mr Lazarus Matizirofa, University of the Witwatersrand

Adoption

This Standing Governance Framework and Terms of Reference is hereby submitted for approval and, upon adoption, shall constitute the governing instrument regulating the structure and operation of the African Data Science Conference 2026.

Name and Designation Date