

July 8, 2026

MRC Guidance on Existing Standards for AI Use in Media Measurement

Introduction

The Media Rating Council (MRC), in its ongoing effort to develop standards for media measurement, has begun an effort to evaluate existing Standards and Guidelines and develop supplementary guidance in certain focus areas, as it relates to the rapidly evolving use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning models in areas that intersect with media measurement processes and products.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad field and refers to the use of technologies to build machines and computers that have the ability to perform cognitive functions associated with human intelligence. Machine learning (ML) is a subset of artificial intelligence that automatically enables a machine or system to learn and improve from experience. It should be noted that since ML is a subset of AI, the references to AI in this document should be interpreted to also apply to ML models, unless explicitly expressed otherwise.

The MRC has observed AI being applied to measurement processes from both ongoing audits (across all media types, formats, delivery methods, etc.) and MRC members noting the growing use of AI-powered media measurement products, as well as the use of AI by both consumers and content creators. Given the growth in adoption and impact on media measurement methodologies and processes, the MRC made this effort a top priority for 2026.

Over the past few years, the MRC has taken note of advancements in the use of AI models for measurement processes that serve as critical aspects of media measurement such as Invalid Traffic (IVT) detection, use of agentic AI for both internal processes as well as external client-facing functions such as auctions, campaign set up and reporting as well as Ad Verification, Brand Safety and Suitability processes and more. The MRC also noted that the rapid penetration of AI use is also noticeable across media consumers and content creators. The wide accessibility to AI-supported applications for a multitude of purposes has blurred the lines between organic and generative content as well as human user and agentic activity. MRC's efforts in these areas are focused on promoting strong quality controls around the design, empirical support, testing, monitoring and continuous improvement of AI models. Furthermore, MRC believes adequate and transparent disclosures to measurement users regarding both the methodology and limitations of models used in the measurement process with impact on reported metrics is required and important.

Classical AI/ML uses patterns in historical data to identify anomalies, forecast outcomes or for the classification of subject matter, and typically performs a specific task with a clearly defined goal to provide actionable insights. To date, MRC has observed and evaluated, through audit, application of Classical AI/ML across a variety of measurement systems using existing Guidelines and Standards for several years. However, in addition to a need to consolidate and update this applicable guidance and these requirements for today's use cases, there is a need to produce incremental guidance and requirements for evolving AI use cases. These include (Note:

July 8, 2026

these may not be mutually exclusive and AI use cases may overlap or involve several below aspects):

Generative AI (Content Creation): Generates content such as texts, images, music, and voices and typically does not rely on explicit programmed instructions; rather learns from data.

Agentic AI: Acts autonomously and makes decisions based on their programming and learned experiences; these systems perceive their environment, process information, and take actions without human intervention.

-Assistive AI (copilots): Designed to augment human capabilities rather than replace them and acts as digital assistants, helping users with tasks and workflows.

-Embedded AI: Integration of AI capabilities and skills into existing technology such as ERP systems or browsers to enhance the functionality, efficiency, and output of the system.

With that said, MRC has developed and published several Standards and Guidelines in the past several years that provide a strong foundational coverage of AI use in media measurement, covering areas spanning across data integration, empirical support, identity resolution, Invalid Traffic (IVT), Brand Safety and Suitability, auction transparency, and more. Please refer to the MRC website for a list of Standards and Guidelines applicable to MRC accreditation processes through this link: <https://mediaratingcouncil.org/standards-and-guidelines>

As such, MRC is embarking on an effort to 1) Provide the marketplace with guidance on existing standards that intersect with AI use in measurement that are currently used in MRC's process to evaluate audited services (represented by this document) and 2) Develop and set standards that cover identified gaps in measurement areas, as agreed to by the MRC AI Standards Working Group (to be completed in a phased manner which began Q1 2026). Please refer to the Focus Areas section of this document for more details on these areas.

Executive Summary

As part of this effort, the MRC engaged with measurement services as well as the auditors currently conducting MRC accreditation audits to collect information on use cases for AI intersecting with audited measurement services processes, both internal or external. The MRC noted that while there have been several advancements in the functions AI could serve for organizations, MRC's Standards and Guidelines cover several evaluation criteria for AI models such as empirical support, quality controls over development and testing, monitoring and issue resolution and disclosures.

However, MRC also acknowledges several areas where there are either no defined metrics or there is a need for specific guidance on minimum requirements and evaluation criteria. Moreover, while MRC's Standards and Guidelines provide a good foundation for evaluating AI

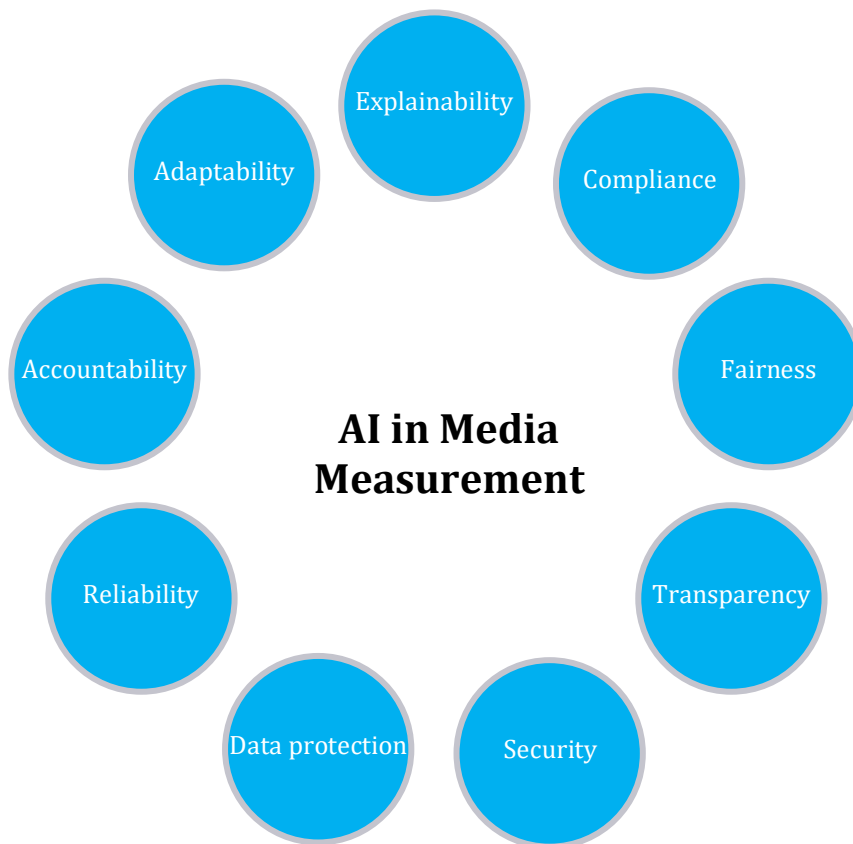
July 8, 2026

use in media measurement, that existing guidance is not currently consolidated or explicitly expressed as applicable to this area. As such, MRC identified the first step in this effort to consolidate the existing guidance relevant to evaluating AI use across the identified focus areas discussed later in this document'. This effort involved collaboration across MRC staff, supporting and sponsoring organizations such as the ANA, 4As, IAB Tech Lab, media buyers and sellers, measurement services and other media measurement users.

AI Principles in Media Measurement

AI use in media measurement has increasingly expanded into several key areas of media measurement, spanning across both digital and non-digital measurement. As such, the MRC, in collaboration with the audit firms conducting accreditation audits, developed a framework for evaluating AI use intersecting with media measurement processes. This framework was developed in alignment with industry AI Standards frameworks and includes nine AI principles, which represent areas in need of evaluation (and potential risks) when intersecting with measurement systems and the media being measured.

Below are descriptions for each of the principles represented in the following diagram :



July 8, 2026

Principle	Description
Explainability:	The models and algorithms outputs are explainable and allow for validation.
Compliance:	The model and algorithms used comply with applicable MRC Standards and Guidelines.
Fairness:	The potential model bias is assessed for group and individual fairness in representation and model outputs.
Transparency	The purpose and design of the model are disclosed to users in sufficient detail to understand the outputs produced by the model.
Security	The systems and algorithms involved in operating the model, including data transfers and storage, are protected against unauthorized access.
Data Protection	The system's data use aligns with permitted rights and confidentiality.
Reliability	The models are capable of producing valid and accurate outputs based on stated expectations for the model.
Accountability	The model inputs, algorithmic designs, processes, thresholds, limitations and assumptions are known to the measurement services and quantified, as applicable.
Adaptability	The model is adaptable to technological advancements and changes in media consumption, content delivery and consumer behaviors.

Existing Guidelines & Standards Applicable to AI Use in Media Measurement By Principle

While the use of AI has grown exponentially over the past several years, MRC identified several focus areas where MRC will prioritize its efforts for this standards initiative, as listed below. These priority areas are based on both the incidence of AI use in measurement or impact on behaviors being measured as well as the need for incremental guidance and requirements not covered in existing Guidelines or Standards.

- General
- Invalid Traffic
- Brand Safety
- Base Digital Measurement
- Identity and Big Data
- Auctions

In order to consolidate the existing guidance related to AI use in media measurement, the MRC engaged with the audit firms conducting MRC audits to build a list of standards and guidelines currently in use to evaluate AI use in various different areas. The table below enumerates the MRC Standards and Guidelines used to evaluate current AI use in media measurements, in alignment with the AI principles defined above:

July 8, 2026

Existing Guidelines and Standards Currently Applied to AI Principles in Measurement							
Principle	MRC Minimum Standards ¹	Ad Verification Guidelines ²	Brand Safety Supplement ³	IVT Standards ⁴	Data Integration Guidelines ⁵	Outcomes and Data Quality Standards ⁶	Auction Transparency Standards ⁷
Explainability	All Standards and Guidelines require data quality control, model empirical support and associated reporting/disclosure.						
Compliance	All Standards and Guidelines require standardized methods for application of models and data adjustment across measurement use cases.						
Fairness	Require assessment and disclosure of bias and error.		Require model and algorithm evaluation, governance and monitoring.		Require data validation and assessment of impact of integration	Robust requirements for use of models and data quality.	Robust governance controls over inputs, optimization and decision parameters.
Transparency	All Standards and Guidelines require clear disclosure to users of methods, data sources, procedures and results including bias and limitations.						
Security	Require IT systems controls.			Require protection of techniques from reverse engineering.	Apply MRC Minimum Standards to data integration.		Secure design and operation of the model.
Data Protection	Require protection of data and systems.			Requirements for data availability and disclosure.	Apply MRC Minimum Standards to data integration.	Robust requirements for ingestion, permissions and use of data.	Privacy and regulatory application to auction model design and operation.
Reliability	All Standards and Guidelines require quality control, validation and monitoring of models and methods as well as monitoring and disclosure.						
Accountability	All Standards and Guidelines require clear disclosure of errors, limitations and guidance for applicable use.						
Adaptability	Require continuous improvement and ongoing assessment.			Require risk and control approach to monitor evolving threats.	Apply MRC Minimum Standards to data integration.		



July 8, 2026

¹ *MRC Minimum Standards*

² *Guidelines for the Conduct of Ad Verification*

³ *MRC Supplement to IAB Guidelines for the Conduct of Ad Verification: Enhanced Content Level Context and Brand Safety*

⁴ *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Standards Addendum*

⁵ *MRC Guidelines Concerning Data Integration*

⁶ *MRC Outcomes and Data Quality Standards*

⁷ *MRC Digital Advertising Auction Transparency Standards*

See the Appendix to this document for a detailed mapping of existing MRC Standards and Guidelines to interpretations of application to AI governance concepts. MRC currently applies these aspects in audit to AI use in measurement and expects audited measurement services to comply with relevant requirements where applicable.

July 8, 2026

Ongoing Processes and Next Steps

As stated above, beyond this initial first effort to delineate current AI use cases, risk principles and the intersection with existing Guidelines and Standards, the MRC has begun an effort to produce holistic AI Standards across all applicable measurement use cases including an effort to consolidate existing requirements and to create incremental requirements.

In addition to the above detailed use cases, the emerging use cases this AI Standards efforts is focusing on include, but are not limited to:

TV measurement:

- Further Big Data and Fusion integration
- Privacy responsive methodologies, absent availability of PII
- Device attestation for verification of supply sources
- More robust content level classifications at scale (e.g., brand suitability, content genre, contextual)

Audio measurement:

- Richer audience data in audio measurement growth areas – podcast measurement
- Cross-channel outcome effectiveness measurement (e.g., brand lift, attribution, creative ROI)

Digital measurement:

- Further drive towards cross-media measurement
- Agentic workflows developing to support ad buying, selling and measurement (cross-workstream integrations)

Out-of-home measurement:

- Developments in approximating Attention (e.g., opportunity to see) and audience composition
- Further parity between OOH/digital measurement techniques in forecasting, audience modeling and optimization
- Innovative mobility/location intelligence, POI context, lift and attribution measurement

July 8, 2026

The detailed AI risks this Standards effort is focusing on across all measurement use cases include, but are not limited to:

AI/IT Governance processes

- Bias risks within training data
- Explainability and transparency of measurement related to performance risks (i.e., accuracy, variability)
- Dependency on AI and AI vendors to support code development and measurement
- Model performance monitoring and alignment of output expectations and model limitations/assumptions

AI content labeling and rights management impacting ad verification, brand safety/suitability

- Current limitations associated with AI content labeling and rights management
- Impact of content types (organic vs. generative) on model training and outputs
- Ability to distinguish organic vs. generative content in ML training data
- Industry frameworks for content labeling and rights management (e.g., C2PA)

Modeling of simulated/synthetic audiences in measurement

- Evaluation process for simulated/synthetic audience accuracy and completeness
- Influence of training data on model outputs and fidelity of data used in model predictions
- Demographic characteristics determination and model criteria for minimum viewership metadata

Identification of more complex IVT activity

- Implications of agentic AI advances (near term) and Artificial General Intelligence (far term)
- Increased complexity of “General IVT” activity as AI-based crawlers increase (declared)
- Increased presence of non-declared or spoofed user agent-based crawlers
- Increased sophistication of SIVT mimicking human behavior patterns
- Proliferation of Made for Advertising (MFA) where applicable to IVT

Recognizing certain IVT “grey-areas” for measurement

- Distinguishing “human-involved” agentic-AI exposure in measurement (i.e., agentic validity)
- Measurement and monetization of zero-click
- Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) proliferation and model training data scraping impacts on property level IVT classifications (i.e., publisher collateral damage)



July 8, 2026

Transparency in AI buying systems (auctions and seller operated buying agents)

- Disclosure requirements for areas or processes where AI is used in auction environments, including the use of Agentic AI (if applicable, and not captured through the Auction Transparency Standard)
- Risks related to algorithmic collusion, algorithmic poisoning, and cold start issues
- Blackbox placements

Questions for Measurement Services Regarding AI Use in Their Measurement

MRC is in the process of producing AI Standards for future marketplace guidance for media measurement users and practitioners as well as to create a standardized audit evaluation framework. This effort began in Q1 2026 and is expected to be completed in phases throughout 2026 and early 2027.

MRC's aim in the interim, is that this guidance related to existing standards applicable to AI allows users of media measurement to understand the risk areas and current requirements assessed in accreditation audits in order to enable media measurement users to ask the right questions and set appropriate expectations for quality measurement while MRC works to produce holistic incremental AI Standards governing newer and emerging applications. In that spirit, below are some suggested questions media measurement users (buyers, sellers or intermediaries that rely on or subscribe to media measurement services) should consider asking related to AI systems and AI use in media measurement:

Where is AI used in my measurement, buying or reporting workflow?

How are AI-driven decisions determined?

- What deterministic (i.e., through direct observations) methods are used vs. model based (e.g., AI) techniques?

How reliable are your model-based techniques?

- What is the basis of "truth" in the development of models?
- What training data is used to train your models; how do you vet your training data?
- What techniques do you use to validate your model performance in production (e.g., Human in the loop)?
- What KPIs do you use for validation and how do your models perform against those KPIs?

How do you manage change?

- How often is your methodology updated (e.g., model retraining, new model release)?
- What transparency do you provide regarding the timing of model updates and impacts to my analytics?



July 8, 2026

Who has access to my input/output data?

- Is my information used to train your models?

Is your methodology validated by a third-party?

- Is your process examined and Accredited by the Media Rating Council?
- What observations were highlighted by third-parties (i.e., MRC) regarding the validity of your methodology?

Please contact the MRC Staff (staff@mediaratingcouncil.org) with any questions or to communicate your desire to participate in these activities. Thank you for your interest in the MRC AI Standards development efforts.

July 8, 2026

APPENDIX A: Mapping of Existing MRC Standards and Guidelines to AI Governance

MRC Standard / Guideline	Interpretation of application to AI governance concepts	AI Principle(s)
MRC Minimum Standards (A.1)	Mitigation of AI bias, distortion and human error	Explainability Fairness Accountability Adaptability
MRC Minimum Standards (A.2)	Application of robust quality controls and validation on data, algorithms and outputs	Accountability Reliability
MRC Minimum Standards (A.3)	Representation of the population and disclosure of sampling biases within training data	Fairness Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (A.6)	Documentation of AI processes for transparency and explainability	Compliance Explainability Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (A.7)	Algorithm documentation, security/change controls and recovery planning	Security Data Protection Adaptability
MRC Minimum Standards (A.10)	Pilot testing and validation of new AI models and disclosure before deployment	Explainability Transparency Reliability
MRC Minimum Standards (A.11)	Provenance of training data to prevent undue influence or bias	Fairness
MRC Minimum Standards (A.12)	Detection and handling of invalid/adversarial data and disclosure impacts	Security Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (A.13)	Logically justified and empirically validated model outputs and adjustments	Explainability Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (B. General)	Disclosure of modeling methods and up-to-date methodology documentation	Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (B.1)	Disclosure of known model biases, data gaps and error tendencies	Explainability Fairness Transparency Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (B.2)	Disclosure and quantification of material methodology change impacts	Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (B.3)	Disclosure of training data collected, used and filtration process	Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (B.6)	Disclosure of training data distributions to population benchmarks	Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (B.7)	Disclosure of model uncertainty and known error sources in reporting	Transparency Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (B.8.a, b.)	Disclosure of confidence intervals or error rates for model outputs	Transparency Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (B.8.c)	Disclosure of model accuracy and error margins and calculations	Transparency Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (B.9)	Disclosure and quantification of AI-driven adjustments and explanation of purpose	Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (B.10)	Use and disclosure of data sufficiency thresholds for reporting	Compliance Transparency Reliability
MRC Minimum Standards (B.12)	Disclosure of anomalies or incidents that may have impacted model outputs	Transparency Accountability
MRC Minimum Standards (C.1)	Implementation of privacy, data integrity, security and output integrity controls	Security Data Protection

July 8, 2026

MRC Standard / Guideline	Interpretation of application to AI governance concepts	AI Principle(s)
MRC Minimum Standards (C.2)	Automated transparency flags revealing quality and provenance	Transparency
MRC Minimum Standards (C.3)	Ensuring users have latest models; errors and fixes are promptly communicated	Accountability Transparency Adaptability
Ad Verification Sections: 2.a, 2.c, 3	Disclose verification techniques used and clearly state known limitations and failure conditions.	Explainability Accountability Transparency
Ad Verification Sections: 6, 9	Require auditable evidence for automated conclusions.	Compliance
Ad Verification Section: 9	Validate any sampled, manual, or automated process and fully disclose how they operate.	Explainability Reliability
Ad Verification Section: 2.c	Monitor technical limitations and reduce false positives/negatives in verification processes; disclose known limitations and maintain a process to identify and correct inaccuracies.	Accountability
Brand Safety Section: 3.4	Apply end-to-end ML lifecycle controls, inclusive of training data selection, parameter/feature choice, data preparation, model selection, training, evaluation, tuning and periodic refresh.	Reliability
Brand Safety Sections: 3.4, 9, 10	Define data sufficiency criteria and disclose degraded performance, specifying specify minimum sample size/quality thresholds for ML training and evaluation; and proactively inform users where lower-quality or lower-volume data may reduce model performance.	Compliance Transparency Accountability
Brand Safety Section: 3.4	Enforce relevance, train/test separation, and bias mitigation; ensure features are empirically relevant, training and evaluation datasets are distinct, data is cleaned/normalized/deduplicated, and material bias is reduced and disclosed.	Fairness Explainability
Brand Safety Section: 3.4	Use fit-for-purpose, empirically supported models. Models should be appropriate to intended use, documented, periodically validated, and refreshed to address drift and changing environments.	Explainability
Brand Safety Sections: 3.4, 3.5	Embed continuous human intervention. Known model weaknesses and edge cases should direct manual review, and reviewer findings should feed back into model improvement.	Accountability
Brand Safety Sections: 3.4, 3.7, 9	Disclose methodology and the degree of ML reliance. Provide users with non-technical disclosure of model methods, dataset sizes, data sources, and level of reliance on ML versus human review.	Transparency
Auctions Sections: 1.1, 4, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1	Develop governance processes of auction mechanisms as an algorithmic decisioning process over allocation and pricing, with transparent disclosure of the logic, parameters, and rules.	Fairness Transparency
Auctions Sections: 1.1, 2.1.1	Maintain explainability, accountability, and formal oversight over automated auction behavior, including ownership of policies, inputs, performance, and participant communications.	Explainability
Auctions Sections: 1.2, 2.2.1	Maintain internal controls over inputs, optimization and decision parameters that affect outcomes.	Explainability
Auctions Section: 1.1	Execute ongoing validation and user trust through transparent reporting, disclosure of change impacts, communication of error and variability, and audit evidence of operational effectiveness.	Reliability Accountability
Auctions Section: 2.1.4	Support independent explainability review of auction behavior through third-party measurement and access to relevant bid or protocol information where possible.	Compliance Explainability
Auctions Section: 2.1.5	Maintain privacy and regulatory requirements into the design and operation of the automated auction methodology as core governance constraints.	Security Data Protection

July 8, 2026

MRC Standard / Guideline	Interpretation of application to AI governance concepts	AI Principle(s)
Auctions Section: 3.3	Disclose rules and variables used as well as: -Feature Importance: Provide a dynamically generated list of the top N features or variables that contributed the most to the ad's placement and price. -Model Card Requirements: Document the training data, intended uses, known limitations, and performance metrics of ML models.	Compliance Transparency
IVT Sections: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Create independent, technically qualified governance, R&D teams with authority to oversee AI; develop and refine detection methods, monitor performance and ensure data completeness	Explainability Reliability Adaptability
IVT Sections: 3.3, 5	Establish comprehensive governance and continuous improvement processes for AI detection systems, balancing security requirements with transparency and accountability	Adaptability Security
IVT Sections: 2.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1.3; IVT Interim Update	Consideration of lawful data use, minimization and data consent in use of AI techniques	Compliance Security Data Protection
Data Integration Section: Quality Assessment	Use relevant, comprehensive, representative data and features; monitor match/linkage rates and avoid overusing synthetic/imputed data; assess and maintain distributions to prevent bias	Fairness
Data Integration Section: Quality Assessment	Statistically validate models for accuracy and fairness, test dynamic/personalized models, quantify and flag variability or unreliable outputs, regularly review/improve models	Explainability
Data Integration Section: Disclosure	Document and disclose methodologies, data sources, feature selection, weighting practices, post model adjustments and rationales; disclose reliability, uncertainty, scope and limitations	Explainability Compliance Transparency Adaptability
Data Integration Section: Quality Assessment / Disclosure	Maintain robust governance, quality controls and human oversight across all AI/ML processes; clearly explain integration methods and ongoing research efforts to users.	Fairness Data Protection Security Accountability Adaptability
Outcomes Sections: 3.1, 5.1	Select, prepare and tune data rigorously to ensure accurate models	Reliability
Outcomes Sections: 3.1, 8.4	Define and communicate data sufficiency and performance limitations	Accountability Transparency
Outcomes Sections: 3.1, 5.1	Relevant high-quality training data and bias-mitigated	Fairness
Outcomes Section: 3.1	Models are fit for purpose and regularly revalidated	Explainability Reliability
Outcomes Sections: 2.1, 2.3, 5.2	Use human review to correct AI outputs and enhance fairness	Fairness Accountability
Outcomes Section: 9	Communicate AI methods and datasets transparently	Transparency
Outcomes Section: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1	Employ explainable AI techniques to clarify prediction drivers	Explainability
Outcomes Sections: 5.1, 5.2	Thorough records and continually validating AI-related data	Accountability
Outcomes Sections: 7.2	Preserving privacy and transparency requirements in handling missing data	Transparency Security Data Protection
Outcomes Sections: 1.3, 8.6, 7.2	Set data retention policies that balance accountability and privacy	Compliance Security Data Protection
Outcomes Section: 9	Disclose variability metrics and define clear pilot-study protocols	Transparency