

ATSS 1.3 Governance Charter

High-level governance, separation of duties, and due process for the PSSN Registry & ATSS scores.

Version: 1.3 (High-level) · Status: Public summary · Date: 25 December 2025

Purpose

This document defines the high-level governance model for the Pan-African Sovereign Serial Number (PSSN) registry and the Auditable Transformative Science Standard (ATSS) scoring process. It clarifies responsibilities, evidence handling, decision-making, and appeals.

It is designed to prevent capture, conflicts of interest, and manipulation, while protecting due process for all parties.

Scope

Applies to: (1) PSSN identifier issuance, (2) ATSS_Q (quality) and ATSS_I (integrity) scores, and (3) integrity case handling (reports, reviews, corrections, sanctions, and positive credits).

Institutional roles and separation

Core principle: standard-setting, scoring, and infrastructure are organizationally separated. No single actor may control all three.

- PASC (Pan-African Standards Council): convenes the standard, publishes rules, maintains the appeals structure, and appoints review panels. PASC does not issue unilateral scores.
- Academic Consortium (multi-university): provides scholarly oversight and reviewer capacity. Initiated by USK and expanded through MoUs with African universities. Panel participation is recorded.
- USK (Université Simon Kimbangu): initiating academic institution that delegates governance and scoring to consortium + PASC processes. USK is a founding anchor, not “the registry”.
- CENA (Centre Mandombe): supports research operations, documentation, and preservation. CENA supports traceability and record-keeping but does not set scores alone.
- Technical operator (e.g., Deep InfoSec): provides hosting, cybersecurity, and reliability. No role in scoring decisions. Non-interference is enforced via access controls and audit logs.
- Community and stakeholders: can submit evidence, request corrections, and appeal outcomes through defined channels.

Scoring decision model

ATSS_Q and ATSS_I are computed from public rules and documented events.

Every score change must reference: (1) the rule invoked, (2) the evidence set, and (3) the decision record (panel vote or signed decision).

No secret downgrades. Penalties must be expressed in a minimally sufficient, non-defamatory form.

Integrity cases and due process

- Intake: reports are accepted with evidence. Anonymous reporting may be allowed, but evidentiary thresholds are higher.
- Triaging: screening for spam, harassment, duplicates, and jurisdiction.
- Notification: when appropriate, the subject is informed and given a right to respond within a defined window.
- Panel review: reviewers assess evidence against published criteria. Conflicts of interest are declared and managed.
- Decision: outcomes include no action, correction, positive credit, warning, penalty, or referral.
- Publication: decisions are logged with references to rules and evidence; sensitive personal data is redacted.

Appeals and corrections

Any scored entity may request an appeal. Appeals must cite the contested rule, the alleged error, and supporting evidence. Appeals are reviewed by a panel that is independent from the original decision where feasible.

Corrections are normal. Honest corrections can increase ATSS_I when they improve transparency and repair harm.

Transparency and auditability

The registry publishes governance rules, scoring rules, and a public decision ledger at a level of detail that enables independent audit while respecting privacy and safety constraints.

Infrastructure logs (access, changes, exports) are retained and available to governance auditors.

Conflict of interest and anti-capture controls

Reviewers must declare conflicts (financial ties, authorship ties, institutional dependence, personal disputes). Recusal is mandatory when impartiality is reasonably questioned. Panels should be geographically and institutionally diverse.

No sponsor, operator, or institution may control rules, panels, and infrastructure simultaneously. Budget and sponsor disclosures are recorded.

Data protection and safety

Only necessary personal data is collected. Sensitive data is minimized, encrypted at rest and in transit, and access-controlled. Whistleblower protection and anti-harassment measures are mandatory.

Change control

Governance rules evolve through public proposals, review, and recorded decisions. Every version has a date, rationale, and compatibility notes.

Contact

Registry and governance contact: registry@pasc.institute

Reference implementation: PSSN Registry · ATSS 1.3 (web).