

The ODU Standard

A Framework for Ethical AI Displacement · Version 1.4 · 2026

ABSTRACT

This document proposes and defines a new global ethical standard: **the ODU Standard** — a framework governing the obligations of companies that deploy artificial intelligence or robotic systems to replace human workers.

The ODU Standard is administered through the **ODU Platform** — an independent, neutral technology platform that facilitates, audits, and administers the standard between companies and the workers they displace. The platform serves both parties: it gives companies a clear, voluntary framework for managing AI transitions with integrity, and it gives workers an independent body that calculates and distributes their entitlements transparently.

The central mechanism of the standard is the **Displacement Compensation** — an ongoing monthly payment made by a company to its displaced workers for the productive lifetime of the AI or robotic system that replaced them. The Displacement Compensation is not a fine, a severance supplement, or a charity. It is a structured share of the net economic gain the company captures by replacing human labour with automated systems. Its amount is determined independently by the **ODU Audit System** — a multi-agent AI infrastructure that cross-examines findings across multiple independent analytical agents before producing a verified Displacement Compensation recommendation. The output of this process is each company's **Displacement Effect Index (DE Index)**.

Workers affected by any transition announced on the ODU Platform vote on whether to accept the proposed Accord. Their individual shares are calculated using the **ODU Distribution Formula** — a published, auditable weighting of salary and seniority — and are visible to each worker before they vote.

Ten percent of every Displacement Compensation payment flows into the **ODU Transition Fund** — a growing pool dedicated to retraining, reskilling, and transition support for displaced workers globally.

A company that voluntarily adopts the ODU Standard earns and maintains the right to carry the **ODU Committed** designation — a publicly verifiable signal of ethical conduct in AI deployment, recognised by investors, customers, employees, and the wider labour market.

PART I The Problem — A Transfer No One Is Naming

Something is happening right now that has no honest name in public discourse.



Across every industry, in every country, companies are deploying artificial intelligence agents and robotic systems that perform work previously done by human beings. The companies that deploy these systems become more efficient, more profitable, and more competitive. The workers displaced by these systems lose their income, their daily purpose, and often their sense of place in the economy.

This is not described as what it structurally is: **a transfer of economic value from human labour to automated capital**. It is described instead as “progress,” “efficiency gains,” “the future of work,” or — most dishonestly — “an opportunity for workers to upskill and find new roles.”

The economic reality is precise and measurable. When a robotic system replaces 240 warehouse workers, the company captures the equivalent of 240 salaries in perpetuity, minus the operational cost of the system. That difference — the net efficiency gain — is real money. It was previously distributed among 240 people as wages. Now it accumulates on a balance sheet.

No law compels the company to account for that transfer. No standard requires them to acknowledge it. No mechanism exists to share it. The workers receive a severance package — a one-time payment designed to ease the transition — and then they are on their own.

This is the problem the ODU Standard addresses. Not with charity. Not with protest. With a framework.

PART II Why Existing Responses Are Insufficient

Severance

Severance treats displacement as a moment — a single event requiring a single payment. It acknowledges the loss but not the ongoing nature of it. The worker receives a cheque. The company receives a perpetual efficiency gain. For a 20-year employee displaced by automation, a 12-week severance payment against a 15-year automated income stream is not an ethical settlement. It is a legal minimum masquerading as one.

Retraining Programmes

Retraining assumes that displaced workers can reliably transition into new roles that AI cannot yet fill — and that this transition is the company's gift to offer rather than the worker's burden to bear. In practice, retraining programmes have low completion rates, uncertain employment outcomes, and are disproportionately unavailable to older workers, workers in specialised industries, and workers in regions where the new roles simply do not exist. They address a symptom. They do not address the transfer.

Universal Basic Income

UBI is the most honest of the existing proposals because it acknowledges that the transfer is real and structural. But UBI is funded by the public — by taxes, which means by everyone — rather than by the specific companies capturing the specific efficiency gains. It socialises the cost of a private decision. The company externalises the human cost. Society absorbs it.

The Missing Framework

None of these responses treat the displaced worker as someone with a continuing economic claim on the value their labour previously generated. The ODU Standard proposes something different: that displacement is not a moment but a transfer, and that transfers create obligations that are proportional, ongoing, and verifiable.

PART III The Philosophical Foundation

A Principle Recognised Everywhere

The obligation to share the value extracted from a resource that belongs to others is not a new idea. It is one of the most consistently applied principles in global economic and legal history — recognised across every major legal tradition, every continent, and every form of government.

Norway — the sovereign wealth model

Norway's Government Pension Fund Global was built on a single principle: oil companies extract Norwegian oil and pay royalties into a national fund managed for the benefit of all Norwegian citizens. When AI extracts the economic value of human labour, the same structure applies.

Brazil — the community impact model

Brazil's CFEM law requires mining companies to pay royalties weighted toward communities most directly affected by extraction. ODU applies this logic directly: the workers whose specific labour is replaced by a specific AI deployment receive the greatest share of the return.

India — the District Mineral Foundation

Indian law mandates that a portion of mining royalties fund the District Mineral Foundation — a body channelling extraction revenue into development for populations surrounding mining operations. AI displacement creates the same dynamic. ODU is the mechanism that ensures the return flows.

Africa — where the principle's violation proves its necessity

For decades, multinational corporations extracted mineral wealth from African nations while local communities received near nothing. The result is one of the most cited examples of how failing to honour the extraction obligation causes generational harm. The workers displaced by AI face a structurally identical situation. Africa's mineral history is ODU's strongest argument.

Universal — patents, traditional knowledge, spectrum

Patent royalties, the Nagoya Protocol (196 nations), and spectrum licensing all operate on the same principle: *if you extract value from something that belongs to others, you pay*. ODU applies this universal principle to the extraction of economic value from human labour.

The Standard the World Already Accepts — And Its Environmental Proof

The ODU Standard does not invent a new moral logic. It applies an existing one — already recognised in international law, environmental governance, and global market standards — to the domain of AI-driven workforce displacement.

The Polluter Pays Principle — Rio Declaration, 1992

Principle 16 of the Rio Declaration states that whoever creates a harm bears its cost — not the public, not the worker, not the state. Now embedded in OECD Guiding Principles and the domestic legislation of over 40 countries, the Polluter Pays Principle is a cornerstone of international economic governance. AI displacement is an externality as real and measurable as pollution. ODU is the mechanism that makes the Polluter Pays Principle operational for AI.

The EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) — 2005–present

The ETS does not prohibit industrial activity — it prices the externality it creates. What began as a contested policy is now the operating assumption of European heavy industry, adopted in equivalent form by China, Canada, South Korea, and California. The Displacement Compensation creates a price — assessed independently — for the externality of AI displacement. The mechanism is structurally identical.

CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project) — 2000–present

CDP launched as a voluntary request for carbon emissions data. In its first year, 235 companies responded. Today, over 23,000 companies representing \$67 trillion in market capitalisation disclose through CDP — with no law requiring it. CDP's trajectory from fringe request to universal market expectation is the closest real-world model for ODU's adoption arc.

Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) — 2015–present

Over 7,000 companies have committed to SBTi emissions targets aligned with the Paris Agreement. Three years ago it was a voluntary differentiator. Today it is increasingly a condition of investment eligibility. The standard did not wait for regulation — it created the expectation ahead of it. The ODU Committed designation is designed to create an identical dynamic.

Payments for Ecosystem Services / REDD+ — 1997–present

Communities that preserve forests receive direct, ongoing payments for the ecosystem services their land provides. The UN's REDD+ programme scaled this globally with over \$10 billion committed. Workers' labour is the ecosystem that produced the company's current productive capacity. When that ecosystem is automated away, its value is captured by the system that replaced it. The

Displacement Compensation is the payment for the services of that ecosystem. PES and REDD+ prove that ongoing payment for past value-generation is a global, growing, and accepted principle.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme — 2003–present

An industry-led voluntary certification scheme — created under moral pressure from the trade in conflict diamonds — now covers 99.8% of the global rough diamond trade. No global treaty mandated it. Consumer pressure and reputational risk created it. The AI displacement moment is reaching the same threshold. Companies that help define the ODU Standard will be better positioned than those on whom it is eventually imposed.

The Montreal Protocol — 1987

The most successful international environmental agreement in history phased out ozone-depleting substances before the harm became irreversible. Companies that switched early gained competitive advantage and shaped the technical standard. ODU's argument to companies considering adoption is identical: the standard is forming now. Those who participate in forming it lead. Those who wait inherit it.

The Obligation Is the Company's, Not Society's

The company made a decision to deploy automated systems. That decision created the displacement. The obligation to address it belongs, in the first instance, to the decision-maker — not to the public, not to government, not to the worker.

PART IV The ODU Platform

What It Is

The ODU Platform is the independent, neutral technology infrastructure through which the ODU Standard is implemented. It is not owned by any company, any labour union, or any government. Its independence is not a feature — it is the condition on which its authority rests.

ODU's governance structure — its legal form, advisory board composition, and long-term independence mechanism — will be documented separately and published prior to the activation of the first ODU Accord. The standard itself is not contingent on any single governance structure; any independent neutral body that administers it must adhere to the Immutable Core defined in Part XIII.

What It Does — Five Core Functions

1. Transition Registration and Public Disclosure — Companies announce AI or robotic transitions before they take effect, creating a public, timestamped record. A company that registers but has not yet committed to a full Accord carries the public status **Announced — Accord Pending**, visible in the ODU registry from the moment of registration.

2. Independent Assessment — The ODU Audit System independently calculates the DE Index and produces a proposed Displacement Compensation. This cannot be adjusted by the company; it can be formally challenged through the process defined in Part IX.

3. Worker Engagement and Vote — Workers are notified, review their individual share and the full Accord terms, and vote through a secure, anonymous, encrypted digital process with mandatory confirmation steps.

4. Compensation Administration and Distribution — All Displacement Compensation payments flow through ODU. The company makes one monthly payment; ODU distributes individual shares via the ODU Distribution Formula, retains its platform fee, and directs 10% to the Transition Fund.

5. Registry and Certification — ODU maintains the permanent public ODU registry — the authoritative record of every Accord, every Disclosed transition, every status change, and every Certificate of AI Displacement Offset issued. The registry cannot be altered or expunged by any party.

ODU Committed — Scope of the Designation

A company carries the **ODU Committed** designation only when **all** qualifying transitions it has registered are covered by active Accords or are formally in assessment. Partial coverage does not confer the designation — it is publicly visible in the registry as incomplete.

What It Is Not

The ODU Platform is not a marketplace, a staffing agency, or a retraining service. It applies a defined standard, administers a defined process, and holds the public record of every voluntary commitment made within it. Its value is in its consistency and its independence.

PART V The Displacement Compensation — Definition and Mechanics

Definition

The Displacement Compensation is an ongoing monthly payment made by a company to the workers it has displaced through AI or robotic deployment. It is paid for the operational lifetime of the automated system — or an agreed contract term, whichever is shorter. It is not a fine, a penalty, or supplementary severance. It is a structured share of the net economic gain.

How It Is Calculated — The DE Index

Each company receives a **Displacement Effect Index (DE Index)** — independently assessed by the ODU Audit System. It considers: the aggregate annual wage of the displaced worker pool, the AI system's documented efficiency output and operational cost, the expected operational lifetime, and industry benchmarks. A company cannot submit its own efficiency figures without verification against ODU's benchmark database.

The compensation percentage is set by a published, versioned **industry-tier framework** — subject to annual review by an independent advisory panel. Companies and worker representatives may submit evidence to each annual review. The current framework version is published in the ODU Standard Methodology Appendix.

Who Is a Displaced Worker

A displaced worker is any person whose role or contracted function is materially substituted by a qualifying automated system — regardless of employment classification. This includes direct employees, long-term contractors, and agency or staffing-firm workers. The definition is functional: if the automated system performs the work that person previously performed, they are displaced.

A qualifying event is triggered when **five or more workers** are displaced within any rolling **12-month period** — preventing sub-threshold avoidance through sequenced rounds of displacement.

Worker Death and Designated Beneficiary

On a worker's death, their monthly share transfers to their **registered designated beneficiary** for **12 months**, then returns to the active pool. The total pool obligation never decreases due to individual deaths. Workers designate their beneficiary during onboarding.

How It Is Distributed — The ODU Distribution Formula

Salary Pool (70%): Each worker's share proportional to their salary as a percentage of total displaced payroll.

Seniority Pool (30%): Each worker's share proportional to their years of service as a percentage of total years across all displaced workers.

The formula is published, fixed, and auditable. In homogeneous workforces it produces near-equal distributions. In mixed workforces it reflects the real economic loss of each individual.

How Long It Runs — Function-Based Obligation

The obligation is attached to the **function** performed by the automated system — not to a specific vendor, hardware generation, or software version. Three rules govern changes:

Patch, update, or hardware refresh: The same Accord continues. Updating the same functional system is not a new deployment.

Vendor change for the same function: If a company switches vendors but the automated system continues to perform the same displaced function, the existing Accord continues. The obligation follows the function, not the supplier.

Genuine retirement: If the automated system is retired and the displaced function is no longer performed by any automated system, the Accord reaches Completed status. A company cannot claim retirement while the same function continues to be automated by any means.

PART VI The ODU Standard in Practice — A Step-by-Step Example

Scenario: Meridian Logistics deploys 12 autonomous picking systems replacing 240 warehouse workers. Pre-automation annual wages: \$9.6M. System cost: \$480,000 total, \$220,000/year operating cost, 15-year operational lifetime.

Company Side

Step 1 — Transition Registration: Meridian submits a transition registration on the ODU Platform — timestamped, immediately public record.

Step 2 — DE Index Assessment: The ODU Audit System calculates: net annual efficiency gain \$9.38M/year → ODU Displacement Compensation $\kappa = 20\%$ (DE Index floor) = \$1.876M/year = \$156,300/month. Meridian receives the full breakdown and can formally challenge it.

Step 3 — Review and Response: Meridian reviews the proposed ODU Accord — monthly Displacement Compensation, distribution formula, 15-year term, public accountability obligations. Meridian accepts.

Step 4 — Accord Activation and Certification: Meridian countersigns the ODU Accord. Status: **Active**. ODU issues a serialised Certificate of AI Displacement Offset. Meridian carries the ODU Committed designation.

Step 5 — Ongoing Payments and Public Record: Every month, Meridian makes one voluntary payment of \$156,300 to ODU. If Meridian ever misses a payment, Accord status updates to **Lapsed** publicly. Meridian's ODU record is permanent.

Worker Side

Step 1 — Notification: All 240 workers receive a notification from ODU before any deployment takes place.

Step 2 — Individual Accord View: Each worker sees their personalised monthly share based on the Distribution Formula. A worker earning \$45,000/year with 8 years of service might see \$520/month. A senior worker earning \$72,000/year with 18 years might see \$890/month. Workers are informed clearly: this is a voluntary framework — payments continue for as long as the company honours its commitment. It is not a guaranteed financial instrument.

Step 3 — Worker Vote: Workers vote via secure, anonymous, encrypted digital ballot with mandatory triple-confirmation. 172 of 240 vote to accept (71.7% — above the 65% threshold). The Accord proceeds. Workers who declined are bound by the majority outcome but receive their share equally.

Step 4 — Monthly Income: Each worker receives their individual share directly from ODU — not from Meridian.

Step 5 — Transition Fund Access: Workers in the Meridian Accord are automatically enrolled in ODU Transition Fund access — retraining, skills certifications, and transition support services funded by 10% of Meridian's Displacement Compensation.

PART VII The Standard Defined

What ODU Committed Means

A company that is **ODU Committed** has made the following voluntary commitments, publicly recorded on the ODU Platform. The designation applies only when **all** qualifying transitions the company has registered are covered by active Accords or are formally in the assessment process. Partial coverage does not confer the designation.

- 1. Transparency before displacement.** Any AI or robotic transition affecting five or more workers — or an aggregate of five or more within any rolling 12-month period — will be announced on the ODU Platform before it takes effect.
- 2. Independent assessment.** The economic impact is assessed independently by the ODU Audit System. The DE Index and the compensation percentage applied are published with full methodology.
- 3. A fair Displacement Compensation.** Determined by the ODU Standard's industry-tier methodology. The company may formally challenge through Part IX process but may not substitute its own calculation.
- 4. Worker vote.** Affected workers vote through a secure, anonymous, encrypted digital ballot with mandatory triple-confirmation. A minimum of 65% acceptance is required. Workers without digital access are provided a supervised alternative.
- 5. ODU-managed distribution.** All Displacement Compensation payments flow through ODU directly to each worker's account via the ODU Distribution Formula. No payment passes through the company.
- 6. Public accountability.** Every Accord and its status — Announced, Active, Lapsed, Cancelled, or Completed — is permanently listed in the public ODU registry. The record never disappears.
- 7. Certification.** Upon activation, the company receives a serialised Certificate of AI Displacement Offset. A company with all qualifying transitions covered by live Accords holds **Displacement Neutral** status.

The Five Principles of the ODU Standard

I. The Transfer Creates an Obligation

When automated systems replace human labour and generate economic gains that previously flowed to those workers, a portion of those gains belongs to the workers for the duration of the system's productive life.

II. The Obligation Must Be Independent

No company can fairly calculate its own displacement obligation. Independence — of assessment, of distribution, of payment — is not a feature of the ODU Standard. It is the standard.

III. The Measure Is the Lifetime of the System

Displacement is not a moment. The obligation lasts as long as the function that displaced the workers continues to be automated. When the automated function is genuinely retired, the obligation ends.

IV. Workers Have a Voice

Workers must vote to accept the Accord through a secure, anonymous, independently administered process before it takes effect. No Accord is valid without a genuine worker vote meeting the 65% threshold. Workers are participants — not passive recipients of a corporate decision.

V. The Standard Serves Both Sides

A company that operates under it gains a verified record of ethical conduct, regulatory preparedness, and the right to carry the ODU Committed designation. Workers receive financial security and access to transition support. The standard exists for both.

PART VIII **Accountability Through Transparency**

The ODU Standard is voluntary. Companies that adopt it do so because they believe in the obligation it represents — or because they understand that the reputational consequences of not doing so are real and growing. There is no lien. No escrow. No early termination penalty. No legal enforcement of any kind.

This is not a weakness. It is a deliberate architectural choice. Every standard that has achieved global reach — B Corp certification, Fair Trade, Organic, ISO quality frameworks — operates through the same mechanism: **public verifiability, not legal compulsion.**

The Public ODU Registry

Every ODU Accord is permanently listed in the public ODU registry the moment it is activated — accessible to anyone. Each Accord displays: company name, transition details, current status, Certificate of AI Displacement Offset, and a full history of all previous Accords including any that have lapsed. There is no deletion. There is no expiry.

Accord Statuses

- Announced** Transition registered and publicly visible in the ODU registry. Accord assessment in progress or not yet initiated. Full status: Announced — Accord Pending.
- Active** Payments current. Certificate valid. ODU Committed designation active.
- Lapsed** Payment missed. ODU Committed designation suspended. Certificate marked inactive. Status updated publicly within 48 hours. This is a voluntary framework — if a company lapses, payments stop. ODU's response is immediate public status update and active reinstatement pursuit, not financial bridge payments.
- Cancelled** Company formally withdrew. Reasons recorded. Certificate permanently marked Cancelled.
- Completed** Full term honoured. Every payment made. Certificate permanently marked Completed — a verified record of full commitment.

Informed Consent

Workers must be clearly informed before they vote that an ODU Accord operates as a voluntary framework in good faith — not as a guaranteed financial instrument. If the company lapses, payments stop. ODU's response is immediate public status update and active reinstatement pursuit; there is no bridge fund and no payment guarantee from ODU. This must be stated explicitly in every worker notification, and workers must acknowledge it as part of the voting process.

“Workers accepting an ODU Accord accept this as a voluntary framework operating in good faith, not a guaranteed financial instrument.”

PART IX The ODU Audit System

Qualifying Systems

The ODU Standard applies to automated systems that meet both of the following criteria:

(a) System type: AI software agents — including autonomous AI, large language model-based agents, and robotic process automation operating without continuous human instruction — and autonomous robotic systems, including humanoid robots and industrial robotic systems, whether physical or software-based.

(b) Deployment timing and function: The system is newly deployed after the ODU Standard's effective date, and it directly substitutes for a human worker role that existed within the previous 36 months. A system that augments or assists workers without replacing their function does not qualify. A system that resumes a previously automated function qualifies from the date of redeployment.

Borderline cases are referred to the ODU Audit System for a formal scoping determination, which is published in the public registry alongside the Accord record.

Multi-Agent Audit Architecture

The ODU Standard is only as credible as its assessment methodology. ODU's audit infrastructure is built on a multi-agent AI architecture: multiple independent analytical agents assess the economic impact of every Accord simultaneously and without access to each other's outputs. Their findings are then cross-examined by a verification layer that identifies discrepancies and produces a final DE Index with a documented confidence score and full audit trail.

The Audit System is supported by a continuously updated benchmark database of AI and robotic system capabilities across industries. A company cannot claim its automated system is 40% as productive as industry benchmarks show and expect that discrepancy to survive audit.

The DE Index — the output of this process — becomes the company's public displacement impact score, associated with the ODU Committed designation. It is the foundation of every Accord.

Formal Challenge Process

A company that disputes its DE Index result may initiate a formal challenge within **30 days** of receiving the assessment. The challenge is reviewed by an independent panel — composed of

individuals with no employment or financial relationship with ODU — which adjudicates within **60 days** of submission.

No Accord is activated during an active challenge period. If the company cannot delay the AI deployment, the proposed Displacement Compensation is paid into **escrow** for the duration of the challenge — held by the independent panel administrator and released in full to workers if the challenge is unsuccessful, or returned in part to the company if the panel upholds a lower assessment.

All challenges, outcomes, and panel determinations are published in the public ODU registry. A company may not initiate more than one challenge per Accord.

PART X **The Economic Case for Companies**

The efficiency gain remains. Under the ODU Standard, the company retains the overwhelming majority of efficiency gains from AI deployment. The Displacement Compensation is a share of the net gain — not a reversal of it.

Regulatory preparedness. AI displacement regulation is coming. Companies operating voluntarily under the ODU Standard will not be caught unprepared when those frameworks arrive.

Talent and market positioning. The ODU Committed designation signals to future employees, customers, and investors that the company operates ethically when its decisions affect people's livelihoods.

Competitive dynamics. As more companies adopt the standard, pressure builds on those that do not. The standard creates its own adoption momentum.

PART XI **The Language of the Standard**

Every successful global standard requires a shared vocabulary. The environmental movement gave the world “carbon footprint,” “carbon offset,” and “carbon neutral.” The ODU Standard introduces the equivalent for AI-driven workforce displacement.

Term	Definition
AI Displacement Footprint	The total measurable economic impact of a company's AI and robotic deployments on its displaced workforce.
AI Displacement Offset	Completing an ODU Accord for a specific transition, compensating the displaced workforce through a Displacement Compensation for the system's lifetime.

Term	Definition
AI Displacement Credit	A transferable unit representing a verified AI Displacement Offset — issued per ODU Accord.
AI Displacement Audit	The independent assessment by the ODU Audit System to calculate the DE Index and proposed Displacement Compensation.
AI Displacement Disclosure	Public reporting of a company's AI Displacement Footprint.
Displacement Neutral	Active ODU Accords covering every AI or robotic transition the company has made.
Zero Displacement	No unaddressed AI or robotic workforce transitions — full coverage.
Displacement Positive	Contributing to the ODU Transition Fund beyond mandatory obligations.

PART XII The Global Vision

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission published *Our Common Future* — a document that defined “sustainable development” for the first time in precise terms. It was not law. No government enforced it. Thirty-five years later, carbon neutrality is a mandatory reporting requirement for publicly listed companies in dozens of jurisdictions.

The ODU Standard follows the same arc: a real, measurable harm; an absence of existing frameworks; a clear ethical argument; a mechanism that works for both sides; and a name.

ODU does not claim to be the permanent governing body of a global standard. The role of a pioneer is to define the terrain, not to own it forever. The standard, once established, should be developed and ultimately governed by a broader coalition — governments, labour organisations, AI industry bodies, and civil society.

ODU's ambition is to be to AI displacement what the Brundtland Report was to environmental standards: the document that named the problem precisely, proposed the first viable framework, and made it impossible for the world to continue without an answer.

PART XIII The Immutable Core — Principles for Adoption and Derivation

The ODU Standard is designed to evolve. It will be adopted by governments, adapted by industries, amended by legal systems, and developed by organisations whose understanding of AI displacement

grows beyond what this founding document can anticipate. This is not a risk — it is the intended arc of any standard that achieves global reach.

However, a standard that can be adapted without limit is not a standard — it is a suggestion. The following principles constitute the **Immutable Core** of the ODU Standard. They may not be removed, reversed, or substantively weakened in any derivative framework, national implementation, or industry-specific adoption. They may be augmented. They may not be diminished.

I. The Transfer Principle

Any derivative must acknowledge that AI replacing human workers constitutes an economic transfer that creates a proportional, ongoing financial obligation to those workers. A framework that characterises the Displacement Compensation as voluntary charity rather than a structured obligation of the transfer is not the ODU Standard.

II. The Independence Principle

The calculation of the Displacement Compensation must be conducted independently of the company making the payment. A derivative that allows self-assessment without third-party audit and challenge rights is not the ODU Standard.

III. The Vote Principle

Workers must have a genuine, anonymous, encrypted digital vote before any Accord takes effect — with a triple-confirmation step and irrevocability except for verified technical fault within 24 hours. Workers without digital access must be provided an accessible supervised alternative. A derivative that removes or marginalises the worker vote is not the ODU Standard.

IV. The Ongoing Obligation Principle

The obligation is ongoing for the operational lifetime of the automated system. On a worker's death, their share transfers to their registered beneficiary for 12 months, then returns to the pool at full value — the obligation never decreases. A lump sum satisfies the standard only if independently verified to match or exceed the net present value of the full compensation stream. A derivative that converts ongoing obligation to nominal one-time payment is not the ODU Standard.

V. The Independent Distribution Principle

Payments must pass through an independent intermediary. The displacing company may not distribute shares directly to its own former workers. A derivative in which the company controls distribution is not the ODU Standard.

VI. The Public Record Principle

Every Accord — and all alternative financial agreements, offers, and counter-proposals — must be publicly recorded, permanently accessible, and status-updated in real time. A private or confidential certification process is not the ODU Standard.

VII. The Proportionality Principle

The Displacement Compensation must be a proportional share of the net efficiency gain — calculated using the DE Index as the certified reference benchmark. A derivative whose compensation is set so low as to be economically disconnected from the actual gain is not the ODU Standard.

VIII. The Flexibility Principle

Companies and workers may agree by majority vote on alternative forms of compensation — shares, lump sums, bonuses — provided the alternative is independently verified as equivalent in value to the monetary Displacement Compensation, with the DE Index as the benchmark. After two failed counter-propose rounds, monetary Displacement Compensation applies as default. A derivative permitting alternatives without independent value verification is not the ODU Standard.

IX. The Floor Principle

No derivative may reduce worker protection below the minimum established in this founding document. Any jurisdiction may raise the bar. None may lower it and claim to implement the ODU Standard.

X. The Honesty Principle

Any organisation claiming to implement the ODU Standard must accurately represent what they have implemented and how it differs from this document. Derivatives must be clearly labelled: 'ODU Standard — [Jurisdiction] Implementation, with the following departures: [list].' Transparency about deviation is itself a requirement of the standard.

CLOSING - THE STANDARD WE PROPOSE

The AI revolution is not slowing. The displacement it causes is not a side effect — it is a structural outcome of how AI creates economic value.

We propose the following:

That the economic gains of AI deployment create a proportional, ongoing obligation to the workers whose displacement made those gains possible.

That this obligation is best addressed through the Displacement Compensation — an independently calculated, worker-voted monthly payment that flows for the productive lifetime of the system.

That the body calculating, administering, and publicly recording this obligation must be independent of both the company and the workers — a neutral standard body whose integrity is its only product.

That this standard, once established, should spread — as all necessary standards spread — until it becomes not a differentiator but an assumption.

We do not claim to have every answer. We claim to have the right question, at the right time, with the first serious attempt at a framework worthy of the problem.

This is the ODU Standard.

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ODU — Organic Deferred Unemployment · The new ethical standard for the age of AI displacement