

Deliverable 2.2: ACTRIS Ethical Guidelines

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1. Introduction

This document describes the main principles of ethics to be applied within the ACTRIS activities. They shall be acknowledged and followed by all persons affiliated to ACTRIS and should be supported by all participating institutions. These guidelines do not exclude other ethical issues (e.g. related to professional and scientific responsibility, governance, social and environmental responsibility and law abiding) brought up by the ACTRIS ERIC and its contractual ACTRIS partners, or by the Ethical Advisory Board of the ACTRIS ERIC.

In general, everyone in ACTRIS should work in a socially ethical way keeping the integrity and fairness, and maintaining high level of trust and respect among the people working in ACTRIS and with the users and other stakeholders. One should always take into account that the mission of ACTRIS is to provide effective access for a wide user community to its resources and services, in order to facilitate high-quality Earth system research, to increase the excellence in Earth system research, and to provide information and knowledge on developing sustainable solutions to societal challenges.

2. Managing ethical issues

Following the principle of subsidiarity, ACTRIS activities-related misconducts are handled locally according to the local regulations. However, the information of the misconducts and the local process on the matters involving staff within the ACTRIS activities should also be transferred to the Ethical Advisory Board.

The ACTRIS Ethical Advisory Board shall advise both the ACTRIS ERIC, its advisory bodies, and its contractual ACTRIS partners in all ethical issues. Anyone from these organisations can contact the Director General or the members or observers of the General Assembly and raise an ethical issue to be discussed and handled by the Ethical Advisory Board.

The Ethical Advisory Board shall include managerial, administrative and legal as well as scientific expertise.

The Ethical Advisory Board gives reports to the General Assembly of the ACTRIS ERIC.

Before ACTRIS ERIC is established and the Ethical Advisory Board is set up an Ethics Working Group shall be established to discuss ethical issues and to follow the work on all documents related to these guidelines so that if needed these guidelines can be updated accordingly.

3. Conflict of interest

Since ACTRIS involves several organisations and countries, conflicts of interest may arise if the same organisations or their staff are present in several places in the ACTRIS governance or operations.

A conflict of interest may arise when a person or a legal entity is involved in multiple activities related to, for example financial, scientific, management, or other aspects, or a person has a secondary occupation, which may affect his/her motivation and personal or organisational interest. All persons involved in the

ACTRIS activities should conduct their affairs so as to avoid or minimize conflicts of interest. However, if a conflict of interest cannot be avoided, this person should declare it openly and disqualify him/herself if needed. Disqualifying oneself ensures that decisions are not influenced by competing interests and will solely be made for the benefit of ACTRIS. When a person is disqualified, he/she shall not participate in the consideration of a matter or be present during such consideration.

3.1. Personal conflict of interest

Persons involved in the ACTRIS activities should disqualify him/herself if at least one of the following grounds of disqualification is present:

- a close person of the person involved in ACTRIS is a party to the matter that is discussed in relation to a decision;
- the person involved in ACTRIS or a close person to him/her assists or represents a party or a person on a matter from which they are due to gain specific benefit or suffer specific loss from;
- a specific benefit or a specific loss from the decision on the matter is foreseen for the person involved in ACTRIS or a close person to him/her; or
- the person's impartiality is compromised for any other reason.

A close person is defined as a family member (for example a spouse, a child, a sibling, a parent, a grandparent or otherwise especially close person to the individual involved in ACTRIS), a family member of the spouse of the individual involved in ACTRIS and other similarly close persons to the individual involved in ACTRIS (for example a previous spouse of the employee and a comparable half relative). A spouse is defined as a partner in wedlock, a domestic partner or a partner in a registered partnership.

3.2. Financial conflict of interest

ACTRIS ERIC and its contractual ACTRIS partners are expected to conduct ethically their financial management.

A financial interest is in general anything of monetary value received or held by a person or a close person, whether or not the value is easily ascertainable. The financial interest includes, but is not limited to, salary or other payments for services. A financial interest becomes significant when the interest appears to be related to the person's institutional responsibilities. Persons should therefore avoid being part of decisions in case their financial interests are influenced by the outcome of the decision.

Sponsoring by commercial companies must not influence any purchase decisions nor any scientific content. This should be clearly communicated to possible sponsors. In publications supported by private companies or by foundations with an ideological agenda, or arising from the activities funded by such sources, this sponsorship must be clearly declared.

3.3. Conflict of interest at the institutional level

ACTRIS is a complex and large research infrastructure with a governance structure that involves many organisations and thus multiple interests may arise at an organizational level. A person should disqualify him/herself concerning duties within other organizations at least in the following situations:

- if a member of the governing bodies in the ACTRIS ERIC, for example the General Assembly, represents a scientific organisation that is in a contractual relationship with the ACTRIS ERIC and a contractual issue with this organisation is under discussion in the governing body; or
- if a member of the governing bodies of the ACTRIS ERIC or a person within ACTRIS or a close person is a member of the board, supervisory board or a corresponding organ of, or the managing director or in a comparable position in, a corporation, foundation, state enterprise or institution that is competing with ACTRIS or that is due to gain specific benefit or suffer specific loss from the decision under discussion.

4. Ethical principles in ACTRIS activities

4.1. Data production

ACTRIS shall follow the rules of good scientific practice in research and data production.

The basic principles of good scientific practice and production of data are:

- highest professional standards in designing and conducting investigations,
- a critical, open-minded approach in conducting research and scholarship,
- frankness and fairness with regard to the contributions of partners, involvement of scientists, and predecessors, and
- integrity at all stages in scientific enquiry, data quality assurance and quality control in particular, avoiding
 - any form of fraud, such as fabricating or falsifying data or records;
 - any form of fraud in analysing data and any form of misleading analysis;
 - piracy or plagiarism;
 - sabotaging the work, records or protocols of other scientists;
 - break of confidence as a reviewer or supervisor, and complicity in such actions by fellow scientists.

Data production procedures and protocols should be written in clear and unambiguous terms. They should include specific details of the aim, materials, methods, time schedules and analytical approaches to be used. It is essential that all participants in the research infrastructure comply with the Data Management Plan where specific procedures are described. Particular attention should be paid to the completeness, integrity and security of the data records and connected metadata.

4.2. Data management

Preserving primary data, managing data in a good and correct way, storing and documenting all relevant data and processing data adequately are of highest priority and should always follow good scientific practice. The technical requirements for ACTRIS are given in the ACTRIS Central Facility concept and National Facility requirement descriptions, and will be further described in the Data Management Plan.

Individual parties of ACTRIS should develop mechanisms, appropriate to their particular task, discipline and situation, for ensuring compliance with good practice for compliance monitoring. Responsibility for compliance monitoring should be assigned to an experienced member of each unit.

4.3. Data access and access to facilities

ACTRIS data policy defines the principles for using ACTRIS data. In order to guarantee fair scientific competition no user should be privileged.

The administration connected to requesting and granting data access or access to ACTRIS facilities shall be kept to a minimum. The users shall be provided with instructions in order to have effective and efficient access.

Users shall provide their data resulting from the available access in accordance with the FAIR principles, including specifications of the data format, and the users should respect ethical principles defined in these guidelines.

4.4. Acknowledging contribution

Users of ACTRIS data or ACTRIS facilities are encouraged to disseminate the results from work done through the provided access in peer-reviewed publications, and they shall acknowledge the contribution and support provided by ACTRIS. In accordance with good scientific practice, users are encouraged to offer co-authorship to those persons working at ACTRIS facilities who have made genuine scientific contributions to their work. Users are encouraged to make their publications available through open access repositories.

The persons and organisations, which have originally generated ACTRIS data or digital tools or produced different levels of ACTRIS data, shall be given appropriate acknowledgement and attribution. Authors of publications shall be given acknowledgment in accordance with applicable copyright legislation and scientific custom.

4.5. Use of animals

In accordance with the Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, use of animals shall be conducted according to the following principles:

a) wherever possible, a scientifically satisfactory method or testing strategy not entailing the use of live animals, shall be used;

b) the number of animals used in projects is reduced to a minimum without compromising the objectives of the project; and

c) the refinement of breeding, accommodation and care, and the methods used in procedures, shall eliminate or reduce to the minimum any possible pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm to the animals.

5. Personal data protection

In accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, personal data shall be processed according to the following principles.

Personal data shall be:

(a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency');

(b) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;

(c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation');

(d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay ('accuracy');

(e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed;

(f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality').

Personal data shall be processed on the basis of the consent of the data subject concerned or some other legitimate basis, laid down by law. The basis of data collection and processing shall be clearly stated.

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The European Charter for Researchers The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
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