



Group on Earth Observations  
Biodiversity Observation Network

# Code of Conduct

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for (biodiversity and  
environmental) scientists

May 3, 2023

## Preamble

The guidelines below summarize values and principles regarding how we should work with others, engage with society, and how our work and methods impact life and nature. We encourage all to delve into more detailed guidelines developed by others. We start with three overarching principles, focusing on conduct in relation to people, nature, and scientific practice. Further details are divided into personal behaviours, practices, and publication strategies.

## Overarching Principles: We...

- 1** respect everyone and accept diversity of age, gender, sexuality, race, origin, religion, ancestry and culture, social and economic status, and physical and mental ability. This includes promoting and facilitating equity in all transactions.
- 2** respect nature by practicing and promoting sustainable use of natural resources and minimising disturbance of living organisms and natural environments.
- 3** conduct our science with honesty and transparency of evidence, data, knowledge, know-how and/or ideas (Montreal Statement on Research Integrity 2013, Resnik and Shamoo, 2011).

## Behaviours: We...

- 1** take time to be mindful, considerate, and supportive of others and their circumstances.
- 2** respect confidentiality, cultural and indigenous sensitivities, and do not impose ideologies (e.g., political, religious) on others.

- 3 refrain and actively oppose discrimination, harassment, bullying, and misuse of power.
- 4 respect the spirit and letter of laws, regulations, agreements, and institutional requirements where these are appropriately designed for the benefit of a broader society, and otherwise work with these institutions for change.
- 5 practice integrity, honesty, impartiality, objectivity, and intellectual rigour in our work.
- 6 are accountable for our research, including mistakes and oversights in professional practice, publications, peer review, data collection and interpretation.
- 7 oppose the spread of misinformation and misleading presentation of evidence, such as selective reporting to conceal evidence of governmental, industrial, scientific, social and/or environmental issues that society should be aware of.
- 8 declare conflicts of interest, both actual and potential, that may be perceived to influence our research and its interpretation.
- 9 support the profession and colleagues, such as by contributing as an editor and peer reviewer, organising meetings, mentoring, educating, and sponsoring as opportunities arise, and by supporting those disadvantaged by breaches of these guidelines.
- 10 acknowledge our backgrounds and limitations of expertise in all discussions and applications.
- 11 foster the ideals of this Code of Conduct in others, including training and mentoring staff and students.

## Practices: We...

- 1** consider the consequences our behaviour and work have on people and nature, including wildlife, climate change, and the environment, and minimize detrimental impacts.
- 2** minimise health and safety risks to ourselves, other people, and nature.
- 3** prioritize research methods and practices that have low impact regarding the well-being of people and nature, in the laboratory and natural environment.
- 4** obtain permission from landowners, local communities, Indigenous People, and any other relevant authorities in any fieldwork.
- 5** make it clear that people are free to refuse to participate in particular research. This includes explaining health and safety risks, and the effects the research may have on participants, other people, and the environment.
- 6** avoid spreading species, including microbial pathogens, beyond their natural ranges.
- 7** deposit physical samples, including specimens, in herbaria, museums, or other appropriate national archives with rigorous metadata and all appropriate permits so they are maximally accessible to other users.

## Publications: We...

- 1** publish research findings and supporting primary data in an accurate, timely manner to contribute to scientific knowledge, and enable transparency, reproducibility, and replicability of the work.
- 2** acknowledge people who have helped our research, including funding sources, and cite prior work and ideas which our work incorporates.
- 3** respect the intellectual and material property of others. Where we use data from third parties, we seek their permission to use and release data as appropriate.
- 4** respect the sensitivity of data that may enable identification of individual people, or aid criminal or unethical behaviour, such as collection of threatened species, spread of pests, or infringe others patent or copyrights.
- 5** support publication of ethical scientific research, as an editor or reviewer, regardless of whether it conflicts with our beliefs or interests, or those of our employers or group consensus.
- 6** never fabricate or falsify research findings, plagiarise the work of others, or condone such misconduct by others.
- 7** follow scholarly publishing guidelines for authorship and acknowledgements in scientific research papers (e.g., the “Vancouver Guidelines” Anon. 2019a; Parker and Berman, 1998; CASRAI, 2021).

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