



Scientific Center of Innovative Research Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

1. Purpose and scope

The Scientific Center of Innovative Research (SCIR) establishes this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to safeguard research integrity, editorial independence, and responsible governance across all SCIR activities, including scholarly publishing, research and analytical projects, education, and public communications. The Code defines shared standards for everyone who contributes to SCIR outputs, including management, staff, editors, reviewers, authors, contractors, partners, and other contributors. The Code applies to content published on SCIR websites and journal subdomains, to project deliverables, to datasets and analytics, and to public statements made on behalf of SCIR. The Code is designed to be operational and enforceable, meaning that ethical expectations are paired with clear responsibilities, procedures, and accountability mechanisms. The Code is interpreted alongside SCIR policies on fact-checking, data governance, conflicts of interest, and corrections.

2. Normative basis and alignment

This Code is aligned with established international standards for publication ethics and transparency in scholarly publishing, including COPE Core Practices and the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing. It also reflects widely used guidance on authorship, contributorship, disclosure, and editorial responsibilities, including ICMJE Recommendations and relevant WAME statements on conflicts of interest and journal ethics policies. For personal data, human-derived data, and participant related materials, the Code is implemented in a manner consistent with the GDPR principles of lawful processing, fairness, transparency, and data minimisation. For responsible use of artificial intelligence tools in editorial and analytical workflows, SCIR follows a risk based approach and takes account of the EU AI Act as an emerging regulatory framework relevant to AI assisted processes. SCIR also supports the ethos of responsible publishing in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN SDG Publishers Compact action points.



3. Core ethical principles

SCIR adopts the following principles as the foundation for all decisions and actions.

1. **Integrity and honesty:** SCIR communicates evidence accurately, avoids deception, and corrects errors transparently.
2. **Independence and fairness:** Editorial and analytical decisions are made without undue influence and are based on relevant quality criteria.
3. **Transparency and accountability:** Processes, roles, and decisions are documented to allow scrutiny and learning.
4. **Respect for persons and communities:** SCIR protects dignity, privacy, and safety, especially when working with human-derived data.
5. **Non-discrimination and equal opportunity:** SCIR ensures respectful treatment and equitable access to participation and recognition.
6. **Scientific rigour and reproducibility:** Methods, data provenance, and limitations are disclosed to the extent compatible with legal and ethical constraints.
7. **Responsible innovation:** Digital and AI tools may be used, but never as a substitute for human accountability for factual accuracy and ethical compliance.

4. Roles and responsibilities

SCIR assigns ethical accountability to specific functions to ensure consistent implementation.

- **Management** ensures that resources, training, and governance structures are in place to enforce the Code.
- **Editors and editorial boards** are responsible for independent editorial decisions, transparent peer review policies, and ethical handling of submissions and corrections.
- **Authors and contributors** are responsible for originality, accurate reporting, appropriate attribution, and full disclosure of relevant interests and funding.
- **Reviewers and experts** are responsible for confidentiality, constructive assessment, and disclosure of conflicts that could bias evaluation.



- **Data owners and data stewards** ensure lawful access, data quality controls, de-identification where required, and retention rules consistent with the purpose of processing.
- **Communications staff and spokespersons** ensure that public statements meet SCIR fact-checking thresholds, especially when communicating numbers, rankings, or sensitive statuses.

5. Editorial independence and quality assurance

SCIR safeguards editorial independence as a prerequisite for trust in scholarly communication. Editorial decisions must not be determined by commercial considerations, institutional pressure, partner preferences, or personal relationships. Journals and publishing units must maintain transparent information about ownership, governance, editorial leadership, peer review approach, fees where relevant, and correction practices in line with recognized transparency principles. When SCIR provides analytics, ratings, or indices, SCIR documents methodological rules, data provenance, and limitations sufficient to support responsible interpretation. Where risks are high, SCIR uses second line review or independent QA checks to reduce errors and bias.

6. Research integrity, originality, and responsible authorship

SCIR promotes research integrity across publishing and projects. Plagiarism, fabricated data, falsified results, inappropriate image manipulation, and misrepresentation of methods are prohibited. Authorship must reflect substantial intellectual contribution and accountability, and contributorship should be disclosed where appropriate to ensure transparency of roles. SCIR expects accurate citation practices and prohibits citation manipulation. SCIR also expects responsible reporting of uncertainty and limitations, particularly when results are communicated to policy audiences or the public.

7. Conflicts of interest and competing interests

SCIR requires proactive disclosure and management of conflicts of interest, including financial and non-financial interests that could reasonably be perceived to influence judgement. Conflicts must be disclosed by authors, reviewers, editors, and decision makers, and must be managed through transparent procedures such as recusal, reassignment, independent review, or additional oversight. SCIR applies the same principle to partnerships and funded projects, ensuring that



funders and partners do not control conclusions or editorial outcomes. When SCIR staff or editors submit work to SCIR venues, enhanced safeguards must be applied to prevent biased decision making.

8. Peer review ethics and confidentiality

SCIR treats peer review as a structured ethical process requiring confidentiality, impartiality, and respectful communication. Reviewers must not use privileged information for personal advantage, must identify relevant conflicts promptly, and must provide evidence based feedback. Editors must ensure that peer review is fit for purpose, that reviewer selection is appropriate, and that decisions are justified and documented. Appeals and complaints must be handled through a defined process that protects fairness for all parties.

9. Data ethics, human-derived data, and privacy

SCIR processes data according to the principles of lawful basis, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity, and confidentiality. Where SCIR works with human-derived data, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, audio or video recordings, or transcripts, SCIR requires an appropriate lawful basis and documented participant information consistent with the context. SCIR applies de-identification, pseudonymisation, and disclosure control where needed, and explicitly manages re-identification risk in small samples or unique cases. SCIR does not publish personal data unless it is necessary, lawful, and ethically justified, and it avoids publishing sensitive details that may create risk of harm.

10. Responsible use of AI and automated tools

SCIR may use AI assisted tools for drafting, translation, language editing, screening, and analytics, but SCIR maintains human accountability for the correctness and ethics of all outputs. SCIR prohibits presenting AI generated content as evidence without verification and prohibits fabricated citations, fabricated quotations, or invented attributions. SCIR requires explicit internal documentation when AI tools materially contribute to editorial or analytical decisions, and applies a risk based approach consistent with the logic of the EU AI Act. Where AI is used in workflows that affect persons, reputation, or access, SCIR increases oversight, applies bias checks where feasible, and records decision rationales.



11. Fact-checking, corrections, and retractions

SCIR treats factual accuracy as a continuous obligation. SCIR maintains procedures for verifying critical claims and for correcting errors promptly and transparently. Corrections must be visible, traceable, and proportionate to the impact of the error. For serious breaches of integrity, SCIR may issue expressions of concern, corrections, or retractions consistent with recognized publication ethics practices. SCIR documents the basis for corrective actions and maintains an internal audit trail for learning and prevention.

12. Misconduct allegations, whistleblowing, and due process

SCIR provides a structured pathway for raising concerns about misconduct, unethical behaviour, or serious procedural failures. Allegations are assessed fairly and confidentially, conflicts are managed, and decisions are based on documented evidence. SCIR protects good faith reporting and prohibits retaliation. Where allegations involve journals or published content, SCIR follows recognized principles for handling misconduct allegations and ensuring due process for authors and reviewers.

13. Respectful conduct, non-discrimination, and safe working environment

SCIR expects respectful professional behaviour in all interactions, including editorial communications, peer review, project work, and public engagement. Harassment, bullying, discrimination, and intimidation are prohibited. SCIR supports equal opportunity in participation and recognition, including fair access to editorial roles, reviewer roles, and project collaboration, based on competence and integrity.

14. Sustainability and societal responsibility

SCIR supports responsible publishing and dissemination practices that contribute to societal learning and sustainable development. SCIR encourages content that is relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals and supports publishing practices consistent with the UN SDG Publishers Compact action areas, including responsible communication and engagement with communities. This commitment is implemented without compromising editorial independence or scientific standards.



15. Training, monitoring, and enforcement

SCIR implements this Code through training, documented procedures, and periodic internal review. Non-compliance may result in corrective actions, including revision requests, suspension of roles, rejection of submissions, withdrawal of content, reporting to relevant institutions where appropriate, or termination of collaboration. Enforcement is proportionate, consistent, and documented. SCIR periodically updates this Code to reflect evolving standards, regulatory changes, and operational learning.

References:

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9. European Union. (2024). Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (Artificial Intelligence Act). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj/eng>
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