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Based on Article 69, paragraph 2 of the Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, 186/21 and 40/23) and taking into account the Strategy of the Slovenian Research Council for Ethics, Integrity, and Equal Opportunities in Research (of November 23rd, 2010) and in accordance with Article 69, paragraph 2 of the Act on Scientific Research and Innovation Activities (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, 186/21 and 40/23) and the Regulations of the ZRC SAZU Committee for Ethics, Integrity, and Equal Opportunities in Research (no. P-2022-4), the ZRC SAZU Board of Directors, at the proposal of the director of ZRC SAZU and the ZRC SAZU Committee for Ethics, Integrity, and Equal Opportunities in Research, at its 30th meeting on June 22nd, 2023, adopted the following

## ZRC SAZU CODE OF RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

### Preamble

The ZRC SAZU Code of Research Ethics and Integrity defines the basic principles and standards of conduct related to research ethics and integrity for all ZRC SAZU employees and others that use ZRC SAZU premises, facilities, or resources for research purposes (hereinafter referred to as “persons involved in research activities”).

The ZRC SAZU Committee for Ethics, Integrity, and Equal Opportunities in Research is responsible for drafting, updating, and disseminating the code. The purpose of the code is to maintain high standards of ethics and integrity in research at ZRC SAZU. Research ethics are understood as a respectful and responsible attitude toward research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage, and the environment. Research integrity includes reliability, honesty, and accountability in the design, conduct, publication, and reporting of research. The treatment of violations of the principles of research ethics and integrity set out in this code is governed by specific regulations.

### I. Fundamental principles

As a fundamental framework for the principles and practices in research ethics and integrity at ZRC SAZU, we adopt the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity developed and published by the association All European Academies (ALLEA; Berlin, 2018). It defines the basic principles of researchers’ conduct as:



- Reliability in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in its design, methodology, analysis, and use of resources;
- Fairness in developing, conducting, reviewing, reporting, and communicating research in a transparent, accurate, complete, and impartial manner;
- Respect for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage, and the environment; and
- Accountability for research from conception to publication, for its management and organization, for training, supervision, and mentoring, and for its wider impact.

We build on this framework with internationally recognized principles of research ethics as they apply to specific research areas and disciplines. We strive to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all research participants. We follow ethical and legal principles and best practices in our research work with human subjects regarding informed consent and the collection and processing of personal data.

## **II. Standards of conduct in accordance with the principles of research ethics and integrity**

### 1. General standards of conduct

- 1.1 Research work is based on the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of scientific creation.
- 1.2 Those involved in research activities shall ensure the quality of research, including the careful planning and conduct of research and the objective testing of hypotheses.
- 1.3 Individuals involved in research activities shall develop their professional skills and critically observe and consider previous achievements in their field.
- 1.4 Persons involved in research activities shall be aware of the principles of research ethics and integrity, particularly those that apply to their field of research.
- 1.5 Persons involved in research activities shall reflect on the social relevance and impact of their research.
- 1.6 Communication and collaboration between persons involved in research activities shall be based on respect, understanding, inclusion, and equal opportunities.
- 1.7 Persons engaged in research activities shall not discriminate against those they come into contact with in the course of their duties and research activities on the grounds of ethnic origin, nationality, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, religion, political or other opinion, property, birth, education, social status, various handicaps, social or regional origin, or any other personal circumstance.

### 2. Research integrity



2.1 Authorship of research publications with several authors is based on a significant contribution to the research design, the collection of essential data, or the analysis or interpretation of the findings. The mere performance of research work or affiliation with a research group without a significant contribution to the content of the published work is not sufficient to list a person as an author. The final version of the text and the order of authors must be approved by all authors.

2.2 All research contributions are acknowledged and properly cited by the persons involved in the research activity, and the findings that have influenced their research are cited in their publications. This applies to the contributions and findings of others as well as to their own previous contributions and findings.

2.3 Those involved in research activities shall report honestly on the findings of their research. They shall not present falsified or fabricated data. They shall document their research and report the findings in a manner consistent with professional standards so that they can be verified and reproduced if necessary. They shall also not allow funders to compromise independence in the research process.

2.4 Persons involved in research activities shall not declare in their presentation or other documents any competences that they do not possess.

2.5 Persons involved in research activities are obliged to communicate with the professional community, the public, and the media in a non-misleading manner. In doing so, they shall endeavor to separate professional and personal opinions.

2.6 When publishing research findings, authors shall disclose conflicts of interest and financial or other support for the research or the publication of the findings.

2.7 Persons involved in research activities also fulfill their commitment to the research community by participating in peer reviews, assessments, or evaluations to the best of their knowledge and belief. In doing so, they act professionally and honestly and declare potential conflicts of interest.

### 3. Research ethics

3.1 Persons involved in research activities shall comply with legislation, regulations, codes, and internationally recognized ethical rules relevant to their field of research.

3.2 Persons participating in research activities shall identify and appropriately define the potential risks associated with the research when designing and conducting research.

3.3 Persons involved in research activities shall respect and protect the dignity, health, safety, and wellbeing of all persons and communities involved in research. They shall pay particular attention to sensitive issues and vulnerable groups.

3.4 Persons involved in research activities shall be aware that one of the basic principles of research involving human subjects is the informed consent of participants or their guardians to participate in research.

3.5 Persons involved in research activities shall be aware of the legal and ethical requirements for the protection of personal data.



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3.6 Persons involved in research activities shall respect and protect cultural and natural heritage and the environment in their work and act ethically in the study of all living beings.

This code will be published on the internal website of ZRC SAZU and will enter into force on the day following its publication.

Drago Perko

Chairman of the ZRC SAZU Board of Directors