

Guidelines on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice and Preventing Scientific Misconduct at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

FOREWORD

Guided by the recommendations presented by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft / German Research Foundation (DFG), the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) has adopted a set of "Guidelines on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice and Preventing Scientific Misconduct".

The paramount concern of the "Guidelines" is to heighten and to sustain the consciousness of the basic principles of good scientific practice and to convey them, at an early point of time, and to consistently recall them to scientists and young scholars as the self-evident constituent conditions of scientific work. The "Guidelines" are also intended to emphasise that the DIE cannot accept scientific misconduct, because any tolerance of it would undercut public confidence in science and scholarship and destroy the mutual trust of scientists and scholars.

§ 1

Good scientific practice

- (1) Scientific work rests on basic principles valid everywhere and in all scientific disciplines. The paramount principle is honesty towards oneself and towards others. Honesty is at the same time an ethical norm and the basis of the rules of good professional conduct, the details of which differ by discipline; that is, it is the basis of good scientific practice.
- (2) Examples of good scientific practice would include in particular:
 - general principles of scientific work, in particular
 - working with reasonable diligence,
 - carefully documenting results,
 - consistently questioning one's own findings,
 - practising strict honesty with regard to the contributions of partners, competitors, and predecessors;
 - cooperation and leadership responsibility in working groups,
 - mentorship for young scientists and scholars,
 - securing and storing primary data,
 - a regard for scientific publications as the primary medium through which scientists give an account of their work,
 - respect of intellectual property rights,
 - compliance with ethical standards in carrying out surveys.

- (3) Good scientific practice cannot be achieved at the DIE without the active cooperation of all its staff members. The duty to respect and convey the key rules needed for the purpose lies with the DIE's individual scientists and scholars, and in particular with those active as project heads, heads of working groups, advisers, or in any other senior or supervisory functions. The DIE's departments are responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to them in supporting and mentoring young scientists and scholars and in organising day-to-day scientific activities.

§ 2

Scientific misconduct

- (1) Scientific misconduct is regarded as the occurrence, in a scientific context, of grossly negligent violations of ethical norms, conscious misrepresentations, or infringements of the intellectual property rights of others or any other conscious impairment of their research activities. Determinations of such misconduct will be made on a strictly case-by-case basis.
- (2) Scientific misconduct may be seen as given in particular in cases involving
1. misrepresentations based on
 - fabrication of data;
 - falsification of data and sources through e.g.
 - suppression of relevant sources, evidence, or texts,
 - manipulation of sources, (re)presentations, or figures,
 - selection and suppression of undesired findings without disclosure;
 - misrepresentations in a letter of application or an application for support (including misrepresentations on publication organs and publications in press);
 - misrepresentations to selection committees or expert commissions of the scientific performance of applicants;
 2. infringements of intellectual property rights as regards a protected work created by another person or important scientific findings, hypotheses, theories or tenets, or research methods stemming from other persons through
 - unauthorised use involving arrogation of authorship (plagiarism),
 - exploitation of research methods and ideas of others, in particular in connection with an activity as a reviewer (wrongful appropriation of ideas),
 - arrogation of authorship or co-authorship without having provided a scientific contribution of one's own,
 - falsification of content,
 - unauthorised publication or unauthorised provision of access to third parties as long as the work, findings, hypotheses, theoretical content, or research method in question has not been published,
 - claims to co-authorship of another person without that person's consent;

3. impairment of the research activity of others through
 - sabotage of the research activity of others, e.g. through
 - malicious misplacement or theft of books, archival materials, manuscripts, or datasets,
 - deliberately rendering unusable scientifically relevant data carriers,
 - elimination of primary data to the extent that this constitutes a violation of legal provisions or the principles of scientific work acknowledged in the discipline in question,
 - unauthorised destruction or passing on to others of research material.
- (3) Co-responsibility for misconduct may result, inter alia, from active involvement in the misconduct of others, shared knowledge of falsifications by others, co-authorship of publications containing falsifications, and gross violation of supervisory duties.

§ 3

Prevention of scientific misconduct

In order to safeguard good scientific practice and to prevent scientific misconduct in research, the following rules will be observed at the DIE:

1. The principles of scientific work and good scientific practice will be imparted to all staff members. This will include due emphasis of the special significance of honesty and responsibility in science and of the possibility of scientific misconduct with a view to appropriately sensitising the staff members.
2. Collaboration in working groups will be conducted in such a way as to ensure that the findings reached in specialised work-sharing can be reciprocally communicated, subjected to critical discourse, and integrated into a joint knowledge base.
3. Measures will be undertaken to ensure that the DIE's young scientists and scholars receive appropriate support and mentoring.
4. The performance and evaluation criteria applied for promotion, hiring, and allocation of resources will be guided by the principle that quality and originality always have precedence over quantity.
5. The primary data on which publications are based will be stored for ten years, on durable and secured data carriers, in the institution in which they were produced.
6. The principle of strict honesty will be observed with regard to contributions of partners, competitors, and predecessors. Only those who have contributed in essential ways to the research on which a publication is based may be designated as its co-authors.

§ 4

Ombudspersons

- (1) The DIE's plenary spokespersons will function as ombudspersons. For their fellow staff members, these are confidential persons and contact partners, they are authorised to receive allegations and information bearing on scientific misconduct, and they are available as contact persons to all staff members when it comes to questions of good scientific practice.

- (2) The ombudspersons will subject information provided to them to a summary examination of its truth content and its significance, investigate possible motives, and consider possible ways to settle such allegations.

§ 5

Committee

- (1) If the plenary spokespersons are, in individual cases and in compliance with the rules set out above, unable to bring about an amicable settlement of an allegation or a complaint, or if, in their opinion, there is reason to suspect a serious violation of the rules of good scientific practice, they will inform the Institute's executive management and will ask to furnish a board of inquiry which should clear up whether scientific misconduct is in play. The board of inquiry consists of a Department Head of one department and two other researchers, who may not belong to the same department, in which the incident occurred.

§ 4

Procedures in cases of scientific misconduct

- (1) The general procedural principles will include in particular
- that those against whom allegations have been raised will, in every phase of the proceedings, have the opportunity to give evidence bearing on the allegations raised against them;
 - that both an investigator and the accused party will have the right to challenge the investigator's impartiality;
 - that information on the persons involved in such proceedings and the evidence presented will be kept strictly confidential until proof of culpable misconduct has been established;
 - that the events and procedures of individual segments of the overall proceedings will be duly recorded in written form.
- (2) The investigation committee is authorised to obtain the information and evidence it needs to clarify the case in question and, on a case-by-case basis, to call on expert witnesses from the discipline concerned. Freely assessing the evidence presented, the investigation committee will examine whether it is faced with a case of scientific misconduct.
- (3) Suspicious circumstances reported to the ombudspersons by an informant may be presented in the context of the investigation, without having to reveal the informant's identity, unless the informant consented to its disclosure. The accused person will be informed without delay of possibly incriminating facts and evidence. Both the accused person and the informant will be given appropriate opportunity to give evidence on their own behalf; on request, they will be given an oral hearing. Both the accused person and the informant will have the right to designate a person of their confidence as their counsel.
- (4) If the informant's identity is unknown to the accused person, it must be revealed if the accused person would otherwise be unable to defend him- or herself appropriately, in particular because the informant's credibility is an essential element involved in establishing misconduct. In exceptional cases, the informant's identity will not be required to be revealed if the facts and circumstances of the case and the body of evidence speak clearly for themselves.

- (5) The committee will present to the Institute Council (*Institutsrat*) a final report on the findings of its investigation, including a recommendation on how to proceed further in the case. At the same time, it will inform both accused persons and informants on the substantial findings of its investigation.
- (6) Based on the final report and the recommendation of the investigation committee, the Institute Council (*Institutsrat*) will determine whether to terminate the proceedings or whether scientific misconduct has been proved. In the latter case, the Institute Council (*Institutsrat*) will decide on sanctions to be imposed. These may, for instance, include academic sanctions or sanctions provided for under industrial relations law or under civil or penal law. If allegations of scientific misconduct are determined to have been raised wrongfully, the Institute Council (*Institutsrat*) will take measures to ensure that the accused person is fully rehabilitated.

Bonn, 26.03.2010

References:

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft / German Research Council's "*Empfehlungen zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis*" / "Proposals for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice".