



CODE OF ETHICS

**FOR THE PREPARATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECTS
FUNDED BY THE DIGITAL, INNOVATION,
AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT
(DIGIT PROJECT)**

Version 2

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Code of Ethics

for the preparation and implementation of the projects funded by the Digital, Innovation, and Green Technology Project (DIGIT Project)

Code of Ethics Obligation	Ethics Review Procedure
<p>This document is for all applicants and beneficiaries to be fully informed of the goals and protocols related to the ethical principles that apply to their application and project, including the consequences of ethics protocol violation.</p> <p>Every project funded by the DIGIT Project, as well as all service providers and contractors engaged in the projects funded by the DIGIT Project are obligated to respect and implement the World Bank Group Code of Ethics (WBG Code of Ethics (worldbank.org)), as well as the following World Bank Group Environmental and Social Standards (Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) (worldbank.org)):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; – ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions; – ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management; – ESS4 Community Health and Safety; – ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; – ESS8 Cultural Heritage; – ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. <p>The process is aimed at ensuring that all the research and innovation activities under the DIGIT Project comply with applicable national regulations and international laws, as well as with the following core science & research ethical principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honesty: ensure honesty in all forms of scientific communication with colleagues, sponsors, and the public. 2. Objectivity: avoid bias in all aspects of research. 3. Integrity: maintain consistency of thought and action. 4. Carefulness: avoid errors or negligence at all times. 5. Openness: share information about your research and be open to criticism and new ideas. 6. Transparency: disclose all the necessary information needed to evaluate your research. 7. Accountability: be responsible for all concerns related to your research. 8. Intellectual property: avoid plagiarism, give proper credit to all contributions in your research and honor all forms of intellectual property. 9. Confidentiality: protect and safeguard all confidential information recorded in your research. 	<p>The Ethics review procedure applies to every project receiving funding from the DIGIT project. Applicants are required to give careful consideration to the ethical dimensions of their proposed work and must submit a proposal that is "ethics-ready". Emphasizing open science, the DIGIT Project places significant importance on the principle of open access. The beneficiaries under the DIGIT Project are expected to adhere to the commitment of providing unrestricted access to the published outcomes of their research, encompassing peer-reviewed articles and monographs.</p> <p>Furthermore, the DIGIT Project advocates for open access to research data, considering it a fundamental principle. Offering free online access to all such materials is the most efficient means of ensuring that the results of its funded research are readily available, readable, and can serve as a foundation for subsequent research and development.</p> <p>It is also mandatory for the beneficiaries to establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) by providing an e-mail address where complaints, comments and/or suggestions could be sent by the interested public, either groups or individuals. Beneficiaries must report the e-mail addresses of the established GRMs to the DIGIT Project GRMs: for Component 1 to Ministry of Science, Education and Youth (MSEY) at grmdigit@mzom.hr, and for Component 2 to the Croatian Science Foundation (CSF) at grmdigit@hrzz.hr. The email addresses of the GRMs must be published on the beneficiary's website (if applicable). Information on received complaints, comments and suggestions should be documented in a logical framework database. Beneficiaries must report this information to the DIGIT Project GRMs (Component 1: MSEY and Component 2: CSF), including details on the actions taken in response to the feedback received.</p> <p>The grievances related to misconduct on the Code of Ethics will be taken further in the Ethics review procedure that focuses on the following four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard setting through the design and stewardship of ethical policy, practices, decisions, and behavior, while ensuring public confidence; • Outreach and training to strengthen World Bank Group values, foster a culture of respect and integrity, and build bridges between scientific research and practice in ethical development;

10. **Responsible publication:** publish for the sole reason of advancing the knowledge in your field.
11. **Responsible mentoring:** help and mentor other researchers and promote their welfare.
12. **Respect for colleagues:** respect and treat all your colleagues fairly.
13. **Social responsibility:** aim to promote social good through your research.
14. **Non-discrimination:** avoid discrimination in all forms against colleagues.
15. **Competence:** improve your competence and promote the competence of science as a whole.
16. **Legality:** obey all relevant laws and policies.
17. **Animal care:** respect and care for all animal species. Causing pain and discomfort to animals shall be avoided.
18. **Human subjects' protection:** respect human dignity and take special precautions wherever needed.
19. **Effectiveness:** put all efforts to reach set objectives.
20. **Efficiency:** achieve more output with less input.
21. **Economy:** put all due efforts into saving the grant funds.

While creating many opportunities AI raises profound ethical concerns. Therefore, all ethical principles mentioned above need special attention from applicants and beneficiaries while using or developing AI systems in their projects. Also, it is necessary to align with and build upon relevant EU legislation such as the Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689) and corresponding guidelines, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) AI Guiding Principles: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/ai-principles.html>.

Project proposals must be conceptually and content-wise in accordance with ethical principles, and projects must be implemented in accordance with them. In this sense, the applicants must confirm in the application that they are familiar with the ethical principles of this document and must undertake to act in accordance with them. The EU codes of ethics for R&D should also be considered.

During the implementation of procedures for the procurement of works, goods and services, the beneficiaries must inform bidders about the obligation to implement the Code of Ethics, and the bidders must confirm that they accept to implement the same, while sub-contractors will confirm the same to the bidders. During the implementation of the project, contracted entities and sub-contractors are obliged to act in accordance with ethical principles.

- Advice to applicants by sharing ethics expertise and spotting trends - providing counsel on conflicts of interest and compliance-related issues as needed;
- Addressing misconduct by reviewing concerns, recommending actions, and facilitating resolutions.

The provided information is the subject of the Ethics review procedure, which is implemented within the DIGIT Project.

The consequences for ethics protocol violations can include the following:

- Project suspension or termination: Immediate suspension or termination of the project and funding. Also, termination of the beneficiary's Grant Agreement with the contracted parties is included.
- Legal actions: Possible legal actions against the individual or organization responsible.
- Financial penalties: Requirement to return funds received, along with possible fines.
- Reputational damage: Public disclosure of the violation, which may result in reputational harm to the individual or organization.
- Future ineligibility: Barring the individual or organization from applying for future funding under the DIGIT Project.