

Pursuant to Article 20 of the Statute of the Croatian Science Foundation (O-1330-2013), the Board of the Croatian Science Foundation at its 112<sup>th</sup> session held on 26 April 2018 adopted the following

## **CODE OF ETHICS OF THE CROATIAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **Article 1**

- (1) The Code of Ethics (hereinafter: the Code) of the Croatian Science Foundation (hereinafter: the Foundation) contains a set of principles in the area of scientific integrity and scientific ethics that serve as guidelines for professional activities and public actions of all Foundation's employees, members of the Foundation's bodies and boards, evaluators and beneficiaries of the Foundation's funds, as well as other researchers whose work is connected with the Foundation's activities (hereinafter: stakeholders).
- (2) The Code clarifies expected relations based on accountable professional and scientific conduct.
- (3) The Code shall in no way limit any human, intellectual and academic freedoms, but shall support conduct based on scientific integrity, which is the basis of every research activity. The Code is subject to amendments in line with the development of the Foundation's activities.
- (4) The implementation of this Code assumes honest intention and fair judgment. Ignorance or lack of understanding of ethical standards shall not justify unethical behaviour.

### **II. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 2**

- (1) The Code is intended to promote the application of ethical principles and values in science as well as in business and public relations and to establish the procedure in case of violation of the Code's provisions.
- (2) The evaluation of the work and professional competence of all stakeholders shall be based on criteria that are directly applicable to the work performed, professional commitments or pre-defined criteria.
- (3) The Foundation shall support and protect all rights of project leaders that arise from the Foundation's general acts and regulations in force.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

#### **Article 3**

- (1) Words and phrases referring to gender, regardless of whether they have been used in the masculine or feminine gender in the Code, shall be taken to mean both genders.
- (2) The terms used in this Code shall be interpreted in the following manner:
  1. the Foundation's "Bodies" are the Board and the Executive Director;
  2. the Foundation's "Boards" include evaluation panels, permanent and temporary boards and all other boards, committees or organisations that participate, on a permanent or occasional basis, in the evaluation of project proposals or project reports or collaborate with the Foundation in the implementation of individual calls;
  3. "Evaluators" include all experts participating in the evaluation of project proposals, implementation and achieved results of the projects as well as all experts that are involved in the Foundation's activities and the evaluation processes on a permanent or occasional basis;

4. “Researchers” are all persons included in the project proposal or scientific work within a project, such as applicants of the project proposal, project leaders, project collaborators, research group members, supervisors, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers or advisors.

#### IV. EUROPEAN DOCUMENTS

##### Article 4

This Code is based on [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)<sup>1</sup>, which establishes best scientific practice on the principles of scientific integrity, guiding the researchers in their encounters with practical, ethical and intellectual challenges, which include reliability, honesty, respect and accountability.

#### V. UNDERLYING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

##### Article 5

The Foundation shall support the highest standards of scientific integrity, commitment and accountability of scientists that participate in the implementation of projects. This shall pertain to all stages prior to, during and upon completion of project funding, which include, inter alia, submission of the project proposal, project management, prescribed data collection and logging, data processing, writing up and publishing results, referencing, reporting and data storage.

##### Professional Conduct

##### Article 6

Every stakeholder shall be guided by the principle of professionally accountable conduct, which includes responsible, conscientious and timely performance of contractual obligations, pursuant to the Foundation’s documents, as well as ensuring confidentiality and privacy of data revealed to them during the performance of their duties and participation in the Foundation’s activities.

##### Conflict of Interest

##### Article 7

In order to prevent conflict of interest and implement, in an objective and transparent manner, the processes of evaluating project proposals and monitoring funded projects, the Foundation’s Board adopted the Regulation on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest, which is aimed at avoiding collaboration with persons who might be biased during the evaluation process.

##### Respecting Integrity and Dignity

##### Article 8

All stakeholders are to be guided by the principles of respecting equality, integrity and dignity of others ~~and shall, within their jurisdiction,~~ act in the manner that avoids discrimination or preference on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, skin colour, gender, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, financial situation, trade union membership, education, social position, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, gender identity, expression or sexual orientation or any other basis.

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<sup>1</sup> (The European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, Revised Edition (Berlin, 2017), *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*, (23 April 2018).

## VI. PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Article 9

- (1) Apart from abiding by fundamental ethical principles, every stakeholder shall ensure accurate, precise, transparent and timely performance of the part of the work entrusted to them.
- (2) The stakeholders shall not abuse their personal authority or the authority of other persons or of the Foundation for their personal gain nor shall they allow their personal interests to affect their ethical and professional performance of the work entrusted to them.
- (3) The actions of the Foundation's employees and members of its bodies and boards that are not directly connected with the Foundation's activities shall not conflict with their professional commitments in the Foundation nor shall they damage the Foundation's reputation.
- (4) The stakeholders shall follow the acts and bylaws of the Republic of Croatia, the Statute and other general acts of the Foundation, applying the rules of The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers<sup>2</sup>, especially when including or employing collaborators into project implementation.
- (5) The researchers are to act in accordance with the principles of transparency and efficient management of funds and shall provide, where applicable, access to all project documentation, including the project's original financial documents, to the Foundation's employees or its authorised representatives.
- (6) The Foundation shall manage all financial resources in accordance with its legal commitments. For the sake of transparency of all procedures, the Foundation's general acts, calls for proposals and the list of funded projects containing fundamental data shall be published on the Foundation's website.

### Public Appearances

#### Article 10

- (1) When involved in any form of public appearance or activity in which they represent the Foundation, the stakeholders shall express the viewpoints of the Foundation pursuant to the general acts, granted powers, expertise and this Code. The stakeholders are to obtain prior consent of the Foundation's Head for all public appearances in which they will represent the Foundation.
- (2) When they are involved in public appearances in which they do not represent the Foundation, the stakeholders shall not reveal any data which they became aware of through their participation in the Foundation's activities.
- (3) When they are involved in public appearances in which they do not represent the Foundation, and which are not related to the Foundation's scope of work, the employees are not required to ~~obtain consent of the Foundation's Head to appear in the media~~, but are required to pay attention to the Foundation's and their personal reputation when doing so.

### Data Privacy and Confidentiality

#### Article 11

- (1) The data that was revealed to the stakeholders during the performance of their duties and their participation in the Foundation's activities shall be treated by the stakeholders as trade secret.

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission, (Brussels, 2015), *The European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* (23. April 2018).

- (2) Data required for the evaluation of project proposals or project implementation may be made available to persons involved in the expert evaluation, whereby all persons involved in the process shall follow the principles of data privacy and confidentiality.
- (3) The obligation of protecting data privacy and confidentiality shall not relate to the general acts and decisions adopted and published by the Board nor to the scientific results and effects of the implemented projects following their publication.

### Prohibition of Acquiring Material or Other Gain

#### Article 12

The stakeholders shall not abuse their powers or position to acquire material or other gain for themselves or another natural or legal person. Every acquisition of material or other gain for themselves or another natural or legal person deriving from the abuse of power or position shall be considered conflict of interest.

### Mutual Relations

#### Article 13

Stakeholders' mutual relations, i.e. all forms of communication, shall be based on mutual respect, trust, collaboration, accountability and transparency and shall not include any form of harassment that is aimed at or constitutes a violation of personal dignity and causes fear or hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

## VII. ACCOUNTABLE SCIENTIFIC CONDUCT

#### Article 14

- (1) The Foundation shall support scientific work that is in line with the highest ethical principles. This shall include scientific integrity, collegiality, protection of respondents, protection and proper care of trial animals, social accountability and public availability of research results.
- (2) The Foundation expects the research to be conducted in a socially accountable manner, which implies following ecological norms and disposing toxic and other waste generated during the research pursuant to the regulations of the Republic of Croatia.
- (3) The researchers need to be acquainted with all ethical issues related to the research within the project.
- (4) The applicant of a project proposal, or the project leader, shall be held accountable for all unresolved ethical issues.
- (5) If the projects involve working with human material, working with trial animals, working with protected plant, animal or fungal species and working with respondents, the project leaders shall obtain certifications from the competent authorities pursuant to national and European regulations governing the issue at hand and follow them in a consistent manner.
- (6) If, at any point during the implementation of the project, circumstances referred to in paragraph 5 above occur, the project leader shall, without undue delay, report this to the Foundation and obtain the required certifications from the competent authorities.
- (7) The Foundation shall reserve the right to assess the content, scope and validity of the certificates and permits referred to in paragraph 6 above as well as the conformity of the national authority for issuing such documents. The Foundation may require new and subsequent validations to be issued.

## Scientific Fraud and Dishonesty

### Article 15

- (1) The Foundation shall assume that all research results, presented in any form, are a consistent and truthful representation of the conducted research.
- (2) Any form of scientific dishonesty shall be considered unethical.
- (3) The following activities that are not in accordance with the principles of accountable research implementation shall be considered scientific fraud and dishonesty:
  1. inventing data or results and logging and publishing such data;
  2. falsification and abuse of materials, equipment or procedures during research and changing and subsequent manipulation of original data or their unjustified omission from analysis (for instance, to “enhance” the results);
  3. plagiarism and self-plagiarism of text and parts of text (copying or adopting ideas, expressions and results of other authors and presenting them as one’s own or new);
  4. multiple publications of identical original scientific results (unless officially regulated otherwise, with a clear reference and approval by the primary source of publication) as works of the same author or other authors;
  5. preventing the work of other scientists, scientific groups or others by intentionally damaging or destroying materials, equipment or data or restricting access to the equipment financed by public funds;
  6. simultaneous submission of drafts of scientific works for peer review or their publication in several journals, unless officially regulated otherwise;
  7. abuse of authorship, such as misappropriation of authorship (labelling work authored by other persons with one’s own name or a third person’s name), donated authorship (unmerited authorship), planted authorship (assignment of authorship without the author’s knowledge), expulsion or deletion of authors that meet the conditions for authorship from the authors’ list;
  8. intentionally and consciously referencing literature in an inaccurate, imprecise (without referencing the precise location in the text) or biased manner;
  9. distorted and false reporting of the status of one’s own publications (for instance, “in press” or “accepted for publication” when this is not true);
  10. concealing conflict of interest and connection with persons and/or institutions during the presentation and publication of results and work;
  11. submitting a project proposal with previously collected results, i.e. applying for funding of research activities that have already been implemented.
- (4) Researchers shall act in full accordance with the principles of intellectual property and shared property and define the rights and obligations of acquiring authorship in advance, in case the research is conducted in collaboration with students, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers or other scientists.
- (5) Co-authorship shall not be considered acceptable in cases of technical assistance, provision of materials, translation, education on method application, mere data collection or managing the department or organisation conducting the research, nor in any other case in which the co-author did not scientifically contribute to the production of the work.

## VIII. VIOLATION OF PROVISIONS OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

### Article 16

- (1) Any stakeholder and other interested parties who consider that rules prescribed by this Code have been violated are required to report this fact to the Executive Director.
- (2) During the process of validating the complaint, the Executive Director will familiarise the person against which the complaint has been submitted with the expressed opinion and demand their written statement, statements of other persons that might have direct knowledge of the content of the complaint, and take any other actions necessary for determining the facts.
- (3) Based on the complaint and the determined facts, the Executive Director may issue a written warning to the person referred to in paragraph 2 regarding an action that is not in accordance with this Code and their obligation to follow the provisions of this Code.
- (4) The Executive Director shall notify the Board of any complaint and the actions that have been taken. Further measures may also be taken, depending on the type and severity of the violation or repetition of an identical or similar act.
- (5) The decision on further measures shall be adopted by the Board upon proposal by the Executive Director.
- (6) In case of violation of scientific integrity, the Board's decision shall be based on the opinion of the Foundation's Committee for Scientific Integrity.

#### The Foundation's Committee for Scientific Integrity

##### Article 17

- (1) The Foundation's Committee for Scientific Integrity (hereinafter: the Committee) shall be established to assess and act upon the matters of scientific integrity connected with the complaint regarding the violation of rules prescribed by this Code.
- (2) The Committee shall be established pursuant to a Board decision. The Committee members shall be appointed by the Board for a three-year mandate with the possibility of re-election, for the purpose of issuing opinions, proposals, expert justifications and preparation of specific issues for discussion.
- (3) The Committee shall comprise of at least six members, all from the scientific community, and shall include at least one member per scientific area. Where necessary, additional members may be included in the Committee for discussing individual matters. A substitute member for each Committee member will also be nominated. The substitute member shall replace the Committee member in case they are unable to attend or are in a conflict of interest.
- (4) The President of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board.

#### Initiation of Proceedings before the Committee

##### Article 18

- (1) The proceedings for issuing the opinion of the Committee shall be initiated upon written request regarding the conformity of a particular action or conduct with the principles of scientific conduct and the provisions of the Code. The request for issuing an opinion shall be submitted by the Board.
- (2) The request shall be submitted to the President of the Committee and shall contain the basic question at stake and a description of the case and the action for which the opinion is sought.

#### The Committee's Practice

##### Article 19

- (1) The President of the Committee shall call a Committee meeting within 15 days upon receiving the request. The sessions shall be held in person or by electronic means, which shall be decided upon by the President of the Committee.
- (2) The Committee may ask the applicant or other persons involved for additional clarifications or evidence.
- (3) The Committee meeting must be attended by all Committee members or their substitutes and the Foundation's employee from the Section for Scientific Projects and Programmes, who does not take part in the process of adopting the Committee's opinion, but rather only provides administrative support to the Committee.
- (4) When adopting the opinion, the Committee will aim to achieve consensus of all Committee members. If this is not possible, the opinion shall be issued based on the views of the majority of Committee members.
- (5) The Committee members with divergent views may attach their dissenting opinions to the official opinion of the Committee.

### Opinion

#### Article 20

- (1) The Committee shall deliver its opinion to the Board within 30 days upon receiving the request. The prescribed deadline may be extended for justified reasons. In that case, the Committee shall notify the Board before the 30-day period has expired.
- (2) If the Committee concludes that no opinion can be adopted, the President of the Committee shall notify the Board of this fact within the deadline referred to in paragraph 1 above and shall provide statements of reasons due to which an opinion cannot be adopted.
- (3) The Committee shall supplement their opinion with a proposal of possible measures pursuant to this Code. The final decision on possible measures shall be adopted by the Board.

### Minor Violations of Scientific Integrity and Measures

#### Article 21

- (1) Minor violations of scientific integrity shall include:
  1. inadequate collection and storage of data and/or materials;
  2. inadequate treatment of biological and/or hazardous material;
  3. intentionally and consciously referencing literature in an inaccurate, imprecise (without referencing the precise location in the text) or biased manner;
  4. inappropriate conduct and violation of interpersonal relationships with members of the research group or inappropriate conduct in communication with the evaluators or employees of the Foundation.
- (2) Measures in cases of minor violations of scientific integrity shall include:
  1. a written warning to the researcher and head of their organisation;
  2. the obligation to submit an exceptional report;
  3. an official visit;
  4. ban on participating in the work of the Foundation's boards;
  5. suspension of resolution of other matters, including the funding of project activities, until the matter of violation of scientific integrity has been resolved.

## Moderate Violations of Scientific Integrity and Measures

### Article 22

- (1) Moderate violations of scientific integrity shall include:
  1. inadequate, inaccurate or imprecise documentation on the implemented research;
  2. lack of recognition or unjustified assignment of authorship;
  3. preventing the work of other scientists, scientific groups or others by intentionally damaging or destroying materials, equipment or data or restricting access to the equipment financed by public funds;
  4. simultaneous submission of drafts of scientific works for peer review or the publication of an identical piece of work in several journals, except in exceptional situations;
  5. distorted and false reporting of the status of one's own publications.
- (2) Measures in cases of moderate violations of scientific integrity shall include:
  1. where possible, prompt rectification of the resulting situation (for instance, withdrawing the article from the process of publishing or logging into public records) and notifying the Foundation of the relevant measures taken;
  2. ban on submitting applications to the Foundation's calls and participating in the Foundation's projects for up to three years.
- (3) Apart from the measures referred to in paragraph 2 above, the Committee may also propose measures referred to in Article 21(2) of this Code.

## Major Violations of Scientific Integrity and Measures

### Article 23

- (1) Major violations of scientific integrity shall include:
  1. publishing scientific results in a biased and non-transparent manner, presenting false results or concealing parts of the results;
  2. inventing or modifying the data and discoveries in project proposals, projects or presentations and publications of results;
  3. misrepresenting earlier research as new and original research in project proposals or projects of the Foundation;
  4. plagiarism or self-plagiarism in project proposals and results (copying or adopting ideas, expressions and results of other authors and presenting them as one's own);
  5. abuse of authorship, such as misappropriation of authorship (labelling work authored by other persons with one's own name or a third person's name), donated authorship (unmerited authorship), planted authorship (assignment of authorship without the author's knowledge), expulsion or deletion of authors that meet the conditions for authorship from the authors' list;
  6. concealing conflict of interest and connection with persons and/or institutions during the presentation and publication of results and work;
- (2) Measures in cases of major violations of scientific integrity shall include:
  1. permanent ban on participating in the work of the Foundation's boards;
  2. expulsion of a project application from further evaluation process in any stage of the evaluation process;
  3. ban on submitting applications to the Foundation's calls and participating in the Foundation's projects for up to five years;



4. termination of project funding and termination of the Allocation Contract with return of funds.
- (3) Apart from the measures referred to in paragraph 2 above, the Committee may also propose measures from Article 21(2) of this Code.

#### Article 24

In case an activity and/or conduct arises in the area of scientific integrity that has not been referred to in this Code, the Committee for Scientific Integrity shall be free to assess whether this constitutes a minor, moderate or major violation and apply this Code and propose a corresponding measure accordingly.

### IX. ENTRY INTO FORCE AND PUBLICATION

#### Article 25

- (4) The Code of Ethics shall be published on the Foundation's website and shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.
- (5) Upon entry into force of the present Code, the Code of Ethics of the Croatian Science Foundation No. O-933-2014 of 20 March 2014 shall cease to be valid.

O-1524-2018

Zagreb, 26 April 2018

Board President  
Professor Dario Vretenar, F.C.A.