

Research Fieldwork Code of Conduct

Purpose: This document sets the boundaries of behaviour and practice on field research in order to foster a safe and inclusive environment, and to ensure equitable outcomes from field research. The document is designed to instigate discussion about how to best design fieldwork, and then to be signed collectively after consultation between all of the fieldwork participants. Please refer to the Research Fieldwork Ethics and Inclusivity Assessment, and **Research Fieldwork Guidelines** for further considerations in creating a safe, inclusive and equitable fieldwork environment.

- 1. We are committed to treating everyone associated with our fieldwork with respect and dignity.** All members of the field team have agreed to support one another, and be empathetic to one another's needs. We have ensured there are open lines of communication between the field team so that everyone feels comfortable to discuss issues they may face.
- 2. We are committed to protecting the safety of each team member and have discussed potential issues the team may face and how to mitigate them.** We have a clear policy for reporting and mitigating issues relating to harassment and malpractice whilst in the field.
- 3. We are committed to working as a team.** Aspects of our professional contributions to the project have been discussed and agreed upon. We have provided opportunities for our collaborators to express ways in which they would like to contribute to the project.
- 4. We are committed to protecting and preserving the heritage of the regions we visit.** We have considered the cultural links between the land we are visiting and the local people. We have taken steps to involve the community in our work, and recognise that field research builds upon the work of local people, land managers and scientists, all of which we agree to acknowledge appropriately with their input.
- 5. We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our fieldwork.** We recognise that fieldwork disproportionately affects the areas we visit, and have therefore taken steps to reduce our environmental impact during the course of our work. We have minimised the amount of sampling and landscape damage that may come from our fieldwork.
- 6. We are committed to promoting the communities and scientists that host us.** We have considered ways in which we can aid the career development of our collaborators, in consultation with them, and promote their research.

By signing this document, we agree to all of the commitments outlined above. Signatures of fieldwork participants:

Signatures of fieldwork participants:

Date:

Fieldwork Location:

This code of conduct was initially developed by COMET's Fieldwork Guidelines working group, using online resources (particularly Jennifer McKinnon's Fieldwork Expectations Agreement) and in response to feedback from focus groups supported by the Research England Enhancing Research Cultures Fund (Grant No. 95535920). Suggestions can be sent to comet@leeds.ac.uk

First written: 30/03/2022 Revised: 26/05/2023; 22/06/2023



Research Fieldwork Ethics and Inclusivity Assessment

Each section consists of self-reflective questions on the left with links to advice on the right.

Section A: Safe and Inclusive Fieldwork	
A 1. How has your team ensured open lines of communication for all fieldwork participants to voice their concerns and needs prior to travel?	Advice on establishing lines of communication Broaching topics of identity with participants
A2. Do all participants have an ally in the field, or a contactable and informed department member, who can provide support in the event of an incident beyond physical emergencies?	Importance of allyship during fieldwork Advocating for allyship training
A3. What procedure does your team have in place for reporting incidents of bullying and harassment whilst in the field?	Example Procedure for reporting harassment
A4. What steps have your team taken to ensure the safety of all participants in the field, particularly for BIPOC or LGBTQ+ scientists?	Advice to supervisors for protecting at-risk individuals Advice for protecting BIPOC scientists in the field Advice for protecting LGBTQ+ scientists in the field Accessibility and research fieldwork
Section B: Ensuring Equitable Outcomes	
B1. How have you ensured that everyone in your team has access to the appropriate field kit and PPE for your upcoming trip, including medication?	Potential hidden fieldwork costs Sources of funding to Purchase field kit/PPE
B2. What steps have you taken to ensure that every member of the field team can contribute and benefit equally from the field research?	Advice on maximising fieldwork contribution Advice on ensuring equitable outcomes
B3. How have you assessed what equitable outcomes might look like from your field research?	Advocating for equitable funding structures
B4. What impact will your research have on the local community in which your research takes place, and how have you ensured that these impacts are constructive and have longevity?	Examples of projects with long-term constructive impact on local communities
Section C: Minimising Environmental Impact	
C1. How do you justify the intended research fieldwork given its environmental impacts?	
C2. How are you travelling to your field area? Have you considered alternatives to flying?	Try not to fly
C3. What steps have you taken to minimise the environmental impact of your research?	Simple steps to minimising environmental impact
Section D: Ethical Acknowledgement and Sampling	
D1. What steps have you taken to identify and acknowledge the people and groups that have a connection to the land where you are working?	Advice on finding out who to acknowledge
D2. What discussions have you had with local collaborators about how they wish for their contributions to your field research to be acknowledged or recompensed?	Advice on deciding the best ways to acknowledge collaborator's contributions
D3. What are the expected impacts of your research on the communities in your field area , and how will you mitigate those impacts?	Advise on the ethical dimensions of sampling
D4. How have you ensured that the data and knowledge you collect will be available for local scientists and the community?	Advice on documenting sample provenance

Version 1. 22/06/2023 - This work was supported by the Research England Enhancing Research Culture Fund under Grant No. 95535920 held at the University of Leeds.