Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO)

Rules of Good Scientific Practice

Preamble

In 1998 the general meeting of the German Research Foundation (DFG) adopted principles for self-monitoring in science ("Rules of Good Scientific Practice"). On the basis of these DFG principles and the guidelines established by the Leibniz Association regarding this, the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) has established rules of good scientific practice.

The following text details these rules of good scientific practice, the procedure for their implementation and a catalogue of conduct that is regarded as misconduct.

These were approved by the Executive Board on 03/06/2002 on the basis of a draft of the Research Co-ordination Group of IAMO. Following discussion with all staff and employees, they were approved at an institute meeting on 27/05/2002 and updated by the Executive Board on 20/09/2017.

1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The rules formulated in the DFG recommendations to ensure good scientific practice refer to principles which - derived from working practice and scientific self-conception - also constituted and continue to constitute the binding basis for the work of IAMO. Good scientific practice means:

- to work *lege artis*[1] and carry out investigations in accordance with the state of research at all times;
- to document methodical approach and results - this should serve the reproducibility and traceability of findings;
- to make a critical assessment of the findings obtained;
- to maintain strict honesty with regard to the contribution of those jointly involved, competitors as well as predecessors.

As scientific misconduct cannot be fundamentally ruled out, there is also a requirement at IAMO to secure good scientific practice via suitable measures, in particular in the following fields:

1. Securing of leadership responsibility and co-operation in the working groups;
2. Guaranteeing of high-quality and responsible support of junior researchers;
3. Securing and long-term archiving of primary data;
4. Responsibility of all participants for scientific publications;
5. Priority of originality and quality over quantitative criteria in assessing scientific performance.

Scientific institute management commits itself to ensuring the implementation of the respective measures.

2 SPECIFIC RULES

2.1 Responsibility and co-operation

In science, as in all areas, fundamental values can ultimately only be exercised by each individual. Each researcher bears sole responsibility for their own conduct. Those undertaking management tasks are also responsible for the conduct of the unit that they lead.

Members of a work unit must be able to rely on one another. The conversations and discussions - including of a controversial nature - that are characteristic of vibrant, productive groups are only possible on the basis of mutual trust.

The structure of co-operation and clear responsibility structures in the working groups and scientific areas of IAMO is a key basis for the securing of good scientific practice. Institute management bears responsibility for appropriate overall management at the institute. It ensures that delegated tasks have clearly defined content, that they are explicitly assigned and actually undertaken.

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[1] *"Lege artis"* largely consists of honesty to oneself and to others.

As a prerequisite for the realisation of management functions by the staff entrusted with them and for productive co-operation in the research departments and working groups of IAMO, scientific institute management ensures an appropriate size for organisational units and the clear specification of their respective tasks.

2.2 Training and support of junior researchers

The training of researchers represents one of the three core tasks of IAMO. The institute consequently sees itself obliged to secure the high-quality and responsible training and support of junior researchers. In order to realise this, the training of junior researchers at IAMO is oriented towards the following principles and comprises the following elements:

a) A supervisor is appointed at IAMO for each junior researcher (graduand, doctoral candidate). The supervisor gives advice on scientific work and is also available for regular functional advice and support.

b) The imparting of the fundamental principles and specific requirements of good scientific practice is a fixed component of the training and supervision.

c) Doctoral candidates of IAMO become members of the IAMO Graduate School and take part in the agricultural economics doctoral study course or comparable subject-specific doctoral study programmes. The IAMO Graduate School comprises structured training of doctoral candidates in the field of agricultural and nutrition economics as well as related disciplines. The systematic communication of theoretical principles and methods serves to increase the quality of training and efficiency in the handling of dissertation themes. In addition, the IAMO Graduate School also offers specially-tailored seminars, access to international research networks and participation in conferences and workshops.

d) As further support for junior researchers at the institute

   - IAMO facilitates their participation in scientific conferences in Germany and abroad;
   - the institute enables limited periods to be spent at partner establishments in the countries of the region under observation;
   - the junior researchers attend courses at Martin Luther University and co-operating universities outside of Halle (Saale).

e) In addition, IAMO also supports junior researchers in particular from partner establishments in the countries of the region under observation via:

   - guest researcher periods at IAMO;
   - support of participation in seminars and workshops run by IAMO;
   - further training events in the countries of the region under observation.

2.3 Securing the documentation of research findings and primary data

Documentation and the recording of primary data are of great significance when it comes to securing the reproducibility and traceability of research findings.

a) All scientific investigations are to be documented carefully, methodical approach and findings are to be archived at the institute for ten years on durable and secured data carriers at a location to be specified by the scientific institute management.

b) The same applies for primary data that has served as the basis of publications, statements etc.

c) The system of documentation is to be one that enables persons designated by the responsible management to access the data and documents where required.

d) In the event of a change of location of the researcher responsible for the creation of the data the original documents shall also remain at the institute, with duplicates produced or rights of access specified where necessary. Further details are to be regulated on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 Scientific publications/rules regarding authorship

The individuals named as author should be solely those individuals who have made a significant contribution to the publication and who have agreed to it being published, i.e. who bear joint responsibility. The following contributions do not in themselves justify co-authorship:

- a solely technical involvement in data collection;
- mere reading of the manuscript without active contribution to the content;
- instruction of co-authors in specific methods;
- provision of funding;
- general leadership of the establishment in which the research was carried out.

“Honorary authorship” is excluded.

The approval of a manuscript for publication must be agreed upon by all co-authors. With this declaration of consent joint responsibility is assumed for the publication satisfying scientific standards.

2.5 Performance and assessment criteria

At IAMO originality and quality always has priority over purely quantitative assessment criteria when it comes to recruitment, exams and other commitments in which performance and assessment criteria are utilised. In this, originality, “degree of innovation” and contribution to the advancement of knowledge are central when assessing scientific performance. Even in areas of work where intense competition urges prompt publication, the quality of the work and the publication must be paramount.

3 COMMUNICATION OF THE “RULES OF GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE”

The “Rules of Good Scientific Practice” are handed out to all IAMO staff involved with scientific activities, as well as guests, and displayed within the institute. These rules form part of the employment contract obligations of research staff.

Questions relating to the implementation of the “Rules of Good Scientific Practice” are discussed at meetings of the Executive Board, the Research co-ordination group, the departments and/or in meetings of all research employees.

The “Rules of Good Scientific Practice” are a central component in the training of junior researchers at IAMO.

4 OMBUDSPERSON

An ombudsperson and deputy are elected by the research employees of IAMO to arbitrate in the resolution of disputes or disagreements relating to good scientific practice as well as the initial investigation of accusations of scientific misconduct. Those eligible to vote must have a higher education degree qualifying for entry into a profession and primarily undertake research tasks.

The ombudsperson and their deputy should be elected from amongst the research employees at IAMO, in exceptional cases a researcher that is not a member of the institute may be elected. Members of the Executive Board cannot be elected. The term of office is 3 years. Re-election is permitted. The ombudsperson exercises their office on a voluntary basis, independently and free from instruction. They are to be assisted in the exercising of their duties by all those involved. Here too, researchers of IAMO with a higher education degree qualifying for entry into a profession are eligible for election. A proposal is only considered where the person proposed has declared a willingness to hold the office.

The ombudsperson and their deputy are supported by the institute in obtaining the appropriate qualifications.

5 SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT

In specific cases of suspected scientific misconduct the Executive Board of the institute is to be informed. This in term initiates the procedure described in the appendix. At all stages of the procedure care is to be taken to observe statutory terms and regulations (in particular regarding employment and criminal law) as well as typical conflict of interest rules.

6 CATALOGUE OF CONDUCT INTERPRETED AS MISCONDUCT

Scientific misconduct exists where, within a context of scientific importance, a deliberate or grossly negligent misrepresentation is undertaken, intellectual property of others infringed or their research activity impaired.

The following in particular are regarded as misconduct:

Misrepresentation

1. The invention of data.

2. The falsification of data, e.g.

a) through the selection and rejection of undesirable findings, without sufficient revelation of these;

b) through the manipulation of representations or illustrations.

3. Incorrect statements in an application letter or a funding application (including misrepresentation to the publishing organ and publications in print).

Infringement of intellectual property

4. Regarding work of a third party protected by copyright or significant scientific findings, hypotheses, teachings or research approaches originating with third parties

a) unauthorised exploitation under the pretence of authorship (plagiarism);

b) the exploitation of scientific approaches and ideas of others (theft of ideas), especially in the capacity of expert or superior;

c) the pretence or unfounded acceptance of scientific authorship or co-authorship;

d) the falsification of content or

e) unauthorised publication and unauthorised making available to third parties where the work, the findings, the hypothesis, the teachings or the research approach have not yet been published.

5. Using the (co-)authorship of another person without their permission.

Impairment of the research activities of others

6. The sabotaging of research activity (including the damaging, destruction or manipulation of documents, hardware, software or other items that others require in order to carry out their investigations).

Appendix

Procedure for dealing with scientific misconduct

1 INITIATION OF THE PROCEDURE

In specific cases of suspected scientific misconduct the Executive Board of the institute is to be informed. In suitable cases the Executive Board of IAMO shall inform the section spokesperson of Section B of the Leibniz Association. This notification is to be undertaken in writing; in the case of verbal notification a written annotation is to be drafted by the Executive Board. If a member of the Executive Board is affected by a case of suspected misconduct, then the Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board of IAMO is to be informed, who shall notify the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees where necessary.

The circumstances upon which the stated suspicion are based are to be investigated. The precise determination of events is to be undertaken promptly. Investigations are initiated by the Executive Board or the Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board and are to be conducted in accordance with confidentiality and the protection of all those concerned. The person affected by the suspicion of misconduct should be given the opportunity to make a statement, with the naming of the facts and evidence, at the latest one week after the emergence of the suspicion. The deadline for this should be no longer than one week. The name of the person raising the suspicion shall not be revealed to the person affected at this stage of the procedure without their permission.

Following receipt of the statement of the person affected or passing of the deadline to make a statement the Executive Board, respectively the Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board shall reach a decision within one week as to whether the suspicions of misconduct have been refuted by the statements or if the suspicion has been substantiated and that further investigation is subsequently required. The decision is to be presented in writing in the form of an annotation. If the suspicion has been substantiated, then the Executive Board, respectively the Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board shall decide on the necessity for further measures, in particular the involvement of the central ombudsperson of the Leibniz Association.

2 FURTHER PROCEDURE, CENTRAL OMBUDSPERSON OF THE LEIBNIZ ASSOCIATION, COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY

For further proceedings the guidelines of the Leibniz Association in their respectively valid version apply.

3 PROVEN MISCONDUCT

If scientific misconduct is regarded as proven, then the Leibniz Association and the Executive Board, respectively the Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board shall decide upon the necessity for further action using due discretion. In this the Leibniz Association may avail itself of the measures listed in its guidelines in their respectively valid version.

The Executive Board, respectively the Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board of IAMO shall be responsible for the initiation of any disciplinary, employment, civil or criminal law consequences. Depending on the circumstances of the individual case and in particular the severity of the misconduct identified, sanctions in various fields of law are possible, including cumulative ones, for example

a) Employment law consequences
    - written warning
    - termination without notice
    - dissolution of contract
b) Academic consequences
    - removal of doctor title
    - removal of authorisation to teach
c) Civil law consequences
    - banning from the premises
    - surrender claims against the person/s affected, such as the surrendering of scientific material removed
    - injunctive claims from copyright law, personal rights law, patent law, competition law
    - repayment claims, such as regarding bursaries or third-party funding
    - claims for compensation from the institute or third parties
d) Criminal law consequences
e) Revocation of scientific publications

Scientific publications that contain errors due to proven scientific misconduct are to be withdrawn, where not yet published, and rectified where they have already been published (revocation). Co-operation partners are to be informed - where necessary - in appropriate form. As a rule, the authorship and publishers are obliged to undertake this; if they fail to act during a reasonable period of time, management shall undertake suitable measures available to it.

In cases of grave scientific misconduct management shall notify other research establishments or research organisations involved, where necessary also professional bodies.

The Executive Board may be obliged to inform affected third parties and the public for the protection of third parties, to maintain trust in scientific probity, to re-establish the scientific reputation of IAMO, to avoid consequential damage and in the general public interest.