

ESRI Ethics Statement

General Ethical Principles Adhered to in ESRI Research

The ESRI strives to ensure that the four basic principles of ethical research are central to the work in which it is involved – whether undertaken by its own researchers in isolation or in collaboration with other institutions and/or individual researchers or research networks. These principles are:

Beneficence

As researchers we strive to ensure that our work should make a positive contribution to the welfare of those affected by it.

Non-maleficence

We endeavour to ensure that the research work undertaken by the ESRI does not cause harm to any sectors of society and, in particular, to participants (where applicable).

Justice

The benefits and risks associated with our work should be well assessed in advance and both should be equitably distributed throughout society.

Autonomy of subjects

Where applicable, the research respects and protects the rights and dignity of participants.

Research involving primary data collection

Certain aspects of ESRI research may involve primary data collection, usually in the form of interview surveys. The Institute is fully compliant with all legal requirements regarding the collection, storage, handling, processing and analysis of data. The ESRI undertakes, as appropriate, to conform to the highest standards of:

Veracity

Participants in sample surveys and related data collection exercises are given full and accurate information in regard to issues such as the background, nature, purpose, funders and outputs of the research.

Informed Consent

Participants in sample surveys and related data collection exercises are given sufficient details on the research in question as to allow them to make an informed decision to participate or otherwise in a research study.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups

The Institute is particularly conscious of its obligations to safeguard the interests of vulnerable or potentially ‘at risk’ groups who may be involved in its research. These include, for example, children, the elderly and minority ethnic or other sub-groups of the population.

Privacy

Participants in sample surveys and related data collection exercises have the right not only to agree to participate in the research but also to decide on which information to provide as part of the research and to withdraw from the research at any time.

Confidentiality

The information provided by participants is treated as confidential and used for research purposes only. Micro-level information will not be disclosed in any fashion to third parties which would allow it to be associated with an identifiable individual, unless this is clearly stated when participants are being recruited into the research.

Minimising Risk

Participants in the research carried out by the ESRI will not be put under undue or unnecessary risk as a result of their participation. Given the nature of the social and economic research generally undertaken by the Institute this would principally include emotional or psychological risk resulting from participation in questionnaire surveys on particularly sensitive issues.

Research Ethics Committee

The ESRI has its own Research Ethics Committee and may also submit research proposals to the Research Ethics Committees of other institutions or collaborators.

Research Outputs

The ESRI is committed to putting the results of its research into the public domain (always on an anonymised basis) with a view to transparency, scrutiny and peer review. Where feasible, the Institute is committed to depositing anonymised primary data collected in the course of research into a publicly accessible data archive.

Breaches of Procedures

Breaches of the Ethical Principles set out in this document will be investigated following the ESRI procedure for investigating allegations of scientific misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.