

BRIDGES Programme Good Practice Charter

Introduction

At the heart of its scientific mission, the BRIDGES PEPR seeks to strike a balance between preserving biodiversity and maintaining fair and sustainable fishing practices. The programme stands out for its transformational ambition for socio-ecosystems, orchestrating transitions in close collaboration with project beneficiaries and the local scientific community. This charter sets out the principles that BRIDGES programme members commit to upholding throughout their involvement in the programme, during the deployment of their scientific actions, and in their collaborative relationships with scientific and non-scientific partners in the region.

BRIDGES members include all permanent and non-permanent staff, researchers, lecturers, engineers, technicians and others who contribute directly to the research activities of the BRIDGES programme. BRIDGES members undertake ethical research in partnership with local scientific partners, in accordance with the terms of the charter. Local scientific partners include any individual whose work is primarily scientific in nature (e.g. scientific staff of NGOs, government agencies), who are not members of BRIDGES and who originate from the south-western Indian Ocean (SWIO).

The SWIO is understood to mean any nation or territory, whether island (Réunion, Mayotte, Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles) or continental (South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya), not limited solely to the programme's study sites. Through actions broken down into monitoring indicators, the programme is committed to monitoring and measuring compliance with the principles of the charter.

1) The integrity of BRIDGES research

BRIDGES members are committed to conducting research with integrity, in accordance with the principles of reliability, honesty, respect and responsibility. They are committed to make data, methods and analyses underlying their conclusions accessible in order to ensure the reproducibility and verifiability of results, in accordance with the values of open science and the protocols of national and international research partnerships. They will ensure that independence of research is preserved throughout the programme. To meet the objective of honesty, BRIDGES members are committed to giving fair recognition to scientific contributions in publications. Co-authorship recognition is based on cumulative criteria ([see ICMJE criteria](#)): (A) Substantial contribution to the conception, methods, or acquisition,

analysis, or interpretation of data; (B) Editorial involvement and final approval of the manuscript; and (C) Shared responsibility.

Action 1.1 In accordance with ANR rules, all publications produced within the framework of BRIDGES must cite the source of funding in the acknowledgements as follows: *'This work has received government funding managed by the French National Research Agency under France 2030, reference [reference of your targeted project].'* France 2030 logo must be displayed on all communication materials.

Action 1.2 Publish in open access journals or, at a minimum, deposit the preprint version of publications (Author Accepted Manuscript, AMM) in the [HAL open archive](#).

Action 1.3 Submit data and source codes to appropriate open thematic platforms (e.g., Seanoé or Sextant for marine data, Huma-Num for social sciences and humanities data), with a DOI.

Action 1.4 Recognise key contributors (e.g. contributors of data, methods and those who helped secure funding) by inviting them to participate in the development of the experiment or project, its implementation, and the writing and revision of articles, thereby highlighting their fair contribution to the BRIDGES programme. Any previously published data may be freely reused, citing the authors of the data, however collaboration with the authors of the data is strongly encouraged. The use of unpublished data should be discussed with the team that carried out the measurement in order to define co-authorship based on ICMJE criteria.

Action 1.5 Characterise the contributions of all authors and non-authors in publications according to the [CReDiT taxonomy](#), or by adapting the taxonomy in accordance with the requirements of the target journals.

2) Equitable North-South scientific collaboration

Aware of the historical asymmetries in North-South scientific collaborations (Carbonnier & Kontinen, 2015; Galtung, 2021) as well as between European territory of France and its overseas territories, the BRIDGES programme is committed to establishing equitable collaboration with scientific partners in the SWIO and to encouraging and promoting research conducted by academic research institutions based in the SWIOI. The strong support and contribution of local scientific partners are essential for the appropriation of BRIDGES issues, the legitimisation of actions carried out by BRIDGES members, and the sustainability of the programme's impact on the study sites.

Action 2.1 Encourage the involvement of scientific partners from the SWIO region in BRIDGES research activities in order to strengthen capacity sharing of regional research through the co-supervision of students, doctoral students or post-doctoral researchers from the region and the selection of local candidates.

Action 2.2 Co-publish with scientific partners in the SWIOI region.

3) Interdisciplinary and partnership-based approach

The BRIDGES programme adopts an interdisciplinary and partnership-based approach based on epistemological pluralism (Miller et al., 2008), which is essential for understanding complex socio-ecological systems. To this end, BRIDGES integrates natural and social sciences and recognises local knowledge systems as legitimate sources of knowledge that complement scientific knowledge (Tengö et al., 2014).

BRIDGES members are committed to avoiding so-called 'extractive' practices, which involve merely collecting data without any long-term commitment from partners in the territories concerned (Manuel-Navarrete et al., 2021), favouring instead co-productive research that respects local contributions. By adapting its approach to the specific contexts and needs of actors in the field, BRIDGES is committed to strengthening the co-production of knowledge and meeting the expectations of partners, thereby maximising the relevance and impact of the programme in the region (Satizábal et al., 2021).

Action 3.1 Organise the joint development of research activities with local partners to adapt the BRIDGES approach to specific contexts.

Action 3.2 Systematically inform stakeholders of the results of each task that concerns them (e.g. during workshops, events, scientific and operational committee meetings).

Action 3.3 Encourage co-publications between targeted projects.

Action 3.4 Coordinate interactions between BRIDGES teams, partners and local communities to avoid repeated requests and ensure balanced and respectful partnerships.

Action 3.5 Promote forms of dissemination of results tailored to the needs of non-scientific partners or stakeholders, in addition to publications in international journals (e.g. policy briefs, artistic productions).

4) Ethical data collection and management

Data collection in the BRIDGES programme is based on ethical and legal principles that ensure the integrity of the research and respect for participants. Informed consent, personal data protection and confidentiality are key elements of this approach.

The collection, use and conservation of data, particularly those relating to genetic resources, biodiversity and traditional knowledge, must comply with the Nagoya Protocol and the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Any research involving resources or associated knowledge must ensure that the prior informed consent of the parties concerned is obtained and that the benefits arising from such research are shared fairly and equitably. Particular attention is also paid to personal data, containing any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (GDPR). Its collection, processing and storage will be carried out in an anonymous and secure manner and must be validated by the relevant ethics committees.

The terms and conditions for managing research data will be specified in the research project and communicated to participants in accordance with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable). It is important that scientific partners have equitable access to data and share responsibility for it with BRIDGES members.

Action 4.1 Publish an initial and final data management plan for the programme.

Action 4.2 Publish a guide on effective data lifecycle management for the BRIDGES programme to support the various targeted projects.

Action 4.3 Obtain the necessary authorisations from the research ethics committees of the respective organisations of BRIDGES members and obtain signed informed consent forms before collecting any personal data.

5) Minimising BRIDGES' environmental footprint

The BRIDGES programme is committed to minimising its environmental footprint by considering the impact of scientific and operational choices. This commitment is based on a proportionate approach, taking into account the expected benefits of physical meetings and the constraints of partners.

Action 5.1 Minimise the carbon impact of scientific missions and institutional meetings by favouring low-carbon transport and promoting remote or hybrid meetings and the pooling of missions and events.

Action 5.2 Adopt responsible digital practices by optimising the use of large equipment (e.g. optimising codes to reduce calculation times, pooling simulations), such as calculators, and by streamlining hardware purchases.

6) Collective Intelligence

The BRIDGES programme adopts a collective intelligence approach to strengthen connections and synergies between its various teams and partner regions. This approach promotes the exchange and pooling of expertise, in a spirit of sharing and complementarity, to ensure that each targeted project contributes to the overall impact of the programme. By combining efforts, BRIDGES aims to maximise positive outcomes for local communities, while limiting repeated and excessive demands on local actors.

Action 6.1 Create a digital collaborative space to share progress, data and best practices between teams.

Action 6.2 Establish a committee for each site to facilitate exchanges and the sharing of approaches between projects targeted at each BRIDGES study site.

7) Monitoring and implementation

The BRIDGES programme, in coordination with the targeted project leaders, is responsible for ensuring compliance with and implementation of this charter and commit to providing the necessary information for monitoring actions. Compliance with and implementation of actions will be monitored using various indicators covering the charter's thematic areas, such as:

- **Open science practices** (e.g., percentage of open access publications);
- **Virtuous publishing practices** (e.g., percentage of scientific publications with one or more co-authors from the SWIO region);
- **Financial resources mobilised in the study areas** (e.g. number of mirror projects funded to create synergy with BRIDGES and co-supported by partners from SWIO countries);
- **Partnership research practices** (e.g. number of co-construction workshops, number of human resources and budgets allocated to BRIDGES sites);
- **The environmental footprint of BRIDGES** (e.g. adoption rate of low-carbon modelling practices).

These indicators are not exhaustive and are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the BRIDGES PEPR Operational Secretariat, supported by the relevant targeted projects, to compile these indicators, monitor them and ensure compliance with the principles set out in the charter throughout the programme.

The charter will be incorporated into the BRIDGES operating and communication guide. For members already involved in the programme, it will be distributed within each targeted project by the project leaders. All BRIDGES members will be required to read and sign a document certifying their commitment to comply with this charter. However, it should be emphasized that the Charter does not exempt the ethical review of actions carried out in targeted projects and their various tasks.

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Further resources

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Exploration, exploitation et préservation des milieux inconnus et très faiblement anthropisés. Cas particulier des grands fonds marins. Avis du Comité Éthique en Commun, n°16, mars 2024. <https://www.ethique-en-commun.org/content/download/8140/file/Avis-16.pdf>

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