

# URGEO

## Deliverable 6

**[DRAFT]**

## Institute and Field Work Safety Plan For At-Risk Groups

### Deliverable Description:

Develop and publish a safety plan specific to your pod (lab, university, organization). This safety plan should include a code of conduct as well as a process for reporting violations, as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2. Outline training resources that are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training. **For field work, include a racial risk assessment of sites, a pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team, procedures for documenting incidents in the field, as well as additional required or supported trainings.** This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.

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## Introduction

As a highly regarded research institute, the NIOZ Texel strives to provide a safe and inclusive environment to all. As a result of identity prejudice, certain individuals are at higher risk for conflict and violence when they are at work, either in proximity to the institute or in the field – which, in our case, generally constitutes the sea. At-risk individuals include minority identities of the following: race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, and/or religion. Everyone deserves to work as safely as possible; therefore, it is important for all NIOZ Texel members to be informed of the increased risk certain populations face and to define informed strategies. As such, this plan will provide an assessment of risk and best practices for all at-risk groups, with an added focus on groups with presently less developed risk profiles at our institute.

In addition to making group members feel safe and secure, diversity and inclusivity have numerous benefits to us all. The greater the mix of people in our institute, the greater the mix of skills, experiences, perspectives, and ideas we can collectively draw on. But, the benefits of diversity and equality cannot be achieved without creating an inclusive environment.

Research groups should adhere to best practices to minimize risk for all individuals. Here we provide strategies that 1) acknowledge that some individuals encounter dangerous situations due to their identity(ies), and 2) minimize the chance of conflict between and among researchers and other communities present. The inclusion of this document as a key resource sends a positive signal to all at-risk individuals that their professional community acknowledges their risk and is willing to implement actions to ensure their safety.

Please note that this Safety Plan is not a legal document, supplementing, but not superseding, greater NIOZ and NWO policies.

The [NWO implementing regulations 2020-2022 document](#) contains a code of conduct on sexual intimidation, aggression, violence, bullying and discrimination as well as organizational policies regarding the right of complaint, procedural steps, and accountability. However, this code of conduct is not specific to the NIOZ which is vulnerable to several risks that are

particular to its location and the nature of its research, notably that it usually entails a large amount of fieldwork.

An additional issue of note is that the rural location of the NIOZ, far from big cities and physically separated from the mainland amidst a predominantly white population as well as staff, means that people of colour are at high risk of isolation. There have been reports of hostile behavior of the local populations (in both Texel and Yerseke) and towards outsiders (especially non tourists) which disproportionately affect POC. Furthermore, the geographical realities of the NIOZ create an environment where at risk individuals have reduced or no access to additional supportive institutions as would be found on larger campuses and in areas of greater development, i.e. cities. Additionally, people of colour are more exposed to the risks that the blurring of the lines between professional and personal life can present when moving to Texel and Yerseke.

Where fieldwork at NIOZ Texel is concerned, it constitutes an important part of marine research. The research done at NIOZ Texel usually has a high component of fieldwork (including at-sea research), which can constitute a defining moment for people's research projects and careers. Yet, fieldwork disproportionately exposes people of colour to risk situations that can adversely affect their work and retention in marine sciences. At-sea research in particular carries many risks of exposure to unpleasant experiences for researchers of colour. The mixed living and working situation on a ship at sea can be a highly charged environment; indeed, many instances of microaggressions or open racist language have been noted from these research cruises.

Established risks for people of colour include:

- Higher exposure to harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- “the outdoors culture” which can exclude people of colour or from non-western backgrounds.
- Higher risk of being harassed or be targeted of hostile behavior by locals, police or border authorities.

- People of colour are disproportionately exposed to the risks commonly associated with fieldwork, such as:
  - new, unfamiliar, unknown or nonexistent rules of conduct and reporting mechanisms
  - reduced independence for access to transportation, food, medical resources, etc.
  - distance from personal support networks at home
  - unfamiliar cultural norms or language
  - long days with physically strenuous work and exhaustion
  - exposure to harsh environmental conditions and potential greater risk of environmental hazards, or unfamiliar risks compared to the home base location.

## Measures for increasing safety of BIPOC at NIOZ

1. Create a general code of conduct for NIOZ employees.
2. Create a code of conduct for work and live on-board the ships and fieldwork.
3. Create a code of conduct for business trips and conference travels.
4. Publish this code of conduct in an easily accessible place on the Intranet and update it often.
5. Create guidelines for PI, chef scientists and field coordinators on how to create a safe field work for POC.
6. Include a racial risk assessment of sites, a pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team.
7. While on fieldwork, have easily accessible and explain to newcomers the detailed procedures for documenting incidents, and contacting home or a confidential advisor.
8. Provide frequent training to all employees on diversity, bystander intervention, and de-escalation.
9. Provide frequent training to NIOZ management and HR on diversity and inclusion, HR diversity, inclusive leadership.
  - Done: Diversity training given by external company for all employees in 2020. Subject was group specific and was not focused predominantly on race issues or individual safety.
  - Suggestions:
    - i. For all employees: Workshop Diversity and inclusion
    - ii. For senior scientists and management positions: Inclusive Leadership

<https://www.catalystconsulting.nl/>

<https://www.wur.nl/en/activity/Active-Bystander-intervention-training.htm>

## Guidelines for Scientists Organizing Field Work

1. *Run a racial risk assessment.* This assessment requires faculty to consider the experiences of their BIPOC students. Lead collaborative discussions to identify discriminatory or race-related incidents with team members that could occur in the field and then *encourage bystander interventions.*
2. Before field trips, team leaders should *reach out* to local authorities, businesses, and community leaders, especially in white communities, to provide early notice of the diverse nature of their teams.
3. Take an *antidiscrimination training course* and, *if possible, provide diversity, allyship and bystander intervention training to the people going to the field.* BIPOC students could be paired with white field allies. These partnerships would help build trust within field parties, as well as help interactions with local communities.
5. Institutions should *identify and share cultural norms*, expectations, jargon, policies, and rules practiced in field communities that may be unfamiliar to the fieldwork team.
6. Team leaders should interrogate and *identify blind spots* in team members from the majority racial group. Self-awareness of one's own privilege can be a good impetus to becoming a strong ally.
7. Team leaders should be present in the field to *introduce all of their team members* to the host community and other stakeholders.
8. Team leaders should *document hostile encounters* that team members face during field visits regardless of severity. This accounting is particularly important to address microaggressions faced by BIPOC individuals. [Microaggressions](#), which routinely go unacknowledged or are minimized, wear down morale over time and have adverse impacts on mental health. For students, this impact can lead to their eventual exit from the geosciences.
9. Team leaders should *address incidents of discrimination when they happen.* Team members should practice and use the [5D strategy](#) for bystander interventions: direct,

distract, delegate, delay, document. The team should have a plan to exit dangerous scenes or to relocate the field party to a place of safety if other strategies fail.



## Code of Conduct

### General Code of Conduct:

Enjoyable, rewarding, high-quality research can only be conducted when you feel safe, secure, and supported. All NIOZ Texel members should therefore dedicate themselves to a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of identity. We do not tolerate harassment by and/or of our members in any form and we ask all members of the community to conform to the following Code of Conduct:

1. All communication, be it online or in person, should be appropriate for a professional audience, and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate at any time.
2. Be kind to others and do not insult or put down other group members.
3. Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate.
4. Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of discussions, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.
5. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
6. Contribute to discussions in meetings with a constructive, positive approach.
7. Be mindful of talking over others when discussing in groups and be willing to hear out the ideas of others.

### Aboard NIOZ research vessels

While on-board of the NIOZ vessels or during field work one should keep in mind that this is at all times a professional environment. While on-board the ship or in field work the general code of conduct always applies to all guests and employees of NIOZ. The NIOZ recognizes that fieldwork and/or life on board of the ships can be intense, emotional, and tiring. Due to the nature of these activities a complementary code of conduct is necessary. While on-board the ships or on field trips:

1. You are committed to the research conducted on-board as part of a team. Attend to the responsibilities trusted on you by the captain, chef-scientist, field coordinator or imitate superior.
2. You carry out work on conscious way with regards to your personal physical and mental wellbeing. Safety always comes first.
3. Live on board a ship or field work can be dangerous. There is no space to “play hero”, especially if jeopardizing yours' and other crew members’ safety.
4. Be mindful of the personal space of others. Do not pressure fellow crew members into unwanted social situations.
5. This is an intense, emotional, and tiring situation. Make an extra effort to communicate as clearly as possible and in a kind and constructive manner.
6. Always behave professionally, including during meals and recreational activities. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate.
7. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
8. You and your colleagues are accountable for their actions. There is no space for “what happens on the boat/field stays on the boat/field” culture.

Code of Conduct for business trips and conference travels:

## Reporting Process

### General Policy

Incidents should be reported to individuals' direct superiors (e.g. supervisor), heads of their departments, HRM (Human Resource Management) of the NIOZ, or the director of the NIOZ. Reporting may be assisted by the presence of a "confidential counsellor" or communicated in all other instances through them. Two internal (at the NIOZ) and two external confidential counsellors can be found on the [intranet](#).

If a mutual agreement is still not achieved, a formal complaint can be lodged with the NWO Complaints Committee.

By post: PO Box 3021, 3502 GA UTRECHT

And/or by email at: [klachtencommissie@nwo.nl](mailto:klachtencommissie@nwo.nl)

If a complaint is brought to the NOW the authorized party (the NWO-I Director in the case of the NWO-I) makes the final decision based on advice from the Complaints Committee. Within four weeks after receiving this recommendation the authorized party will send the final decision in writing to the party that submitted the complaint and the party(s) for whom the decision has direct consequences.

The Complaints Committee receives a copy of the final decision made by the authorized party and all documents relating to said complaint are lodged with the Complaints Committee and stored in a separate archive that is maintained by the secretary and is only accessible to members of the Complaints Committee. The number of complaints lodged and the outcome of these cases will be reported to the Central Works Council (COR), of which one representative of the NIOZ is a member.

In suspicion of malpractice and as a last resort, the Whistle Blower Policy is an option for cases "of suspected illegal or immoral practices that take place under the responsibility of the employer and on account of which a significant social interest is at stake".

Aboard NIOZ Research Vessels

Other Fieldwork

## Additional Resources

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WhbeE4dWI\\_FagMIU6ZUX9\\_tUpou5OAsg-FQtSABWQ2w/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WhbeE4dWI_FagMIU6ZUX9_tUpou5OAsg-FQtSABWQ2w/edit)

<https://eos.org/opinions/ten-steps-to-protect-bipoc-scholars-in-the-field>

<https://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008210>

<https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202008.0021/v1>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-020-01328-5>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-018-0219-0>

<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/bes2.1742>