Working principles for members and guests of the Coastal Groundwater Group at ZMT (v1.0)

Our group brings together people with different scientific and cultural backgrounds. Diversity is welcome, and the principles below are shared expectations for all of us. They reflect our core values: Integrity, Responsibility, Respect, Trust, and Solidarity. We work honestly, take ownership of our science, respect different personal and cultural backgrounds, support one another to build the trusted environment that fosters independent and creative research.

Scientific integrity: Good scientific practice

- We prioritize rigorous, useful, and relevant research over the quantity of outputs.
- We work honestly, transparently, and rigorously; we never manipulate, or selectively present evidence to support a preferred result. We discuss mistakes transparently to learn from them.
- We plan and conduct fieldwork and laboratory work carefully, using appropriate methods and prioritizing safety in collaboration with our partners.
- We document data, code, methods and decisions to support reproducibility. We share outputs where appropriate, but protect confidential information.
- We share information, give credit fairly, and discuss authorship and responsibilities transparently. But we protect confidential information and follow applicable ethical requirements.
- We use AI responsibly - as assistants, not as substitutes for our own scientific judgement, expertise, or responsibility. We discuss and disclose its use openly.

Ownership and self-motivation: Excellence from intrinsic motivation

- We approach our work with curiosity and a motivation to learn, improve, and contribute to scientific knowledge.
- We take responsibility for our projects, preparation, deadlines, and follow-up. We develop ideas and possible solutions ourselves and communicate delays, uncertainty, or conflict early.
- We ask for help when we need it.

Leadership and scientific independence: Learning and growing together

- We judge scientific arguments by evidence, not personal status. We question assumptions - including those of senior group members.
- We explain our reasoning and are prepared to defend or revise scientific choices when the evidence requires it. Constructive disagreement helps learning and is welcome.
- Group members develop increasing scientific independence. The group leader provides clear expectations, constructive feedback and support appropriate to members' task and career stage.

Group culture: The group is a safe space for its members and guests

- We treat everyone with respect, regardless of characteristics or circumstances such as ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, career stage or professional role.
- We foster an appreciative, supportive culture. We welcome different perspectives and while maintaining shared standards of integrity, respect and reliability. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, intimidation or demeaning behaviour.
- We share knowledge, support one another through setbacks and celebrate successes.
- We consider the environmental impacts of our research and seek practical ways to reduce them.
- We respect personal boundaries, privacy and individual preferences about social participation.
- We respect working hours and leave, discuss workload and personal circumstances sensitively, and agree realistic expectations and deadlines.

We hold every member of the group to these standards. We raise concerns or ask for support early when these principles cannot be met. Our aim is to produce creative and relevant science while building an environment in which we can learn, develop, and enjoy working together.

These working principles complement applicable ZMT and other institutional policies, which take precedence in case of conflict.