

ACTRIS Artificial Intelligence Policy

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1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an engineered or machine-based system that can, for a given set of objectives, generate outputs such as predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy.

An AI system is any data system, software, hardware, application, tool, or utility that operates in whole or in part using AI.

This policy describes the main principles to be applied within ACTRIS activities when using or developing AI tools. This policy does not exclude other guidelines or rules (e.g., related to professional and scientific responsibility, governance, social and environmental responsibility and compliance with the law) that may be raised by the ACTRIS ERIC or its contractual ACTRIS partners.

This policy is complemented by other ACTRIS policies like ACTRIS data policy, ACTRIS access and service policy, ACTRIS ERIC ICT policy and ACTRIS Ethics Policy which regulate different aspect of ACTRIS activities that may be connected to AI issues.

2. AI objectives and strategy

The objectives and strategy of using and developing AI systems within ACTRIS are

- to foster scientific work and innovation,
- help and expedite the administrative work of ACTRIS ERIC in managing ACTRIS as a distributed infrastructure,
- promote ethical and fair use of AI technologies,
- ensure transparency and accountability in AI-supported decision-making processes, if any will be allowed,
- safeguard the privacy and security of data processed by AI systems, and
- mitigate risks associated with usage of AI at the same time as enjoying the benefits.

This shall be done in line with EU and national legal requirements as well as principles laid down in this policy. The process of using and developing AI systems shall be monitored, and AI should always be understood as a tool to help and facilitate work, not the final deciding mechanism.

3. Principles of using AI

The use of AI within ACTRIS should be transparent so that all use and applications are clearly disclosed and communicated. In addition, any AI-driven models used in environmental and climate research should be transparently documented, and their results should be verifiable. AI systems should be suitable and implemented to support the objectives of ACTRIS.

Any use of AI should always be overseen by humans. The employees within ACTRIS using AI should assess its output for reliability and validity within a defined range of acceptability and pre-defined conditions of use in order to avoid any negative effects and incorrect information generated by the AI.

Care should be taken that the use of AI systems shall not endanger human life, health, property rights, privacy, integrity or the environment.

Ethical risks such as algorithmic bias should be reviewed and minimized.

There should always be a well-founded reason to use AI, given its high energy consumption. Environmental effects of using AI should be systematically evaluated and taken into account in decision making.

When choosing AI tools, organisations should explore possibilities to select systems that have been produced by European manufacturers.

4. Principles of developing AI systems

Systems that deploy subliminal techniques beyond a person's consciousness or purposefully manipulative or deceptive techniques, with the objective or the effect of materially impairing their ability to make an informed decision, shall not be developed.

Human autonomy, identity, and dignity with respect to privacy shall always be fully safeguarded.

When AI system tools are developed, the systems should be designed and documented to answer how and why a decision was made.

The experiences, best practices, and lessons learnt in AI development should be shared within ACTRIS as widely as possible to help others in using and developing AI systems efficiently.

5. Regulatory compliance

AI use and development in Europe is regulated by EU regulation on AI (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689) coming into force step by step. ACTRIS ERIC will monitor the development of the EU AI regulation and adapt this policy to be fully aligned with it.

In addition to the EU regulation, all relevant legislation shall also be taken into account, including but not limited to:

- Copyright legislation: content used in AI systems (like for example text, databases, images, audio, video) are often protected by copyright. Also, software used for developing AI systems may be protected and not necessarily available as open-source.
- Data protection legislation: all personal data must be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and with the organisations data protection policies to ensure the privacy and security of individuals.

- Non-public information and AI systems: non-public, confidential or private information must not be shared with public AI models (i.e. ChatGPT or Otter.ai) or any features these services offer.
- Sector standards: all relevant professional, technical, and ethical standards in the field should be taken into account when developing or using AI systems."

6. Managing AI issues

Central Facility host organisations should take care that employees have access to appropriate training on the use and development of AI systems relevant for RI operations. Common problems and experiences should be shared under ACTRIS ERIC coordination.

If high-risk systems according to the EU regulation on AI (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689) are developed or tested, risk management systems shall be established and maintained in full compliance with the regulation.

The risks of using AI within ACTRIS should be regularly reported by all Central Facilities to the RI Committee and regularly discussed in the RI Committee.

Central Facility host organisations should actively and steadily evaluate the benefits, risks and costs of the AI systems they use and develop and compile experiences in utilizing AI.

Any risks and problems of using or developing AI systems should be reported to the Director General of ACTRIS ERIC, who, if seen necessary, can take issues to the Ethical Advisory Board or the ACTRIS ERIC General Assembly for further discussion.

ACTRIS organisations should aim at having scientific strategy about AI tools and where they are useful and necessary.

7. Review of the policy

This policy shall be reviewed regularly to reflect developments in AI systems and legislation and updated as necessary. Any amendments shall be approved by the ACTRIS ERIC General Assembly.

References

- (1) ACTRIS access and service policy:
[https://www.actris.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ACTRIS ERIC GA approved ACTRIS access and service policy%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.actris.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ACTRIS%20ERIC%20GA%20approved%20ACTRIS%20access%20and%20service%20policy%20%281%29.pdf)
- (2) ACTRIS data policy:
[https://www.actris.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ACTRIS ERIC GA approved ACTRIS data policy%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.actris.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ACTRIS%20ERIC%20GA%20approved%20ACTRIS%20data%20policy%20%281%29.pdf)
- (3) ACTRIS Ethics Policy:
- (4) ACTRIS ERIC ICT policy:
[https://www.actris.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ACTRIS ERIC GA approved ACTRIS ICT policy%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.actris.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ACTRIS%20ERIC%20GA%20approved%20ACTRIS%20ICT%20policy%20%281%29.pdf)
- (5) Definition of AI provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology AI Risk Management Framework (NIST AI RMF). Adapted from: OECD Recommendation on AI:2019; ISO/IEC 22989:2022. <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/ai/NIST.AI.100-1.pdf>
- (6) Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act) (Text with EEA relevance [Regulation - EU - 2024/1689 - EN - EUR-Lex](#))