APPROVED by

Order No V-11 of 1 February 2022

of Director of Nature Research Centre

**DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE RESEARCH CENTRE'S VOLUNTEERING PROCEDURES**

**CHAPTER I**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Description of the Nature Research Centre's Volunteering Procedures (hereinafter referred to as the "Description") sets out the objectives and principles of volunteering at the Nature Research Centre (hereinafter referred to as the "NRC") as the organiser of volunteering and those who wish to volunteer at the NRC, the procedure for organising volunteering, and the roles, rights and obligations of those involved in the volunteering a activities.
2. The Description has been prepared in accordance with the Law on Volunteering of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter, the "Law on Volunteering" ), the Description of the Conditions and Procedure for the Reimbursement of the Costs of Volunteering approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 14 July 2011 No. A1-330 "On the Approval of the Conditions and Procedure for the Reimbursement of the Costs of Volunteering" (as amended later).
3. The terms used in the Description:
	1. **volunteer** means a person who carries out volunteering, as defined in the Law on Volunteering;
	2. **volunteering** means an unpaid activity of public benefit carried out by a volunteer, the terms of which are agreed between the volunteer and the organiser of the activity;
	3. **volunteering agreement** means an agreement between the volunteer or the volunteer's legal representative and the NRC, represented by the Director, in the form set out in Annex 1 to the Description, on the basis of which volunteering is carried out in the NRC's unit(s) and which sets out the rights and obligations of the parties to the volunteering;
	4. **volunteering coordinator** means a member of the staff responsible for a proper and quality organisation, management and coordination of volunteering activities at the NRC, as well as for the mentoring of volunteer mentors;
	5. **volunteer mentor** means a person appointed by the NRC Director to organise and supervise the volunteering activities of the volunteers assigned to them in the NRC unit(s);
	6. other terms used in the Description shall be understood as they are defined in the Law on Volunteering and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and of the Nature Research Centre.

**CHAPTER II**

**AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING**

1. The objectives of volunteering at NRC:
	1. to contribute to a sustainable society and environment by promoting and organising voluntary activities;
	2. to promote and organise the personal development of volunteers, enabling them to develop to their full potential;
	3. to encourage volunteers to express themselves, cooperate and communicate with each other;
	4. to maintain and improve the existing volunteering traditions and creating new ones;
	5. to develop volunteers' civil engagement, skills, as well as general and specific competences through training, seminars, lectures, reflection, case studies, supervision, educational and other events, as well as evaluation of volunteers' activities and competences;
	6. to promote and organise volunteer employment, social activity, non-formal and inclusive education and training;
	7. to give volunteers the opportunity to implement their own initiatives and contribute to social, community and other activities inside and outside the NRC;
	8. to uphold the NRC values of academic freedom, diversity of opinion, openness to ideas, innovation, mutual respect, trust, tolerance, academic ethics, combining autonomy with accountability to the state and responsibility to society.
2. The principles of volunteering at NRC:
	1. voluntary participation - volunteers participate in volunteering of their own free will;
	2. benefit to society and to the individual - participation in volunteering enables individuals to make an active contribution to society and promotes volunteers' personal expression and development;
	3. cooperation - volunteering is based on cooperation between volunteers and NRC to match the needs and opportunities of volunteers and NRC;
	4. variety and flexibility - volunteering may take place in different NRC units. A volunteer and the NRC may agree on the forms and ways of volunteering, as well as on changes to them;
	5. active participation in the (self)education process - active participation is achieved by taking time to identify and understand personal experiences;
	6. holistic approach - taking a holistic approach to the person, to the objectives and methods of volunteering; taking into account emotional, intellectual and physiological aspects; focusing on the person, the group and the field of volunteering;
	7. learning from experience - learning through volunteering is based on experience, which only makes sense if it is understood and internalized. Experiences are discussed (reflected upon) and identified, and conclusions are drawn that are made meaningful and applied to life;
	8. open and informal communication - volunteering is a safe process where volunteers can be themselves, sharing their life experiences, exposing their weaknesses, and not being afraid to make mistakes and admitting to their mistakes. Volunteering is a space to learn from our mistakes, to learn from each other;
	9. creating a non-competitive environment - volunteering is a space that avoids artificial competitive tensions;
	10. group-process-oriented (self)education - learning to clarify interpersonal relationships, make joint decisions, and share work and responsibilities. The group also intensifies individual education, allowing the individual to take into account his/her individual needs and to choose the most appropriate pace, means and methods of work.
3. Volunteering shall be unpaid and may not replace paid work.

**CHAPTER III**

**ORGANISING VOLUNTEERING**

1. Information on volunteering opportunities, the main areas of volunteering, tasks, possible activities and other information related to volunteering shall be published on the NRC website and publicised through the NRC's internal communication tools, social networks, partners, as well as at various events and by other means.
2. A person wishing to volunteer at any NRC unit must enter into a volunteering agreement with the NRC if at least one party wishes to do so or if the volunteer is reimbursed for the costs of volunteering.
3. The volunteering agreement shall agree on the duration, nature and other conditions of the volunteering.
4. The NRC's rights:
5. to agree with the volunteer the objectives, timeframe and procedures for the volunteering activity;
6. to suggest activities that volunteers can contribute to the NRC;
7. to enable volunteers to implement their own initiatives, where these are in line with the NRC's needs and capabilities;
8. to take into account the nature of the volunteering activity and the requirements set out in the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, to require persons wishing to carry out volunteering activities to submit the documents necessary for such activities (health certificate, certificate on criminal record, etc.);
9. to terminate the volunteering agreement concluded with a volunteer if the volunteer's actions contravene the principles of cooperation laid down in the volunteering agreement, violate the interests of the parties and/or the legal acts of the Nature Research Centre;
10. to organise a system to promote volunteering and motivate volunteers in the NRC.
11. NRC's responsibilities:
12. to provide opportunities for volunteering at the NRC;
13. to promote and organise volunteering;
14. to reimburse volunteers for the costs of volunteering where possible;
15. to require volunteers to comply with the rules of internal order set out in the Description and in the legal regulations of the Nature Research Centre, to respect the property of the NRC, and to claim compensation for any damage caused to the NRC;
16. to draw up and administer volunteering agreements and other documents relating to volunteering at the NRC;
17. to inform volunteers about the nature, scope and course of the volunteering activity, the current and potential health and safety risks that may arise during the volunteering activity and the use of measures to protect against these risks, safety and other requirements, and to familiarise volunteers upon signature with the Description;
18. to appoint a person to supervise a volunteer's activities at the NRC;
19. to provide volunteers and volunteer mentors with the necessary information, advice and technical assistance to organise and carry out their volunteering activities, as required; and, where possible, provide volunteers with the necessary tools to carry out their volunteering activities;
20. when the volunteer requests, to issue a document confirming the volunteering activity and the hours spent volunteering;
21. to coordinate volunteer activities and advise them on the specifics and complexities of their work;
22. to enable the volunteer to participate in volunteer training and meetings with the NRC volunteering coordinator and volunteer mentor;
23. to ensure compliance with the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and of the Nature Research Centre related to volunteering.
24. In the role as the organiser of volunteering at the NRC, the volunteering coordinator shall organise and manage volunteer activities at the NRC, and the volunteer mentor shall organise and manage volunteering at the NRC's particular core unit.
25. The functions of the volunteering coordinator:
	1. to administer volunteering agreements and other documents on behalf of the NRC in relation to persons volunteering inside or outside the NRC to the extent that this function is not delegated to volunteer mentors in accordance with the procedures laid down by the NRC units;
	2. to disseminate and update information on volunteering opportunities inside and outside the NRC;
	3. to coordinating the activities of all volunteer mentors, to provide information, individual and/or group consultations, methodological support, and training where necessary;
	4. to keep records of planned and implemented volunteering activities and volunteers, perform the control of volunteering activities and initiate, organise and coordinate volunteering programmes at NRC level, where appropriate and possible;
26. The functions of a volunteer mentor:
	1. to ensure the smooth and high-quality activity of the mentored volunteers;
	2. to maintain and complete lists of the mentored volunteers and submit them to the volunteering coordinator;
	3. to familiarise the mentored volunteers with the nature of volunteering, the structure and rules of the NRC unit(s), as well as the requirements for volunteering as set out in the Description and the internal rules of procedure of the Nature Research Centre;
	4. to inform the mentored volunteers of any changes in the conditions or objectives of their volunteering;
	5. to provide feedback on the activities of mentored volunteers to the volunteering coordinator during the volunteering process and organise individual and group meetings for mentored volunteers;
	6. to make proposals to the volunteering coordinator for the admission and removal of mentored volunteers;
	7. to provide the volunteers with the information they need to carry out their volunteering activities, contribute to the organisation of training, seminars and other events, and provide advisory and technical assistance;
	8. to help the mentored volunteers to overcome difficulties and integrate into the volunteer team;
	9. to monitor the activities of the mentored volunteers, check, administer and sign the volunteering record sheets (Annex 2 to the Description). The volunteering record sheets shall be compiled and kept in the NRC's unit where the volunteering takes place in accordance with the NRC's procedures;
	10. to initiate and organise volunteering activities in the NRC's core unit(s) in coordination with the volunteering coordinator;
	11. to contribute to the achievement of the NRC's objectives and to the organisation and implementation of the volunteer motivation system at the NRC;
	12. to carry out other tasks assigned by the volunteering coordinator in relation to the functions of the volunteer mentor.
27. The volunteer's rights:
	1. to be aware of the nature, scope and process of volunteering, the current and potential health and safety risks that may arise during volunteering and the use of protective measures, safety and other requirements;
	2. to receive a document confirming the volunteering activity and the time spent volunteering, where the objectives set out in the volunteering agreement have been met;
	3. to access to the tools, information, advice and technical assistance needed to carry out their voluntary activities;
	4. to participate in volunteer training, where organised;
	5. to stop volunteering by notifying the volunteer mentor as early as possible;
	6. to make suggestions and requests to the volunteering coordinator;
	7. to exercise other rights provided for in the legal regulations of the Nature Research Centre and of the Republic of Lithuania.
28. The duties of volunteers:
	1. to carry out their volunteering activities responsibly and conscientiously and to fill in the Volunteering Record Sheet (Annex 2 to the Description);
	2. to familiarise themselves with the Description and to comply with the procedures for volunteering set out therein, as well as with other legal regulations of the Nature Research Centre and of the Republic of Lithuania related to volunteering;
	3. to follow the procedures for volunteering as discussed with the volunteering coordinator and/or volunteer mentor;
	4. to actively communicate with the volunteer mentor, the NRC volunteering coordinator and other NRC staff as needed;
	5. in case of any problems with the volunteering, if you are unable to volunteer (due to illness or other legitimate reasons) or if you are unable to attend the planned training, to inform about it the mentor immediately;
	6. to preserve and use NRC's assets efficiently, to comply with the internal rules of procedure, to remedy any damage caused by his/her fault to the NRC or to third parties, and not to breach the legal interests of NRC and third parties;
	7. to contact the volunteering coordinator about violations of the rights set out in the Description;
	8. to carry out the tasks of the volunteer mentor and the volunteering coordinator in relation to the volunteer's volunteering activities.
	9. if confidential information is provided to a NRC volunteer during the volunteering activity, a separate agreement shall be signed to the volunteering agreement, in which the volunteer undertakes to use the confidential information only for the purposes stipulated in the volunteering agreement and not to disclose the information, documents, etc. to third parties without the NRC's written consent, except in cases where such an obligation is stipulated by the valid legal regulations of the Republic of Lithuania or of the Nature Research Centre.

**CHAPTER IV**

**PROMOTING AND RECOGNISING VOLUNTEERING AT THE NATURE RESEARCH CENTRE**

1. The NRC shall organise and implement a motivation system for their volunteers, where possible.
2. Volunteering activities shall develop and assess competences acquired through non-formal learning as defined by the Nature Research Centre's legal regulations.
3. Participation in volunteering activities may be recognised as practical work and/or learning experience for the volunteer, depending on the objectives and nature of the volunteering activity, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the legal regulations of the Nature Research Centre.
4. Volunteering shall not include:
	1. paid work;
	2. helping family and friends;
	3. recreational or tourism activities;
	4. studies or vocational training.

**CHAPTER V**

**FINAL PROVISIONS**

1. The NRC may carry out various forms of voluntary activities which do not contradict the laws of the Republic of Lithuania, the Description and other legal regulations of the Nature Research Centre.
2. Information about volunteering activities organised by the NRC shall be available to the public on the NRC's website, on Facebook and/or in other ways.
3. The NRC shall not have an employment relationship with volunteers and therefore shall not provide the volunteers with accident insurance. The volunteers may purchase accident and/or liability insurance on their own prior to volunteering with the NRC.
4. Volunteers' personal data and other persons' data related to volunteering activities shall be processed solely for the purposes of the implementation of the volunteering activities in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (the "General Data Protection Regulation"), the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Legal Protection of Personal Data, and the Rules on the Processing of Personal Data in the Nature Research Centre, as approved by Order No V-4 of 28 January 2018 of the Director of the Nature Research Centre "On Approval of the Rules on the Processing of Personal Data at the Nature Research Centre (Privacy Policy)", and other legal regulations of the Republic of Lithuania and of the Nature Research Centre regulating the protection of personal data.
5. Volunteers' personal data shall be obtained from the data subjects themselves or from the NRC core unit where the volunteering activity is carried out.
6. Volunteers' personal data may be provided to:
	1. NRC staff involved in organising volunteering activities;
	2. the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour;
	3. other natural and legal persons whom personal data for volunteering must be provided under the laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania for the purpose of enforcement of any such legal act.
7. Volunteers' personal data and the related volunteering records shall be kept for the duration of the volunteering activity and for a term of 5 years after the fulfilment or termination of the volunteering agreement. Upon expiration of the term, the data shall be deleted in accordance with the procedures established by the NRC.
8. All NRC units are obliged to provide the volunteering coordinator with the depersonalised information necessary for the volunteer record on members of the NRC community and others who volunteer at NRC units.

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