



## PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) and its member institutions—science centers and science museums around the world—are committed to **advancing public understanding of science and contributing to the development of a scientifically literate society.**

ASTC institutions subscribe to the fundamental principles and practices of science, including the free exchange of views and the free movement of individuals.

ASTC institutions place particular value on meaningful exchange on societal issues, locally and globally, where understanding of, and engagement with, science are essential—and always in the spirit of tolerance, peace, and respect for cultural identities and diversity.

### **I. SERVICE TO COMMUNITIES**

ASTC science centers and science museums are committed to providing innovative approaches to science learning designed to inspire people of all ages about the wonders and the meaning of science in their lives.

ASTC science centers and science museums are sites for informal learning and are places to discover, explore, and test ideas about science, technology, engineering, mathematics, health, and the environment.

ASTC science centers and science museums address societal issues, locally and globally, helping translate complex science into comprehensible, relevant form. These institutions promote meaningful exchange and debate between scientists and local communities, building trust between the scientific establishment and the general public.

ASTC science centers and science museums raise public awareness about the science behind societal issues, promoting objective, scientifically based approaches to decisions and policies by individuals and communities.

ASTC science centers and science museums strive to be models of excellence in equity and diversity and to be recognized by their communities as truly inclusive institutions.

## **II. ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF SCIENCE**

ASTC members adhere to the fundamental principle that science is a human endeavor that uses observations and experimentation to develop explanations of the natural world. Scientific theories are grounded in and compatible with evidence, internally consistent, and demonstrably effective in explaining a wide variety of phenomena. Science is a dynamic process of learning that derives from multiple cultures and heritages and many thousands of peer-reviewed publications.

We live in an era when science and technology affect every aspect of life and society. ASTC member institutions strive to be valued, objective platforms for timely knowledge and discourse on the principles and the topical issues of science.

To serve this role in communities everywhere, ASTC institutions rely on the credibility, integrity, and accountability of the scientific community itself, achievable through free flow of scientific and technological information, broad population representation in research, peer review of data and research to support policy decisions, and the sincere intent by all to facilitate open communication among scientists and with the public. Science is the common language that can transcend all boundaries—geographic, socioeconomic, cultural, and more—for the benefit of all humankind.

## **III. RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL DIVERSE ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY**

As institutions dedicated to educating and inspiring people of all ages about science, ASTC members are therefore committed to

- Furthering public understanding of science
- Helping demonstrate the impact of science and technology on society and culture
- Encouraging diversity and participation by all peoples in the scientific enterprise, especially women, minorities, and other groups underrepresented in scientific and technological careers
- Serving as vehicles for education, inspiration, and discourse about topics of science in society
- Cooperating with other educational agencies and organizations to further common goals.