

Ethical Deliverable D8.9/ D.44: Detailed information on the informed consent procedures that will be implemented

WP 1: Project Management

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Executive summary

This document “Detailed information on the informed consent procedures that will be implemented” defines key ethical issues concerning social science research activities in DESTRESS including focus groups, discussions and interviews, as identified and established according to EU and national directives.

These issues have been examined from the internal point of view and include acquisition of participants, information to participants, informed consent and data handling during the planned research activities and after their implementation.

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Annex 1: Sample for an informed consent sheet for discussions

Annex 2: Sample for a project information sheet

1. Introduction and ethics requirements

DESTRESS aims at examining the social acceptability of geothermal energy projects. In this regard, the following sociological investigations are planned: individual narrative and exploratory interviews, group interviews of focus groups, participant observation and/or ethnographic fieldwork and quantitative surveys. For these activities, ethical guidelines of the Horizon 2020 were taken into account.

The procedures and criteria specified in this document will be applied by all partners involved in this social science research, namely TNO, ETH, UOS and WES concentrated on the actions described above and for all procedures of data acquisition and processing. Each partner supervises and checks the work performed by its researchers in accordance with this document. Each partner will also declare in written form that every survey, collection or handling of personal data within DESTRESS will be in accordance with European and national data privacy laws. And, each partner will refer the ethical matters to its own data protection officer and will individually bear responsibility for data collection, storage and protection. Furthermore, this document is to be interpreted with reference to the Grant Agreement (GA) and the Consortium Agreement (CA).

In case of additional, currently unforeseen research activities, objectives, techniques or tools, the content of this document may be modified or adapted. Any partner may request changes, but each change must be analyzed by the Executive Board (EB).

In case of changes in this regard, DESTRESS social research activities will be implemented with regard to ethical implications and respecting the regulations expressed in international texts and codes of practices, in particular the Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. An Ethics Advisor, Marco Blau, who has been data protection officer and supervisor of large European scientific projects at the Legal Department of the GFZ, was appointed to oversee the ethical concerns involved in this research.

Individual research activities will not entail any risk and burden for the participants. All the research and personal data will be collected and used in respect of the European Parliament's directive and legislations. Due to the nature of DESTRESS social research activities to be performed, ethically relevant incidental findings are not expected. During DESTRESS social scientific research, the identity of the participants will not be disclosed.

2. Participation criteria

Participants of the empirical studies during DESTRESS will differ in social status, education, sex, age, family and urban/rural background or place of residence (various countries, cities and places with/without a currently running geothermal project). However, no minors will be involved in the research.

3. Informed consent procedures

Ethical standards of informed consent and rights of information will be considered and an informed consent sheet explaining details about the research and including description and specification of the action were internally prepared. In view of taking an informed decision, the participants will receive an

informed consent sheet in the language they speak and will be clearly informed in an additional document of the following:

- the research objectives
- the duration of the research activities
- benefits to the subject or others
- possible adverse events, risks, discomfort or disadvantages
- possibilities to refuse participation or withdraw from the research, at any time, and without consequences
- where to receive more information about the action
- data protection and confidentiality and privacy policies

This detailed information will be provided to the potential participants by means of a project information sheet (see Annex 2). In addition, the researchers will make sure that participants understand given information and realize the impact of the research for themselves and for society. Researchers will also explain what will happen with the research data and the results at the end of the research.

A sample for the informed consent sheet for planned discussions to be implemented in France by the University of Strasbourg in English is provided in Annex 1. As the social acceptability studies will be conducted by the above mentioned partners in various countries (Lithuania, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and probably the UK), the sample will be adapted to the requirements and language of the country where the research is to be performed.

In general, the participants will sign and date the informed consent sheet. In some circumstances, giving verbal consent will also be allowed. In this case, researchers will record the consent for the further documentation. Before doing so, the participants will be given an opportunity to ask questions about the research and the project.

All social research related discussions and interviews taking place within DESTRESS will be recorded, transcribed and coded as well as all research data incl. quantitative surveys will be pseudonymised/anonymised.

Data collection and dealing with the informed consent issue looks as follows:

- Exploratory/ narrative interviews: data anonymization will be respected and the informed consent sheet will be signed by each participant or a verbal consent will be given.
- Quantitative survey: to be carried out with two purposes, 1. To collect data on the perception of geothermal energy and 2. To recruit participants for the focus groups and the research interviews. Informed consent would not be systematically needed. It will depend on the wish of each participant to engage either in research interviews or focus group discussion. If one does not accept to participate, there will be no need for personal data collection and no informed consent form will be signed.
- Focus groups and research interviews: participants will be selected on the basis of data collected through the quantitative survey. They will be sent the informed consent form and the information sheet a few days before the focus group.

4. Data protection

In compliance with European Parliament and Council Directive 95/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, only data with a strict connection with the aim of the research, in some cases including information about professional or educational background, will be collected and adhered to strict anonymization policy.

Collected research data will be analyzed for the whole group of participants, rather than individually, in order to better secure their privacy and anonymity. In general, no link between a statements and a participant will be possible. However, for case study research (research within a specific localization, organisation or project), despite the non-disclosure of identity and data anonymization, researcher cannot exclude that other individuals familiar with the case might identify the participant. In this case, the participants will be informed about the possible data identification and the strict confidentiality of their statements. They will also be ensured that researchers have obliged themselves to never disclose nor confirm their identity to anyone.

In addition, participants will be informed that quotations from interview transcripts may be used in publications. In such cases the quotes are also anonymized and no personal information disclosed.

In general, no pictures of participants will be taken. In case that pictures of participants will be taken and also used for illustration in publications or demonstrations, additional consent of the respective participants will be required.

Furthermore, the data will be stored in a secured server of each partner individually and confidentiality of it will be preserved. Collected data will not be available to anyone outside the project's team.

The personal information will be stored for the duration of the project until March 2020. After this date, all personal data if provided (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) will be deleted. Anonymised transcriptions and audio recording of the interview as well as basic socio-demographic data of the participants (e.g. sex, age group, religion) will be stored beyond March 2020 according to standard research procedures. The data will only be accessible for scientific purposes and may be drawn upon in the framework of other research projects.

WP3.3 Risk governance
Public perception of geothermal energy

Informed Consent

Group Discussion on Geothermal energy

I agree to take part in the group discussion on the above-mentioned issue as described in the Project Information Sheet (attached to this form). I have been informed on the fact that I am participating in a research project, on the agenda of the group discussion, and on how the discussion will be recorded, stored and handled.

If I as a participant wish to leave at any time during the discussion, I will be free to do so without giving a reason. However all recordings made up to this point, may be used by the researchers.

I further agree to the audio/video recording of the group discussion, as well as to the transcription and translation of the audio recordings. Any analysis and interpretation of the data will be done in an anonymised form, allowing no link between statements and particular participants. I am aware that some quotations of mine may be used in publicly available reports in anonymised form.

The researchers will keep the participants' identity strictly confidential. Personal information will only serve for organizational purposes concerning the group discussions. The personal information that I have supplied to the researchers will be stored for the duration of the project until March 2020. After this date, all personal data (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) will be deleted. Anonymised transcriptions and audio/video recordings of the discussions as well as basic socio-demographic data of the participants (e.g. sex, age group, place of residence,...) will be stored beyond March 2020 according to standard research procedures. The data will only be accessible for scientific purposes and may be drawn upon in the framework of other research projects.

Place, Date:

Signature

Focus Group Participant
Name, City, Country

Responsible Researcher
Name, Institutional Address

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WP3.3 Risk governance
Public perception of geothermal energy

Project Information Sheet

Research Project by the University of Strasbourg

You are being invited to take part in a focus group discussion. Before deciding whether you would like to take part or not, you may want to know why the focus group discussions are being done, and what taking part means. Please take time to read the following information and contact a member of the research team at the address below if you require further information.

What is the purpose of the project?

The central aim of the study is to investigate how people coming from different cultural backgrounds perceive geothermal energy and geothermal projects and position themselves towards it. This study is part of a broader European project (www.destress-h2020.eu).

Who is carrying out this project?

The research team consists of social scientist. For France, the LISEC (Education and communication studies laboratory) is conducting the research in this project. [Brief description of the institution: 2-3 sentences]

How have I been chosen?

The study aims at getting a good cross-section of the views and attitudes of members of the public on aspects of geothermal energy. Our intention is to choose people with different personal backgrounds to allow for a diversity of opinions, as well as interaction in a lively discussion. We consider everyone's view to be equally important.

What will the discussion be like and what am I supposed to do?

The group discussion will be approximately 2 hours long involving 6 to 10 participants. The discussion will be moderated in order to guarantee that all participants get equal opportunities to speak. You are expected to actively take part in the discussion as well as to respect to the other participant's views and to engage with their opinions. This should provide a constructive discussion climate. The discussion will be audio/video recorded and thereafter transcribed into text. The audio/video recording allows the researchers to focus on the discussions without taking notes and to analyse what you have said in an adequate way.

If I choose to participate, what am I expected to do next?

Attached to this information sheet you find a consent form that you are asked to sign. This form is your written agreement to take part. Please read it and consider it carefully in making your decision. If you agree to participate, please bring the signed consent form along to the focus group discussion. Should you have further questions do not hesitate to contact us.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

Your participation in the discussion will contribute to improve the understanding of social, political and cultural standpoints towards geothermal energy and possibly contribute to an elaboration of guidelines.

What happens to the results of the group discussion?

Your views expressed during the group discussion will be an important part of material used in the research project. The material will be used only in an anonymised form and your personal data will be kept strictly confidential. The discussion records will be safely handled and stored by the researchers involved and in line with the requirements of the data protection acts.

Who is funding the study and who is conducting the research?

The study is being funded by the European Commission and is conducted for France by researchers at the LISEC of the University of Strasbourg. As an employee of the Strasbourg University, Philippe Chavot will carry out the research. He is conducting the research together with [collaborators].

When will the discussion take place?

Focus Group Discussion:

When: (please come on time)

Where:

We will call you by telephone at least one day before to confirm that you are still happy to attend. We kindly ask you to call us if for unexpected reasons you are not able to take part in the discussion.

[Contact Information]

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