

# D1.3 Gender Equality and Ethics Management Plan

WP1 COORDINATE – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION



## Document Information

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## List of abbreviations

DoA – Description of Action

GA – Grant Agreement

WP – working package

# 1 Executive summary

The overall objective of the Circ-Boost project is to enable and demonstrate an increase in the large-scale uptake of integrated circular solutions in European construction value chains demonstrated through five large scale pilots.

Throughout its activities, Circ-Boost will implement and monitor a gender equality and ethics management plan to ensure full compliance and going beyond the current EU and national legislative framework.

For this purpose, the deliverable D1.3 summarises the ethics requirements and self-assessment procedure for the project, as well as the gender dimension in its research and innovation activities.

An appropriate allocation of resources will be ensured to carry out all these activities guided and monitored by the Gender Equality and Ethics Officer.

The deliverable presents direct guidelines on:

- beneficence and non-maleficence of end users participating in the project;
- engagement of end users participating in the project;
- informed consent;
- compliance with data protection legislation;
- gender equality.

Finally, templates are provided for informed consent for collecting anonymous and confidential data.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Circ-Boost at a glance

Circ-Boost aims to become a focal point and interaction node for different emerging technologies to foster circularity in buildings and the construction sector. The overall objective of the project is to enable and demonstrate an increase in the large-scale uptake of integrated circular solutions (ICS) in the European construction value chains demonstrated through five large scale pilots. The project's core consists of five pilot projects, deployed in different European regions, highlighting and demonstrating at large scale novel and integrated solutions for demolition, construction waste processing, management, and valorisation in new products. Transversal activities of digitalization will allow collaboration between the pilot projects and more efficient use of digital tools and platforms.

Targeted activities are envisioned for boosting and maximising the pilot projects' commercial and business potential through effective exploitation measures. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the solutions demonstrated will actually be adopted by the industry, the project will support construction and design companies in educating and training their workforce to optimally use the new technologies as part of training activities. The Circ-Boost project will also leverage the partners' existing regional and international networks and connect with new networks, initiatives, and projects to disseminate and compare project results with a wide audience of construction stakeholders increasing the overall uptake potential of circular solutions. Finally, tailor-made communication and dissemination measures will further support the dissemination of project results with policy makers, and European-wide construction industry, as well as the promotion of the project's success.

### 2.2 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this deliverable is to provide practical guidance to project partners for the day-to-day gender equality and ethics management of the project. It describes in detail:

- gender diversity and ethics opportunities and challenges;
- monitoring of balanced participation in teams;
- integration of the gender dimension in research programmes and communication;
- promotion of good practices on gender roles and ethical issues related to professional and scientific responsibility.

## 3 Ethical value and Legal framework relevant to Circ-Boost

### 3.1 Ethics requirements and self-assessment

Compliance with ethical principles and applicable international, EU and national law in the implementation of research activities not originally envisaged (or not described in detail) in the DoA will be ensured.

The Consortium also confirms that any ethical concerns raised by those activities will be handled following rigorously the recommendations provided in the European Commission Ethics Self-Assessment Guidelines.

### 3.2 Gender dimension in the research and innovation concept

Circ-Boost will encourage local actors, especially in the pilot regions, to replicate similar models that are strongly focused on involving women in the workforce. This will be done through a series of workshops

titled “The importance of women in the creation of circular construction value chains”, where particular success stories will be identified and shared. Open round table discussions “Issues and challenges for women in the construction industry” with women engineers, from both academia & industry will be organised. As a result of the success stories analysis, the workshops and the open round tables, a chapter of the Circ-Boost policy brief will be drawn up to identify possible changes in policy design and implementation to boost women employment in the construction sector.

Additionally, a Gender Equality and Ethics Officer will be appointed to integrate the diversity and gender dimension in the project activities, research, and procedure. The Gender Equality and Ethics Officer will analyse the status of gender diversity and identify success and challenges; monitor balanced participation in teams, integration of the gender dimension in researching programmes and communication; promote good practices, and other initiatives.

In particular, integrating gender equality issues at each stage of the project cycle, following the three objectives of the Commission’s activities on gender equality in Horizon Europe<sup>1</sup>:

- Fostering gender balance in research teams;
- Ensuring gender balance in decision-making, “in order to reach the Commission’s target of 40% of the under-represented sex in panels and groups (50% for Advisory Groups)”;
- Integrating gender/sex analysis in research and innovation content as a means to “improve the scientific quality and societal relevance of the produced knowledge, technology and/or innovation”.

## 4 Allocation of resources

Following the Circ-Boost GA, a part of the project budget is allocated to cover the costs related to gender equality and ethics management activities and monitoring. These costs will be re-assessed along the course of the project and forecasts will be verified with the partners every 6 months.

## 5 Gender equality and ethics monitoring and management

### 5.1 Guidance on beneficence and non-maleficence of end users participating in the project

The following principles should be considered when conducting project activities involving end users:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en)

- All Circ-Boost activities with end users should be scientifically sound and their purpose should be to contribute to knowledge;
- All Circ-Boost activities with end users should be undertaken and supervised by those who are appropriately qualified and experienced;
- The importance of the objective should be in proportion to the inherent risk to the subject;
- All Circ-Boost activities with end users should be preceded by careful assessment of predictable risks in comparison with foreseeable benefits to the subject or to others;
- Activities with end users should not be undertaken where the hazards involved are not believed to be predictable;
- Adequate procedures should be in place to deal with any potential hazards.

## 5.2 Guidance on engagement of end users participating in the project

End users are to participate in the project at different stages of the work plan. To this end, both on-line and off-line engagement activities will be pursued. The specific mix of end user characteristics to be involved at each project stage and particular selection criteria to be applied respectively will be specified as part of a dedicated user/stakeholder engagement strategy developed under WP2 (Task 2.1, D2.1, Lead beneficiary CAP). At least three different categories of users are envisaged to be involved:

- Construction companies and workers;
- Architects, designers and project planners;
- Waste treatment recycling facilities;
- Municipalities and public authorities;
- Environmental / Urban planning NGOs;
- Civil engineering and other thematic research institutes and universities;
- European and national policy makers;
- Citizens.

In any case, participation in project activities is to be voluntary. The engagement procedure to be detailed as part of Task 2.1 will rely on a number of general principles:

- participation will be voluntary;
- participation will only be possible upon informed consent;
- participants will have the right to refuse or withdraw at any time without any negative repercussions.

## 5.3 Guidance on informed consent

The following principles should be considered in relation to achieving informed consent from users participating in the project:

- Each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, anticipated benefits and potential hazards of the research;
- Any documentation given to potential participants should be comprehensible and there should be an opportunity for them to raise any issues of concern;
- Consent should be required in writing and records of consent should be maintained;
- Potential participants must be informed that they are free to withdraw consent to participation at any time;
- There should be a procedure for making complaints and participants should be made aware of this;
- All participants should be volunteers. Considerable care should be taken where consent is sought from those in a dependent position and it should be made clear that refusal to participate will not lead to any adverse consequences. For example, clients of public service providers must be assured that any decision not to participate will not prejudice or affect in any way the services they currently receive;
- Any inducement offered to participants should be declared and should be in accordance with appropriate guidelines;

It is not envisaged that persons who do not have the legal competence to give informed consent will participate in any project activities.

It is also not planned to involve vulnerable individuals whose vulnerability/stigmatisation will potentially be enhanced by the project. The topic will be revisited at regular intervals in WP2 planning discussion and adequate action taken in case that vulnerable individuals will be engaged in whatever ways. In general, user involvement within the project will adhere to the commonly accepted ethical research principles of beneficence and non-maleficence.

In case any personal data is to be gathered, these will be anonymised for further use by the project. It may also happen that data is to be gathered which is to be considered as confidential. In both cases informed consent will be sought from individuals involved. Two generic consent forms are annexed to this document. These will be customised to the particular circumstances prevailing at a given evaluation setting.

## 5.4 Guidance on compliance with data protection legislation

Any data processing activities within the project will be carried out in accordance with European and national data protection legislation. At the European governance level, the EU Directive 95/46/EC will remain in force until 2018. From then on, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>32</sup> will take effect. As discussed earlier in this document, all EU countries have transposed the Directive of 2005 into national laws. The Circ-Boost collaborative platform and services will be assessed by the project in relation to their conformity with European and national legislation. As far as required, the project will seek advice from the competent authorities at national level.

When it comes to ensuring data privacy during the piloting process in particular, all pilot sites are to follow a common data protection protocol as follows:

- Only research/other personnel within the participating organisations should be granted access to data.
- All data must be made to be anonymous.
- Only summaries of the quantitative data should be available. Excerpts (e.g. quotations) from qualitative data may be included in any results section of any report or academic publication.
- Participants must be treated with respect at all times and their anonymity protected.
- Pseudonyms or codes must be used to replace any identifiers within the data. Every quotation must be made anonymous, using e.g. a pseudonym, when quotations from interviews are to be included in reports and publications arising from the project.
- Personal paper-based details of participants must be kept in locked filing cabinets.
- Transcription must be made anonymous
- Data (transcripts, audio and video recordings) will be kept in locked cabinets.
- Interview/focus group recording, transcription and analysis: It is essential that data is made to appear anonymous. Reference numbers must be used to identify tapes, transcriptions and data analyses.
- All information that could be used to identify the participant (names, address, and personal details) must be separated from the data permanently before analysis.
- Reports must only contain selected passages of interview transcripts and must not publish transcripts in their entirety.
- Video recordings of persons will also be separated from identifiers permanently and will not be used publicly without prior informed consent.

## 5.5 Guidance on gender equality

WP and Pilot leaders are asked to ensure that their teams are fully aware of the gender dimension of any community engagement activity planned within the framework of the Circ-Boost project through the collaboration with the Gender Equality and Ethics Officer. The following list of questions derived from the work of the “Gender in EU-funded Research” toolkit<sup>2</sup> should be used for discussing relevant issues concerning the practical implications of Circ-Boost’s commitment to gender equality:

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch/index\\_downloads.html](http://www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch/index_downloads.html)

- How will the WP and Pilot teams ensure that the local stakeholders to be involved in the deliberative processes represent both men's and women's interests?
- Will gender differences be explicitly addressed in the discussions and during the workshops and conferences?
- Will the WPs and Pilots achieve a balanced representation of men and women among the participants and speakers in local events such as workshops, conferences, mapping parties?

As a general rule, project partners should seek:

- strong participation of female researchers in the project, wherever possible aiming for a share of at least 40% of women in research teams as measured by number of participants or person hours spent on the project;
- at least 40% share of each gender in members of all project decision-making bodies;
- use of moderation techniques (at meetings and workshops) which make sure that female participants are given as much voice as males.

Consortium partners are recommended to provide their staff with gender training. As stipulated in the annex of the Horizon Europe Work Programme, costs for this type of training are eligible for funding from the project budget. The objective is to encourage researchers to further develop and share gender expertise in relation to Circ-Boost stakeholder engagement activities. The Circ-Boost project will prioritise those partners which still need to provide training in order to align their processes with this plan.

Data on gender management in Circ-Boost will be collected regularly by the coordinator and then analysed and reported in the periodic progress reports. For this purpose, each project partner is asked to report on an annual basis data on:

- % of women participants in Circ-Boost decision-making bodies;
- % of person hours in Circ-Boost worked by women;
- % of women participating in community engagement activities at pilot sites;
- % of women in groups of external parties advising the project at pilot sites;
- % of women on expert panels at the conferences organised within Circ-Boost;
- % of women in the External Expert Advisory Board;
- % of women working on the development of technical solutions within the project.

The data will be reported in total numbers and percentages wherever appropriate.

# 6 Consent form templates

## 6.1 Consent Form Template – Anonymous Data

I understand that my participation in the Circ-Boost project will involve [*provide brief description of what is required, e.g. ...completing two questionnaires about my attitudes toward circular construction which will require approximately 20 minutes of my time.*].

I understand that participation in this project is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with [*name*].

I understand that the information provided by me will be held totally anonymously, so that it is impossible to trace this information back to me individually. I understand that this information may be retained indefinitely.

I also understand that at the end of the project I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the project.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(NAME) consent to participate in the project conducted by [*name*]

Signed:

Date:

## 6.2 Consent Form Template – Confidential Data

I understand that my participation in the WeGovNow project will involve *[provide brief description of what is required, e.g., ...completing two questionnaires about my attitudes toward circular construction which will require approximately 20 minutes of my time.]*.

I understand that participation in this project is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and without penalty.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with *[name]*.

*[select one of the two following paragraphs depending on design]:*

I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only the *[name(s) of project team members where applicable]* can trace this information back to me individually. The information will be retained for up to *[state amount of time data will be held]* when it will be deleted/destroyed. I understand that I can ask for the information I provide to be deleted/destroyed at any time and I can have access to the information at any time.

OR IF DATA IS TO BE EVENTUALLY ANONYMISED:

I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only *[name(s) of project team members where applicable]* can trace this information back to me individually. I understand that my data will be anonymised *[state when this will happen, for example at the end of the project or on a specific date]* and that after this point no-one will be able to trace my information back to me. The information will be retained for up to *[state amount of time data will be held]* when it will be deleted/destroyed. I understand that I can ask for the information I provide to be deleted/destroyed at any time up until the data has been anonymised and I can have access to the information up until the data has been anonymised.

I also understand that at the end of the project I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the project.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(NAME) consent to participate in the project conducted by *[name]*

Signed:

Date:

**End of Document**