

BUDGET IT

Building Gender+ Equality Through Gender+
Budgeting For Institutional
Transformation

D5.2. Ethics Plan



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Authors	Suzana Ignjatovic
Institution	University
Email	@khas.edu.tr

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List of Contributors

Suzana Ignjatovic

Branko Radulovic

Mary Lou O'Neil

Contents

1. Introduction.....	7
2. Purpose and scope of the Deliverable	7
3. Legislation.....	7
4. Ethics management plan	9
4.1. Monitoring.....	9
4.2. Assessment.....	9
4.3. Data Management Plan.....	9
5. Ethical procedures.....	10
5.1. Risks and harm	10
5.2. Research instruments.....	11
5.3. Informed consent	11
5.4. Recruitment and interviewing.....	13
5.5. Data Management, Dissemination, and Exploitation	13
5.6. Intervention.....	13
Annex 1. Informed consent form – GEAM survey.....	14
Annex 2. Informed consent form – focus groups.....	16
Annex 3. Informed consent form – workshops.....	18



1. Introduction

The BUDGET-IT Project aims to advance inclusive gender+ equality in the institutions of the widening countries (Bosnia, Serbia, and Turkey) by implementing gender+ budgeting as a tool of institutional transformation. The BUDGET-IT Project will collect data from institutional sources (universities and municipalities) and human subjects (focus groups and surveys). Baseline data will be processed and analyzed as part of gender+ equality plan (re)evaluation. Human subjects are also involved in the interventions and activities related to institutional transformation. The Ethics Plan provides the methodology and ethical procedures to mitigate risks of ethics violations and address any arising issues in these activities. This document is the first version of the Ethics Plan that will be revised and updated during the project lifecycle.

2. Purpose and scope of the Deliverable

Ethical issues and data management are addressed in WP5 (Data Management and Ethics) and WP6 (Ethics requirements). The Ethics Plan is the output of Task 5.3. within WP5. The Ethics Plan will be also used in the preparation of WP6 Deliverables D6.2 and D6.3 (Ethics Report).

The main objectives of the Ethics Plan:

- to ensure compliance of the project activities with relevant EU and national legislation
- to develop procedures for monitoring, assessment, and reporting of ethical issues in the project
- to provide technical instruments for ethical compliance of project activities (e.g. consent forms).

The Ethics Plan will be utilized as input in the following project tasks:

- WP2 – (Re)Evaluating GEPs: Task 2.1 Data collection; Task 2.3 Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring (GEAM) Survey; Task 2.4 Training for inclusive GEPs for universities and municipalities;
- WP3 – Implementation of Gender+ Audit and Gender+ Budgeting: Task.3.1 Gender+ budgets; Task 3.2 Integrated GEP-GB for all partners and audit guideline.
- WP5 – Data Management and Ethics: Task 5.1 (Data Management Plan); Task 5.2 (Data Management Workshop); Task 5.3. (Ethics); WP6 (Ethics Requirements).

3. Legislation

The Ethics Plan aims to ensure the alignment of the project with ethical standards and requirements deriving from European Legislation, the Horizon Europe program, the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation),¹ and the ALLEA European Code of Conduct for

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679>



Research Integrity.² The legislative framework include EU legislation and directives, but also protocols and guidelines of good research practice in the social sciences and humanities: European Commission (2018) Ethics in Social Science and Humanities.³

All activities will be performed in compliance with EU legislation and national legislation of the participating countries outside the EU (Turkey, Bosnia, and Serbia). The collected data will be transferred or stored by one of the project partners in a country outside the European Union (Turkey, Bosnia, Serbia) which is going to be addressed in the Data Management Plan. The ethics management procedures will take into consideration any issues arising from diverging legislation in the widening countries (Turkey, Bosnia, Serbia): personal data protection legislation; access to data from public institutions; collecting personal data for scientific purposes; and local regulations that may enhance or prevent gender budgeting in public institutions. Local differences in legislation will be addressed in the next revision of the Ethics Plan.

The following GDPR provisions are operationalized in the Ethics Plan (chapters 4 and 5) to ensure the ethical standards for human subjects participating in the BUDGET-IT project:

- Article 4. Directly and indirectly identifying data (directly – names; indirectly, any cross-referencing information can be an identifier);
- Article 5. Principles relating to processing of personal data, including processing for research purposes (Lawfulness, fairness and transparency; Purpose limitation; Data minimization; Accuracy; Storage limitation; Integrity and confidentiality; Accountability);
- Article 7. Conditions for consent (the consent can be withdrawn at any time).
- Article 9. Processing of special categories of personal data, especially “personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership”;
- Article 9(2) sets out the explicit consent of the data subject: “the data subject has given explicit consent to the processing of those personal data for one or more specified purposes (...)”;
- Article 13. If data are collected from an individual, the subject must be informed as to who is collecting, but also provide the data subject with the “information necessary to ensure fair and transparent processing”;
- Article 14. sets out the data subject’s right to information⁴.

² <https://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ALLEA-European-Code-of-Conduct-for-Research-Integrity-2017.pdf>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_ethics-soc-science-humanities_en.pdf

⁴ https://edps.europa.eu/sites/edp/files/publication/20-01-06_opinion_research_en.pdf



The above provisions will be included in ethical guidelines for the planned activities of BUDGET-IT project that include data collection from human subjects (research data)⁵. Data and materials obtained through the GEAM Survey and focus groups will be managed in accordance with the outlined provisions of the GDPR as the legal framework of the BUDGET-IT project.

4. Ethics management plan

The following mechanisms will be applied to ensure compliance with ethical standards in BUDGET-IT project:

4.1. Monitoring

The Ethics advisor is appointed in the initiation phase of the project. The Ethics Advisor is responsible for ethics management and monitoring. The Ethics advisor will provide support and directions in any arising ethical issues.

Ethics reports will be submitted as deliverables (D6.2 and D6.3) covering the 1st (M12) and 2nd reporting period (M36).

The data management protection officer will be responsible for data management development and implementation.

4.2. Assessment

Ethics assessment will be conducted during all stages of the project lifecycle for specific project tasks. The Ethics Advisor, the Advisory Board and the partner organizations will have timely consultations about any arising ethical issues. For example, project instruments (interview guides, questionnaires, workshops programs) will be assessed for ethical compliance in the pilot stage and during fieldwork.

In addition to internal procedures, ethical clearance will be requested from ethics authorities in each respective partner institution (internal review boards/research ethics committee). Ethical approval is obligatory for the GEAM survey and focus groups.

4.3. Data Management Plan

The project will collect primary and secondary data. Primary data will be generated through qualitative and quantitative research (focus groups and surveys). Primary data from focus groups include audio recordings and transcripts of interviews. The survey will provide data gathered from the questionnaires, and a dataset will be created from the collected data. The project will also use secondary data from institutional sources (municipalities and universities) and official statistics. The procedures for data processing, storage and transfer are addressed in the Data Management Plan (Deliverable D5.1).

⁵ https://www.inshs.cnrs.fr/sites/institut_inshs/files/pdf/Guide_rgpd_2021_en_0.pdf



5. Ethical procedures

All project tasks related to data collection, data processing, and human subjects will be checked for ethical issues. The respective differences between surveys and focus groups will be taken into consideration.

5.1. Risks and harm

BUDGET-IT will comply with ethical principles and respective procedures that minimise risks and harm in the studies, following EU legislation and guidelines of good research practice in the social sciences and humanities. The checklist⁶ indicates that the planned studies in the BUDGET-IT project are low-risk research activities. However, there are potential risks that should be considered in research planning.

CATEGORY	RISKS	BUDGET-IT RISK ASSESSMENT
Participants	Children, vulnerable groups (e.g. persons unable to consent, minorities, marginalised people, migrants, refugees, victims of abuse and violence)	Even though students and employees of the respective institutions (universities and municipalities) are vulnerable groups, they are “participants who are in any way dependent on you or your staff” ⁷ .
Sites of research	Conflict regions, sites of historical value to indigenous people, troubled neighbourhoods, non-EU countries or regions within them where the economic, political, environmental and health conditions may pose risks.	Sites of research basically safe micro environment (universities and municipalities) and meso environment (cities). Participating non-EU countries with autocratic/hybrid regimes (Wurzburg Democracy matrix) which may pose political risks to participants in micro-environments (institutions).
Sensitive areas of research	Risk of exposure to harm to participants, researchers; potentially sensitive topics, such as participants’ sexual behaviour; illegal or political activities; experience	Both studies explore Gender+ research topics. Intersectionalities may include vulnerable groups

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_ethics-soc-science-humanities_en.pdf

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_ethics-soc-science-humanities_en.pdf

	of violence, abuse or exploitation; mental health; participants' personal or family lives; or their gender or ethnic status. Research into criminal activity.	(disability, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities)
Methodology	Deception, covert research, invasive methods (fMRI for children) as part of interdisciplinary research, profiling and web-crawling	The purpose of the GEAM Survey and focus groups is transparent. Online risks (GEAM Survey) are prevented by data management procedures.
Data processing, sensitive data	Data collection and processing to be implemented – risk of traceability and re-identification through small groups of participants, linking of large amounts of data from different sources; uncertainty whether children are participating; sensitive data	Focus groups may pose risks of identification through small groups of participants
Consequences of research	Potential for misuse of findings	Intervention (institutional transformation) may pose risks to people in the respective institutions (some categories of students or employees)

*Source: Ethics in Social Science and Humanities (2018: 20) (table modified)

5.2. Research instruments

Transparency of research goals is ensured by the best possible understanding of the study and its purpose. The GEAM survey applies a standard questionnaire to explore different aspects of gender equality in institutional settings. The questionnaire (selected modules) will be translated into local languages and adjusted to provide content clarity. Focus groups will be conducted in a local language, and the interview guide will be checked for ethical issues.

Informed consent forms will be an integral part of the survey questionnaire (on a separate sheet in focus groups).

5.3. Informed consent

Informed consent forms are used as instruments to obtain explicit consent from research participants. Informed consent forms for surveys and focus groups (Annex 1 and Annex 2) provide comprehensive information about the study and their role in the study. The copies of signed consent forms will be kept on file as part of ethics monitoring during the project⁸.

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf



Research participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, personal data protection, the content of the questionnaire (or focus groups), benefits and risks of the study, the process of collecting data (conversation, recording, online administration), research participant's rights during the study (voluntary participation, the right to withdraw consent), and information about further data processing and exploitation. The GEAM Survey will be administered online, and the consent form template (Annex 1) will be adapted for online survey. Research participants must give explicit consent to participate in the study. To obtain informed consent, the participants should be given all the relevant information about the study and their role in it.

Below is the checklist from the Ethics in Social Science and Humanities (2018: 13-14) that has been consulted in the development of informed consent form templates.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM: CHECKLIST⁹

- Give participants a clear explanation of the aims, overall purpose, methods and implications of the research.
- Explain that participation is voluntary.
- Remind participants that they have a right to withdraw their consent at any time without any consequences.
- Explain the degree of benefit, risks, burden or discomfort involved in participation. Give an estimate of the time and effort expected of participants.
- Explain precautions to ensure participants' safety and provide information on insurance, if there is any
- Explain who is funding the research and for what purpose.
- Disclose who will benefit from the research.
- Give a firm commitment to protecting respondents' anonymity and privacy (provided that this can genuinely be guaranteed).
- Make a clear commitment to treating personal and sensitive information confidentially.
- Reassure participants that there are secure procedures for analysing any data gathered.
- Explain clearly who will have access to any data that participants provide.
- Consider any unintended/unexpected/incidental findings and explain how you intend to deal with such findings.
- Explain briefly where research findings will be published.
- Offer to provide respondents with further information about research if they ask for it.
- Give the name and contact details of the contact person who can answer any queries participants may have.

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_ethics-soc-science-humanities_en.pdf



- Clarify possible uses to which data may be put in future (if this is envisaged) and clarify whether participants will be asked for consent again if this is the case. Cover any issues relating to copyright of data and other materials used in the research.

5.4. Recruitment and interviewing

Procedures for the recruitment of Research Participants should be based on ethical principles. According to Ethics Self-Assessment, adult participants will be selected for the sample. All research participants are “volunteers, adults and those able to give consent”. Another potential risk may arise during the interview, notably in focus groups. In order to provide confidentiality, the organizer may consider external interviewers. The recruitment for the online GEAM survey should avoid the snowball method and carefully take advantage of social networks and online groups to select research participants.

5.5. Data Management, Dissemination, and Exploitation

Primary data (the GEAM survey and focus groups) and secondary data (institutions) will be used for different activities during the project: intervention, dissemination, and exploitation. All personal data will be managed following the EU-GDPR principles of data minimization, storage limitation, integrity, and confidentiality. In focus groups, all personal information will be anonymized by pseudonymization in the transcripts and publications. Other dissemination, communication, and exploitation methods (policy briefs, conference papers) must not lead to a breach of agreed confidentiality and anonymity. Alternative identifiers will be used to prevent any unintended indirect identification. Audio recordings will be deleted from recording devices after being transcribed. The GEAM survey will be administered online, so the data need to be protected from unauthorized access and misuse. All personal data from the survey and focus groups will be available only to authorized persons. The data will be stored with the highest level of security. The data management protection officer will ensure data security.

5.6. Intervention

The activities related to institutional transformation need to be assessed for ethical issues (intersectionalities). The planned activities include workshops and training to produce inclusive gender+ budgets (year 2) and gender+ equality plan and gender+ budget will be integrated into one inclusive document (year 3). Evaluation questionnaires and short demographic questionnaires for workshops/training will be checked for compliance with ethical principles and standards. The participants in training activities (institutional transformation) will be informed about the purpose of the activities and their role as participants when they receive the invitation to activities. They will be asked to give explicit consent that during BUDGET-IT activities (events, meetings, trainings, and conference) will be taken video record and this video record can be used for communication and dissemination purposes.



Annex 1. Informed consent form – GEAM survey

BUDGET-IT **INFORMED CONSENT FORM** **Declaration of Consent: Participation in GEAM survey**

Project acronym	BUDGET-IT
Project name	Building Gender Equality through gender budgeting for Institutional Transformation
Project start date	1/1/2023
Duration of the project	36 months
Grant Agreement No	101094391
This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation program under grant agreement No 101094391	
Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this document are solely those of the project, not those of the European Commission.	
Building Gender+ Equality Through Gender+ Budgeting For Institutional Transformation (BUDGET-IT) is a three-year project designed to use gender+ budgeting to transform institutions to advance inclusive gender+ equality and enhance the reputation, inclusiveness, and research excellence of the widening countries of Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey assisted by leading university counterparts in Italy and Spain. BUDGET-IT will use gender+ budgeting as a tool to move past the current stagnation surrounding gender+ equality.	

You are selected to participate in this study because we are interested in your views about gender equality in your institution. The survey includes questions about your personal background, experience with gender equality, working conditions, organizational culture and climate. Please note that no questions are mandatory, but we encourage you to share your views so that we can understand the situation in your institution.

The survey will take about _____ minutes.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may end the interview at any time.

The information you share with us will be kept completely confidential. Any identifying personal information will be de-linked from your responses and protected from unauthorized access and misuse. Study findings will be presented only in summary form in reports and publications.

The results of this study will be used only for research purposes.

If you have any questions, please contact _____

Consent

I understand my rights as outlined above and I consent to participate in this study.

Signature:

Name:



Date:

Place:



Annex 2. Informed consent form – focus groups

BUDGET-IT
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Declaration of Consent: Participation in focus groups

Project acronym	BUDGET-IT
Project name	Building Gender Equality through gender budgeting for Institutional Transformation
Project start date	1/1/2023
Duration of the project	36 months
Grant Agreement No	101094391
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You are selected to participate in this session because we are interested in your views about gender equality in your institution. This conversation will be audio-recorded to capture your statements accurately. The recorded conversation will be transcribed, and after the transcription, the recordings will be destroyed. The transcribed material will not contain personally identifiable information. We will use your alias names instead of your real names to quote your statements. In order to maintain confidentiality, please do not share other participants' identities and statements with others outside this session. Your participation is voluntary. You can leave the session anytime, and we will remove your statements from further analysis. We also ask you to fill in a short demographic questionnaire. The results of this study will be used only for scientific purposes, so please feel free to share your point of view. We appreciate that you have taken the time to participate in this conversation.

Consent

I understand my rights as outlined above and I consent to participate in this study.

Signature:

Name:

Date:



Place:



Annex 3. Informed consent form – workshops

BUDGET-IT

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Declaration of Consent: Name, Photographs, Video or Other Images

Project acronym	BUDGET-IT
Project name	Building Gender Equality through gender budgeting for Institutional Transformation
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Consent

By signing this document, during BUDGET-IT activities you are agreeing that the activities (events, meetings, trainings, and conference) will be taken video record and this video record can be used for communication and dissemination purposes for BUDGET-IT website and BUDGET-IT social media channels (Twitter, Instagram) , and that your name may be listed in the list of participants which will be included in the relevant deliverable report to the Commission which may also be part of a publicly available document.

Photos taken during the course of BUDGET-IT events may also be used for communication and dissemination purposes including but not limited to the BUDGET-IT website and BUDGET-IT social media channels (Twitter, Instagram).

I consent to the use of my name, picture related to my person, in photographs taken during BUDGET-IT events.

I do not consent to the use of my name, picture related to my person, in photographs taken during BUDGET-IT events.

Signature:

Name:



BUDGET IT

Date:

Place:

