



STARS 4 Water

Ethical requirements

Deliverable D7.2

31-03-2023

Ethical requirements

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Summary

Three different ethics issues have been identified that require attention during the STARS4Water project execution (Annex 1):

1. Human participants, as the project involves stakeholders and other non-project parties in project activities
2. Protection of Personal Data (POPD), as the project will potentially collect personal data in meetings, during interviews, in questionnaires, etc
3. Non-EU countries, as the project involves three partners from two non-EU countries.

This report describes these ethical issues and the measures taken by the STARS4Water consortium to comply with national and European legislation.

We recognize the importance of open and FAIR access to the research data. STARS4Water D7.1 addresses the Data Management Plan (DMP).

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1 Introduction

1.1 About STARS4Water

The STARS4Water project aims to improve the understanding of climate change impacts on water resources availability and the vulnerabilities for ecosystems, society and the economy at river basin scale. The project includes two distinctive elements: first, the need for an international stakeholder community to address their specific information needs and data requirements. Second, the development and application of innovative data services, models, tools to fulfil those needs.

STARS4Water seeks to demonstrate the benefit of existing and new data services to support decision-making in water resources management. This consortium will develop and deliver new data services and data driven models for better decision-making in water resources planning at the river basin scale and support actions for adaptive, resilient and sustainable management of freshwater resources in the future. The services will be co-designed with stakeholders to meet their needs, ensuring their relevance and uptake beyond the lifetime of the project. Following a process of co-creation, we aim to provide stakeholders with next generation river basin tools and build a strong Community of Practice.

More information on STARS4Water can be found on <https://www.stars4water.eu/>

1.2 Ethics review

The European Commission in its Ethics Summary Report (see annex) has identified three key issue that are of concern during the STARS4Water project, together with specific requirements that the project shall satisfy for it. This deliverable regards the ethical issues concerning:

1. Human participants.
2. Protection of Personal Data (POPD)
3. Non-EU countries.

This report describes these ethical issues and the measures taken by the STARS4Water consortium to comply with national and European legislation.

2 Protective measures

All STARS4Water project activities will be conducted according to national legal and ethical requirements of the countries in which activities take place. STARS4Water will comply with Horizon Europe ethical standards and guidelines.

2.1 Human participants

Consent

STARS4Water adopts a co-creation approach to reach the project's objectives. Besides project participants stakeholders will be invited to engage in co-creation sessions and voice their requirements. Surveys and questionnaires are used to complement the co-creation sessions.

Participation from outside the project consortium will be on a strictly voluntary basis. STARS4Water will inform each participant beforehand on several issues relating to their participation, such as, but not limited to: purpose of the meeting, expected activities, benefits and burdens of participating, data and privacy issues in processing and reporting and the right to discontinue participation. Results, e.g. a quote, will not be traceable to individuals without their consent.

Annex 2 provides a basic Informed Consent Form templates for interviews and other engagement activities. This template will be adapted to meet the demands for meetings.

Gender and Inclusiveness

Vulnerability is a key component of climate risk and gender inequality is a central reason why women are considered more vulnerable to climate change than men¹. In addition, gender equality is part of the Sustainable Development Goals. STARS4Water hence sets out to understand how to better integrate contextual local knowledge into modelling approaches used in adaptive, sustainable water management impact research. Gender will be considered both in the inputs and outputs of the various WPs. Water resources availability risks that are studied and proposed will be examined regarding the differences between men and women, in terms of synergies and trade-offs, acceptability and resonance with their policy objectives. River basin hubs activities play an important role in this and will be designed to consider the role of gender. Including gender-balanced stakeholder views and perceptions is an important objective of the project. STARS4Water will strive that women will be equally represented in the stakeholder groups engaging in co-creation activities of the project. Policy recommendations derived in the project at the various scales, from case studies to EU level, will include gender-specific considerations. Dissemination and communication activities will be devised to target women and men equally.

Gender be a criterion in selecting candidates for stakeholder panels, training workshops and other activities.

¹ Nellema, C., Verna, R. & Hislop, L, 2011. Women at the frontline of climate change: Gender risks and hopes. A Rapid Response Assessment. United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal. ISBN: 978-82-7701-099-1

Inclusiveness in STARS4Water goes beyond gender, and encompasses a broader view on diversity in teams, in co-creation processes and interviews. In STARS4Water co-creation processes the following key questions will be discussed when organising and executing co-creation activities:

1. Are all relevant voices (stakeholders) heard?
2. Is (preparatory) information accessible and understandable for all participants to engage?
3. Do all participants have equal and fair opportunities to contribute during sessions?
4. Do the results of a co-creation activity raise any inclusiveness issues?

To avoid any misunderstanding, in STARS4Water...

- ... no human research subjects, human embryonic stem cells or human tissues will be used or studied.
- ... the activities of the project do not involve any research that may cause harm to the environment, animals or plants.
- ... no vulnerable or high-risk groups (e.g. children, adults unable to consent, people in dependency relationship, vulnerable persons) will be involved.

2.2 Protection of Personal Data (POPD)

GDPR / Personal data and views

During the project, personal data are collected and stored to organize and monitor the project and to analyze the realization of specific project targets, for example gender balance. These personal data originate from meetings, surveys, co-creation workshops, studies and dissemination activities. Some of the project activities (e.g. training, workshops, etc.) will be visually recorded (photo, video) for communication and educational purposes. Such data are sensitive and subject to 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 (General Data Protection Regulation; 'GDPR'). The STARS4Water consortium partners commit to abide by the requirements of this regulation, also if they are non-EU States. This has been addressed in the consortium agreement:

Article 4.4: Specific responsibilities regarding data protection.

Where necessary, the Parties shall cooperate in order to enable one another to fulfil legal obligations arising under applicable data protection laws (the 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 relevant national data protection law applicable to said Party) within the scope of the performance and administration of the Project and of this Consortium Agreement.

In particular, the Parties shall, where necessary, conclude a separate data processing, data sharing and/or joint controller agreement before any data processing or data sharing takes place.

When collecting data...

- ... the GDPR principles (article 5 GDPT) will be followed, leading to a transparent use of a minimized amount of personal data limited to a specifically identified purpose only. Sharing with other partners will be in anonymized format where possible
- ... Personal data will be handled by the STARS4Water partner responsible for an activity and will only be anonymously exchanged unless exchange is essential to carry out the action.
- processing of personal data other than data required to carry out the action will be avoided.
- ... clear and accurate information on personal data collection will be given to each participant prior to their involvement in the project. Storage, sharing and publication of this information is voluntary following stakeholders' consent and mostly in anonymized format only.

The following groups of individuals are identified as among those who will be requested to approve processing of personal data and recordings, including consent to sharing and publication.

- Staff of the consortium partners
- Members of the International Advisory Board (IAB)
- Participants in the user community
- Participants workshops
- Participants training events and internships
- Visitors/registrants of the website, including social media

Committing to GDPR implies that the partner in charge will store the data consistent with the GDPR regulation and act upon breaches / data leaks in line with the GDPR. The approach to store data with partner institutes ensures clarity about responsibilities and proper procedures are in place.

Nevertheless, ANNEX 3 provides general guidance on personal data processing that can guide consortium partners.

Note that STARS4Water does not plan to collect any personal data that falls into special categories of personal data, such as race or ethnic origin, nor will it collect any data related to religion, political opinion, criminal history or likewise. During the lifetime of the project STARS4Water may record gender information to monitor 'gender and inclusiveness'.

In the unlikely case that personal information during the life-time of the project is exchanged, partners will ensure a safe transmission of such data. The transferred data will always be with GDPR compliant consortium partners. At no circumstances non-anonymous data will be exchanged with partners not bound by the GDPR.

In any case, no personal data or views will be collected and shared after the lifetime of project, except for official reporting of the project to the European Commission.

Websites, portals, webforms

The website, metadataportal and e-learning environment deserve some special attention with respect to personal data. For personal data collection, e.g. registrations for the site, for events, or questionnaires, a privacy policy statement will be included in the webforms, including information

on purpose of processing, categories of data-subjects and personal data being processed, duration, how to effectuate the rights as data-subject. It will be mandatory to accept this privacy policy.

The e-Privacy Directive is typically known as the cookie law. Annex 4 provides guidelines on cookies and sample text for the website www.STARS4Water.eu

Default settings will be that no cookies are stored on local machines. Analytical data (e.g. website visitors) will not be collected in a way that individual users can be traced.

The website will contain a webform to contact the project. Unless consent is given, personal e-mail addresses will not be published.

Deltares will be responsible for the website and GDPR compliance, as mentioned at the website.

Deliverable authors and contributors

The data and reports produced in the course of the project will become (in general) publicly available and can be freely used by the interested stakeholder groups. As stated in section 2.1 personal data will be anonymized. The exception are deliverable authors, contributors and reviewers whose names and affiliations will be included.

2.3 Non-EU countries

The consortium includes a beneficiary from Norway (NVE), a beneficiary and an associated partner from the United Kingdom (UKCEH). Within the setting of this project the handling of personal data may raise ethical concerns. During grant preparation this has been reviewed with the following conclusion:

- Norway: The GDPR was incorporated into the EEA agreement and became applicable in Norway on 20 July 2018.
- UK: The provisions of the EU GDPR have been incorporated directly into UK law as the UK GDPR. The EU considers the UK GDPR to have an “essentially equivalent” level of data protection to the EU (adequacy decision of 28 June 2021).

The consortium considers the non-EU partners of no additional ethical concern, as all partners comply to the GDPR and no personal data will be exchanged (section POPD).

3 Health and safety issues

Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) rules of STARS4Water partners, based on national legislation and in-house regulations of partners will apply in this project. This includes institutional regulations regarding travel.

The project does not involve the use of experimental facilities. Safety regulations regarding the use of facilities and the execution of physical experiments do not apply.

ANNEX 1: Ethics (Self-Assessment)

During proposal preparation, the following potential ethical issues were identified.

Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations	Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations
<p>Human participants</p> <p>Stars4Water adopts a co-creation approach to reach the project's objectives. Besides project participants stakeholders will be invited to engage in co-creation sessions and voice their requirements. Surveys and questionnaires are used to complement the co-creation sessions.</p>	<p>Participation from outside the project consortium will be on a strictly voluntary basis. Stars4Water will inform each participant beforehand on several issues relating to their participation, such as, but not limited to: purpose of the meeting, expected activities, benefits and burdens of participating, data and privacy issues in processing and reporting and the right to discontinue participation. Results, e.g. a quote, will not be traceable to individuals without their consent. Session moderators / organizers will pay specific attention to equal and fair opportunities for all participants. A balanced co-design approach will already be considered when selecting and inviting participants. The Coordinator will establish an effective ethical management with a thorough understanding of both the underlying science and the associated ethical principles. A thorough assessment of the specific legal and ethical requirements shall be carried out and documented at the beginning of the project. (D7.2)</p>
<p>Protection of Personal Data (POPD)</p> <p>Information related to natural persons (individuals) will be collected and processed to invite stakeholders, advisory board members, and representatives of related projects. For distribution of newsletters a distribution list will be created.</p>	<p>Stars4Water will comply with the agreements for personal data protection applicable in Europe: The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). The GDPR is also applicable in Norway as of 20 July 2018. STARS4Water will collect only the most essential (personal) data: name, affiliation, organisation, professional contact data and, if relevant, memberships of and positions in projects/networks/... and areas of expertise. As announced in section 'human participants', STARS4Water will require informed consent of research participants. According to the GDPR, each participant will be informed of their rights to (i) access personal data, (ii) change personal data in the database, (iii) erase personal data from the database and (iv) restrict processing of personal data for certain purposes. The data management procedures related to the POPD will be described in the Data Management Plan (D7.2), which will be delivered in Month 6 of the project and updated frequently. A Data Manager will be responsible for the Data Management in the project.</p>
<p>Non-EU countries</p>	<p>The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) is partner in STARS4Water. The</p>

D7.2: ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

<p>The consortium includes a beneficiary from Norway, a beneficiary and an associated partner from the United Kingdom. Within the setting of this project the handling of personal data may raise ethical concerns.</p>	<p>GDPR was incorporated into the EEA agreement and became applicable in Norway on 20 July 2018. The provisions of the EU GDPR have been incorporated directly into UK law as the UK GDPR. The EU considers the UK GDPR to have an “essentially equivalent” level of data protection to the EU (adequacy decision of 28 June 2021). The consortium considers the non-EU partners of no additional ethical concern, as all partners comply to the GDPR (section POPD).</p>
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The consortium will ensure compliance with the ethical principles and the applicable EU, international, and national laws for the ethics issues raised above and any additional ethics issues that may emerge in the course of the grant.

The Consortium confirms that for any applicable ethics issue, the guidance provided in the European Commission Ethics Self-Assessment Guidelines will be followed.

ANNEX 2: Basic Informed Consent Form templates

This annex includes a Basic Informed Consent Form that will be used for the managing personal and other data during the execution of the STARS4Water project. The first section describes how to use the form, while the next two sections include templates that serve as examples and can be used as by the consortium partners when organizing interviews, workshops, surveys, or requesting for data to be shared by third parties.

How to use of the consent forms templates

The templates included in next sections are provided as draft documents that the consortium partners are expected to refine and adjust to suit their needs when interacting with project stakeholders. Text that should be always modified are identified as bold.

If the interested agent is not aware of the scope of the project, additional information must be provided so that they can make an informed decision about the consequences of their collaboration with the project.

The templates of the Informed Consent Form are in English. If other languages are required consortium partners are responsible for generating translations.

Annex 2a: Consent Form for interviews and other engagement activities

Dear **XXX**.

You have been asked for an **interview / participating in a workshop / participating in a survey, etc.** in the framework of the STARS4Water project of the Horizon Europe Research Framework program of the European Commission, grant agreement number 101059372, hereafter 'the Project'. This form of informed consent describes the project and the terms of this cooperation.

STARS4Water aims to improve the understanding of climate change impacts on water resources availability and the vulnerabilities for ecosystems, society and the economy at river basin scale, including two distinctive elements: first, the need for an international stakeholder community to address their specific needs and requirements. Second, the development and application of innovative data services, models, tools.

STARS4Water will develop and deliver new data services and data driven models for better decision-making support on planning actions for adaptive, resilient and sustainable management of fresh water resources, which will be co-designed with stakeholders to meet their needs, ensuring their relevance and uptake beyond the lifetime of the project. Following a process of co-creation we aim to capacitate stakeholders with next generation river basin tools and build a strong Community of Practice.

In this process, the Project closely collaborates with several stakeholders to facilitate the deployment of valuable tools and products. Your participation in the **interview/ workshop / etc. will** have the aim of **evaluating your needs and recommendations / test the tools/ co-design potential tools / etc.**

To guarantee your rights and allow you to contribute according to your interests, the project team undertakes to:

1. Your answers will be completely anonymous.
2. Your answers will be separated from any information from which your identity may be determined.
3. You will be given the opportunity to review the results of this activity and have the option to amend your input.
4. After completion of the project, the data you will provide will be stored for 5 years.
5. If at any time during or after the study you wish for your data to be deleted, you may contact / **name / organization / email / phone.**
6. You are free to stop collaborating with the project team at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this project, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the project partner conducting this interview/ workshop / survey / etc.

By signing this consent form, you declare that you have been informed of the purpose and nature of the project, that you understand what is expected of you and that you agree to voluntarily take part in the project.

Name of the interview/workshop/etc.: **XXX**

Date and location/link/etc. of the interview/workshop/etc.: **XXX**

Participant's name: **XXX**

Participant's signature: **XXX**

Consortium partner organization name: : **XXX**

Responsible interviewer's name and organization: **XXX**

Responsible interviewer's signature: **XXX**

Annex 2b: Consent Form for use of data

Dear **XXX**,

You have been asked to share data with the consortium in charge of the STARS4Water project of the Horizon Europe Research Framework Program of the European Commission, grant agreement number 101059372, hereafter ‘the project’. This form of informed consent describes the project and the terms of this cooperation.

STARS4Water aims to improve the understanding of climate change impacts on water resources availability and the vulnerabilities for ecosystems, society and the economy at river basin scale, including two distinctive elements: first, the need for an international stakeholder community to address their specific needs and requirements. Second, the development and application of innovative data services, models, tools.

STARS4Water will develop and deliver new data services and data driven models for better decision-making support on planning actions for adaptive, resilient and sustainable management of fresh water resources, which will be co-designed with stakeholders to meet their needs, ensuring their relevance and uptake beyond the lifetime of the project. Following a process of co-creation we aim to capacitate stakeholders with next generation river basin tools and build a strong Community of Practice.

In this process, the project closely collaborates with several stakeholders to facilitate the deployment of valuable tools and products. These activities involve the compilation, storage and management of datasets and information. Next points describe the procedures for handling the data that you will provide for the implementation of the project, that will be treated with the utmost care.

1. Data will be used for scientific purposes, such as writing scientific articles, developing customized tools, etc. in this case all data will be analysed on an aggregate level and be presented in an anonymous way.
2. Data will be stored in an electronically and physically secure environment at [name of organization storing the data and geographical location where data will be stored].
3. All data will be stored for a period of 5 years after the end of the project.
4. Any data you provide will only be used for the purposes of the STARS4Waterproject.
5. The organization you work for will be mentioned as the source of the data.
6. No original data (understood as non-anonymized data) will be shared with any person or organization, public or private, outside of the Project consortium.
7. However, with your written consent, it is possible to share data with parties who are not members of the consortium but who participate in the city hubs. If you wish to share your data with the participants of your River Basin Hib under the terms of this document, please answer “yes” to the last question at the end of this document. If you prefer to arrange the terms of this eventual collaboration in the future, please, answer “no”. In this case, details of how data will be shared (which data elements, to/from which stakeholders) will be discussed and specified between involved stakeholders, when this issue becomes relevant.
8. You are free to have your data removed from all the databases associated to the STARS4Water project at any time during its implementation. To do this, simply contact either the project coordinator or your direct contact person with your request.
9. **[Please, enter here any additional point about the data management, collection, licenses, limitations, citation, etc.]**

D7.2: ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

If you have any questions about the Project please do not hesitate to ask your contact person (details provided below) or the project coordinator at any time with any questions or concerns you may have.

To indicate that you have read this letter of consent and agree to cooperate with the STARS4Water project under these terms, please sign below.

Name / description of the provided data: **XXX**

Name of the data provider: **XXX**

Organization providing the data: **XXX**

Date: **XXX**

Consortium partner organization name: **XXX**

Consortium partner name: **XXX**

Consortium partner email: **XXX**

Consortium partner name signature: **XXX**

Do you authorize to share the provided data to other participants in the Data Hub under the terms listed above? **XXX**

ANNEX 3: General guidance on personal data processing

The table below provides guidance on processing of personal data.

Question	Answer	Action	Next step	Examples
Q1 Are personal data processed (by means of or because of the service)? (See Examples.) Please note: processing is any action with personal data, including collecting, storing, organizing, updating, consulting, forwarding, deleting and bringing together.	Yes	Describe what data this is. Collected data may not contain more information than the purpose requires.	Q2	Personal data includes all information about an identified or identifiable natural person, for example: names, e-mail address, IP address, residential address, cookies, GPS data made with a personal device, bank details, IMEI number, telephone number, RFID tag, passport photo.
	No		Done	
Q2 Are special personal data processed? (See Examples.) Please note: processing of special personal data is prohibited, unless an exception based on the GDPR applies.	Yes	Describe what data this is. On principle, this is prohibited barring specific exception based on GDPR. Contact JZI.	Talk to GDPR legal experts	Special personal data: data showing e.g. race/ethnicity, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, genetic/biometric data, health, sexual orientation.
	No		Q3	
Q3 What is the purpose of using the Personal Data?		Describe the goal	Q4	
Q4 Do you really need the Personal Data for the purpose you intend? E.g. for registering at a website.	Yes	Give arguments. Note: may not be more data than the goal requires.		
	No	Minimize	Repeat Q4	
Q5 What is the duration of use? Limit the duration to what is necessary for the intended purpose.		Describe		
Q6 Do you share the Personal Data with third parties such as partners, hosting parties, or subcontractors?	Yes	Enter into a processing agreement before passing data on. Draw up a list of processors & what personal data they receive	Q7	
	No			
Q7 In which countries are the processors located? / Do you send them personal data?		Make a list of the countries	Q8	
Q8 Are these partners located within the European Economic Area ("EEA")? Note: outside the EEA + international organizations such as the WB, have special requirements.	Yes		A-1	(EER = EU + Norway, Iceland en Liechtenstein).
	No	Seek legal council		

Information Obligations	
A 1	Inform website user about the nature of processing, purpose, duration, legal basis for processing, any Processors (at the hosting party), countries to which etc.
	Inform about data subject rights.
	Ensure organization for handling of data subject rights within 4 weeks.
Obligation to consent	
A 2	Request permission for the specific use - this must be actively given.
Internal reporting obligation	
A 3	<p>Report the processing of data to the Data Protection Officer of your organization (for inclusion in Data Protection Register - required by law).</p> <p>In doing so, provide the following data to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the purpose for which the data is processed; b. that the processing is based on the explicit consent of the data subject; c. description of the type of personal data; d. description of type/categories of data subjects; e. which Deltares employee(s) may access the data and what authorizations they have; f. for how long you process the data (related to purpose); g. general description of security measures; h. Who the processors are. The entire chain must be visualized. Sub-processors outside the EEA zone (EU + Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) are only allowed under specific conditions.

ANNEX 4: Cookies

Cookies		action	
Q-I.01	Are cookies used?	Yes	Go to Q-I.02, Q-I.03, Q-I.04
		No	No further action required
Q-I.02	Are Session Cookies used (these are mainly used by online shops and allow you to keep items in your basket when shopping online. These cookies expire when the browser is closed)	Yes	STARS4Water website text: <i>Cookies are small text files that are placed on your device by websites that you visit. They are widely used to make websites work more efficiently and to provide information to the owners of the site.</i> <i>We use only first party cookies, in order to improve your browsing experience on our website and to analyze site traffic. We do not use third party or other, marketing cookies.</i>
		No	No further action required
Q-I.03	Are Permanent Cookies used (these remain in operation, even when you have closed the browser. They remember your login details and password so you don't have to type them in every time you use the site. The law concerning permanent cookies stipulates that they need to be deleted after a period of six months)	Yes	STARS4Water website text: <i>....We also use cookies to enable certain features of our website, such as remembering your preferences and login details. You can control and/or delete cookies as you wish. For more information about how to manage cookies, visit aboutcookies.org. However, please note that deleting or disabling cookies may affect your browsing experience on our website. By continuing to use our website, you consent to our use of cookies.</i>
		No	No further action required
Q-I.04	Are third-party cookies used (these are installed by third parties with the aim of collecting certain information to carry out various research into behaviour, demographics etc.)	Yes	Currently not foreseen.
		No	No action required.

Web analytical

Q-I.05	Are tracking tools used?	<p>Yes STARS4Water website text: <i>We use Google Analytics to collect information about how visitors use our website. Google Analytics sets first party cookies on your device to help us track and analyse website usage. The information generated by the cookie about your use of the website will be transmitted to and stored by Google on servers in the United States. Google will use this information for the purpose of evaluating your use of the website, compiling reports on website activity for website operators and providing other services relating to website activity and internet usage. Your IP address will be anonymized. No personal IP or other personalized information will be obtained, and no marketing or remarketing activity will be performed based on the information that will be stored in Google Analytics.</i></p> <p>No No further action.</p>
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AVG		
Q-I.06	Is personal data stored, requested or otherwise processed?	Yes See ANNEX 2