

ETHICAL ASPECTS

The RISTANC project has adopted a Standard Ethical Protocol governing the conduct of its activities. This protocol was approved by the Scientific Council of the Science and Research Centre Koper.

Two aspects follow from this for the projects, which will be funded under this Call:

1. All projects are expected to comply with the ethical principles set out in that protocol, adjusted to the context of activities funded under the call, and this document sets these principles out. (Section 1)
2. All projects agree to be part of the research process, and will be asked to sign the Informed Consent form at the signature of the contract. (Section 2)

Section 1: GENERAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES and OPEN SCIENCE

The overarching ethical principles include:

- respecting human dignity and integrity
- ensuring honesty and transparency towards research subjects
- respecting individual autonomy and obtaining free and informed consent (as well as assent whenever relevant)
- protecting vulnerable individuals
- ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- promoting justice and inclusiveness
- minimising harm and maximising benefit
- sharing the benefits with disadvantaged populations
- respecting and protecting the environment and future generations.

Additionally, we comply with principles of **open science**.

To enact these ethical principles, the projects commit to the following in the conduct of their activities:

Principle	Commitment in the context of RISTANC
Respecting human dignity and integrity	We will move beyond avoiding harm to actively fostering mutual respect across diverse ways of knowing, cultural, professional, and social backgrounds.
Ensuring honesty and transparency towards research subjects	We perform our work honestly and responsibly: without manipulating results, plagiarism, or undisclosed conflicts of interest . We will disclose actual, but also potentially perceived conflicts of interest. We will use artificial intelligence transparently and with human oversight.
Respecting individual autonomy and obtaining free and informed consent	We will ensure that participation of people in our activities is voluntary , that participants are informed of the benefits and risks of participation, that participants can ask questions and that participants can withdraw their participation at any time without any consequences.
Protecting vulnerable individuals	We will ensure safe, equitable spaces for engagement and ensuring the interests of vulnerable groups are represented.
Ensuring privacy and confidentiality	We collect and process personal data lawfully and in compliance with the GDPR at both the EU and national levels by collecting only what is strictly necessary, informing participants about how their data is used, and respecting their rights.
Promoting justice and inclusiveness	We will actively promote equitable and inclusive participation in actives, paying attention to differences in gender, age and ethnicity, making effort to avoid marginalisation or exclusion of under-represented social groups.
Minimising harm and maximising benefit	We will minimise the negative impacts and maximise the positive benefits of our work. We will have a duty of care for the environment and people potentially impacted by our activities. Any work involving animals and any impact on the environment will be carried out with the utmost consideration and minimal harm, and in compliance with regulations.

Sharing the benefits with disadvantaged populations	We avoid extractive use of participation where knowledge is taken for material gain without reciprocal value.
Respecting and protecting the environment and future generations	We integrate ecological integrity and long-term sustainability as core values of our work. Our aim is to benefit society and minimise social and ecological harm in the long term, and not just for the here and now.
Open science	Should posts, publications, and data be generated during our project, the posts and publications must be freely accessible , while the data must be shared according to the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary."

The grant awarding institution will be available to advise the projects on the application of these principles to their specific contexts.

Section 2: INFORMED CONSENT

Below is the Information sheet and the Informed Consent form that the projects will be asked to sign at the time of signature of the contract.

Information sheet

You are invited to participate in the process of transdisciplinary participatory research within the framework of the RISTANC project (Research and Innovation Cooperation for Sustainability and Achievement of EU Mission Goals). Please read the text below. If this is not clear enough or you need additional information, please contact us or via the contact below.

Project summary and research purpose

The RISTANC project focuses on the implementation of the EU Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030. Our aim is to support the move towards more sustainable marine management, especially in Slovenia and the wider EU area, by connecting knowledge from science, local and national administrations, NGOs, the arts sector, universities and local communities. The project seeks to enhance preparedness in addressing future sustainability challenges and to strengthen understanding of the significance of local contexts in this regard.

In the research process, you will take on the role of a stakeholder who holds relevant knowledge and views on the sea and its management. In the project, we identified various stakeholders and profiles that are important for the research process, including citizens, authorities, scientists and experts, sea users, students and representatives of interest groups.

The research is funded by the European Union. The research has been approved by the Scientific Council of the Science and Research Centre Koper.

Right to withdraw from participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. There is no financial compensation for it. We expect that participation will bring you benefits in the form of reflection about yourself, your work and your perspective of others, thus it will enable you to connect with other members of society in efforts to restore the seas. We do not expect any serious risks to your health or well-being when conducting workshops and consultations.

You are free to discontinue participation in the research process and activities at any time, and do so without giving a reason and without consequences.

For all explanations, withdrawal of participation and the course of the research, the following is responsible: dr Jerneja Penca, jerneja.penca@zrs-kp.si, T: +386 40 859 776.

Privacy and data protection

In the process, we will only collect your connection to the sector or part of society, as you define it. This data will be used in the form of aggregated information and group results. We will anonymize the information in such a way that your identity will not be recognized in the results. The data will not be passed on to third parties. The primary data will be accessible exclusively to members of the research group at ZRS Koper for the duration of the project and up to 5 years after the end of the project. The results of the project will be made public, primarily via the website ristanc.eu, but you may also be included among the recipients of notifications.

Informed consent to participation in research

You will participate in the research and data collection process through:

- Call for funding small projects under project RISTANC

In the research results, I would like to be referred to by researchers (choose one of the options):

- ☐ With my real first and last name (note in case of a group participation this option will only be used if all participants agree to this)
- ☐ With the pseudonym I chose: _____
- ☐ With the title chosen by the researcher (e.g. citizen 1, decision maker 2, etc.)

By signing, you confirm that you understand and agree to the following:

- ☐ I am familiar with the content of the research, I have had the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to them;
- ☐ I participate in the research voluntarily and understand that I can withdraw from it at any time without giving reasons and without consequences;
- ☐ I am aware that all collected data will be stored in accordance with data protection regulations;
- ☐ I agree that the anonymized data obtained in the research will be used for research purposes (e.g. publication in scientific publications, project reports, long-term storage in repositories);
- ☐ I agree to the publication of photographs on the project website and in project materials.

(Place and Date)

(Name and Surname)

(Signature)