SQAT
SOIL QUALITY ANALYSIS TOOL

Deliverable 1.2

Gender equality & ethics management

plan

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Disclaimer

The author of this document has taken any available measure to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, consistent, lawful, and up to date.

Executive Summary

Farms are at the forefront of the data economy, propelled by digitalisation, robotics, and smart algorithms. However, these advancements exacerbate societal pressures on soil health, demanding cleaner water, healthier soils, increased carbon storage and biodiversity. Current solutions are costly and unsuitable for farmers. With this in mind, the EU-funded SQAT project will develop a smart soil mapping service. Combining multi-level, multi-technology approaches, SQAT offers high-resolution soil property maps and tailored solutions for farmers. Using autonomous robot-mounted sensors and innovative in situ analysis tools, the SQAT system enhances productivity while reducing costs. Co-developing with SMEs, SQAT aims to commercialise its solutions, empowering farmers with variable-rate applications for liming, fertilisation, seeding, tillage, and carbon farming.

Gender Equality and Ethics Management Plan outlines our commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity and integrity within our SQAT project. Through robust policies and proactive measures, we aim to ensure equal opportunities for all genders and uphold the highest ethical standards in our research and operations. By integrating gender mainstreaming and ethical considerations into every aspect of our project, we strive to promote fairness, diversity, and accountability, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of our outcomes.

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Abbreviations

| EO | Ethics Officer |
| SQAT | Soil Quality Analysis Tool |

1   Introduction

1.1   Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the strategies, policies, and procedures aimed at promoting gender equality and ethical conduct within the context of our SQAT project. It is part of WP1 MANAGE: Project Management & Coordination. It serves as a guiding framework to ensure that all project activities are conducted in a manner that respects diversity, upholds ethical principles, and promotes equal opportunities for all genders.

1.2   Scope

This document encompasses the comprehensive approach our project will take to integrate gender equality considerations and ethical standards throughout all phases of project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It applies to all project stakeholders and is designed to be adaptable to various project contexts and activities.

1.3   Outside of Scope

1.3.1   Ethics Summary Report

As the SQAT project extends its activities to Ukraine, particularly focusing on the task of returning soil to cultivation on recently demined fields, the Europe Commission has issued an Ethics Summary Report (**101129644_SQAT_EthSR**). This report sheds light on the ethical considerations pertinent to our endeavours in this region. Furthermore, in compliance with project requirements, a detailed examination of ethics-related activities, including this specific topic, will be encapsulated in Deliverable D7.1 OEI - Requirement No. 1.

1.3.2   Data Protection and Privacy

While data protection and privacy are integral components of our project, it's important to note that detailed requirements regarding the protection of personal data will be outlined in our separate deliverable, D4.2 Data Governance Principles. As such, the specific delineation of data governance measures falls outside the scope of this plan, with comprehensive coverage reserved for the document D4.2 Data Governance Principles.

1.4   Relevant Standards and Conventions

SQAT project is obliged to adhere to the ethical principles and guidelines outlined in the Horizon Europe program. This also encompasses compliance with relevant national, international, and European Union laws, such as:

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

- The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights).
- The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

The principles of research integrity enlisted in the Code include reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability. This involves ensuring quality in all aspects of the research, being transparent and fair in reporting, treating colleagues and research participants with respect, and taking responsibility for the entire research process, including its wider impacts.

The code also enlists good research practices in the following contexts: research environment; training, supervision, and mentoring; research procedures, safeguards, data practices and management; collaborative working; publication, dissemination and authorship; reviewing and assessment.

2   Gender Equality Framework

2.1   Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is an essential process for understanding the roles, responsibilities, and power dynamics between different genders within the context of SQAT project. It involves examining how social, cultural, economic, and political factors intersect with gender to influence access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes.

- **Identification of Gender Issues:** Conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify gender disparities, inequalities, and barriers that may exist within the project's beneficiary groups.
- **Gender Needs Assessment:** Identify the specific needs, priorities, and preferences of different genders to ensure that project interventions are responsive to diverse realities and perspectives.

2.2   Gender-Equal Opportunities and Treatment

Ensuring gender-equal opportunities and treatment within our project is fundamental to promoting inclusivity, fairness, and dignity for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or expression. This section outlines the principles and strategies for fostering an environment where all genders have equitable access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Enforce a strict policy of non-discrimination based on gender in all aspects of team membership. Prohibit any form of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or bias in the project activities.

Gender Balance: Strive for gender balance and diversity in all decision-making bodies, and project teams. Ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in leadership roles, advisory groups, and other forums where decisions are made.

Inclusive Decision-Making Processes: Foster an inclusive and participatory decision-making culture that values diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions from individuals of all genders. Create safe spaces for open dialogue and collaboration, where individuals feel empowered to voice their opinions and ideas without fear of reprisal or marginalization.

Language and Communication: Use inclusive language and imagery in all project communications, materials, and events to reflect the diversity of genders and avoid reinforcing stereotypes or biases.

Feedback Mechanisms: Establish mechanisms for soliciting feedback from partners and other stakeholders on gender-related issues, concerns, and suggestions for improvement.

In the event of necessity, all team members are instructed to commence direct correspondence with the Ethics Officer (EO). The EO shall serve as the designated central point of contact for all issues relating to gender equality.

If needed additional guideline will be prepared by EO and presented and shared with all partners by Project Management Team.

By promoting gender-equal opportunities and treatment, we can create an inclusive and empowering environment where all individuals can thrive and contribute to the success of our project.

3 Ethics Management Framework

3.1 Ethical Principles and Values

Ethical conduct is paramount to the success, integrity, and sustainability of our project. This section outlines the core ethical principles and values that guide our actions and decision-making processes, ensuring that we uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and respect for human dignity.

Transparency: Maintain transparency in all project activities, decisions, and communications, ensuring that stakeholders are informed and engaged in an open and honest manner.

Accountability: Hold ourselves accountable to project beneficiaries and partners. Take ownership of our actions and accept responsibility for any mistakes, errors, or failures, and take corrective action as needed.

Confidentiality: Respect the confidentiality and privacy of sensitive information shared by project stakeholders, including personal data, research findings, and proprietary knowledge.

Human Rights: Uphold the fundamental human rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. Ensure that project activities and informal gatherings during in person meetings are carried out in accordance with international human rights standards and principles, including the principles of non-discrimination, equality, and non-violence.

Equity: Promote equity and fairness in the distribution of project benefits, resources, and opportunities.

Social Responsibility: Acknowledge our role and responsibility as stewards of sustainable development, striving to maximize positive social impacts while minimizing harm and negative externalities.

Professional Ethics: Adhere to professional codes of conduct, standards, and best practices relevant to our respective disciplines and roles within the project.

3.2 Ethical Decision-Making Processes

Ethical decision-making is a systematic process that enables us to navigate complex ethical dilemmas and dilemmas with integrity, transparency, and accountability. This section outlines the key steps and considerations involved in ethical decision-making within our project.

Step 1 - Identification

Be vigilant in identifying situations or decisions that raise ethical concerns or dilemmas, such as conflicts of interest, potential harm to stakeholders, or violations of ethical principles.

Step 2 – Information Gathering

Gather relevant information, facts, and evidence related to the ethical issue at hand, including the perspectives and interests of all stakeholders involved.

Step 3 – Evaluation

Evaluate the ethical implications of each possible course of action against the core ethical principles and values outlined in the ethical management framework (3.1).

Step 4 – Decision Making

Exercise sound judgment and critical thinking skills in reaching a decision that upholds Document the rationale and reasoning behind the decision-making process, including the ethical considerations, the factors weighed, and the rationale for selecting a particular course of action.

Step 5 – Decision Implementation

Implement the chosen course of action in a timely and effective manner, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are informed and engaged in the implementation process.

Step 6 - Monitoring

Monitor the implementation process closely to ensure that ethical standards are upheld, and any unforeseen ethical issues or challenges are addressed promptly. Engage in reflective practice to critically evaluate the ethical decision-making process, including the factors influencing the decision, the outcomes achieved, and any lessons learned.

The EO is responsible for managing Ethical Decision-Making Process.

4 Conclusion

The Gender Equality and Ethics Management Plan serves as a comprehensive framework for integrating gender equality considerations and ethical principles into all aspects of SQAT project. As we conclude this document, we reflect on the key insights and commitments that guide our actions and shape our vision for the future.

This document provides a roadmap for integrating gender equality and ethics considerations into every facet of SQAT project. Through collective action, shared responsibility, and unwavering commitment, we strive to create a project environment that upholds the principles of fairness, justice, and respect for all individuals, contributing to positive social change and transformative impact in the communities we serve.

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