



**Innovative and Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation**  
HE-101132431

### D6.3 Ethics Training and Support Materials

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#### Summary

This document describes the initial plan for Ethics Training and Support in line with the description of the Grant Agreement. Ethics Training is necessary in order to guarantee that the ethics principles and protocols are well embedded in IDEM researchers. In terms of support, specific guidance and assistance will be given to the responsible partners during recruitment of participants, on management of their personal data, and preparation of consent forms in different formats, such as the easy-to-read accessible format.

#### Plain Language Summary

This document describes the training plan to learn about ethics. Ethics is the set of norms and rules that direct people's behaviour. Researchers in the IDEM project will learn the ethics principles. In this task, the members of the IDEM Consortium will assist in preparing easy-to-read accessible documents necessary for people that participate in the research, for example, consent forms.



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<b>Acronyms</b>	
CIREP	Institutional Committee for Ethical Review of Projects
D	Deliverable
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
T	Task
WP	Work Package

## 1. Overview

This document describes the initial plan for Ethics Training and Support in line with the description of the Grant Agreement.

The iDEM consortium is composed of research institutions, experts in text simplification, user organisations, citizens' representatives, non-profit organisations and software developers who form an interdisciplinary and complementary team of four EU countries (Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Spain) and one non-EU country (UK)<sup>1</sup>.

Taking this into consideration, the project requires a multidisciplinary approach and considerable user involvement to contribute to the established objectives. The multidisciplinary nature of the project allows the development of ethical training from different perspectives. In this context, an Ethics Training Plan has been developed in which each partner provides specialized training on ethical issues, which are key on this project, from their field of experience.

Ethics training is necessary in order to guarantee that the ethics principles and protocols are well embedded in iDEM researchers and that ethics compliance approval by ethics committees is obtained.

In terms of support, specific guidance and support will be given to the responsible of recruiting persons for Use Cases and other activities and facilitators dealing with potential participants from vulnerable or marginalized groups, people with disabilities, migrants, the elderly, etc. on management of the participants' personal data, and preparation of consent forms in different formats, such as the easy-to-read accessible format.

## 2. Ethics Training plan

iDEM Project must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU<sup>2</sup>, international and national law on ethical principles<sup>3</sup>. The researchers must commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities<sup>4</sup>.

In this sense, Ethics Training is necessary in order to guarantee that the ethics principles and protocols are well embedded in iDEM researchers and ethical principles are correctly applied to all the processes within. It is also compulsory to obtain the ethics compliance approval by ethics committees.

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<sup>1</sup> As stated in the Grant Agreement.

<sup>2</sup> European Union and the best practices <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dyna/bp-portal/>

<sup>3</sup> The European Code of Conduct for Research and Integrity, <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

<sup>4</sup> As stated in the Grant Agreement

For this reason, an Ethics Training Plan is being provided within the task 6.2 Ethics Training & Support (WP6). This plan imparts formal training in a number of on-line sessions and seminars during the first year of the project specially. All members of the consortium must attend at least one training session during the duration of the project.

Up until the writing of this deliverable, there has been an initial formation offered on **Ethics and Data protection in research**. Its goal was to learn on the basis of research ethics principles and an introduction to data protection. This training presented researchers a solid foundation on the ethical principles necessary to develop the project. It was provided by the Institutional Committee for Ethical Review of Projects of Universitat Pompeu Fabra by Marianna Nadeu Rota, CIREP<sup>5</sup> office, UPF.

The second workshop was **Towards Responsible AI Innovation: Inclusive Design and Gender Perspective**. The talk, followed by a Q&A session, discussed gender bias in research, academia, health care and society in general. How AI is developed by people with gender biases and how it also needs to be re-thought within this perspective. Discussion on focus groups and interview facilitators, training, support and special consideration towards the audiences to be addressed in terms of language complexity, gender considerations, social background, literacy and more. Guidelines towards empowering and inclusive behaviour were shared and bibliography was suggested by Nataly Bulsón.

The third session was on **Plain Language normative, generation and complexities**. It presented the consortium with the basic features of Plain Language and Easy to Read, differences, advantages and specifications. The talk, followed by a Q&A session, discussed examples of institutional documents and its complexity, which were then to point out the resemblances with complex participatory platforms which are relevant to iDEM, Almudena Rascón Alcaina shared her expertise with the consortium.

## 2.1. Calendar 2024

Date	Name of Ethics Training
24/04/2024	Research ethics and data protection in research
23/05/2024	Towards Responsible AI Innovation: Inclusive Design and Gender Perspective
05/06/2024	Plain Language Workshop: How to write for everybody to understand

<sup>5</sup> Institutional Committee for Ethical Review of Projects, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

18/06/2024	Empower Ethics: The Path to Ethical Citizen-Driven Participation
10/09/2024	Ethics issues and Biases in Natural Language Processing
23/09/2024	Introduction to SHEA & Safeguarding
08/10/2024	Ethics procedures in the UK

*Table of proposed training activities*

## 2.2. Ethics training description

### **Seminar 1: Research ethics and data protection in research**

Status: Completed  
 Speaker: Marianna Nadeu  
 Organisation: Institutional Committee for Ethical Review of Projects - Universitat Pompeu Fabra  
 Date: Wednesday, 24th April 2024 at 10:00  
 Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Description: Ethic training on the basic research ethics principles and an introduction to data protection

Attendance: 9 people  
 Sandra Szasz, Horacio Saggion, Claudia Mazzanti, John O'Flaherty, Laura Trujillo, Lian Muñoz, Stefan Bott, Volkan Sayman and Almudena Rascón.

Summary: During this training, participants are trained in the origins of ethical codes in research, focusing on the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki and the Belmont Report. The training focuses on the Belmont Report, developing the main 3 points: respect for people and their autonomy and their relationship with informed consent, the risks and benefits of participating in research, and fairness when recruiting participants for the investigation. In this sense, informed consent is a moral and legal obligation for all research, and must be clear and understandable. For its part, recruitment must consider special protection for the vulnerable population. Finally, the training develops the topic of personal data protection, the development of the data protection plan and its main objectives.

The speaker: Marianna Nadeu is an R+D+Ethics Advisor at UPF. She coordinates the University's Institutional Committee for Ethical Review of Projects (CIREP) and advises researchers on research ethics aspects. She holds a PhD in Romance Linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Seminar 2: Towards Responsible AI Innovation: Inclusive Design and Gender Perspective**

Status: Completed

Speaker: Dr. Nataly Bulsón

Organization: Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Date: Thursday, 23rd May 2024

Duration: 60 minutes

Description: Ethic seminar on inclusive and diverse perspectives on sex and gender biases in research

Attendance: 9 people

Sandra Szasz, Horacio Saggion, Claudia Mazzanti, John O'Flaherty, Alba Mestres, Eleonora Severa, Lian Muñoz, Thomas Blanchet and Verena Riegler .

Summary: In this seminar, we explore crucial aspects to foster a positive social impact of artificial intelligence on society, by enhancing participation and designing technologies with diverse and inclusive perspectives. Our discussions address topics such as human rights and the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a special focus on addressing sex and gender biases. Recognizing these elements as fundamental pillars, our goal is to promote inclusion, equity, and responsibility in artificial intelligence.

The Speaker: Nataly Buslón, PhD

Senior Postdoctoral Researcher in Responsible Artificial Intelligence at Pompeu Fabra University. She has worked as a Senior Advisor on various public and private sector AI projects for UN Women LAC, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Organization of American States (OAS). Her work focuses on the social impact and ethical aspects of artificial intelligence (AI), with a gender perspective, diversity, and social inclusion in technologies. She was a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC) for five years in the areas of AI for health and disinformation and was a visiting researcher at Columbia University (2016) and Stanford University (2022).

Buslón holds a PhD and a Master's degree in Sociology from the University of Barcelona (Cum Laude) and is a Marketing Analyst from the University of the Enterprise (UDE). She is an Ambassador for Women in Data Science Stanford in Barcelona, a member of the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), and the <A+> Alliance for Inclusive Algorithms. She has been appointed by UNESCO to the Women for Ethical Artificial Intelligence platform.

### **Seminar 3: Plain Language Workshop: How to write for everybody to understand**

Status: Completed  
Speaker: Almudena Rascón Alcaina  
Organisation: PIM  
Date: Tuesday, 5th of June 2024  
Duration: 60 minutes

Description: Ethic seminar on Plain Language normative, generation and complexities.

Attendance: 12 people  
Sandra Szasz, Horacio Saggion, Extane Scott, Lian Muñoz, Eva García Chueca, Volkan Sayman, Stefan Bott, Eleonora Severa, Laura Trujillo, John O'Flaherty, Cristina Astier and Verena Riegler .

Description: Plain Language is a language variety whose wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information. In this seminar, we see the main guidelines and recommendations in writing text (vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure) and content presentations (form and layout and paratextual elements).

The speaker: Almudena Rascón is a journalist, with a master's degree in Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization from the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. She currently works as Coordinator of Cognitive Accessibility Programs at Plena Inclusion Madrid, a federation of entities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### **Seminar 4: Empower Ethics: The Path to Ethical Citizen-Driven Participation**

Status: Organized  
Speaker: Lian Muñoz and Almudena Rascón Alcaina  
Organisation: CIB  
Date: Tuesday, 18th June 2024  
Duration: 60 minutes

Description: In this seminar we will be showcasing the process of co-creation with citizens to enhance participation (specifically the target of our use case, which are people with intellectual disabilities), and the ethical implications, the procedures at a methodological level guaranteeing an ethical data processing. Along with PIM we will try to establish some methodologies when talking about the direction and procedures of the use case in the field. Things to take into consideration, tips, especially in regard to the ethical problems that may come out during the activities. We will implement an easy-to-read and inclusive approach, so the

participants would be empowered to choose what they want to do exactly and erase any doubts about their participation in the project and participatory activity.

The speaker: Lian Muñoz is a Researcher at Fundación Cibervoluntarios (CIB). She studied social and cultural anthropology in Complutense University of Madrid. Specializing in Gender and Art. She's finishing a Master on Advanced Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, with a thesis related to far-right movements and their involvements on the Internet through video games and role-playing games environments. She's also enrolled in a Master of Innovation in Institutions. Furthermore, she has also finished a Bootcamp on UX/UI Product Design, and she specialized in UX Research and inclusive tools in the digital field, video games, LGBTQ+ research and feminist studies.

### **Seminar 5: Ethics issues and Biases in Natural Language Processing**

Status: Organized  
Speakers: Horacio Saggion and Stefan Bott  
Organisation: UPF  
Date: Tuesday, 10th September 2024  
Duration: 30 minutes

Description: In this seminar, we will see ethics issues and Biases in Natural Language Processing. This event will address the main ethical risks inherent in (Large) Language Models. Toxicity, polarity and discrimination are often a problem because models learn stereotypes and malicious language usage from the data they learn from. Data from the internet is often biased and polarized. Paired with over-reliance and low digital competence of a part of the users can lead to disinformation and reinforcement of the mentioned stereotypes. Disinformation can also result from malicious use of NLP, e.g. for trolling and ideologically motivated spamming. Other issues are data privacy (personal data which is inherent in Language Models) model security (vulnerability to misuse), and copyright infringements (when protected intellectual property is illegally used for model training).

The speakers: Horacio Saggion is chair in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence at the Department of Information & Communication Technologies, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Barcelona, Spain.. Horacio is currently director of the Large Scale Text Understanding Systems Lab of the TALN Natural Language Processing Group where he works in several areas of Natural Language Processing (NLP) automatic text summarization, text simplification, NLP for Sign Languages, information extraction, figurative language, sentiment analysis and related topics. His work

combines symbolic and statistical techniques. Horacio is the project coordinator of the Horizon Europe funded project iDEM - Innovative and Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation - and principal co-investigator in the AI-BOOST project.

Stefan Bott is a Natural Language Processing researcher at UPF. He has been working on automatic text simplification, computational lexicography and computational semantics. Within iDEM he is responsible for the use of Large Language Models for text simplification and assisted text generation.

### **Seminar 6: Introduction to SHEA & Safeguarding**

Status: Organized  
Speaker: Silvia Robbiani  
Organisation: ActionAid Italia  
Date: Monday, 23rd September, 2024  
Duration: 1 hour

Description: Safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to anyone they come into contact with, and that they do not expose anyone to the risk of harm and abuse. In the seminar, we'll be discussing ActionAid's approach to Safeguarding.

The speaker: SHEA & Safeguarding Junior Focal Person, tasked with the overall supervision and implementation of the measures included within the SHEA & Safeguarding Policies of ActionAid Italy, integrating Safeguarding in each organisational area (Recruitment, Programme Work, Organisational Culture, etc.)

### **Seminar 7: Ethics procedure in the UK**

Status: Organized  
Speaker: Carlo Eugeni  
Organisation: UOL  
Date: Monday, 8th October at 10:00  
Duration: 1 hour

Description: In this seminar we will see the ethics procedure at the University of Leeds, and its collaboration with the National Health System.

The Speaker: Carlo Eugeni is the programme leader of the MA Audiovisual Translation and Localisation at the University of Leeds, where he teaches live subtitling, media access services, and conference interpreting. He launched the International Symposium on Live Subtitling, co-funded the International Association of Respeaking on A.I.R., wrote the first book and Ph.D. thesis on the topic, and designed the live subtitling self-assessment tool MARS. Carlo has researched and published in the fields of live subtitling, conference interpreting, and subtitling strategies; and is co-editing a book for Routledge entitled Teaching Interpreting and Live Subtitling. In 2018, he received an honorary award by the Italian Association of Cochlear Implant Users APIC for his commitment in promoting the empowerment of deaf people through live and pre-recorded subtitling. He was Intellectual Output Leader of the Erasmus+ project LTA on live subtitles and T2V on Easy-to-Read validators and facilitators, and is currently serving as a partner in the Erasmus+ project CCUV on Easy Italian writing and the Horizon project iDEM on accessibility to the decision-making process; and as a member of the experts group on accessibility in the metaverse for the UN International Telecommunications Unit.

## 2.3 Seminars 2025

For 2025, the consortium is already planning on organising additional ethics training and seminars.

We plan to focus some sessions on the EU Artificial Intelligent Act, These will be scheduled for early 2025, we are looking into it from different points of views and how it affects our project. The EU Artificial Intelligent Act is a proposed European regulation on artificial intelligence, the first comprehensive regulation on AI by a major regulator anywhere.

Other sessions will focus on the European accessibility act. This is a directive that aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services, by removing barriers created by divergent rules in Member States.

## 3. Ethics support materials

IDEM Project is developing use cases in Catalan, Spanish and Italian languages. These use cases will be carried out with a diverse and vulnerable group of citizens thus the use cases require ethics support and guidance in order to: recruit the participants from vulnerable or marginalised groups, such as people with cognitive disabilities; manage their personal data; and prepare the consent forms in the different accessible formats.

With the aim of making the content of the consent forms truly understandable, the use of Easy-to-Read and Plain Language texts is fundamental as a tool to facilitate the comprehension of the information participants are consenting to.

In order to do this, IDEM researchers are preparing ethics support materials in Easy-to-Read and Plain Language with the necessary information in Spanish, Catalan and Italian.

As discussed in IDEM Ethical Protocols<sup>6</sup>, an informed consent form has the aim to guarantee that human participants engage in the proposed activity voluntarily and free from coercion, also that they fully understand how their data will be stored and processed by the project. In order to fully understand the scope of the project and be able to make an informed decision on involvement in the focus groups, an information sheet about the aims of the project is provided to potential participants. These consent forms and information sheets are going through ethical protocols approval to be ready before the focus groups start.

Besides the training and seminars planned within the project, members of our community have undergone ethical training within their own organisations.

Supported by the CIREP office at UPF, Sandra Szasz, Stefan Bott and Akio Hayakawa have obtained the UPF Researchers - basic course certificate. The course included three topics: History and Ethics of Human Subjects Research, Defining Research with Human Subjects, and Assessing Risk.

Besides the sessions offered within the consortium, several partners have attended the **Navigating Research ethics- KT4 seminar**<sup>7</sup>. This webinar aimed to initiate a dialogue addressing the challenges associated with adhering to research ethics best practices, focusing particularly on the protection of user data and pseudonymization. This webinar was offered by Jennifer Edmond Alberto Bettiol, and Kate Francis, KTD4 EU project.

#### 4. Suggested Literature

We would like to conclude with a list of suggested readings, which we encourage the iDEM community to browse and read. We have been collecting works which are related to the topics of interest for the iDEM community, as well as reports and declarations which are key to the ethics discussions about research involving users.

ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. *Copyright (c) 2018 by the Association for Computing Machinery.*

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<sup>6</sup> [iDEM] D6.1 Ethical Protocols, submitted M4 to the EC.

<sup>7</sup> <https://kt4democracy.eu/events/navigating-research-ethics-and-managing-sensitive-data-complex-european-projects>

Artificial Intelligence Act: MEPs adopt landmark law, EU AI Act, 2024 [TA \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-room/default.aspx?id=14484) and [Artificial Intelligence Act: MEPs adopt landmark law | News | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](https://www.european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-room/default.aspx?id=14484)

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The European Code of Conduct for Research and Integrity, 2023 Revised Edition

<https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities A/RES/61/106, 2006,  
<https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Disability,  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/preamble.html>

Universitat Pompeu Fabra example protocols form, forms adopted by iDEM can be found  
<https://www.upf.edu/web/cirep/review>

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