

REINVENT – PROJECT NR 730053

# H – Ethics requirement

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# Research involving human beings

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As part of the REINVENT research, interviews, focus groups and workshops will be conducted, the outcomes of which will inform the project. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for REINVENT to ensure all engagement with human beings is conducted in an ethical way. The rest of the document outlines the characteristics of human beings involved in REINVENT research, its key ethical principles, as well as procedures that will ensure them.

## Human beings in REINVENT

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Human participants in REINVENT research are adults involved in the steel, paper, plastics, and meat&dairy sectors, as well as a broader range of stakeholders and experts engaging with these areas and their decarbonisation (whether policy-makers, trade unionists or researchers). Most of them will have a strong level of expertise in their areas and share interest in the themes addressed by REINVENT

REINVENT will not deal with vulnerable groups, persons unable to give informed consent, children, patients or any other sensitive groups. The study does not involve any physical or psychological interventions on the study participants. Participation in REINVENT's interviews, focus groups and other activities is voluntary.

REINVENT research engages with a relatively small number of human participants who are experts in their areas, so the main criteria to recruit research participants would be their expertise and potential interest in REINVENT, as well as them representing organisations that are of interest to REINVENT. Importantly, we will engage with all the human participants of REINVENT in their professional rather than personal capacity.

## Ethical principles in REINVENT

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Ethical principles in REINVENT ensure respect for people and human dignity, as well as protection of values, rights and interests of the research participants. The key principles of engaging with human participants are the following:

- **No harm**

The researchers of the project will ensure the 'no harm' principle in all contexts of REINVENT research. This may involve resolving any potential conflicts during research activities that involve a number of participants. This may also involve being sensitive to the participants' positions within the structures of their organisations and whether what they share may affect them in any way. Human participants of REINVENT have the right to stay anonymous or withdraw from the study at any time.

- **No deception**

Many participants come from the extensive networks of REINVENT researchers and their trust is of utmost importance. Human participants of REINVENT would know what they are involved in whenever participating in the project's activities.

- **Informed consent**

Before the participants take part in REINVENT research, it will be ensured that they give informed consent for this, i.e. they will be aware of what the project is about and what their participation involves (see the procedures section). Any audio or video-recording will also be done only upon agreement from the human participants involved.

- **No invasion of privacy**

The participants will take part in REINVENT in their professional capacity, but it might be their individual interest that would attract them to REINVENT, with the individual interest likely helping to shed light on the professional world. REINVENT researchers will make sure an appropriate balance of the two is maintained and that there is no invasion of privacy at any point.

Beyond these four fundamental principles, researchers in REINVENT will constantly be alert to any potential sensitivities that might emerge as the research progresses and how they might affect the project and human beings involved. For example, if the information shared with us complies with all the above-mentioned principles, but is found sensitive by our research groups, this sensitivity would be raised and discussed with the human participants involved.

The responsibility for compliance with these ethical principles lies with all researchers within REINVENT.

# Procedures for ethical research

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The following procedures will be followed to ensure ethical research in REINVENT:

- **Informed consent form will be used**

The form will always be accompanied by a research information sheet, which briefly describes the purpose of REINVENT research. Templates of the informed consent form, as well as the brief introduction of the project have been shared with all research participants. The informed consent template may be amended by individual researchers or research groups, depending on the research context.

The informed consent form and the research information sheet will be written in a way that is easy to understand, will describe the aims, methods and implications of the research and allow for withdrawing at any time for any reasons.

- **Oral informed consent**

Formal informed consent forms in many cases help to establish trust between the researchers and human participants of the study and provide protection to the latter. However, in certain situations standard procedures for obtaining informed consent may be harmful or seem offensive to the participants.

In such cases, alternative consent will be gained orally, i.e. it will be explained to the human participant(s) what REINVENT is about, what they are involved in and how the materials from this engagement will be used further. Oral consent would be especially helpful in workshops, the insights from which could be used for REINVENT research, but where signing formal informed consent forms might create an awkward atmosphere.

- **Careful handling of data**

The outcomes of engagement with human participants will be stored in the well-protected Lund University's Box drive used by REINVENT. Any loss of data from personal computers should be immediately reported to the Lars J Nilsson (the project coordinator) and the respective work package leader (see also D8.2 Data Management Plan).