



## SPADE Open Call #2 Ethic Self-Assessment

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**CLOSING:** 26 May 2025 at 17:00 CET

**Project Website:** <https://spade-horizon.eu/>

**Open Call platform:** [https://bit.ly/SPADE\\_OC2\\_Applicants](https://bit.ly/SPADE_OC2_Applicants)

All the Open Call documents and templates available for download at

<https://spade-horizon.eu/open-call-2-applicants/>

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# 1. Ethic Self-Assessment

All partners in SPADE will place research ethics at the core of their work. In its different research phases some research tools and methods such as in-depth interviews (e.g. individual experts/stakeholders consultations), focus groups, collaborative workshops, and other persons' consultation approaches (see WP1, WP5) are used. This level of human involvement produces a set of ethical and legal issues, which the consortium is well aware of and determined to address in the following manner:

## 1.1 Ethics requirement 1 HUMANS

Our research contains piloting in at least 3 locations. This includes a baseline assessment and monitoring of progress throughout the project. Surveys, interviews and focus group discussions are foreseen in the pilot activities. All these activities will be deployed on a voluntary basis and include only adults. Respect for people and for human dignity will be at the core of these activities. Participants will be provided with detailed Information Sheets explaining, inter alia, what the project is about, what participation would involve, the entirely voluntary participation and verification of absence of any form of obligation. They will have the right to withdraw at any time without providing any explanation or justification and without any consequences, what data will be collected and the rights to modify or delete, as well as benefits of participating, potential risks and dangers. All stakeholder engagement activities will be conducted using fully rational adults, which means that they will be able to give written consent and to understand their role in the project.

Furthermore, SPADE will integrate a gender dimension since integrating a gender dimension and identifying and implementing measures would not only benefit individuals, but also society and the (rural) forestry regions in general. Research about the agricultural sector shows that gender and other normative social structures can lead to unequal benefits from innovation opportunities. This will be addressed in detail in Task 1.7.

## 1.2 Ethics requirement 2 PERSONAL DATA

Data will be collected from the pilot sites in **Greece, Norway and Spain** both in terms of drones operation/use, as well as regarding agriculture. The processing of personal data is doubtful since anonymization mechanisms will encrypt the personality of the datasets making unable to link data with the identification of a person. Trustworthy mechanisms will ensure that SPADE tools are ethical, lawful and unbiased to race, origin, colour of people participating. A privacy preserving mechanism will also ensure the above process and only when is legally needed/confirmed personal information will be revealed to LEAs (via secure by design information transfer). Furthermore, personal data of the human participants may be collected via surveys, interviews and/or questionnaires, but this case is also doubtful as they are planned to be anonymous. Only the combination of the collected data could possibly result in the identification of a person. It is ensured that the project complies with **applicable international, EU and national data protection legislation** and especially with:

- 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 repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR), - the Directive (EU) 2016/680 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 by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA, - the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (Convention No.108),
- the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and
- the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFR).



**Informed consent** is the cornerstone of research ethics. Informed consent: all participants will be adults aged 18 and over who can give informed consent. Participants will not include children or adults unable to give informed consent. Prospective participants will be provided with a specific SPADE Consent Form at their identification stage and will sign it before they participate in any part of the study. The SPADE consent form will include:

1. A statement confirming that SPADE is a research project.
2. The subject and purpose of the research, the duration, procedures to be used, identification of any experimental procedure and any costs likely to be incurred by the participant, if applicable.
3. Information on whether the data collection is to be recorded and/or observed and details of the method used to collect data, e.g., audio or video recording.
4. A statement to the effect that there are no foreseen risks and benefits are at societal not personal level.
5. The identity of the organisation/s and individuals conducting research and handling the personal data provided by participants. Participants will be able to check without difficulty the identity and bona fides of any party conducting the research.
6. Identity and contact details of the person to contact for answers to questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and who to contact in the event of injury to any participant.
7. A statement that participation is voluntary, withdrawal from the research can be undertaken at any time without loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled.
8. The purposes for which those data will be used and the period for which they will be kept in identifiable form.
9. Identification process: as already stated, participant identification will be carried out amongst citizens aged 18 and over.

Personal data will be collected only to the extent that it enables the accurate identification of eligible participants, and the latter will be informed of the project purpose and scope to enable informed consent as described below. Prior to this and as a prerequisite, the data subject will be provided with detailed information about the data processing in an intelligible and easily accessible form, using clear and plain language. As a minimum, the **Information Sheet for data collection** will include the identity of the data controller(s) and, where applicable, the contact details of the DPO, the specific purposes of the processing for which the personal data will be used, the data subject's rights as guaranteed by the GDPR and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (in particular the right to withdraw consent or access their data), information as to whether data will be shared or transferred to third parties or to non-EU countries and for what purposes, how long the data will be retained before they are destroyed. If the data processing entails potential risks, the data subjects will be informed accordingly during the informed consent procedure.

**Data handling and data security:** The processing of personal data under the activities of SPADE will be limited to the processing necessary and proportionate to achieve the purposes of the project (principle of proportionality).

The **minimization principle** will be strictly followed, i.e. we will use only the absolute minimum of personal data required for the purpose. Where it is possible to conduct necessary research without collecting personal data, this will be preferred.

The **purpose limitation principle** will be strictly followed, i.e. the consortium will ensure that personal data will be processed for a specific legitimate purpose(s). Further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research purposes and/or statistical purposes are considered compatible with the initial purpose.

The **storage limitation principle** will be strictly followed, i.e. personal data will be retained for as long as necessary for the purpose(s) of processing and will be destroyed by the end of the project (storage limitation principle).

The consortium will ensure that **appropriate technical and organizational measures** are implemented to ensure a level of security appropriate to the potential risks for the data subjects in the event of unauthorized access to, or disclosure, or accidental or unlawful destruction, or loss, or alteration of their data. Examples of the safeguards to be used are indicatively:

- pseudonymization/ encryption/anonymization of personal data where necessary;
- use of dummy/virtual/fake data when possible;
- the ability to ensure the ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems and services;



- the ability to restore the availability and access to personal data in a timely manner in the event of a physical or technical incident; physical security measures.

We will NOT process data belonging to special categories of personal data (e.g. genetic, biometric or health data, information about sex life or sexual orientation, trade union membership, race or ethnicity, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs).

We do NOT foresee any further processing of previously collected personal data (secondary use).

We do NOT foresee that publicly available personal data will be involved other than those referred as open dataset through research papers and open data repositories.

The above will be further detailed in **Task 6.5: Data Management and GDPR Conformance Monitoring**

### 1.3 Ethics requirement 3 ANIMALS

SPADE aims at developing pilot use cases evaluated at real livestock conditions for improving animals' health, safety and security conditions. Moreover, the project will apply non-intrusive, non-disturbing techniques and methods, deliberately **avoiding** to impair animals' well-being and natural behaviour by any possible disturbing-mean (e.g. noise levels, physical contact etc.).

To that end SPADE will abide to the European ethics requirements for treating animals and will even attempt to go beyond and conform to stricter societal ethical 'animal treatment' demands such as those championed by International Organizations (e.g. The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals - PETA Foundation). Therefore, SPADE declares that this project will not experiment on individual animals in its effort to monitor animal health remotely (using drones). Moreover, SPADE will not deploy any animal restrain techniques and will not lock animals in cages or in laboratories. SPADE will not use techniques that could endanger: animal poisoning; animal deprived of food, water, or sleep; animal subjected to psychological distress; deliberately infected with diseases; subjected to brain damage; paralysed; exposed to skin or eye irritants; burned; gassed; force-fed; electrocuted; and animal killed. Finally, SPADE will not be involved in animal breeding via animal suffering from debilitating genetic modifications, or used as breeding machines or in any cruel animal supply chain configurations, or animal languished in cages without being used for experiments until they die.

The work of SPADE is predominantly designed to improve animal health and should be seen as a step towards improving the European infra/info structure towards leveraging further the ethical treatment of animals in the livestock industry.

### 1.4 Ethics requirement 4 ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY

From an environmental standpoint, SPADE involves the creation of a systematic approach to complying with environmental regulations. Moreover, under **Task 1.6: Ecosystem and Market watch, Assessment & Evaluation** specific activities towards this goal will be implemented also for the outputs of the project.

From a health standpoint, SPADE has at its core the development of safe, high quality, and environmentally friendly processes, working practices and systemic activities that prevent or reduce the risk of harm to people in general, farmers, and employees of consortium partners.

From a safety standpoint, SPADE involves creating organized efforts and procedures for identifying workplace hazards and reducing accidents and exposure to harmful situations and substances. The partners of SPADE foresee training of personnel in accident prevention, accident response, emergency preparedness, and use of protective clothing and equipment.

All relevant EU and National regulations pertaining the activities of SPADE will be closely followed and monitored.

In detail SPADE will make all reasonable efforts to:

- Promote occupational and personal safety, health and wellness;
- Protect the health and safety of people involved in SPADE activities;
- Provide information to all people involved in SPADE activities about health and safety hazards;
- Identify and correct health and safety hazards and encourage people involved in SPADE activities to report potential hazards;



- Conduct activities in a manner protective of the environment; and
- Maintain a risk-based emergency management program to reduce the impact of emergency events to SPADE.

## 1.5 Ethics requirement 5 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SPADE, from its inception phase already, has defined a strict AI-trustworthiness framework that will be present and steer all the system's design and validation phases. All SPADE AI modules will follow the guidelines published by the EC and the AI High-Level Expert Group on its "Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI" document. According to this, Trustworthy AI is defined by 3 complementary concepts: Lawful AI, Ethical AI and Robust AI, which are addressed through 7 key points mainly intended for developers and deployers of AI systems. From the guidelines, the Assessment List for Trustworthy AI (ALTAI) was derived to assess the level of compliance of AI systems. For each AI developed system, including the training and validation stages, the SPADE AI trustworthiness methodology will ensure:

1. Transparency, including traceability in the case of use of ML techniques and explainability of results to allow end users to understand the reasoning behind recommendations/outputs;
2. Technical robustness and safety, covering resilience to attack and security issues, accuracy, reliability and reproducibility;
3. Privacy and data governance, ensuring access protection, quality and integrity of the managed data;
4. Diversity, non-discrimination and fairness, fostering stakeholders participation and avoiding any kind of unfair bias;
5. Human agency and oversight, ensuring fundamental rights of end users, stakeholders and participants; and
6. Accountability mechanisms minimising negative impacts and enable redress in case of adverse impact.

