

Informed Consent for Participation in OPERAS-P Focus Group Interview Study

Dear researcher,

We at the OPERAS-P (“Preparing Open Access in the European research area through scholarly communication”) project aim to develop the European Research infrastructure for open access publications in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). This European Commission funded project intends to improve cooperation between players in the SSH scholarly communication landscape, enhancing the overall quality of the ecosystem and taking care of the whole research cycle in view of enabling Open Science as a standard practice. In the process of the Landscape Study design, we are conducting an in-depth stakeholder consultation amongst academics involved in scholarly communication in SSH. We aim to consult academics in their different roles (as researchers, authors, editors and publishers) to identify their experiences and needs.

Aim of the focus group interviews

In the focus group interviews, we wish to learn from the participants’ experiences and understanding of current practices in scholarly communication. This valuable knowledge will help us identify best practices and develop a novel and practice-oriented set of usable tools and procedures that researchers can use to improve scholarly communication in their own discipline. Also, it will enable us to create the landscape study describing the institutional, scholarly and technical context in each participating country and allow us to prepare a long-term, evidence-based strategy for the development of the OPERAS infrastructure and its services.

Use of data and dissemination of research findings to participants

The focus group interviews will be audio recorded and the subsequent interview transcriptions will be made fully anonymous. All names and other identifiers (information on country, university, etc.) will be removed to ensure full anonymity. The recordings will be destroyed after they have been transcribed. As this is a Europe-wide consultation, the transcripts will be translated into the English language. Informed consent forms will be stored separately from the discussion transcripts. The anonymous transcripts of the focus groups will be stored safely at a web-based collaborative and GDPR compliant platform for a minimum 10 years after the end of the study, and possibly indefinitely. Fully anonymised transcripts will be made available as open research data in a CESSDA open access repository as well as on the project’s OSF (Open Science Framework) site: <https://osf.io/> under CC-BY licence. Only anonymized data will be used for analysis.

The findings from the focus group interviews will be analysed, published and made publicly available. The project report detailing the findings of the study will be sent to all participants when the report has been finally approved by the European Commission. No personal identifiable information will be mentioned or disclosed at any point.

Benefits and risks of participating

The direct benefits of participating in the research are that participants can share experiences and actively bring in and broaden their knowledge; mostly, however, the benefits are indirect, they will be accrued by the SSH research community as a whole with a contribution to the development of scholarly information infrastructure.

The study poses a small risk of discovering sensitive information, for instance concerning researchers' specific experience or identifying publishing venue. In the focus group introduction and debriefing, we will emphasise that participants are not to repeat what is said in the focus group interview to others. By signing this informed consent form, participants agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed by all participants and researchers during the focus group session. Participants will have the opportunity to view, and if relevant, comment on transcriptions of interviews and quotations.

If you do not want to join or want to stop the group conversation

Participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you must sign the attached informed consent form and bring it to the focus group. If you have agreed to participate but change your mind, you can withdraw at any point (including during the focus group discussions), we would ask you kindly to inform us if this is the case. Each participant in the focus group interview may at any time demand removal of his/her interview data by a simple request to the coordinator of the study, prof. dr. Jadranka Stojanovski (jadranka.stojanovski@unizd.hr), or to University of Zadar Data Protection Officer (gdpr@unizd.hr). Data, which have already been published, cannot be removed.

Financial aspects

There is no fee paid for participation.

Supervision

University of Zadar Data Protection Officer (gdpr@unizd.hr) can be contacted for questions regarding Data Protection in the OPERAS-P project Landscape study. A study coordinator also welcomes any questions about this study. Please do not hesitate to contact the landscape study coordinator, prof. dr. Jadranka Stojanovski (jadranka.stojanovski@irb.hr), if you have any questions.

Informed consent and confidentiality agreement

Participation is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving any reason for withdrawing by contacting the study coordinator prof. dr. Jadranka Stojanovski (jadranka.stojanovski@unizd.hr) or University of Zadar Data Protection Officer (gdrp@unizd.hr).

By signing the consent form, you indicate that you are in agreement with all of the statements below:

- I have read the information provided about the study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been sufficiently answered. I have had enough time to decide whether I would like to participate.
- I am aware that participation in the study is voluntary. I also know that I can decide at any moment to not participate or to withdraw from the study. I do not have to provide any reasons for not participating or terminating enrolment in the study.
- I give consent to the audio recordings of the focus group interview.
- I give consent to the collection and use of my interview data in line with established data protection guidelines and regulations (GDPR).
- I give consent to having my anonymised transcribed interview data made publicly available on OSF (<https://osf.io>) or similar secure platform. I understand that this means that the anonymised data can be used for research purposes other than the ones described above. I am also aware that this means that my anonymised information may be used in countries outside of Europe and that the regulations for data processing and storage in those countries may not comply with those of the European Union.
- I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed by all participants and researchers during the focus group session.
- I want to participate in this study.

Name in block letters:

Signature: