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– EU Global Leadership –  
TIA 2030**

**Methodology – tools**

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## INDEX

<b><i>Executive Summary</i></b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b><i>1. Introductory remarks</i></b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b><i>2. Main body</i></b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b><i>2.1 Guidelines for preliminary desktop research</i></b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b><i>2.2 Qualitative data collection process</i></b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b><i>2.2.1 Detailed instructions for interviews with a sample contact letter</i></b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b><i>2.2.2 Instructions for participant observation</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><i>3. Conclusion</i></b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b><i>References</i></b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b><i>Appendices</i></b> .....	<b>15</b>

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## Definitions

The following table represents the abbreviations used in this document.

<b>Term/Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
EU	European Union
UN	United Nations
WP	Work Package

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## Executive Summary

This document represents the deliverable for WP3: Research: the Social Fields Approach to Technologies and Innovations in Agenda 2030 for the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence “Technology and Innovations for Agenda 2030 – EU Global Leadership” (TIA2030). It is a set of documents representing complete developed methodology, protocols and tools, which will be used to collect the primary data at European, national and regional levels.

The document is structured into 3 chapters with subsections. The first chapter contains introductory remarks. The second chapter and its subsections present guidelines for preliminary desktop research, an overview of the qualitative data collection process, as well as detailed instructions for interviews and instructions for participant observation. The main assumptions are represented in the Conclusion chapter. Sample contact letter to the respondents, Consent form for collaboration in research, Interview/focus group guide with questions and subsections are represented in the Appendices for this document and will also be attached to the Deliverable as separate PDF files.

The developed methodology, protocols and tools will be published online on the TIA2030 online platform, that will allow transferability so that other researchers interested in the same topic can collect the data in other settings using the same tools.

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## 1. Introductory remarks

This document represents the deliverable for the WP3: Research: Social Fields Approach to Technologies and Innovations in Agenda 2030. It is a set of documents outlining the complete developed methodology, protocols and tools, which will be used to collect the primary data on, first, European, macroregional, national, regional/local levels, and, secondly, on the global level (in selected third countries).

Data collection tools are based on operationalisation from the SOFIA approach and the literature review conducted before and represented in Deliverable 3.1 – Literature review with meta-analysis. It serves as the basis for the development of methodology, protocols and tools. The data will focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the role of institutions, social networks and cognitive frames in the development and implementation of the EU's grand strategies, with a particular view on the current Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Data will be collected with the help of qualitative research methods, in particular:

1. the semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups, which will employ specific additional questions designed to collect data for qualitative comparative analysis;
2. participant observation, to be used in contexts when it will be particularly important to additionally explore reveal the reality of Agenda 2030 implementation in a specific context.

The research results are supposed to be used to assess and further refine data collection methodology for other researchers who will decide to study strategic processes for their own research.

The structure of the document is the following: Chapter 1 contains the introductory remarks with a short overview of the methodology, research aims and data collection tools; Chapter 2 and its subsections present guidelines for preliminary desktop research, a description of the methodology and qualitative data collection process with detailed instructions for interviews and instructions for participant observation. The main assumptions are represented in the Conclusion chapter. Sample contact letter to the respondents, Consent form for collaboration in research, Interview/focus group guide with questions and subsections are represented in the Appendices for this document and will also be attached to the Deliverable as separate PDF files.

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## 2. Main body

### 2.1 Guidelines for preliminary desktop research

The TIA2030 project focuses on competence and knowledge on the European Union implementation of the United Nations global Agenda 2030, which aims to decouple economic growth from environmental and social degradation. The theoretical scope of the project is based on the SOFIA (Social-Fields-Approach) conceptual framework: three main social forces (institutions, social networks, and cognitive frames) (Beckert, 2010; Rončević & Cepoi, 2022) are considered regarding their impact while shaping the systems of technological innovations, particularly within the implementation process of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within the project implementation process, TIA2030 engages a variety of target groups (academia, students, professionals, policymakers, civil servants, businesses, civil society and the general public at large), setting up infrastructure, methodologies, protocols, and tools to systematically collect, evaluate and make publicly available both already existing documentary resources and new primary empirical data.

In order to determine the research methodology as well as create data collection protocols and tools, the theoretical scope of the research was framed based on the literature review. This method of analysis of secondary sources involves studying information without direct participation in the data collection process, allowing for a thorough review of a large amount of data for a limited time. In addition, it enables the description of theory and facts to establish a comprehensive background and introduction to the research field (Bryman, 2012). The review was conducted using the resources from Scopus, Clarivate, and Google Scholar databases. It is based on the qualitative meta-analysis of the existing academic landscape and supporting publications, such as reports, legal documentation and data (e.g. Oslo Manual 2018, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023, OECD and Eurostat data) regarding the implementation process of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs (implementation deficit) within the EU, beyond its borders and in the global level. A particular emphasis is put on the social fields theory as an analytical framework to underline the role of social forces not only in shaping the internal structural settings of social fields within the process of adopting and implementing Agenda 2030 and its SDGs but also in the European Union public diplomacy in its application. Moreover, the literature review outlined the role of technological advancements within the implementation of Agenda 2030, proclaiming that innovations often facilitate realising these goals, impacting the methods and effectiveness of implementation strategies.

Overall, the TIA2030 project aims to advance interdisciplinary EU studies and deal with the phenomenon of EU implementation deficit, with a view to offering research and educational tools that could be utilised throughout Europe and beyond to contribute to awareness of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs and support their implementation. In addition, TIA2030 develops a multi-level approach to introduce policy recommendations for local, regional, national, macroregional and EU levels, as well as for governments beyond the EU borders to support EU public diplomacy towards third countries and promote EU values and its strategic vision.

The working methodology of the TIA2030 project combines four interdisciplinary elements:

- Student-centred learning educational approach, aiming to develop autonomy and

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independence of the learner, which will substantially increase the quality of the teaching and assure better results;

- Open Innovation 2.0 paradigm, where academia, policy-makers, industry and civil society work together to co-create structural changes far beyond the scope of individual actors. These principles of networking, collaboration, entrepreneurship (enhancing the creative exploration of new opportunities), proactive management of intellectual property (open-source approach in the case of TIA2030), and innovation are based on research and development (research activities of TIA2030);
- SOFIA conceptual framework, which focuses on institutional, social and cognitive foundations and mechanisms of implementation of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs. This approach can also be instrumental in providing the relevant tools and inclusion of all target groups in the process, primarily through debates on relevant strategic ideas (dealing with economic, political, environmental, social demographic etc. challenges, etc.) on the EU, national and regional levels, through selection of the most relevant strategic priorities in the open political process, and through dissemination of ideas on EU strategic development;
- Research activities which enable the collection of primary information.

The concept and methodology for the research have been selected and developed since the specific objectives cannot be met with (desktop or empirical) research alone but require smart and carefully interwoven and mutually informing activities.

## 2.2 Qualitative data collection process

Research will be conducted within the qualitative research paradigm, an empirical type of research where the data is expressed in a non-numerical form. The main aim of qualitative research is to elicit participants' perspectives (Clark et al., 2021) to collect the data, which tends to offer detailed information about the considered topics. Careful engagement with places and social actors is also required, whereas those actors may include individuals, communities, organisations, or institutions (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010; Clark et al., 2021). Within the current research, primary qualitative data will be collected with the help of the following **qualitative research methods**:

1. the semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups, which will employ specific additional questions to collect data for qualitative comparative analysis so as to gather the expertise and competencies of high-level experts on the topic of EU grand strategies, in particular on EU strategy for innovations-based implementation of Agenda 2030, and its impact on international, national and regional levels;
2. participant observation, to be used in contexts when it will be particularly important to additionally explore the reality of Agenda 2030 implementation in a specific context.

Qualitative data will be collected on, first, European, macroregional, national, regional/local levels, and, secondly on the global level (in selected third countries). The first aspect is important due to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the European Union, which are in line with the principles of subsidiarity. The second is relevant due to the major contribution of the European Union to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, more generally, due to attempts of the European Union to make a positive contribution to the global agenda

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through its public diplomacy.

As far as the research method is particularly concerned, it is worth mentioning that semi-structured interviewing allows a more open nature of the discussion rather than other interview types: interviewers can ask additional or follow-up questions, change the order of the questions or exclude one or another question as the respondent might have already referred to it or answered it earlier. Therefore, it appears to be possible to explore unexpected relevant subtopics. In addition, the collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews enables the adjustment of data collection tools to the specific social settings in which data will be collected (Bryman 2012, 402).

The decision to conduct semi-structured interviews within the scope of ongoing research is deemed favourable also considering the aim of capturing individuals' experiences and expertise. This also aligns with the chosen research approach, showcasing the complexity of social phenomena, particularly the complexity of a social field.

The methodology will consider an alternative path to the data collection process with the help of the focus group, a qualitative research method of a focused discussion with several participants on a certain topic (Clark et al., 2021). The main benefit of performing focus groups is to observe the pattern of respondents' behaviour and answers while discussing a topic in a group, but not individually. This also gives the possibility of collecting additional relevant reflections and comments that respondents have as reactions to other participants, reducing individual bias in the answer patterns while enriching the understanding of terms and concepts via consecutive commentaries (e.g. from the discussion emerging from the experts, their critical reflection and additions to previous comments, etc.) (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010).

**Data collection** will take place in:

- the EU institutions in Bruxelles (Belgium) (international level);
- Central Europe (Vienna, Austria), Danube Region (Budapest, Hungary) and Adriatic-Ionian (Bologna, Italy) (3 macroregional levels);
- 3 core developed EU Member States (Belgium, Germany, Ireland), 3 semi-peripheral (Hungary, Poland, Slovenia) and 3 peripheral countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia) (national and/or regional levels);
- 3 third countries from 3 continents with different economic, social and environmental circumstances (thus corresponding to the three dimensions of sustainable development) where the European Union has a representation as testing cases (United States, Ukraine/Russia (availability of the respondents in these regions will depend on the current situation on the spot), Thailand);
- United Nations (New York or Geneva) (international level).

The research **population** consists of the representatives/officials of the EU/UN/other relevant institutions (e.g. regional development agencies, regional EU offices) in the selected regions/countries. Thus, the research **sample** might be preliminary (but not exclusively) defined in the following way:

- Officials from specific EU and UN institutions (e.g. European Commission, European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee, Delegation of the European Union to the UN Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

in Geneva, etc);

- Mid-level or senior-level officials or those with relevant expertise (e.g. policy advisors, representatives of regional development agencies, liaison officers, etc);
- Representatives based in specific countries or regional EU offices across selected member states;
- Officials working on specific policy areas considering the implementation of Agenda 2030;
- EU institution officials from various departments and locations in selected regions/countries.

The **sampling method** will follow the mechanisms of identifying key informants, experts, and relevant professionals on the topic of the implementation of the EU grand strategies. Inside the sample, while searching for the contact for the interviews/focus groups, it is also possible to use the snowball technique to build up the interviews/focus group list of respondents throughout the known contacts.

The number of interviews and/or focus groups should be determined depending on the region's accessibility and the interviewees' availability. It is presumed to have at least 1 interview with stakeholders in each mentioned region/country/institution. In addition, the number of focus groups generally depends on the research need and the data. So, the decision on whether to implement the focus group as a method will depend on how the research will proceed and also on key respondents found in a particular country/region/institution and their availability to participate in a discussion at a particular time and place. Regarding the composition of the focus group, certain authors presume that it should include from 4 to 6 participants (Clark et al., 2021).

### **2.2.1 Detailed instructions for interviews with a sample contact letter**

Provided guidelines aim to conduct semi-structured interviews/focus groups with the outlined population of the research.

Initially, contact with the possible respondents is to be established. An official contact letter will be emailed to the respondents (or intermediaries). The Contact letter for the respondents is represented in Appendix A and in a separate PDF file as a part of a set of documents for this Deliverable. It is considered to be the template and can be modified/adjusted regarding the needs of the project and the research process. In cases of great distance or other circumstances, interviews/focus groups will be conducted via online meetings (audio/video call) using platforms like Skype/Zoom/Google Meet/WhatsApp, etc. An interview/focus group guide (a questionnaire) is prepared with a series of additional (follow-up) questions to guide and orient the discussion. An Interview/focus group guide with questions and subsections is represented in Appendix C and in a separate PDF file as a part of a set of documents for this Deliverable.

Regarding specifically the focus group implementation procedure, it is worth mentioning that it is usually run by a moderator, who should guide the discussion but not intrude on it, giving particular attention to the interaction processes within the group and how the participants discuss particular issues as members of the group, but not as individuals. All the participants should be provided with clear and extensive instructions about the discussion before starting the focus group; at the beginning

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of the discussion, it could be useful to ask each participant to introduce themselves (it will help to associate a voice to a name while coding) (Clark et al., 2021).

The interviews/focus groups are supposed to be conducted in English in order to unify the answers or in the national language if participants cannot or refuse to be interviewed in English. All ethical and confidential aspects will be discussed with the interviewees in advance, as well as through an electronic consent form, so they can familiarise themselves with the research details and review the interview questions. If necessary, they may be again provided with assurance of complete anonymity. The consent form might also be sent via Google form, in case it will be impossible to sign it digitally or by hand (the Consent form for collaboration in research is represented in Appendix B and in a separate PDF file as a part of a set of documents for this Deliverable).

When the time slot is set up, an interview/focus group discussion is scheduled. All interviews/focus groups will be recorded for subsequent transcription and quoting, with the preliminary agreement of the respondents. To avoid technical issues, two recording devices might be used simultaneously. The interview/focus group is planned to last max. approximately 1 – 1,5 hours. The difference in duration might be explained by the fact that these are semi-structured interviews, and, as has already been mentioned, these methods allow more flexibility during the discussion. Moreover, the respondents might understand the questions differently; they have different opinions and experiences.

The recorded interviews/focus group discussions will be transcribed and coded to identify the main categories discussed by the respondents. In this case, the open coding method will be employed to assemble collected data into specified categories that are potentially important for the research. This method also helps to reduce the amount of data that is to be analysed with the help of turning it into smaller fragments (Bryman, 2012). The transcripts will be segmented into the main topics. According to the analysis mentioned above, it is possible to outline the following topics pertinent to the research aim, which should be discussed with the respondents during the interviews/focus group discussions: Understanding EU grand strategies, EU grand strategies and their implementation, Role of technology and innovations, Multilevel governance and EU Public Diplomacy. Respondents' answers will be analysed for each topic to identify key notions pertinent to the research aim. Respondents' quotations will be marked according to the distinguished notions; then, these notions will be grouped into categories. The relevance of the categories to the primary research issue will be assessed to interpret the research results, emphasising the interconnection of the categories with the main aim of the research.

### **2.2.2 Instructions for participant observation**

The participant observation method will be used within the research process in situations where it is crucial to delve deeper and reveal the reality of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs implementation in a specific context.

Participant observation (qualitative, unstructured approach to observation) is regarded as one of the methods of collecting primary qualitative information within the research. It involves the researcher

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immersing themselves in a social setting for an extended period, closely observing the behaviour of individuals within that environment (such as a group, organisation, or community) to understand the significance and the meanings they assign to their surroundings and actions. The level of participation can vary significantly, depending on the extent to which the researcher engages in the social settings (Clark et al., 2021).

Participation may involve listening to conversations between others and asking questions “in the field”, helping the researcher view the situation or a social setting from the perspective of others. This method might be an additional tool for the mentioned semi-structured interview/focus group approach since participant observers are typically in closer and longer-term contact with the respondents. It also offers a deeper understanding of the context behind people's behaviours and actions within the social setting. However, many topics and questions cannot be observed directly and require interviews for deeper investigation. The relevance of using either participant observation or interview/focus group methods greatly depends on their suitability for the research objectives and proceedings. Additionally, the participant observation method includes conducting some interviews or discussions during the observation process with the key respondents and participants of the social setting (Clark et al., 2021).

Before starting the participant observation, it is important to clearly outline the specific behaviours, interactions, or contexts the researchers are interested in exploring. Then, it is necessary to choose a relevant social setting that aligns with the research objectives, ensuring that it is an environment where participants are comfortable, and, for sure, it is obligatory to obtain permission to observe within the setting, explaining the main goal of the research and gain participants' consent. During the observation process, researchers should take detailed notes to document their observations (including, for example, dates, time, descriptions of events, interactions). Participants' privacy and confidentiality must be ensured in advance. Collected data should be anonymised. Informed consent should be obtained, where it is necessary. It is also essential for the researcher mainly to observe and not to engage in activities where appropriate. If permitted (and appropriate), audio and/or video recording tools might be considered to supplement the observations (participants must be informed about possible recording).

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### 3. Conclusion

Collected data and materials (existing research, databases, secondary and primary data) will be analysed and used for teaching activities and also to prepare policy recommendations on the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs in the European Union and beyond its borders. Policy recommendations will be aimed at policy-makers at the European, macroregional, national, regional and local levels, as well as in the United Nations and the third countries. Importantly, they will present the possible best approaches to engage in public diplomacy to implement Agenda 2030 in the third countries, with the main goal of Sustainable Development Goals and European values and strategic vision.

The research dimension of the TIA2030 project builds upon the SOFIA approach, focusing on institutional, social and cognitive foundations and mechanisms of implementation of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. For this purpose, the project sets up infrastructure, methodologies, protocols, and tools to systematically collect, evaluate and make publicly available both already existing documentary resources and new primary empirical data. This will be the foundation for multi-level policy debate with relevant audiences and enable the development of content and tools on EU subjects to complement and upgrade current courses and curricula. These activities are carefully interwoven to incorporate principles of integrated collaboration, co-created shared value and rapid adoption of the strategic vision of successful, smart and inclusive growth. As a result, TIA2030 will advance interdisciplinary EU studies, deal with the phenomenon of EU and global implementation deficit, support EU public diplomacy towards third countries, and promote EU values and its strategic vision.

The data, which will be collected during the research process, will be stored on the online platform of TIA2030. Following the crowdsourcing approach, the platform will provide access to collected data to interested experts (upon request and registration on the webpage), with full access given to those researchers who can contribute their primary data. TIA2030 staff will review all submitted data to ensure consistency of the data collection process with developed protocols and maintain the highest standard of quality. Results will also be used to assess and further refine data collection methodology for other researchers who decide to study strategic processes for the purpose of their own research.

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## Appendices

- Appendix A: Sample contact letter to the respondents – template
- Appendix B: Consent form for collaboration in research – template
- Appendix C: Interview/focus group guide with questions and subquestions

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**Appendix A: Sample contact letter to the respondents – template**

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**JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

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**Contact letter to the respondents**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to invite you to take part in an interview/focus group as part of the research, which will be implemented within the scope of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence “Technology and Innovations for Agenda 2030 – EU Global Leadership” (TIA2030). The interview/focus group will be conducted in English in person or via Skype/Zoom/Google Meet/WhatsApp/other applications, depending on the availability, with a date determined to suit your schedule. The discussion will last up max. approximately 1-1.5 hours, participants are offered full anonymisation. All the data will be used only for pedagogical, scientific and research purposes. Information about respondents is strictly confidential.

The research is focused on the EU implementation deficit of the grand strategies (Agenda 2030 and its SDGs in particular). It aims to offer interdisciplinary tools for research and education and introduce policy recommendations for local, regional, national, macroregional, and EU levels, as well as beyond the EU borders while supporting Agenda 2030 and its implementation and promoting EU values globally.

The objectives of the project and research are the following:

- To integrate ongoing research on the EU grand strategy Agenda 2030 and its SDGs to teach students with limited exposure to the EU topics;
- To gather the expertise and competencies of high-level experts on the topic of EU grand strategies;
- To develop synergies between various disciplines and resources in EU studies, especially on Agenda 2030 (e.g. sociology, information studies, law, political science, data science, engineering, regional studies etc.);
- To create joint transnational activities and structural links with academic institutions in other countries in exploration and teaching on EU and its grand strategies, especially Agenda 2030;
- To ensure openness of academic activities on the topic of the EU and Agenda 2030 to civil

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society and the general public at large;

- To enhance awareness of the EU grand strategies and their implementation through additional programmatic documents, including in regions beyond the European Union;
- To promote and encourage the discussion among multi-level policy debate with relevant stakeholders and audiences about the mechanisms behind the successful implementation of EU grand strategies.

The benefits you will derive from participating in the discussion are as follows:

- Create opportunities for the community to gain insight into the impact of your work and that of other stakeholders concerning the EU grand strategies implementation process;
- Get detailed information on the research methodology of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, as well as other projects at the Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto (Slovenia);
- Establish future cooperation with the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence and other projects from the Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto (Slovenia).

If you agree to contribute, let us know the best time to schedule the talk with you. Information will be audio-recorded for the following transcription and analysis. We have prepared a preliminary set of questions for all the Respondents.

If you have additional questions or concerns about this research, please get in touch with our project team: [tia2030@fis.unm.si](mailto:tia2030@fis.unm.si).

We are hoping for your positive response. Thank you very much in advance for taking the time to consider participation.

Yours sincerely,

The Jean Monnet CoE Team

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*Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence*, titled **Technology and Innovations for Agenda 2030** (TIA2030), is the focal point for competence and knowledge on the European Union's implementation of the United Nations global Agenda 2030. European Union played an important role in the adoption of Agenda 2030.

To achieve this, **TIA2030** engages a variety of target groups, i.e. academia, students, professionals, policy-makers, civil servants, businesses, civil society and the general public at large. **TIA2030** sets up infrastructure, methodologies, protocols, and tools to systematically collect, evaluate and make both already existing documentary resources publicly available and new primary empirical data. This is the foundation for multi-level policy debate with relevant audiences (conference special sessions, joint field trips and round table discussions) and enables the development of content and tools on EU subjects to complement and upgrade current courses and curricula (course modules, summer schools, workshops), which will be available as Open Educational Resources.

As a result, **TIA2030** will advance interdisciplinary EU studies and deal with the phenomenon of EU implementation deficit, with a view to offer research and educational tools that could be utilised throughout Europe and beyond, to contribute to awareness of **Agenda 2030** and its implementation.

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**Appendix B: Consent form for collaboration in research – template**

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**JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

Technology and Innovations for Agenda 2030 – EU Global Leadership – TIA 2030

**Consent form for collaboration in research**

You are invited to collaborate in the research, which will be implemented within the scope of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence “Technology and Innovations for Agenda 2030 – EU Global Leadership” (TIA2030). Please consider this information carefully before deciding to participate in the research.

**Purpose of the research** is to address the EU implementation deficit of the grand strategies (Agenda 2030 and its SDGs in particular) and offer interdisciplinary tools for research and education; to introduce policy recommendations for local, regional, national, macroregional and EU levels, as well beyond the EU borders while supporting Agenda 2030 and its implementation and promoting EU values globally.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in one *interview/focus group*, either in person or via Skype/Zoom/Google Meet/WhatsApp/other applications. You will be asked several questions about your knowledge and possible working experience regarding the implementation and acknowledgement of the EU grand strategies (Agenda 2030 and its SDGs in particular) among EU members, its neighbourhood countries and other global regions; the role of technologies and innovations as well as EU Public diplomacy in this process. With your permission, the *interview/focus group* will be audio-recorded. You will not be asked to state your name on the recording.

**Time required:** approximately max. 1- 1,5 hours.

**Risks:** participation in the research does not induce special risks.

**Benefits:** Participation in the research does not bring any special benefits except for contribution to the research and sharing your experiences concerning the EU Grand strategies implementation process. You will not be compensated for participating in the research.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses to the questions will remain confidential, and your real identity will not be disclosed at any point. You will be assigned a random numerical code, and anyone assisting with the transcription of responses will only identify you by this code. The researcher overseeing the

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study will securely store the recordings in an archive.

The transcript, without any identifying information, will be retained in accordance with the JM CoE TIA2030 Grant agreement. The data you provide will contribute to project reports on the EU's implementation deficit of grand strategies, as well as in formulating and presenting policy recommendations to support the SDGs of Agenda 2030 and promote EU values globally. This data may also serve as the foundation for future articles or presentations. Additionally, your responses will inform future project-related work. Your name or any information that could identify you will not be used in any publications or presentations.

Your **participation in the research** is completely voluntary, and you are free to decline or withdraw at any time without any penalties or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you wish to withdraw, inform the interviewer/moderator; no further questions will be asked. You may skip any questions during the interview/focus group and continue participating in the research.

Interview/focus group questions are attached to this Consent form.

If you have additional questions or concerns about this research, please contact our project team: [tia2030@fis.unm.si](mailto:tia2030@fis.unm.si). You may also contact the project coordinator, prof. Borut Rončević, Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto, [borut.roncevic@fis.unm.si](mailto:borut.roncevic@fis.unm.si)

#### Agreement:

By entering my email, name, and surname, I hereby declare that I have read the statement and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research. I confirm my consent to participate in the described research and allow the use of results for pedagogical, scientific and research purposes. The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained, and I agree to participate in this study.

I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix C: Interview/focus group guide with questions and subquestions



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# JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Technology and Innovations for Agenda 2030 – EU Global Leadership – TIA 2030

## Semi-structured interview and/or focus group guide

**General introduction** (*intro of the interviewer/moderator, brief project overview, aim of the research, permission for recording, confidentiality, interview/focus group duration*).

### **Introduction - Understanding EU grand strategies**

- 1. What do you consider to be the main elements of the EU grand strategies, including Agenda 2030 and the New European Innovation Agenda for your country or institution?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *How have these strategies evolved? What are the main drivers of these changes?*
- *How and to what degree are the priorities of Agenda 2030 reflected in your daily work?*
- *Do you see these priorities being formulated in the list of Agenda 2030 SDGs?*

### **EU grand strategies and their implementation**

- 2. In your view, what are the most considerable gains for the European Union in the implementation of these strategies?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *Would you say that certain groups have benefited from the implementation of the EU's grand strategies? If so, which groups have seen the most benefit and how?*

- 3. One of the recurring issues discussed is the "implementation deficit" of EU grand strategies. What, in your view, are the root causes of this deficit, and how can they be addressed effectively?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *How can the EU balance its internal processes and external impact while striving to meet the objectives of its grand strategies?*
- *How could you evaluate the acknowledgement of the grand strategies among EU members (and its close neighbours) and other global regions?*

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**4. How are the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs being implemented in your context? Did your institution or country formulate strategies, projects, etc., at different levels?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *What are the mechanisms through which this process takes place?*
- *How does civil society engage with and adopt the outcomes of the Agenda 2030?*

**Role of Technology and Innovations**

**5. The EU considers Technological Innovations as one of the key factors in achieving Agenda 2030 goals. What role do you see technology and innovation play in this aspect?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *What do you think about the possible interdependence of technological development and the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs? Can they motivate societies to reformulate them, for example?*
- *How would you estimate the possibility of technology and innovation being a solution to mediate the current implementation deficit of the EU grand strategies?*
- *In your view, what are the major challenges and ethical considerations associated with the use of technology in EU grand strategies?*

**Multilevel Governance and EU Public Diplomacy**

**6. The EU operates within a complex system of multilevel governance. How can the EU effectively coordinate its strategies and policies across various levels of governance, from local to global?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *What is your country's official stance regarding this matter? Can you detail on region and institution as well?*
- *Can you offer a good and/or bad example of how these strategies are shifted and implemented at different levels of government?*
- *Do you think the implementation is becoming "weaker" when shifting to local levels?*

**7. What are the challenges and opportunities for enhancing cooperation and knowledge exchange between EU institutions, academia, and other stakeholders (governments, civil society, academia, private sector) to improve the implementation of grand strategies and Agenda 2030 in particular?**

*(additional/follow-up questions):*

- *In your opinion, is the current funding and institutional infrastructure in your country adequate to support the shift towards a knowledge-driven society?*
- *Can you elaborate on whether your country or region has established any mechanisms to engage people in collaboration with institutions, especially for Agenda 2030 and its SDGs?*
- *In what ways does Agenda 2030 support the development of civil society?*

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