 Participant Information: Focus Groups

**Resilient coasts: optimising co-benefit solutions (Co-Opt)**

Elina Apine, Tim Stojanovic

What is the study about?

We invite you to participate in a research project about coastal flood and erosion management in the UK and the social acceptability of green/nature-based solutions.

Why have I been invited to take part?

We have approached you as a key stakeholder in coastal zone management (you are either involved in the decision making, are affected by the decisions or have special interest in coastal zones) in [case study site].

Do I have to take part?

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason, and with no negative consequences.

What would I be required to do?

You will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion about coastal flooding and erosion management practices and solutions in the UK in general and specifically in [case study site]. You will also be asked to show on a map what type of coastal protection schemes in your opinion would be the most appropriate for certain coastal stretches. You will also be asked questions about your knowledge and opinion on nature-based solutions and decision-making processes regarding coastal flood and erosion management.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

There are no risks associated with taking part in this study, but we might inconvenience you regarding time.

Are there any benefits associated with taking part?

This study will provide essential information on what coastal flood and erosion management solutions are preferred and how we can make more sustainable decisions.

What precautions will you take to help protect me from the coronavirus?

In planning for this research, we have completed a University of St Andrews risk assessment. We will hold focus group discussions in well ventilated rooms, ensure social distancing and provide hand sanitiser. Wearing of face masks will be encouraged but not mandatory.

Please let us know at any time if there is anything we could do to make you feel safer or if you ever want to reschedule or withdraw your participation.

What can I do to help protect you from the coronavirus?

If you or a family member has developed symptoms of coronavirus in the last 14 days, please do not attend, but get in contact and we will arrange another time to meet. Before you attend, we will explain the safety provisions we have put in place and require you to observe them.

Informed consent

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in this study and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent.

Who is funding the research?

This research study is being funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council (NERC-ESRC) through the Sustainable Management of UK Marine Resources (SMMR) Programme. Project reference code: NE/V016245/1.

What information about me or recordings of me (‘my data’) will you be collecting?

You will be asked to respond to a short online survey with questions on your educational background, sector you represent and experience with coastal management. We will ask for you consent to have the audio recorded of the meetings.

How will my data be securely stored, who will have access to it?

Your data will be stored in a **PSEUDONYMISED** form, which means that your data will be edited so that you are referred to by a unique reference such as a code number or different name, and the original data will be remain accessible only to Elina Apine. Your data will be stored in a secure cloud-based platform, and only Elina Apine and Tim Stojanovic will be able to access it. There will be a ‘key’ document, which will link your unique reference to your real identity. The key will be kept on a secure external hard drive and only Elina Apine and Tim Stojanovic will have access to it and be able to reconnect your data to you at a later date.

Audio recordings will be taken on an encrypted device and transcribed at the earliest opportunity before being destroyed.

How will my data be used, and in what form will it be shared further?

Your research data will be analysed as part of the research study. It will then be published in research publication and project report. Your name and organisation will not be identified in any publication or report.

If shared (published and/or placed in a database accessible by others), your data will be in a **PSEUDONYMISED** form, which means that your data will be edited so that you are referred to by a unique reference such as a code number or different name. There will be a ‘key’ document, which will link your unique reference to your real identity. The key will be kept in on a secure could-based platform and only Elina Apine and Tim Stojanovic will have access to it and be able to reconnect your data to you at a later date.

It is expected that the project to which this research relates will be finalised by November 2024.

Where can I find out about the results of the study?

The summary of the results of this study will be available on project’s website <https://projects.noc.ac.uk/co-opt/> and will be shared with project supporters in a form of a PDF briefing note.

When will my data be destroyed?

Your data will be retained in a pseudonymised form which means that your data will be edited so that you are referred to by a unique reference such as a code number or different name. The deletion of this data will be subject to regular review in accordance with the University of St Andrews guidance which is 10 years.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation will be known to Elina Apine, Tim Stojanovic and other researchers facilitating the sessions as well other FGD participants. However, this information will not be shared publicly.

Use of your personal data for research and data protection rights

The University of St Andrews (the ‘Data Controller’) is bound by the UK 2018 Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which require a lawful basis for all processing of personal data (in this case it is the ‘performance of a task carried out in the public interest’ – namely, for research purposes) and an additional lawful basis for processing personal data containing special characteristics (in this case it is ‘public interest research’). You have a range of rights under data protection legislation. For more information on data protection legislation and your rights visit <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights/>. For any queries, email [dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk).

You will be able to withdraw your data within two months. If your data is anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it, because we will not know which data is yours.

Ethical Approvals

This research proposal has been scrutinised and subsequently granted ethical approval by the University of St Andrews Teaching and Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I have concerns about this study?

In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the researcher. However, if you do not feel comfortable doing so, then you should contact my Supervisor or School Ethics Contact (contact details below). A full outline of the procedures governed by the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee is available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/humans/ethical-guidance/complaints/>.

Contact details

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| **Researcher(s)** | Dr Elina Apine | **School Ethics contact** | Dr Antje Brown |
|  | [ea93@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ea93@st-andrews.ac.uk)  Dr Tim A Stojanovic  [tas21@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:tas21@st-andrews.ac.uk) | gsdethics@st-andrews.ac.uk |
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