# INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

*Ethical Clearance Reference Number:* LRS/DP-21/22-26406

**YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

## Title of project

**Robots at the Gates? Robotic Process Automation, Skills, and Institutions: The Case of Financial Services in the UK and Germany**

## Invitation Paragraph

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of an **ESRC-funded Digital Futures at Work Research Centre**. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

## What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project is to gather data on **Robotic Process Automation** as a technology and how it affects workers' employment and skills. It will investigate whether and how the context influences the adjustment to automation via reskilling, redeployment, or redundancies. It focuses on knowledge-intensive services, such as financial services, which are undergoing a massive digital transformation of their back-office operations. It will contribute to theory and evidence, first, on the characteristics of automation, its effects on the work restructuring and workers' skill-mix; and second, the national/sectoral institutional responses and the reconfiguration of sectoral ecosystems and business models.

## Why have I been invited to take part?

You are being invited to participate in this project because of your **expert knowledge** of the sector as part of your job role/function (Automation/IT, Business Innovation, Human Resources, Accounting, etc.) or as a key stakeholder in the sector (officials of business associations, trade unions or regulatory bodies).

## What will happen if I take part?

If you choose to take part in the project you will be asked to answer questions about the following topics: adoption of automation technology; process; success/failure; problems/bottlenecks; fear as 'job-killer'; effects on skills/training; layering of processes; human-robot interactions; business models; vendor relationships; the role of associations (if any). Participation will take place remotely via MS Teams or Zoom meetings and will last 30-60'.Our discussion is **confidential** and your oral consent is needed to to record the answers for the assistance of recollection of the researchers. What you say will only be used for scientific purposes and will be anonymised.

## Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. You should only take part if you want to and choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Once you have read the information sheet, please contact us if you have any questions that will help you make a decision about taking part. If you decide to take part we will ask you to provide your verbal consent orally at the beginning of the meeting.

## Incentives

We will offer an Amazon voucher to all the participants as a way to to thank them for donating their time and as an incentive to participate in our research. Amazon vouchers will be mailed within a month following the date of the interview.

## What are the possible risks of taking part?

The main disadvantage to taking part in the study is that you will be donating your time (30-60') to provide us with an interview. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study.

## What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By offering your time you will contribute to improving our understanding of a topical issue that interests not only academics and professionals, but also regulators, media and the general public. As a research participant this is a unique opportunity for you to influence, inform and shape the research process and findings. Additionally, this is an opportunity to strengthen the links between business and academia through knowledge exchange, to help improve the links between academic theory and real-world practice, and to reflect upon the ongoing challenges and changes in the sector.

## Data handling and confidentiality

What is said in the interview is regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. Your data will be processed under the terms of UK data protection law (including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018). The data will be anonymised and remain confidential. The participants will not be identified in any report. The data will be retained for a reasonable period until the analysis of the data is complete and publications have been finalised and accepted. In reporting on the research findings using quotes, we will not reveal the names of any participants. The data will be stored in secure storage repositories in KCL hard drives of password-protected computers inside restricted-access offices. No data will be accessed by anyone other than the KCL research team; and will only be used with generic descriptors to protect the anonymity of the respondents. No data will be able to be linked back to any individual taking part in the interview.

## Data Protection Statement

If you would like more information about how your data will be processed under the terms of UK data protection laws please visit the link below:

https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support/research-ethics/kings-college-london-statement-on-use-of-personal-data-in-research

## What if I change my mind about taking part?

You are free withdraw at any point of the project, without having to give a reason. Withdrawing from the project will not affect you in any way. You are able to withdraw your data from the project up within two weeks of the date that the interview took place, after which withdrawal of your data will no longer be possible due to compliance with funder obligations if deletion would be likely to render impossible or seriously impair the achievement of the objectives of the research project. If you choose to withdraw from the project in the two-week timeframe we will not retain any of the information you have given thus far.

## How is the project being funded?

This project is being funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, and particularly the Digit Innovation Fund of the ESRC-funded Digital Futures at Work Research Centre.

## What will happen to the results of the project?

We will produce a final report summarising the main findings, which may be sent to you upon request. We also plan to disseminate the research findings through working papers, journal publications, seminars and conferences within the UK and internationally.

## Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this project, please contact me using the following contact details:

Dr. Andreas Kornelakis, King's College London, King's Business School, Bush House, 30 Aldwych, London WC2B 4BG andreas.kornelakis@kcl.ac.uk +44 (0)20 7848 4379

## What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If this project has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the project you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

The Chair of the Social Science and Public Policy, Humanities and Law, Research Ethics Subcommittee, which reviewed the project, at: rec@kcl.ac.uk

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.**