

A photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees. Sunlight is streaming through the canopy, creating a warm, golden glow and visible sunbeams. The ground is covered in green moss and some small plants.

»» Report on Sustainability Policies 2024



particip
your partner in change

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1 MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Particip was founded in 1989 and has its headquarters in Freiburg, Germany. In 1999, we opened a branch office in Brussels, Belgium. The company's shareholders comprise nine independent individuals, including six senior staff members.

The management of change is a challenge that we at Particip are successfully committed to. Directing and shaping transformation processes is at the very core of our services. Our corporate objectives are:

- Customer orientation
- Sustainability
- Professional & methodological competence
- Social responsibility
- Staff commitment

Further, our core values enable us to maintain and enhance existing good practice while undertaking change. Our guiding principles, which constitute the foundation for our staff's day-to-day decision-making, are:

- Partnership
- Communication
- Excellence

Successfully implementing change means delivering lasting results for our clients, target groups and partners. We not only advise our customers, but also support them in the implementation processes that follow their decisions. Honest and open relationships with our clients, partners, experts and staff are the strategic foundation for our long-term success. The services Particip provides are intersectional. Thus, all our efforts ultimately converge on the SDG 1: to end poverty worldwide.

The Sustainability Report lays down our ethical principles and policies and provides a binding guideline for all our staff to work to the highest professional standards.

Our ethical principles and policies are based on internationally recognised guidelines and models, such as the UN Global Compact Principles, which Particip initially signed on 7 September 2007, as well as the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

Johannes Walter
Managing Director

The services Particip provides are intersectional. Thus, all our efforts ultimately converge on the SDG 1: To end poverty worldwide. "

2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOUR

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

Principle 2: Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

Principle 5: Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour

Principle 6: Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Related SDG

1 No Poverty

2 Zero Hunger

3 Good Health and Well-Being

4 Quality Education

5 Gender Equality

6 Clean Water and Sanitation

7 Decent Work and Economic Growth

10 Reduced Inequalities

16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Human Rights and Democracy are one of the core sectors covered by our services. We openly commit ourselves to complying with internationally proclaimed human rights in accordance with the UN Declaration of Human Rights and to observe the national laws in all countries we work in. We fully abide by the principles of equality and non-discrimination against anyone regardless of gender, skin colour, religion, culture, age, disability or national origin and condemn all forms of discrimination and harassment, whether of physical, verbal or non-verbal nature. All business partnerships are fair and transparent and based upon mutual respect.

We are aware that human rights are less protected in some of the countries we work in than in Germany, where our headquarters are located. We therefore attach importance to the fact that our commitment is not only binding for our permanent staff in our headquarters in Freiburg and our branch in Brussels, but also for all freelance experts contracted by us for short- or long-term assignments at home or abroad.

We obey the laws and regulations in the countries we operate in and accept responsibility for our actions worldwide. We commit ourselves to comply with internationally proclaimed human rights in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to observe the national laws in all countries where services are provided. Equally, we fully respect the political, cultural and religious practices prevailing in the country of operation.

2.1 Code of Conduct

Since August 2010, Particip has an official Code of Conduct. By signing it, all staff members in our headquarters in Freiburg and our branch in Brussels ensure their assent.

The Code of Conduct lays down our ethical principles, provides us with a practical guideline while working to the highest professional standards in development consulting and sets a framework for action.

2.2 Trafficking in Persons

We commit to complying with internationally proclaimed human rights in accordance with the UN Declaration of Human Rights, including anti-trafficking in persons.

“Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims.” UN Office on Drugs and Crime,
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html>

Our company's employees, contractors, contractor employees, and their agents shall not:

1. Engage in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of performance of the contract;
2. Procure commercial sex acts during the period of performance of the contract;
3. Use forced labour in the performance of the contract;
4. Destroy, conceal, confiscate, or otherwise deny access by an employee to the employee's identity or immigration documents, such as passports or drivers' licenses, regardless of issuing authority;
5. Use misleading or fraudulent practices during the recruitment of employees or offering of employment, such as failing to disclose, in a format and language understood by the employee or potential employee, basic information or making material misrepresentations during the recruitment of employees regarding the key terms and conditions of employment, including wages and fringe benefits, the location of work, the living conditions, housing and associated costs (if employer or agent provided or arranged), any significant costs to be charged to the employee or potential employee, and, if applicable, the hazardous nature of the work;
6. Use recruiters that do not comply with local labour laws of the country in which the recruiting takes place;
7. Charge employees or potential employees recruitment fees;
8. If required by law or contract, fail to provide an employment contract, recruitment agreement, or other required work document in writing. Such written work document shall be in a language the employee understands.

2.3 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Particip's most valuable asset is our people. We aim to create a working environment that combines performance-orientation with concern for the individual. There is no place for discrimination, harassment and bullying in an inclusive and fair working environment. We therefore condemn all forms of discrimination and harassment, whether of physical, verbal or non-verbal nature against anyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin colour, religion, culture, age, disability or national origin.

Particip condemns any form of sexual harassment, as defined by EIGE (The European Institute for Gender Equality):

"Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature [...], with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment."

Bullying and harassment can occur in a variety of situations. The harasser can identify with any gender and be in any relationship with the victim, e.g. as an immediate supervisor, or work colleague. Anyone can be a victim of bullying and harassment, regardless of age, or gender.

What can you do if you are victim of harassment of any nature while working with / for Particip?

Particip strives to create a safe space for victims of any form of harassment. Particip has a team of persons of trust, that any employee can turn to. The team consists of a male and a female member and employees have the choice to contact either of them through personoftrust@particip.de or in person. It is guaranteed in our Code of Conduct that no employee will suffer adverse consequences for reporting any form of harassment.

At Particip discriminations on any grounds are equally important. Therefore, you may turn to the persons of trust if you feel discriminated against on grounds of ethnic origin, religion or belief, your age, gender, sexual orientation or a disability. Each employee also has the opportunity to talk to their direct supervisors, team leaders, or colleagues. Employees can also seek advice with the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Antidiskriminierungsstelle, the website is available in English, Arabic and German).

What can you do if you witness any form of harassment?

Depending on your level of comfort there are several ways to help when witnessing any form of harassment at Particip.

Direct involvement could be stepping in, when you see someone being harassed, e.g. by talking directly to the person who is being harassed. Indirect involvement can include talking to a team leader, or to a person of trust, either in person or via email at personoftrust@particip.de. Witnesses can also seek advice with the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Antidiskriminierungsstelle, the website is available in English, Arabic and German).

2.4 Gender Equality and Diversity

As a company headquartered in Germany, Particip is subject to the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG – Allgemeines Gleichstellungsgesetz) which is the basis for cooperation with all internal and external employees, regardless of their place of residence.

Memberships and Support

We are signatories of the German initiative “Charta der Vielfalt” (diversity charter), a corporate initiative to promote diversity in companies and institutions. The initiative aims to promote the recognition, appreciation and integration of diversity into Germany’s business culture and is supported by the Commissioner for the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees and Integration.

Particip's most valuable asset is our people. We aim to create a working environment that combines performance-orientation with concern for the individual. Our work processes and culture enable staff members to find their individual balance between professional and private life.

Family -Life-Balance

We are deeply aware that the responsibilities arising from having a family as well as a job are closely intertwined and mutually conditioning. For our family-oriented working environment, we were already honoured in 2005 as one of the most family-friendly companies in Germany. At Particip working parents do not have to choose between a career or a family. We firmly believe that work-family balance is not dependent on gender either: about a third of all parents on parental leave at Particip are men, way above average in Germany. Particip provides easy reintegration after parental leave, and offers home office solutions as well as part-time work at all seniority levels.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

We ensure "equal pay for equal work" by using a transparent remuneration structure for our staff directly involved in project work irrespective of any personal circumstances such as gender. Requirements to be met for achieving different salary levels are clearly defined and available to all employees.

2.5 Related Projects

Manager of the CSO Fund 'Promotion of Human Rights, Peace and Social Cohesion 2021-2025'

The objective of this project is "a strengthened civil society contributes to the respect of human rights, the prevention of conflicts and the preservation of social cohesion".



Thematic Evaluation of EUTF Protection Interventions in Libya

The European Union Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa provides a coordinated response by the European Union, its Member States and other donors to multiple crises affecting the most vulnerable and marginalised people in the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa, and the North of Africa. This evaluation will focus specifically on protection interventions financed by the EUTF North of Africa window in Libya.



Fund to Combat Trafficking and Other Worst Forms of Child Labour" (Children and Youth Fund, Phase VI)

The Children's Fund Project was created in 2005 by a Development Cooperation Agreement between the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and Burkina Faso due to the scale of the phenomenon of trafficking and the worst forms of child labour observed in Burkina Faso. The aim of the Project is to support initiatives to combat this phenomenon.



Technical Assistance: media and freedom of expression in the framework of EU democracy support 'Media4Democracy'

The overall objective of the project was to support the EU Delegations' broad and coherent implementation of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression and to help them to identify, design and implement appropriate near-, medium- and long-term actions.



Communication Component of the project Sustainability in the Textile and Leather Sector in Bangladesh (STILE)

Workers in the textile and leather industry are actively advocated to increase compliance with social and environmental standards in their working and living environment. This component of the programme will focus on encouraging workers in the textile-, garment and leather industry to actively advocate for compliance with social and environmental standards in their working and living environment.



Technical assistance for the implementation of the projects Improvement of the judicial system and access to justice 2021-2025 and Improvement of trust between the population and the internal security forces - Burkina Faso

The objective of the project is to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion and the Ministry of Security in order to support them in the implementation of their projects, which are the subject of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Government of Burkina Faso.



Benin - Gender Equality Support Programme (PAEG) - Recruitment of an operator for the general coordination and technical assistance to local partners

The Benin Gender Equality Support Programme (PAEG), Phase 1: 01.07.2022 - 30.06.2026 aims to strengthen gender equality among the Beninese population and thereby sustainably reduce the socio-economic vulnerability of women in Benin.

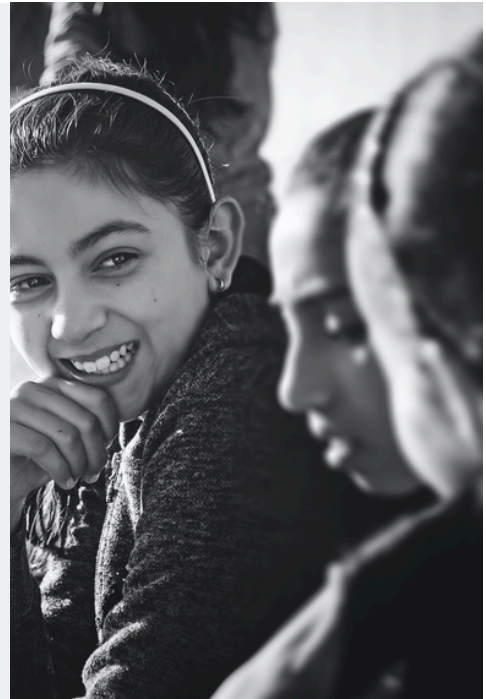


Support to the identification and formulation of a complementary support (top up) to the MOUSSAWAT programme

The general objective of this program (2018-2024) is to contribute to gender equality in Morocco through a human rights approach, with the specific objectives of:

- increasing women's empowerment and enjoyment of their rights;
- combating violence against women and promoting a culture of equality;
- ensuring gender mainstreaming in sectoral public policies and local governance.

General objective of the project: To contribute to the implementation of the cooperation strategy of the European Union with the Kingdom of Morocco, in particular in terms of promotion of gender equality.



Technical assistance to the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Family and Child Protection in the Central African Republic

The general objective of the project of which this contract is a part of is to reduce gender-based violence in the Central African Republic.

The action is aligned with the national strategy to combat gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation in the Central African Republic (2019-2023).



3 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle 8: Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Principle 9: Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Related SDG

2 Zero Hunger

6 Clean Water and Sanitation

7 Affordable and Clean Energy

9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

12 Responsible Consumption and Production

13 Climate Action

14 Life Below Water

15 Life on Land

Environmental protection is one of the core sectors covered by our services. But we are also committed to minimizing the negative environmental impacts of our day-to-day work.

3.1 Travel

Wherever possible, staff at Particip use public transport when travelling. Instead of owning a company car, we are members of a local car sharing company, where we can use a range of environmentally friendlier vehicles including electric cars.

CO2 emissions caused by project-related air travel are compensated through two organizations: <https://www.myclimate.org/>, and <https://www.atmosfair.de/en/>. All offsetting projects are related to one or several of the following standards: CDM Gold Standard, Plan Vivo, CER /VER (CER and VER projects are audited by a United Nations accredited body and other independent bodies).

3.2 Memberships and Support

Particip supports "Klimaschutz im Bundestag e.V.", an organisation which is campaigning for the issue of climate protection to be given higher priority in the German Bundestag. Amongst others it advocates for a Germany-wide CO2 emission tax to combat climate change. Through a national CO2 emission tax, the national climate protection goals can be achieved, and the costs of climate protection are spread in a fair and socially acceptable manner. Additionally, CO2 emission taxes are a strong incentive to invest in energy efficiency and in the further expansion of renewable energies.

Particip has been a long-term member of Greenpeace Germany. Greenpeace is fighting Global Warming and is fully committed to the Paris Agreement's target and the imperative of limiting the average global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

As part of the *Entrepreneurs for future*, we fully support the statement that it is possible to do business and protect the climate.

3.3 Infrastructure

Our head-quarters in Freiburg, Germany, are located in the world's first commercial plus-energy building – the Sonnenschiff ("Sun ship"). Plus-energy buildings on average generate more energy than its users spend.

3.4 Related Projects

Conservation and enhancement of natural ecosystems and their biodiversity for green growth of rural communities in Burundi

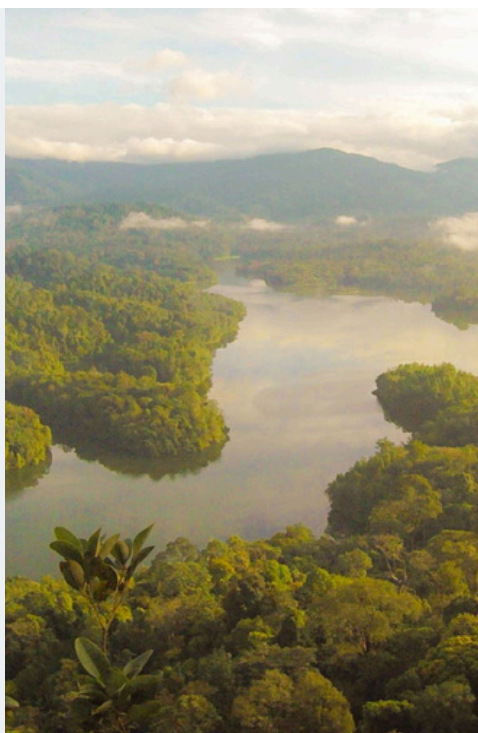
This project is part of the program “DUKINGIRE IBIDUKIKIJE – Conservation and enhancement of natural ecosystems and their biodiversity for green growth of rural communities in Burundi” which supports the preservation of natural ecosystems (including two protected areas) in the context of integrated landscape management and aims to help enhance their goods and services.



Forests For the Future Facility — F4 (EU Technical Assistance Facility for Improving Sustainable Forest Management)

The Forests for the Future Facility (F4) provides strategic and technical support to the European Commission and to partner countries, to contribute to healthy forest ecosystems, able to create decent jobs and to enhance economic growth in partner countries. F4 has a demand-driven approach to improve the number, quality and effectiveness of EU interventions in the forest-relevant sectors. F4's main themes are linked to sustainable forest management, private sector investment, policy reforms and sustainable value chains.

The F4 serves as a platform for dialogue and exchange as well as practical cooperation to address the interlinkages between development, poverty reduction, trade, climate change, biodiversity and forest.



Coordination support contract of the "Partnerships for sustainable cities"

Having in mind the programme of support, the specific objectives of the action are:

- To monitor the outcomes of each project and their contribution to the objectives of the Programme and to the localisation of SDGs
- To promote exchange of experiences and best practices among the different projects financed by the programme.
- To support the Commission to draw lessons learned and in house knowledge from the partnerships in order to better engage with local authorities.
- To communicate efficiently about the outcomes of the programme.



Final evaluation of project: support to enhanced cooperation in sustainable transboundary water management in the Mekong Basin

The main objectives of this evaluation are to provide the relevant services of the European Union, the interested stakeholders with:

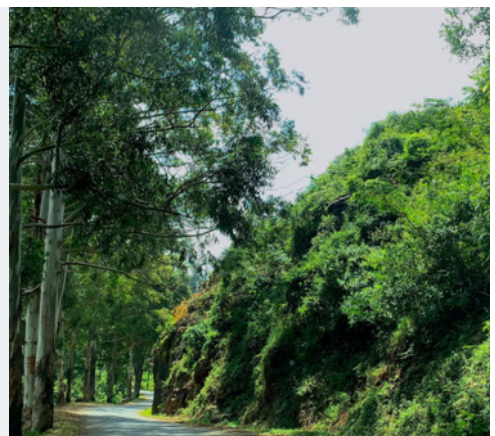
- an overall independent assessment of the performance of the “Support to enhanced cooperation in sustainable transboundary water management in the Mekong Basin”, paying particular attention to its different levels of results measured against its expected objectives and the reasons underpinning such results;
- key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve future interventions.



External Review and Evaluation Services of forest programmes in Tanzania

The main purpose of this project is to conduct reviews and evaluations alongside the implementation of three different Forestry Programmes in Tanzania. These are:

- Participatory Plantation Forestry Programme phase 2 (PPF2),
- Forestry and Value Chain Development Programme (FORVAC) and
- Tree Outgrowers Support Programme (TOSP).



4 ANTI-CORRUPTION

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Related SDG

1 No Poverty

8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

10 Reduce Inequalities

16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

17 Partnerships

Corruption is defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption weakens democracy, increases inequality and poverty, exacerbates the environmental crisis and hinders economic development.

As an actor in international development cooperation, we are convinced that our company's long-term success is not feasible at the expense of a few individuals or the general public, but solely in a sound, trustful and fair societal environment.

We therefore attach great importance to the fact that our staff members know and adhere to Particip's no-tolerance policy regarding corruption.

Additionally, all contracts with freelance experts clearly refer to the issue of corruption. By signing their contract, the freelance expert agrees that:

- The contractor shall not accept any commission, discount, allowance, indirect payment or other consideration in connection with, or in relation to, or in discharge of, his obligations under this contract.
- In context of services provided by the Contractor he shall not accept or give any favour, gift or remuneration from or to any source external to Particip without obtaining its approval. Otherwise, Particip may, without prejudice to any accrued rights of the Contractor under this contract, terminate this contract.

What can you do if you witness a breach of Particip's anti-corruption policy?

In case an employee or freelance expert witnesses a breach of Particip's anti-corruption policy, they may report in confidence their concerns and violations to Particip's internal persons of trust in person or at personoftrust@particip.de. No employee or freelance expert will suffer adverse consequences for reporting any disregard of Particip's ethical principles.

4.1 Conflict of Interest

Our Conflict of Interest Policy refers to any case where an employee's personal interest might contradict the interest of the company they work for. This is an unwanted circumstance as it may have heavy implications on the employee's judgement and commitment to the company, and by extension to the realisation of its goals.

A conflict of interest happens when an individual involved in multiple interests finds themselves in a decision-making situation where serving one of those interests would harm another.

Particip's conflict of interest policy applies to all prospective or current employees of the company, as well as independent contractors and persons acting on behalf of the company. This situation may take many different forms that include, but are not limited to:

- Employees acting in ways that may compromise the company's legality (e.g. taking bribes or bribing representatives of legal authorities);
- Employees' ability to use their position within the company to their personal advantage;
- Employees engaging in activities that will bring direct or indirect profit to a competitor;
- Employees using connections obtained through the company for their own private purposes;
- Employees using company equipment or means to support an external business.

The possibility that a conflict of interest may occur can be addressed and resolved before any actual damage is done. Therefore, when an employee understands or suspects that a conflict of interest exists, they should bring this matter to the attention of management so corrective actions may be taken. Supervisors must also keep an eye on potential conflict of interests of their subordinates.

The responsibility of resolving a conflict of interest starts from the immediate supervisor and may reach senior management. All conflicts of interest will be resolved as fairly as possible. In general, employees are advised to refrain from letting personal and/or financial interests and external activities come into opposition with the company's fundamental interests.

4.2 Related Projects

SBC-II:Component Communication -Visibility - Dialogue Haïti

The SBC-II programme aims in particular to: a) support the strengthening of the governance of the Haitian state, through support for the State Reform Framework Programme (PCRE) and the modernisation of the civil service, b) improve the management of public finances, and in particular increase budgetary transparency and strengthen control and anti-corruption mechanisms, and c) target certain priority expenditures for the implementation of the national policy in the field of primary education.



Technical assistance support for public administration reforms in Georgia

The overall objective of the programme of which this contract will be as follows:

To improve the efficiency, accessibility, accountability and transparency of the Georgian Public Administration in accordance with European principles of Public Administration and best practices.

Capacity building and advisory support will be provided for the development of the methodologies and tools required to implement and monitor the reforms in the PAR Roadmap priority areas, complementing other EU support provided under the overall programme.



Governance for Inclusive Development (GovID) in Ghana

The project Governance for Inclusive Development (GovID) in Ghana aims to contribute to the development of Governance by improving transparency, internal accountability, participation and provision of public services so that national and sub-national Governance actors are able to finance inclusive development in Ghana.



5 DATA PROTECTION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The concurrent management of a diverse project portfolio at Particip requires reliable, clear and efficient management structures. In order to ensure high efficiency of all relevant working processes and their continuous improvement, Particip has adopted a process oriented quality management system (QMS). The QMS sets a framework which enables Particip's teams to act in an independent and self-responsible manner satisfying customers' demands. The QMS is re-certified according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2015 on a regular basis.

5.1 Confidential Information

Particip takes the protection of personal data very seriously and strictly observes the regulations of the data protection legislation. Personal data are details of personal or material circumstances of an identified or identifiable individual. These include information such as name, address, telephone number or date of birth. Other examples of confidential information include non-public acquisition- sensitive information, financial reports, financial performance documents, or financial plans.

Inhouse staff as well as external freelancer sign a non-disclosure agreement before they start working for us. On our website, personal data are only collected to the extent that is technically necessary. Under no circumstances are the collected data sold or passed on to third parties for other reasons.

Every individual or company working with or for Particip has the right to obtain information, at any time, about the data relating to them, its source and recipients, and the purpose for which it is stored. Information on the stored data can be obtained from our privacy officer at dataprotection@particip.de

TECHNICAL
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