

[Show in browser](#)

NEWSLETTER

[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

The research we want. Reflections in view of COVID-19

*by Elsa González-Esteban, Moral Philosophy Associate Professor
(tenure) at the Universitat Jaume I (Spain) and ETHNA System Project
Coordinator*

In 2011, in an expert group, the EU worked with scientists, philosophers, political scientists and economists to define the right framework for RRI. This led to the RRI concept: Responsible Research and Innovation. It was clear that in order to describe R&I as responsible, it did not suffice to comply with precaution and regulatory parsimony principles. In other words, responsibility cannot be understood solely according to the ethical principle of “do no harm” by analysing the possible consequences of research results or products.

Developing RRI involves going beyond the ethical principle of “do no harm” to combine it with the ethical – proactive – principle of seeking the “right impacts”. As von Schomberg, one of the leading exponents and proponents of RRI, points out, this system of governance leads all the actors involved in the R&I processes to “make each other mutually responsible with a view to the acceptability, sustainability and ethical desirability” of R&I processes, as well as marketable products. Therefore, the actors of RRI are no longer only scientists, but also citizens, companies, civil society, politicians and others.

Currently we are experiencing how COVID-19 has made it even clearer how important ethical principles are as signs of what is undesirable, but also as guidelines for the science and research we want. Of course, it has been made clear that it goes against our sense of justice that scientific advances do not reach everyone equally, regardless of a patient’s origin, gender or age. Social alarm has been caused by the knowledge that, when faced with a shortage of resources, the guideline of not providing health care resources to the elderly has been proposed, and even applied, by arguing that they had fewer chances of survival, which proves that R&I require an appropriate response from the reliability it generates in society.

[Read more](#)

Latest news



Partners from all over the EU have joined forces to develop a framework that will help European research institutions to implement ethics in their research.

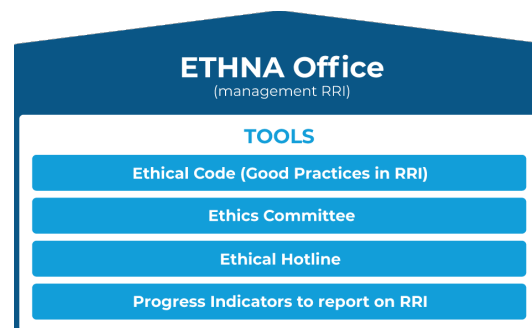
In the kick-off meeting for the ETHNA System project, the ten partners from eight countries met in Castellón to outline the first steps.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight on... ethical governance

Why an ethical system of governance for the RRI?

Ethics requires management mechanisms for its application. The ethical system of governance proposed in the Ethna System project offers the key tools to establish rules of conduct based on shared values, review their compliance and account for what has been developed, all in an open, participatory and co-responsible manner.



[More about Ethical governance](#)

Update from the work packages



Communication is key

While many project partners are currently busy with their [work packages](#), the work package 7 “Communication and Dissemination” has already met some of its milestones. The communication team hit the ground running after the start of the project. In a first step, it was the designers’ task to create a **logo** – not an easy task in a project that is based on many abstract ideas! After much deliberation, we arrived at the current ETHNA System logo, which embodies many of the ideas the project encompasses.



The pillars represent institution, education and governance, which is a vital part of the project. The various colours in the logo stand for the diversity of scientific research in addition to other values such as openness and participation. For those in the know, they are also reminiscent of the colour wheel of the Sustainable Development Goals. After all, ETHNA System aims to contribute to seven SDGs, for example SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and infrastructure), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The colour blue has been chosen as it symbolises stability, order, truth, and intelligence. Also, blue is a colour that is universally liked.

Based on the logo, the project team has developed a number of communication materials and created a [website](#) that gives insight into the goals and details of the project. And – absolutely essential these days – we set up social media accounts in Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Do you want to know what is next for ETHNA System?

Follow us on your choice of site and let us know what you think!



3 Questions to Work Package 2



Marit Hovdal Moan

Researcher at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
NTNU

Your work group is currently working on assessing policies, practices and projects relevant for grounding RRI practices in R&I funding and performing organisations. How is the work progressing?

WP2 is led by NTNU, and is undertaken in collaboration with UJI and FECYT. We have agreed on a division of labour, where UJI and FECYT is in charge of articulating the ETHNA project's conceptualisation of "RRI and "ethical governance". They are also in charge of writing a literature review on RRI and ethical governance. NTNU, on its part, is mapping practices of RRI governance in the EU/EEA, focusing primarily on the meso and micro level (i.e. the institutional level of HEFRCs, and the level of RRI research projects). NTNU is also responsible for putting all the elements together in a coherent report in the end.

A draft version of the UJI/FECYT contribution was due by the end of June and has been completed, and the mapping of relevant RRI governance practices will be completed by mid-July.

The purpose of the mapping exercise is to gain an overview of the field of RRI governance in the EU/EEA, both to see whether there are examples of "good" or "promising" practices of RRI governance "out there", and if so, whether the practices identified are worth picking up, as it were, and bringing into the ETHNA System.

The desk research phase will be complemented by RRI expert interviews. Although the interview phase is only due to start in August, we have already begun the process of identifying and interviewing a couple of RRI governance experts, notably Roger Strand, former chair of the EC expert group on "Indicators for promoting and monitoring Responsible Research and Innovation" (Strand et al., 2015).

What are the key challenges you are facing in your work?

Deciding on relevant criteria for the evaluation of RRI governance practices has proven a more challenging task than expected. Finding concrete examples of RRI governance

practices has also been difficult. With the exception perhaps of JERRI and Fit4RRI, previous EU-funded RRI projects focus on RRI practice at project level when mapping good RRI-practice.

What are the major findings or achievements so far?

In the process of mapping relevant RRI governance practices in the EU/EEA, it is imperative that we work with a set of criteria for promising RRI governance practices, which enable us to filter out “good” governance practices among these, to paraphrase the RRI Tools’ methodological approach to identifying good RRI practices. We have therefore constructed a theoretical framework for the evaluation of RRI governance practices, drawing on the literature on governance theorising “on the role of institutions in influencing behavior of actors”.

[Read the full interview](#)

Upcoming Events

Please note that due to the COVID-19 crisis, these events are subject to change. Please make sure to verify event dates and venues with the organisers!

EASST + 4S 2020

18. August 2020 - 21. August 2020
Prague, Czech Republic Prague, Czech Republic

EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF)

2. September 2020 - 6. September 2020
Trieste, Italy

2020 Three I's, Biosecurity & Research Integrity Conference

14. September 2020 - 16. September 2020
Chapel Hill, USA Chapel Hill, N.C., NC United States

DigiTranScope Spring Institute: Governance of Digitally Transformed Societies

5. October 2020 - 9. October 2020
Fiesole, Italy

[View all events](#)

Background on ETHNA System

The goal of ETHNA System is to implement and enforce an internal management and procedural system of the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) within 6 European Higher Education, Funding and Research Centres. It aims to generate a process of Ethical Governance of the Responsible Research and Innovation where Gender equality,

Open Science, Citizens' Engagement and Integrity Research (ethics) dimensions will be also necessarily addressed through a multi-stakeholder governance. It will be translated into a new formal organisational structure that will facilitate the compliance with all RRI dimensions in all scientific disciplines as well as assuring the innovations accomplished are made according to the needs of civil society demands.

[More about the project](#)

ETHNA System

<https://ethnasystem.eu/>



You have received this newsletter because you subscribed to it
with the email address u.mommert@biocom.de.

[Unsubscribe now](#)



© 2020 ETHNA System