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⬛ ETHNA   **NEWSLETTER**

Project Video: Experiences with the implementation of the ETHNA System

Elsa González-Esteban
Project coordinator, ETHNA System project

Watch how the ETHNA System was piloted across six different countries in Europe. Our latest project video dives into the implementation of the ETHNA System in different RRI contexts. What would an ethics governance system look like in a university as opposed to in an innovation ecosystem? What are some of the barriers and challenges that these different organisations faced in implementing the ETHNA System? These are just some of the aspects the film touches on. The diversity of organisations that implemented the ETHNA System, the different approaches they undertook, and the wide range of outcomes they achieved provide valuable insights that will ultimately help demonstrate the viability and sustainability of the ETHNA System.

Watch the video

Latest news

Lessons learned from pilot implementations

During the ETHNA System project, six organisations from four different RRI contexts piloted the Ethics Governance System implementation. Their experiences, the barriers they encountered and the lessons that were learned have now been consolidated into a report.

Read more

Successful Workshop for Transfer of Knowledge

Over two days in November, ETHNA System partners came together in Sofia, Bulgaria for a workshop on the first results of the ETHNA System implementation process. On the first day, each of the six implementing organisations had the chance to present their experience thus far.

Read more

Spotlight on... science education

Involving students and teachers in reflecting on the role of research and innovation fosters sustainable interactions between schools, researchers, industry and civil society organisations, both in formal and informal learning. The integration of RRI principles in teaching and learning activities supports multidisciplinarity and stronger student engagement as well as student acquisition of critical thinking and collaborative learning skills.

Source: RRI Tools

Three questions for Work Package 6

Marko Hajdinjak

Senior Researcher, ARC Fund

Your work package seeks to evaluate the outcomes of the testing of the ETHNA System in different contexts. How did the six implementing organisations differ?

Not only did the six implementing organisations come from different contexts (higher education, research funding, innovation ecosystem, and research centres), but each of them also had a different starting point. For example, at Harno and Espaitec, the idea to set up a governance structure similar to the ETHNA System emerged only after the two organisations joined the project. At UNINOVA, a rather vague idea that an ethics governance structure could be beneficial existed, but there were no concrete plans on how to implement it. ARC Fund had a well-developed plan to implement an ethics governance structure, but it had not yet been carried out until its involvement in the ETHNA System project. UJI already had some key ethics management instruments in place, such as the Ethics Code, several committees related to ethical issues and the Ethics Line, but there was also awareness that these structures needed to be renewed and some new ones needed to be developed. At NTNU, a well-established ethics governance structure was already in existence before the commencement of the project.

What different barriers in the implementation of the ETHNA System did you discover?

While not all challenges and barriers were necessarily valid or applicable in all implementation contexts, several important ones did emerge. A critical challenge was that if the methodology were to be applied too rigidly, it could be perceived as a top-down imposed mandate on researchers. Despite good intentions, a lack of the necessary resources (e.g., human resources, time, financing) could also delay or prevent a successful implementation. Overall, insufficient understanding of the RRI concept and scepticism concerning its added value presented a further challenge to implementing across the different organisations. Other barriers identified included the insufficient or inconsistent support from senior management, or inadequate communication and cooperation between units (resistance based on hierarchy, experience, competition, professional 'jealousy', etc.). Any reluctance to implement

changes and reforms in the organisation could also bring about challenges in the implementation of the ETHNA System. Lastly, the difficulties of engaging external stakeholders was cited as a further hinderance.

What were some of the lessons learned from the evaluation?
Several very interesting lessons came out of the ETHNA System implementation process. For example, the co-creation process is essential as it fosters fruitful debates among internal stakeholders. This not only improves the quality of the process, but also helps to ensure that the achieved results are not seen by the personnel as something imposed on them but co-created with them. It is also necessary to focus on what is important for organisation's context: ETHNA is a flexible ethics governance system and there is no need to adopt it in its entirety. In a similar vein, one size does not fit all: The ETHNA System Guide to the Ethics Governance of RRI is a very practical document, with useful and step-by-step instructions about how to implement the ETHNA System and develop its tools. Most of the steps in the ETHNA System Guide are voluntary and can be easily adapted to organisational context and needs. As such, the ETHNA System can be easily applied in research-performing and research-funding organisations of all types and sizes. In large organisations such as universities, the ETHNA System might be more appropriate for smaller units, such as departments or faculties. Based on the findings from the evaluation, the final version of the ETHNA System will be developed, along with the five-year implementation plan and a manual with the implementation methodology for those that wish to adopt the ETHNA System in their universities, technology parks, research centres and research financing organisations.

Our sister projects: Editors' pick

ROSiE: Fostering responsible open science in Europe

ROSiE is a three-year project funded by HORIZON 2020. Its mission is to co-create with all related stakeholders novel practical tools to foster a responsible open science and citizen science. A consultation and stakeholder engagement through workshops and discussions with the Stakeholder Forum; creating and facilitating a community of practice to gather knowledge on Research Ethics and Research Integrity in Open Science from other European projects. ROSiE partners will reach out to the research

community and policy-makers, in order to co-create novel practices in the design, preparation, making, valorisation and evaluation of science.

All related initiatives

Upcoming Events

Please note events are subject to change. Please make sure to verify event dates and venues with the organisers!

2023 AUSTRIAN CITIZEN SCIENCE CONFERENCE
19. - 21. April 2023
+++ Linz +++

EARMA CONFERENCE
 24. - 26. April 2023
+++ Prague +++

STS CONFERENCE GRAZ 2023
8. - 10. May 2023
+++ hybrid +++

CITIZEN SCIENCE SUMMER SCHOOL
4. - 9. June 2023
+++ Zurich +++

ETHNA SYSTEM FINAL CONFERENCE: ETHICS AND RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN PRACTICE
15. - 16. June 2023
+++ Castellón +++

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