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ETHNA   **NEWSLETTER**

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Drivers, barriers, and best practices on the road to implementing the ETHNA SYSTEM
by Dietmar Lampert and Gábor Szüdi,
Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)

The multi-stakeholder consultation process to revise and validate the results of the ETHNA System concept recently concluded. Through the involvement of almost 900 external stakeholders from across the world, who are engaged in various RRI key areas, we managed to shed more light on the drivers, barriers and good practices of institutionalising responsible research and innovation in research-performing organisations (RPO).

Our findings indicate that the main barriers are still related to a relative lack of awareness and a misunderstanding about the principles, concepts, and practices of ethics and other RRI dimensions. Another major barrier at RPOs is the lack of top-level leadership support, as well as weak existing support structures and measures. Consequently, these barriers might manifest themselves in a lack of resources – in terms of time, human and financial resources – available to foster the incorporation of ethics and responsibility principles in research practices.
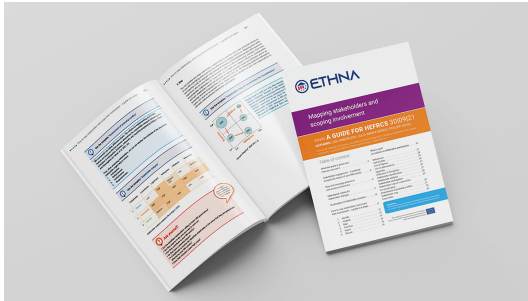
In practice, you often find that a combination of several barriers exists in an RPO, a complex situation that can only be tackled if there is a supportive organisational culture in place – or at least a mandate and regulatory framework – to take RRI principles into account when carrying out research. Institutionalising RRI can be fostered by the voluntary or mandatory adherence to national and international standards or normative rules.

Institutional leaders should understand the benefits of an ethics governance system to facilitate substantial improvements in terms of spreading RRI principles within their organisations. For this purpose, good practices such as the upcoming living lab experiments in the ETHNA project are of utmost importance. We need to showcase that positive changes are possible with proper planning and careful co-creation with each of

the involved stakeholders.
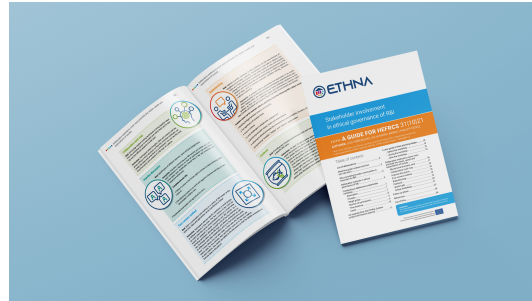
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Latest news

ETHNA System Guide to Stakeholder involvement

To define and measure society's most pressing needs and demands, many research institutions want to place their stakeholders at the centre of research and innovation – but often they don't know how. Now the ETHNA System project has finalised a guide on how Higher Education, Funding and Research Centres may develop stakeholder engagement strategies that support Responsible Research and Innovation.

The guide is the first of three guidance documents to be published by project partner EUREC, the European Network of Research Ethics Committees.

Read more

Guidance for participatory stakeholder engagement

Engaging internal and external stakeholders plays an important role in all RRI activities. In the second of its three guides, EUREC published a guidance document on how to involve stakeholders in deliberative processes.

Read more

Spotlight on... gender perspective

phenomenon, policy or social process. Its application makes it possible to ensure that the experiences and concerns of women and men are part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all spheres to prevent inequality from being perpetuated. Its ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

3 Questions to Work Package 4

Gábor Szüdi

Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)
Vienna, Austria

Your work group is currently focused on designing the implementation plans for the ETHNA System. How is the work progressing?

Indeed, while it is true that the work is being led by us at ZSI, we could not have done it without our key partners because the conducted research has been a collaborative effort. Our goal was to revise and validate the results compiled in the first version of the ETHNA System concept, which we could only have achieved by sensibly involving the project partners. Each of them has contributed to at least one activity of the multi-stakeholder consultation, most of them to several activities where we strived to find out the most significant challenges and most important incentives, as well as good practices for the institutionalisation of RRI at different research-performing organisations commonly found in Europe...

What are the key challenges you are facing in your work?
The four living lab implementation cases envisioned by ETHNA cover very different types of research-performing organisations as well as research-funding organisations, each of which has distinct needs and priorities towards the institutionalisation of RRI. In addition, RRI keys covered in our consultation process are truly diverse among

themselves. Therefore, the sheer variety of the RRI issues on the one hand and the expectation to elaborate relevant and actionable options for the Living Labs one the other hand has proven to be the most challenging task of all. In the end, we as a project have to be modest in terms of what can be done in the Living Labs and what should even be attempted in the limited amount of time given in the context of the ETHNA project – institutionalisation takes time! That being said, there is no harvesting without planting seeds.
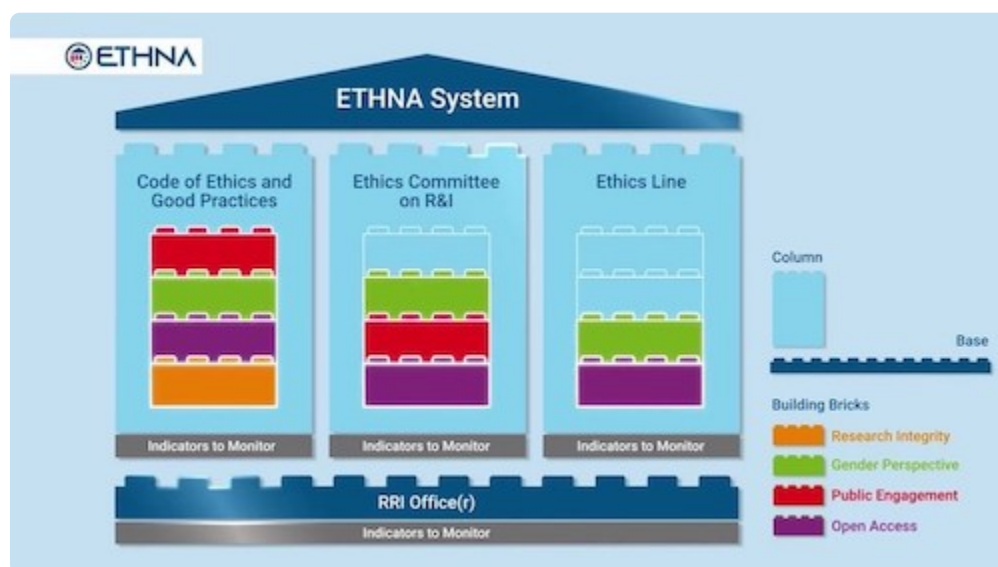
Did something come up during the project work that you did not expect at the outset?
It was enlightening to see that, in terms of the institutionalisation of RRI or one of its key areas, most research-performing organisations face very similar challenges, irrespective of their kind, size, or country. Now, that does not mean that there is a common, 'one-size-fit-all' solution out there that is the answer to all their problems. On the contrary, institutional characteristics must be taken into account, from the organisational culture and values to the organisational structure, to the leadership support and support structures already in place, to the readiness and capabilities of their researchers, to bottom-up initiatives found in various departments or groups, to external influences.

We were also surprised to repeatedly hear how important it is to focus on processes, not so much – and certainly not solely – on outcomes. The saying that the *journey is the reward* seems especially true when it comes to RRI institutionalisation.

Read the full interview

Our latest project video: a breakdown of the ETHNA structure

Watch the video clip on YouTube

Our sister projects: Editors' pick

Time4CS is an EU funded project, launched in January 2021, that aims to support institutional changes that promote Citizen Science in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs). To facilitate this process, TIME4CS has identified 4 Intervention Areas that alone or combined can stimulate the institutional changes necessary to promote public engagement in R&I activities: Research; Education and Awareness; Support resources and Infrastructure; Policy and Assessment.

In this framework, three expert organisations in the field of Citizen Science (Front-Runners) - University College London, Aarhus University, and the Competence Center of the University of Zurich - are working side by side with four implementing organisations (Implementers) willing to foster Citizen Science in their institutions - Tyndall National Institute at the University College Cork, Kaunas University of Technology, Center for Genomic Regulation, and Università San Raffaele. Two organisations act as Facilitators and accompany the partners through the different phases of the project - Agency for the Promotion of European Research (APRE) and the European Science Foundation.

The first year of the project is dedicated to planning, co-designing and co-creating grounding actions in Citizen Science for the implementing RPOs, whereas the second year will be dedicated to their implementation, and the third year will focus on their sustainability.

For more information about the project: https://www.time4cs.eu/

All related initiatives

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!

GRACE Final Webinars: Implementing RRI in Research Organisations
26. October 2021 - 14. December 2021
online

OECD: Technology in and for society
.06 December 2021 - 07. December 2021
online

Translations of Research Integrity – Challenges in working on and with integrity
09. December 2021
Aarhus, Denmark

View all events

ETHNA System

https://ethnasystem.eu/