

Public Report of ENERI Think-Tank Workshop Berlin, January 13, 2017

Cooperation between ENERI and other EU projects

The project will create a cooperative and supportive European Community for Research Integrity (RI) and Research Ethics (RE). To pursue this objective ENERI will use the resources that already exist and will refine them. Therefore, ENERI needs to investigate overlapping topics with other projects to study their findings and to prepare agreements of cooperation to link ENERI with relevant projects and initiatives.

The project office and the partners already contacted coordinators and partners of different EC funded projects. In particular, the following projects agreed to cooperate:

- **SATORI** (Stakeholders acting together on the ethical impact assessment of research and innovation). <http://satoriproject.eu/>
- **PRINTEGER** (Promoting integrity as an integral dimension of excellence in research). <http://printeger.eu/>
- **SIENNA** (Stakeholder-informed ethics for new technologies with high socio-economic and human rights impact). This project starts in October 2017.
- **EnTIRE** (Mapping Normative Frameworks for EThics and Integrity of REsearch).
- **HEIRRI** (Higher Education Institutions and Responsible Research and Innovation).

All of these projects include training elements. ENERI will cumulate the expertise when workshops for training will be established.

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Systematic analysis of leading questions of ENERI

1. What is needed for training?

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

Defined Curricula

- distinction between a core and an advanced curriculum
- decision about the transfer of competences and knowledge (variabilities: different disciplines, different types of board/committee members, inclusion of the train-the-trainer concept)
- a first concept of a core curriculum to teach RI has been already prepared

Learning software and training programmes

- reviews of different learning software offered by various institutions/networks to consider the development of new training software or to improve existing software
- reviews research ethics training programs that has been collected during the EURECNET project

Case studies and good practice

- case studies (provided by ALLEA, ENRIO) are extremely important, but it needs to be discussed, how they can be integrated into the project (electronic platform (website), textbook etc.)
- access to examples of good practice (structure, infrastructure, proceedings)

Teaching courses and Workshops

- boot camps can be taken as „laboratories” for testing curricula
- workshops with stakeholders will help to develop curricula

Blogs and Webinars

- WP 3 may include a review of relevant blogs
- blogs and webinars might be integrated in the e-platform; it should be considered whether different ethics experts could write short elements of potential blogs.
- the University of Maastricht will share its experience of moderating webinars

Short Movies

- ENERI will consider the presentation and collection of short educational movies (like the Office of research Integrity (ORI) <https://ori.hhs.gov/>)

General Discussion

- Discussion about the target group of the whole curriculum. The group decided that ENERI shall focus on lacks of training of experts in Europe. The focus will not be on trainers or on students. Target groups: RIO members/REC members/experts (not undergraduate or graduate). This includes a training for experts for the ethical review process at EC.
- Discussion about distinction between core and advanced curriculum. The group discussed two challenges: to bring issues of RI and RE together and the need to cover issues related to research ethics and integrity of different disciplines. The group decided: ENERI will prepare elements of a core curriculum that has not the goal to discuss deep philosophical dimensions. It should be for practical assistance of experts involved in RECs, RIOs and comparable boards of ethical reviews. It might be wise to differ between RE, RI and the overlapping items. Whether a specification is needed for experts coming from different academic disciplines is still a matter of consideration.

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2. What are appropriate methods for capacity building?

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

Workshops in specific countries as actions for capacity building

- countries with infrastructural lacks in research ethics and integrity need to be identified
- one of the two boot camps should be organized in a country with infrastructural lacks in RE/RI
- EUREC will assist with its experience in capacity building to support ENERI's actions in capacity building

Further actions for capacity building

- Partnerships between institutions of developed and developing countries in RE/RI that constitute a partner programme/exchange programme for capacity building

- Assisting transfers into national legal frameworks
- Considering translations of central elements of RI/RE

General Discussion

- For capacity building ENERI needs to integrate stakeholders. They will make a difference and will initiate a process in RE/RI development: It is important to create a large pool of stakeholders instead of only training individuals, because all activities will remain unproductive if individual persons return from boot camps without any effect for the institution, a relevant pool of experts and the infrastructure
- It is important to identify countries with certain infrastructural lacks/countries that may need assistance (Greece, Romania etc.) and to identify contact persons. ENERI should organize a meeting in one of those problematic countries to start a dialogue and to assist in an advanced development of structure and infrastructure.
- An important rule of the process of capacity building is that a country should not start patronizing another country.

3. What are cases of good practices? RE/RI

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

A suitable document to highlight good and bad practices is the ALLEA “European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity”

- An updated version will be published in early 2017.
- This code is and will be used by the European Commission as a reference document for Model Grant Agreements (MGAs) in Horizon 2020 to highlight the importance of research integrity.
- Upon completion, ALLEA will circulate the code to its member academies.

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What are reasons of bad practice?

- Problems in establishing and upholding a culture of integrity.
- Overall, academia (or governments) is too focused on quantitative indicators, rather than quality.

Does the hierarchical structure of Universities and the impact system induce bad practice?

- Hierarchical structures can make it difficult for researchers to report misconduct of and to their superiors. This can hamper career and future funding.

What role do whistleblowers play?

- Whistleblowers play a very crucial role in systems of good practice and need to be protected.

Differences in various disciplines?

- no field is safe from misconduct.

Independence of RECs and RIOs?

- Independence is very important for the credibility of such bodies.
- In ENERI a specific focus on the independencies of RECs and RIOs is necessary

External control or internal mechanisms and integration?

- the systems vary from country to country

- Finland has established internal mechanisms that are based on confidence that expert bodies do a good job. Finland is an example of strong internal mechanisms without external control, and experiences are positive.
- ENERI will evaluate the different systems and structures in Europe.

4. What are criteria to build up an expert database?

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

List of criteria to identify experts:

- **Publications**
Publications are an important criterion in general, but publication indexes are not comparable across fields.
- **Personal references/CVs**
Experiences and references may be indicators to identify an expert in RE/RI. But as a single criterion, it might be too vague. An important criterion is the experiences in serving an ethics committee/board.
- **Member of committee(s)/board(s)**
practical experience in RE/RI seems to be the most important criterion;
ENERI should start with experts included in ENRIO, EUREC, ALLEA, plus committee members within the individual/national structures in these networks.

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General Discussion

- It will not be easy to create a self-running system of an expert database. Therefore, it is important to link the ENERI expert database to EUREC, ENRIO, ALLEA to keep it alive. Asking an "expert question" once or twice a year can proof whether the accounts are still active but also to get opinions from the experts on recent developments.
- The importance of ENERI is to start with identification of experts and with training concepts for experts to increase their knowledge. The latter may also lead to concepts of certification.
- In combination, publications (CV) and active experiences as committee/board members are the most important criteria to identify experts.
- It is important not to forget/exclude young researchers; they could be "certified" via REC/RIO trainings (if they have no expertise by then). But this is not the focus of ENERI.
- ENERI could initially work on a description of a "profile of an expert".

5. What kind of VHPs or other harmonising elements are necessary?

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

The extent of voluntary harmonisation procedures (VHPs) required will depend on how many and to what extend the principles for governing RE and RI can themselves be harmonised. This will be a key contribution of WP3.

- Cultural differences need to be carefully taken into consideration

- To share transnational protocols and cases could be an interesting experience of shared decision making processes
- It is possible that WP3 may conclude that RE and RI structures should be fully integrated, going even further than shared decision making. Apart from anything else, unifying RE and RI structures would enable more cohesive approval and ongoing monitoring of research projects (RECs tend to be involved before research starts, and RIOs when research projects go wrong.)
- All harmonisation procedures need informational inputs. There are already existing collections of structures/activities/procedures for the website: Flow charts about the procedures to investigate cases will be an important part of this exercise within ENERI.

6. What Models of certification and accreditation are necessary?

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

- Instead of certification and accreditation, the group highlights that adherence to RE/RI principles and practices needs to be considered a part of everyday life of scientists.
- The certification in RE/RI might be based on the experiences in a “gender and diversity training certificate”
- RRI: Elements of certification might learn from established RRI-Tools (cf. HEIRRI).
- As REC systems vary across the EU, accreditation might also work differently depending on the legal status of a REC, e.g. it is questionable if accreditation could work in case where RECs are established and regulated by the law. Certification of REC members is problematic also because of already known and much discussed obstacles: lack of time, lack of motivation of REC members etc. Therefore, it seems that the most reasonable option would be to have voluntary certification and accreditation of RECs and REC members (preferably online).
- Voluntariness, quality assurance and responsibility shall be the leading principles to consider certification. Accreditation and a heavy-handed external steering or control mechanisms might be discouraging. The three pillar networks of ENERI (EUREC, ENRIO and ALLEA) should collaborate to exchange experiences with certification systems and should cooperate in elaborating new procedures in a certification process or a similar action.

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7. How can we proof effectiveness of training and ethics evaluation processes?

The ENERI partners considered the following aspects:

- There is some research on training initiatives, but fairly little research on the long-term effect of RE/RI training.
- One way to “measure” learning is to see how well learning outcomes were achieved through “examining” knowledge and competences before and after course.
- Another way is to ask about participants own perceptions of the training and its utility for them.
- ENERI might consider brief quality studies. But they require attitude changes and will have effects in the far future, rather than tomorrow

- Important criteria of surveys and studies will be: ex-post evaluation of running and completed research projects, scrutinizing deliverables that are related to Ethics Assessment (e.g. protection of personal data, dual use, misuse, third countries, environmental protection, safety)

General Discussion

- Measuring training effects is very difficult. Different people make different experiences. But one can ask for immediate experiences and effects after the training.
- There will surely remain an unsolvable distinction between theory and practice.
- Good surveys need more time than the funding period of a research or networking project.

report prepared by ENERI office and the ENERI beneficiaries