

RRI Practice Policy Brief - The Netherlands

Summary

This policy brief describes the concept of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), the project RRI-Practice, the status of RRI in the Netherlands, and recommendations for further strengthening RRI in Dutch research policies and organizations.

In early 2017, the RRI-Practice teams from Nijmegen and Wageningen organized a national workshop on RRI in the Netherlands. The workshop discussion made clear that RRI and current Dutch research and innovation policies match each other well. Furthermore, participants argued that RRI should not be implemented in a too rigid and top-down manner, but rather in a differentiated and context-sensitive way.

The national RRI case study of the Netherlands shows that many aspects of RRI are already well-embedded in research and innovation policies, or are high on policy agendas. This for instance counts for societal engagement, open science, gender equality, and research integrity. At the same time, the organizational reviews indicate that some barriers impede the further implementation of RRI. These include: resistance to open access, gender bias, and the strong influence of quantitative and productivity-oriented criteria in the assessment of researchers and research groups. Our main recommendations on how to deal with these barriers are:

1. Further stimulating reflection and dialogue, for instance on how societal contributions and implications can be better incorporated in how science is valued, and how values such as openness, inclusion, and integrity can be further internalized in research and innovation.
2. Further developing and implementing indicators and assessment criteria for researchers and research groups, in which RRI-related aspects and competences, for instance with respect to societal engagement, open science, and science education, are emphasized.

RRI is a multifaceted approach that can be put into practice in various ways. The RRI review of the Netherlands describes several examples:

- Policies and collaborative efforts that aim to make open access publishing the default in 2020;
- Research funding programs that focus on stimulating responsible innovation and responsible research practices;
- The National Research Agenda, in which citizens, researchers and other stakeholders collectively shape the Dutch research agenda;
- Ways of fostering organizational cultures in research organizations, in which values such as integrity, diversity, and societal engagement are internalized.