



RESPONSIBLE  
RESEARCH AND  
INNOVATION IN  
PRACTICE

# Policy Recommendations

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And with input from Project Consortium members and Advisory Board



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## Policy – relevant observations from the project

In most of the organisations we have studied **responsible research and innovation** is perceived heuristically as being a useful term for furthering reflection on responsibility norms in research and innovation

Many agree that there is a need to **adapt or change the research and innovation system**, orienting this towards **urgent societal challenges**

... and that **working more closely and meaningfully with stakeholders and publics** can help achieve this



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## Policy – relevant observations from the project

But there is also a need for space and freedom to pursue curiosity-driven research and independent, critical enquiry

...and in some countries where science and funding for this is under considerable threat or attack, securing resources for these is the priority...

RRI can be perceived as being vague and confusing:

So we need to be clear about what we are talking about when we mean 'RRI'



## RRI as existing ‘defacto’ norms and the EC Keys....

‘Existing responsibility norms relating to **research integrity, conduct and narrowly – constituted) ethics** are in the main established and often codified in many organisations

We see a range of activities aimed at ‘doing better’ for these and individual RRI keys e.g. gender equality, open access. But these activities are fragmented and unequally distributed

Advancement of RRI as practices related to these norms and keys represents the situation in most of our studied organisations, although there is considerable work to be done

Advancement of these is important and (possibly even sufficient) for knowledge production that is not strategic or aimed at innovation (i.e. ‘basic’, ‘mode 1’, ‘fundamental’)



Responsibility norms relating to research integrity / conduct and the keys also apply to research that is strategic and directly or indirectly aimed at innovation  
...where there are expectations of ‘economic and social impact’, ‘valorisation’ etc

But for this sort of ‘mode 2’ / ‘third mission’ / ‘translational’ / ‘triple helix’ knowledge production there is an additional need for:

“an approach that anticipates and assesses potential implications and societal expectations with regard to research and innovation... [where] societal actors... work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of society” (EC)



# Why do we need a different approach?

Because innovation, and techno-science aimed at this:

a) have the power to create futures and vulnerabilities in profound and transformative ways

so we need to ask what kind of future we want innovation to contribute to  
how we can inclusively engage as a society with these futures in the making  
and how we can collectively take responsibility for those futures

b) are socially, environmentally, politically and ethically entangled, unintentionally or by design: we need to understand these entanglements, and respond to them in a timely way

c) create uncertainties, dilemma, risks, and ignorances, with often unpredictable impacts

d) fall (at least in part) into a governance void. Regulation, whilst important, is not enough...  
and existing governance processes in research performing institutions are insufficient

(Owen et al, 2013 and many, many others before and since)



....so not just doing better but 'doing differently'.

Systematically integrating and embedding capacities for:

broad (ethical) reflection, anticipation, inclusive deliberation and responsiveness in and around processes of knowledge co -creation and co-production aimed at the urgent challenges we face as a society

So implicit in this is that

- a) Markets are failing
- b) Regulation is insufficient
- c) We are getting the innovation some of us want, but not all of us, and our planet, need



We see isolated fragments but little systematic evidence of an integrated approach to this in our organisations.... Why?????

But we see inspiring and creative experiments both in our organisations and in:

: NUCLEUS, FoTTRIS, SMART-MAP, NewHoRRIZON, JERRI etc...

and there have been others before

And we know a lot more now about how effective change can be catalysed....





# Policy – relevant recommendations (I)

## 1. Change the incentive regime

Current disciplinary norms and organisational incentives present significant challenges for both doing better and doing differently

There are insufficient incentives, with significant trade-offs and risks of engaging for individuals

Career progression criteria and academic performance evaluation schemes are major structural barriers



## Policy – relevant recommendations (I)

Changes to incentive regimes, including policies and evaluation instruments, linked to money

Changes to grant funding assessments and periodic research excellence assessments

EC and national funders are in a unique position to effect change: where there is money involved people are more likely to change behaviours.

If the EC and national funders raise **legitimacy challenges** to incumbent institutional logics and practices ‘de-institutionalisation’ of these logics is more likely\*

..... creating space for the paradigmatic change that is needed.

\*or we can wait for a crisis, we are due one soon



## Policy – relevant recommendations (II)

### 2. Broaden / reframe definitions of research quality and research excellence

Definitions of research quality and excellence are central to evaluation and incentive regimes  
'what gets measured gets managed'...

Current definitions, which in the main emphasise publications (and in some cases narratives of impact associated with research) are insufficient

Reframing these should focus on the **quality of the proposed process** (grant applications) and the **quality of the research process undertaken** (research evaluation) in line with RRI principles

Promissory statements of impact in grant applications should be subject to far greater scrutiny (e.g. as part of impact evaluation in EC grants)



## Policy – relevant recommendations (III)

### 3. Build capacity and culture for RRI through training and resourcing

Change requires policies and incentives coupled with persistent work related to raising awareness, communication, investment in organisational infrastructures and support for innovative experiments

It requires sustained, meaningful commitment, leadership\* and institutional entrepreneurship

It requires training, reconfiguration of pedagogies and educational programmes, in particular for early career researchers

Norms are engrained from an early stage, so change is needed at all levels of higher education (Undergraduate, Postgraduate)

\* Have we got the right leaders?



## Policy – relevant recommendations (IV)

### 4. Make RRI an adaptive and creative learning process that adds value

RRI will have a greater chance of success if it is seen to add value, as a flexible, creative and adaptive learning process

Organisations are at different stages of the ‘RRI journey’ and the socio-political contexts for RRI vary: we need to be sensitive to this

The ability to experiment, make contributions however small, take risks, learn from failure and be creative in novel and innovative ways are key

In the course of such experiments, researchers and stakeholders can experience the added value of engaging RRI in a positive way that builds communities, capacity and learning

This is a **long term process of culture change**, we are really only just beginning. ....and we shouldn't give up



## Policy – relevant recommendations: summary

1. Change the incentive regime
2. Broaden / reframe definitions of research quality and research excellence
3. Build capacity and culture for RRI through training and resourcing
4. Position RRI as an adaptive and creative learning process that adds value



## KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

Recommendations  
RRI Handbook for Organisations  
Deliverables  
Publications  
Policy briefs  
National workshop reports  
Newsletters  
Expert interviews



## Recommendations

RRI-Practice\_Policy\_recommendations [Download](#)



### RRI-Practice Policy Recommendations and Roadmaps

Responsible Research and Innovation in Practice

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