



Research Infrastructures Role in Ethics compliance

Accessing the Sea & its Biodiversity
for Science – Role of RIs?
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"Research Infrastructures" (according to ERIC Regulation)

...means **facilities, resources** and **related services** that are used by the scientific community **to conduct top-level research** in their respective fields and covers major scientific **equipment** or sets of instruments; **knowledge-based resources** such as collections, archives or structures for scientific information; enabling **ICT-based** infrastructures such as Grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a **unique nature essential to achieve excellence in research.**

Such infrastructures may be 'single-sited' or 'distributed' (an organised network of resources)

Ethical issues ???

“Top level research”, “excellence in research” ...

definition of Research Infrastructures (e.g. in ERIC regulation) reflects priorities (both decision makers and scientific communities) when the first ESFRI roadmaps were discussed as well as a new ERIC legal framework

Some awareness on ethical issues was there... but not to the point that it should justify a dedicated body in a governance structure or dedicated activities (for RIs other than those serving biological and medical sciences) !

And, indeed, in 2013...

2013 High level expert group report "Assessing the projects on the ESFRI roadmap"

"In most cases ***ethical issues have been underestimated.***"

"...ethical issues are of critical importance for research infrastructures to **relate to the public**, to **regulatory authorities** and to **stakeholders.**"

"Often future **liability issues** can be avoided by establishing within the governance structure an **Ethical/Bioethical Board**... Together with the widespread **absence of a risk analysis**, the **reduced sensitivity to ethical liabilities** seems to be characteristic of many research infrastructures active in physics, chemistry, material sciences, humanities and, more surprisingly, in environmental science. This **shortcoming should be addressed with urgency**, as research infrastructures will be **international organisations accountable** for their operational activities to the full community of direct and indirect users. **Reputational risks** should be managed and mitigated via the ethical bodies, including also members of the local communities."

2013 High level expert group report "Assessing the projects on the ESFRI roadmap"

(Euro Argo)

"It is recommended that ethical issues be **explicitly** addressed in the ERIC. It is not adequate to rely on national level legislation or international governance and regulations, especially because this is a European research infrastructure operating in a global setting."

(IAGOS)

"Since data of **societal importance** (i.e. pollution) are likely to be collected, an Ethical/Bioethical Board and an appropriate corporate **social responsibility policy** should be set-up in due time."

(SIOS)

"Given the sensitive nature of the environment, ethical issues need to be addressed carefully. Recommendation is to **set up a separate Ethical Board.**"

...

ERIC statutes

shall contain at least (excerpts)...

(b) the **tasks and activities** of the ERIC;...

(g) the basic principles covering:

(i) the **access** policy for users;

(ii) the **scientific evaluation** policy;

(iii) the **dissemination** policy;

(iv) the **intellectual property rights** policy;

(v) the **employment** policy, including equal opportunities;

(vi) the **procurement** policy respecting the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and competition;...

(viii) the **data** policy;

(i) the **bodies** of the ERIC, their roles and responsibilities ...

Ethical issues !!!

Activities, policies (access, etc.), **governance** : at different level, and at key stages of the development of an RI, ethical issues must be identified and addressed.

RI must define and adapt its **strategy**, during its development and operation:

- from minimum **legal requirement**: compliance to national and int'l regulation... + addressing reputational risks
- to high quality support and **service facilitating access** by users: assisting and training users, including on ethical issues and related legal requirements (identifying applicable law, which regulation...)
- promoting best practices, **harmonization**
- **engaging with policy makers and stakeholders** including for a proactive role in shaping the legal framework

"...ethical issues are of critical importance for research infrastructures to relate to the **public**, to **regulatory authorities** and to **stakeholders**."

Clusters (EMBRIC, CORBEL, ENVRI Plus): opportunities to identify **common issues**, discuss solutions and collaborations

Thanks for this workshop ! It demonstrates the continued efforts in addressing ethical issues and

a high "sensitivity to ethical liabilities" !!!



HORIZON 2020

**Thank you
for your attention!**

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