



Ethical Guidelines for the European Research Infrastructures

Silvia Peppoloni (1,3), Giuseppe Di Capua (1,3), Florian Haslinger (2), and Michèle Marti (2)

(1) Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Rome, Italy (silvia.peppoloni@ingv.it; giuseppe.dicapua@ingv.it), (2) ETH Zürich, Switzerland (florian.haslinger@sed.ethz.ch; michele.marti@sed.ethz.ch), (3) IAPG - International Association for Promoting Geoethics

One of the goals of the Horizon 2020 project ENVRIplus (“Environmental Research Infrastructures Providing shared solutions for Science and Society”) has been to establish an ethical reference framework for the European Research Infrastructures (RIs) involved in the project. This goal has been achieved through the activities carried out in the Work Package 13 (WP13).

The ENVRI community is formed by RIs dealing with topics ranging from biological processes/life to solid Earth dynamics and technological advances. Activities planned in the WP13 have gradually led to theoretical insights of the ethical issue.

Starting from the analysis of existing documents and the results of a preliminary survey concerning the level of knowledge that the ENVRI community possesses on ethical issues in conducting scientific activity, the WP13 team has developed and released the "Ethical Guidelines" (EGs) for Research Infrastructures.

The EGs are an orienting document, aimed to provide the ENVRI community with a general framework of ethical values, that can support responsible scientific and technical activities, with a two folded goal: the first one is to give a point of reference to those working at a RI, supporting them to declare personal obligations and to assure the integrity of their activities; the second one is to fix a starting point in tracing the RIs’ path in developing their own specific codes of conduct, taking into account RIs’ peculiarities with respect to their status, mission, activities, and goals, with the long term perspective to assure better working conditions and more effective benefits for society.

Ethical values included in the EGs refer to four ethical domains, affecting RI’s as a whole as well as individual scientists working at RIs. In addition, the EGs address also some delicate matters such as working environment, data life cycle, conflicts of interest, and relationship with decision-makers.

The EGs, far from being exhaustive, begin to fill gaps in ethics applied to the RIS’ activities, and are open to future developments and integrations.

Scientific and technological communities more aware of their ethical and societal obligations towards their members and society can be capable of achieving their institutional goals in a more responsible way.