



The Ethical Label: a tool to identify ethical and social aspects of research products

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ENVRiplus is a Horizon2020 project in which ethics applied to geosciences features as a fundamental issue, at the core of the scientific research and practice. ENVRiplus brings together Environmental and Earth System Research Infrastructures (RIs), projects, and networks, with technical specialist partners to create a more coherent, interdisciplinary and interoperable cluster of Environmental Research Infrastructures across Europe (<http://www.envriplus.eu/>).

Within the project, an entire work package (WP13) is dedicated to develop an ethical framework of reference for RIs, able to increase the awareness of scientists on the importance of ethical aspects in Earth and Environmental sciences and on the responsibility they have in conducting research activities.

The Ethical Label (EL) is a tool created by WP13 with the aim to identify and highlight ethical and social aspects of “activities, products, and data” (deliverables) undertaken within and/or resulting from the ENVRiplus project (<http://www.envriplus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/D13.2-Ethical-label-template.pdf>).

The specificity of the EL template is to provide additional information to the description of the technical-scientific characteristics usually associated to deliverables of a research project.

The EL template is structured as a user-friendly tool, with different tables related to: “type of product”, “field affected”, “accessibility”, “end-users”, “potential impact”, “area concerned”, and “potential misuse”. The final table “summary” groups information selected in the previous sections of the table into a simple format, useful to tag a deliverable.

Finally, a procedure to approve the EL associated to an ENVRiplus deliverable is suggested.

The adoption of the EL will allow a more complete characterization of the outcomes of the project. While the EL was developed within a specific project, it is meant to be applicable to any research activity leading to published products, with the long-term goal to improve the way in which (geo)scientists can communicate their scientific and technological achievements both to specialist and not-specialist end-users.