

## **EFC Research Forum Statement on Responsible Research and Innovation**

The EFC Research Forum Steering Committee acknowledges the potential of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) to steer the field and its outcomes towards more desirable ends. Thus, it is committed to develop, promote and support RRI and suggests other foundations and philanthropic institutions consider doing so.

With this statement we describe why RRI is important, what it is and how the EFC can raise awareness and support research foundations in their effort to contribute to RRI.

### **What is RRI?**

Responsible Research and Innovation is a dynamic, iterative process by which all stakeholders involved in research and innovation become mutually responsive to each other and share responsibility regarding the RRI outcomes and process requirements.

RRI aims to align a wide range of actors and activities involved in research and innovation (R&I) processes towards desirable and acceptable future outcomes, which contribute to the solution of major societal challenges. It entails envisioning the future and connecting R&I with that future. The norms for the outcomes need to be sensitive to the pluralistic society we live in and to possible changes in the interpretation of values over time due to either technological or cultural developments. This is an uncertain and unpredictable process that is value-based, allowing for the discussion of purposes and values. Responsibility is then not seen at the level of individuals, but in terms of collective and distributed responsibility, which requires active participation of the diverse actors involved in integrated processes of anticipation, reflection and inclusive deliberation that are closely tied to processes of policy-making and decision-making.

RRI is now a cross-cutting issue in Horizon2020, the research framework programme of the European Commission (EC) from 2014 to 2020. The EC describes RRI as “Europe’s ability to respond to societal challenges”<sup>1</sup> and puts under its umbrella several policy agendas related to the interaction of science and society:

**Engagement:** All societal actors – researchers, industry, policy makers and civil society – need to jointly participate in the research and innovation process.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission leaflet on RRI.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/responsible-research-and-innovation-leaflet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/responsible-research-and-innovation-leaflet_en.pdf)

**Gender equality:** The under-representation of women in science in Europe must be addressed.

**Science education:** Europe aims to increase its number of researchers and to enhance the education process to better equip future researchers and other societal actors to fully participate in the research and innovation process.

**Ethics:** To adequately respond to societal challenges, research and innovation should respect fundamental rights and the highest ethical standards.

**Open Access:** Research and innovation should be transparent and accessible. This means giving free online access to the results of publicly-funded research (publications and data).

## Why RRI?

Research and innovation generate business opportunities and solutions for today's major societal challenges. They have, for example, resulted in unprecedented advances in medical care, automation, and sustainable energy. But success is not guaranteed; innovations may fail, at least partially. Examples hereof are genetically modified crops in Europe, the electronic patient record system, and subsoil carbon dioxide storage in The Netherlands. Some innovations are not (fully) utilised, while in other cases needed innovations are never developed in the first place. Developing better R&I practices, which reflect both excellent science and incorporate societal needs and values, requires taking collective responsibility for these developments.

## Activities

In the workshop "The role of philanthropy in the promotion of Responsible Research and Innovation"<sup>2</sup>, held in Brussels in October 2013, the European Commission, the EFC, foundations' representatives and a number of invited experts exchanged views and ideas on the subject. Its main outcome was the common will of the EC, foundations and other philanthropic organisations to go further in the development of RRI in Europe. These institutions recognise Responsible Research and Innovation as a step forward in the debate on science in society: RRI aims to improve the excellence of research by engaging societal stakeholders in Research & Innovation; a goal that plays perfectly to philanthropy's strengths and builds on its useful role in society.

Through their contributions during the workshop, the participants indicated their willingness to act together to develop RRI governance further. They underlined the need for:

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<sup>2</sup> "The role of philanthropy in the promotion of Responsible Research and Innovation". Report of the participatory workshop held on 21-22 October 2013. DG Research and Innovation.

1. Exchanging and reflecting regularly on the evolution of RRI;
2. Participating and supporting interdisciplinary activities involving different stakeholders;
3. Looking critically and independently at RRI activities, including socio-economic and humanities monitoring;
4. Advancing the reflection on evaluation and assessment of RRI activities at project and programme levels, and developing impact indicators;
5. Deciding on rules and priorities that the EC should take the lead on;
6. Reinforcing the knowledge base on RRI;
7. Building capacity through formal and informal science education and training; and
8. Strengthening communication and public relations, as well as transparency to achieve the broadest dissemination of RRI in Europe and beyond.

The EFC and four of its members - “la Caixa” Foundation (coordinator), Fondazione Cariplo, Foundation for Polish Science and King Baudouin Foundation - are members of the project [RRI Tools](#), which will develop a set of tools to support training on how to implement Responsible Research and Innovation in Europe and will raise awareness of the concept throughout Europe. The project reaches 30 countries of the European Research Area and includes 26 Consortium members ranging from universities to science centres, in addition to the private foundations involved.

## Expectations

RRI is an evolving concept. Its future shape and level of implementation will depend on the will and transformative capacities of the different actors of the research and innovation systems that adopt it as a guiding vision. In order to produce broad and lasting impacts RRI should be promoted not only at the level of individuals and projects, but also at the level of institutions and their practices. This should be the responsibility of both the foundations and the institutions they fund.

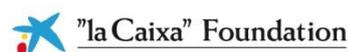
## Acknowledgements and resources

The EFC Research Forum acknowledges Prof. Jacqueline Broerse, VU University Amsterdam, for her valuable contributions to this statement.

### *Resources:*

- Developing a framework for responsible innovation. Stilgoe, Owen, Macnaghthen. Research Policy. November 2013  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048733313000930>
- EC Report on Ethical and Regulatory challenges.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/ethical-and-regulatory-challenges-042012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/ethical-and-regulatory-challenges-042012_en.pdf)
- RRI Tools project and Toolkit website: [www.rri-tools.eu](http://www.rri-tools.eu)

## Current EFC Research Forum members:



## Why a Research Forum?

Foundations and philanthropic organisations play a vital role in supporting research across Europe, and have valuable expertise to share with all research stakeholders. The mission of the EFC Research Forum is to maximise this potential. The Forum is a collaborative network that supports initiatives to advance a vision for a new environment for philanthropy in research. This vision is:

- A better legal and fiscal environment to promote more effective philanthropic support for research
- Enhanced cooperation between philanthropic bodies and other research stakeholders
- Better understanding of the value which foundations contribute to research
- Increased awareness of philanthropy's role in supporting research
- Philanthropic investment in research which complements (not substitutes) public funding