PO-03

Research Ethics and Integrity for the Green Transition

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The environmental crises commonly associated with the "Anthropocene" require rapid and comprehensive action across all sectors of society. While research and innovation (R&I) are important pillars for adaptation and mitigation, the environmental impacts of R&I itself cannot be ignored [1]. This applies both to the environmental impact of the research process itself and to the direction of research and the technological solutions and innovations sought. The consideration of environmental aspects in the design and conduct of research should be considered as part of a good scientific practice. For example, the revised version of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity [2] states that the principle of respect also applies to "ecosystems" and "the environment", while it is considered a violation of research integrity to cause "unnecessary harm" to the environment. However, there has been little effort to put this aspect of research integrity into practice, as current guidelines on research ethics and integrity, where they exist, are largely superficial and general in their treatment of environmental aspects of research and development and mostly fail to provide clear guidance [3].
There is an urgent need to develop a comprehensive framework for R&I to address environmental and climate ethics and integrity issues. Research Ethics and Integrity for the GREEN transition (RE4GREEN) is a three-year Horizon Europe-funded project whose main objective is to contribute to a European Research Area framework on ethics and integrity for R&I activities that support the transition to a sustainable economy and society. To this end, the project mapped the existing academic literature on the topic and analysed the gaps in the available resources on research ethics and integrity, including frameworks and guidelines as well as training materials and courses. The identified ethical issues and gaps will be further explored in eight Social Labs, that will bring together stakeholders and researchers from diverse backgrounds across Europe to provide practical insights and test the project's findings through firsthand experience. In addition to its analytical contributions to the discourses on research ethics and integrity, RE4GREEN will produce recommendations for comprehensive environmental guidelines and training materials. At the time of the conference, the results of three key deliverables of the project will be available and presented, including the mapping of the scientific literature as well as existing R&I resources and key insights from the first two rounds of social labs conducted in the project.

[1] Samuel, G., and Richie, C. Journal of Medical Ethics, 49, 428–433
[2] ALLEA, The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2023)
[3] Tzouvaras, C., Seedall, C., and Tambornino, L., Zenodo (2025)