

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Have your say on ethics assessment in Europe

SATORI project invites you to give your feedback on the first version of the CEN Workshop Agreement

Having confidence in science is immensely important. Its far-reaching consequences call for a broad stakeholder involvement to increase legitimacy. However, many sensitive topics in this field give us ethical dilemmas. How do we keep our privacy in the drone era? Should we edit genes at embryo level in humans? Is there any unwanted usage of personal data for medical purposes? Well-established agreements on different issues will create safer outcome and improved procedures of projects and ethics assessment units.

EU FP7 SATORI project aims at reaching a harmonized approach towards ethics assessment of research and innovation (R&I), while exploring differences in values, principles and research practices between different countries, organisations and scientific fields.

This has resulted in CEN (Comité Européen de Normalisation) Workshop Agreement (CWA) which sets requirements and provides guidelines for ethics assessment undertaken by research ethics committees and other units and individuals that have a responsibility to evaluate the ethical aspects of R&I.

Given the immense societal impact of the research and innovations, SATORI project invites you to provide your feedback on the first version of the CWA document.

The CWA consists of two parts. The first part provides organizations and individual researchers a practical tool to help them establish and run an ethical assessment unit, which will in turn strengthen and improve the ethics assessment of their research practices.

The second part of the agreement provides researchers and ethics assessors a "how to" for ethical impact assessment, a practical, policy-oriented guide aimed at the different stages of the ethical impact assessment process.

"The objective of the CWA is to come to widely supported agreements on ethical assessment for all scientific disciplines", said Marlou Bijlsma from the Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), a SATORI partner in charge of creating the CWA and for facilitating the process of achieving agreements on the document.

Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), SATORI partner, is in charge of creating the CWA and for facilitating the process of achieving agreements on the document.

The CWA process takes about a year and is typically used for new subjects within standardization. The document is again reviewed after three years, while a full standard can only be developed after five years. A CWA is also called a pre-standard. Part of the development of a CWA is a public inquiry phase.

Public inquiry opened until mid-November

From mid-September to mid-November stakeholders are invited to review the first version of the document through the NEN website. The document is available in English and comments will be only accepted in English. Stakeholders are all organizations or individuals involved in the process of research and innovation: researches, universities, ethics committees and assessors, research organizations, industry, funding agencies etc.

Give us your feedback at: <http://www.normontwerpen.nen.nl/Home/Category/002>

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The SATORI project is a 45-month project on ethics assessment of research and innovation (R&I) supported by the European Commission through its FP7 funding scheme. SATORI aims to improve ethical assessment practices and strengthen respect for ethical principles. SATORI comprises 17 partners from 12 countries and is co-ordinated by the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Follow us on Twitter: @SATORI_EU