



Grant Agreement number: **824521**

Project acronym: **GRACE**

Project title: **'Grounding RRI Actions to Achieve Institutional Change in European Research Funding and Performing Organisations'**

Type of action: **Coordination and Support Action (CSA)**



## Deliverable 3.1

### Mutual Learning Plan

<b>Deliverable leader:</b>	K&I
<b>Lead Author:</b>	Luciano d'Andrea
<b>Contributors:</b>	
<b>Contractual delivery date:</b>	31/08/2019
<b>Delivery date:</b>	30/08/2019
<b>Dissemination level:</b>	Public



## Document Revision History

Version	Date	Author/Editor/Contributor/Reviewer	Summary of changes
<b>0.1</b>	18/06/2019	Luciano d'Andrea	First draft
<b>0.2</b>	24/08/2019	Ildiko M. Ipolyi	Minor suggestions/corrections; overall consistency (quality) check
<b>0.3</b>	24/08/2019	Claudia Colonnello and Giovanna Declich	Minor suggestions/corrections
<b>0.4</b>	27/08/2019	Luciano d'Andrea	Final draft

### Disclaimer

The sole responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

### Copyright

This document may not be copied, reproduced, or modified in whole or in part for any purpose without written permission from the GRACE Consortium. In addition, an acknowledgement of the authors of the document and all applicable portions of the copyright notice must be clearly referenced.

All rights reserved.

This document may change without notice.



## Table of contents

<b>DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1. <i>Mutual learning and institutional change</i> .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2. <i>Aims of the Mutual Learning</i> .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.3. <i>Components of the Mutual Learning Plan</i> .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.4. <i>Capitalisation of knowledge and know-how</i> .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. TIMESHEET .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>10</b>



## 1. Institutional framework

The GRACE project is overall aimed at contributing to the EC objective of spreading and embedding Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in the European Research Area through the development of a set of Grounding Actions (GAs) in six research funding and performing organisations. For each research organisation, GAs will be incorporated in an 8-year long Roadmap towards RRI (three of which developed under GRACE).

The project involves **10 partners**, of which 6 are involved in the implementation of the GAs (the so-called “implementing partners”) while 5 (the so-called “cooperating partners”) are involved in supporting the implementing partners, being one of the partner – the University of Groningen – both an implementing partner and a cooperating partner (for what concerns one of the RRI key, i.e., research ethics and integrity).

The **six implementing partners** are: the European Science Foundation (ESF - France), the University of Groningen (RUG – the Netherlands), the University of Siena (UNISI - Italy), the Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL- Sweden), the Agency for Management of University and Research of the Government of Catalonia (AGAUR – Spain), and the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC-SAZU – Slovenia).

The **five cooperating organisations** are: Knowledge and Innovation (K&I – Italy), the South-East Europe Research Centre (SEERC – Greece), the European Network of Science Centres and Museums (ECSITE - Belgium), the Aarhus University (AU – Denmark) and, as said above, also the University of Groningen.

In order to support this process, a set of actions (included in WP3, Task 3.4 “Mutual learning design and implementation”, led by K&I) are envisaged for encouraging and supporting **mutual learning dynamics among the partners**, as a way to integrate the endeavours of the implementing partners in the development of the GAs and in the definition of the Roadmaps towards RRI.

This document represents the Mutual Learning Plan which defines approach, contents and activities of the mutual learning process which will be developed throughout the GRACE project.

The document is organised in **4 sections**, including this section devoted to the institutional framework.

**Section Two** provides a short description of the theoretical and methodological approach to mutual learning adopted in GRACE.

In **Section Three** the focus is on the contents of the mutual learning process, while **Section Four** presents a plan of activities.



## 2. Theoretical and methodological framework

### 2.1. *Mutual learning and institutional change*

The literature in the field of adult education and organisational studies defines **mutual learning** as a process aiming at collectively building knowledge on shared themes, with a strong focus on **problem-solving**. The basic idea of mutual learning, which can be related to both lifelong learning (Federighi et al., 2007) and organisational learning (Lehner et al., 2005) is that it is possible to **transform the practical experience** of other groups in possible solutions that can be applied to one's own situation.

The more the mutual learning group is heterogeneous, the greater the potential for learning and innovation. At the same time, a very diversified group requires a particular attention to the diversity of social, cultural and regulatory situations, in order to identify enablers and barriers specific to different contexts. Due to its **potential for innovation**, mutual learning is being increasingly adopted in international processes of policy exchange and coordination (Tamtik, 2012).

However, from a broader perspective, mutual learning can be considered as an **emerging paradigm** in the way in which organisations and human beings face a difficult situation. In particular, some scholars in organisational change (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Argyris, 2001; Schwarz, 2007 and 2013) recognise the presence of a shift from the so called "**unilateral control model**" to the "**mutual learning model**" in the decision making process and in human behaviours.

The **unilateral control model** can be defined as a mindset or even a social construct characterised by the assumption that difficult situations can be effectively coped with only when the control is unilaterally managed by only one person or by a homogeneous group of people, understood as the only ones able to understand the situation to face.

The **mutual learning model** is based on the opposite assumption, i.e., that control can be increased through the involvement of other actors, thus exploring different views and creating a common understanding.

Hence a set of other assumptions derive about how a decision making process should be carried out, the role of other actors and the attitudes to keep during the process (see table below).

Unilateral control model	Mutual learning model
I understand the situation; those who disagree don't	I have some information; so do other people
I am right; those who disagree are wrong.	Each of us may see things that the others do not
My motives are pure; those who disagree have questionable motives	People may disagree with me and have pure motives
My feelings and behaviors are justified	Differences are opportunities for learning
I am not contributing to the problem	I may be contributing to the problem

(Sources: Schwarz, 2013)

On the basis of these considerations, GRACE will consider mutual learning both as a **learning method** and a general **approach to institutional change**.

Mutual learning is clearly a **learning method**, i.e., a method based on learning from one's own and others' experience. In this perspective, mutual learning is viewed as the most effective option to



take for increasing one's own capacity to prevent or manage the problems which inevitably emerge in designing and implementing the GAs and in defining the Roadmaps.

However, mutual learning can be also understood as a general approach to **institutional change**. This concept refers to a process aimed at introducing permanent changes in a way in which an organisation works. This means modifying the **norms** (mission, procedures, protocol, organisational structures, etc.) but also the **social patterns** (cognitive, emotional, relational, behavioural, etc.) which are dominant or largely shared by the majority of people inside the organisation.

In such a context, mutual learning can be a **powerful tool** just to modify the social patterns in the research organisation especially creating the conditions for mobilising and coordinating all the concerned actors towards RRI.

It is also noteworthy, in this regard, that it could be quite paradoxical and a sign of ineffective thinking to open research organisations through RRI adopting procedures shaped on the unilateral control model (i.e., only modifying the norms), without opening, through the mutual learning model, the decision-making process to all the actors involved.

Being a process requiring an exchange among many actors, mutual learning cannot be but a **dynamic process** which cannot be fully planned from the beginning. Its development largely depends upon the interests and questions that participants are focused on and worried about in that moment.

## 2.2. *Aims of the Mutual Learning*

This short presentation of the view of mutual learning in the framework of GRACE allows us to better define the aim of Task 3.4.

In the context of GRACE, mutual learning is aimed at supporting implementing partners in the design and implementation of the GAs and in the definition of the Roadmap. In this framework, mutual learning can be considered as an effort to identify **benchmarks**, i.e., best solutions for common problems, analysing their underlying enabling conditions and discussing ways for adapting them to different circumstances.

To pursue this aim, three specific objectives should be also attained:

- Providing the implementing partner with **practical knowledge** to effectively manage the problems and constraints they meet in implementing the GAs
- Helping them **gain awareness of and formalise what they actually have learnt** from their own experience if only for the need to communicate it to the other partners
- Facilitating a comparison among the different GAs allowing to generate a **more comprehensive and in-depth knowledge** of RRI-oriented institutional change processes as they emerge from the practice of the partners.



### 2.3. *Components of the Mutual Learning Plan*

In methodological terms, the mutual learning process will include three components:

- Mutual Learning Workshops
- Mutual Learning on-line meetings
- Mutual Learning Exchanges.

#### **a. Mutual Learning Workshops**

Mutual Learning Workshops are 2-day sessions fully devoted to the mutual learning exercise involving all the project partners. They are based on different formats, including simulations, brainstorming sessions, experience exchanges and guided discussions. On the basis of the inputs from the partners, the most appropriate formats are applied. The agenda of each workshop is established through a consultation process among the partners, thus organising the time on the basis of the participants' needs.

In general, the structure of the workshops includes a part devoted to an open exchange among the partners on the ongoing GAs implementation process and a part focused on issues relevant for all the implementing partners which is established before the workshop.

The Mutual Learning Plan includes three Mutual Learning Workshops, one for each year of the GRACE implementation period.

The first workshop was carried out in Brussels on May 28-29 2019.

#### **b. Mutual Learning Virtual Meetings**

Mutual learning Virtual Meetings last 1-2 hours and are conducted on an on-line conference platform. In comparison to the workshops, the on-line meetings are narrower in scope, focus on specific issues which are common to many or all the implementing partners. They are also used to make a follow up of the Mutual Learning Workshops. Overall, at least five virtual meetings are planned during the GRACE implementation period.

#### **c. Mutual Learning Exchanges**

Differently from the previous components, Mutual Learning Exchanges, do not involve all the partners but only some e.g. two of them. They can take the form of direct contacts between one or more implementing partners and one or more cooperating partners. However, direct exchanges between two or more implementing partners, without the involvement of cooperating partners, are also envisaged and strongly encouraged.

Mutual Learning Exchanges are prevalently developed via distance contacts, but it is also possible to organise on-site visits or face-to-face meetings, for example in the occasion of the General Assembly Meetings.



#### 2.4. Capitalisation of knowledge and know-how

The three components of the Mutual Learning Plan are overall thought to create a mutual learning environment which allows implementing partners to develop the GAs anticipating or timely reacting to possible obstacles and constraints and to increase their skills and capacities in managing RRI over time.

To support this process, K&I will facilitate a capitalisation of knowledge and know-how generated through the activities connected with mutual learning, including those which are of informal nature, on the one hand, by ensuring a reporting of the Mutual Learning Workshops and the Mutual Learning Virtual Meetings and, on the other hand, interacting with implementing partners, on a periodical basis, in order to help them turning their experience into new skills and lessons learned.

### 3. Substantive aspects

The Mutual Learning Plan will develop throughout the GRACE project. Therefore, its contents will evolve together with the evolution of the project. Functioning as a support structure for facilitating the implementation of GAs, such contents will largely depend on the demands and needs expressed by the implementing partners over time.

However, a general framework of the main topics considered in the different phases of the project can be defined (see the table below). It is to remind that Task 3.4 starts in May 2019 (M5 of the project) and ends in November 2021 (M35 of the project):

Phase	Main Topics
Preparatory phase (M5-M10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– RRI: what and why</li> <li>– The RRI keys: contents and aims</li> <li>– Institutional change and grounding actions: what they are and why they are important</li> <li>– The dynamics of institutional change</li> <li>– How to design the grounding actions</li> <li>– How to design the Roadmap</li> <li>– Evaluation and impact assessment of GAs</li> </ul>
Development phase (M11-M34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishing an effective team</li> <li>– Involving leaders and mobilising key actors</li> <li>– Developing negotiations</li> <li>– Managing resistances and obstacles</li> <li>– Coordinating the GAs with each other</li> </ul>
Stocktaking phase (M30-M35)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Institutional arrangements for ensuring long-term sustainability to GAs</li> <li>– Lessons learned from the implementation of the GAs</li> <li>– Developing the Roadmap towards RRI</li> </ul>





As for the preparatory phase, it is to highlight that most of the issues mentioned have been already discussed in the **First Mutual Learning Workshop** held in Brussels on May 28-29 2019.

Moreover, it is also to recall that, under WP3, Task 3.1, **a set of 7 documents** have been prepared by K&I and circulated among the partners, overall aimed at providing them information and guidance on the RRI keys, the approaches to institutional change and the self-assessment of the research organisation.

## 4. Timesheet

The general timesheet of the Mutual Learning Plan is presented in the table below.

Period	Activities and events
May 28-29 2019	1 <sup>st</sup> ML Workshop (Preparatory Phase)
June 19	1 <sup>st</sup> ML Virtual Meeting
June-September	ML Exchanges on the design of GAs and Roadmaps
September	Draft of the design of GAs and Roadmaps
October	Delivery of D3.2 Definition of GAs and Roadmaps towards RRI
October-December	ML Exchanges on the implementation of GAs
January 2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> ML Virtual Meeting
February-March	ML Exchanges on the implementation of GAs
April	2 <sup>nd</sup> ML Workshop (Development Phase)
May-September	ML Exchanges on the implementation of GAs
October	3 <sup>rd</sup> ML Virtual Meeting
November 2020 - February 2021	ML Exchanges on the implementation of GAs
March	4 <sup>th</sup> ML Virtual Meeting
April –June	ML Exchanges on the implementation of GAs
July	3 <sup>rd</sup> ML Workshop (Stocktaking Phase)
August-September	ML Exchanges on sustainability of GAs
October	5 <sup>th</sup> ML Virtual Meeting
November	Delivery of D3.3 Guidance document on RRI-oriented GAs

The timesheet could be modified on the basis of the needs of the partners or for other reasons that for the moment cannot be foreseen.



## References

- Argyris C, Schon D. (1978). *Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective*, Addison Wesley, Reading, Mass.
- Argyris, C. (2002). Double-loop learning, teaching, and research. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 1(2), 206-218
- Federighi, P., & Torleone, F. (2007). *Tools for Policy Learning and Policy Transfer: Supporting Regional Lifelong Learning Policies*. W. Bertelsmann Verlag.
- Lehner, U., Natter, M., Naylor, I., & Wagner-Pinter, M. (2005). Mutual Learning–Benchmarking among Public Employment Services (PES). *PES Benchmarking Project Report, DOI*
- Schwarz, R.M. (2006). Does your leadership reduce learning?. *Leader to leader*, 2006(39), 40-47.
- Schwarz, R.M. (2013). *Smart leaders, smarter teams: How you and your team get unstuck to get results*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Tamtik, M. (2012). Rethinking the open method of coordination: Mutual learning initiatives shaping the European research enterprise. *Review of European and Russian Affairs*, 7(2).

