SEREN4 INFORMATION SHEET

ETHICS IN SECURE SOCIETIES PROPOSALS

Short practical remarks on ethical issues for security research applicants

Most proposals often contain unrecognized ethical issues which must be addressed appropriately. Proposal should proactively demonstrate that all ethical issues have been considered. Proposals should be ETHICS READY using the "ethics by design" method.

Considering ethics in research projects enhances the quality of research and ensures that your work is within the legal framework. Remember, only ethical research is excellent research! Ethics is often misunderstood by researchers as hindering the scientific progress and intended to regulate research or go against research freedom. In truth, the main ethical principles in the security related research include respect for human dignity and integrity, privacy and confidentiality, minimization of harm and maximization of benefits, respect and protection of the environment for future generations and avoiding misuse and dual use. The compliance with the highest standards of research integrity (i.e. avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, questionable research practices, double funding, etc.) is beyond doubt and should always be considered and addressed.

Consider all aspects of preparing a proposal from an ethical point of view. It is necessary to pay attention to ethical issues in the **formulation of objectives, impact** of results and **implementation** and to integrate ethics into the **methodology** of the work – *ethics by design*. In addition to their scientific merit and impact, all selected proposals are judged on their *ethical* and social impact by experts.

This short info sheet focuses on the most frequent ethical issues which are typical for security research. Our aim is to bring awareness to the ethical dimension in security research proposal preparation. This document does not address ethics in other research areas e.g. research with human embryos, foetuses, cells, tissues and clinical trials.

How to complete your ethics self-assessment guide

When submitting a proposal, you must submit a completed **ETHICS ISSUES TABLE** and subsequently fill in the **ETHICS part of your proposal (Part 5)** in which:

- You will **describe** how the proposal meets the national legal and ethical requirements of the country where the tasks raising ethical issues will be performed;
- You should **provide** a copy of any obtained ethics committee opinion or notification or regulatory approval of any competent national or local authority;
- You should **discuss** in detail how the ethics issues identified in the ethics issues table, will be addressed;

Funding and Tender Portal, On-line manual

The EC Guide **"How to complete your ethics self-assessment"** gives handy and well-structured tips for almost all situations, and helps you to process all ethical aspects of your proposal correctly. **The time that you invest in self-assessment is not wasted.** Ethical issues could be either a part of the work packages concerned (as a specific deliverable) or accumulated in a separate work package. In addition to this, you have to **summarize** all details of ethical issues in Part 5 of your proposal, including the risk assessment.

Here are the ethics issues raised in the ethical guide relevant to security research, and the number they correspond to on the list: **Human beings (2), Personal data (4), Animals (5), Non-EU countries (6), Environment, Health & Safety (7), Dual-use (8), Exclusive focus on civil applications (9), Potential misuse of research results (10)** and **Other ethics issues** (i.e. Artificial intelligence) (11)**.** As you can see, despite the common opinion that you may not have any ethical issues, security related projects deal with a majority of the ethical cases detailed by the EU.

@SEREN4_H2020 www.linkedin.com/company/seren4

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Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

Examples of typical documents/personnel/approvals/information it is recommended to attach to the proposal, and cases where these are needed:

- Ethical approval at a national or organization level: For example, when working with volunteers for medical studies, patients, children, vulnerable, minors, animals; if there is potential misuse of results; experiments in third countries; also in case of interviews, surveys, recording, videos etc.;
- Data protection officer (DPO) - recommended practically in all proposals as they will all deal with different information and levels of protection of that information. Attach either the name and contact details of DPO (Data Protection Officer) or a person in charge of data protection in the organization;
- Example of the Informed Consent form and Information Sheet when working with volunteers or when processing personal data; Informed consent is meant to guarantee the voluntary participation in research and is probably the most important procedure to address privacy issues in research. Informed consent consists of three components: adequate information, voluntariness and competence;
- All copies of the necessary national and local authorizations and approvals for all relevant research activities need to be provided. If authorizations or approvals are not in place yet, a timeframe can be included explaining when approvals and authorizations will be requested or are expected to be granted. If no approvals or authorizations are required, this should also be explained;

Annotated Model Grant Agreement, Article 34

Documents to be specifically mentioned in the proposal:

- Authorization of specific laboratories and research/security specialists, completed special trainings (certificates) – safety is a part of ethics;
- Export/import license for research samples or goods;
- If a form of the Informed Consent and corresponded Info sheet are not attached to your proposal explain details in part 5 of the proposal;

Typical information to be incorporated in your proposal:

- When planning work with hazardous substances, it is necessary to describe how you will ensure the safety of the workers and anyone else involved. The appropriate accreditation of the workplace and people (specialists) should be attached;
- Detailed description how you plan to protect the environment (show that your research respects biodiversity and does not impose irreversible change that threatens the environment or ecological balance);
- When planning to use laboratory animals provide detailed description how you will treat them (the 3Rs rules : Replacement, Reduction, Refinement);
- Details of volunteers selection and their characterization;
- Character of both personal or any potentially sensitive data and detailed information on how they will be handled during and after the project in agreement with GDPR. Pay attention to the transfer and the access to the data in case of non EU country in the project;
- Provide information on a source and an ownership of the data obtained from outside of your project including publicly available data. Show a permission to use it, do not forget the secondary used data;
- Elaborate a risks assessment of any procedures that may have a negative impact on people or the environment;
- Explain how researchers and volunteers in laboratory and field experiments will be secured (measures, training, insurance etc.);
- Explain how you will deal with unexpected data, information obtained during the project;
- Explain the measures which you plan to introduce to avoid the risk of dual use or misuse (A detailed strategy addressing the specifics of the situation putting the necessary safeguards in place)

Rules for participation, Article 13.3 and 14

Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence