

# FINNISH ADVISORY BOARD ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

## Action Plan: 1 February 2013 – 31 January 2016

The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) was established in 1991 for handling ethical issues concerning scientific research and for promoting research integrity (Decree on the Advisory Board on Research Integrity 1347/1991). The first appointed Advisory Board began its activities in 1992. The Advisory Board secretariat works in connection with the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (TSV) in Helsinki. Further information can be found on the Advisory Board website at [www.tenk.fi](http://www.tenk.fi).

### Advisory Board tasks

According to the decree, the task of the Advisory Board on Research Integrity, as appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM), is:

1. to present proposals and issue statements to the authorities on legislative matters regarding research integrity and other questions,
2. to work as a specialist body in clarifying issues involving research integrity,
3. to take initiatives for promoting research integrity and to promote discussion in Finland concerning research integrity,
4. to follow the international development of its field and to actively participate in international cooperation, and
5. to practice information activities pertaining to research integrity issues.

### Composition

The present members of TENK were appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture for a term beginning 1 February 2013 until 31 January 2016. The Advisory Board will continue to be chaired for a second term by Chancellor of the University of Tampere, Krista Varantola. The Vice Chair will be Professor Markku Helin of the University of Turku. The composition of the Advisory Board will be as follows:

Chancellor, Professor Krista Varantola (University of Tampere), Chair

Professor Markku Helin (University of Turku), Vice Chair

Unit Director Arja Kallio (Academy of Finland)

Senior Teacher Jyrki Kettunen (Arcada)

University Lecturer, Docent Pekka Louhiala (University of Helsinki, University of Tampere)

Research Director Per Mickwitz (Finnish Environment Institute)

Professor Kirsi Saarikangas (University of Helsinki)

Professor Ari Salminen (University of Vaasa)

Chief Legal Counsel Ari Suomela (Tekes)

Professor Pirkko Walden (Åbo Akademi University)

Docent Sanna Kaisa Spoof, TENK Secretary-General, will act as the Advisory Board secretary.

## Action Plan: 1 February 2013 – 31 January 2016

### 1. Strategic priorities

TENK will promote good scientific practices by drawing up and revising national guidelines and recommendations as well as by making an impact on international recommendations in the field of research integrity. TENK will stress awareness and education in the promotion of research integrity and in the prevention of research fraud. The TENK guidelines *Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland (RCR 2012)*, which entered into force on 1 March 2013, will obligate research organisations to arrange education on research integrity. During the 2013–2015 term, TENK's activities will be more clearly focused on specialist tasks both in the monitoring of research integrity activities and in the creation of a good operating culture involving research integrity on the national level and in international cooperation.

In accordance with its permanent objectives, TENK will

1. assure an operating culture that follows the principles of research integrity,
2. practise research integrity awareness and education,
3. develop the investigation process involving allegations of fraud,
4. streamline networking on both the national and international level and make an impact on international development in the field,
5. develop the interactive distribution of information, and
6. utilise good international practices in Finnish research integrity culture as well as raise the awareness of tried and tested Finnish research integrity guidelines.

TENK's most significant tasks and priorities of its activities for the 2013–2015 term include

- the coordination of responsible conduct of research and education in research integrity at universities, especially in Doctoral programmes, as well as at universities of applied sciences and other research organisations by furthermore utilising international cooperation and teaching materials where possible,
- the promotion of starting up continuing education in research integrity for researchers and the promotion of starting up teacher training in the field as needed,
- a much broader commitment to TENK's research integrity guidelines by the scientific community,
- the start of statistical calculation of statements concerning RCR allegations of misconduct and statistical calculation of ethical review of research in the so-called human sciences,
- monitoring the introduction of electronic plagiarism detection systems at higher education institutions,
- highlighting specific questions on ethics concerning the management of research,
- counselling in ethical problem areas concerning the advising and evaluation of theses,
- the prevention of problems concerning authorship and publishing, and
- the raising of specific questions on ethics on the sharing of digital documentation (open data, data sharing) involving open science and research.

In place of an annual action plan, TENK will be switching over to the process of drawing up its action plan to touch upon the three-year term of each appointed Advisory Board, starting in 2013. The priorities of activities and the most significant measures shall, however, be separately confirmed for each calendar year.

### 2. Promotion of responsible conduct of research

TENK will continue to process allegations and requests for statements concerning the violation of the responsible conduct of research, and in its operations it shall, at the same time, strive to prevent scientific fraud. The objectives for the term include promoting the initialisation of and monitoring the implementing of the revised RCR guidelines and also much broader commitment to it by the scientific community.

In March 2013, a total of 67 research organisations – all Finnish universities and nearly all universities of applied sciences as well as a majority of research institutions – had committed to the RCR guidelines that were revised in 2012 together with the scientific community. A list of these organisations is maintained on the TENK website.

TENK's objective is to create a system which may allow as many scientific associations and research-funding foundations as possible, as well as funds, to commit to the RCR guidelines without being subject to any obligations to preliminary and official investigations in accordance with the process. They could thus require their members and grantees of research funds or publication support to comply with the responsible conduct of research. In this way, those researchers not employed by any research organisation could also belong to the sphere of the RCR guidelines.

TENK will coordinate the organisation and regional implementation of the ethical review of the so-called human sciences, that is, disciplines outside of those found in the Medical Research Act. In March 2013, a total of 56 Finnish higher education institutions and other research organisations had given their signatures in commitment to the TENK guidelines *Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences and proposal for ethical review*. TENK appointed a follow-up working group for this job for a two-year term from 2012 to 2014. The working group is chaired by Professor Risto Turunen of the University of Eastern Finland and the vice chair is Head of Development Arja Kuula of the Finnish Social Science Data Archive. TENK members from the previous term, Senior Teacher Irma Mikkonen of Savonia University of Applied Sciences and Research Professor Jussi Simpura of the National Institute for Health and Welfare, were selected as its other members.

In order to promote the operational culture of ethical review and to make the practice of issuing statements cohesive, as well as to support cooperation amongst committees, TENK will organise specialist seminars and discussion panels in the field. Together with ethical committees, joint seminars will also be organised in connection with multidisciplinary science events and research seminars.

The *template for a researcher's curriculum vitae*, which was released in November 2012 in cooperation with the Academy of Finland, Universities Finland UNIFI and the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene, will be publicised and recommended for widespread use in all areas of science. The template is maintained and updated, as needed, on the TENK website in Finnish, Swedish and English.

### **3. Development of education in research integrity**

The higher education institutions and research organisations that have committed to the RCR guidelines are responsible for arranging education in research integrity. In regard to education in research integrity, discipline-specific research integrity, on the one hand, and the promotion of responsible conduct of research concerning all fields of science, in other words a researcher's honesty and independence, on the other hand, must be distinguished. TENK feels it is of paramount importance that in each field, discipline-specific research integrity is a part of normal education in research methods and not a separate module from other teaching. For example, the responsibility of each department providing researcher education is to handle specific questions on responsible conduct of research in accordance with the field of education as a part of its researcher education programme. Higher education institutions will organise education on responsible conduct of research for their Bachelor's and Master's degree as well as postgraduate students and will furthermore be accountable for the equivalent training of their personnel. TENK will support the starting up of continuing education in research integrity for researchers and teacher training in the field.

TENK will regularly be in contact with higher education institutions and representatives of different fields of science to find out what seminar topics would be current and what forms of teaching and education materials would be in demand. For example, TENK, together with OKM, will analyse the appropriateness of the field's international online tutorials in Finland.

In regard to the research fraud cases it has processed, TENK will continue to keep them anonymous for annual reports and educational use. On the basis of the RCR 2012 guidelines, TENK's series of teaching slides will be

revised. They will be placed on the TENK website where they will be freely available, provided that the source is cited.

In cooperation with actors and other partners in the field of ethics, TENK arranges *Ethics Day* for researchers and specialists every year. TENK also regularly organises other specialist seminars in its own field. Moreover, TENK and other national ethical committees are in preparation for a joint session in connection with *Science Forum* 2015.

The TENK Chair, Secretary-General and members will participate in educational sessions, as lecturers, that will be organised at many higher education institutions and other research organisations.

#### **4. Development and monitoring of the RCR processes**

In the new TENK guidelines *Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland (RCR 2012)*, which entered into force on 1 March 2013, changes and challenges which have happened over the past ten years in the climate of research integrity, such as the intense internationalisation of the scientific community, will be taken into account. Instructions and the investigation process of violations have, however, remained unchanged in their groundwork in comparison to the 2002 RCR guidelines. In the 2013–2015 transitional stage, TENK will be obliged to simultaneously implement both the 2002 and 2012 guidelines together. Finnish national guidelines are in line with international recommendations on research integrity. TENK will also actively strive to make an impact on the development of international guidelines.

In the investigation of issues involving research integrity, it is important that the legal security of all parties – including the party putting forth an allegation – will be guaranteed. TENK will regularly organise discussion panels and seminars on the RCR process.

Research organisations shall be liable for reporting to TENK all the cases on allegations of RCR misconduct that have been brought to their attention. In addition to this, TENK finds it necessary that Finland could start to make statistical calculations on how common plagiarism, for example, is in higher education institutions, both in Bachelor's and Master's as well as postgraduate studies and in official research work. At the same time, consideration will be provided on the means on how to acquire information on questionable operational cultures and the breeding ground of research fraud as well as the true number of violations against the responsible conduct of research in different fields of science. There would also be a need for the flow of information between universities on, for example, fraudulent applicants applying for a spot in postgraduate studies. TENK will still not take a position on scientific disputes nor on the quality of research carried out, such as Doctoral dissertations.

#### **5. Networking**

TENK will participate in national and international discussion on research integrity at scientific and academic forums as well as through scientific and popular presentations and articles and positions. The Chair, the Secretary-General, and the members will actively take part in seminars and meetings in which research integrity will be discussed. TENK will develop procedures for increasing dialogue not only with higher education institutions and research organisations but also with archives, foundations and other sources of funds for science as well as scientific associations. TENK's objective is to take an annual Advisory Board study trip and to hold one meeting at a locality outside of Greater Helsinki with a higher education institution.

TENK has active cooperative relationships with organisations of the European scientific community, such as actors in the other Nordic countries, the European Commission, OCED and *Science Europe* as well as other specialist bodies in the field. The Chair will act as the Finnish representative in the *Permanent Working Group on Science and Ethics* that handles research integrity in *All European Academies ALLEA*. The Secretary-General will participate in the meetings of *ENRIO*, the European Network of Research Integrity Offices. Global networking will continue, where possible, in connection with study and seminar trips. TENK will participate in the May 2013 *World Conference on Research Integrity* in Montreal where the Chair and Secretary-

General will give a presentation on the Finnish RCR system. This conference is an excellent forum which carries the message that the Finnish model for handling allegations of fraud operates effectively and is on a high level in terms of international standards. In regard to those themes raised at World Conferences, TENK will follow their further development in the EU, OECD and at other forums.

TENK will support the acquisition of EU research funding in the fields of research integrity and responsible research and innovation activities for promoting the responsible conduct of research in Finland and Europe. The TENK Secretary-General will participate in preparing the *Horizon 2020* programme, coordinated by the Academy of Finland. TENK will provide ideas for and monitor the planning of projects and will work, as needed, as a project partner and specialist through TSV.

TENK will be involved with the *NordForsk* ethical networks of specialists. TENK will also actively follow the actions of other European organisations in the field of the ethics of science, such as the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies *EGE* and the European Conference of National Ethics Committees *COMETH*. A representative of TENK will participate, where possible, in the annual events of ethical committees (e.g. *NEC forums*).

National ethical committees in Finland – TENK, the *National Advisory Board on Social Welfare and Health Care Ethics (ETENE)* and the *National Committee on Medical Research Ethics (TUKIJA)* as well as the *Advisory Board on Biotechnology (BTNK)* and the *Board for Gene Technology (GTLK)* – have for a long time been in cooperation with each other. The chairs and secretary-generals of these committees will regularly convene in the future to exchange experiences on current issues about research integrity.

TENK will raise the awareness of Finnish research and science involving, for example, the internationalisation and quality of research, the popularisation of science, the challenges of the scientific community and responsible science communication. This will be done together with TSV and TENK's sister committees – in other words, the Council of Finnish Academies (TANK) and the Committee for Public Information (TJNK) – which work in connection with TSV.

## 6. Distribution of information

TENK will practise the active distribution of information to and counselling for their interest groups and a broader audience; as well as for foreign researchers working in Finland. TENK will distribute information on its own activities and operational models at international forums as well. The most significant channel of communication is the TENK website [www.tenk.fi](http://www.tenk.fi). Up-to-date information will be produced and collected for the webpages and the links will be maintained for the websites of various actors in the field of research integrity. *Ethics Day* has its own website.

Interviews with TENK members and also their speeches, presentations and articles will constitute an important role in raising awareness of TENK objectives as well. Cooperation in the distribution of information will be carried out with TSV and OKM.

Printed RCR 2012 guidelines can be ordered free-of-charge from the TENK office. All of the TENK guidelines and materials, such as annual reports, will be available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

Support for acquiring a joint web portal between the national ethical committees will be provided. The revising and producing of TENK presentation materials in different languages will be considered, among others, in relation to the timetable and development of the *Research.fi* service which works in connection with TSV.

## 7. Advisory Board resources

In 2013, the Advisory Board will have a Secretary-General and a part-time assistant. In addition to their regular jobs outside of TENK, the work that the members do in the Advisory Board plays a valuable role in its activities. Fixed-term labour may be hired or purchased services may be acquired for the Advisory Board if project funding

or other funds allow for it. TENK may participate as a partner in EU or other projects, e.g. in the field of responsible research and innovation activities.

In 2013, a total of €126,000 in State funding had been granted to TENK. Of this amount, €35,000 was allocated for publication, translation, seminar and travel expenses. TSV will be offering TENK a large part of the infrastructure it requires, such as spaces, network connections and financial administration. A contract on the pricing policy of the other services TSV will be offering to TENK will be drawn up during the term. In the expenditure during the term, there will be an emphasis on preventative work such as the promotion of and specialist seminars on new education concerning research integrity as well as national networking and international activities.

In order to carry out its tasks, such as focusing on preventative action, monitoring the circumstances of research integrity, more restrictive deadlines entered in the RCR 2012 guidelines as well as the assurance of the internationalisation of its activities, TENK will require additional resources. TENK, TSV and OKM will negotiate on and resolve the level of additional appropriations TENK requires and the need for personnel. The assurance of TENK operation is an essential part of the 2013 TSV strategy work and development programme, which is required by OKM, the provider of funds for operations.

This Action Plan has been approved at the TENK meeting held on 23 April 2013.

Krista Varantola, Chair

Sanna Kaisa Spoof, Secretary-General