

## Preface

When first hearing the term „responsible innovation”, it is difficult to find out what it actually means: one has conjectures rather than an understanding about it and even those more familiar with the nature of innovation are at a loss what to think of this concept. After some contemplation, one will soon picture ideas or expectations regarding responsible innovation – but such thinking often deepens the mystery rather than correctly clarifies the meaning.

Putting it very simply, responsible innovation is the interpretation of sustainability in the context of the innovation policy. In the broadest sense, it is *commitment to preserving the future, which can get manifested in the responsible management of science and innovation in the present*. A transparent, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view to the (ethical) acceptability, sustainability and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products. This means that this expanded dimension of responsibility covers and requires the comprehensive and systematic examination of the environmental, social and ethical aspects of innovation.

The term itself refers to an approach which is spreading fast in the European Union and, according to expectations, *may become a central element of the 2014–2020-as programming period*, as the European Commission’s most recent report, published in November 2013 under the title *„Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), Science and Technology”*, also shows.

Over the course of the past one and a half years, in the framework of the *FaRIIn (Facilitating Responsible Innovation in SEE Countries – SEE/D/0252/1.3/X)* project, which was launched for the examination of the regional application of the concept, we have looked at the questions related to the term’s definition, examined what key elements its application has and how responsible innovation can be put into practice in the regional units of our project partners. During our research work, we have managed to deliver the concept of responsible innovation to a large number of innovative actors and stakeholders in the region of Szeged University where, as a result, the approach has been translated into practical application. Among other results, the responsible innovation concept has been integrated into Csongrád County’s 2014 – 2020 regional development strategy and operative programme.

On 19 May 2014, we organised a scientific conference under the title *„Innovation Related Social, Ethical and Environmental Challenges”* at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Szeged University, participants being the representatives of different fields of science, where we were glad to see that our colleagues were open to integrating the cornerstones of responsible innovation into their work.

This book is designed to convey to the general public the ideas which the representatives of the individual fields of science have identified as the points of intersection between their respective research areas and responsible innovation. Our hopes are to bring the reader closer to understanding and accepting responsible innovation and that this concept will soon become integral to the everyday lives of the region's players.

Szeged, July 2014.

The Editors