

*Informed
adaptation:
ethical
considerations
for adaptation
researchers and
decision-makers*



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Ethics: general issues

- the privileged position of the researcher in influencing decision-makers
- adaptation decisions made on the basis of who is providing the expert advice rather than specific circumstances of the end-user
- creating additional risk in the recommendation of particular adaptation options





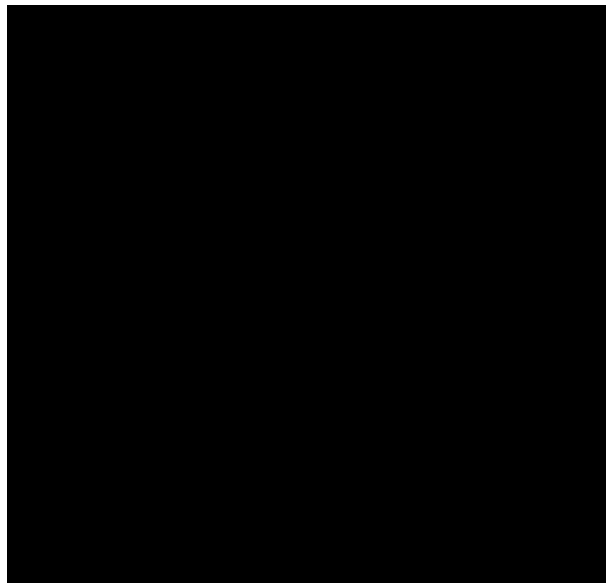
Ethics: specific issues

- potential conflicts of interest (e.g. disciplinary bias, researchers advocating their own research, preferencing career metrics over value to decision-makers)
- mechanical adherence to quantitative modelling and focus on the explicit rather than the tacit
- mis-representation of research results as uncontroversial inputs into the operational decision-making of end-users
- lack of unbiased and comprehensive communication of the diverse options and the benefits/risks associated with them
- lack of awareness of the very different relationship a researcher and a decision-maker have to the adaptation decision itself in relation to risk and responsibility
- lack of clarity between research and operational aspects

Lacey et al. 2015



From research to an operational system



Lacey et al. 2015, Howden et al. 2013



Ethics: an approach

- Ideally adaptation solutions should be developed by incorporating a range of views, be appropriate to decision-makers' needs and largely independent of which researcher is involved in the process. Such collaborative or participatory processes tend to share power, responsibility and knowledge
- Encourage researchers to be 'honest brokers' of (some of the) adaptation knowledge
- Behaving in an ethical way does not inherently remove risk from adaptation research practice or decision making; rather it allows us to more explicitly manage certain types of risk related to the motivations and behaviours of those operating in this domain

Lacey et al. 2015



Thankyou

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