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A TOOL FOR INSTALLING RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION IN NEW TECHNOLOGY-
BASED FIRMS

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ABSTRACT

Innovation is a powerful force, leading to new products, services, business models and even changes to socio-economic systems. As such, it can play a positive role in addressing social problems. However, it is unclear how to introduce responsible innovation to real-world industry settings. We explore this challenge in the context of new technology-based firms (NTBFs), developing innovations within the setting of agriculture, food or energy. We develop a tool that provides innovators with a systematic way to identify socio-ethical issues. Using the concept of experiential learning, we track the impact of the tool across 12 cases. For the tool to install responsible innovation principles, we propose that a full learning cycle must be completed. We find evidence that the tool can enable a full learning cycle and provides a method to identify socio-ethical factors. We contribute by articulating and operationalising an approach to introduce responsible innovation principles into real-world contexts.

KEYWORDS: Responsible innovation; Industry; New technology-based firms; Start-ups