

RM ROADMAP

Consensus Document for Country Community Finland

Co-Creation Session 1: Understanding the landscape: National Networks and Associations

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RM ROADMAP

“Creating Framework Conditions for Research Management to Strengthen the European Research Area”

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landscape: National Networks and
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Understanding the landscape: National Networks and Associations

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1. Introduction

This is an important moment for the research management (RM) community in Europe. The European Commission (EC) and countries across Europe want to better understand the current research management landscape to further strengthen the European Research Area (ERA).

Research management includes a broad range of professionals supporting researchers to achieve excellence in research. For the purpose of this co-creation exercise, Research Managers (RMs) are to be considered as broad as possible including: research policy advisers, research managers, financial support staff, data stewards, research infrastructure operators, knowledge transfer officers, business developers, knowledge brokers, innovation managers, etc. For simplicity, we use the term research management but this exercise covers also other terms such as research support, research management and administration, professionals at the interface of science and other terms which are used as the norm in the national landscapes across Europe.

The RM Roadmap Knowledge and Community Platform (KCP) brings research managers together to shape the future of the profession and support the strengthening of an inclusive research management community in Europe. The KCP is a place where research managers share their views and introduce issues for discussion in a solution-focused endeavour. RM Roadmap Ambassadors lead the discussions for each country on the Knowledge and Community Platform, supported by national and regional RM networks.

This co-creation exercise is the biggest collaboration between RM networks ever to take place in Europe. With a focus on learning insights from RMs, the co-creation exercise seeks to establish a robust framework that can support professional growth and collaboration across the EU and associated countries.

By 2023, 40 country communities have been established within the RM Roadmap Ambassador Network. The RM Roadmap project will use the outcomes from this co-creation exercise to make a roadmap for the future of research management in Europe and to build and exchange solid knowledge on career framework opportunities, upskilling and networking for research managers. RM Roadmap will ultimately build a value proposition for policy makers and institutional leaders who want to strengthen and modernise their research support departments.

This **consensus document for Country Community Finland** contains the outcomes of the **First Co-Creation Session - Understanding the landscape: National Networks and Associations**.

A short summary of the main outcomes from the co-creation exercise is included in section 2. More information about the topic of RM National Networks and Associations is detailed in section 3. Recommendations about best practices, challenges and lessons learnt about (formal or informal) national networks, associations, communities are provided in section 4.

For more information about the RM Roadmap initiative, the reader can consult the following website: www.rmroadmap.eu

2. Summary of Co-Creation Session 1

The Co-creation session 1 took place during October 2nd to 13th. Given the well-established national networks in Finland and having as RM Roadmap (associate) ambassadors the chair as well as one member of the executive committee of the Finnish Association of Research Managers and Advisors (Finn-ARMA), it was expected that the country community would entrust the ambassadors to summarize the Finnish landscape of national networks and associations. Thus, a small number of contributions from RM at universities and research organisations were registered in the co-creation session. In session 1, the contributions addressed networks at large and for specific topics, i.e. Research Ethics, Open Science and Data Management. In Finland, RM engaged in innovation management and services are often part of R&I support units, however they organize themselves in specific networks.

One contribution indicated European University Alliances as networks relevant to RM beyond national ones. Another contribution pointed out that professional networks require funding and even small grants can enable and sustain important outcomes.

3. Discussion Outcomes of Co-Creation Session 1

In Finland, the community of Research Managers is organized in several networks and one association – the Finnish Association of Research Managers and Advisors (Finn-ARMA). The association brings together research administration and management experts from higher education institutions and research institutes in Finland. The mission of Finn-ARMA is to promote co-operation and the professional development of its members. Currently the association has some 500 members working in 17 thematic groups, see figure below, where the most of the actual activities take place. The association and thematic groups are open for all. The association is a bottom-up action born from the experts' own needs. Finn-ARMA has an executive committee tasked to enable continuity of activities and take care of the general matters. Finn-ARMA actively co-operates with other national stakeholders.

Since 2008 and content wise supported by Finn-ARMA, the annual Research Services Days have been organized. In 2023, the conference attracted more than 400 RM from different areas and from more than 50 organisations, inc. higher education institutions, research organizations, research funders and public organizations. Each year one higher education institute volunteers to organize and host the event. The Research Services Days offer diverse opportunities for networking, lobbying, upskilling, co-creation and exchange of best practices. The RM Roadmap Ambassador presented the project at the event.

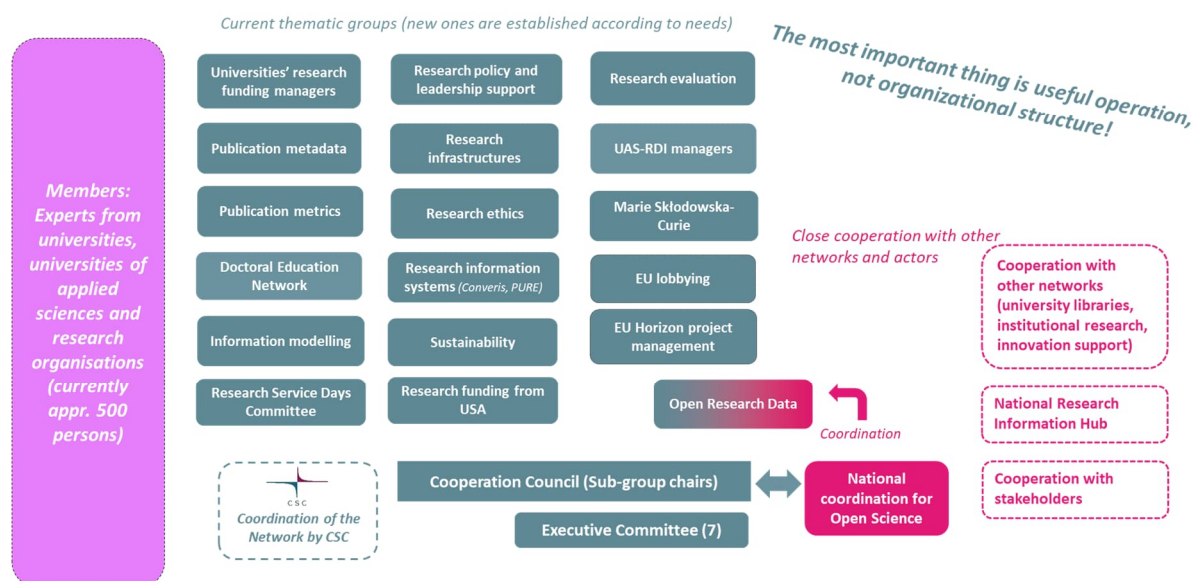
Finn-ARMA organises webinars three times in a year for all the members of different groups and networks. The topics include current matters in research management and administration and news about development projects in the different groups. Also RM Roadmap project has been presented in these webinars.

Finn-ARMA has started to activate the general communication to all groups by email information letters and Twitter/X postings.



Network of research administration, funding and services experts and managers from universities, universities of applied sciences and research organisations

<https://wiki.eduuni.fi/display/csctuha/Finnish+Association+of+Research+Managers+and+Administrators>



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Pathways of the Finnish RM networks and associations in contributing to national and European R&I system

Finn-ARMA works closely with relevant ministries, national funders and the Universities Finland UNIFI (formerly Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities) as well as the associations of research institutes Tulanet and universities of applied sciences Arene. In Finland, representation of Research Managers are invited to discuss with the sub-committee 20 on R&I, being part of the national Committee for EU Affairs.

Likewise, Research Managers are well connected to the National Liaison Office for the Horizon Europe program.

Finland is committed to ERA Action 17. The Ministry for Education and Culture in Finland has entrusted Finn-ARMA to represent Finland in ERA Action 17. Finn-ARMA selected two delegates being experienced RM. One being from a research organisation and the other being from university. In order to ensure prompt communication one representative is member of the Finn-ARMA executive board.

One example of the close collaboration with national funders is the Finn-ARMA Horizon Café webinar series, which is jointly organised by the Finn-ARMA and the National Liaison Office for the Horizon Europe program – the EU's research and innovation programs EUTI – operating in Business Finland. EUTI offers free-of-charge services to all Finnish actors interested in EU funding and implementing EU projects. The Horizon Café is an informal event to advance knowledge on Horizon Europe, share best practices, network and influence the European R&I system.

CSC – IT CENTER FOR SCIENCE LTD is a non-profit state enterprise with special tasks. As part of the national research system, CSC develops, integrates and provides high-quality information technology services and ensure that Finland remains at the forefront of development. CSC has an important role as an instrument for steering and developing the Ministry of Education and Culture's education, science and cultural policy. CSC is owned by the Finnish state (70% shareholding) and higher education institutions (30% shareholding). CSC upholds the IT-infrastructure of Finn-ARMA and kindly supports the association with a (technical) coordinator. CSC provides services for all the national research performing organisations.

One obstacle to the bottom-up voluntary work of national networks is their financial support. In Finland, many professional networks have chosen to work in flexible and the least bureaucratic way and they are not legal entities. So the networks cannot receive funding. The same way to operate applies also to Finn-ARMA which is not any legal entity either. In general, support to Finn-ARMA can be provided via CSC and the engaged higher education institutions.

Among the formal legal entities is the leading actor in relation to Open Science in Finland is The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, established in 1899, which is cofunded by the Finnish Ministry for Culture and Education.

Non-exhaustive list of Finnish RM networks and associations and relevant bodies

The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies <https://tsv.fi/en> promotes e.g. Open Science <https://avointiede.fi/en> and Responsible Research <https://www.vastuullinentiede.fi/en>

Finn-ARMA

<https://wiki.eduuni.fi/display/csctuha/Finnish+Association+of+Research+Managers+and+Administrators>

One example of a Finn-ARMA thematic group:

The chair of the Finn-ARMA Research Ethics Group described the network's work as follows. The group consists of research ethics experts from around 30 Finnish universities and research institutes. Practical processes are guided at the top by centralised national guidelines, but research organisations

have the autonomy to determine how research ethics is implemented in practice within their organisational structure. Research ethics experts often work alone or in small teams within their organisations, so an important benefit of the group is the low-threshold peer support we can seek and receive from each other. Group members have received support in situations where written, official guidelines do not help. The group has also shared best practice and worked to develop a common understanding of research ethics and processes related to it.

Research ethics in human sciences in Finland is centrally regulated and supervised by The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The ethics of medical research is regulated by law: members of this network work in areas other than medical ethics. One of the aims of the network is to influence national policies and guidelines by developing common views and positions.

Finnish networks in relation to data management:

AVOTT <https://www.avointiede.fi/en>

CSC <https://www.csc.fi/research-data-management-competence-center>

Some innovation experts engaged in patenting are networked in Patent information centres (PATLIB).

<https://www.epo.org/en/searching-for-patents/helpful-resources/patlib>

The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK: <https://tenk.fi/en/advice-and-materials>

The Board of research administrative data and research data in research performing institutes (Tutkimushallinnon tietovirtojen ja varantojen ohjausryhmä) under the Ministry of Education and Culture, often deals with issues that are very relevant to Research administration.

<https://wiki.eduuni.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=208242397>

Summary of the co-creation session 1

The co-creation session 1 can be summarized in line with one contribution that "I'm sure that we all agree that Finn-ARMA is the most relevant network in Finland for the Research Management".

Policy documents and funding which mentions research management or the equivalent national name(s) for research management

Research administration/management: tutkimushallinto

Research services: tutkimuspalvelut

Research manager: tutkimusasiamies, tutkimusasiantuntija

Essential policy documents

The National Roadmap for Research, Development and Innovation: <https://okm.fi/en/rdi-roadmap>

The Act on Research and Development Funding in 2024–2030

[Laki valtion tutkimus- ja kehittämistoiminnan... 1092/2022 - Ajantasainen lainsäädäntö - FINLEX ®](#)

Decision by the Ministry for Education and Culture in Finland:

[Opetus -ja kulttuuriministeriön asettamispäätös: Tutkimushallinnon tietovirtojen ja tutkimustietovarannon ohjausryhmän asettaminen](#)

EU affairs and the Finnish government

The Committee for EU Affairs is a cooperative body with representatives from ministries, the Office of the President of the Republic, the Office of the Chancellor of Justice, the Bank of Finland and the Government of Åland. It discusses broad EU issues that involve several ministries, such as ways of influencing the European Commission Work Programme. The Committee also makes decisions on Finland's national experts seconded to EU institutions and agencies. The Committee is chaired by the State Secretary for EU Affairs, who is also the head of the Government EU Affairs Department.

The Committee for EU Affairs has appointed a total of 36 sector-specific preparative sub-committees. The sub-committees constitute the foundation for the preparation of EU affairs by public officials. The chairperson and secretary of each EU sub-committee usually represent the competent ministry.

The sub-committees can assemble in a restricted or extended composition. The restricted composition includes public officials from the competent ministries and representatives of other ministries and government agencies. The extended composition also includes representatives from various interest groups and other stakeholders. The Government EU Affairs Department from the Prime Minister's Office and the Government of Åland are also represented in each sub-committee. The sub-committees meet as necessary.

4. Recommendations

In Finland, Research Managers are always invited to join the other more than 500 RMs to collaboratively work in any of the 17 thematic groups organized under The Finnish Association of Research Managers and Advisors (Finn-ARMA). Likewise, RMs can propose new thematic groups to be initiated. The bottom-up and light governance of Finn-ARMA, without the burden of administrative obligations of a formal legal entity, reflects best the cost-benefit target of the community.

Finn-ARMA can always support building new networks and practical tasks don't require much effort for the active people interested in building new collaborating forums.

The awareness of the networks and networking benefits should be raised in the research organisations' leadership. The group and network members should be allowed to use working time in the networking activities. It should be understood how these networks reduce the time of learning new skills and requirements. Mutual support and practical help are very beneficial for all in the long run.


While setting up a national association it is beneficial to seek endorsement and long-term support of respective ministries and to secure a host of an IT-infrastructure open to all kind of organisations employing Research Managers. Likewise, the national public funders should be given opportunity to engage in the associations operations to increase the R&I system's capacity. In the governing body of the association all forms of organisations employing RMs should be represented, i.e. research organisation, higher education institutes and potentially funders.



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