

# RM ROADMAP

## Consensus Document for Country Community Austria

### ***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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## Co-Creation Session 1

# 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 Austria** 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](http://www.rmroadmap.eu)

## **2. Summary of Co-Creation Session 1**

42 persons registered as members of the Austrian RM Roadmap Group, with 5 providing comments to the four questions on “Understanding the landscape: National Networks and Associations”.

The comments provided related primarily to two major RMA networks in Austria: AURAM (Universities) & AUFOS (non-university research institutes). Private university and industry-led networks were underrepresented in the discussion. The networks discussed provide a forum for exchange with national funding agencies as well as the NCPs. However, at the moment there is no overarching national network of RMAs across disciplines yet, to commonly share knowledge and work towards a stronger professional recognition and advancement of careers.

### 3. Discussion Outcomes of Co-Creation Session 1

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

#### 1. If you have a national network (formal or informal), how did it help you? If you don't, please say how you have built your (internal) network and are using it.

There is a formal network among university-based RMAs called "AURAM" - Austrian Universities' Research Administrators and Managers or "ARGE FoFö" in German (see <https://www.plus.ac.at/forschung/argefofoe/>). There are regular meetings about diverse topics all across the RM's field of activity. Experts, such as staff from funding agencies are regular guest speakers. In addition, information, templates and documents are shared between members. Target groups within the organisation work on several subtopics.

The Austrian RMAs working in the non-university research organisations are represented by an informal network called AUFOS - Ausseruniversitäre Forschungsorganisationen und Services which aims to exchange knowledge and update information about the national and European projects/programs (see [https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/allgemeine\\_downloads/europaeische\\_und\\_internationale\\_programme/AuFos.pdf](https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/allgemeine_downloads/europaeische_und_internationale_programme/AuFos.pdf) for a recent list of members). The network organizes in-presence meetings twice per year to share professions, industries, or interests. This involves staying in touch with contacts, sharing updates on our work, and offering support and assistance when needed. Representatives of the major national funding agencies (Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)) are invited to talk about recent funding developments at the national and European level, as well as upcoming funding programs.

Private universities are currently active in 12 working groups as part of the Private Universities Conference (Österreichische Privatuniversitätenkonferenz, ÖPUK: <https://oepuk.ac.at/en/>) with the aim of tackling the challenges and developments in the sector, comprehensively across universities. With the latest addition in 2020, the ÖPUK has established its own RM WG. Its members, RMAs representing the 17 institutions, meet three times per year to foster knowledge exchange, learn, and establish guidelines for cooperation.

The Research Forum of Universities of Applied Sciences (Forschungsforum der Österreichischen Fachhochschulen, FFH: <https://forschungsforum2023.at/english-information>) represents over 340 RMAs from 21 FHs – universities of applied sciences – addresses different dimensions which are important factors in this university sector: cooperation and impact for joint resilient research with a strong focus on industry uptake and application, with a local focus and cross-border impact. This vehicle for the exchange of knowledge started over 15 years ago, with

FHs in existence since the mid-1990s. An annual Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences was established in 1996.

Additional networks identified were the Austrian Cooperative Research (see <https://www.acr.ac.at/english/>), a network of private research institutes offering applied R&D for companies. Their demand-oriented services are tailored to meet the needs of SMEs, in order to support their innovation efforts, to provide the necessary know-how and to strengthen their competitiveness.

Austrian Academic Library Consortium (Kooperation E-Medien Österreich; <https://www.kemoe.at/english/about-us>) offers support and expertise to 62 member institutes (including university and non-university research institutes).

The Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI; <https://oeawi.at/en/about-the-oeawi/>) offers support national and international networking, as well as advice and training to 38 member institutions (i.e. Ethics Officers), including all Austrian public universities, universities of applied sciences, various non-university research institutions and research funding agencies.

ERA Portal Austria (see <https://era.gv.at/>) is a knowledge-sharing platform from the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research to help RMAs stay informed on European Research Policy. The Horizon Europe Community Austria (see <https://horizon-europe-community.at/>) links Austrian researchers, RTI and non-RTI organisations, public administration, funding agencies, citizens' initiatives and users.

The Knowledge Transfer Centres (WTZ; <https://www.wtz.ac.at/>) provide a platform that connects research, new knowledge, technologies, inventions and know-how. While a central contact/information point for research managers, this is not a platform for networking/career development of RMs.

**2. What challenges do RM networks and associations encounter in contributing to national and European R&I systems? If there are no networks, please elaborate if there have been networking initiatives and if not, please state why you think that is the case.**

The current RMA network meetings (Auram and AUFOS) deal almost exclusively with the operational side of the job/profession. If RMAs want to contribute on a national or European strategic level, they must do so indirectly via the university/institute management (e.g. vice rector for research, President, etc.) and its bodies and networks. As discussed above, without an active network, there limited opportunities for private non-university research institutes to contribute to national and European R&I systems.

There is no national AT office in Brussels to provide information on upcoming policy discussions and to aid in possible steering/lobbying. The National Contact Points (NCPs) at the FFG summarize and distribute information to RMAs in an efficient and timely manner. Their support



at the individual researcher/application level is exemplary, however, whether forums exist for RMAs and the existing networks to contribute to/engage with policy formation are not clear. The EU Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations (KoWi) offers interesting trainings related to European R&I systems, including on-site EC visits, and have been generous enough to include AT participants in the past.

Additionally, the Austria RMA community contributed to the ERA Action 17 focused on the Initiative European Research Management Initiative listed below:

*Upskilling:* improve training and skills development of research management staff (e.g. training and career development programmes and curricula covering the various dimensions of research management, improving accessibility of joint virtual and non-virtual training programmes)

*Recognition:* contribute to the professionalisation of the continuously evolving, multi-faceted role of the research management profession across the ERA, in coordination with Action 4 (e.g. defining skills and competencies of research managers in the various dimensions of research management, contributing to the recognition of new diverse career pathways, quality control of training programmes and curricula for research managers)

*Networking:* support networking of research managers and best practice exchange via cross-border networks in the various dimensions of research management (support for networks of research managers, focusing in particular on early career stage research managers)

*Capacity building:* reinforce research management capacity across the entire ERA, notably supporting organisations in regions of lower R&I intensity (support for cross-border staff exchange for research managers (for instance through the ERA Talents action under widening)).

**3. Please list all of the formal and informal networks and associations of research managers in your country and link to their websites or online groups. Skip if there are no networks your knowledge.**

Austrian Universities' Research Administrators and Managers (AURAM / ARGE FoFö): <https://www.plus.ac.at/forschung/argefofoe/>

Ausseruniversitäre Forschungsorganisationen und Services (AUFOS): [https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/allgemeine\\_downloads/europaeische\\_und\\_internationale\\_programme/AuFos.pdf](https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/allgemeine_downloads/europaeische_und_internationale_programme/AuFos.pdf)

Private Universities Conference (ÖPUK): <https://oepuk.ac.at/en/>

Research Forum of Austrian Universities of Applied Sciences (FFH): <https://forschungsforum2023.at/>

ERA Portal Austria: <https://era.gv.at/>



Horizon Europe Community Austria: <https://horizon-europe-community.at/>

**4. Please list and link to any policy documents and funding which mentions research management or the equivalent national name(s) for research management.**

“Der Gesamtösterreichische Universitätsentwicklungsplan 2022 - 2027” (which is to be considered in the creation of each university's so-called “development plan”) does not directly mention RM (called “Forschungsservice”), but does speak about strengthening research profiles and output: <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/dam/jcr:3a22c2b2-45d1-49dd-8898-112d44d0d39c/GUEP%202022%20-%202027.pdf>. Individual development plans of each university regularly mention RM: <https://unidata.gv.at/SitePages/Publikationen.aspx>

One of the Institute of Science and Technology's (ISTA) ‘core missions’ is “to implement best practices in science management”: <https://ist.ac.at/en/institute/at-a-glance/>

Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) will develop a career model for research administration (Entwicklungsplan 2024-26): [https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/NEWS/2023/pdf/EP\\_OeAW\\_2024-2026barrierefrei.pdf](https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/NEWS/2023/pdf/EP_OeAW_2024-2026barrierefrei.pdf)

The [Austrian ERA-NAP 2022-25](#): Chapter 3: Strengthening human resources for science and research in Austria: The initiative follows the development and implementation of measures to strengthen human resources for science and research in Austria. The focus is on attractive research careers including international and inter-sectoral mobility, the reform of the assessment system for scientists and researchers, and the **further development of research management**.

#### 4. Recommendations

1. If associations or networks do exist in your country, what recommendations would you share to support colleagues in setting one up in countries without associations or networks?
2. If your country does not have any informal/formal network or association, what kind of support would you need?

Austria has not yet established a single national organisation for research management and administration (RMA). Various research related institutions are organised in individual professional networks within their categories of organisational structure – public, private, and industry – while complementary professional networks also exist formed around specialisation/competence (i.e. HR, IT, Data Protection, Ethics, etc.)

Given the current uncertainty in the Austrian RMA community (highlighted by the session one discussions) regarding the existence of networks, the limited networking among those networks, as well as the limited forums for RMA/networks to meaningfully contribute to national and European R&I systems, the creation of a joint RMA association is an obvious aim to explore in the near future. A strongly networked community of RMAs across disciplines and organisational structures – e.g. an Association of Research Managers and Administrators-Austria (ARMA-AT) – could centralize both information sharing and professional development/training, especially for early-stage RMAs or those new to the Austrian system.

Buy-in and input from external factors/stakeholders will be essential in the development of any joint RMA association on a national level. Not only will the host organisations – universities, industry, and intermediaries – need to be included to ensure support for the required cooperation, platform building, continuous development and professionalization, but also key agencies on a national level: FFG and FWF, as well as Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF). International knowledge exchange with similar national-level organisations and networks across Europe will help identify the key goals and necessary connections to realize such a development on an Austria-wide scale.



## 5. References

***The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration Around the World: Austrian chapter 5.27:***

<https://books.emeraldinsight.com/book/detail/the-emerald-handbook-of-research-management-and-administration-around-the-world/?k=9781803827025>



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