

RM ROADMAP

Consensus Document for Country Community Serbia

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
Associations**

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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 also covers 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 Serbia** 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 learned 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

This document highlights a significant moment for the research management (RM) community in Europe. The European Commission (EC) and European countries, not limited on the member states, aim to better understand the current RM landscape to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA). The RM community includes various professionals who support research excellence. The RM Roadmap Knowledge and Community Platform (KCP) serves as a collaborative space for research managers to shape the future of their profession. This co-creation exercise, involving RMAs focuses on learning insights from RMs and establishing a framework for professional growth and collaboration across the EU and associated countries. By 2023, 40 country communities will contribute to shaping the future of research management in Europe.

This document for Serbia summarizes outcomes and recommendations from the First Co-Creation Session, concentrating on understanding national network and RMA landscape.

The Serbian RMA community is rather small and insufficiently organized, even though there is a formal association, SARMA, which is still in the emerging phase. There are people who do not consider themselves as research managers even though act as one.

Considering the fact that many of them haven't registered on the platform and that SARMA is still in the nascent phase, the Co-Creation Session 1 was conducted with direct communication between the RMAs within the SARMA core group, but also with other contributors that were contacted directly. The main goal for the next period will be to create a live and active community that will recognize the necessity of networking and collaboration.

This consensus document for Country Community SERBIA 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.

Serbian national RMA community was established a year ago as an Association. Official name is Serbian Association of Research Managers and Administrators (acronym SARMA). It consists of active members of the RMA community who have been promoting the profession for years, exchanging knowledge and experience through informal channels of communication, jointly acting in front of decision makers. The main goal for founding the SARMA is to gather individuals in a formal group of professionals with following goals:

- To support research community that should recognize and understand the value and importance of the RMA community
- To facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences
- To promote the profession and train new members
- To organize various events like trainings and conferences
- To build and strengthen the internal capacities of all institutions involved in research and development, such as universities, research organizations, companies etc.
- To be the connection between European and Serbian RMA community

SARMA is still in emerging phase. Developing an Association is a process that requires a lot of effort and resources. Several members who are enthusiastically started this journey voluntarily and without any institutional support are giving the effort to widen it and make it real national network of RMAs.

However, it has not been active enough to directly support individuals in the daily work. These individuals were focused on building their internal network of RMAs within their institutions. Some institutions have established an internal networks that consist of a close-knit teams of professionals who collaborate closely to support their research activities. SARMA should focus on the activities to gather all those individuals in the association as active members. So far, these internal networks have played a vital role in fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving, enabling research community to effectively manage research projects and support the excellence of their researchers.

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.

Several common challenges were identified during the discussion within this Co creating session in contributing to national and European Research and Innovation (R&I) systems. While Serbia has the national network of research managers (RMs) in Serbia, it has not been actively contributing to the R&I

landscape, and there have been networking initiatives within the internal network rather than with external RM associations. Some of the challenges we perceive in this context include:

1. Lack of cooperation with the main stakeholders and national policy makers such as Ministries in charge of national and EU-funded programs implementation (Ministries such as Ministry of Science, technological development and innovation, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Telecommunications etc.)
2. Insufficiently developed and open NCP network
3. RMA is not recognized as a profession (despite the efforts of a large number of individuals);
4. Lack of Awareness: One challenge is the limited awareness and visibility of RM networks and associations within the broader R&I community. This can hinder their potential to actively contribute to R&I systems.
5. Fragmented Efforts: In some cases, RM networks may operate in isolation or lack a coordinated approach. This fragmentation can lead to less impactful contributions to national and European R&I systems.
6. Resource Constraints: RM associations often face resource limitations, both in terms of funding and personnel. These constraints can affect their capacity to engage in meaningful activities within the R&I landscape.
7. Policy Alignment: Aligning the objectives and activities of RM networks with national and European R&I policies and strategies can be challenging. This misalignment may result in missed opportunities for collaboration.
8. Limited Cross-Border Cooperation: RM networks may focus predominantly on domestic issues, and there might be limited cross-border collaboration within the European R&I landscape.
9. Institutional Barriers: Some institutional barriers within countries can hinder the establishment and growth of RM networks, further limiting their contribution to R&I systems.

It's important to note that while the Serbian RM network has not been active enough, we are actively working to overcome these challenges. There is a high human potential in Serbia which is not yet organized in the national network SARMA. Members of informal networks are keen to participate in all initiatives that will address some of these challenges and promote active contributions to national and European R&I systems in the future.

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.

Formal network is Serbian Association of RMAs – SARMA, established in Belgrade in 2022.
(www.sarma.org.rs)

During this Session we identified several informal networks that are not organized and are limited to one institution, such as University or on regional level.

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

As of our knowledge, we are not aware of the existence of any public document or policy that formally recognizes Research Management as a profession in Serbia.

3. 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?
 - **Share Best Practices:** Collaborate with existing associations or networks to exchange best practices and expertise in establishing such organizations. Create a platform for knowledge sharing to help colleagues in other countries set up similar associations or networks.
 - **Mentorship:** Offer mentorship programs where experienced members can guide and support individuals or groups looking to establish associations or networks in countries without such structures.
 - **Advocacy:** Use your collective influence to advocate for the recognition and support of similar initiatives in countries that lack them. Engage with relevant authorities to highlight the importance of these organizations.
 - **Resource Sharing:** Share resources, templates, and documents that have been useful in setting up and running your associations or networks. This can help newcomers streamline the process.
2. If your country does not have any informal/formal network or association, what kind of support would you need?

RM network in Serbia is in its nascent stages, but we have recognized the importance of its development within our professional landscape. Although SARMA is still in the process of formation, we want to emphasize our commitment to growth and collaboration with fellow professionals in Serbia and beyond. With this in mind, we have prepared the following recommendations to help shape the future of RM in our country:

1. **Research and Feasibility Study:** Start by conducting a comprehensive research and feasibility study to assess the need and potential support for such associations in your country.
2. **Community Building:** Begin by organizing meetups, workshops, or online forums to bring together professionals who share an interest in research management. Establish a sense of community.
3. **Collaboration:** Seek partnerships with universities, research institutions, or other relevant stakeholders who may provide support, resources, or guidance.
4. **Advocacy:** Advocate for the recognition of Research Management as a profession in your country. Engage with policymakers and academic institutions to demonstrate the value of such an organization.
5. **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs to educate professionals about the benefits of Research Management and how they can contribute.
6. **International Engagement:** Establish connections with international associations or networks to learn from their experiences and gather insights that can help in setting up similar organizations in your country.



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