

RM ROADMAP

Consensus Document for Country Community Slovenia

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

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“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 Slovenia** 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

In first co-creation session “Understanding the landscape: National Networks and Associations” we tackled with four basic questions that were linked with RMA in Slovenia (Outcomes discussed more in details in section three).

Due to time constraints (this was also often exposed by couple of RMA colleagues), we managed to launch initial co-creation debate rather late. Consequently we received limited number of responses (overall 19). We believe that we could increase this number significantly, as there is much higher number of RMAs that are active on national and international level. We are convinced that further discussions will evolve and bring widespread comments.

3. Discussion Outcomes of Co-Creation Session 1

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.

Here answers were quite unequivocal – unfortunately formal RMA society in Slovenia does not exist yet, but there is strong desire that such formal network would be established. Good news is that there are several informal RMA networks – two largest are KOSRIS II (uniting research administration from research institutes) and University of Ljubljana RMA network (uniting research administration from University of Ljubljana). There is also a smaller network of technology transfer experts as this type of RMA is mainly visible at larger research performing organizations. Then there are smaller informal networks that function on a collegial level, but in our opinion are important as they can represent a great substrate for future growth of RMA network on a national level.

Participants argue that KOSRIS II network tackles mainly with financial and legal aspects on national level – some think that there should be more emphasis on project management (especially pre-award) and more topics on EU-funded projects.

Other well-recognized RMA network operates within brackets of University of Ljubljana. It unites rather well RMAs on University level, but is rather unknown to RMAs outside of that circle.

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.

Currently Slovenian national RMA networks contribute mainly on national level, but have also

desire and incentives to collaborate on international level (participants have exposed involvement within EARMA and COST BESTPRAC network). There is also a strong desire for emergence of pan-Slovenian network that would unite RMAs across our country.

Contributors think that there is a lack of time (RMAs usually have many regular tasks of their own and cannot dedicate moderate extra time on tasks that seem to be outside of their basic work – here we recognize a problem of definition of RMA work as it seems like there is not enough time dedicated to upskilling and education). Currently, this is solved in many cases with volunteer contribution (iRMA colleagues dedicating their free time for development of profession).

Contributors also think that lack of RMA funding is hindering evolvement of RMA profession.

Another hurdle for RMAs is (non)recognition of profession, which is reflected in unclear career development, salary growth, society's view, etc. Participants think that there could be wider inclusion of different stakeholders (besides Universities and Research institutes there could be more involvement of government bodies and industry partners).

Participants also think that with better RMA connections we could avoid overlapping of efforts and could dedicate this time to evolvement of RMA profession.

Contributors also expose fragmentation of RMA community – colleagues are employed at different institutions that vary in size, character and researcher support which can consequently hinder RMA links and development of RMA networks.

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.

- KOSRIS II network
- University of Ljubljana RMA network
- Consortium of technology transfer offices

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

Currently there is one larger funding scheme that is established exclusively for RMAs. Mentioned program will help at reinforcement of project offices with an aim to boost successfulness of centralized EU project applications. We expect many positive outputs from this vast project:

- Greater recognition of RMA profession in Slovenia in the future
- Better collaboration between universities and research institutes as there are mixed teams established.
- Establishing fundamental support services with an aim of bringing them to a higher level.
- Internationalization of RMAs

We expect further developments in the future.

4. Recommendations

According to informal discussions, our primary goal is to raise awareness of RMA profession and expose its future potential in Slovenia and beyond. Afterward we would like to establish a formal network that would have clear agenda and would be recognized on national and international level. We would need some support from governing bodies (recognition and funding) to do this.

5. References

6. Acknowledgements

We thank RMA colleagues who contributed to this emerged debate and managed to put constructive ideas and comments.



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