

RM ROADMAP

Consensus Document for Country Community Norway

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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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 Norway 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 inaugural Co-Creation Session in Norway marked the beginning of a two-week endeavor aimed at gaining insights into the needs and challenges faced by research managers in the country. The gathered input will be channeled through the RM Roadmap project to stakeholders, including the European Union and member states, contributing to the development of a future roadmap for research management in Europe.

The discussions revolved around four key questions:

- Participants were asked about the existence and impact of national networks (formal or informal) and how they have aided their work. For those without such networks, insights were sought into how they've built and utilized their internal networks.
- The session delved into the challenges that research management networks and associations encounter when contributing to both national and European Research and Innovation (R&I) systems. Additionally, participants were invited to discuss any networking initiatives or reasons for their absence.
- Attendees were encouraged to provide a list of formal and informal networks and associations of research managers in Norway, along with links to their websites or online groups.
- Lastly, participants were asked to share links to policy documents and funding sources that mention research management or its equivalent national terms.

The outcome of these discussions resulted in a consensus document, representing the collective insights of 41 members from the Norwegian knowledge platform, with a total of 13 comments. This document will be valuable in informing further discussions with stakeholders in Norway and contribute to a better understanding of the national landscape in the context of research management.

3. Discussion Outcomes of Co-Creation Session 1

This consensus document for Country Community Norway 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.

In discussions concerning research management networks and associations in Norway, several noteworthy insights emerged:

NARMA, the Norwegian national network for research administration professionals, plays a pivotal role in supporting research managers. Participants have reaped the benefits of RM proficiency courses and networking events, enhancing their roles as senior research managers. These connections also offer valuable insights into how research management is practiced across diverse institutions in Norway. NARMA's broad thematic focus complements the offerings of other networks, such as EARMA.

While NARMA serves as the national network, EU advisors highlight their predominant involvement at the EU level. EARMA, a European network, provides opportunities for raising awareness and building expertise in research management and administration, particularly concerning topics like PhD education.

Recognition was given to the Research Council of Norway (RCN) for its efforts in expanding networking opportunities and knowledge sharing among research management advisors operating in the EU context. The National Contact Point team organizes events, delivers training, and actively participates in local events related to EU funding. They facilitate networking through National Reference Groups for EU initiatives, acknowledging the pivotal role of research management advisors in the academic sphere.

The RCN also hosts informational events for national calls, benefiting both academics and research management advisors. For young universities, the network forged through RCN-facilitated events has proven invaluable for exchanging tips and guidance.

In summary, these discussions underscored the importance of both national and international networks and associations in bolstering the support system for research management advisors in Norway. These networks offer valuable avenues for sharing knowledge, fostering connections, and nurturing professional growth, all of which contribute significantly to the effectiveness and impact of research management in the country.

Key points:

- NARMA, the Norwegian national network, provides RM proficiency courses and sector-wide networking.
- EU advisors are more active at the EU level, with networks like EARMA offering specialized knowledge.
- The Research Council of Norway (RCN) serves as an active and inclusive network for research advisors.

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 question at hand may find more comprehensive answers within the networks themselves. However, one challenge lies in the limited visibility of NARMA outside of its annual conference, which poses some user-related issues. While there exist various working groups, the availability of webinars, forums, or other events in the interim period is relatively scarce. Furthermore, the NARMA's contributions to both national and European Research and Innovation (R&I) systems. Notably, during the annual events, national funders often participate as speakers, workshop attendees, or panelists, facilitating discussions on challenges and opportunities within the national funding systems.

It's worth noting that the ongoing governmental consultation process regarding the national research system has yet to feature substantial input from NARMA, particularly in the initial stages. (Reference: [Arbeid med melding til Stortinget om forskningssystemet - regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/Arbeid+med+melding+til+Stortinget+om+forskningssystemet/-regjeringen.no))

Despite Norway's favorable position in recent years, concerns arise regarding the sustainability of the progress achieved, especially through the Research Council, given the substantial staff reduction of almost 100 in 2023. This reduction prompts questions about its potential impact.

Research management (RM) remains a relatively nascent profession compared to other specialized competencies in the academic sector. The ongoing development and sustenance of RM rely on evidence-based research, literature, and best practices. Establishing a distinct national best practice could potentially ease contributions to European R&I systems.

Additionally, there is a noteworthy observation regarding the limited participation of active Research Management Advisors (RMAs) in this discussion. It is unclear whether this low engagement may be attributed to a lack of awareness about RM Roadmap. It's worth noting that many RMAs possess extensive experience spanning 20-30 years and could provide valuable contributions. Channels such as the Research Council of Norway could play a pivotal role in disseminating information and encouraging participation, especially for RMAs focused on external funding.

Key points:

- Visibility and engagement of the Norwegian national network NARMA outside of its annual conference is a challenge, with few webinars or forums in between.
- National funders participate in NARMA's annual events, fostering discussions on challenges and opportunities within the national funding systems.
- The ongoing governmental consultation process for the national research system has not seen significant input from NARMA.
- Concerns arise about the sustainability of progress in research management, especially through the Research Council, due to a significant staff reduction in 2023.

- There is limited participation from experienced Research Management Advisors (RMAs) in the discussions on the Knowledge platform, possibly due to awareness gaps about RM Roadmap. Channels like the Research Council of Norway could help spread the word.

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.

In the dynamic landscape of research management and innovation, the creation and sustenance of robust networks and alliances are essential. These networks serve as vital conduits for information exchange, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders involved in research, development, and innovation activities. The following bullet points provide an overview of diverse networks and groups integral to the research management ecosystem, fostering connections at various levels:

- **Horizon Europe-Related Networks:** These networks encompass training events, courses, and reference groups directly associated with the Horizon Europe framework, facilitating cooperation and knowledge dissemination in the context of European research and innovation initiatives.
- **EU Advisers and NCPs Networks:** Comprising informal EU-networks and regional networks, these groups bring together EU advisers and National Contact Points (NCPs) to share insights, experiences, and updates related to EU research and innovation programs.
- **Networks within Institutions:** Institutions often participate in networks as part of umbrella organizations, partnerships, projects, or alliances. These networks play a crucial role in harnessing the expertise of Research Management Advisors (RMAs) and are tailored to address specific research management challenges and opportunities.
- **Specialized Networks:** Beyond the realm of research management, specialized networks such as the Scholars at Risk Norway Section and the NORHED informal network serve unique purposes, connecting individuals engaged in academic freedom advocacy and research cooperation with low and middle-income countries, respectively. Furthermore, there exists more informal networks, for example an informal network for those working with legal issues across the universities.

Together, these networks form a dynamic web of collaboration, driving progress and innovation in the field of research management. The ensuing bullet points provide insights into the diverse and multifaceted landscape of these networks, shedding light on their contributions to research and innovation endeavors.

List of networks including their communication channels.

Newtork description	Communication channels
Horizon Europe-Related Networks:	
1. Horizon Europe training events	https://www.forskingsradet.no/en/horizon-europe/ncp-national-contacts/
2. Horizon Europe courses	Horizon Europe courses (forskingsradet.no)
3. Horizon Europe National reference groups	National reference groups (forskingsradet.no)

4. EU Advisors meetings organized by the Research Council of Norway	Newsletter and email
5. University EU Advisor meetings	Newsletter and email
6. EU networks funded by the Research Council of Norway	narma.no
7. Competence/knowledge brokers regional and national networks	EU-nettverk i Horisont Europa (forskingsradet.no)
EU Advisers and NCPs Networks:	
8. Informal EU-network for research administrators	Newsletter and email
9. Regional EU-networks, e.g., Horisont Trøndelag	Horisont Trøndelag (horisonttrondelag.no)
10. UnLiON (Universities Informal Liaison Offices Network in Brussels)	https://www.unilion.eu/
Networks within Institutions:	
11. Networks within umbrella organizations, partnerships, projects, or alliances where RMAs play important roles or are the primary target group. Examples include working groups in Nordic Five Tech, project teams in ENHANCE and ENHANCERIA, and task forces in CESAER.	http://www.nordicfivetechnology.org/ https://enhanceuniversity.eu/ https://enhanceuniversity.eu/enhanceria/ https://www.cesaer.org/task-forces/
Specialized Networks:	
12. Scholars at Risk Norway Section	https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/sections/sar-norway/
13. NORHED informal network for research managers involved in NORHED projects.	NORHED II (norad.no)
14. Informal network for those in research management working within legal issues	Informal, no website available

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

Policy documents	URL links
Long-term plan for research and higher education 2023–2032	Meld. St. 5 ENG (2022–2023) (regjeringen.no)
Strategy for Norway's participation in Horizon Europe and the European Research Area	Strategy for Norway's participation in Horizon Europe and the European Research Area (regjeringen.no)
Nasjonal handlingsplan for Det europeiske forskningsområdet 2022–2024	National action plan for the European research area 2022–2024

4. Recommendations

The landscape of research management (RM) in Europe is undergoing a transformation, marked by a growing need for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional development among those who support and facilitate research endeavors. In response to this evolving landscape, the RM Roadmap initiative has brought together research management professionals from across Europe to co-create a vision for the future of the profession. This collaborative effort is a testament to the commitment of research managers to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA) and enhance their capabilities to support researchers in achieving excellence in research.

Within this context and based on the Norwegian experience with NARMA the last ten years, we share the following recommendations to support colleagues who want to set up their national associations.

- **Visibility and Awareness:** Create awareness about the significance of research management networks and associations through informational webinars, workshops, and seminars. Highlight the benefits and opportunities they offer to professionals supporting research. The annual NARMA conference is a major vehicle for raising awareness about research management profession in Norway. The 2023 annual conference attracted around 500 research managers across Norway. Efforts are underway to reach out to other sectors outside the research and innovation sector as well.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs to equip research management professionals with the necessary skills and competencies. Offer courses and workshops on best practices in research management. NARMA offers capacity building program that mirrors EARMA's course portfolio with beginner course, advanced course for senior research manager and leader seminars.
- **Engage with National and Regional Initiatives:** Collaborate with governmental bodies, funding agencies, and institutions to align the network's efforts with national and regional research and innovation policies. Seek their support and resources to establish and sustain the network. The NARMAs capacity program is funded by the RCN. NARMA board and members are engaged as ERA 17 representatives on behalf of Norway, and ambassadors for RM roadmap.

These recommendations serve as a roadmap for countries aiming to establish and strengthen research management networks and associations, contributing to the advancement of research and innovation on both national and European scales.

5. References

6. Acknowledgements



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