

# RM ROADMAP

Consensus Document for Country Community United Kingdom

***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”**

***Funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Programme***

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landscape: National Networks and Associations**

# 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 United Kingdom** 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

The UK has a national association for research managers, ARMA, as well as several other formal and informal networks that closely align. There are also strong regional networks and inter-institutional networks for research. Collaboration and recognition of the roles of research management professionals are important themes within these networks.

Through ARMA we encouraged members to join the UK group and contribute to the RM Roadmap project. We also undertook a broader promotion through social media channels to attempt to reach non-ARMA members and engage them in the project. Several conversations took place with associations operating in adjacent areas to highlight the project and the opportunity to engage and add their views to the conversation. At the point of creating the consensus document we have 119 members.

In summary, ARMA membership and involvement have been instrumental in the careers and professional development of individuals in the field of Research Management and Administration. These experiences highlight the importance of professional networks in fostering skills, knowledge, and community within the field, while acknowledging challenges related to resource constraints and differing perceptions of contributions within organisations.

The challenges faced by RM networks and associations, such as ARMA, in contributing to national and European R&I systems include issues related to recognition, diversity, funding, government support, inclusivity, engagement with funders, and the need for cultural change within the research sector. Efforts to address these challenges may involve advocating for the value of RM professionals, promoting inclusivity, and improving collaboration between RM networks and key stakeholders in the R&I ecosystem. UK policymakers are increasingly recognising the importance of research management.

At ARMA we have used this first co-creation session as an opportunity to test and refine the way we gather input from our community and share it with the RM Roadmap UK group. We plan to use these learnings to help inform our approach to future co-creation sessions.

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

This consensus document for Country Community United Kingdom (UK) 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.

The national network for Research Managers in the United Kingdom is ARMA (Association of Research Managers and Administrators) [www.arma.ac.uk](http://www.arma.ac.uk)

ARMA (UK) is the professional association for research management in the UK. It represents research leaders, managers and administrators, offering professional development and opportunities to build networks, knowledge and skills. With around 3000 members, ARMA works with UK-wide and international bodies to influence and understand the changing research management agenda, translating the impacts of that change for their members. It works with others to promote public trust in research, communicating its benefits and value. Most of all, ARMA works to enhance research management as a professional partner in the UK research environment.

ARMA provides a wide range of membership benefits and development opportunities, including regular e-news, social media channels, a member magazine, a jobs mailing list and an Annual Conference.

ARMA's Vision is to drive the professional recognition of research management, to influence the development of UK research policy and to support a vibrant and inclusive community of Research Managers and Administrators (RMA) professionals.

ARMA's Mission is to provide professional development opportunities, to connect the RMA community and to advocate the views of the profession in relation to national policy and matters directly affecting RMAs and researchers.

Value of ARMA Membership:

- From the responses several individuals have been ARMA members for an extended period, which has significantly aided their careers in Research Management.



- ARMA membership has provided valuable skills, knowledge, and networking opportunities, both within the UK and internationally.
- ARMA has enabled connections with like-minded colleagues from other UK institutions, offering valuable networking opportunities for research management professionals.

#### Benefits of ARMA Activities:

- ARMA conferences, special interest groups (SIGs), and mentoring programs have been beneficial for career development, knowledge exchange, and building professional relationships.
- Participation in ARMA activities, such as the introduction workshops, helped early-career professionals gain relevant knowledge and skills.

#### Building a Sense of Community:

- ARMA has helped individuals feel a sense of community and pride in their profession, going beyond just a job.
- Some have actively contributed to ARMA by becoming SIG Champions, delivering training, and even serving on the ARMA Board.

#### ARMA Training:

- ARMA offers training, which has proven valuable, particularly for those new to Research Management.
- The effectiveness of ARMA training depends on one's background and prior experience in the field.

#### Collaborative Projects and Opportunities:

- Participants have benefited from collaborative projects funded by ARMA, such as the collaboration with the AAS (African Academy of Sciences), although such opportunities may be limited due to resource constraints.

#### Budgetary Constraints and Access:

- Budget disparities across departments in institutions can affect access to ARMA resources, such as membership and conference attendance.
- Some individuals cannot afford individual ARMA membership.

## Career Progression and Personal Growth:

- For some, ARMA has been instrumental in their career progression, especially when transitioning into the UK research funding landscape from diverse academic backgrounds.
- ARMA has facilitated professional growth and the development of skills through courses, conferences, and certification programs.

In summary, ARMA membership and involvement have been instrumental in the careers and professional development of individuals in the field of Research Management and Administration. These experiences highlight the importance of professional networks in fostering skills, knowledge, and community within the field, while acknowledging challenges related to resource constraints and differing perceptions of contributions within organizations.

## **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 responses we received highlight several key challenges faced by Research Management (RM) networks and associations in contributing to national and European Research and Innovation (R&I) systems.

The key challenges for Research Managers in the UK can be grouped as follows.

## Perception and Recognition:

- RM networks and professionals are sometimes seen as mere support mechanisms for academics, with their broader expertise and contributions overlooked.
- While this perception is gradually changing, it remains a challenge for RM networks to be recognized as influential contributors to the R&I landscape.

## Diversity of Roles and Systems:

- RM roles and systems vary across institutions, making it challenging to create a unified approach to contribute to European R&I systems.

- Even within the same institution, different areas may have varying levels of support and approaches.

#### Funding Disparities:

- Researchers often have more access to financial support for attending conferences and networks compared to research managers.
- Funding for professional services staff, including RM professionals, is limited and undervalued, hindering their ability to engage in wider networks.

#### Institutional Buy-In:

- Some universities in the UK lack sufficient buy-in for RM networks and associations, with membership being more individual-based in some institutions and group-based in others.

#### Government Support:

- Research Management is not always seen as a part of the government's broader R&I agenda, and it lacks the support it deserves.
- Ideally, RM should be recognized as an essential component of the R&I ecosystem and receive appropriate government support.

#### Inclusivity and Diversity:

- The diversity of institutions, roles, and responsibilities in RM makes it challenging to establish accessible entry points for everyone.
- RMAs sometimes feel excluded from important discussions due to the lack of recognition for their profession.

#### Engagement with Funders:

- RM networks and associations believe that research funders should engage more with research management professionals, not just the academic community.

- They could be valuable resources for informing decisions, policies, and processes in the R&I sector.

#### Cultural Change and Progress:

- Other roles in research, such as Research Technical Professionals, have made progress in terms of recognition and career pathways.
- There is potential to learn from their successes and apply similar strategies to RM professionals.

#### Investment and Policy Engagement:

- There is limited investment in the RM profession by the research sector outside of RM networks and associations.
- The relationship between RM networks like ARMA and entities like UUK or UKRI is not always clear.

In summary, the challenges faced by RM networks and associations in contributing to national and European R&I systems include issues related to recognition, diversity, funding, government support, inclusivity, engagement with funders, and the need for cultural change within the research sector. Efforts to address these challenges may involve advocating for the value of RM professionals, promoting inclusivity, and improving collaboration between RM networks and key stakeholders in the R&I ecosystem.

- 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 National Research Manager Association:

ARMA (Association of Research Managers and Administrators): ARMA is a prominent formal network for research managers. [www.arma.ac.uk](http://www.arma.ac.uk)

Other National Association networks:

PraxisAuril: Another formal association relevant to knowledge exchange. [www.praxisauril.org.uk](http://www.praxisauril.org.uk)

Vitae: This is an organization with a focus on researcher development and support. [vitae.ac.uk](http://vitae.ac.uk)

UKCGE (UK Council for Graduate Education): An organization related to graduate education. <https://ukcge.ac.uk/>

BUFDG (British Universities Finance Directors Group): Sometimes overlaps with research management areas. <https://www.bufdg.ac.uk/>

UPEN (University Professional and Enabling Network) as a relevant network for research management professionals. <https://www.upen.ac.uk/>

PRISM (The UK's network for professional research investment and strategy managers) <https://www.pris-managers.ac.uk/>

National Centre for Research Culture (NCRC): NCRC is coordinating a network to empower research enablers with a focus on culture change in recognition of the roles played by research management colleagues. The National Centre also organises the International Research Culture Conference (IRCC). The IRCC had a session on 'inclusive recognition' and discussed taxonomy and the roles of professional services colleagues in changing research culture. <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/ncrc/>

Regional Member Networks:

N8 International Research Managers Network <https://www.n8research.org.uk/>

North East Universities Research Management Network

North East Global Challenges Network

Research Managers Network for LMIC Partnerships.

Midlands RMs.

## Institutional Networks:

Many institutions have active internal networks to support RMAs.

In summary, the UK has a national association for research managers, ARMA, as well as several other formal and informal networks that closely align. There are also strong regional networks and inter-institutional networks for research. Collaboration and recognition of the roles of research management professionals are important themes within these networks. The financial constraints placed on research managers make networking activities a challenge.

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

#### Influential Policies and Initiatives:

In the UK, Associations and groups have influenced various policies, such as RAE/REF, FEC, research governance, clinical trials regulations, OA (Open Access), concordats, KEF (Knowledge Exchange Framework), innovation policy, Treasury policy, and VAT treatment.

Research managers are increasingly asked to contribute to policy and sector-wide initiatives and strategy, although this is not always formalised, hence the lack of material in the public domain which demonstrates this.

#### HM Government R&D Roadmap

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/896799/UK\\_Research\\_and\\_Development\\_Roadmap.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896799/UK_Research_and_Development_Roadmap.pdf)

#### Research and Development (R&D) people and culture strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-and-development-rd-people-and-culture-strategy>

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) launched the “101 Jobs” initiative which recognises the contributions



of communities beyond academia to research, including research managers. International Research Collaboration

<https://www.ukri.org/news-and-events/101-jobs-that-change-the-world/>

HM Government Review of Research Bureaucracy

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1094648/independent-review-research-bureaucracy-final-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1094648/independent-review-research-bureaucracy-final-report.pdf)

Research management (RM) is mentioned in research grant calls and sector policy documents, particularly in the context of international research collaboration.

Mentioned policies and initiatives include UCKDR (UK Collaborative on Development Research), Africa Charter, Cape Town Statement, and COHRED (Council on Health Research for Development).

Funding sources in this area include MRC Applied Global Health Research, Royal Society International Collaboration Awards, and NIHR Global Health Research Groups.

In summary, UK policymakers are increasingly recognizing the importance of research management even if not explicitly addressing it. A big challenge is that a significant portion of funding relies on academics to apply for research management activity.

#### **4. Recommendations**

ARMA has been the representative national association for research managers in the UK for many years. For those looking to establish new national associations we would make the following recommendations:

- Any network should be designed to maximise member benefit
  - who are your intended community and how can the network help them?
  - It could be worth starting out with a couple of key issues for your community, and tackling those before moving to a broader offer.
- You need robust, and representative, governance structures.
- If you're relying on volunteers to run the organisation, think carefully about time commitment, workload and priorities. There will be lots of excitement about doing EVERYTHING all at once, and you're going to need to have clear priorities to help ensure it's manageable.
- Spend time building stakeholder relationships, particularly with key bodies in the sector, as they can help to build your profile and provide opportunities for engagement.
- Learn from other associations! SRAI have a great qualification programme, ARMA's Special Interest Groups offer an interesting model for engagement, and EARMA run some great thematic sessions.

#### **5. Acknowledgements**

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