



Success Stories from the Research Management Community

A catalogue of best practices
and achievements



Research and
Innovation

Success Stories from the Research Management Community – A catalogue of best practices and achievements

European Commission
Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
Directorate A — ERA & Innovation
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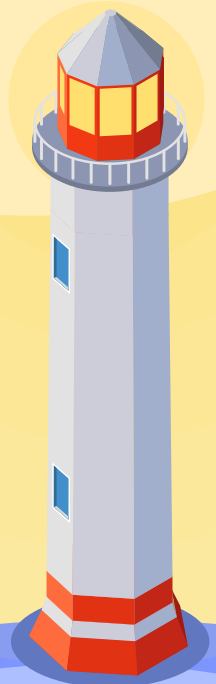
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PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT (PRE-AWARD)



University of Coimbra's strategy: unlocking EU funding

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Portugal

Location: University of Coimbra



Problem/context

The University of Coimbra (UC) sought to strengthen its research standing. Despite securing 81 Horizon 2020 grants, UC's broad disciplinary scope and potential remained untapped. In 2020, the Strategic Areas Unit (NAE) was established to enhance pre-award support and internationalisation, fostering the diversification of funding sources and raising awareness of the European funding landscape, in line with UC's 2019–2023 strategy.

Actions taken

Over four years, NAE promoted Horizon Europe funding, fostering internal interdisciplinary collaboration and supporting 1,800 researchers and research managers. Initiatives such as MarieCurie@UC boosted Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions applications by providing training to R&D centres, while ERC@UC provided support tailored to the candidates. Additionally, for ERA Chairs calls, NAE efforts led to a significant increase in submissions. NAE also supported collaborative proposals and partnerships addressing societal challenges and cross-cutting issues, such as GendER@UC and RIC42.

Results and impact

- ▶ Ranked second among Portuguese participants in Horizon Europe with 100 grants, including 35 as coordinator
- ▶ Increased ERC-funded projects from 2 in 2019 to 10 in 2024
- ▶ Expanded participation in the WIDERA programme, with 20 funded projects, including six ERA chairs
- ▶ Strengthened research management to attract and retain talent



Learn from UC's winning strategy!

Shaping Portugal's research future: the RM role in attracting core funding

Level: Groups of institutions

Country: Portugal

Location: Groups of institutions



Problem/context

Core funding for research institutions in Portugal relies on competitive calls from the National Research and Technology Public Funding Agency (FCT) for R&D Units and Associated Laboratories (AL). Securing these funds is complex and requires strong collaboration between research leaders and management teams.

Actions taken

Research managers can support the development of R&D Unit and AL proposals by improving the quality of the application and its process. However, a strong involvement of research managers is not standard practice. This case focuses on the assembly of seven independent proposals spanning four Portuguese research-intensive institutions, which involved strong participation of research managers in bringing complementary skills and perspectives to the scientific team. Research managers contributed to proposal strategy design, aligning with funder expectations, proposal planning and grant writing, and organised remote interviews and site visits.

Results and impact

- ▶ Secured €11.9 million for 600+ PhD holders and staff from four proposals already evaluated (three remain under evaluation)
- ▶ Improved proposal quality and funding success
- ▶ Earned recognition from R&D Unit coordinators, with one stating: 'Having a research manager on our team was key to ensuring our proposal met the strategic guidelines and funders' expectations [...] and provided a complementary and effective perspective that greatly improved the probability of success of our application.'



Discover how the involvement of research managers drives research success.

Implementation of a masterclass to increase MSCA IF and PF activity

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Finland

Location: [Tampere University](#)



Problem/context


In 2013, Tampere University sought to increase its external research funding, particularly from the EU. Despite the potential of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Individual Fellowships (IFs), the university had submitted only few applications.

Actions taken

A small team of four research managers set out to change this. They identified the need for greater awareness and developed a strategy to promote MSCA IFs. In 2016, they launched the MSCA IF Masterclass, offering workshops, proposal reviews, and supervisor training. To attract applicants, the university hosted a three-day visit for potential candidates to meet supervisors, learn about the instrument, and refine their proposals.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased international visibility and talent recruitment
- ▶ Tripled applications from 6 in 2016 to 18 in 2018, securing several grants each year
- ▶ Established MSCA PF masterclass that attracts 40-60 applicants annually
- ▶ Achieved second-highest ranking among Finnish universities for MSCA PF, prompting potential supervisors to actively request research managers' support in attracting international talents
- ▶ Advanced a former MSCA Fellow to tenure track professorship at Tampere University.

 Explore [MSCA PF](#) and [MSCA IF](#) opportunities – see how [research managers](#) can maximise success!

Grant writing: increasing time for research and capacity building in preparing complex competitive funding proposals

Level: Institution

Country: Finland

Location: [Tampere University](#)



Problem/context


As competition for research and innovation funding increased, Tampere University recognised the need to support researchers – especially postdocs and junior professors – in securing complex EU-funded grants. The proposal preparation process for Horizon Europe projects, particularly for first-time coordinators, required specialised assistance.

Actions taken

Research managers at Tampere University established a dedicated grant writing service, recruiting five full-time specialists to support applicants. Working closely with other research managers in, for example, library, innovation services and post-award, these experts assist researchers throughout the proposal process, from analysing funding calls and identifying partners to co-writing proposals, managing budgets, and handling submissions.

Results and impact

- ▶ Doubled annual Horizon Europe funding in five years
- ▶ Achieved third-highest ranking among EU grant recipients in Finland
- ▶ Expanded participation in Pillar II grants, now being the leading Finnish university in Pillar II and in the top 20 of all universities in receiving Pillar II funding
- ▶ Enabled newcomers to Horizon Europe to succeed as coordinators through grant writers' support

 Learn more about [grant application support through Horizon Europe!](#)

Embracing diversity: empowering research

Level: Individual

Country: Switzerland

Location: [AO Research Institute Davos](#)



Problem/context


The AO Research Institute Davos (ARI) lacked dedicated support for securing competitive funding, managing research data, and promoting gender equality. Researchers struggled with complex grant applications, digital research tools, and inclusivity efforts. Switzerland's non-association with Horizon Europe added further funding challenges.

Actions taken

The scientific project manager role was created to assist with national and international project applications. A grant newsletter was launched for researchers, and electronic laboratory notebooks were introduced for better data management. Workshops on research data, gender equality, and fundraising were held, alongside ARI's first gender equality plan, which included diversity and inclusivity events.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased research funding from CHF 3.2 million (2017) to CHF 5.2 million (2023)
- ▶ Achieved record-high grant applications and success rates
- ▶ Improved compliance with EU research data management rules

 Looking for support with funding, research data, or diversity initiatives? [Explore your options.](#)

EUR 10 million and counting: Teaming Centre's competitive funding win

Level: Institution

Country: Cyprus

Location: [Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute](#)



Problem/context


The Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI) was established in 2019 to address Cyprus' weak research, technological development and innovation investment, limited research beyond academia, and lack of a dedicated blue economy centre. Initially funded by the EU (Horizon 2020) and the Cyprus Government, it needed to secure competitive funding for sustainability beyond 2026.

Actions taken

The CMMI set up the Research Innovation and Support Unit (RISU), which included experienced project managers and research support officers, to streamline grants, train staff, and expand networks. RISU developed funding tools and templates, structured procedures, and a monitoring system, while organising training and joining key EU networks to boost collaboration.

Results and impact

- ▶ Secured €10 million in funding, including 10 commercial contracts and direct assignments and 30 projects across multiple programmes (Horizon Europe, EMFAF, Erasmus, Interreg, Eurostars, etc.)
- ▶ Achieved an overall 29% success rate for 188 proposals
- ▶ Strengthened Cyprus' blue economy, benefiting key stakeholders

 Interested in establishing a new research centre or enhancing an existing one for long-term competitiveness and sustainability? [Explore Teaming for Excellence.](#)



Top-level support: different levels of service

Level: Institution

Country: Italy

Location: [University of Trento](#)



Problem/context

The Pre-award Research Support Office at the University of Trento has long been recognised for its efficient and responsive service. However, post-COVID-19 pandemic, two main challenges emerged: a sharp increase in research proposals, and high staff turnover affecting service continuity. Previously, support staff were assigned across disciplines, leading to imbalanced workloads. Additionally, last-minute principal investigator requests created a high-pressure work environment. Coordination between various research support offices – technology transfer, project management and data management – was fragmented, reducing overall efficiency.

Actions taken

The research managers at the University of Trento, focusing on enhancing efficiency, revamped the pre-award research support service, introducing a tiered support model that tailored assistance from compliance checks to full proposal development. The team was specialised to manage national or international funding applications to ensure growing expertise in grant acquisition. Also, dedicated call coordinators streamlined interactions with funding bodies. Furthermore, the digitalisation of the service's access and key resources resulted in improving accessibility and an efficient onboarding process for researchers and new staff.

Results and impact

- ▶ Achieved deeper expertise in funding schemes by enhancing staff specialisation
- ▶ Improved success rates with strategic proposal support
- ▶ Succeeded in making research support more efficient and seamless by adapting stronger internal collaboration
- ▶ Accelerated onboarding for new staff, thanks to standardised resources and training



Find out more about the [University of Trento's research support services](#).

Outreach pays off: pre-award strategies that work

Level: Institution

Country: Denmark

Location: [Danish Technological Institute](#)



Problem/context

At the Danish Technological Institute (DTI), growing interest in Horizon Europe was hindered by siloed research centres, heavy workload, and communication challenges, requiring a more structured approach to awareness-raising.

Actions taken

The DTI launched the 'Outreach' process in 2021, which was enhanced with digital tools in 2023. This included analysing Horizon Europe work programmes, meeting with over 20 departments to map interests, and using the 'Outreach Table' to match funding opportunities with researchers. Research managers coordinated the process, while the platform automated much of the workload, and workshops improved internal networks and proposal writing skills.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased proposals and success rates
- ▶ Improved researcher collaboration and research management visibility
- ▶ Streamlined Horizon Europe engagement and funding matching



Discover the value of [research managers](#) today.

Boosting grant application quality and collegiality with internal peer review

Level: Institution

Country: Denmark

Location: [University of Copenhagen](#)



Problem/context

To enhance grant application quality and strengthen internal collaboration, the Biotech Research & Innovation Centre (BRIC) research management team introduced a new Internal Review (IR) process. The team identified gaps in securing funds and created the IR process to improve proposal quality in a competitive funding environment.

Actions taken

Launched in 2013, the IR process had BRIC group leaders review each other's grant proposals before submission. Initially seen as extra work, it quickly proved effective in refining project ideas. Research managers coordinated the panels and provided guidance. The process was expanded to all major grants and fellowships, fostering valuable peer feedback and collaboration.

Results and impact

- ▶ Improved proposal quality through constructive peer feedback
- ▶ Increased collaboration, leading to shared experiments and technology
- ▶ Strengthened collegiality and trust within the institution



Want to enhance your grant applications? Discover more [here](#).

MSCA Master Class University of Kassel

Level: Institution

Country: Germany

Location: [University of Kassel](#)



Problem/context

From 2020 to 2022, the University of Kassel's Research Support Office (RSO) identified challenges in Horizon 2020 funding, such as poor proposal quality, low participation of female and international researchers, and insufficient training.

Actions taken

The RSO launched the MSCA Booster project to boost Horizon Europe participation, focusing on Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships (PFs). The research support team created materials, a landing page, and hosted workshops and networking opportunities for postdocs in April 2024.

Results and impact

- ▶ Enhanced international visibility and strengthened collaboration across departments
- ▶ Increased interest in EU excellence programmes (MSCA PF and European Research Council)
- ▶ Improved awareness of EU programmes among postdocs, professors, and supervisors



Explore the [opportunities offered by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions!](#)



A one-stop service to support Aix-Marseille researchers

Level: Groups of institutions

Country: France

Location: [La Mission Europe pour la Recherche](#). Aix Marseille



Problem/context

La Mission Europe pour la Recherche (M.E.R), a joint initiative from Aix-Marseille Université, French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), Inserm, and Research Institute for Development (IRD), was launched to streamline EU research funding processes for researchers at 126 research units in Aix-Marseille, focusing on pre-award support, proposal development, and awareness and post-award activities. This is a pilot project in France to deploy a one-stop service to make access to EU R&I funding easier for academics.

Actions taken

La M.E.R created a unified office to provide tailored support, including sensitisation, proposal writing, training, and strategic collaboration and support for project management activities. Launched in January 2024, the initiative involved collaborators with diverse profiles and attracted over 200 researchers to its inauguration, aiming to make EU funding accessible to all.

Results and impact

- ▶ Submitted 191 proposals in 2024 (112% increase compared to 2023)
- ▶ Secured 145 Horizon Europe projects worth €99 million, including 38 European Research Council-funded projects
- ▶ Increased researcher engagement, with teams new to EU programmes reaching out for support



Read all about it [here!](#)

EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass: sharing experiences to boost successful starting and consolidator applicants

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Location: [EU-LIFE Grants & Funding strategies Working Group](#)



Problem/context

EU-LIFE, an alliance of 17 European life sciences institutes, promotes best practices in research funding. To support early-career researchers, the EU-LIFE Grants & Funding Strategies Working Group created an online ERC Masterclass, pooling expertise from grant managers, grantees, and former panel members to improve success rates.

Actions taken

Three editions of the ERC Masterclass (2021, 2023, 2024) were held as interactive two-day workshops. Day one covered European Research Council (ERC) funding schemes, application processes, and evaluation criteria, with insights from ERC experts and research managers. Day two focused on CV building, administrative aspects, and brainstorming sessions where applicants pitched proposals to a mock panel for feedback.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened collaboration and knowledge sharing among EU-LIFE institutes
- ▶ Achieved >30% success rate in 2021, double the EU average
- ▶ Increased success rate to 44% with reapplications



Find out more about the [ERC Masterclass](#) and discover all [ERC grant opportunities!](#)

Paving the way for a central role in European project leadership

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Spain

Location: [IDIBAPS](#)



Problem/context

IDIBAPS, a biomedical research centre in Spain, faced challenges with the complex EU funding application process, requiring significant documentation and expertise. Many researchers, also clinicians, lacked the time to prepare proposals. The European Project Office (EPO) realised the need for research managers to play a central role in leading proposals, working closely with principal investigators (PIs).

Actions taken

In 2019, the EPO adopted a proactive approach, securing national grants to grow the research management team from four to eight members by 2024. The team conducted 150 interviews with PIs (2019–2020) to deepen their understanding of research activities. They developed advanced proposal writing skills (2020–2021) and played a key role in co-developing proposals from concept to submission (2022–2023).

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased number of coordinated funded projects, from a yearly average of 1 (2019–2021) to 3 (2022–2023), a three-fold increase
- ▶ Boosted number of ERC funded projects, from a yearly average of 0.33 (2019–2021) to 2.5 (2022–2023), a six-fold increase
- ▶ Achieved significant increase in EU funding, from a yearly average of €5.6 million (2019–2021) to €13.7 million (2022–2023), a two-fold increase



Interested in research management team support? [Find out more.](#)

Stronger together: connecting departments for effective research support

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Denmark

Location: [Copenhagen Business School](#)



Problem/context

Copenhagen Business School (CBS) faced challenges in optimising research support due to a dynamic environment with diverse stakeholders. The need to improve resource allocation, align research areas with institutional goals, and streamline pre-award grant management was critical.

Actions taken

CBS created a **collaborative model**, with funding coordinators in each of the 11 departments advising the Research Support Office on research strategies and funding opportunities. Research advisors, specialised in various funding sources, worked with the coordinators to ensure alignment of funding strategies and grant applications.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased grant success rates
- ▶ Matched researchers with relevant funding opportunities
- ▶ Streamlined pre-award processes, boosting funding activity



Need pre-award grant support? Explore your options with [Horizon Europe research funding!](#)

Grant masters: boosting success in MSCA proposals

Level: Groups of colleagues

Country: Portugal

Location: Groups of institutions



Problem/context

Securing Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) individual grants was a funding priority for the Instituto de Medicina Molecular (IMM) and Instituto Gulbenkian Ciência (IGC), as it helped to recruit top postdoctoral researchers and young group leaders.

Actions taken

IMM and IGC had similar grant offices focused on assisting MSCA applicants. Research managers from these offices conducted a study to assess whether their support increases grant approvals. The study examined 78 MSCA applications from both institutions submitted between 2008 and 2011. The support given was categorised into basic (administrative assistance), intermediate (application strategy advice), and advanced (also including editing, reviewing and/or writing non-scientific sections to ensure clarity, coherence, and alignment with funder expectations). Most of the 78 proposals received advanced support (52.6%), while 5.1% received basic and 42.3% intermediate.

Results and impact

- ▶ **Achieved** a 61% approval rate through research managers' advanced support, far exceeding intermediate (18.2%) and basic (25%) support
- ▶ **Demonstrated** strong correlation between support level and grant success through statistical analysis, highlighting the effectiveness of advanced support in securing funding
- ▶ **Strengthened** IMM and IGC's funding priorities with research managers' strategic advanced support, enhancing their capacity to attract top-tier researchers and advance scientific innovation



Discover how to manage your project with a grant agreement. Explore [MSCA actions](#) or [MSCA individual grants](#).

Feedback on MSCA-IF/-PF draft proposals by EU grant advisors results in higher evaluation scores and granted proposals

Level: RM small office (up to three persons)

Country: Andorra, Netherlands

Location: [Leiden University Medical Center](#)



Problem/context

At the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC), many junior researchers apply for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Individual Fellowship (IF) and Postdoctoral Fellowship (PF) grants but lack experience in grant writing. The application form includes non-scientific sections, such as career development and impact, where supervisors offer limited guidance. Dedicated feedback and advice are essential to improve their chances of success.

Actions taken


A review programme was set up for MSCA IF and PF applicants at LUMC, where research managers and EU grant advisors provided feedback on proposals. An annual info. session with past grantees was also organised. Analysis of applications from 2017–2023 showed that feedback boosted evaluation scores.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased success rate to 36%, above national and EU averages
- ▶ Secured 14 grants, with evaluation scores reaching up to 100%
- ▶ Helped researchers gain international experience and advance their careers



Explore [Postdoctoral Fellowships with Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#) and [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships!](#)



**TRANSLATION OF RESULTS:
UPTAKE AND UTILISATION**

Forging trust in public–private health research collaboration through solid management and governance structures



Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA

Location: [Teamit Research S.L., Spain](#)

Problem/context

A decade ago, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) was under-researched with no immunisation or effective therapies. Collaboration between academia and public health agencies monitoring RSV and its impact, and the pharmaceutical industry developing solutions, was minimal. To bridge this gap, the [Innovative Medicines Initiative](#) funded the [RESCEU](#) (2017) and [PROMISE](#) (2021) projects, forming public–private partnerships. However, these partnerships faced governance challenges due to differing priorities between public institutions and private industry, requiring robust research management to ensure alignment and efficiency.

Actions taken

Research managers at Teamit established structured governance models, ensuring balanced representation among academia, public health agencies and industry. They developed coordination processes, advanced General Assemblies, Steering Committees, and Scientific and Ethics Advisory Groups, and enforced a scientific publication and deliverables review process to maintain transparency. Risk management frameworks were also introduced, crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure project continuity, while streamlined communication and strategic collaboration, built trust among partners.

Results and impact

- ▶ Optimised governance structures, improving collaboration and decision-making
- ▶ Enhanced research management processes, ensuring regulatory compliance and operational efficiency
- ▶ Built a foundation of trust and transparency, fostering long-term public–private partnerships through agreed rules of collaboration

 Discover [how Teamit Research S.L. fosters impactful collaboration in public–private health research.](#)

From airport chat to innovation take-off: a research manager's unexpected journey



Level: Individual

Country: Italy

Location: [Università Politecnica delle Marche](#)

Problem/context


Navigating EU funding opportunities can be challenging, especially for first-time participants at brokerage events. One entrepreneur, attending the Digital Excellence Forum @ ICT Proposers' Day for the first time, found himself overwhelmed, lacking the experience in engaging potential partners and maximising networking opportunities.

Actions taken

What started as a casual airport chat turned into a transformative mentorship: a research manager guided the entrepreneur on meeting preparation, approaching collaborators, and staying focused during the event, offering informal mentoring throughout the journey to build confidence and facilitate meaningful connections. This story is not just about funding – it is about the power of guidance, the value of human connection, and the ripple effect of mentorship.

Results and impact

- ▶ Secured the company's first EU project funding through a successful Horizon 2020 application
- ▶ Expanded the company's collaboration network, leading to participation in eight EU funding applications
- ▶ Strengthened research–industry links, reinforcing cooperation between academia and business

 Looking to benefit from a research manager's expertise and guidance? [Discover more!](#)

Research managers bring researchers on the road to market

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Location: EU-LIFE Technology Transfer Working Group



Problem/context

EU-LIFE, an alliance of 17 European life sciences institutes, is committed to strengthening research and innovation. Translating new knowledge into commercial products is challenging and requires expertise in knowledge valorisation, which many researchers lack. Research organisations need professionals to guide scientists through this complex process.

Actions taken

In 2017, the EU-LIFE Technology Transfer Working Group launched a yearly pitch event for researchers to connect with investors. The event, virtual since 2021, helps researchers gain insights into venture creation and funding from venture capitalists.

Results and impact

- ▶ Bridged research and market by connecting researchers with investors
- ▶ Created three new companies through the last two events alone, with others currently in the due diligence stage
- ▶ Contributed to societal innovation with new solutions in various sectors



Find out more about EU-LIFE's work on [innovation!](#)

Bridging gaps: engineers and doctors unite

Level: Individual

Country: Italy

Location: Politecnico di Torino



Problem/context

There was a need to bridge the gap between engineers and medical professionals, ensuring that engineers working on medical technologies could better understand the needs of hospitals and healthcare departments.

Actions taken

A research manager at a technical university, in collaboration with a research manager from a prominent city hospital, organised a full-day workshop. The event featured presentations by engineers working on medical-related research and by hospital department heads, focusing on their technological needs.

Results and impact

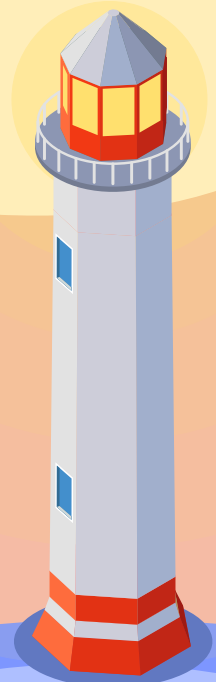
- ▶ Fostered collaborations between engineers and medical professionals
- ▶ Improved understanding of hospital needs for advanced technologies
- ▶ Strengthened ties between Politecnico di Torino and hospitals for future projects



Learn how you can benefit [from a collaboration with a research manager.](#)



PROJECT SUPPORT (POST-AWARD)



Clearing the air: Nordic Innovators' green mission

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

Location: Groups of institutions



Problem/context

The **Horizon 2020** Innovation Action united 16 European partners to tackle greenhouse gas emissions through sustainable aviation fuel and smart energy solutions. However, COVID-19 pandemic disruptions threw the project off course, delaying key milestones. A European Commission review flagged concerns over progress, requiring a revised management plan and progress report to secure interim funding.

Actions taken

Nordic Innovators stepped in, drawing on their Horizon 2020 expertise to steer the project back on track. Through the expertise of their research managers, they ran a project management workshop focusing on risk mitigation, cost reporting, and impact monitoring, refined technical and financial reports to meet the European Commission's expectations, and developed a revised management plan to ensure compliance with funding requirements.

Results and impact

- ▶ Approved revisions unlocked interim funding
- ▶ Regained momentum in the project, advancing smart energy solutions
- ▶ Improved collaboration and efficiency, setting a benchmark for EU-funded projects



Find out more about [Nordic Innovators](#) and their [EU project implementation services](#).

Strengthening success: the power of research management in MSCA

Level: RM association

Countries: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom

Location: RM association



Problem/context

Effective research management is key to sustainable R&I, yet many Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) research managers face high turnover, unclear job roles, and limited professional networks. In 2021, the launch of a Pan-European Network of MSCA project managers bridged this gap, evolving into the MCAA Research Management Working Group (RM-WG) in 2022.

Actions taken

The **MCAA Research Management Working Group**, was established to provide a forum for mentorship and best practices. It holds monthly online meetings, offers training from general project management concepts to specific topics such as financial management, AI, and communication, and engages in significant European research events. A **bimonthly newsletter** strengthens outreach and attracts new members.

Results and impact

- ▶ Established a network of over 250 members across 21 countries and 150 MSCA projects
- ▶ Enhanced project efficiency through knowledge sharing and training and increased visibility and influence in European research management



Learn more about the [Insights & Recommendations on the role of project managers in collaborative MSCA projects](#) and the [MCAA Research Management Working Group](#).

Powering the future: Nordic Innovators' battery solutions

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Countries: Germany, Italy, Spain

Location: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)



Problem/context

The ultimate goal of an airport, an energy company, and a research centre was to integrate second-life batteries into a shared power supply system. However, delays and project complexities put the launch and funding at risk. Without internal expertise in Innovation Fund project management, the consortium needed specialist consultancy to amend the project plan, align partners, and secure continued funding.

Actions taken

Following a competitive tender, Nordic Innovators stepped into streamlining project coordination, enhancing partner communication, and ensuring compliance with **CINEA's** requirements. They introduced tailored reporting tools, optimised risk tracking, and secured approval for amending the project plan, safeguarding funding and progress.

Results and impact

- ▶ Secured CINEA approval ensured project continuation, greater efficiency, and funding disbursement
- ▶ Enhanced collaboration and transparency through customised reporting tools and stronger project oversight



Learn more about [Nordic Innovators](#) and their consultancy services.

ESTEEM3: elevating research infrastructure management

Level: Several countries

Countries: France, multiple European countries

Location: RM medium to large office



Problem/context

Funded by **Horizon 2020** (2019–2023), the ESTEEM3 project expanded its access to Europe's top electron microscopes, driving innovation in materials science, ICT, energy, health, and transport. Fifteen leading research centres and five SMEs encountered the challenge of harmonising transnational access (TNA) procedures, coordinating partners, and ensuring effective project management and communication.

Actions taken

Euronovia's research managers successfully structured TNA procedures, streamlined partner coordination, and ensured compliance with financial and reporting requirements. It also led communication and dissemination efforts, delivering training, networking events, and outreach activities to maximise project impact.

Results and impact

- ▶ Provided 6,000+ access points to cutting-edge electron microscopy infrastructure, supporting 500+ projects
- ▶ Strengthened EU research collaboration, delivering 14 training workshops, 50 deliverables, and 500+ high-impact scientific publications



Learn more about [Euronovia](#) and its consultancy services.



Measuring impact: a game changer for geosciences

Level: Group of colleagues

Countries: 32 European countries

Location: Geological Survey of Slovenia



Problem/context

Focusing on promoting geosciences through transnational collaboration, the GeoERA programme (2017–2022) networked 47 national and regional geological institutes. However, the absence of an established model for monitoring and cross-sectional evaluating (MCSE) large-scale networked geological projects made impact assessment a key challenge. The Geological Survey of Slovenia (GeoZS) led efforts to design a robust framework, ensuring measurable project outcomes and long-term relevance.

Actions taken

Research managers (and evaluators) at GeoZS developed an innovative monitoring and evaluation system, integrating real-time tracking, thematic reviews, and cross-thematic impact assessments of networked projects. The innovative MCSE model drew from Horizon 2020, ERA-NET, and international best practices resulted in a framework measuring synergies, ensuring research continuity, and setting benchmarks for future geological programmes. The basis of the innovative MCSE model was developed by the Slovenian Evaluation Society and has already been applied by, among others, the Council of Europe, WHO-Europe, and the Slovenian Government in the evaluation of national, sectoral, and regional programmes.

Results and impact

- ▶ Invested €30.4 million, supporting 15 transnational projects, 495 deliverables, and over 4,259 outreach activities reaching 74,000+ people
- ▶ Established a replicable impact assessment model, enhancing cross-thematic evaluation methodologies for future European geological programmes – especially for networked projects



Learn more about [GeoERA's](#) innovative evaluation framework.

Fast-tracking innovation: tackling the semiconductor shortage

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Czechia, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom

Location: Groups of institutions



Problem/context

The world's first low-energy detection system for cryo-electron microscopy (CryoEM) was the ultimate drive of a **Fast Track to Innovation (FTI)** project. The disruption of access to essential components because of the global semiconductor shortage, while progress was ongoing, threatened the completion of the project. The consortium needed to modify the work plan, keep the project on track, secure an extension, and guarantee funding compliance with expert support.

Actions taken

Nordic Innovators, with the expertise of their research managers, managed project extensions and ensured regulatory compliance. They kept the project on track despite supply chain issues by improving partner coordination, providing regular updates, and engaging with the European Commission to address challenges and secure necessary approvals.

Results and impact

- ▶ Approved project amendments and reported costs, safeguarding funding and ensuring compliance
- ▶ Successful delivery of the first low-energy detection system for CryoEM, driving innovation in drug discovery, solar cell technology, and materials sciences



Learn more about [Nordic Innovators](#) and their consultancy services.

Freeing minds: pro project management for research

Level: Institution

Country: Finland

Location: [Tampere University](#)



Problem/context

Managing Horizon Europe research projects is very complex and time-consuming. Traditionally, researchers have carried out both research and project administration, which leads to compliance risks and takes time away from scientific work. To address this challenge, Tampere University took a strategic approach and established a dedicated research management team. This allows researchers to focus on research and innovation, while ensuring the efficiency and compliance of administrative work.

Actions taken

Over the past eight years, Tampere University has expanded its post-award team of 12 research managers to include seven permanent and full-time project managers. They support grant agreement preparation, recruitment, payments, meetings, reporting, and funding compliance. Furthermore, they act as a knowledge hub for Horizon Europe project management. Their role also includes training of financial staff at the faculties, peer-to-peer upskilling, and reducing the administrative load for researchers.

Results and impact

- ▶ Earned recognition from [EU DG RTD/REA](#) project officers
- ▶ Minimised compliance risks and audit errors
- ▶ Reclaimed researchers' time, encouraging more applications as coordinators for [Horizon Europe funding](#)



Learn more about [research excellence at Tampere University](#).

How to (not) lose funding in 10 days: the effectiveness of the project management team

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Netherlands, Philippines

Location: [University Medical Centre Utrecht](#)



Problem/context

During the Grant Agreement Preparation (**GAP**) phase, a recently funded European Commission project involving seven partner institutions encountered an unexpected crisis. The Filipino partners failed to meet the financial and legal requirements set by the European Commission, putting the entire project at risk of losing funding. Immediate action was needed to prevent termination with only two weeks left.

Actions taken

The project manager at University Medical Centre Utrecht (UMCU) collaborated closely with the Research Office to evaluate the risks and find a solution. Through the proactive problem-solving skills of the project management team at the Research Office, they negotiated an extension period with the European Commission and concluded that the only feasible way forward was to exclude the Filipino organisations from the consortium. All the necessary adjustments were made – after consulting with the project officer and consortium members. As a result, the project moved forward within the strict European Commission deadlines.

Results and impact

- ▶ Completed GAP on time, preventing the loss of project funding
- ▶ Secured compliance and strengthened communication with the European Commission



Learn more about [UMCU's Research Office and its project management expertise](#).

Research data management professionalised: Bay.FIS as a game changer

Level: Region

Country: Germany

Location: Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences



Problem/context


Many universities still use Microsoft Excel for decentralised research data management, making statistical analysis time-consuming, error-prone, and inefficient. Research data is often scattered across departments, causing delays in administrative processes and responses to external inquiries. Similarly, project contract amendments require multiple stakeholders – lawyers, finance teams, and researchers – to retrieve scattered documents from different locations. An efficient, centralised, and transparent system was needed to address these inefficiencies.

Actions taken

To overcome these challenges, Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences developed Bay.FIS. It is a web-based centralised research management system integrating digital workflows, project oversight, and strategic planning. Designed by research managers, Bay.FIS enhances administrative efficiency, ensures real-time data availability, and significantly reduces workload across departments. The system's flexible project-focused model unifies these, publications, and knowledge transfer events, with automated notifications keeping all stakeholders updated. Its scalability has led to its adoption by 11 other Bavarian universities and the Leibniz Supercomputing Centre, reinforcing its role as a leading research management tool.

Results and impact

- ▶ Streamlined research data management, reducing processing time and administrative burdens
- ▶ Provided instant access to statistical queries, allowing rapid responses to internal and external research inquiries
- ▶ Scalable implementation, benefiting multiple universities and research institutions

 Discover how Bay.FIS is transforming research management at Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University.

Horizon Europe: capitalising on the widening pillar

Level: Individual

Countries: Austria, Portugal, several countries

Location: University of Aveiro



Problem/context

At the University of Aveiro (UAveiro), research management support was limited to a single individual, making it challenging to fully capitalise on Horizon Europe's widening opportunities. There was a need for proactive engagement to secure funding and strengthen institutional participation in the European Commission research programmes.


Actions taken

By actively promoting Horizon Europe's widening opportunities, UAveiro successfully secured two twinning actions (HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03) and three Hop-On Mechanisms at the last cut-off (September 2023). Participation in the EPIBOOST project enabled a research manager to undertake a secondment at Ghent University and attend the latest EARMA conference, fostering knowledge exchange and professional growth.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened UAveiro's presence in Horizon Europe through five newly approved projects
- ▶ Facilitated best practice exchange with leading institutions, including Ghent University
- ▶ Expanded professional networks and enhanced expertise in research management
- ▶ Contributed to the professionalisation of research administration at UAveiro



 Explore widening participation and spreading excellence.

Winning strategies for R&D project management

Level: Group of institutions
Countries: Several countries
Location: [FI Group](#)



Problem/context

Effective R&D project management in EU-funded projects requires coordination across administrative, financial, and legal areas while ensuring compliance with complex regulations. Without specialised expertise, project coordinators risk inefficiencies and delays, particularly in inexperienced teams.

Actions taken

FI Group, a consultancy firm with experience in managing EU-funded R&D projects, supported coordinators and research managers in consortium management, compliance, and financial tasks. They streamlined amendment requests and improved cost claiming and audit preparation.

Results and impact

- ▶ Enabled beneficiaries to focus on technical aspects of their projects by handling administrative and compliance tasks
- ▶ Reduced errors in cost claims, boosting the efficiency of financial reporting and audits
- ▶ Streamlined the amendment request process, saving time and resources for the consortium and European Commission staff
- ▶ Contributed to the successful execution of 400+ Horizon Europe projects (2021–2023), enhancing project performance and outcomes



Streamline your next R&D project with [FI Group](#).

Trekking to grant holder success with Chiara Toldo

Level: Individual
Country: Italy
Location: [University of Trento](#)



Problem/context

In 2018, Chiara Toldo, Research Manager Administrator at the University of Trento, took on the role of Grant Holder Manager (GHM) for the **COST Action 'EUTOPIA'**. Though experienced in research administration, she faced the challenge of reconciling COST's rules with Italian regulations while ensuring timely reimbursements amid bureaucratic hurdles.

Actions taken

The Research Manager Administrator participated in COST training in Brussels and received ongoing support from the Administrative Officer. She learned the financial and administrative processes needed to manage the project and navigated Italian laws to align them with COST rules. Collaborating closely with the Action Chair and Management Committee, she ensured smooth financial operations and contributed to the overall success of the Action.

Results and impact

- ▶ Streamlined the financial processes, overcoming bureaucratic challenges for prompt reimbursements
- ▶ Gained extensive experience in managing international research actions
- ▶ Developed a deep sense of fulfilment and personal growth, contributing meaningfully to the research community
- ▶ Built strong professional relationships and collaboration within the European research ecosystem
- ▶ Became a trusted member of the GHM community, offering valuable support to future grant holders



Take a look at the [COST funding organisation](#).

Managing innovation: the backbone of EU research

Level: RM association

Countries: Spain, multiple European countries

Location: RM association



Problem/context

Collaborative project management has evolved into a professionalised field, both internally – through the establishment of dedicated EU project support teams – and externally, with the involvement of professional R&I consultants. As a result, ensuring effective management of Horizon Europe-funded projects requires specialised expertise.

Actions taken

artica+i is a member of the European Association of Innovation Consultants (EAIC), supporting EU-funded research and innovation projects. Between 2021 and 2023, EAIC members contributed to over 400 Horizon Europe-funded projects across various countries, organisations, and disciplines, enhancing research management.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened the role of professional project management in Horizon Europe-funded projects
- ▶ Enabled more efficient project execution through specialised expertise
- ▶ Provided direct insights into the Horizon Europe funding programme's features and requirements
- ▶ Demonstrated the decisive impact of professional project management on project performance and results



Learn more about [artica+i](#) and its services.

Surprising success: a small university's research triumph

Level: RM small office (up to three persons)

Country: Germany

Location: [FH Südwestfalen](#)



Problem/context

When a research organisation from France approached a senior researcher at FH Südwestfalen, a small university of applied sciences for a Horizon 2020 proposal, concerns arose about the feasibility of managing such a complex application. While a young researcher successfully developed the proposal, the real challenge arose: who would handle the overwhelming administrative tasks and find the necessary resources for implementation?

Actions taken

The Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia launched a support initiative to strengthen smaller universities in their European research efforts. By engaging in this initiative, FH Südwestfalen secured support to assess and improve its research infrastructure and manage the newly awarded Horizon 2020 grant. This hands-on experience enabled the streamlining of research management and administration.

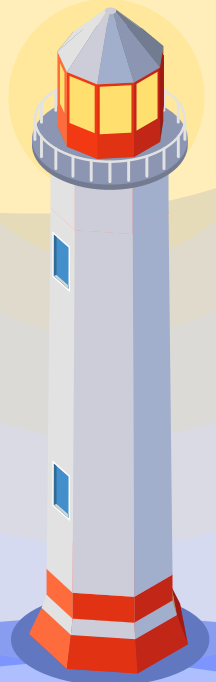
Results and impact

- ▶ Successfully managed six Horizon 2020 projects under the 8th and 9th EU Framework Programmes, three Horizon Europe projects currently running, and two additional projects in the initial phases
- ▶ Strengthened both research and administrative capabilities
- ▶ Increased awareness and satisfaction with Horizon 2020 funding, fostering European collaboration and research growth



Interested in EU research funding? Explore opportunities in [Horizon Europe](#) and the [Horizon 2020 Programme](#)

**RESEARCH STRATEGY
AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**



Strategy to unlock success in research institutes

Level: Institution
Country: Spain
Location: [IDIBAPS](#)



Problem/context

Research institutes serve as a cornerstone in bridging the gap between laboratory discoveries and real-world applications. However, achieving excellence in translational research requires a structured strategic approach. The August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute ([IDIBAPS](#)), founded in 1996, was established to enhance and professionalise research at the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona. IDIBAPS established a strategy area to drive long-term institutional growth by introducing a **director of strategy** role to integrate research, administration, policy and industry partnerships for sustained excellence.

Actions taken

IDIBAPS strengthened its strategic approach by establishing a dedicated strategy area to oversee research coordination, communication, technology transfer and institutional development. A key milestone was introducing career policies for clinician-scientists, supported by specialised training programmes like [BITRECS](#) and the [50/50 Programme](#). Parallel to developing core facilities, these initiatives have enhanced collaboration, propelled innovation and guaranteed long-term research excellence.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened internal collaboration between fundamental and clinical researchers
- ▶ Enhanced innovation through spin-off creation and technology transfer initiatives
- ▶ Improved career development with well-defined policies and targeted training initiatives
- ▶ Expanded research infrastructure, ensuring access to state-of-the-art facilities



Learn more about the IDIBAPS research strategy at the [IDIBAPS website](#).

Postdoc to PI: charting the Sorbonne University pathway

Level: Institution
Country: France
Location: [Sorbonne University](#)



Problem/context

Sorbonne University aimed to strengthen its international attractiveness by offering promising postdoctoral researchers a clear path to independence. Despite good results in securing Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships (PFs), a benchmarking analysis revealed untapped potential, with several high-calibre projects annually receiving the Seal of Excellence but lacking dedicated funding. This uncertainty limited the university's ability to attract and retain top talent, highlighting the need for a structured support approach to maintain research excellence and international reputation.

Actions taken

The research managers prepared a comprehensive MSCA strategy, integrating scouting, recruitment, funding, and professional development. Since 2022, they issue an annual Expression of Interest, matching fellows with supervisors, publishing opportunities internationally, and hosting a June master class. The Research Support Office launched the Seal of Excellence at Sorbonne University, ensuring that highly rated but unfunded MSCA PF candidates still receive funding on par with MSCA PFs. A three-year ministerial grant (2023–2025) sustains this initiative, boosting Sorbonne's research capacity and positioning it as a leader in postdoctoral career development – a clear example of how research management strengthens Europe's public research organisations.

Results and impact

- ▶ Designed a global MSCA strategy at the university
- ▶ Increased the number of high-potential postdocs joining Sorbonne University
- ▶ Created a dedicated institutional Seal of Excellence to fund top-ranked MSCA PF candidates securing €850,000 per year for postdoctoral funding
- ▶ Enhanced institutional performance in European Research Council grant applications



Elevate your research career – explore Sorbonne University's [Seal of Excellence](#) initiative for tomorrow's scientific leaders.

Highways and byways of Europe: strengthening research manager careers through CARDEA



Level: Group of colleagues

Countries: Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain

Location: University College Cork (UCC), Ireland and multiple institutions across Europe

Problem/context

A group of committed HR professionals, heavily engaged in HR Excellence in Research and EURAXESS, identified a significant and growing challenge: research managers (RMs) lacked a structured career pathway within the European Research Area (ERA). With researchers often transitioning into RM roles due to the precarious nature of academic careers, no formal framework existed to support RM career development. While discussions took place over the years, a concrete initiative had yet to materialise.

Actions taken

When the HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-20 was launched, the group seized the opportunity to address the invisible profile of RMs. They developed the CARDEA proposal, which secured EU funding. The project set out to establish a competency framework (RM COMP), a progression model (RM1–RM4), and free training opportunities for RMs across the ERA.

Results and impact

- ▶ Developed RM Comp, the European Competency Framework for RM's
- ▶ Introduced a progression model (RM1–RM4) to support RMs' career progression
- ▶ Launched free micro-credential training, accessible to RMs across the ERA until 2026



Discover [CARDEA's resources](#) and training for research managers.

From local needs to national impact – research administrators setting the agenda



Level: Group of colleagues

Countries: Norway, United Kingdom

Location: Multiple institutions

Problem/context

At a young university with limited research traditions, research support staff struggled to foster a robust research culture. In 2023, a workshop via the Erasmus+ Utrecht Network for Research Managers offered insights from UK institutions on policy development. Inspired, they aimed to spotlight research culture in Norway, where it was largely absent from governmental and institutional policies.

Actions taken

Seeking to initiate change, research managers hosted a dedicated research culture session at the annual **NARMA conference**, inviting UK experts to share best practices with Norwegian support staff. Norwegian institutions also showcased domestic efforts. These discussions gained traction, prompting the Research Council of Norway to launch a national initiative integrating research culture into its strategic papers. Momentum continued when the concept was included in consultations for the upcoming White Paper on the research system, raising it to the Ministry of Education's agenda

Results and impact

- ▶ Established research culture as a strategic priority within The Research Council of Norway, creating a national working group to integrate it into funding policies
- ▶ Influenced governmental discussions, securing its place in the White Paper consultation
- ▶ Strengthened international collaboration through knowledge exchange between Norwegian and UK institutions
- ▶ Enhanced the role of research administrators in shaping national policy



Transforming research culture: explore changes at [NARMA | Partners for research](#), [The Research Council of Norway](#), and [Utrecht University](#).

Recognition of research managers in Antwerp University's career structure

Level: Institution

Country: Belgium

Location: [Antwerp University](#)



Problem/context

Antwerp University faced challenges in managing its growing and diverse research staff. The increasing number of researchers BAF (staff category) required a more specific career structure to address expectations, responsibilities, and career sustainability. The reform aimed to enhance transparency, ensure better employability, and balance flexibility and institutional needs. Recognising research management as a critical function within this category was central to the reform.

Actions taken

A matrix model restructures roles across three levels, aligning with R1-R4 classifications. New job profiles capture the diversity of research roles, incorporating management, coordination, and support functions while allowing flexibility in goal setting. The reform establishes clear career pathways, distinguishing between project-based and sustainable positions. Antwerp University's Talent Centre provides tailored training and career development, now also equipping research managers for evolving responsibilities.

Results and impact

- ▶ Defined structured career pathways with transparent job roles
- ▶ Standardised research management is a recognised profession within the university
- ▶ Established HR tools to facilitate leadership and career development discussions
- ▶ Enhanced employability support through specialised training and counselling
- ▶ Approved new regulations by the University Board in November 2023 after extensive consultation



Strengthening research careers: see how [Antwerp University is shaping the future of research management](#).

A new oncology-driven nanomedicine research laboratory on the ERA map

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Romania

Location: [Regional Institute of Oncology Iasi](#)



Problem/context

The Regional Institute of Oncology Iasi, established in 2012, serves the historical region of Moldavia, Romania. To integrate cutting-edge research into clinical practice, the TRANSCEND Research Centre was launched in 2016, aiming to develop an interdisciplinary platform for translational research. However, a critical gap in research management, policy, and long-term strategy threatened the centre's sustainability and growth. Without structured leadership, the potential of TRANSCEND risked stagnation.

Actions taken

In 2019, the institute secured €2.5 million through the Horizon 2020 WIDESPREAD-06-2020-ERA Chairs programme for the ESEI-BioMed project (2021–2026). Research managers were instrumental in structuring the project and appointing an ERA Chair holder for strategic advancements. The project prioritised research management, human resources, dissemination, and strategic policies over direct research funding. Leveraging the ERA Chair programme, the team established the NanoTechnology Lab within TRANSCEND, attracting complementary funding for equipment essential to cancer-targeted nanocarrier development. Research managers also secured additional grants, including Romania's first postdoctoral project in nanomedicine.

Results and impact

- ▶ Established the first oncology-focused nanotechnology laboratory in Romania
- ▶ Recruited a multidisciplinary, international ERA Chair research team
- ▶ Secured multiple grants, resulting in Romania's first postdoctoral research project in nanomedicine
- ▶ Expanded institutional collaborations through co-supervised theses, joint publications, and research initiatives
- ▶ Increased the centre's visibility through media engagement, public outreach, and policy advocacy



Explore [TRANSCEND's NanoTechnology Lab](#) and the [ESEI-BioMed initiative](#).

Systemic professionalisation of research management in the Catalonia region

Level: Region

Country: Spain

Location: Agency for Management of University Research Grants (AGAUR), Catalonia



Problem/context

A significant attribute crowns Catalonia emerging as a leading European research hub, securing an increasing share of EU funding. However, the region faced challenges in addressing the growing complexity of funding applications and ensuring sustainable research support structures. Important factors like insufficient professionalised staff in public organisations, and the evolution of research landscape required a more structured and strategic approach to research management.

Actions taken

The research managers spearheaded initiatives at AGAUR to enhance institutional research management capacity, launching dedicated grants to strengthen university and research centres support offices. A professional research management network was established to promote collaboration, share best practices, and provide targeted training. Data-driven insights from The International Research Manager in Catalonia 2020 report informed policies on professional development and institutional recognition, reinforcing the region's leadership in securing competitive research funding.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased research funding success, with Catalonia securing 3.3% of Horizon Europe's budget, up from 2.5% in Horizon 2020
- ▶ Strengthened research management network with 1000+ members, enabling sustained support and enhancing their capacities
- ▶ Advanced professionalisation of the research management workforce, with expanding roles and enhanced institutional recognition

 Learn more about AGAUR's initiatives in strengthening research management in Catalonia.

EU-LIFE: a decade of uniting Europe's life sciences for global excellence

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Location: EU-LIFE



Problem/context

Even though independent research institutes are key players in Europe's R&D ecosystem, they lack a collective voice in science policy. By identifying this gap, leading life sciences institutes joined forces to form EU-LIFE in 2013, fostering collaboration, influencing European policy, and strengthening research management across borders.

Actions taken

EU-LIFE research managers set out to raise research quality, endorse science-friendly policies, promote positive research culture, and enhance career development. The alliance established eight active working groups and five task forces, focusing on funding strategies, gender equality, open science, technology transfer, and research infrastructure. Eventually, through regular collaboration, they designed joint training initiatives and advanced innovation projects, succeeding in influencing European research policies.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened research networks across 17 institutes, boosting collaboration and shared expertise
- ▶ Secured better research strategy and funding through policy influence
- ▶ Enhanced research management, with 140+ research managers shaping policies and best practices on a regular basis
- ▶ Sustained growth, marking a decade of achievements and future ambitions for a vital European research landscape

 Discover more about EU-LIFE. Explore their latest publications for insights into their research and advocacy efforts.

Transforming a decentralised organisation into an effective research hub

Level: Institution

Country: Germany

Location: IU International University of Applied Sciences



Problem/context

In 2017, IU International University of Applied Sciences struggled with research management due to its decentralised structure. With fewer than 100 professors and almost no external funding, collaboration was challenging. As a private university, IU was ineligible for many national grants, limiting growth. A strategic overhaul was essential to build research capacity, foster collaboration, and secure funding.

Actions taken

University management launched a research support strategy, engaging faculty through workshops and defining a funding framework. By 2019, this led to first external funding successes. In 2021, IU appointed a Prorektor for Research & Transfer and three full-time research officers. The team introduced a programmatic approach to increase research output, including an internal seed funding model, supporting 10–15 projects annually. Dedicated EU research, project administration, and communications are a few of the additional roles established.

Results and impact

- ▶ Scaled and strengthened research capacity to match tripling of faculty numbers
- ▶ Secured €7.3 million in external funding, expanding national and European grants
- ▶ Developed 18 research services and over 20 projects, including European collaborations
- ▶ Increased research output through sustained publication growth
- ▶ Enhanced virtual collaboration, enabling effective teamwork across locations
- ▶ Expert centre for AI in education



Driving research excellence: see how IU is evolving into a [collaborative research hub](#). Follow their journey on [LinkedIn](#) and watch inspiring stories on [YouTube](#).

Systemic change takes time: the power of patience in research reform

Level: Individual

Country: Czechia

Location: [CEITEC Masaryk University](#)



Problem/context

Martina Pokorná's transition from scientist to research administrator at CEITEC highlighted a fundamental challenge: integrating scientific expertise with effective management. Despite her academic success in biomolecular chemistry, the uncertainty of research funding and family commitments led her to reconsider her career path. Thus, she embraced a leadership role, determined to bridge the gap between researchers and management, realising the need for more robust administrative structures to support scientific excellence.

Actions taken

Pokorná became Deputy Director for Administration in 2012, spearheading reforms to align administrative processes with research priorities. She streamlined funding mechanisms, introduced family-friendly policies, and fostered collaboration between scientists and administrative staff. Her leadership promoted an environment where research and management function cohesively, enabling scientists to focus on innovation while ensuring efficient institutional operations.

Results and impact

- ▶ Enhanced operational efficiency, reducing administrative burdens on researchers
- ▶ Improved funding processes, ensuring smoother grant applications and resource allocation
- ▶ Introduced family-friendly policies, making scientific careers more accessible to parents
- ▶ Increased staff satisfaction and retention, fostering a more inclusive work culture
- ▶ Strengthened CEITEC's reputation, attracting top-tier talent and reinforcing its global rank



Explore CEITEC's cutting-edge [science research groups](#) and discover how they are advancing scientific excellence.

MSCA-PF Seal of Excellence: attracting research talents with an institutional incentive programme



Level: Institution

Country: Netherlands

Location: Leiden University Medical Center

Problem/context

The absence of a national Seal of Excellence (SoE) scheme in the Netherlands left highly rated but unfunded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Individual Fellowship (IF) and Postdoctoral Fellowship (PF) applicants without support. Recognising this gap, the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC) developed an institutional incentive scheme to attract top postdoctoral talent. The initiative sought to strengthen LUMC's research capacity by integrating international researchers and capitalising on their European Commission-evaluated projects to enhance institutional strategy and foster global partnerships.

Actions taken

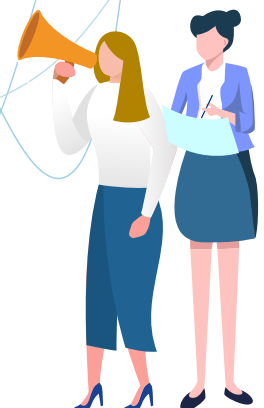
LUMC launched its SoE incentive scheme, co-funding 50% of the MSCA grant budget for the second year of selected projects, while host departments covered the first year. The programme evolved with prioritisation rules to optimise funding allocation following a successful pilot in 2019. Despite a temporary suspension in 2021 and 2022 due to budget constraints, the initiative resumed in 2023. The scheme ensured alignment with institutional strategy, funding sustainability, and researcher career development, managed by LUMC's EU Grant Advisor.

Results and impact

- ▶ Recruited seven top-tier postdoctoral researchers through the SoE scheme
- ▶ Supported high-impact research, yielding peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations
- ▶ Retained three fellows as senior researchers or junior group leaders at LUMC
- ▶ Advanced researchers' careers, with grantees securing prestigious grants (e.g. NWO-VENI)
- ▶ Expanded international collaboration, with fellows securing roles in academia and industry across Europe

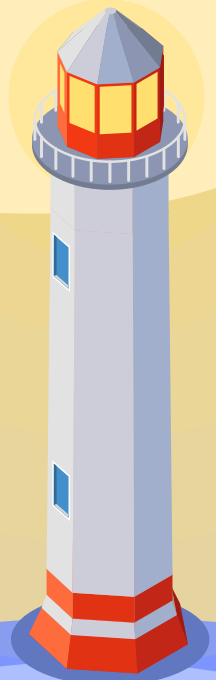


Strengthening research careers: discover how LUMC's SoE programme fosters international research excellence.





RESEARCH SUPPORT DELIVERY



When strategy meets funding: collaborative success for scientific excellence and impact

Level: Institution

Country: Spain

Location: [Centre for Genomic Regulation](#)



Problem/context


Founded in 2002, the Centre for Genomic Regulation (CRG) aimed to become a leading independent European life sciences institute. Supporting this vision, CRG recognised the potential of specialised research managers – scientists with project management skills – to bridge science and administration, strengthening its research strategy and funding capacity. This centralised team coordinates transversal initiatives in open science, gender equality, and responsible research practices.

Actions taken

In 2010, the CRG launched the International and Scientific Affairs (ISA) office, formed as an independent unit. The team played a pivotal role in major European projects such as **ORION** (open and citizen science) and **LIBRA** (gender equality), shaping policies and best practices across Europe. ISA also influenced science policy through alliances such as EU-LIFE and SOMMa, reinforcing collaboration and research policies at national and European levels. In recent years, ISA became the Strategy and Funding (SaF) department, centralising funding efforts and expanding expertise across four main areas: institutional scientific and collaborative strategy, strategic projects, research quality, and pre-award activities.

Results and impact

- ▶ Coordinated 27 international projects (2010–2024), securing nearly €44 million in 2024, and advanced open, citizen science with ORION – training 7,000+ researchers, engaging 39,000+ citizens, and reaching 88% open-access publications
- ▶ Implemented LIBRA initiatives to advance European gender equality – action plans, bias training, recruitment guidelines – raising women's leadership near 50% at CRG in 2024, while strengthening its European presence through EU-LIFE and SOMMa

 Explore how SaF nurtures scientific excellence through specialised research management.

Research development in a cross-institutional research centre: a model for success

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Ireland

Location: [ADAPT Centre, Dublin City University](#)



Problem/context

The ADAPT Centre, a world-leading AI-driven digital content technology research hub, spans eight Irish universities with over 80 academics and 300 researchers. Coordinating research activities across multiple institutions with distinct policies and support frameworks brought considerable challenges. The Research Development Team was established as an integrated, cross-institutional support system, streamlining processes from proposal development to project execution, boosting funding success and research efficiency.

Actions taken

Initially, two funding managers focused solely on pre-award support. Recognising the need for a comprehensive model, the team expanded to 12 research managers, evolving into a full-service unit covering pre- and post-award activities. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst, leading to the creation of an integrated, cross-functional model that eliminated silos. The team refined its approach with design thinking, aligning resources, templates, and knowledge sharing across projects, ensuring efficient collaboration across partner universities.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased funding by 25%, securing €27 million across 55 projects (2020–2024)
- ▶ Diversified sources, excelling in Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, ERC, and MSCA
- ▶ Enhanced project execution via seamless pre- to post-award knowledge transfer
- ▶ Improved strategic planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder collaboration
- ▶ Strengthened team cohesion, fostering innovation and high performance

 Explore how ADAPT's integrated model is driving success and discover more in the [ADAPT IMPACT REPORT](#).

Going digital: research services transformation

Level: Institution

Country: Finland

Location: [Tampere University](#)



Problem/context


For researchers, applying for research and innovation grants, scalability and 24/7 accessibility of research services are essential. The COVID-19 lockdown accelerated the shift to digital solutions at Tampere University, highlighting the need for remote-friendly, on-demand research support. To enhance efficiency, the university's centralised Research Services sought to streamline processes through digitalisation, ensuring structured, scalable, and widely accessible services.

Actions taken

A digital service request management/ticketing system was implemented through a dedicated platform, replacing group email accounts. This provided research managers with real-time visibility into the status of requests, ensuring efficient tracking and resolution. The Pre-Award team also digitalised structured processes using Teams and SharePoint, offering researchers real-time updates, interactive Q&A chats, live and recorded training, and funding documentation. This transformation enabled seamless access to research support while optimising internal workflows.

Results and impact

- ▶ Enhanced service accessibility, allowing researchers to request support at any time
- ▶ Improved the response efficiency by increasing workflow transparency
- ▶ Optimised the internal processes, enabling research managers to focus on high-value activities like impact coaching and grant writing
- ▶ Increased engagement through digital training, live updates, and interactive Q&A forums
- ▶ Scaled research services effectively, ensuring broader institutional reach

 Follow the research path at [Tampere University](#), where technology, health and society converge.

Research managers as agents of researchers' career development at institutional level

Level: Institution

Country: Italy

Location: [Ca' Foscari University of Venice](#)



Problem/context

In a competitive global academic landscape, Ca' Foscari University of Venice aimed to boost its research capacity, attract top talent, and increase funding to become one of Italy's and Europe's leading institutions. In 2013, the International Research Office identified three key priorities: talent attraction, researcher support, and increased access to competitive funding. Initiatives such as the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), Brain Gain, and Careers Plus were launched to foster a supportive research environment and enhance the university's international profile.

Actions taken

The International Research Office implemented three strategic programmes. HRS4R enhanced working conditions, career development, pathways, and transparent recruitment, securing/earning the **HR Excellence in Research Award in 2017**. The **Brain Gain program** attracted top international researchers by promoting ERC grants and MSCA Fellowships. The Careers Plus Initiative provided tailored mentoring, training and proposal writing support. **Research managers** also improved governance and optimised grant procedures, leading to a strong increase in EU-funded projects and visibility.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased the number of ERC grantees from 1 (2013) to 30 (2024), and MSCA Fellows from 2 to 202 – placing Ca' Foscari among Italy's top universities and making it a European top 10 recipient
- ▶ Improved research conditions and institutional capacity through HRS4R action plans and continued Horizon Europe, ERC, and MSCA success
- ▶ Enhanced Ca' Foscari's international reputation, attracting top researchers and driving research-led societal impact

 Explore [Ca' Foscari's talent attraction and career development strategies](#), shaping future research excellence.

Impact helper: building the impact capacities of research managers and researchers



Level: Institution

Country: Finland

Location: [University of Oulu, Finland](#)

Problem/context

Research managers and administrators (RMAs) support researchers in developing competitive funding proposals. In the last 10 years, societal impact has become an integral part of many funding proposals and has caused confusion among researchers. In 2018, University of Oulu RMAs developed Impact Helper, a tool to help researchers and RMAs identify, plan, and measure research impact. The openly accessible Impact Helper online guide and planner were launched in 2020.

Actions taken

Impact Helper became one of the first openly available impact guide tools in Europe. The tool has been developed based on feedback and changes in the funders' requirements. Over 50 impact workshops have been conducted at national and European levels. University of Oulu's RMAs actively contributed to establish the EARMA Impact Group. Impact Helper and Planner were integrated in researcher training.

Results and impact

- ▶ Established Impact Helper as a widely used, openly accessible research impact tool
- ▶ Conducted over 50 impact workshops
- ▶ Strengthened proposal success in Horizon Europe, surpassing Horizon 2020 performance and led Finland's HEIs in Horizon Europe Pillar II funding in 2023 and 2024
- ▶ Integrated impact training into researcher career training
- ▶ Recognised in Finland's 2023 HEI audit as 'an excellent initiative' and engaged 1,000+ global users annually



Discover [University of Oulu's Impact Helper](#)

The 1, 2, 3 qualities of research success

Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Germany

Location: [Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt](#)



Problem/context

Over 80 project administrators supporting EU-funded projects across multiple sites struggled to keep up with evolving Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe regulations. As funding regulations grew more complex, traditional training formats – such as newsletters, presentations, and courses – became insufficient, leading to information overload and, potentially, reduced engagement. This situation risked lowering the quality of administrative management support provided to researchers.

Actions taken

The Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt's team in charge of support to administrators of EU grants – inspired by the FUNDED board game, and the '1, 2, or 3' quiz format for children – made the administrators move as players in a competitive knowledge-based challenge on EU grant regulations. The game was carefully designed with tailor-made questions, three-answer choices, and a clearly marked playing field. Three game sessions were held in November 2023, incorporating music, prizes and certificates to further boost engagement. Consequently, the project administrators' expertise in EU grant administration was strengthened, enabling them to provide more efficient and informed support to researchers.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased staff engagement and knowledge retention through an innovative, gamified training approach
- ▶ Enhanced research management support, as project administrators demonstrated greater confidence in EU grant regulations
- ▶ Improved researcher assistance, ensuring compliance and efficiency in EU project management



Learn more about DLR's research management support for EU projects: [Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt](#)

Overcoming fragmentation: the research management community at Ca' Foscari University of Venice



Level: Institution

Country: Italy

Location: [Ca' Foscari University of Venice](#)

Problem/context

The Ca' Foscari University of Venice achieved a rapid boost in research funding and staffing over the past decade. With research funding increasing from €2.2 million to over €14 million annually and additional resources secured through national and EU initiatives, managing these assets became paramount. However, fragmentation emerged due to high staff turnover, remote work, and scattered operations, making knowledge sharing and interdepartmental collaboration hard. Research managers faced challenges in ensuring consistency in research administration while balancing the decentralised structure of the university.

Actions taken

To address these challenges, Ca' Foscari launched the Research Management Community (RMC) in 2022 – a permanent, cross-functional group comprising 20 research managers from central administration and departmental research units. This initiative fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and best practice sharing, ensuring a coherent approach to research management. The RMC operates without hierarchy, functioning as a peer-driven network where research managers engage in regular meetings, collaborative document drafting, and problem-solving. It actively integrates expertise from IT, legal, and human resources, ensuring research support remains responsive to institutional needs.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened research management, enhancing coordination between central and departmental research units
- ▶ Improved efficiency and response times, reducing delays in research support services
- ▶ Established a replicable model, demonstrating the potential for structured research management communities in universities and complex organisations



Explore [Ca' Foscari's Research Knowledge Community](#) and discover how the RMC fosters collaboration and enhances research management.

Investing in support for EU-funded projects pays off for Uppsala University



Level: Institution

Country: Sweden

Location: [Uppsala University](#)

Problem/context

In the early 2000s, Uppsala University was underperforming in securing EU research funding compared to its national peers. Apart from excelling in other research parameters, compared to similar institutions like [Lund University](#), the funding from the EU was significantly lower. A lack of structured support for EU applications hindered researchers from navigating complex funding programmes effectively. Recognising this gap, research managers proposed a dedicated EU investment plan to enhance participation in competitive financial initiatives.

Actions taken

In 2003, Uppsala University established an EU project coordination unit staffed by research managers specialising in EU funding. This initiative involved hiring dedicated EU project coordinators to assist researchers in grant applications, compliance, and project execution. The coordinators provided targeted training, strategic workshops, and hands-on proposal support, simplifying administrative and financial processes. Over time, this approach built a structured research support framework, integrating best practices and fostering a culture of strategic EU engagement.

Results and impact

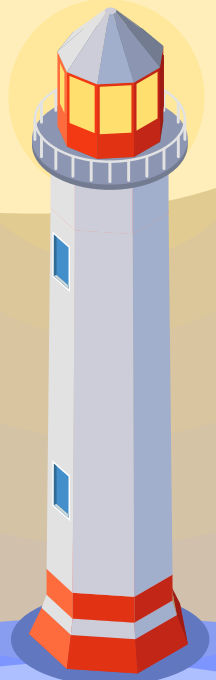
- ▶ Increased EU funding substantially, aligning Uppsala University's success rates with national and European benchmarks
- ▶ Strengthened research management capacity, enabling better compliance and proposal success
- ▶ Sustained long-term impact, with EU project coordinators still operational in 2024 while funding to drive institutional growth



Discover how [Uppsala University enhances EU research success](#).



**TRANSLATION OF RESULTS:
SCIENCE COMMUNICATION**



#DiscussAI: facilitating a national conversation on artificial intelligence

Level: Country

Country: Ireland

Location: [ADAPT/Dublin City University](#)



Problem/context

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a transformative advancement, yet ethical concerns persist regarding its impact on our lives. Ireland's AI strategy, AI – Here for Good, for example, notes that people are often excluded from decisions on AI's use and effects. Integrating citizens' voices into AI research, development and policy is therefore crucial.

Actions taken

In 2021, ADAPT's Education & Public Engagement team launched #DiscussAI, engaging more than 80,000 people in communities across Ireland in learning and dialogue about AI and its role in our lives. The campaign secured €250,000 in funding and involved 150+ researchers across eight universities, with research management key to its success. In August 2023, the implementation report of AI – Here for Good cited #DiscussAI as contributing to the strategy's AI and society goals. ADAPT has shared campaign insights at international research management and science communication conferences.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased public understanding of AI and its societal implications
- ▶ Raised public awareness and participation in AI debates
- ▶ Informed the work of 150+ researchers and influenced AI policy
- ▶ Contributed to international best practice on STEM public engagement



Read more about [#DiscussAI](#) and explore how AI shapes our future today!

Body bits – AI protein educational tool for ages 5–99

Level: Institution

Country: Netherlands

Location: [Utrecht University](#)



Problem/context

Teaching complex concepts such as proteins to a wide age range can be challenging. The BodyBits project aimed to simplify this through an interactive, fun tool that explains protein structures and their role in the human body.

Actions taken

In 2022, BodyBits developed an augmented reality app to teach primary school students about proteins through mini games. Research managers guided development and testing, leading to its expansion in schools.

Results and impact

- ▶ Adopted in Dutch primary schools
- ▶ Raised engagement and understanding of proteins in young learners
- ▶ Attracted educators' interest, enabling student career development and a PhD opportunity



Discover how the [European Proteomics Initiative Consortium](#) made this possible.



Into the microverse: journey through the amazing world of microbes

Level: Groups of institutions

Country: Germany

Location: [Friedrich Schiller University Jena](#)



Problem/context

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Friedrich Schiller University Jena's public engagement paused, leaving outreach budgets unspent. In collaboration with a local planetarium, they created a 360-degree fulldome film to showcase microbes' essential role in sustaining life, rather than focusing on disease.

Actions taken

The manager of the interdisciplinary graduate school secured funding from university partners and external institutions. Scientists contributed storylines, which were developed into a script following two AI drones on a mission to explore how microbes support ecosystems, clean water, and oxygen production. A specialised fulldome production company was selected to bring the project to life.

Results and impact

- ▶ Premiered in 2023 and made available to planetariums worldwide for free
- ▶ Selected for multiple fulldome festivals, with potential award nominations
- ▶ Planned a major screening for April 2025 at an international microscopy event



Dive into the [full success story!](#)

Shaping policy over breakfast: evidence-based CDR

Level: Country

Country: Germany

Location: [Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres](#)



Problem/context

Germany's goal of climate neutrality by 2045 requires not only reducing CO2 emissions but also implementing carbon dioxide removal (CDR) technologies like DACCS and BECCS. Integrating these technologies into policy and infrastructure remains a significant challenge.

Actions taken

A Parliamentary Breakfast was hosted to bring together Members of Parliament and experts to discuss the role of CDR technologies in achieving climate neutrality. The event focused on the application and research needs of BECCS, DACCS, CO2 storage, and necessary infrastructure.

Results and impact

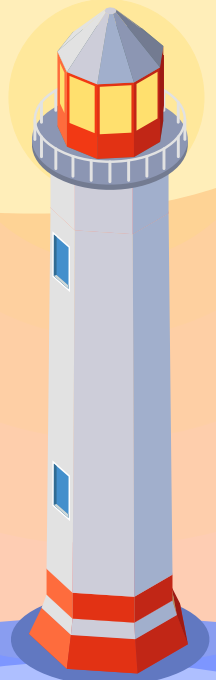
- ▶ Enhanced understanding of negative emissions and CDR technologies
- ▶ Raised awareness of BECCS and DACCS potential and research needs
- ▶ Highlighted the importance of CO2 storage under the seabed



Discover more about innovative [carbon dioxide removal projects.](#)



RESEARCH DATA INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



Leaping into a new era of scientific management: a next-gen administration app for research institutes



Level: RM medium to large office (more than three persons)

Country: Germany

Location: [Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH \(IMB\)](#)

Problem/context

The scientific management team at the Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH (IMB) in Germany needed a centralised solution capable of handling both administrative and scientific tasks, which included management of fundraising, grants, events, student recruitment, training and career development, and publications. Specifically, they needed a solution to address challenges like duplicate data, outdated information, and lack of integration.

Actions taken

A research manager at IMB identified the need for a custom app and collaborated with the team and a software development partner over 24 months to create an innovative IT solution. The app integrates finances, personnel, events, and publications, enabling real-time analyses and automatic report generation.

Results and impact

- ▶ Integrated administrative and scientific data in one place, reducing errors and allowing centralised management of graduate programmes, finances and scientific publications
- ▶ Established real-time management of highly complex processes via automatic interfaces to HR and financial accounting software
- ▶ Enabled real-time data analysis and automatic report generation, freeing up resources for other tasks



Find scientific management interesting? [Explore more!](#)

RAAAP – Research administration as a profession



Level: Several countries

Countries: Several

Location: [NCURA Research Program](#)

Problem/context

Research management is a broad and under-recognised profession, with limited visibility and unclear pathways for attracting talent. It is also challenging to identify the most useful skills and backgrounds for roles in this field.

Actions taken

The Research Administration as a Profession (RAAAP) project conducted three surveys to explore skills in research administration. With funding secured for analysis, infographics were created to simplify the data. The third survey in 2022 received 5,076 responses, and a fourth is planned for 2025.

Results and impact

- ▶ Raised awareness of research management with data from over 12,000 respondents
- ▶ Contributed to open access resources, cited over 200 times
- ▶ Provided infographics and data to support the research management community



Interested in research management? [Explore more insights here.](#)



CRedit: the contributor role taxonomy

Level: Several countries

Countries: Several

Location: CRedit – Contributor Role Taxonomy



Problem/context

Traditional bibliographic conventions fail to capture the full range of researcher contributions, and there is growing demand for better transparency in research outputs.

Actions taken

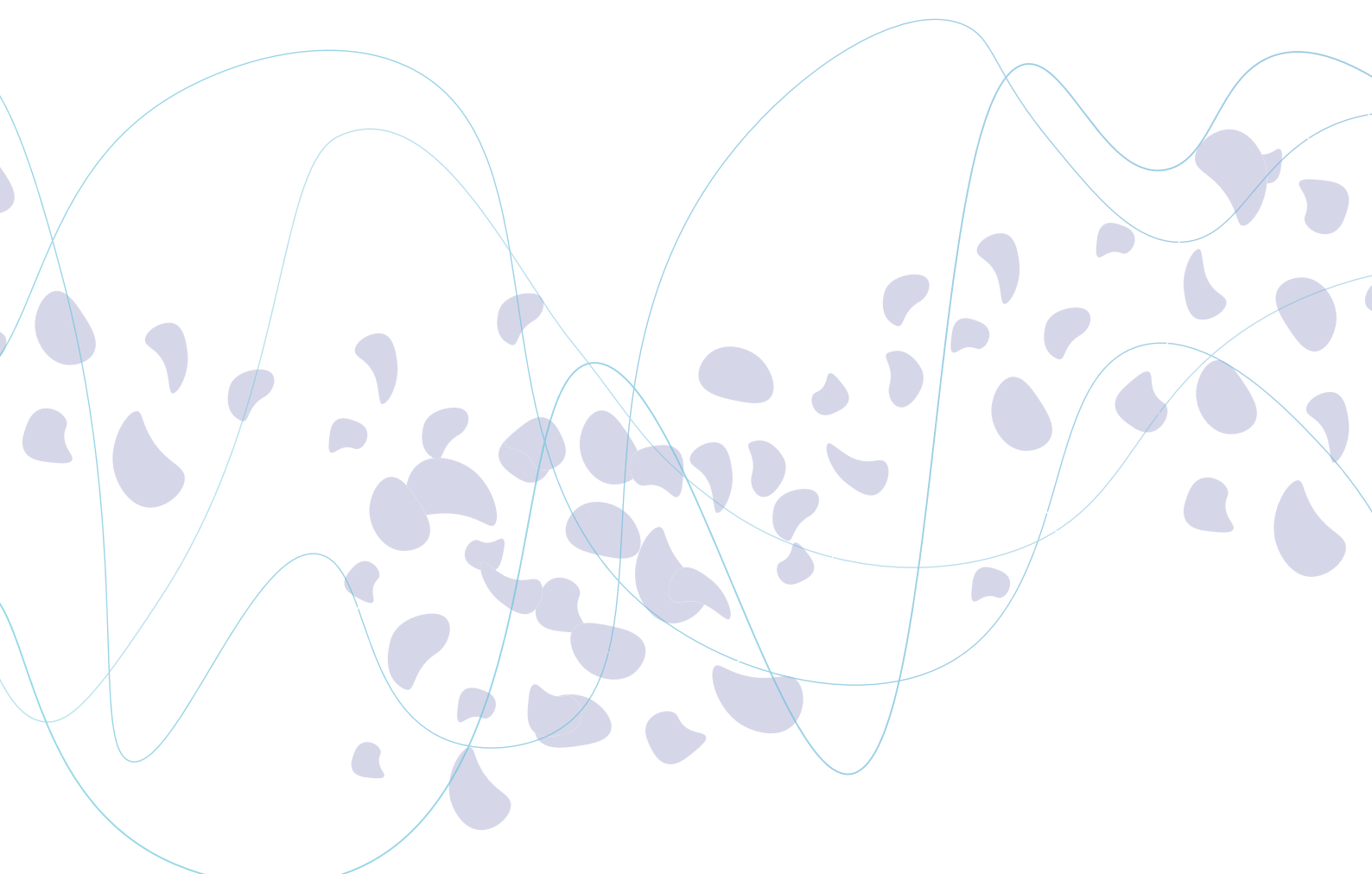
A workshop in 2012 led to the development of the Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRedit) to describe research contributions. After testing and refinement, CRedit was approved by the National Information Standards Organization in 2022.

Results and impact

- ▶ Improved contribution visibility through widespread adoption by publishers
- ▶ Reduced author disputes and ensured adherence to contributorship policies
- ▶ Increased recognition of individual contributions in multi-author works



Discover all about it, [here!](#)





**TRAINING, RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT,
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS (PGR)**

Förderquartett: transforming funding landscape awareness through gamification

Level: RM association

Country: Germany

Location: [TU Dortmund University](#)



Problem/context

Researchers often face confusion when navigating various third-party funding formats. The complexity of funding systems can be overwhelming, for postdoctoral researchers and career changers, and traditional methods like PowerPoint presentations are often ineffective.

Actions taken

To simplify research funding, TU Dortmund University developed a gamified tool called Funding Formats – The Card Game. This engaging game makes learning about funding more interactive. It was introduced in workshops, seminars, and networking events, using playing cards to compare key characteristics of various funding opportunities. After being tested with postdoctoral researchers and research managers across Germany, the game received enthusiastic feedback and demonstrated its effectiveness.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased researcher engagement and understanding of funding formats
- ▶ Enhanced interdisciplinary networking opportunities
- ▶ Sparked further discussion on the tool's potential uses, expanding its reach within research management



Interested in adopting the Funding Formats Card Game at your institution? Contact [TU Dortmund University - TU Dortmund](#) to learn how this tool can support your researchers.

Establishing mental health first aid at German universities: from a local initiative to national coverage

Level: Country

Country: Germany

Location: [Friedrich Schiller University Jena](#)



Problem/context

Doctoral researchers face a two- to threefold higher risk of mental health issues compared to peers. Upon joining Friedrich Schiller University Jena (FSU), a scientific manager identified a lack of structured mental health support, a sharp contrast to institutions in the United Kingdom. Germany's decentralised system further complicated access to help, leaving many in crisis without clear resources. With no accredited Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) provider in Germany, an urgent need for awareness and institutional action emerged.

Actions taken

A scientific manager and research managers launched anti-stigmatisation initiatives, including information events, a music video for International Mental Health Day, and informal peer support networks. Collaborating with the mental health organisation [Irrsinnig Menschlich](#), they expanded awareness efforts while advocating for structural solutions. Their work contributed to the 2020 accreditation of Germany's first MHFA provider, laying the foundation for national adoption.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased awareness of mental health challenges in academia, influencing university policies
- ▶ Expanded MHFA training, leading to national implementation across German universities
- ▶ Improved researcher support, ensuring students and staff receive timely mental health assistance



Learn how [Mental Health First Aid is transforming support for researchers across Germany](#).

Bench2Biz: training scientists for entrepreneurship

Level: Groups of institutions

Country: Switzerland

Location: University of Fribourg



Problem/context

Deep-tech researchers and students often struggle to commercialise their innovations, facing hurdles in navigating the start-up ecosystem, securing funding and validating their business ideas without structured guidance. Recognising this, Swiss institutions collaborated with a US-based pre-seed expert to create a hands-on, intensive training programme to bridge the gap between research and market-ready innovation.

Actions taken

The **bench2biz workshop** was established as a 10-day pre-seed entrepreneurship programme tailored for deep-tech researchers and students. Organised by research managers from Swiss universities and the **Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI)**, the initiative pools institutional and ecosystem resources to help researchers understand the nature of bringing their idea to market, and support technology transfer and development. Participants form multidisciplinary teams, working alongside coaches, IP experts and business mentors to refine their ideas, assess commercial potential and design business models. The hybrid format's implementation successfully integrated international experts to expand opportunities beyond Switzerland.

Results and impact

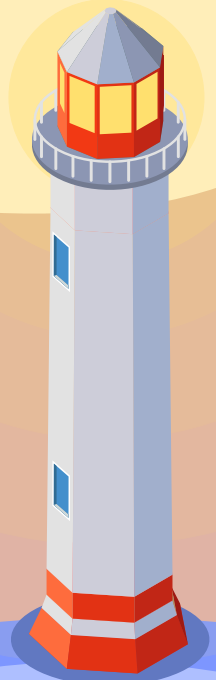
- ▶ Created over 25 start-ups, with 25% of participants establishing successful companies within five years
- ▶ Scaled the programme internationally, generating interest in launching bench2biz in Germany, Romania, Colombia, and more
- ▶ Strengthened the innovation ecosystems at partner universities, fostering long-term entrepreneurship support locally
- ▶ Secured recognition from national agencies, including the Swiss National Science Foundation
- ▶ and Innosuisse, enhancing visibility and funding opportunities



Accelerate your deep-tech innovation journey – protect your intellectual property, start your commercial venture, and [register for Bench2Biz!](#)



RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY



Research managers pioneer efforts to mitigate the climate impact of collaborative research



Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal

Location: [Neovia Innovation](#)

Problem/context

Climate change affects EU-funded research, yet no clear guidelines exist for reducing emissions in international collaborations. The [FAIR-EASE consortium](#) sought to address this gap by developing a structured approach to assessing and mitigating environmental impact in research projects.

Actions taken

[Neovia Innovation](#), a consulting firm specialising in research and innovation projects, led the development of a carbon footprint tracking methodology for FAIR-EASE. They established sustainability guidelines covering project publications, event planning, and travel logistics. They aimed to quantify emissions – so they applied the GES 1point5 tool, a widely used carbon tracking system for research activities. Additionally, Neovia Innovation collaborated with the European Association of Innovation Consultants (EAIC) to extend these best practices across the consulting and research management community.

Results and impact

- ▶ Developed a framework to reduce emissions in EU research projects
- ▶ Integrated sustainability guidelines into project management strategies
- ▶ Expanded environmental responsibility in research collaboration through knowledge-sharing networks



Want to make EU research projects more sustainable? Explore [Neovia Innovation!](#)

Responsible research compliance: UniTrento's research ethics and integrity self-assessment



Level: Institution

Country: Italy

Location: [University of Trento](#)

Problem/context

An increasing challenge in research is confirming responsible research compliance with evolving regulations shielding ethics, integrity, privacy, dual-use concerns, and sustainability. At the University of Trento, many principal investigators (PIs) were unaware of these cross-cutting issues, often treating them as secondary to scientific rigor. Despite regular training scheduled by the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, engagement remained low, particularly among non-clinical researchers who underestimated its applicability. A structured, proactive approach was needed to nurture responsible research practices at all levels.

Actions taken

To strengthen responsible research compliance, research managers at the University of Trento revamped institutional policies – aligning the ethical code with European and international standards and introducing new policies on child protection, financial conflict of interest, and US NIH requirements – and launched digital tools to assist researchers in self-evaluating ethical risks. An example, the Ethics Self-Assessment (ESA) tool, is a user-friendly digital checklist enabling PIs to identify risks and receive tailored guidance, directing them appropriately to the Ethics Committee, Privacy Office, or external regulatory bodies to ensure compliance from the outset.

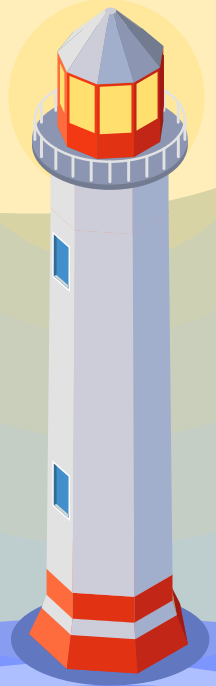
Results and impact

- ▶ Enhanced PI engagement, fostering a stronger culture of research integrity
- ▶ Streamlined efficient ethics approvals, reducing compliance delays
- ▶ Strengthened institutional policies, aligning with global best practices
- ▶ Developed a replicable model integrating ethics, integrity, privacy, and legal compliance into research workflows



Find out more about the [University of Trento's approach to research ethics and integrity.](#)

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT



RUMO: Research Units Management Optimisation

Level: Group of colleagues

Country: Portugal

Location: [NOVA University Lisbon](#)



Problem/context

NOVA University Lisbon has been facing research management challenges. After the pandemic, a group of professionals formed RUMO (Research Units Management Optimisation) to improve collaboration and efficiency, standardise processes, and align with national and international standards.

Actions taken

RUMO formed an interdisciplinary team of science managers and communicators to tackle challenges, standardise processes, and improve research management. They fostered collaboration through meetings, training, and networking, developed a shared database, and advocated for formal recognition of science managers.

Results and impact

- ▶ Optimised processes and data management across research units
- ▶ Increased recognition of science managers, with a career path established
- ▶ Boosted training participation



Explore how [NOVA's research units](#) are driving innovation and collaboration.

Joining forces to recognise staff of research infrastructures

Level: Several countries

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Location: [EU-LIFE Core Facilities Working Group](#)



Problem/context

EU-LIFE, an alliance of 17 European life sciences institutes, is committed to strengthening research and innovation. Life sciences research staff play a crucial role in advancing research by providing technological services and expertise. However, they often lack clear job descriptions, career development plans, and recognition in scientific publications, leaving their contributions formally unacknowledged.

Actions taken

The heads of research infrastructures in the EU-LIFE Core Facilities Working Group conducted a benchmarking survey across 12 institutes to identify challenges and staff needs. The results were published in 2022, and a paper on citing core facilities was released in EMBO reports to improve recognition in scientific literature.

Results and impact

- ▶ Found shared challenges and opportunities for improvement
- ▶ Influenced EMBO reports to update authorship guidelines for better recognition
- ▶ Fostered collaboration among institutes to enhance career support and infrastructure management



Find out how to acknowledge and cite core facilities in this [EMBO reports paper](#) by the EU-LIFE Core Facilities Working Group.

Public engagement and impact: a success story building a professional community to maximise the impact of research in Germany



Level: Country

Country: Germany

Location: [Berlin School of Public Engagement and Open Science](#)

Problem/context

In 2019, Germany lacked a unified platform for public engagement in research. Efforts were fragmented, with no professional community or formal training, thus relying on individual initiatives.

Actions taken

The Berlin School of Public Engagement and Open Science was established in 2020, creating a network for public engagement in research. The school launched the 'Principles for Public Engagement', developed a tailored training portfolio, and hosted international academies such as the Sustainable Futures Academy.

Results and impact

- ▶ Established public engagement as a recognised field, shaping national policies and strategies
- ▶ Expanded the team from 2 to 14 employees
- ▶ Influenced political decision-making through the 'Principles for Public Engagement'



Discover how [public engagement is shaping research in Germany](#).

The transformative power of strategic infrastructure management



Level: Group of colleagues

Country: Portugal

Location: [Centre for Marine Sciences](#)

Problem/context

When an infrastructure manager was hired at the **Centre for Marine Sciences (CCMAR)** in 2022, they developed a sustainable model for the microscopy facility, fostering collaboration and innovative funding strategies. Previously, researchers relied on conventional, basic equipment due to limited knowledge and resources, while the lack of a centralised core facility hindered technological advancement and research progress.

Actions taken

The facility manager acted as the key link between the research group and microscopy companies, coordinating demonstrations of various technologies. This led to the acquisition of a state-of-the-art, fully motorised microscope, tailored to multiple research projects and biological applications. The purchase was facilitated through a collaborative agreement, ensuring its availability to the entire institute.

Results and impact

- ▶ Enhanced research capabilities and saved time
- ▶ Encouraged other groups to share resources
- ▶ Fostered a culture of collaboration and innovation



Explore CCMAR's research infrastructure services [here](#).



Italy's EBRAINS node: advancing neuroscience with an integrated digital infrastructure



Level: Several regions

Country: Italy

Location: [EBRAINS-Italy](#)

Problem/context

In Italy, there was a need to centralise and strengthen national neuroscience research. **EBRAINS-Italy** aims to solve this by integrating advanced modelling, computational, and analytical tools to enhance research and collaboration across institutions, addressing gaps in resources and fostering innovation.

Actions taken

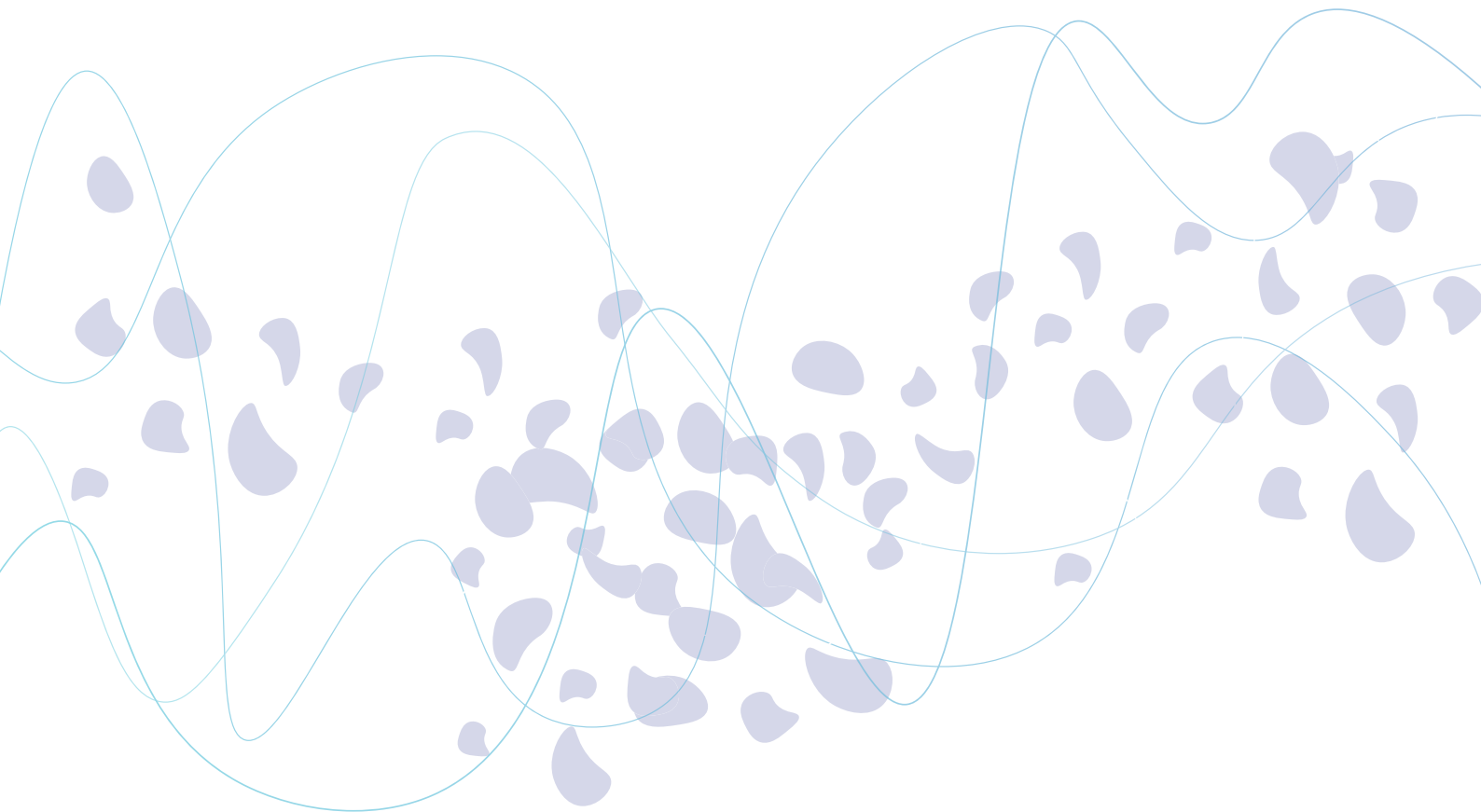
EBRAINS-Italy provides transnational access to resources while developing tools specific to Italy's needs. Project coordinators from 16 institutions focus on producing unique data and advanced models and offering access to supercomputing and experimental facilities.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened Italy's neuroscience research capabilities
- ▶ Fostered new international collaborations
- ▶ Provided unique data and tools for advancing brain disease research



Explore EBRAINS-Italy's resources and services [here!](#)





INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION- INSTITUTION BRANDING

The Botswana statement: a global research pledge

Level: Group of colleagues

Countries: Belgium, Botswana, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, United States

Location: Botswana Open University



Problem/context

Despite global commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), investment in research management and infrastructure remains uneven, limiting the impact of research in driving societal progress. Many emerging research management communities struggle to secure funding and recognition, hampering their ability to contribute to global challenges effectively.

Actions taken

On 24 May 2023, research managers met in Gaborone, Botswana, to discuss global research challenges. The **Botswana Statement** emerged as a call for investment in research management and policy change. Supported by powerful research management societies, it gained international support. On 23 April 2024, the **INORMS** Council unanimously endorsed it, marking a milestone in global research advocacy. Now widely promoted, it urges institutions to strengthen research management.

Results and impact

- ▶ Established a unified global voice for research management, shaping policy dialogues
- ▶ Strengthened international collaboration among research management societies, reinforcing institutional capacity
- ▶ Created a dedicated platform that ensures ongoing engagement, allowing institutions to endorse and integrate the statement into their strategies



Explore the Botswana Statement and support global research investment.

From diversity to unity: interactive facilitation in action

Level: Groups of institutions

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom

Location: Eutema Research Services, Austria



Problem/context

European collaborative research projects unite diverse participants – scientists, industry partners, SMEs, policymakers, and often additional internal or external interest groups – often with vastly different expertise, backgrounds, and expectations. An **EU project's** success lies in smooth communication, continuous engagement, and shared understanding of the joint vision. Traditional meeting formats often fail to create genuine interaction, leaving some voices unheard and limiting collaboration potential.

Actions taken

At Eutema Research Services, the research managers introduced interactive elements into project meetings to motivate and improve collaboration. Meetings featured joint poster sessions, virtual cultural activities, and themed icebreakers to break down silos. Activation exercises encouraged movement during long meetings and World Café discussions and co-creation workshops ensured all voices spoke.

Results and impact

- ▶ Increased engagement, turning meetings into interactive, productive sessions
- ▶ Expanded participation, allowing all stakeholders to contribute meaningfully
- ▶ Broadened perspectives, fostering cross-sectoral collaboration and knowledge sharing
- ▶ Enhanced efficiency, reducing communication gaps and accelerating project progress



Discover more about Eutema Research Services' innovative approach to collaboration.

Making connections: a research manager's journey in European R&I

Level: Several countries

Countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, United States

Location: [University of Otago](#)



Problem/context

It was challenging to be a newcomer to European research and innovation (R&I) and navigate the complexities of the Horizon Europe programmes, requiring a more profound knowledge of funding frameworks and a strong professional network. My attendance at the European R&I Days 2024 in Brussels provided an invaluable opportunity to bridge these gaps, yet success lay upon preparation and meaningful engagement.

Actions taken

During the event, the research managers and administrators provided invaluable guidance, equipping me with insights into funding schemes, networking strategies, and best practices in research management. Their advice helped me prepare for the **EARMA Conference**, where I actively engaged with international peers, exchanged expertise, and cultivated professional relationships that flourished beyond the event.

Results and impact

- ▶ Expanded international network and fostered collaboration between research managers across Europe, North America, and **Australasia**
- ▶ Strengthened my knowledge of the Horizon Europe programme, accelerating integration into the European R&I landscape
- ▶ Facilitated ongoing exchanges of best practices, enhancing research administration efficiency and innovation support



Discover more about [Research at Otago](#).

HR excellence: raising international visibility

Level: Individual

Country: Poland

Location: [University of Gdańsk](#)



Problem/context

In 2015, the initiation of the implementation of the **European Charter for Researchers** in Poland was fragmented, with institutions navigating the HR Excellence in Research process independently. Its scope and potential were significant, aiming to improve working conditions and international visibility. Many universities lacked coordinated strategies to implement best practices. The University of Gdańsk (UG) played a key role in bridging this gap, being one of the first institutions in Poland to earn the HR Excellence in Research award in 2016.

Actions taken

At the UG, research managers led national and international efforts to advance the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers**. They directly supported Polish universities by offering consultancy, training and peer learning sessions. Their expertise extended to the European University of the Seas alliance, where they advised partner institutions on improving research conditions and internationalisation strategies. Organisations such as VITAE and Times Higher Education further recognised this leadership, with research managers contributing as auditors and advisors, reinforcing global visibility for Polish universities.

Results and impact

- ▶ Strengthened research culture across 106 Polish institutions, fostering inclusive and internationally competitive working environments
- ▶ Expanded international collaboration through SEA-EU enhanced research and innovation networks
- ▶ Increased institutional visibility through advisory roles in the United Kingdom and global higher education assessment bodies



Discover how the [University of Gdańsk](#) is driving research excellence and international recognition.

Building resilience: the rise of Ukrainian research and HE management

Level: RM association

Country: Ukraine

Location: Professional Network of Research and HE Managers (PNRM Ukraine)



Problem/context

In early 2022, the full-scale war in Ukraine severely disrupted education and research. Thousands of scientists, educators and students were displaced, while over 2,000 educational institutions were damaged or destroyed. Universities faced profound operational issues, shifting to asynchronous online learning while contending with air raids, infrastructure breakdowns and power outages. The crisis also disrupted international collaboration, forcing foreign students to leave and categorising Ukraine as a high-risk zone for global academic partnerships. These unprecedented challenges required innovative higher education management strategies to sustain research and institutional resilience.

Actions taken

Recognising that universities could not address these challenges alone, the Professional Network of Research and HE Managers (PNRM Ukraine) was established in June 2022. This network fosters cooperation at national and international levels, connecting over 40 research and education managers. Supported by German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) funded initiatives led by Leibniz University Hannover and Münster University of Applied Sciences, it equips members with critical internationalisation skills and links them to global academic networks. PNRM engages in capacity building, grant projects, science communication and supporting displaced universities.

Results and impact

- ▶ Established a sustainable professional network for education and research managers
- ▶ Strengthened international collaboration, linking Ukrainian institutions to European academic networks
- ▶ Facilitated crisis adaptation, supporting displaced universities and researchers
- ▶ Promoted knowledge exchange, enhancing management competencies and institutional resilience



Learn more at [PNRM Ukraine](#) or connect on [LinkedIn](#).



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EU open data

The portal data.europa.eu provides access to open datasets from the EU institutions, bodies and agencies. These can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. The portal also provides access to a wealth of datasets from European countries.

The creation of this catalogue follows the European Commission's call for success stories in Research Management (RM), launched in May 2024. Contributors were invited to share their experiences, focusing on the context, actions taken, and the impact of their work. The goal was to highlight the value and achievements of RM across Europe. This initiative aims to foster greater recognition and support for RM among various communities and stakeholders. The call for submissions was widely promoted with the assistance of European RM associations, ERA stakeholders, the RM-ROADMAP and CARDEA project teams, and RM-ROADMAP Ambassadors.

Project information

