SUPPORT, CONTRIBUTE, GROW

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS
All you need to know about the next EARMA Annual Conference at SQUARE-BRUSSELS CONVENTION CENTRE

THE NEW EARMA STRUCTURE
Plenty of opportunities for members to engage and contribute to the association

PROFILING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR
A quest to deliver a treasure chest of tasks, skills and competences to structure the support of European research application and projects
A doubling of the budget of the 9th EU Framework Programme (FP9) for Research & Innovation to 160 billion euro, also requested by the Lamy Group, would create an estimated 650,000 jobs by 2040 and add around 0.6% to GDP over the same period. As the European Commission has stated in its communication on the next MFF, this doubling would enable the EU to emerge as a global leader in areas like future-energy batteries, smart and clean buildings and vehicles, infectious diseases, and the circular economy. At the same time, it would stimulate more inclusive and resilient societies, increase sustainable growth and reduce inequality in Europe.

Although Horizon 2020 is the largest framework programme for research and innovation to date, it is, with less than 80 billion euro for 7 years, underfunded. In some parts of Horizon 2020, the current budget supports less than 1 out of 5 high quality proposals. Equally, even though the success of Erasmus+ is outstanding in fostering mobility and employability, at 5% European student mobility is far below the 20% Bologna Process target.

However, doubling the FP budget cannot be a substitute for strong support for, and investment in, research, innovation and education at national level. Insufficient national investment in research (to the level of 3% of GDP as agreed by the Member States) and education, together with EU funding, is crucial for Europe’s competitiveness and for a sustainable European society (in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals). And inspired by open science principles, Universities bring research results and education to the public and the market, valorise these results through start-ups and educate present and future generations of teachers, entrepreneurs, researchers, politicians and citizens in general.

Universities, and the European associations to which they belong, look forward to working with the EU institutions to make European research, innovation and education programmes an even greater success than they are today, and to play an important role in further increasing the relevance, impact and benefits of these programmes to European citizens.

As European associations of universities, we call upon the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council, to double the budget for research, innovation and education in the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF).

Welcome to EARMA’s 2018 pre-conference edition of LINK. This year’s conference theme is “Building and Sustaining Excellent Research Support”. Thanks to the Annual Conference Programme Committee (ACPC), under the stewardship of Evelina Brännvall, the conference content just gets better and better each year.

This year, we are trying out new formats and introducing speed dating and Pecha Kucha sessions, which will provide lots more small group networking opportunities.

The opening panel debate promises to be lively and interesting. I’m particularly looking forward to hearing the views and opinions of thought leaders such as Doris Alexander (TCD), Kurt Deketelaere (LERU), Stephan Kuster (Science Europe) and Kurt Vandenberghe (EC). I have no doubt that hot topics such as Brexit and the next framework programme (FP9) — including its budget — will be discussed, as well as how missions and sustainable development goals will be handled within the next framework programme. Will the public better understand science and the importance of funding research? And will science genuinely address the key issues facing the future of society? The division of roles and responsibilities in communicating and funding research between national funders and the European Commission is also likely to cause some debate.

EARMA has been busy during the past year establishing its new structures. The board standing committees are now in place and operating very effectively thanks to everyone who is volunteering their time and effort to progress the professionalisation of EARMA. To understand more about EARMA’s structure and to see how you can get involved, check out the wonderful infographic on pages 14–15. More information on EARMA and opportunities to get involved will be available at the conference. Make sure that you visit the EARMA booth and meet the executive team, Nile Clasen & Emma Lythgoe, who will be available to answer all of your questions.

Registration for the 4th cohort of the EARMA Certificate in Research Management (CRM) is now open. Some of the alumni from the first cohort have kindly shared their experiences with the programme with us on pages 20–21. This is truly an international course with a lot of emphasis on peer learning. The calibre of the applications is wonderful, and applying to be a part of this programme is one of the best career decisions you’ll make.

The beautiful city of Brussels plays host to EARMA’s 24th annual conference. It’s really nice to be in EARMA’s home town this year. Belgium is one of the six founding countries of the European Union and hosts the official seats of the European Commission, Council of the European Union and European Council, as well as a seat of the European Parliament in capital city Brussels. As the centre of European culture and institutions, Brussels has a lot to offer with almost 90 museums, beautiful parks, architecture, world-famous cuisine and an amazing EARMA conference!

Finally, a special word of thanks to Anne Katrin Werenkold for her leadership of the Membership and Communications Committee and for her editorial role putting together this wonderful publication.

Sharon Bailey
Chair of EARMA
One of the most exciting ways of creating public awareness about research is through collaboration with artists.

ANNA DUMITRIU, Artist
Yoram Lev Yehudi
CEO, Orientos UAB

What is our aim? We want to provide a professional network for exchange of expertise, knowledge, and best practices, stimulating professional development.

EDWIN KANTERS,
Implementation Officer, VU/VUmc Grants Desk,
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

One of the greatest challenges faced by research-intensive universities is to ensure their sustainability and competitiveness in an increasingly complex and competitive global research funding environment.

THERINA THERON,
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

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David Langley

FINAL WORDS

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The Annual EARMA Conference is our highlight of the year and we hope this is true for most European research managers and administrators. This year we will meet in the centre of Brussels, at the heart of the European Commission. If your job includes any aspect of European research funding, then this is the conference for you.

Above all else, the conference is a place to make new friends and colleagues and cement existing professional relationships. You are sure to come away with new information, ideas, and, most importantly, contacts. The power of being able to drop an email to someone and have a great answer to your query come back is amazing. This is what an association of professionals like EARMA is all about. It’s so much easier to “connect” when you have actually met someone face to face rather than just virtually.

So, what can you expect in the two-and-a-half day extravaganza of all things European research management? We start on the evening of Monday 16th April with the ever-important EARMA General Assembly, followed by a welcome reception. The conference dinner will be held at Autoworld Brussels. It promises to be a wheely good evening, the menu will drive you crazy, and of course afterwards… brace dancing (not really)! Don’t overdo it though, as you will want to make it to the opening plenary on Wednesday morning. We have secured an eye-opening presentation from a distinguished German researcher. Prepare to be bamboozled, this one is not to be missed.

This year, EARMA has teamed up with the International Region of the American National Council of University Administrators (NCURA) for the conference, so we are expecting more international colleagues than in the previous years, with almost 40 registrations from outside Europe already.

On Tuesday 17th April, the first full day, we start at 9.00am sharp with the first of our keynotes, a panel with the illustrious Kurt Vandenberghe, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission, Stephan Kuster, Acting Director of Science Europe, and our very own Doris Alexander from the EARMA Board. Other keynote speakers include Iván Pastor Barceló, Head of the Ethics and Research Integrity Sector in DG Research and Innovation, and Kurt DeKeukeleire, President of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), and of course the ever-popular Seán McCarthy from Hyperion. We also have Colin Cooper talking about his career as a research administrator in an informative, and at times hilarious, romp through memory lane.

Based on feedback from previous conferences, we have also introduced some new session types to make for an even more interactive and dynamic experience. Keynotes and one-hour sessions run side by side with shorter 30-minute presentations slots. For those looking for more bite-sized information, we also offer a number of Pecha Kucha sessions – 20 slides, 20 seconds each – six minutes and 40 seconds of fast-paced and action-packed content. Each poster team will present their poster on the big screen in one of the auditoria. Get the low down on all of the posters and decide which you want to go and visit afterwards.

And, finally, for those wanting the ultimate in interactive discussion, visit the speed-dating sessions. Each speaker leads a discussion on a table of ten. Then after 10 minutes it is all change, moving to the next session. So you get five 10 minute discussions on different but related subjects. Depending on how interesting you find the subject, you may indeed want to make a “date” to discuss things further.

Our array of carefully selected sponsors in the exhibition hall is always worth a visit.

Overall, we have more than 100 sessions with some amazing speakers covering all areas of research management and administration. You can check out the full programme on the conference website. There will be plenty of H2020/FP9 sessions, but also US funding for EU researchers, open science, research development, social media, collaborating with Japan, developing your own career, structuring research support, ethics, post award, gender issues, professionalisation, and the list goes on.

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If you have already signed up to attend the EARMA conference then great, we look forward to seeing you in Brussels. If not, then do not delay, it is not too late, the conference is still open for booking until April 6 (or onsite at the event). So make the most of this opportunity to advance your knowledge, network and career. By the 8th of February there were nearly 600 delegates registered, hailing from almost 40 countries around the world, so join us at Square Brussels Meeting Centre this April. Be there or be… square.

The conference planning team has worked really hard to put together an exciting, informative, and innovative programme, with something for everyone, so if you are a person, then this is the event for you.

The full programme, information on the venue, booking options, and more is available on the dedicated conference website: http://www.earmaconference.com.
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS
TAKE YOUR PICK

The EARMA Annual Conference will be full of thought-provoking sessions. Below are the presentation of four of them.

“LOOKING THE EVALUATORS OVER THE SHOULDER”

As many other support officers working with EU funding, we found that something had changed, such as ESF’s being less informative and more confusing than previously, sparking an interest in getting more firm knowledge of what had happened. At the EARMA conference, we will offer a peek into the evaluation processes in H2020. Based on a survey among Danish evaluators and follow-up, in-depth interviews, we will present views and perceptions on H2020 proposals and their evaluation as seen from the evaluators’ points of view.

If you have thought about what the evaluators feel about e.g. illustrations, or if they really pay attention to a proposal’s abstract, our talk can provide you with some insight. How about the style of writing; is this important to the evaluators? Quite a lot it seems. We will also present the evaluators’ views on the impact section, or if they really pay attention to a proposal’s abstract, our talk can provide you with some insight. How about the style of writing; is this important to the evaluators? Quite a lot it seems. We will also present the evaluators’ views on the impact section, or if they really pay attention to a proposal’s abstract, our talk can provide you with some insight. How about the style of writing; is this important to the evaluators? Quite a lot it seems. We will also present the evaluators’ views on the impact section, or if they really pay attention to a proposal’s abstract, our talk can provide you with some insight. How about the style of writing; is this important to the evaluators? Quite a lot it seems. We will also present the evaluators’ views on the impact section, or if they really pay attention to a proposal’s abstract, our talk can provide you with some insight. How about the style of writing; is this important to the evaluators? Quite a lot it seems.

The presentation will open for discussion and exchange of experiences, thereby giving grant writers and support staff new ideas for their future work.

“THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUBRECIPIENTS AND CONSULTANTS”

What is the difference between a subrecipient and a consultant and why does it matter? Identifying the correct nature of a relationship between your institution and another party is important because the status of the relationship affects our ability to be good stewards of our awards. Whether an institution is a subrecipient or consultant depends on the nature of the working relationship between the institution receiving the award and the institution issuing the award. Knowing that subrecipients or other procurement actions are determined by the nature of the relationship they have with your institution is half the battle.

If you currently have or are looking to have US federal awards, or collaborations with US-based institutions on federal awards, you should have an understanding on the difference between subrecipients and consultants and how it affects agreement instruments. Avoid common mistakes and problems further down the road by proactively analyzing working relationships and understanding why subrecipients and consultants are sometimes miscategorized. Learning how to correctly identify a subrecipient or consultant will save you and your PI time.

“For most the exciting ways of creating public awareness about research is through collaboration with artists. Art has such a unique way of reaching out to audiences from diverse backgrounds and communicating complex ideas, which is why having an artist on the team is fast becoming best practice for research leaders. Through the EU FET Open funded support action, the Future Emerging Art and Technology (FEAT) project and MRG-Grainmaleu were funded as part of a collaboration with internationally renowned artist Anna Dumitriu.

"Her artistic work is not only impressive but also done very diligently. The results are beyond any expectation," states Yoram Lev Yehudi, MRG-Grainmaleu dissemination manager. The EU FET Unit recently responded about this work via Twitter, writing: “Thank you, that’s exactly the type of thing we need to show the myriad positive impacts of FET”.

Anna created a new artwork specifically exploring MRG-Grainmaleu’s research into gene regulation and cutting-edge CRISPR DNA editing. The piece has been exhibited at numerous venues, including BOZAR, Ars Electronica Festival, The Museum of the History of Science in Oxford, Zone2Source in Amsterdam and Texas A & M University, and continues to tour. At least 103,000 people have seen the exhibitions in the first year alone, and the project has been featured in media like Nature, The Lancet, and Art Quarterly.

“I am a research administrator and have been for nearly 40 years. I have worked at six different universities during that time. I am the recipient of two “Lifetime” awards: ARMA’s Carter award for Outstanding Contribution to Research Management and Administration and the SRA’s Chermside award for Distinguished Contribution to Research Administration.

How, then, do you receive two Lifetime awards in a single Lifetime? Here is the opportunity to find out. My presentation is a personal and humorous retrospective in which I will be reviewing changes to our daily work and offering stories from various project grants and contracts, as well as changes to procedures, academic, funders and fellow colleagues. I will provide an insight into some pivotal moments in research administration, mistakes made and lessons learnt.

As it is an EARMA conference, I will also be including some of my EARMA highlights from previous conferences that I have attended both as a speaker and as a member.

By the end, I hope everyone will be entertained, as well as able to put his or her own careers in research administration into focus within the complex job market that is research administration in 2018.

Personally, I am looking forward to catching up with old friends and discovering new ones, as well as hearing about and learning from colleagues’ new ways of working in research administration.”

Cecilie Ydemann Hansen
Torben Høøck Hansen
Research & Innovation
University of Copenhagen

Cristina Corvo
Grants and Contracts Manager
Office of Sponsored Programs
American University, Washington, DC

Yoram Lev Yehudi
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Anna Dumitriu, Artist
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Colin Cooper, Research Facilitator
Liverpool Hope University
Twitter: @colincooperc1

Support, Contribute, Grow
Link
Can you introduce yourself and your background in research management and policy? I have been involved in European Research programmes since 1980 - that is four years before Framework 1. I was involved as a researcher, research manager, group leader in over 60 EU projects. I was coordinator of 16 of these projects. Since 1995 over 76,000 researchers and support staff have attended my training courses in 29 countries.

What is the main focus of your EARMa presentation and what do you hope delegates will take away from it? In my talk, I will advise support staff on how to prepare for all the above trends. Evaluators will become more difficult. An obvious trend is that the researcher is given more freedom to submit bottom-up. Free (bottom-up) to submit any idea to the programme.

What do you think will be the big trends in funding of research in the near future? More opening of programmes and combining of different funding sources (EU, national, global, private, public, charities and foundations etc.) through co-funding, joint calls, mutual recognition of decisions by funders.

What is the main focus of your EARMa presentation and what do you hope delegates will take away from it? I will be discussing why Europe needs a strong successor to Horizon 2020 and why Science Europe believes the next Framework Programme should remain a research programme at its core that appeals to the best scientists in Europe and the world.

What do you believe will be the big trends in funding of research in the near future? What is the main focus of your EARMa presentation and what do you hope delegates will take away from it? I will be discussing why Europe needs a strong successor to Horizon 2020 and why Science Europe believes the next Framework Programme should remain a research programme at its core that appeals to the best scientists in Europe and the world. What do you believe will be the big trends in funding of research in the near future?

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What do you think will be the big trends in funding of research in the near future? What do you believe will be the big trends in funding of research in the near future?
The 24th EARMA Annual Conference will be held in the capital of European funding, Brussels, Belgium and will focus on “Building and Sustaining Excellent Research Support.” The conference will take place at SQUARE-BRUSSELS CONVENTION CENTRE between the 17th and 18th of April 2018.

InNovember 2017, EARMA’s Annual Conference Programme Committee (ACPC) came together for the first time to go through each of the submitted topics and put the next conference programme together. This year’s newly formed committee comprises both experienced members as well as new members. The team also visited the venue SQUARE-BRUSSELS CONVENTION CENTRE and were given a tour of the excellent premises.

All the members had read the proposals in the submission system and evaluated them. In the meeting, it was time for adjusting them to fit within the time limits and new formats being introduced for the Brussels conference.

We have received more than 100 submissions of which Pre-Award Proposal Development and Funding Opportunities followed by Research Strategies and Policies were the most popular topics.

In order to accommodate an increase in the number of topic submissions, content will vary in length from short, Pecha Kucha-style sessions lasting around 12 minutes, to in-depth 60-minute presentations. Several interactive, speed dating-style sessions will last 60 minutes, with each speaker being given 10 minutes to make their presentation, this will then be repeated up to five times during the session.

After two and a half days of discussion and multiple checks on the programme, we were done with our task. The preliminary programme included five Keynote sessions, nineteen 60 minutes and twenty-six 30 minutes sessions. We were very excited to include six Pecha Kucha sessions with up to 4 presentations per session and four interactive speed dating sessions with up to five presentations per each session.

The next job was to let the speakers know and confirm some of our invited speakers. We are very pleased with the end product, which is now available on the EARMA conference website for you to see (www.earmaconference.com). We look forward to seeing you in Brussels for the annual meeting.

SQUARE BRUSSELS

The conference will take place at SQUARE-BRUSSELS CONVENTION CENTRE between the 17th and 18th of April 2018.

NINETEEN 60 MINUTES AND TWENTY-SIX 30 MINUTES SESSIONS

How the conference committee works

HOW THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE WORKS

Authors:

Evelina Brännvall, Research Funding Specialist, Grants Office, Luleå University of Technology
Maria Maunula, Research Funding Specialist, Development services, Research funding, University of Turku

Team members included: Evelina Brännvall (University of Luleå, chair), John Donovan (Dublin Institute of Technology), Anja Heggen (University of Bergen), David Lauder (University of York), Maria Maunula (University of Turku), Katrin Reschwamm (EU-relations AG), Simon Kerridge (University of Kent, NCURA representative), Emma Lythgoe (EARMA secretary), Nik Claesen (EARMA Managing Director).
OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO EARMA

1. Opportunities for members

- Contribute an article for the LINK Magazine
- Organise a session at our Annual Conference
- Apply to an EARMA Board
- Organise an OLAF at your institution
- Write an article for the EARMA website
- Become a mentor or mentee in EARMA

2. How can the career help you?

- Suggest a topic and help establish a Thematic Group
- Suggest a topic and help to organise a workshop
- Become an active member of one of the Thematic Groups
- Obtain a travel grant to visit our peers at host institutions or conferences
WG1 reached the following conclusions:

The huge diversity within Europe and lack of coherence severely hampered our progress towards profiling the European research administrator, and clearly pointed out that a more structured approach was needed. Therefore, in the autumn of 2015 the development of a BESTPRAC Research Support Staff (RSS) Framework was initiated, and we are now close to the launch of the first prototype.

The RSS framework describes, in a structured and comprehensive way, the tasks and required skills and competences for the following three types of research administrators:

**Type 1: Research Administrator**

The Research Administrator enforces the compliance of grant applications and projects by guarding internal processes and the requirements of the funding agency, answers rules-related questions, and links researchers to information. In second order, the job title can also be Financial Administrator if the administrator primarily focuses on financial rules, budgeting, financial control and financial reporting.

**Type 2: Funding Advisor / Liaison Officer**

The Funding Advisor / Liaison Officer improves the overall participation of his/her institution by having expert knowledge of European funding programmes and by providing advice and support to researchers in a multitude of ways.

**Type 3: Project Manager**

The Project Manager takes care of the day-to-day management of grant applications and projects, in this way reducing the non-scientific work load for the academic staff. In second order, the job title can also be Project Writer if the administrator primarily focuses on the writing of grant proposals.

The RSS framework is structured according to the life-cycle of a project and discriminates between:

1. the planning, design and ideas phase
2. the proposal preparation phase
3. the grant preparation phase
4. the project phase and project legacy

The RSS framework is currently primarily based on non-financial and non-legal research administration, but profiles can easily be geared towards financial and legal administration. The framework is now being translated into a BESTPRAC Wiki that allows for further detailing and optimising. The wiki currently includes 90 BESTPRAC supporting documents that are linked to specific tasks. These documents include guidelines and presentations from WG1 and also from the BESTPRAC Finance Working Group (WG2) and Legal Working Group (WG3). A complete prototype will be launched in the second half of 2018. This is facilitated by the two-year continuation of BESTPRAC.

The BESTPRAC RSS framework provides a reference for institutions that want to set up a professional research support office or evaluate existing support services. It will also contribute to an improved positioning and career perspectives for research administrators. During the BESTPRAC Dissemination Meeting ‘Shaping the Future of Research Support as a Driver for Research Excellence’ on 19 September 2017 in Brussels, the RSS framework was well received by representatives from the COST Association and the European Commission.

**Acknowledgments**

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ELLEN SCHONK, Coordinator EU Funding, Research Development Office, Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam, The Netherlands (former BESTPRAC Working Group 1 leader)

NIK CLAESSEN, Managing Director, EARMA (BESTPRAC Working Group 1 member and designer of the BESTPRAC Research Support Staff Framework)

**THE BESTPRAC RESEARCH SUPPORT STAFF FRAMEWORK**

A quest to deliver a treasure chest of tasks, skills and competences to structure the support of European research application and projects. In March 2014, research administrators from various European countries came together in Zagreb, Croatia, for the first Working Group 1 (WG1) meeting of the COST Targeted Network BESTPRAC (www.bestprac.eu).

- The profession of a research administrator, especially of non-financial and non-legal administrators, is still poorly defined within Europe.
- The job contents for a research administrator are very heterogeneous between institutions and European countries, and is mainly dependent on the embedding of the administrator within the institution as well as on the professionalism of the institution with regard to research support.
- Job profiles often lack a clear description of tasks as well as key skills and competences.
- Research administrators often experience a poor recognition of their profession, as well as of their relevance in European grant applications and projects.
- Career development opportunities for research administrators are either not available or rather limited.

The huge diversity within Europe and lack of coherence severely hampered our progress towards profiling the European research administrator, and clearly pointed out that a more structured approach was needed. Therefore, in the autumn of 2015 the development of a BESTPRAC Research Support Staff (RSS) Framework was initiated, and we are now close to the launch of the first prototype.

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They acknowledged that research excellence requires excellence in research administration and that more professional research support can contribute to bridging the widening gap between European countries.

The general opinion was the BESTPRAC RSS framework can play an important role in increasing research administration excellence throughout Europe.

BESTPRAC has made a significant achievement in profiling the European research administrator and is delivering a unique structured framework in a sustainable and open-access Wiki format. A challenge will be to keep the Wiki up to date and to improve it with new contents. We therefore call on all our colleagues in Europe to contribute to the BESTPRAC Wiki and make it our professional online catalogue for research administration.

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NIK CLAESSEN, Managing Director, EARMA (BESTPRAC Working Group 1 member and designer of the BESTPRAC Research Support Staff Framework)
In many African HEIs, the capacity for effective RMA is not yet well established. There is a need for improved institutional investment in the establishment of strong and effective professionalised RMA functions. Universities in Africa often depend on the part-time commitment of senior professors to provide necessary RMA support and guidance to researchers in the institution, while they are expected to maintain their own teaching and research outputs. This is simply not sustainable. However, unlike many HEI support functions, no obvious career path or professional RMA qualification currently exists on the African continent to allow for the recruitment, career development and professionalisation of RMA personnel. That being said, those who do work in RMA are generally highly committed, experienced and passionate about what they do.

A new collaborative project entitled StoRM (Strengthening of Collaboration, Leadership and Professionalisation in Research Management in SADC and EU HEIs), funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme and led by Stellenbosch University (SU), is tackling this challenge. The project focuses on the professional development of RMA staff, as well as managing intellectual property and potential conflicts of interest. The development of institutional researcher capacity and providing special support to early career researchers is a further challenge, which is particularly emphasised in the developing world. Skilled and professional Research Management and Administration (RMA) personnel and a strong and effective institutional RMA office have therefore become pivotal to the efforts of universities to help plan, develop, manage and sustain their research efforts. A well resourced and professional RMA function serves as a critical enabling university’s ambition to achieve their research ambitions. In short, the world of higher education has changed.

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[ANNOUNCING AN EARMA / SARIMA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME]

JOIN THE STORM

In the framework of the ERASMUS+ project StoRM, EARMA, a StoRM associate, established a fellowship programme jointly with the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association SARIMA.

The fellowships contribute to the objectives of the StoRM project with their purpose to:

- Build capacity and contribute to professional development of RMAs;
- Support the efforts of higher education institutions (HEIs) through the provision of good research management;
- Share understanding of different contexts.

The fellowship programme will be open for 10 EARMA Members going to Southern Africa, and for 10 fellows from Southern African institutions hosted at EARMA Member Institutions.

To benefit from the StoRM fellowship programme, EARMA Institutional Members from the HEI sector are invited to set up group fellowships (see info box hosting 3-5 Southern African fellows for a maximum of 10 working days).

Being a host will enrich your institution’s global network and contribute to its outreach and will offer new perspectives on your work. As a host, you will not receive any financial support, but the fellows will cover their own full costs. Being a host will also be an advantage when applying for a Southern African fellowship, as you can build on and expand ongoing collaboration.

CURRENT DEADLINES:

- Offers to HOST an EARMA group fellowship: April 30, 2018

StoRM Group Fellowship

Up to five institutions jointly set up a programme for a group of up to five fellows. The programme can consist of meetings with specialists at different levels, from Department to Institutional, with topics of potential mutual interest. Note that a broad approach, including meetings with Deans or Heads of Institutions, Study Offices, Financial Offices, Library, visiting more institutions etc. can add value to a programme.

The Group fellowships have been instructed by experiences in the COST network BEST-PRAC (“Group STSMs”) and examples can be found at the BESTPRAC website (www.bestprac.eu).

To give some flavour to what you will find:

Chapter 1, The Global Research Environment, is a particularly interesting discussion of national differences in the research environment, well balanced and covers gender issues well. Chapter 4, Organisational Structures, is a little more disparate and wide ranging, perhaps trying to cover too much ground – it does nicely show that there is no “one size fits all” solution to the structure of research support. Chapter 5, Research Strategy, becomes very practitioner focused, and not too theory heavy – perhaps a good thing for the intended audience. Chapter 6, Priorities – Project Preparation, has some lovely vignettes and a good overview. It could perhaps have benefited by some references to more in-depth resources, for example the Research Funding Toolkit [2] by Jacqueline Attridge and Andrew Derrington. The Postaward chapter focuses on EU funding, but the advice can easily be extrapolated to other funders. Other chapters cover areas such as who are RMAs?, dealing with academics, the (European) research environment, knowledge exchange, metrics, ethics, research infrastructure, diversity, and skills. There is something here for all of us.

Overall this is a far more Euro-centric offering than its American focused predecessor, and this is perhaps its greatest strength – that and being ten years more up to date, rather important in our fast moving world. Whilst I was lyrical, I should make it clear that although I was not directly involved in the development of the book, I do seem to have amassed a couple of acknowledgements, so I can’t claim to be completely unbiased. However, I do wholeheartedly recommend it to those new to the profession, and indeed those wondering what an RMA is and whether or not they should be one. The more senior amongst you will also find depth in a number of areas that you might be less familiar with.

So the burning question: should you buy it? Well that of course depends on your needs. Some of the funder and policy specific information will become dated, but the more generic parts such as the skills needed to be an RMA should stand the test of time. It is not what I would describe as a page-turner given the style changes across the 15 chapters, but nonetheless it is a useful resource, and in some places an extremely useful one. Something to dip into in those idle moments at your desk, should you have any, which according to my reading of Research Management - Europe and Beyond, seems unlikely!

References

FORMING AN ARMA BEGINNERS GUIDE

ARMA-NL is the professional association for people working on grant support in the Netherlands.

WHY
A network of EU project managers already existed in the Netherlands (EUPMAN). It was established in 2007 and had grown to include over 500 members without any formal board, financial means, mission statement or registration. It thrived solely on volunteers and a sense of necessity to join efforts felt by all members. This network-organised symposia, had a website and a forum with questions and answers. The main drive towards professionalisation was to be able to better facilitate the members by organising better symposia with rooms large enough to accommodate all, invite guest speakers, to organise workshops and make survival kits without relying totally on goodwill and the effort of members and organisations. Additionally, the size of the group was another main driver for change. You need to identify your reasons for change. Often these are the result of difficulties that have happened while running a group or network before the professionalisation.

CHANGE
It is always easy to just continue to do things the same way you have been doing for years. Change can be scary; we could be leaving behind something that has worked well for years in trying to make it better. This also means to take a risk with our plans of professionalisation. In 2016, the steering committee of EUPMAN found that change was an opportunity, but the members had to be convinced this change was beneficial for the network. A survey was issued providing members with an opportunity to submit feedback and share their thoughts. Involving members is crucial in forming an ARMA.

PLANS
What is our aim? We want to provide a professional network for exchange of expertise, knowledge, and best practices, stimulating professional development, to be a knowledge provider and to look after the interests of the members. The association is open for all people working in advice, management, and administration of international and national financed research, innovation and education projects. These topics were chosen, as they represent the work of the current EUPMAN members. A new association should know what its members do and want.

IDENTITY
An important aspect when professionalising a network of EU project managers towards an ARMA is to consider the values that are important, and what the identity of the group is. Moving too far away from this identity will bear the risk of losing members because they do not feel at home anymore. An important value of EUPMAN was that the organisation was for member by member and that all work was undertaken on a voluntary basis. These will remain the most important principles of ARMA-NL. The identity of the association should match that of the members.

AMBITIONS
Without any experience setting up an ARMA, we created some documents with grand ideas, visions, dreams and a long-term vision about what the association would look like. Long-term visions and grand ideas are fine to keep you motivated, but you need to start with something that is manageable and can relate to the existing group. Small steps are essential in starting an ARMA. In our experience, the key to moving forward is to take very small steps and keep involving members during the transition by sharing and talking about the future of the association.

KNOWLEDGE
Setting up a large association was not our every day job. Some of us had experience as board members of other associations, at sporting clubs or running a company and therefore had some experience with associations and procedures, for instance at the Chamber of Commerce. But generally, we lacked experience. To formalise an association, a lot of practicals need to be taken care of, such as registration at the Chamber of Commerce, the drawing up of regulations and by-laws, starting a bank account, thinking about membership fees, budgets, a professional website, administration, sponsorships and a mission statement containing goals, and measurable actions that can be undertaken in the future. Gaining knowledge is important and taking time to acquire it is essential for the success of the transition.

HELP
We asked for help from other sister associations and gained an understanding of how they were organised. When you start up a website, it’s imperative to know what content management system to use and what software. The help of other organisations is paramount to get a clear picture of the do’s and don’ts. We are not able to do this on our own and received support and advice from other research management associations abroad.

STARTING
The steering committee has presented the new plans to the members, and the first meeting of the new association has been planned. We are now looking down the road towards a professional and ambitious association that provides information and hands-on assistance to all aspects of grant support. This year we will begin with several committees in which members and a board member will start to lay the groundwork of the association. We will take small steps forward and have exciting times ahead of us.
CRM GRADUATES SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

The Certificate in Research Management (CRM) Europe is a work-based professional qualification for research managers and administrators (RMAs) employed in research performing organisations (RPOs) and research funding organisations (RFOs). The qualification is designed to help students and professionals to consolidate their knowledge and skills required to be successful research managers. The workshops for the fourth cohort will commence in October 2018 and are now open for registration.

Participants from the first cohort have provided input to help improve the programme and have kindly shared their experiences from the course, answering the following questions:

1. Why did you take part in the CRM programme?

2. What are your main impressions from the course?

3. How did you find the course workload?

4. Now you are a Certified Research Manager has it affected your career in any way, directly or indirectly?

5. If you were to choose one take-home message from the CRM course, what would that be?

"Evelina Brännvall
1. First of all I wanted to structure my knowledge in research management and learn new ways of putting my knowledge to good use. Secondly, I wanted to widen my network of research managers from within Europe.
2. My impression from the course is very positive. I have learned a lot of new things, which I often use in my everyday work.
3. The course workload was quite heavy, so I had to learn how to plan my work better.
4. Certification gave me the confidence to build my career in research management and even take a step towards leadership. CRM encouraged me to be more active in EARMA working groups. It gave me the courage to apply for an EARMA board member position and succeed. CRM has really boosted my career.
5. CRM will give you new knowledge, new friends and confidence to build your career in research management and beyond."

"Astrid Souren
1. I felt that too many aspects of my job were based on trial and error. With rapid changes in academia and related risks and uncertainties increasing at a fast pace, I wanted to catch up and be able to perform to the best of my ability.
2. The programme offered insights, new techniques and new approaches. It also improved my capacity to evaluate what will work and what will not in any field of research management in my institute by asking the right questions, developing adequate management information and interpreting available information. At a meta level, the programme is not yet upfront in addressing research management challenges such as publishing, open science, engagement, business models in academia, impact and ethics. Hopefully it will develop in this direction through continuous improvement.
3. For me to learn what I searched for, implied spending much more time than formally requested.
4. By having gone the extra mile and taken a more active approach to the performance and management of our institute, I am more effective in my role. The fact I can refer to an accredited programme, helps in the back of my mind, but I never use that argument. It helps my career in an indirect manner, as it has enhanced my performance.
5. Firstly, stay ahead and informed about upcoming developments and always evaluate them in the light of performance of individual researchers and the institute, not for research management as such. Secondly, bear in mind the scarcity of resources is such that without an advanced research strategy, any institute will be outperformed."

"Esther Philips
1. I thought it would be of added value to my job as research manager.
2. The training days were very valuable. Most trainers gave very good and interactive lectures. Lessons learned were often eye-openers, mostly because you are working among an international group of colleagues.
3. It was okay. I was tempted to put in more work, because that would have been a better learning curve, but since the ‘exams’ were asking us to be very limited, I also limited myself in the end to what was asked.
4. For starters, it broadened my network and I ended up with a group of new friends. As for the content of the course, it is very helpful, for instance how to analyse the research portfolio. It affected my career in such a way that I now feel more confident in advising researchers. This has become an important part of my current tasks.
5. Recognise you are working in an international environment where you shouldn’t take your way of working and thinking for granted.

"Jakob Feldtfoe Christensen
1. To broaden my perspective on research management, grow my international network and enhance my career perspectives.
2. We were the first cohort, so as expected it was a bit messy, but I did connect with a great network and in my new job I can see I have a different and often broader perspective on research, research policy and research management.
3. The intended structure and content of the assignments could have been designed better so that we got more out of the workload.
4. It encouraged me to explore other aspects of research management. My participation in the CRM programme was one of the reasons I got a new job.
5. My take-home message would be to always see the whole picture: funding, administration, culture etc.
The 2017 Conference in Malta (April) marked both the end of one year and the beginning of the next for EARMA. The 2017 conference was a great success with 650 delegates from around the world in attendance at the spectacular Mediterranean Conference Centre. There were many highlights from the conference, not the least the presentation of EARMA’s Professional Recognition award to Dr Seán McCarthy for all his great work and dedication over the years. Many congratulations to Seán again for this well-deserved honour.

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The past 12 months have been a busy one for EARMA. May 2017 marked the first step to the new EARMA structure. The re-structuring was launched with a call for interested parties to establish a number of new Standing Committees. The Standing Committees are chaired by an EARMA Board Member and are an integral part of the ‘good governance’ of the association. Seven Standing Committees were launched between June and September:
- The Annual Conference Programme Committee (APPC)
- The Policy and Representation Committee (PRC)
- The Professional Development and Recognition Committee (PDRC)
- The Membership and Communications Committee (MCC)
- The Finance and Audit Committee (FAC)
- The Statutes, By-Laws and Standing Orders Committee (SBSOC)
- The Awards Committee (AC)

The Standing Committees have been working tirelessly to help the association organise events, become more efficient and to provide more transparency to EARMA members. In particular, the Annual Conference Programme Committee with the organisation of the EARMA 2018 conference. The Standing Committees are the frantic paddling legs beneath the water of the elegant swan!

September was an existing month with a new Chair, Sharon Bailey, and the Board (Evelina Brännvall, Anne Katrin Werenskiold, Doris Alexander, Pasi Sihvonen; Jagdeesh Pabla, Jan Andersen and Anna Groeninx Van Zuyen) officially taking over responsibility of EARMA.

September marked the launch of the new and improved EARMA website and newsletter. Many thanks to the Communication Working Group (Anne Katrin Werenskiold, Maryam Hassan Edalat and Yulia Matrokovitch) who worked tirelessly over a 2-year period to rebrand EARMA and make the new website a reality. The Communications Working Group has now been broadened to include membership and the new Standing Committee, Membership and Communication Committee, has been created. The committee currently has five members from five countries and different professional backgrounds. They have been kept very busy drawing up a Communications Strategy as well as creating, commissioning and compiling content for this [LINK].

October, EARMA attended the ‘Stakeholders Workshop on ideas for further simplification of the implementation of the M&I Framework Programmes’ (FPM) at the Jacques Delors Building Brussels. The workshop took the form of an open discussion with practitioners at working level, going through technical details of the processes, including proposal submission, evaluation, reporting, documentation, guidance for M&I grant implementation as well as IT – a very full and productive day took place. More details with links to presentations can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/2017-10-20/agenda_en.pdf

October also came with good news for European Research Administrators as a whole when COST announced the extension of the most successful COST activities, the Targeted Network BESTPRAC, for another two years. BESTPRAC provides a platform for research managers and administrators to formulate, train and exchange best practices within their profession and contains many EARMA members. For more information go to www.cost.eu/bestprac

The momentum from the start of the year did not wane as 2017 drew to a close! The third cohort of the EARMA Certificate in Research Management (CRM) started in November and joined the second cohort in Brussels, who are now nearing the end of their studies.

EARMAs Thematic Groups were launched in December. Thematic Groups will be the vehicle for members to set the scene within EARMA. The goal of a Thematic Group is to exchange knowledge and best practices around a theme selected by the members themselves.

2018 started as 2017 ended, busy and full of life. Registrations for the European Certificate in Research Management, October 2018 cohort, opened in January and is still taking registrations should you be interested. The European Certificate in Research Management is a fully accredited European professional qualification in the field of research management and is designed to help students consolidate the knowledge and skills required to be a successful Research Manager as you will see from the student testimonies.

March marked the launch of the very first Thematic Group, the Ethics and Research Integrity Thematic Group. It was launched on 1st March at an event hosted by the European Commission (Ethics sector of DG Research and Innovation). The main aim of the launch event was to create a community on Ethics and Research Integrity to meet the demands of the current rapid evolution in this field and the challenges associated with it.

And so, another year in EARMA draws to an end and we hope you have enjoyed it and are looking forward to what the next 12 months will bring!...
EARMA is the professional association for research managers and administrators (RMAs) in Europe. RMAs are key players in research, and the profession is a fundamental component of the complete research process. EARMA is active in developing the research support profession through the provision of internationally recognised professional qualifications. Through the strength of its members, EARMA is a trusted partner in European research policy development.

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