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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Unite & engage

2016 in Luleå
A spotlight on this year’s hot topics for the EARMA Annual Conference in Luleå, Sweden

THE LEIDEN GROUP
Ole Svensings, Chair of the Danish Association for Research Managers and Administrators, reflects on how this new network was created

HORIZON 2020 MIDTERM REVIEW
A valuable insight on the feedback and key recommendations EARMA contributed to the midterm review
Chairman’s corner

"A new EARMA is, of course, more than just a logo. It represents a renewed commitment to be more proactive representing you – our members"

EARMA is getting busy. As the 2016 conference in Luleå approaches, the pace of organisation gets faster and faster. It never ceases to amaze me that our Annual Conference Committee (ACC) manages to keep sane at this time of year, but it has provided a great programme that will ensure one of the richest conferences in recent years.

Congratulations to Evelina Brannvall, Jenny Lindberg, David Lauder and the ACC, as well as Ronan Flood and his team from Advantage Group for bringing it all together.

THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH SUMMIT
I am delighted that EARMA decided to hold its European Research Summit in Brussels. After the awful attacks in March, we spent a number of anxious days reviewing our options and getting advice on what we should do. The almost unanimous opinion of our participants was that we should continue as planned – and we did.

This is not the first time we have had to deal with a situation like this. Earlier in the year, we postponed our Professional Development Programme because of the equally awful Paris attacks. If the “European experiment” means anything, it means solidarity between people in the face of challenge.

ESTORIL 2: THE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE
There has been lots of new work for the Board from the Working Groups’ meeting in Tarragona, which will culminate in a new strategic plan for presentation at the General Assembly. This year’s strategic dialogue in Tarragona proved the value of this ongoing process.

Having the opportunity to dedicate time for reflection and dialogue between the Association’s most active members is a great way to see how the General Assembly’s intentions and the Board’s activities are translating into actions for members, as well as ways to improve our delivery of the Association’s objectives.

THE NEW EARMA
Finally, you will notice, as you move around the Annual Conference, small hints that EARMA is changing. You will see flashes of logos that look like the EARMA logo but are a bit different, like the one on our cover. It’s not a slip at the printer, nor is it caused by all that fresh Arctic air (or any other substance for that matter); rather, it is part of a new brand for EARMA, linking all our activities with a related, but distinct, identity.

A new EARMA is, of course, more than just a logo. It represents a renewed commitment to be more proactive in representing you – our members – and, above all, to keep the Association relevant to all aspects of your professional lives.

John Donovan
Chairman of EARMA
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KURT DEKETELAERE
Secretary-General, League of European Research Universities; Professor of Law, KU Leuven

“I don’t think Europe can mobilise its full intellectual potential if the inequalities in the research landscape, as mirrored by the funding flows from Horizon 2020, persist”

PETER FISCH
Publicist, European Research Policy

“The Commission needs real success stories to justify more investment in research and innovation; it has a lot of statistics on the inputs to research but very little on research impacts”

SEAN McCARTHY
Chair, European Research Summit
EARM A is growing. It has more and more members in more and more countries, and communicating with our members is, as ever, an important task. We have harnessed a variety of channels to communicate through, and have had many audiences to communicate with – but, by upgrading and re-imagining our flagship LINK magazine, we endeavour to provide clear, interesting, relevant and helpful content to our readers.

LINK is a direct, tangible connection between EARMA members. It showcases the work that EARMA does on your behalf in education, training, policy briefing and networking – and we hope that it will become a shared reference of best practice and robust ideas to help you in your work.

EARMA is moving into a new phase of its own life. Since our 2010 conference in Ljubljana, the growth and development of the Association has been truly remarkable – but this expansion brings with it several challenges that we need to address. Some actions have already happened; however, to build a bigger future for EARMA much more needs to be done. You will therefore see several new proposals in this year’s General Assembly, including a renewed strategy, further engagement in the policy process, a sustainable business model around our education and training programmes, and provision of further core support to the EARMA office.

Alongside all of this exciting activity, we present to you a fresh magazine that marks the start of a brighter future for our Association.
Meet the team

**John Donovan**  
EARMA Chairman, Dublin Institute of Technology

**Sharon Bailey**  
EARMA Treasurer, University College Dublin

**Anne Katrin Werenskiold**  
EARMA Board Member, Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry

**Jan Andersen**  
EARMA Board Member, Danish Technical University

**Maryam Hansson Edalat**  
EARMA Board Member, Stockholm University

**Susi Poli**  
EARMA Board Member, Bologna University

**Marjolein van Griethuysen MSc**  
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

**Emma Lythgoe**  
EARMA Secretariat

**Doris Alexander**  
Trinity College Dublin
This year, Luleå University of Technology is hosting the EARMA Annual Conference in Luleå, Sweden. Discover what we have in store!

The 22nd EARMA Annual Conference in Luleå, Sweden, will offer an international atmosphere for research management and administration networking across industry, academia and the public and private sectors. “Luleå is a place for 97 nationalities to enjoy midnight sun in the summer and ice roads in the winter. Everyone is warmly welcome to experience midsummer with us here in the Thousand Islands City!” says our local representative Evelina Brannvall.

We are excited to offer a broad range of hot topics for discussion at the conference, some of which include research and innovation; engagement, inclusion and diversity; new horizons research management; and implementation of Horizon 2020 (H2020). To find out more, visit: www.earmaconference.com/programme

THE CHALLENGE OF ORGANISATION
Considering all of the elements involved in organising a conference, it is no wonder that Forbes ranked conference organisation as fifth in its top 10 most stressful jobs list – just behind firefighter and airline pilot! Helping to ensure that the rewards outweigh any ‘risks’ at the event was the work of the Annual Conference Committee (ACC), in collaboration with the core professional congress organiser, Advantage Group, led by Ronan Flood. As Advantage Group has taken on the majority of the detailed logistical planning, ACC has been able to focus mainly on programme content and delivery.

PROPOSAL SELECTION
This support also gave us time to review the record number of proposals received. Unfortunately, we also had to reject some great topics. We took this task very seriously by locking ourselves in a room for two days to go through each proposal carefully (we did still go out for lunch and dinner!). Key criteria were quality, variety and originality. We hope you enjoy the results.
Implementation of Horizon 2020 – reflections on the practicability and suggestions for improvement

Agatha Keller, Co-Head of the MA in History and Political Science, Annika Glauner, Research Manager for the MA in Art History and Dr Martin Müller, Swiss National Science Foundation Professor, University of Zurich

Thirty months into H2020, this dedicated session discusses whether the European Commission (EC) has lived up to its promise of making things simpler for scientists.

Successful applicants do get their hands on grant money quicker under H2020 than the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) – waiting time has reduced from an average of 330 days to approximately 200 days. However, the current problem is the relation between input and output; between investment and profit. Excellent researchers may turn away from the opportunities offered by H2020 because of the frustratingly low success rates.

This session will discuss the main findings of two networks – IDEA League and IGLO – on the ‘simplification of Horizon 2020’. Topics include: where has red tape been cut? What needs to be further improved? What are the researchers’ priorities when it comes to simplification? How can we better balance effort and results?

Debating this status openly and constructively will allow the EARMA network to quick-start a process for becoming a creative, constructive and proactive partner for discussing H2020 implementation issues with the EC. Innovative ideas, open issues and constructive input will result in more coherent and evidence-based feedback from the Research Managers Community. Carrying out this discussion at the Conference is very timely, as it coincides with the H2020 interim evaluation and the first conversations around the next FP.

ADMIN 2.0 – Answers to SCIENCE 2.0?

Jan Andersen, Senior Executive Officer, Technical University of Denmark and Anne Katrin Werenskiold, EU-Office, Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry

Admin 2.0 describes a dynamic, flexible, multifaceted research support responding to the needs of science in the digital age, known as Science 2.0. Under the keywords: open access, open data and citizen science, the sharing of digital information and new technologies for data collection and interpretation are about to radically change the research arena. How is this new world of digital science going to transform research administrations?

Over the past 10-15 years, an increasing dependence on competitive external funding led to the establishment of research support offices to keep track of funding opportunities and requirements. Additionally, mobility and internationalisation of research increased the need for language and intercultural skills in administrations.

Science for society involves the alignment of research agendas with societal needs and delivering a direct economic impact through efficient transfer of knowledge to industry. Now, open access to publicly funded knowledge and open data pave the way towards the digital world.

Admin 2.0 denominates the goal of the fully fledged professional support unit of the future, close to the scientists’ needs and adaptable to new challenges.

Trends in national and European funding of universities and the impact on university research management

Thomas Estermann, Director for Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development at the European Universities Association (EUA)

In order to fulfil their mission, universities need sufficient and sustainable public funding at local, national and European level. EUA’s annual Public Funding Observatory shows that public investment in universities has declined since the start of the financial and economic crisis in 2008.

In addition, EU funding through programmes such as H2020 is threatened. The success rate of universities has decreased from 20% in FP7 to about 14% in the first calls of H2020.

Decreasing public funding augments the pressure on universities to look for other sources, such as business and industry or philanthropic funding. To attract funding from these sources, universities need to develop a strategic approach towards fundraising and liaising with various partners. These developments enhance the importance of research management and give it a more strategic role as an intermediary between university management and researchers.

Further trends in university funding and their impact on universities will also be discussed at EUAs Funding Forum on 6-7 October 2016 in Porto, Portugal.
Ahead of the EARMA Annual Conference 2016, we spoke with Kurt Deketelaere, Jason Fox and Peter Fisch about what delegates can look forward to at this year's event.
Could you begin by introducing yourselves and revealing which sessions you are most excited about attending at the EARMA Annual Conference 2016?

**KD:** I am the Secretary-General of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), which comprises 21 research-intensive universities in 10 European countries. We have three main goals: first, to promote the interests of frontier research; second, to build best practices among our members; and third, to bring everything we do at the EU level to the national and international level. I am also a full professor of law at KU Leuven, Belgium, which is one of the 21 LERU members.

I think EARMA is right for including several sessions on the Horizon 2020 (H2020) midterm review and the Ninth Framework Programme (FP9) – but I am also happy to see that a number of sessions are going to address the potentially tremendous development of open science. The future way in which we ‘do’ research and science is not only a question of money. We must also tackle issues such as open access to publications, the re-use of scientific data, metrics, the re-educating of researchers in this big data society and more.

**JF:** Ahoy, Dr Jason Fox here. You can find out more about me at [www.drjasonfox.com](http://www.drjasonfox.com) but, in short, I’ve dedicated the past decade to research in motivation design and the future of work. I’ve got a couple of best-selling books on the topic, and I’m particularly excited to be able to share some insights with you at the 22nd EARMA Annual Conference.

As for the sessions I’m most excited about – where does one begin? There are so many great options to choose from. I’m going to be making my way to as many as I can, taking visual notes to share with you as part of my closing wrap-up.

**PF:** For some 20 years I was engaged in European research policy shaping as an EU official in the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation. I was, notably, Head of Unit for the Social Sciences and Humanities and for the Evaluation of the Framework Programme.

Since leaving the European Commission in 2014, my focus has been on analysing European research policy. My aim is to stimulate a broader public debate, particularly through short papers published on my website ([www.peter-fisch.eu](http://www.peter-fisch.eu)), but also through interviews and conference participations.

Against this background, I look forward to the EARMA Annual Conference, and especially to the presentations in Track 5 on ‘Research Strategies and Policies’. In my view, 2016 is the ideal time to discuss this area, as we are soon entering the active preparation phase for the next European FP.

What is the main focus of your talk, and what learning points do you hope delegates will take away with them from your session?

**KD:** Every year, there are issues with safeguarding the annual budget for H2020. We are now looking at what is going to be the influence of the migration
policy on the H2020 budget; there are concerns that H2020 will lose another €1 billion to the funding of this policy challenge.

My talk highlights the fact that we all, as lobby groups and stakeholders, have to emphasise the importance of continuous investment by society for society in European research, innovation and education. We have to put concrete examples on the table of how these areas contribute to societal welfare, and we have to do so in a language that finance and economy ministers understand (in terms of added value and job creation).

JF: My opening session will deliver relevant insights in motivation design – particularly in the context of facilitating meaningful progress through complexity, uncertainty and doubt. But my intention for the whole event is to ensure that you are best equipped to progress the new ideas and insights you obtain from this event. For this, I will also be delivering a visual wrap-up of the event, along with the savvy to make things happen.

PF: The title of my talk, ‘Low success rates are not necessarily a bad thing’, is deliberately provocative. The idea behind my presentation is that our established perceptions about H2020 might not always be accurate – and that some issues could also be tackled in a completely different way.

So, if you join my talk, you can expect to learn more, not only about the benefits of low success rates, but also about hidden insights from the official H2020 statistics. Most importantly, I would like to invite you to think about the unthinkable… an FP without Work Programmes!

This year will be EARMA’s 22nd Annual Conference. How valuable do you think these yearly events are for research managers and administrators across Europe?

KD: In LERU, we have a group similar to EARMA called the European Research Project Managers Group, and this community has had significant input in the development, implementation and evaluation of H2020 – and the members are now looking forward to how the next FP should be set up. I am sure EARMA, which is much bigger and acting for many more universities, plays a similarly important role for their universities as the European Research Project Managers Group is playing for LERU.

JF: Conferences play a critical role in disrupting busyness and the default thinking it brings. This is a chance to step back and ask the bigger questions, to connect with colleagues across the sector and to find new ways of working. Without events like this, nothing gets refreshed, and none of us benefit from collective insight and experience.

PF: Although I am not a research manager myself, I have contributed as an EU official to several of the EARMA Annual Conferences. I have always liked the atmosphere, which I felt was so different from the more classic scientific conferences I attended. For me – and I assume for many of my colleagues – these meetings were a kind of litmus test, a unique opportunity to expose conceptual ideas to a reality check by so many experienced research managers.
Research roundtable: A chance to change

A selection of speakers from the EARMA Annual Conference offer their insights on the below questions:

Following the midterm review, what changes would you like to see to the Horizon 2020 (H2020) funding process?

How do you think the EU Ninth Framework Programme (FP9) will improve upon H2020?
With regards to audits, we should keep the financial rules for H2020 as they are now; they are not perfect but not bad either. If clarifications are still necessary, they should be done in a transparent and unambiguous way for beneficiaries and auditors. In H2020, I see a major risk in a lot of re-work due to the late, reactive audits. They are contrary to the intention of detecting errors early to minimise impact and ensure correction. Still, evolving guidelines and different interpretations that are arising lead to insecurity of what will be accepted or understood by auditors and officers in two or three years from now. Conflicts, refund of payments and a lot of extra work, due to extrapolation of supposed errors, seems pre-programmed.

In FP9, I wish for stable and reliable financial rules based on the known and learned H2020 rules from the first grant agreement.

We need to maintain the funding agreed upon at the beginning of H2020 and stop any kind of further reduction of the FP budget. Solutions must also be found to improve the success rate – not only by bringing in more money, but also by being clearer on what is needed for the first and second rounds of the selection phase.

Money from the H2020 budget should not be spent on new ideas such as the European Innovation Council. While the multitude of tools and instruments already available for innovation are not working fast enough, the solution is not to develop an additional tool – I think we have to reform what we have, not create additional institutions that are only going to further complicate business. In addition, Europe will, of course, be confronted with new challenges like migration, but we must oppose losing another €1 billion of the H2020 budget to tackle this issue. The European Commission (EC), together with the European Parliament and Council, needs to find other sources of funding for new challenges.

A thorough reflection is needed before embarking on a new FP. Is it going to be a continuation of H2020 or should we think about a complete redrafting? Furthermore, should the European Research Council and a transformed European Institute of Technology be inside or outside the FP?

But before we address these questions, I think we first have to consider what the EU is going to look like in the near future. We need to think about Brexit, the current Swiss situation, and the issues with Turkey and Central Europe. Perhaps there will be fewer Member States; perhaps there will be additional Member States – the political situation is going to play an important role in the run up to the next FP.
US researchers and research administrators have progressed in their understanding of EC research funding opportunities. We have seen improvements and ease of operation between FP7 and H2020; one example is the easing of audit requirements for an unfunded US partner.

Our hope is to see the following types of changes in H2020 and/or FP9: first, entities that do not receive EC funding will be allowed to be full partners without having to sign the full grant agreement. Second, in the same way that international organisations are relieved of the requirement to accept Belgian jurisdiction, it would facilitate US organisations’ participation if this exception was also allowed for those that are legally forbidden from accepting any foreign jurisdiction. Third, the establishment of a research office in the US to represent the EC’s FPs. This office would serve as a focused and definitive source of information for both US researchers interested in participating in European FPs and European researchers looking for US collaborators.

We look forward to continuing to work with the EU as it continues to support research and international collaborations.

Before talking about improvements, I would like to state that, in my view, H2020 is in many respects the best FP we have ever had. Of course, there are important problems to be addressed, but the start of H2020 has been much smoother than that of any previous FP.

I would like to highlight three aspects as important issues for the next FP. First, I would ask for more clarity and simplicity in the FP structure. We have reached a degree of complexity in terms of programmes and funding lines which, in my view, puts an efficient overall governance of the FP at risk. Moreover, pre-defined priorities and ring-fenced budgets replace, to a considerable extent, what I like most about the FP – the open competition for the best ideas. After a decade of administrative simplification, this might be the right moment to start a conceptual simplification.

Second, innovation is, of course, an important issue, but I am not convinced that pushing even further for the innovation dimension in the research projects is the best way to proceed. My view might be simplistic, but I think there is a good reason why we have different words for ‘research’ and ‘innovation’ – because the two words actually mean different things. Rather than ‘integrating’ even further, I would opt for a clear distinction between an FP with collaborative projects as a key pillar, and a new innovation support activity (eventually called the European Innovation Council), which might use completely different tools and instruments.

Finally, I don’t think Europe can mobilise its full intellectual potential if the inequalities in the research landscape, as mirrored by the funding flows from H2020, persist. According to my first calculations, the Netherlands has received H2020 funding of more than €40 per capita so far, whereas the amount for Romania is well below €2. In view of the European Research Area, there is an urgent need to tackle these inequalities using completely new approaches. This, of course, is not a task for the next FP only, but the programme design should include more substantive action than only ‘teaming’ and ‘twinning’.
What were the main topics of discussion?

The key areas covered were proposal success rates in the first Horizon 2020 (H2020) calls and the trends that will affect the next Framework Programme (FP). Regarding the low success rates, the European Commission (EC) said the most logical solution was more use of two-stage proposals. Stage 1 should get rid of proposals that are clearly not suited to H2020. A 30% success rate should be the target for Stage 2.

The EC is under pressure to justify to the Parliament and the Council how wisely it invested the €50 billion spent on FP7 and the €80 billion being spent on H2020. The Commission needs real success stories to justify more investment in research and innovation; it has a lot of statistics on the inputs to research but very little on research impacts.

Can you outline any significant news that came out of the presentations?

The important news was that the debate on the next FP has already started, although discussion of the H2020 midterm review will be the official kick off. The contribution by EARMA is an example of what organisations should be doing if they want to participate in the EU decision-making process.

The presentation by Jan van den Biesen (Vice President, Public R&D Programs, Philips Research) showed how big research-intensive companies view programmes like H2020. Philips was able to cooperate easily with any research centre in Europe for H2020 and across commercial contract research projects.

Kurt Deketelaere (Secretary-General, League of European Research Universities) said that focus on funding has shifted from convincing research ministries to convincing finance ministries – an important point for organisations like EARMA that are concerned with long-term trends affecting the sector.

Do you have any comments on the format that could be considered for future summits?

The European Research Summit is an important initiative by EARMA. The timing was perfect, as the debate on the next FP is just starting. My recommendation is that similar summits should be held at key points in the development of FP9.

The main role of future iterations would be to follow the debate through the different stages (consultation, drafting, proposing and adopting).

The Summit should be seen as a mechanism where the EARMA community is updated on progress of the discussion, but also as a mechanism whereby the EC can get valuable and honest feedback, as it works with groups that it trusts and that have credibility. To be invited to participate is a big vote of confidence in EARMA.
As an association run by volunteers, EARMA has to confront the same issues faced by similar organisations, such as changes in the number of volunteers contributing and their time commitment, fluctuations in group memberships and responsibilities, and an imbalance between expectations by the membership and the association’s resources and workforce. Wise planning and prioritising are essential to cope with these obstacles. The EARMA Board therefore devised the concept of a ‘Strategic Conversation’ between the Board and the EARMA Working Groups. ‘The purpose of this conversation is to give the Board and Working Groups the opportunity to meet for an extended period of time outside the confines of the Annual Conference to discuss the Association and what it should be and do,’ EARMA Chair John Donovan outlines.

The first Strategic Conversation – held in Estoril in early October 2013 – led to practical improvements such as the installation of a professional office for EARMA (run successfully by Emma Lythgoe), the launch of the Professional Development Programme and a new EARMA website. This will become the go-to-place for research managers and administrators in Europe in terms of competence, representation, recognition and insight.

The second Strategic Conversation was held at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain, on 4-6 March 2016. During this intense weekend, 28 participants provided new ideas and helped stake out EARMA’s course in the years to come. A common theme emerged from all the discussion groups: after many improvements to EARMA, a remaining issue is communication, both internally and ‘to the world’. To tackle this, professionalisation of communication has become the number one priority for EARMA.
EARMA opens the Horizon 2020 midterm review

Doris Alexander, Anne Katrin Werenskiold, Yulia Matskevich, EARMA European Research Area Working Group; John Donovan, Chairman of EARMA
EARMA and its members have been closely monitoring Horizon 2020 (H2020) since its inception – and we positively support the programme and welcome many of the enhancements to it over previous Framework Programmes (FPs). Furthermore, we are delighted to contribute to ongoing discussions around the development of H2020 and, following an extensive consultation among our members, have made a series of recommendations that we feel will improve the outcomes for all H2020 stakeholders. Here, we present a short synopsis of the ‘Contribution from EARMA to the midterm review of Horizon 2020’.

SIMPLIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATION
H2020 aimed to radically simplify the administration process found in previous FPs. Yet some of these simplifications may actually be imposing additional administrative burdens.

Recommendation: Further effective administrative simplification must continue and be based on trust between the European Commission (EC) and research performers with appropriate levels of verification where warranted.

CLEARER DEFINITIONS OF IMPACT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EVALUATION
While selecting an appropriate H2020 challenge may be relatively simple, choosing a particular call topic for inclusion and translating it into the identified call impacts is not so straightforward. It is also not apparent how the ‘H2020 indicators’ document, which outlines how the results and impacts of H2020 are to be assessed, influences impact statements or is used in evaluating the impact of a given project proposal.

Recommendation: Clearer definitions of expected impacts in the work programmes/call documentation are needed. We also believe a clear briefing should be provided on the distinction between different categories of impact.

THE INTEGRATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES AND THE PROMOTION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
Fully interdisciplinary research is key to solving the world’s societal challenges. Interdisciplinarity can cover a broad spectrum, from remaining within science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) or social sciences and humanities (SSH) to the inclusion of both STEM and SSH, and beyond, as well as the inclusion of a variety of different stakeholder types.

Recommendation: In any H2020 documentation, the term ‘interdisciplinarity’ should not be used where promoting ‘SSH inclusion’ is the intent and vice versa. In addition, a clear H2020-wide definition of interdisciplinarity should be provided for both applicants and evaluators.

SSH INCLUSION
The EC’s report on integration of SSH in H2020 clearly shows that the quality of SSH integration is very uneven across projects. Indeed, 28% of projects funded under topics flagged for SSH do not integrate any contributions from SSH. Thus, it seems there is a misalignment between the intention of the topics flagged, the applications submitted and the applications selected for funding. SSH should not be seen as an ‘add on’ to a STEM project; rather, it should be fully included in the totality of proposal design.
Recommendation: The clear identification of topics suitable both for SSH inclusion and SSH lead is needed. To properly assess SSH contribution, evaluation panels require more expertise from across the SSH spectrum.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY MANAGEMENT
The management of interdisciplinary projects – whether within STEM or SSH, across the two or beyond – brings challenges. The success of such projects is therefore somewhat dependent on the effective management of interdisciplinary interactions. However, many evaluators lack understanding of these dynamics within interdisciplinary projects.

Recommendation: Large-scale interdisciplinary projects should have an individual evaluator and/or a member of the panel review who has expertise to judge the feasibility of the project’s interdisciplinary management.

REVIEWING THE REVIEWERS
Occasional reviews of the panel discussions would ensure that there is sufficient transparency around the process and consistency across different panel meetings. The reviewer would not be a part of the panel but would act as an observer on behalf of the EC.

Recommendation: For the sake of transparency, the observer system in the proposal evaluation process should be revived.

THE TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL SPECTRUM IN H2020
There are growing concerns that H2020 – in particular Pillars 2 and 3 – now concentrates on projects with higher technology readiness levels (TRLs). As such, there is a perceived squeezing out of higher level educational organisations from participation in these pillars. The reduction in funding for lower TRL projects carries the risk that H2020 will lose its attractiveness for university participants. The focus on higher TRL levels in the call topics for Pillar 3: Societal Challenges could lead to the breakup of longstanding, successful European-wide interdisciplinary collaborations.

Recommendation: A new two-phased project activity instrument for collaborative projects in Pillar 3 should be developed, with Phase 1 aligned with projects covering a spectrum of lower- to mid-range TRLs. Phase 2 funding could be applied to move appropriate projects from Phase 0 or 1 along the value chain and into the higher-range TRLs.

TACKLING OVERSUBSCRIPTION AND FEEDBACK
Oversubscription in H2020 induced low overall success rates (an average of 14% and decreasing). Considering the high economic cost of bid preparation, this low success rate discourages further participation.

EARMA, in general, welcomes the recent statement of Robert-Jan Smits in Research Europe indicating that the EC is planning to use restrictive two-stage evaluation procedures, ensuring success rates above 30% in stage two in the future. However, having an increased emphasis on impact in stage one evaluations can only work if applicants know exactly what the expected impacts (aligned to the correct TRL) are and whether SSH integration should be included.

Recommendation: Excellence for low TRLs, and excellence plus very clearly defined impact statements for projects extending into the higher TRLs, should be the requirements for a proposal to access stage two, where a success rate of 30-40% should be ensured. Such an approach would massively reduce the workload for all proposals that are rejected in the first evaluation.

CONCLUSION
EARMA recognises that programmes such as H2020 grow and develop all the time, and that there is a willingness on the part of the EC to be responsive.

There are numerous stakeholders in the H2020 process sharing many of the same concerns. However, here, we have tried to highlight issues that specifically arise for our members or their clients, the researchers that carry out the work.

We remain willing and able to engage with the EC and other stakeholders in ensuring H2020 and its successors meet all of the expectations that have or will be set for them.

"EARMA recognises that programmes such as Horizon 2020 grow and develop all the time, and that there is a willingness on the part of the European Commission to be responsive"
We speak to representatives from two of our new EARMA members to find out what their institutions are working towards and why they have joined this international network.
Sciences Po, Université Sorbonne Paris Cité

Amélie Antoine Audo, Head of the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité Europe Research Network, describes how a supportive environment is enabling Sciences Po’s research to address key societal concerns. She also explains the benefits of EARMA membership and why it was important for a French institution to join

Sciences Po is an international research university with top rankings in the fields of humanities and social sciences. In what ways does the institution work to achieve this world-renowned status?

Thanks to the work achieved under the Vice President for Research (currently, Christine Musselin), we recruit top academics from all over the world and provide them with an excellent work environment in terms of career development, administrative support and research opportunities. We guarantee a suitable teaching load that allows academics to provide cutting-edge knowledge to our bright international students, but also to have time to produce their own research, develop scientific collaborations and apply for highly selective grants such as those of the European Research Council (ERC).

Sciences Po only covers five overarching disciplines: political science, history, sociology, law and economics. Because of this relatively narrow scope, interdisciplinary dialogue has always been very active and efficient. This helps expand our interdisciplinarity beyond the social and human sciences, and develop dual degrees and research programmes with environmental or natural sciences. This is also a strong asset in the global higher education sector.

How does research underway at Sciences Po tackle some of the key challenges facing society today?

Sciences Po was created at the end of the 19th Century as an independent institution to train French high civil servants and politicians. Therefore, from the beginning, tackling the key challenges facing society has been part of our DNA. We also conduct fundamental research, and our research agenda is always driven by societal matters: migration, radicalisation, new forms of consumption, climate change, digital disruptions. These are a few examples of the issues we work on and disseminate across multiple channels. Additionally, we are consulted as experts by policy makers.

The recent selection of LIEPP (Interdisciplinary laboratory for the evaluation of public policies) as an ‘excellent lab’, during the French Excellence Initiatives’ highly selective competition, highlights the perpetual concern we have with bridging frontier research and societal issues. This project aims to develop new scientific evaluation methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) and provide advice when an administration or NGO asks whether a public policy is efficient or not.

Why have you decided to become an EARMA member?
What do you expect to gain from your membership?

The Sciences Po membership takes place within the framework of our community – Université Sorbonne Paris Cité (USPC). It is a cluster of eight self-governing higher education institutions and five research institutes.

The European Research Network, created by USPC and managed by Sciences Po, brings together the European officers and project managers of the eight Higher Education Institutions to join forces and take on shared challenges of the European Research Area – especially those embodied by Horizon 2020. These include: reinforcing visibility and outreach of research; developing cooperation and scientific partnerships; promoting technological partnerships; and increasing resources for research and innovation.

Our collective EARMA membership should provide very fruitful exchanges in terms of sharing good practices with colleagues working in a different environment. It could also help to develop an international network and new collaborations that can lead to excellent projects!

I was also informed that France was not very well represented within the association until now. It was high time to change the situation and show that the French community of research managers and administrators is also dynamic and effective!
SOAS at the University of London is the world’s leading institution for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. What are some of the core goals of SOAS?

As an institution, we aim to equip people for a global economy and a multicultural Britain. We do this by advancing knowledge and understanding of these regions through teaching and research, contributing to the development of academic disciplines and providing high-quality education to help our students achieve excellence in their chosen field and develop their intellectual skills. Our role is to create an academic environment that nurtures, challenges and inspires the next generation for a fairer and more cohesive world. This means dealing with pressing issues affecting the world today, such as democracy, development, human rights, identity, legal systems, poverty, religion and social change.

2016 is an important year for SOAS as we are 100 years old. Looking forward, our goal is to further deepen our impact in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. With phenomenal economic growth in China and India, political upheaval in the Middle East and the burgeoning middle classes of Africa, our world-class scholars are ideally placed to provide analysis and understanding of a rapidly changing world. As we embark on our second century, we will offer state-of-the-art research, teaching and student provision – all in one precinct, as we bring the Senate House North Block into our estate.

Having received the Athena SWAN Bronze Award for gender equality, can you discuss the importance of creating an inclusive environment for all students and researchers?

The diverse population at SOAS is one of our greatest strengths, and equality of opportunity is at the core of all the school’s activities. The fundamental principles of the SOAS Charter, which was developed by and for staff and students, include providing mutual support, seeking to improve communications and strengthening relationships. Across SOAS, we are continuing to engage in discussions around improving accessibility and inclusivity. For example, in 2014, the school committed to taking action to reduce mental health discrimination by formally signing the Time to Change pledge. We have recently refreshed and updated our Respect@SOAS policy to underline our commitment to creating and maintaining a school-wide culture of respect as part of its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Why have you decided to become an EARMA member? What do you expect to gain from your membership?

EARMA membership is a great opportunity for SOAS to engage with a wider network of professionals working in research management and administration. We have been a member of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) in the UK for many years, and this has been a useful source of contacts and information. To some extent, however, it has lacked the international focus that EARMA brings, as well as access to updates about opportunities and developments in the European context. We are very much looking forward to connecting with fellow members across Europe, and getting the most out of the information sources, networks and development opportunities we will now have access to. It’s really helpful that there is an unlimited number of colleagues who can be part of the membership so that we can extend these benefits to as many people as possible.
Why join EARMA?

1. EARMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
   - Keynote speeches
   - Parallel presentations
   - Workshops
   - Reduced member rates
   - Networking with peers
   - Best practice exchange across 6 dedicated tracks

2. WORKING GROUPS
   - European Research Area
   - Professional Development
   - Culture and Diversity
   - Communications
   - Annual Conference Committee
   - Global Development
WHY JOIN EARMA?

MEMBER BENEFITS

• Receive the EARMA newsletter
• Participate in the International Exchange Programme (US and Europe)
• Access information on international research management job vacancies
• Join a network of research managers and administrators from over 30 countries
• Share professional experiences and best practices
• Embark on career development through EARMA Academy training opportunities
• Take part in training events and go along to site visits

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

• Be part of a network of universities, companies and other organisations
• Be on the inside track in the development of European research policy
• Be a partner in our mentor programme
• Be a host in our fellowship programme
• Take part in our dedicated seminar programme
The Leiden Group: Just the beginning

Olaf Svenningsen, Chair of the Danish Association for Research Managers and Administrators (DARMA), tells the story of how 10 European research management associations came together to form the Leiden Group – an informal network that facilitates effective communication and potential collaboration between the organisations.

While at the turn of the millennium there were only two research management and administration associations (RMAs) in existence in Europe – EARMA and the UK’s Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) (then RAGnet) – the situation is now remarkably different. As Chair of the Danish association, DARMA, I attend many meetings and conferences where representatives of the RMAs discuss different topics and often discover many common issues. The International Organisation of Research Management Societies (INORMS) is a semi-formalised international forum, with the primary purpose of organising a biannual conference. This year’s event, taking place in Melbourne, Australia, will certainly be the go-to event of 2016 for many research managers around the world.
It quickly became evident to me that European RMAs had more in common than many of our international sister associations. It is not only EU funding that ties European RMAs together; in fact, it seems that national European research funding often shows interesting similarities. A recent example is the drastic cuts in funding for research and universities in, among other places, Denmark and Finland, with lay-offs at universities and cuts for public funders. Another important common interest is the relationship between EARMA and the national European RMAs. Maintaining an open dialogue and good working relationship is vital for both EARMA and the RMAs; for example, if these associations work together, they would be better positioned to wisely safeguard their members’ interests.

The Leiden Group is currently formed of the following RMAs:

- EARMA: The European association founded in 1995
  www.earma.org

- The Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA): The UK RMA, which has been around since the early 1990s and comprises around 3,000 members from 250 institutions
  www arma.ac.uk

- The Danish Association for Research Managers and Administrators (DARMA): The Danish RMA, founded in 2007-8 as an independent, member-owned organisation with currently around 275 members
  www.darma.dk

- The Norwegian Association for Research Managers and Administrators (NARMA): The Norwegian RMA, constituted in 2012 as a network under the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR)
  www.narma.no

- The Finnish Association for Research Managers and Administrators (FinnARMA): The Finnish RMA, also founded in 2012 as a network of Finnish research services
  www.finn-arma.fi/page/english

- The Icelandic Association for Research Managers and Administrators (IceARMA): The Icelandic RMA, also established in 2012
  www.icearma.is

- Austrian Universities’ Research Administrators and Managers (AURAM): A network of Austrian university research support staff comprising 22 members
  www.forschungsservice.at/index_en.html

- Forschungsreferenten: A German network of research support services founded in 2003, with nearly 1,500 registered users
  www.forschungsreferenten.de

- Polish National Contact Point (NCP) network: The Polish NCP for research programmes of the EU has been in operation since 1991 and long been involved in EARMA

- BestPRAC: A COST Targeted Network focusing on research administration in Europe. BestPRAC is not a national RMA, but it does constitute a European forum for research management and administration
  www.bestprac.eu

- Netzwerk Wissenschaftsmanagement: A German network of research managers founded in 2011
  www.netzwerk-wissenschaftsmanagement.de
Benefits of the Leiden Group

The establishment of this coalition of RMAs has numerous advantages. For example, it can:

- Provide a platform for the mutual exchange of relevant information to European RMAs
- Facilitate contact and manage expectations between European RMAs
- Nominate candidates for the Board and Working Groups of EARMA
- Be a forum for suggesting, discussing and initiating collaborative projects or sharing resources between European RMAs. Topics may include:
  - Sharing updated information on the status of European RMAs
  - A European RMA journal or magazine
  - Gathering the experiences of setting up and managing RMAs in Europe; looking at what challenges have been encountered and how they have been addressed
  - Discussing the sharing of offerings, such as webinars, access to meetings and workshops
  - Facilitating members’ study visits and other professional exchange activities

In international relations. Last but not least, learning about the experiences of other RMAs is interesting and provides important knowledge.

FORMING THE GROUP

I soon discovered that the RMA chairs and other representatives were not only nice people, but also had significant common professional interests. Unfortunately, though, contact between the European associations was limited to individual contacts at conferences and meetings, and no forum for the exchange of ideas, opinions and possible collaborations existed. So at EARMA’s 2015 Annual Conference in Leiden, Netherlands, I invited the chairs of the European associations to an informal meeting to discuss the potential benefits of establishing a forum in which the associations could easily contact each other if and when an issue arose.

Identifying and counting up the RMAs for the invitation was an interesting exercise in itself, since there was no comprehensive list. While I managed to identify 10 associations, I knew there were probably more organisations and informal networks that would qualify, but which had neither a website nor formally appointed points of contact, making it challenging to reach out to them.

The 10 RMA representatives met near the end of the EARMA Conference. We kick-started the event with a round of presentations that were really interesting: just as research support services are notorious for being organised in vastly different ways, national RMAs seem to have invented many different kinds of wheels. Some are associations with bylaws, elected boards and even staff; some are independent, member-owned organisations; others are constituted as networks, typically under national academic organisations. What was common across the board, though, was the fact that all the RMAs had come into existence in recognition of the need for developing the profession, which seems to be growing and/or maturing in all European countries.

I found it particularly fascinating to hear that some organisations had met resistance from academics. Apparently, the idea of administrative/managerial staff organising themselves can be seen as inappropriate, and even threatening, by some academics. But while this may come as a surprise, it does demonstrate an aspect of RMAs of which we all need to be sensitive.

The meeting also covered possible areas of collaboration, and there was a unanimous consensus on establishing a communication forum and organising face-to-face meetings for the European RMAs at least once each year – the EARMA Annual Conference being the most obvious choice of venue. It was also agreed that the Group would be kept as informal, and not be made into another organisation.

Since this initial meeting, the RMAs have stayed in contact through email. No name was agreed upon at the meeting but, out of convenience, ‘the Leiden Group’ soon became established. In essence, the Group is nothing more than a mail-based hotline between European RMAs. For example, should I, as Chair of DARMA, have an issue that I wish to discuss with my European colleagues, this is now easily accomplished.

BUILDING THE GROUP

Even if the network is informal, there are still some organisational aspects that need to be addressed and, together with EARMA, I propose that the Leiden Group remains an informal network comprising the chairs of European RMAs. One individual, ie. the chair or a substitute of the chair, represents each RMA. The Group has no decision-making powers, but each RMA may of course enter into agreements as a consequence of discussions. This option would be there with or without the Leiden Group, which may only facilitate discussions and negotiations.

The Leiden Group is also open for participation between all European RMAs – formal as well as informal. Inclusion criteria are necessary and, although this has not been finally agreed upon, my suggestion would be that any RMA with written bylaws and an active, updated member database would automatically qualify. Informal networks should, in my opinion, be welcome, and would need only demonstrate an active, updated member database in order to qualify. An informal network that does not know its members would thus not be eligible to join the Group, which I would hope is perfectly reasonable.
Getting research to stand out can prove challenging. Non-specialist audiences may struggle to understand formal communications and are therefore unable to keep abreast of scholarly and scientific developments. Creating engaging, accessible and easy-to-understand content is essential to increasing impact.

Research Media is a creative communications agency, specialising in the research sector. We translate the language of research to fuel engagement, uniting research, policy and practice.

Drop us a line to discover how we can make your research resonate through bespoke, creative and personal outputs, helping your work to tell its story.
EARMA’s internal strategic discussion process has, at its most recent meeting, reconfirmed the importance of communications within the organisation, outside the organisation and as a key tool for the future growth of the Association. With this in mind, the Board has made communications a priority area and re-activated the Communications Working Group (Comms WG). Comprising Anne Katrin Werenskiold, Maryam Hansson Edalat and Yulia Matskevitch, the WG will ensure that correspondence with members and external bodies is clear, constructive and engaging.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

While some activities have already started, there are further specific areas in which the Comms WG will continue its work during 2016-17:

**Re-branding:** In collaboration with our colleagues and sponsors, including Research Media, the EARMA brand is undergoing a revamp. A set of new logos as well as consistent templating of EARMA documents and collateral will create a brand new and exciting look and feel for the Association.

**Website:** A webmaster’s work is never done! Our website, relaunched in 2013, has already more than tripled in size to a complex and sometimes difficult-to-navigate website. Our Comms WG is therefore working towards building a more logical, interactive, easily accessible and attractive website.

**Newsletter:** The current PDF newsletter is undergoing a transformation, and we will soon provide you with the latest updates on EARMA’s activities via a user-friendly electronic version.

**Blog:** We are also excited to launch an EARMA blog. This creative space will be used to showcase the latest content from EARMA, including: articles of broader or topical interest, meeting reports, announcements of upcoming events and other EARMA initiatives, fellowship reports, EARMA publications, news from the WGs, input and feedback from members, and plenty more. We hope this blog will give you the opportunity to suggest and share different upcoming issues in the field, voice your opinions on research management and administration matters, and search for partners with related interests. Your contributions as members will be hugely valuable!

**Social media:** EARMA’s social media channels are not being used as much as we would like. We therefore plan to increase our presence on LinkedIn and Twitter to build a vibrant and engaged online community for our members – so watch this space.

GET IN TOUCH

This is certainly an exciting time for EARMA – and the Comms WG is working hard to make key changes that will bring value to all.

Feel free to follow these developments, visit the website and send your feedback to comms@earma.org. We hope to hear from you soon!

If you are interested in participating in the Comms WG and sharing your ideas, we encourage you to contribute – influence – change! Contact us at: comms@earma.org
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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Unite & engage

2016 in Luleå

A spotlight on this year’s hot topics for the EARMA Annual Conference in Luleå, Sweden

THE LEIDEN GROUP
Olaf Svenningsen, Chair of the Danish Association for Research Managers and Administrators, reflects on how this new network was created

HORIZON 2020 MIDTERM REVIEW
A valuable insight on the feedback and key recommendations EARMA contributed to the midterm review