

Who are the Professionals at the Interface of Science?

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BESTPRAC-EARMA meeting
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TODAY

1. What is this concept of *Interface of Science*?
2. How does it relate with the professional frameworks used by professional associations (EARMA or by BESTPRAC)?
3. How is this concept helping to frame new initiatives?

Professionals at the Interface of Science

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group



Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education

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The interface of science: the case for a broader definition of research management

Marta Agostinho, Catarina Moniz Alves, Sandra Aresta, Filipa Borrego, Júlio Borlido-Santos, João Cortez, Tatiana Lima Costa, José António Lopes, Susana Moreira, José Santos, Margarida Trindade, Carolina Varela & Sheila Vidal

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Platform for the Interface of Science

Informal network of professionals in Portugal

- non-academic and semi-academic professionals
- all levels of academic degrees
- work on communication, knowledge transfer, valorisation, impact, policy, funding, post-award, lab management etc.)
- work at universities, research centres (public, private), companies, funding agencies



Professionals at the Interface of Science



We propose a new **umbrella definition** for the professionals that work to support and create added-value to Research and Innovation that covers the full diversity of these professionals

Many professions within one profession

- Advanced Training Manager
- Research Benchmarking Analyser
- Research Policy Adviser
- Researcher Development officer
- Science Communicator
- Ethics / RRI expert
- Outreach and Events officer
- Facilities manager
- Health & Safety expert
- Lab manager
- Librarian
- Pre-award manager
- Teaching labs coordinator
- Technology Transfer officer
- Project Manager
- Fundraiser
- Gender and Diversity Expert
- Business Development officer
- International Partnerships officer
- Impact Officer

An easy way to visualize the roles at the Interface of Science



— Pre-award Research Funding
Fundraising
Business Development
Science Advocacy
Research Strategy Advice

— Post-award Project Management
Researcher Development
Advanced Training Management
Ethical Expert
Gender and Diversity Expert
Research Facility Management
Laboratory Management

— Technology Transfer Management
Science Communication
Outreach

What bring us together?

- **Facilitator** roles, knowledge brokering
- **Add value** to research (\neq support) - Defy biased perception resistant to recognising creation of **added-value by non-academics**
- Create **supportive environments** to research
- Combine **transferable competencies** (interpersonal skills, diplomacy, communication, critical thinking, organisation), **technical** knowledge and broad understanding of the **scientific endeavour**
- Potential for mobility **across research disciplines and institutions**
- Defy the classic **dichotomy of the research sector** that divides players among 'researchers' and 'administrative' support

Where should the boundaries of the interface of science be set?

INCLUDED:

- Activities intrinsically embedded and specific to the R&I ecosystem; differentiated responsibilities beyond general administrative roles

EXCLUDED:

- Research
- Activities not specific to the R&I ecosystem

Where do boundaries really are?

- Advanced Training Manager
- Research Benchmarking Analyser
- Research Policy Adviser
- Researcher Development officer
- Science Communicator
- Ethics / RRI expert
- Outreach and Events officer
- Facilities manager
- Health & Safety expert
- Lab manager
- Librarian
- Pre-award manager
- Teaching labs coordinator
- Technology Transfer officer
- Project Manager
- Fundraiser
- Gender and Diversity Expert
- Business Development officer
- International Partnerships officer
- Impact Officer

• Accountant Auditor Lawyer Security IT Human Resources

Research project
financial management

Research specialised
legal support

IT development

HR specialised
in research
careers



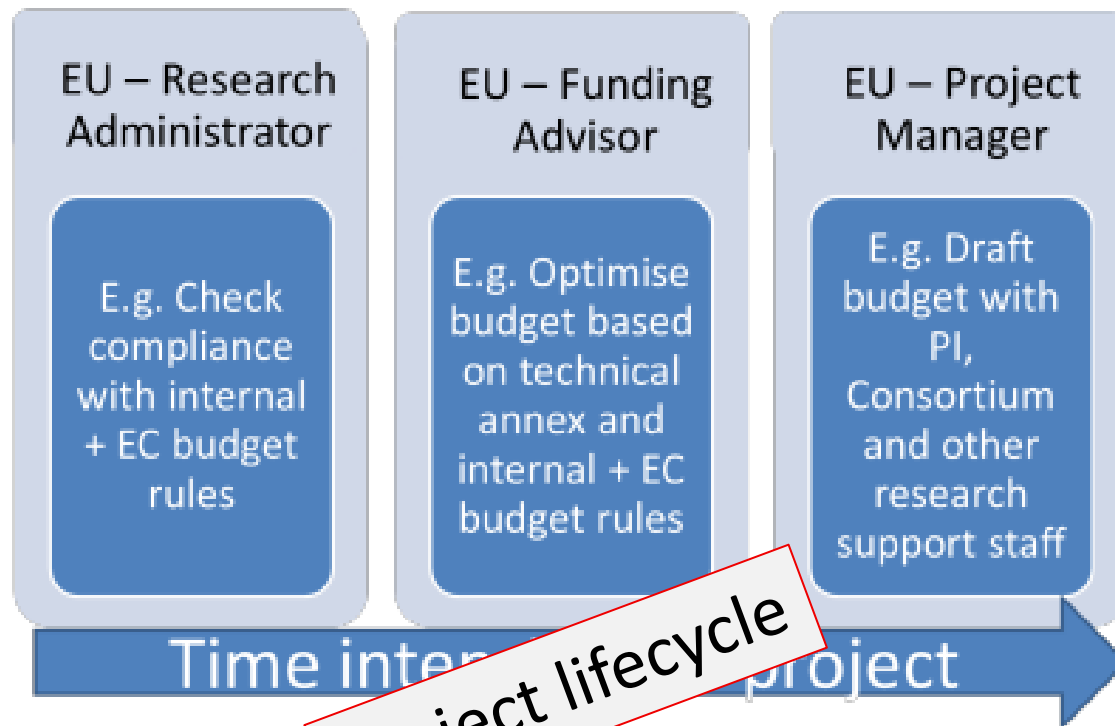
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How does this concept relate with the professional frameworks in use by EARMA and BESTPRAC?

BESTPRAC Cost Action www.bestprac.eu

Framework for Research Administration during project life cycle



The BESTPRAC community is diverse but the underlying professional framework is slight conservative because it can exclude professionals whose work is not directly linked with the project lifecycle

ARMA Professional Development Framework used by EARMA

Leadership ■ Management ■ Operational

The EARMA community is diverse and the underlying professional framework is comprehensive and reflects the diversity within the the concept of the Interface of Science



The naming of professionals within EARMA and BESTPRAC

‘BESTPRAC enables capacity building for **RMA** leading to excellence in research support’

‘EARMA’s mission is to support excellent research by supporting members in their profession as **RMA**s’

Research Managers and Administrators

traditional naming for the professionals



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Why naming ‘Interface of Science’ instead of ‘Research Managers & Administrators’ or simply ‘Research Managers’?

- Several relevant professionals with identities well established (e.g. science communicators) do not identify themselves with the word “Manager”
- “Administrator” may be associated to a biased value perception that persists in higher education institutions that fails to recognise creation of added-value by non-academics

Why is naming important?

It symbolises a specific **professional identity**,
important for

- **Improving professional development and careers**
- **Advocating for professional recognition**
- **Fostering organisational change** - push for new career frameworks and access to decision-making
- **Frame new initiatives**

How is this concept of Interface of Science helping to frame new initiatives?

- From literature review to R&I initiatives:
 - foRMAtion
 - V4+WB Network of Research Managers and Administrators
 - PloS - the missing link
 - ProScience-EU Cost Action
- **BESTPRAC network was the perfect ground** to foster discussions and collaborations

foRMAtion project



Coordinated by Hétfa

- Virág Zsár- BESTPRAC WG1

Start: Sept. 2019



 36
months

€ 388437
in EU funding

 8
organisations

 5
countries

Main goal: Design an Innovative and smart module for potential Research Managers and Administrators in Universities: NOVA | Corvinus | Sapiientia

- bachelor students + teachers

V4+WB Network of Research Managers and Administrators

Coordinated by Hétfa

- Virág Zsár- BESTPRAC WG1

Start: Nov. 2020



-
- Visegrad Fund
-
-

Main goal: to strengthen the network of RMAs from Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia to contribute to their more successful participation in the EU R&I funding programmes



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V4+WB Network of Research Managers and Administrators

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- Virág Zsár- BESTPRAC WG1

Start: Nov. 2020



- Visegrad Fund

Main outputs: Webinar + platform for sharing resources /learning materials *“for interested staff members working on the interface of science”*

PloS - the missing link

SURVEY ON PROFESSIONALS AT THE INTERFACE OF SCIENCE WORKING AT FUNDING, POLICY AND OTHER SCIENCE AND INNOVATION RELATED ORGANISATIONS

Joint task EARMA and BESTPRAC members
Carolina Varela, José Santos & Simon Kerridge

Start: Jun 2020

- Create awareness of the profession, foster self-recognition
- Provide recommendations on professional development

ProScience-EU: Valuing and Accelerating the Impact of PROfessionals at the Interface of SCIENCE



62 proposers, 24 countries, 13 ITC
Submitted in Nov. 2020

Main goal: provide evidence-based research on the impact of the PloS in Europe, tools, methodologies, capacity-building and best-practices activities to support them in advocating and improving their actions and impact.

To summarize

umbrella definition

common traits of the profession

foster an open community

promote recognition and valorization

frame new initiatives



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Thank you. Questions?



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