

## SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) – SCIENTIFIC REPORT

The STSM applicant submits this report for approval to the STSM coordinator

**Action number:** COST Action TN1302, Targeted Networks

**STSM title:** The voice of research administrators - building a network of administrative excellence (BESTPRAC)

**STSM start and end date:** 22/05/2018 to 25/05/2018

**Grantee name:** Barbara Pandev

### PURPOSE OF THE STSM/

(max.500 words)

The Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) The voice of research administrators - building a network of administrative excellence (BESTPRAC), COST Action TN1302, was organized for the support of individual mobility strengthening existing and creating new networks and fostering collaborations by allowing project managers at an early stage of their career to visit the host institution in Hungary with visits to NNC institutions and IPC institutions to contribute to the policy and objectives of BESTPRAC, to allow networking and exchanging financial, legal, and administrative experience, knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer, and increased efficiency in project management; and to establish a network for the administrative, finance and legal services in universities, research organizations and related entities.

The program was structured to give a comprehensive overview of the participating institutions' research management activities. What are the lessons learned from setting up a proactive pre-award research management system, what are the roles and responsibilities on the whole decision-making scale.

The program included discussions on hot topics in European research policy, strategy, and research management issues and gave the opportunity to visit the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the National Research Development and Innovation Office and met the Hungarian National Contact Points, to receive concise overviews of the role of the two institutions in promoting Hungarian research and discuss issues of ERC and MSCA grants from the research managers' perspective.

This Group STSM was therefore designed for early stage research administrators dealing with SSH research projects. The objective of the program was twofold. Firstly, it gave a comprehensive overview of the research management activities of the participating institutions and detailed insight to research funding, policy and strategy-making in Hungary. Secondly, it featured discussions on cross-cutting European research policy issues from the research management perspective, such as societal impact, public outreach, open access and GDPR.

## DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSMS

(max.500 words)

The program consisted of widespread activities with a consistent common theme and line of knowledge prepared to be passed to all participants.

On the first day the action began with the presentation of hosts and participants, which was followed by a discussion on hot issues of pre-award research management where each participant pointed out the most pressing topics and compared them.

We continued by discussing impact under the title “Impact inside – lessons learned from setting up a proactive pre-award research management team at MTKA”, about knowing how to speak about what is important to you, while keeping every discussion in English to ensure a constant use of “work language”. The office follows this line of work in everything, from e-mails, to presentations and interviews. To boost up focus and pre-interview preparation they have conceived fillable intranet forms that gather all basic information required to deliver a more effective interview with the office. It is also a formulary that allows researchers to only get relevant information.

This was followed by “Reflections on identity and branding and a practical comment on “The other side – post-award management at HAS CSS”, followed by the Interactive Workshop: “The everyday challenges of research professionals”, where role-playing was used as a tool to share common challenges and best practices of dealing with them in a most effective and productive way.

Meeting with CEU’s Academic Cooperation on the second day of the action and the Research Support Office (ACRO), gave us an opportunity to get to know additional models of international research management support.

We got even the basic information on RESAVER, a pension fund scheme for European researchers that facilitates researchers’ mobility in the European Research Area. This was followed by a session with law experts on Preparing for GDPR – challenges of implementation, CEU’s case study. We could get concrete answers and advices. It was followed by the discussion on Open Science, Open access to publications and open access to research data. Lastly the session Communicating Research for Impact about finding ways and channels to communicate results and findings to stakeholder in an interesting, meaningful and productive way.

The visit to Hungarian Academy of Sciences on the third day gravitated on themes like “The unique role of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in research strategy making and research support; the Academy and the network of research centres; successful participation at the ERC granting scheme – challenges and RMA techniques”.

The visit to National Research, Development and Innovation Office, consisted of presentations on “How does the national research funding scheme work in Hungary – also: the special role of the Office” and “How does the Office boost international cooperation, MSCA-grants in Hungary”.

The last day held an interactive, case-study focused workshop and roundtable discussion was scheduled: “How to maximize impact and public outreach from the research management perspective?” Cultivating and maximizing the societal impact of past and ongoing projects, “How can RMA professionals contribute to maximizing societal impact? How should one promote SSH project results to the public?”.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED**

(max. 500 words)

The COST BSTPRAC action in Budapest was an eventful week that has given me the opportunity for an overview of the everyday work, challenges, successes and mistakes from diverse perspectives. The most motivating lesson learned was, that we all face the same challenges and problems, no matter the size of the institution, nationality or work experience.

Main contributions to the goals of the COST Targeted Network were the building of professional networks in research project management by the meetings organized by the hosts and other participants. The discussion and exchange of experiences in administrative, legal and financial issues that in common, the learning of new strategies and tools for pre-award management and the plans of fruitful cooperation in the future.

It emphasized how much can be done if there are enough resources spent. Often the case is that the importance of pre-award involvement of the administrative office is something that has less importance in comparison to the post award management. Most of it is left to the restricted approach of researchers that, as a result, are not stirred in the most fructuous direction and too much is left to chance rather than rigorous planning.

One of the thoughts that most stood out was that societal impact building and public outreach start on identity and branding – a concept that is overlooked in the current situation. It is considered too marginally, when a communication research would bring better results in the short and long run.

We learned the importance of knowing your role and how it fits within the institution and about transparency and fixed rules application to prevent disorganized work. Because impact matters and it's exciting. The impact mindset helps to think about creating value by influence, a changed way of thinking and doing, relating and lesson learning, providing tools and creating different possibilities. The difficult social sciences impact was pointed out: How does it make my life better? Impact is an effect of change and benefit on quality of life beyond academic. Therefore, the communication plan should be credible and must consider receptiveness, tailored to a specific country, and as specific as possible about all the targeted EU institutions. It includes a bale of tools, the defined timeframe of results, resistance overcoming and industry bonding where sensible. Being general is not good enough. Another deliverable was: "Online forms make wonders". Formulating a research pitch that should gather approval from the institute diminished the last-minute proposals because of its two-week obligatory notice.

We finished our activities with a wrap-up session: Sharing and exchange of best practices and lessons learned that I can synthesize in:

Be proactive. Be persistent with your proposal. Similar institutions have similar challenges. Networking. Success or failure generate a pool of knowledge that can be channelled as info back to the system. Putting the researchers in a H2020 mindset. Consider context and be specific. Know your audience. Build trust. Strive to be passionate. Set and maintain rules all the time.

### **FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)**

(max.500 words)

ZRS Koper is open for future joint projects. During the STSM we had the opportunity to discuss ideas on how can we continue and deepen our cooperation with possible joint projects under Horizon2020 and FP9 programmes. ZRS Koper is not a university, but it can provide a different approach in a possible future collaboration. As a project manager, I will seek the opportunities to facilitate and promote cooperation and form a partnership with the institutes participating in this STSM.

We agreed that University of Jyväskylä and International University of Sarajevo have good platform for future cooperation, because of their institutional similarities, but the cooperation with ZRS Koper could be more centred on the cooperation with specific Centres of the wo universities, that have similar specific activities, on the other hand the Centre for Social Studies is very similar in the field the research is centred when comparing it's research activities to our Institute of Social studies, so a future collaboration in foreseeable and contacts have already been exchanged.

In case a relevant project idea presents itself soon, I will contact the other institutions to possibly develop a joint proposal.