

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: TN1302 - The voice of research administrators - building a network of administrative excellence (BESTPRAC).

STSM title: Identification and transfer of best practices in research administration

STSM start and end date: 2019-03-25 to 2019-03-29

Grantee name: Gabrijela Radić

PURPOSE OF THE STSM:

The purpose of the STSM was to identify and transfer best practice in research administration, which would lead to increased participation of the University of Zagreb School of Medicine in international collaborative projects (EU funded projects). The STSM exchange between the University of Zagreb School of Medicine (UZSM) and the University of Tartu (UT) was intended primarily to share their knowledge and experience within the Grant office and learn about UT new organization and procedures. The STSM was designed with the aims of BESTPRAC in mind, particularly its focus on allowing networking and the exchange of administrative experience, knowledge sharing and its transfer, and increased efficiency in project management. The purpose of this STSM was for early stage administrator to visit UT and learn more about best practices in research administration in order to facilitate knowledge transfer back to UZSM research management team.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSMS

University of Tartu (UT) is Estonia's leading centre for research and training. It preserves the culture of the Estonian people and leads the country's reputation in research and higher education. UT belongs to the top 2% of world's best universities. As Estonia's national university, UT stresses the importance of international co-operation and partnerships with reputable research universities all over the world. UT includes four faculties. To support and develop the professional competence of its students and academic staff, the university has entered into bilateral co-operation agreements with 79 partner institutions in 31 countries. Research at UT focuses on subjects as diverse as medicine and philosophy, genetics and computer science.

The schedule of my STSM stay included organized meetings with the staff of the Grant office, Centre for Entrepreneurship, visit to the University of Tartu Institute of Genomics, visit to the Spark Hub and partaking in the internal meeting of the project H2020 Alliance4Life.

Meeting with Taivo Raud, Head of the Grant office

- General Information about the University of Tartu and Grant office

Meeting with Laura Tompson, Foreign Funds Coordinator at the Grant office.

- Discussion about the distribution of work in the office – the project pre-award phase oriented and tasks are mainly divided by programs.

Meeting with Eleri Vako, Foreign Funds Coordinator

- Introduction to NIH funding scheme, internal project workflow software

Meeting with Viktoriia Biliaieva, Assistant, Project Writing Team.

- Discussion about the services that Grant writing unit is offering.

Meeting with Vallo Mulk, Senior Specialist of International R&D Cooperation

- Presentation “EU partnerships and University of Tartu”

Meeting with Jane Luth, Head of Technology Transfer

- Presentation of the ADAPTER platform, discussion about the services that Center for Entrepreneurship is offering

Meeting with Kalmer Lauk, Analyst of Research and Development

- Presentation of the “Matching funding software” developed by UT

Meeting with the Kadri Raav, Project Manager at the University of Tartu Institute of Genomics.

- Sharing and exchange of best practices related to post award phase, project finances and project management, discussing ongoing projects and identifying areas for potential future collaborations between UZSM and UT, discussing the timesheet records and internal procedures regarding time record.

Visit to Spark HUB and partaking in the event organized by IdeaLab

- The University of Tartu IdeaLab is providing pre-incubation services (workshops, consultation, collaboration with experts and scientists) for all students and University of Tartu early-stage start-up teams. It is the place where students can turn their ideas into reality by participating in inspirational events, hackathons, workshops, meet-ups with entrepreneurs and pitching competitions. Their extra-curricular business idea development programme STARTER enables students to develop their ideas into validated business models. Hands-on workshops are supervised by entrepreneurs and integrated with mentoring sessions. Mentors are start-up founders or entrepreneurs from different business sectors. Students from all disciplines can join their events and find innovative solutions to everyday problems, test the viability of their ideas, improve teamwork skills and broaden their networks.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED

During the stay, I obtained insights into the organization of the Grant office and Centre for Entrepreneurship of the University of Tartu (UT). Grant Office is a central support office that helps researchers from all the faculties and institutes. Their main task is provision of support services to improve the efficiency of research and research and development policymaking in Estonia and internationally. Office provides help for research projects and higher education development projects. Currently there are more than 1000 projects ongoing at the University of Tartu (national funding, structural funds and international funding, including H2020 and others) – starting from small projects to large H2020 and SF projects. In 2017. UT rectorate decided to restructure the old research support office and create a new Grant office since 01.01.2018. The main focus during the restructuring was to increase pre-award services in addition to the existing post-award services.

Grant office of UT initiated several new pre-award services:

- Providing information about funding opportunities by using Research Professional database
- They are also building a digital grant matching software (to match funding opportunities for individual researchers).
- They started a Grant writing unit.
Purpose of the Grant writing unit is to help researchers to write competitive H2020 proposals.
Services are provided at three levels:

- 1) reading and editing;
- 2) writing specific parts of the proposal;
- 3) lead-writing of the full proposal.

- Also, they have a dedicated employee for “*International R&D Cooperation*” and they are taking much more proactive role towards EU R&I partnerships, such as EIT KIC-s; PPP-s, P2P-s, etc.

Office provides information and advice about all the possible funding opportunities (national funds, structural funds and international funds). Coordinators help researchers throughout the whole life-cycle of the project until reporting and auditing.

Regarding the Technology Transfer activities, University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology lead the network of Estonian universities ADAPTER which aims to provide a quick and easy link for companies and research and development institutions. ADAPTER enables companies and all others to: ask for advice from all the universities at a time; find a development partner to enhance their capability; find a contractor for an innovation; see what services are provided by the universities; learn about financing mechanisms to support the cooperation of companies and R&D institutions. The University of Tartu’s IP protection policy is very focused— priority filings are made in the IP territory where a good quality examination and a search report will be provided (depending on the scientific field, usually abroad) in good time before the Patent Cooperation Treaty deadline. Inventions are taken forward to the PCT only where indications for commercial and patentability potential are present. Central funds for IP protection are present, and inventions with an actual income and/or are used in industrial cooperation are prioritized over inventions with no clear industrial interest. Additionally, new inventions are prioritized over matured ones, to make the best usage of the IP budget.

The visit to UT provided me an exchange of mutual knowledge and information on how to handle and organize a project life cycle as pre-award and post-award services. I have gained good insight into different grant management systems in the field of search for funding opportunities, support in proposal writing, and provision of innovation services that will be useful in performance and optimization of my future work.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)

No concrete actions have been established, though this STSM has certainly strengthened the relationship between UT and UZSM, which has the potential to lead to future collaboration. As partners of the Alliance4Life project funded within H2020 programme, we expect that the collaboration will be extended through the multilateral or bilateral collaboration in various fields. I hope that this will expand to the research administration management as well, where UT can act as an example of best practice in organizational aspects, especially with the results achieved after restructuring.