

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: Exchange of Knowledge for EU Projects Management Tools

STSM start and end date: 19/08/2019 to 23/08/2019

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PURPOSE OF THE STSM:

Sharing knowledge is necessary due to the complexity of research area. Institutions should have communication and collaboration with others to stay updated. Creating network contact lists is a key point to deepen research knowledge. I thought that the Silesian University of Technology is a suitable host for transferring knowledge and best practices.

The Silesian region has advanced in the metal and mining sector. However, in recent years it has also developed in the fields of modern technology, such as information technology, healthcare and automotive. There are representatives of two important automotive companies and equipped hospitals in the region. Silesian University of Technology is a good institution to learn and share best practices about research administration which is the oldest technical university in the region. Both Sabancı University (SU) and Silesian University of Technology (SUT) settled in near to the industry.

The specific objective of the program was to examine and compare the electronic interface systems used in the management of EU projects. I was able to compare what I learned during the program with the e-CZP system used by SUT and the alpproject system used by SU. After the visit, I shared the differences and improvements between the programs with my team. As the project life cycle and data collection area, these interfaces are becoming more widespread in research institutions and contribute to sustainable project management.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSMS

- **Project Management Center**

The center was established 10 years ago. It composed of five offices.

1. National Funds and Projects Office
2. Structural Funds Office
3. International Funds and Projects Office
4. Education Projects Office
5. The Project Finance Services Office

- **Natural Funds Office:**

In application process researchers has to submit their proposal Englis due to University has reviewers from all over the world. Small grants can be an exception to that.

Natural funds can be varied:

- Natural Science Center
- Natural Science Center of Technology
- Ministry of Science
- Foundation of Polish Science (Biggest nongovernmental organization in the area)

There are more than 200 active national projects. The national funds' office has the largest number of projects. In national funds, projects can be one partner up to 5-10-15. This office arranges some meetings and programs to find partners for researchers.

National funds office is also responsible for signing process consortium agreements.

The national fund's office is also responsible for the electronic signature.

- **Electronic Tool for Application and Management of Projects e-CZP**

The project office uses a special digital platform to apply and manage a project. The process begins with the application submission of the researcher. It is obligatory for using the system if a researcher wants to approve it from the project management center. After researchers submit their proposal on the electronic system, the project office is allowed to see and edit the proposal. This electronic tool is not used only for project proposals but also for other routine procedures for signature and security. Employees log in system with their regular email user name and password. All small divisions of the project office use this system. This system was custom made by the universities' IT department. The interface system can vary according to the position of the university in the project. The application form is designed to be user-friendly containing the main information about the project. The researcher must fill the project type, title and choose a related office in the project management center. (national, international, infrastructure or education) The researcher can see former submitted projects on the system. After the researcher submit his/her project via the e-CZP approval mechanism starts. The application is approved by the dean of the faculty and the project management center.

Furthermore, e-CZP is not used for only project proposal but also gathering the data about all project information. The system can sort active projects by name, code or department. It also provides statistical benefits. Every project has a unique project code. e-CZP has been in use for the last eight years. It allows the gradual follow-up of applications. The steps are listed below;

1. The first draft of the proposal
2. Advanced draft
3. Signed agreement
4. Universities approve
5. Financial Issues (ruled by finance office)

E-CZP system is used more often in the post-award stage of the project. Due to SUT is a public university there are many rules to obey during coordinating purchasing and financial activities. E-CZP provides to check project activities regularly.

Researchers and administrative staff can upload documents on the system.

- **Educational Projects Department**

Educational Project Office is more interested in academic projects. Researchers who are experienced in age tend to such projects. The main goal of those kinds of projects to increase the competence of researchers, students, and administrative staff. The educational project department is working closely with the Ministry of Education and the National Center of Research and Development. There are large and small projects. Small-scale projects take a year. There are 111 active projects. Researchers and employees can apply to open calls. They organize kick off meetings with participation from different units of the university.

- **The Project Finance Services Office (CZP6)**

The office supports the academic and administrative staff of the University in accounting for financial resources from national, structural, and international projects. The office also assists in preparing complete financial documentation for funding institutions. The main duty of the office is the verification of budgets in projects. Other tasks include opening bank accounts for individual projects, monitoring and control of costs during the realization of projects to confirm their compliance with project agreements, and making payment requests, statements and reports during the implementation of projects and preparation of relevant

documents. Financial Office prepares the financial reports of the Project in coordination with the Project coordinator.

- **Center of Innovation and Technology Transfer**

I had a meeting with Grzegorz Studzinski who is a broker of Innovation on the third day of the program. The Center deals with SUT's Intellectual property management and protection, creating cooperation between industry and SUT and many other activities. During the meeting, I observed that both universities had similar problems in ensuring that technology transfer offices work with industrial firms in cooperation with universities. Ideas were exchanged on practices that would increase the scope of the collaboration.

- **Medical University of Silesia**

The Medical University of Silesia was visited in the scope of the program. The Medical University of Silesia is the largest medical school in Poland. It has been established on the 20th of March 1948. The dental faculty in Zabrze is very advanced in terms of technology. With simulation programs and augmented reality applications, students can practice many health information before they graduate.

- **Other visits are listed below:**

University of Silesia Visit

University of Economics Visit

International Relations Office Visit

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED

The best practices that emerged as a result of the exchange of knowledge and experience under the STSM program are listed below.

- **Using electronic tools in project management is quite essential to provide stakeholders to follow the project regularly and healthy and sustainable.**

In our work, it seems that there is an electronic solution for many of the problems. We are trying to build a digital workflow for Project management. As I see many of the European universities try to do it. In Silesian University of Technology Project Management Center use a similar electronic tool with Sabancı University which we can follow the proposal and purchasing steps of Project. Unlike Sabancı University, the use of the electronic tool in SUT starts with the submission of the application by the researcher. The proceedings continue after the university board confirms that the application is of sufficient quality and that the budget plan is appropriate for the university. I have observed that this system accelerates the approval mechanism for both universities and ensures that all the necessary persons are aware of the status of the project at the same time. It is also a good way of archiving if the system is available to upload files.

- **Breakfast with Projects- It is necessary to schedule activities to encourage researchers and prepare an appropriate environment.**

Project Management Center has a successful event that they do regularly. There are breakfast and 5-6 tables from project offices. It is open from researchers all over the region. Therefore, researchers can choose a suitable office for their projects and can cooperate with other researchers or find another good idea. These meetings like brainstorming.

The project office is trying to open up space for researchers to apply projects. They have many success stories about it. After joining a program with the support of a researcher project office who has never applied for a project before, he applied for it and received successful results from the first H2020 program.

After that, he managed to get acceptance from his three applications at the same time. To sum up, one of the goals of administrative staff is unburdening the researchers and support them to realize their full potential.

- **Quality of Applications Matters**

SUT is working to increase the number of qualified project applications. Researchers receive extra payment for all international projects remaining on the threshold. A similar study is being carried out at Sabancı University as the visiting institution university. It is a general opinion in the field of research that the number of project applications is not quantitatively significant and that qualified applications are a criterion for increasing the number of projects.

- **Effective and Strategic relationship management is an important element.**

In addition to the regular use of the right management tools, communication is of considerable importance in project management. In the triangle between the project team - the commission and the project management office, each item communicating and being aware of each other is a factor that directly affects the success of the project.

- **Long-life networking provides benefits to the research team.**

Although management approaches vary according to national laws and cultures, the problems faced by the nature of the research are often similar. For this reason, sharing experience is important for project management. Project managers need to be involved in activities in the ecosystem and engage in long-term networking.

- **Aligning research operations is important as an excellent research activity.**

Standardization in the application and management processes of the projects provides clarity. Effective management needs to know what the previous and next stage is at each step. It is vitally important to create standard documents for each stage and to update them as changes occur.

- **Management methods could be shaped by the rules and opportunities:**

The structure of the university also affects research management. Especially in post-award works, the abundance of regulations and rules do not allow rapid actions.

- **Building new network areas in the research project management ecosystem is not so difficult contrary to what is believed.**

One of the most important contributions of the STSM program to me is that it allows me to see that people are open to collaborations in the research ecosystem. Mutual cooperation is a desirable event as it nurtures and improves the system and provides different perspectives on both sides. The European Union finances the circulation of research managers such as Erasmus and BESTPRAC, allowing the host institution to move without a burden and allow project specialists to learn from another and look problems with fresh eyes.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)

- Sabancı University is conducting detailed studies on nanotechnology and composite materials. For this reason, a meeting was organized by the host institution with one of the successful researchers working in this field at the university. Dr. Dawid Janas is the Head of Functional Nanomaterials Group at the Silesian University of Technology. In this fruitful meeting, Dr. Dawid Janas talked about his research areas, projects and showed his laboratories. This meeting provided a good basis for the partnership between the two universities in European Union projects.
- The host institution has scheduled meetings with many of the other nearby universities in the Silesian region, as well as its own university. These meetings paved the way for cooperation with the host institution and other visited universities.

- The exchange of students and staff was discussed with the international office of SUT within the scope of Erasmus program. After returning from the visit, I shared the information I had with the international office of Sabancı University.
- I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Katarzyna Markiewicz-Śliwa the head of the Project Management Centre and Mrs. Ewa Mendec for their outstanding efforts and hospitality during the program.