

11th BESTPRAC

WG1/WG2/WG3 Meeting

“Report WG1: Administration”

March 11-12, 2019 /Tallinn, Estonia

During the BESTPRAC Meeting in Tallinn, WG2 members (36 attendants from 22 COST Countries) the following topics were addressed during the meeting:

- WG 1.1 Reinforcing cooperation in R&I along the Quadruple Helix
- WG 1.2 Preparing for 2021-2027 in R&I
- WG 1.3 [insert your job here] as a centre of the universe
- WG1.4 PM Methodology Guide of the European Commission and BESTPRAC Research Support Staff Framework Roles, skills, methods, tools, techniques to better manage our projects
- WG 1.5 Pick and choose parallel sessions WG1: advising like a superhero

WG 1.1 Reinforcing cooperation in R&I along the Quadruple Helix

To warm up participants and launch a platform for exchange of experiences a World café discussion was carried out in this sessions dividing participants into 8 groups who discussed the each of the following topics during 15 min:

How to better engage R&D of your institution with:

- a) Government sector
- b) Business sector
- c) Civil sector
- d) Other representatives of the academic sector

With regard to the different sectors, working group members discussed the following issues:

a) Government sector

The discussion was led by Fanni Bobák. Participants first tried to define the presence of the government sector in research and innovation. With this regard the following issues were gathered:

- national governments have dedicated unit for European projects and programmes;
- representation of governments in Brussels (for instance the Interministry Working Group (DE) – 1 meeting/year in Brussels). Also, in case of certain countries the network between research institutions and universities has representation in Brussels or can easily mediate the main messages to Brussels, e.g. CLORA (FR), for RMAs, 2meeting/year;

- national foundations for science, research, innovation, e.g. the National Science Foundation in Portugal
- it is also possible that national/local governments directly participate in different projects, but it is hard to involve them, and in some cases, they do not have experts.

Different countries have different practices and levels of interaction with governments with regard to R&I, e.g. in Denmark, various platforms exist including DARMA, network of HEIs, NCP and PC member, etc.. The following **good practices** for engaging the government sector were discussed:

- The best option is to reach a dedicated person (secretory general) and invite to events, regularly, since decisions usually born during informal discussions... – since usually there is no formal way to engage the government;
- lobbying can be another option, however, with that regard transparency should be raised;
- in the case when governments could not have been engaged in the whole process of project development and implementation project's recommendations have to be shared with governmental bodies at the end.

b) Business sector

The discussion was led by Juan Abolafia and aimed to touch upon how HEIs can better engage with business sector.

To do so, the following two motivations drive the business sector to be involved in research and innovation: 1) money & 2) increase of ideas and knowledge.

The following **good practices** for engaging the business sector were discussed:

1. The importance of the role of a Facilitator (Innovation manager) embedded in the technological transfer office was highlighted whose main role is to identify strategic lines;
2. Then HEIs are forced to deepen cooperation with business sphere in case of participation in calls where the involvement of the private sector is key;
3. Engaging with technological centers can support these efforts;
4. Engaging with European enterprises networks or chambers of commerce to get in touch with representatives and to get access to actors from various countries;
5. Internal training events, including matchmaking;
6. Sharing events where different types of stakeholders get together. Client resource management system might be a particularly useful tool to manage all the knowledge that is shared and better mapping of the stakeholders;
7. Lastly, campaigns targeting and involving key sponsors could also support to pave the way for closer cooperation.

c) Civil sector

José Avelino Silva was moderator of this topic. In the first part of the group discussion, participants defined the civil sector, being comprehensive and heterogeneous. Mentioned subsectors that comprise civil sphere are general public/civil societies; tax payers; NGOs; media; alumni; final users of research (e.g. patients); institutions (considered civil to be non-profit such as schools, hospitals etc.).

General consensus was that **each of the above mentioned subsectors require a distinct approach and measures should be tailored to maximize impact** of the specific group. **Focus** on discussion **was directed to "general public"** as this subsector seems to be the most representative, but measures can be applied and adapted to other subsectors.

In the perspective of "Approach and be approached by science" the following approaches were discussed:

- Communicate to the public through "traditional media" - such as TV & Newspaper using articles, short video clips about research topics and outcomes - but also employing social media such as twitter, facebook or Instagram.
- Listen to the public to obtain opinion and receptivity before, during and after research stage. One proposal was to set-up public hearings and open discussion tables with public already during the research proposal stage to better engage public and obtain support.
- Interact with the public to create a trust relationship and involve public. Some good examples put in practice by participants were using apps to obtain data and communicate with public, FabLab/Living Lab and Open days, visit to schools, set-up of study groups, interaction with public in person, but also through social networks.

Some important messages that were retained are:

- Communication instead of dissemination;
- Simplify and make "scientific language" adequate to the public, avoid any "Shibboleth"

d) Other representatives of the academic sector

With the support of Marise Almeida, the delegates identified three axes of engagement: Internal, External and a transversal one with regard to the liaising with other representatives of the academic sector.

Internal liaising takes place within the institutions. This kind of cooperation can have several obstacles, such as lack of time, differences with regard to the agenda management of different stakeholders, lack of international communication, lack of knowledge of the RAS functions and outcomes, as well as the possible conflicts between roles, responsibilities and hierarchy of the academic and research staff.

To smoothen this kind of cooperation, the following good practices were collected:

- Info days with network with the coordinators of the several departments
- Info days with network with students
- Training courses on different topics of Science administration and management (help of Pre and Post-award staff)
- mobility of RAS staff between different departments

- “bank of time”: change culture

External liaising is supposed to be realized with other institutions. With that regard the following actions are considered as good practices:

- Having legal links, agreements with other institutions for cooperation;
- Personal meetings to identify common fields of interest, to seek for synergies, etc.;
- Launching and/or participation in multidisciplinary COST actions (Match with researchers and academics);
- Organizing events, workshops, network with researchers and administrators;
- Short term missions (mentoring/training) each other;
- Training courses.

Transversal liaising necessitates the following actions:

- Think strategically,
- Analysis and use of outcomes, experiences from BestPrac
- Raising the skills of responsible persons to improve networks;
- Change in mind set, think in win-win situations.

WG1.2: Preparing for 2012-2027 In R&I

This session has addressed the following topics at the BESTPRAC meeting in Tallinn:

1. **Updates of Horizon Europe:** Jan Andersen (Technical University of Denmark), Delphine Nicolas (IFREMER-Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer) and Nathalie Queffelec (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)
2. **Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation and expectations for Horizon Europe:** Vesna Bozanic (ISCTE-IUL Lisbon)
3. **Erasmus +:** Virág Zsár (HÉTFA Research Institute and Center for Economic and Social Analysis)

In depth presentation of Horizon Europe and differences with respect to Horizon 2020

Jan Andersen, Delphine Nicolas and Nathalie Queffelec presented 1.the context, 2.the structure, 3.the strategic approach of **Horizon Europe** (HE), highlighting the differences between the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and Horizon 2020 (H2020).

Context

Overview of timeline adoption of HE and explanation of the legal process followed for mid-2018 till the programme will start 1/01/2021.

- Ongoing: Parliament and Council negotiations on Union budget 2021-2027, including the proposed budget of **€100 billion** for Horizon Europe. The shared objective is to achieve an agreement in the European Council by October 2019.
- At the end of November 2018, the European research ministers agreed on a **"Partial General Approach"** to the Framework Programme. This fulfills the necessary conditions to start "Trilogue" negotiations between the Council of the

EU, the European Parliament and the EU Commission (EC) on the legal package of Horizon Europe.

- The first difference between HE and H2020 concerns the involvement of the EC. The Commission has the mandate to be involved in the preparation of the contents of the next Framework Programme.
- By the second half of 2019 creation of a strategic planning to prepare first work programmes under Horizon Europe, including codesign of missions and setting up of partnerships.

Structure

- The focus of H2020 will be kept: Excellence, Application Orientation, Open Science. Nevertheless, their content has been revised.
- Pillar I "**Open Science**" will continue to include ERC, MCSA and RIs, having an increase of the foreseen budget.
- The former pillars II and III of H2020 will be "merged" under the second pillar "**Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness**". The former "Societal Challenges" are transformed into five Clusters with the following research topics (Health; Inclusive and Secure Society; Digital and Industry; Climate, Energy and Mobility; Food and Natural Resources).
- The III pillar will be focused on "**Open Innovation**", a great novelty is represented by the role of the European Innovation Council. It will help researcher and innovators to create markets of the future, leverage private finance, scale up their companies.

Systemic approach

- HE will introduce the so called "**Missions**" as a **new feature** of the programme to contribute to GDGs and reach political global needs. They are intended to work on pre-defined urgent global challenges across all Clusters of Pillar II. Actually, there is an ongoing discussion on Missions.
- The full range of R&I will be supported, from low to high Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs 1-9) across the scheme, with continued strong focus on the European added value and collaboration even at international level.
- Greater attention to deliverables production. Projects could be stopped if the foreseen deliverables will not be achieved.
- Continued streamlined support to European Partnerships: co-programming, co-funding (incl. through procurement), institutional funding open to all types of public, private stakeholders (incl. foundations)
- Allowing restrictions on the schemes certain Associated Countries could participate in (particularly mono-beneficiary schemes) based on the impact on European interests.
- Providing support to and creating more synergies and reciprocity with R&I activities of other EU programmes at national and regional level (i.e. INTERREG programmes) avoiding duplication.

Comments during the meeting:

- **Provide inputs on some specific content related to BESTPRAC follow-up to be inserted in the drafting of the next Strategic Programme.**

Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation (SEWP) and expectations for Horizon Europe was presented in details by Vesna Bozanic, outlining:

1. State of the Art of the program
2. Factors discouraging participations
3. Proposition for Horizon Europe

State of the art

SEWP program aims to unlock excellence in low-performing R&I regions, widen participation of these countries in H2020 and contribute to the achievement of the ERA. The Composite indicator of Research Excellence, with a corrective threshold of 70% of the EU average, distinguish countries identified as "low R&I performing" or "Widening" countries. **The total budget in H2020 rounds 900 million €, being divided in four measures:**

- **Teaming** – institution building
- **Twinning** – institutional networking
- **ERA Chairs** – bringing excellence to institutions
- **Widening fellowships (new):** aim to support researchers of any nationality to undertake their fellowship in a Widening country. Applications can be submitted with MSCA IF call, giving the possibility to beneficiaries in widening countries whose proposal was above quality threshold but not retained for funding, to be automatically be reassigned to widening fellowship.

"Matthew Effect": despite the declared goal of SEWP program, the trend of assigned funding up to now show increasing disparities among countries in terms of access, being that early success of established centres of excellence in competitive R&I programs brought to accumulation of comparative advantage (**e.g. the top-500 organisations in the FP7 made up only 1.7% of successful participants, but received 60% of the total funding**).

Factors discouraging participation

Some barriers, which culminated in low participation of widening countries, have been identified.

Perceived barriers:

- High administrative burden for coordinators projects
- Very low success rate and limited funding for fundamental research
- Perceived lack of R&I excellence (self-selection not to participate)
- Lack of preconditions for success
- Lack of transparency
- Predominant focus on teaching, rather than research in most universities
- Low success rates that reduce incentives to invest in the necessary capacities

Environmental barriers

- Problems with information, communication and training
- Lack of staff with necessary skills and experience

- Insufficient national R&D investments
- Lack of synergies between national research systems and the EU research landscape
- Reduced access to international networks

Proposition for Horizon Europe

The new program “**Strengthening the European Research Area**” will have a dedicated budget of **2.1 billion euros**. The program will provide two measure:

- **Sharing Excellence (€ 1.7 billion)**. Novelties for Teaming, Twinning, ERA chairs:
 - Facilitate specific research elements customized to the particular needs of the action
 - Strengthen research management skills (soft measure)
 - Ensure sustainability via stronger plan (soft measure)
- **Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system (€ 400 million)**

Lessons learnt from SWEP:

- Add seed money for research cost
- Improve the sustainability of the actions
- Reinforce the institutional building component
- More focus on the beneficiaries
- Improve communication of actions toward regional/national authorities

Eligible costs

- In Member States eligible for widening actions, the hourly costs of personnel are eligible to the level representing 1.25 times the national level for the hourly remuneration for RDI projects funded by national schemes.

There are many associations of universities suggesting improvements for

- Twinning
 - Small consortium focused on young researchers
 - Measurable outcomes
- ERA Chair
 - Include funding for research costs
 - More flexibility for successful institutions
- Teaming
 - Continue funding only existing Centers of excellence
 - All proposals deemed excellent after Phase 1 should be funded at Phase 2
- In General
 - Create conditions to offer competitive salaries in widening countries

Proposals during the meeting:

- **Lobbying with new EU representatives during the next BESTPRAC meeting in Brussels (September 2019).**
- **Prepare a white paper to bring to European Commission, underlying the necessity to introduce into the funding scheme (with particular focus on**

SWEP programme) financial support for research administrators, in order to reduce the gap in terms of access to funding opportunities.

WG1.3: [insert your job here] as a centre of the universe: soft Skill development

Interactive reflection and self-development how to alter your behaviour to get your

job done. Discussion leaders, Despoina Xenikaki, Gabriele Picarella, Gréta Björk, Kristjánsdóttir, Sascha Le Large, Nadja Beglerovic, Caroline Strickson, Edwin Kanters

In this session the participants will make **a virtual staff exchange** and finding out more about the BESTPRAC participants in their group. 4 topics will be addressed of which the summaries are described underneath. The conclusion from this session is that although the diversity in the group is large many of us uphold the same believes, standards and work ethos as well as working on and with the same topics and issues.

The job descriptions

BESTPRAC WG1 participants show a large heterogeneity however they all are bound by the administration of research at their organisations. Descriptions vary from, project manager, associate professor, head pre awards, funding officer, head of SRO to programme manager and others. Their experience varies between 2 till even 16 years but most have about 6-7 years' experience some do a PhD and others are members of boards and committees. The group shows a large commitment and dedication and most are happy with their position treasure their level of freedom and independence. They see themselves as generalists and are able to set structure, being part of co-creation with scientists and those who are close to researchers find satisfaction in bringing research to a higher level. The enthusiasm and dedication of these professionals should be cherished but care should be taken with the workload they easily acquire themselves. They wish for dedicated time for professional development for instance on communication, negotiation and deep knowledge on TTO. Regarding the organisation they want more internal projects and get the system better organised in addition most find they too busy to act proactively. Their Dream job has impact on society entails freedom and an environment in which a high level of expertise is required.

Place in the organisation

The organisation size differs from very small to very large or even working for several organisations. The participants are **part of** a research office, project management department research and innovation service, some are connected directly to the directorate others are part of departments and decentralized again showing the diversity in the group. The **size** of the office is in general considered in order and the number depends on the level of service provided. **The position** and service of the office depends on the decision of management.

Participants appreciate the overview they have of their organisation they know what is going on and they also appreciate their close working relation with researchers and other administration. In general the relation and **collaboration with peers** is valued and the larger the organisation the more peers are present to connect to. The participants **wish** to work more collaborative with other offices some would like a different organisation model and more peers and a better overview and integration in the admin cycle. In addition a more bottom up

approach in working with other department's better interlinked organisation better collaboration among the different units is mentioned as an important aspect.

Your power! And hierarchical lines

Hierarchical lines and power

Two different **levels of control** can be identified, those embedded centrally and those in decentral offices. The central offices are in close contact with the rectorate either directly or through management, for decentralised offices the hierarchical lines are more elaborate but sometimes felt as not essential functioning in their own micro environment and the closer to the top the more you will see your influence. Next to the organisational structure **your own experience of control** is essential in functioning in an organisation the group defined this as follows. Personal power and influence can be defined as having specialised knowledge to solve problems other personnel or managers don't have the same knowledge. Participants see regular meetings with management as essential to solve larger issues or if the issue is politically charged. An important part of feeling in control is the trust given to manage the job and the independence. Issues that arise are that the responsibilities are not recognised that go with it and support depends on politics and new management can completely change things. Some of the need for administration should be felt at a higher level. **The wish** is for clearer horizontal structure and more horizontal interaction, more strategy, structure on same page and communication between central and decentral. Clearer and less diluted power all resulting in a better cooperation and allocation of resources. There should also be room for creative thinking and error elimination.

Soft skills you need for you job.

Research administrators/managers are often required to speak a new language, the language of soft skills. It's a language that requires application of some tools which can be learned but most importantly need to be practiced. Below are some examples of soft skills that BESTPRAC members of Working Group 1 at the meeting in Tallinn, Estonia (11-12 March 2019) agreed that should help us be better and efficient in our jobs. BESTPRAC members acknowledged that even though training to improve those skills is not necessarily provided by their institutions due to limitations of funding (although some institutions offer leadership/mentorship or work shadowing opportunities), all members had an understanding and suggestions of what is required to provide a more efficient service.

Effective communication skills/negotiating skills: The ability to be able to reach a solution acceptable to everyone. This requires an approach of being soft but also firm so that our boundaries are still respected.

Coaching/Listening skills: To be able to listen without judgement what the other person says and to empathise. It also requires patience and the ability to trust. It helps getting to know the people we work with, what their preferences are and what's their working style.

Time management/Organizational/Problem solving/Entrepreneurial skills: To be able to organize time around deadlines. This sometimes requires us to look at the big picture so that we're able to find the most appropriate solution in the given timeframe. It also requires us to try and simplify the information, make it accessible.

Positive/Caring attitude: Being open minded and showing flexibility as well as understanding. Be willing to help. A sense of humour helps to break down barriers but also to overcome difficulties.

Team/Intercultural skills: The understanding that we are all different. The ability of collaborating and working together taking into account cultural or other differences. Communication is key to acknowledge those differences as well as creating opportunities to feel inclusive.

Intuition/Creativity: This is based upon the premise that we all want to grow and develop in our roles and therefore we come up with ideas and solutions which may not be immediately available. Using intuition, we can feel whether an idea or a plan of work is not right.

Training to obtain those skills can be several for instance the national associations such as FINN-ARMA, ARMA, DARMA or KEARM, through visiting peers or learning by doing. Getting the opportunity to spend time to earn a degree is important and outside training should be encouraged to provide a new flow of skills and knowledge. HR should be more aware of the needs for research administration and their importance in the success of the organisation

WG1.4 PM Methodology Guide of the European Commission and BESTPRAC Research Support Staff Framework Roles, skills, methods, tools, techniques to better manage our projects.

Empowerment of the research ecosystem at KU Leuven by Wannes Ribbens

The research support has become increasingly complex due to a changing ecosystem and more complex decentralization and diversity of staff next to the presence of several satellite colleges and universities part of KU Leuven resulting in fragmentation. There is a need for assistance, recognition, and professionalization. To identify the group RAAAP and RSSF was used for mapping of expertise. The project started with a top down approach that did not work instead it was changed into a bottom up approach by creating a network for ea. education, sharing of best practices, recognition of roles and information exchange and flow.

A launch event was organized and subsequent events will be organized in the future. The co-creation of the network and material was loosely based on the BESTPRAC RSSF framework. There is a web area for support professionals and it is investigated what courses and trainings are necessary for professionalization. The NeON project is in its initial phase and will be further developed in the coming years.

Open science by Robert Link

Open science is part of the 3 Os, Open innovation, Open Science and Open to the world and is the 2016 vision of the DG research. It is a new approach to the scientific process. Open innovation, creation of new products by many like LEGO crowd sourcing platform. Making new LEGO kits by many. Open government can be seen as policy development by many. Open Science is the creation of science by many (external use of brains) getting new ideas and new knowledge by a radical new approach. It is not only about open access, or science communication.

Erasmus 2021-2027 by Virág Zsár

What will happen with ERASMUS in the new framework, the budget will be doubled from 14712 million to 30000 million, in addition the programme administration and use will be simplified, there will be more emphasis on innovation and there will be extra and streamlined opportunities like in sports. The programme will be extended and reach 12 million people instead of 4 million in the previous framework. There will be more opportunities for non-formal learning and flexibility simplification and streamlining.

The following actions will be part of the programme. For key action 1 mobility for learners and staff in higher-, vocation- and adult education. Key action 2 cooperation for innovation and exchange of best practices in the field of education, training, youth and sports. Facilitating partnerships. Key action 3 Support for policy reform and cooperation, recognizing of competences skills and degrees. Dialogue and cooperation in education but also in other policy instruments dissemination and promotion. Jean Monnet action reinforcing dialogue between academia and decision makers, networks, projects, centres of excellence.

Who can join, eligible countries are the EU27 +EEA + accession countries + ENPI the funding is organized through national agencies the funding is organized through unit costs. The participant portal will be used for application and reporting.

MP2 project management methodology by Edwin Kanters

The open PM2 methodology created by the European Centre of Excellence in Project Management (COEPM2) was developed for the European Commission. The methodology was first used in 2007 and is now open access and can be used by anyone. It offers a guide, template, Wiki and support network. PM2 provides you with a robust methodology to manage your EC project. It divides the project into 4 phases: the initiation phase, planning phase, execution phase and closing phase. The first two phases are already part of the proposal preparation and the available templates can assist in the improving the proposal.

By introducing a project management methodology next to excellent science. During the execution phase this methodology can help the project as well as the interaction with the EC.

Pick and choose parallel sessions WG1.5: advising like a superhero by Edwin Kanters

The Superhero advising skills session was a 1.5 hour interactive lecture toughing some essential soft skills to use when advising in your job (or in any other situation) the aspects were practiced using roleplay. The lecture was based on the principle that the only successful advisor is the one that has results. The following topics were addressed, 1) some general tips on advising; 2) the art of listening to your client; 3) 7% of communication are words the rest is body language and intonation; 4) how to be a trustworthy advisor; 5) empathy in advising; 6) dealing with limiting believes; and 7) different styles in advising.

The role play was performed on the following topics: understanding the other, neurolinguistics programming, and empathic advising