

**COST ACTION NO TN1302 – BESTPRAC: THE VOICE OF RESEARCH**  
**ADMINISTRATORS – BUILDING A NETWORK OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE**

**STSM REPORT: COST-ONLINE STSM-TN1302-20633**

**SUMMARY (THIS WILL BE ALSO USED IN THE COST REPORTING FORM)**

The STSM BESTPRAC is aimed at supporting individual mobility and at strengthening the existing networks and fostering collaborations by allowing - in particular - early stage administrators to visit an institution in another participating COST Country. This proposed STSM to Trinity College Dublin met this criteria and the applicant came from an Inclusiveness Policy Target Country -- Hungary.

The visit to Trinity College Dublin took place between 20 and 24 October 2014. During these five days I was based at the Trinity Research and Innovation Office on TCD's campus. During meetings and discussions with the colleagues at the Research Development Office, the Contracts Office and the Financial Services Division we covered a variety of topics including TCD's financial targets within Horizon 2020, budget preparation, contract signing, financial recording and reporting and preparation for audits and more.

I also participated in a Maria Skłodowska Curie Action Workshop and had an opportunity to meet with the Departmental Coordinators at a meeting that resembled the Bratislava Workshop of BESTPRAC on a smaller scale.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT:**

Day 1, Monday, 20 October:

- TR&I Office Staff Meeting, H2020 key financial targets and research diversification strategy, Overhead policy, Teaching buyout – Oonagh Kinsman, Research Projects Officer
- Budgeting - Ciarán McEvoy, Research Projects Officer: Budget Planning – reviewing budget in terms of the application and the actual work packages, Irish Salary Scale, H2020 Budget template which includes data for TCD and H2020 use, useful tips

Day 2, Tuesday, 21 October: Financial Services Division – scheduled training session with different members of the team

- Elaine Sharkey – Interim Deputy Research Accounting Manager: Overview of Financial Services Division and Research Administration Structure
- Introduction to RPAMS – Research Proposal and Award Management System: overview of the software that was specifically developed to suit TCD's needs.
- Ángel Dominguez – EU Grant Management: Grant set up, VAT, Time Sheets, Reporting
- Michael McCarthy – ERC Grants and EU Portal

- Na Ma – Audit Coordinator – timesheet administration, preparing for and co-ordinating audits, capturing data for management and annual reports

Day 3, Wednesday, 22 October

- Marie Skłodowska Curie Workshop held by Dr. Jennifer Brennan NCP and National Delegate for Ireland, RISE, ITN, Consortium tips and pitfalls
- RPAMS continued – a closer look at the grant management system from the Research and Innovation Office's point of view
- ResearchProfessional.com

Day 4, Thursday, 23 October

- Meeting with Deidre Byrne, EU Project Manager for CENDARI
- Contracts Office – Lyn O'Reilly: PIs and the Participant Portal and RPAMS
- EU Project Managers and Coordinators Network Meeting
- Launching the Blood Exhibition in the Science Gallery

Day 5, Friday, 24 October

- Visit to Book of Kells and the Old Library, lunch with Drs Doris Alexander, Research Development Officer and Oonagh Kinsman
- Summary of Visit, remaining questions answered, sharing of useful templates and documents

### **CONTRIBUTION TO THE GOALS OF THE COST TARGET NETWORK**

My training week at TCD was very useful and perfectly matched the goals of BESTPRAC. Throughout the discussion I gained insight into how proposal development, contract signing and grant management is handled at a historical HEI that has a considerable amount of experience with research projects.

During the meetings I had the chance to share some of our practices and my experiences in the given fields and thus compare the processes of the two institutions. While there are similarities, the differences are considerable – we are a fairly small university where all proposal/project-related tasks are taken care of within one single office while at TCD different units handle the different phases.

### **BEST PRACTICES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED:**

- RPAMS (Research Proposal and Award Management System): Stores and manages documents associated with each proposal and project makes them accessible to the pre-award office, contracts office, PIs and Financial Division. The system is directly linked to the HR system already filling out the data on the researchers involved in the research proposal/project.
- New PIs can register (on an internally accessible webpage) for a workshop organized by the Financial Services Division where professionals working in the different fields of financial project management talk about their respective fields.

- Useful tips on coordinating a big consortium: tips on document sharing and communication tools. Also, it is useful to develop a front page template for the deliverables that includes the basic data of the deliverable – title, partner, contact info of the authors, etc.
- Guide to Good Grantsmanship: a very useful document on the roles of the different offices associated with application and research grant management, lots of useful and practical information on choosing the right funding body, writing a good proposal, putting together a budget, managing a project and more – and all of it with subtle Irish humour.
- Audits: useful tips on how to prepare for it, tips on the most closely looked at items.

### **IMPLEMENTATION AND BENEFITS FOR HOME INSTITUTIONS:**

While some of the practices would only work at TCD or at a HEI of similar size it was still inspiring to learn about them. And there the best practices that are relevant for a small university such as CEU. Getting the big picture of how things are organized on a larger scale help me with my daily work with EU and nationally funded projects and in advising or interacting with (would be) researchers.

I have enthusiastically shared the cream of my training experience and am planning to do a more extensive summary at our next staff meeting.

The colleagues I have met at TCD have kindly offered me their help if needed in the future when I have specific questions related to their fields of expertise. So this STSM has not only been an important learning experience but also a great way of networking and establishing valuable professional relations.

### **FUTURE COLLABORATION WITH HOST INSTITUTION:**

CEU and TCD have collaborated or are currently collaborating with Trinity College Dublin on six different EU-funded projects. The established personal relationships in the different fields and stages of proposal development and research grant management will be beneficial to both partners in the future when planning or putting together a consortium and applying for research funding.

One of the officers at the TCD Financial Services Division has expressed a strong interest in visiting CEU with the aim of learning about and comparing best practices and processes. Since he is not early stage any more the visit is likely going to take place within a different programme. Here at CEU we are open and happy to host him as well as others with the same purpose.

I would like to thank Oonagh Kinsman for arranging the meetings with the different offices and for putting together an intensive, very useful programme that covered everything that was of interest. I also owe a big thank you to everyone who gave their time to meet me and share their knowledge in their fields of expertise.