

BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE BETWEEN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (UCL) AND UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID (UPM)

APPLICANT: ROBERTO MARTINEZ, roberto.martinez@upm.es .

HOST INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON. Michael Browne, Head of European Research and Innovation Office, UCL.

HOME INSTITUTION: UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID. Contact: Roberto Martínez, Deputy Director European Project Office, UPM.

VISIT: From August 31st to September 5th, 2014.

Summary

Exchange of best practices on management issues related to European research and innovation projects between two leading institutions in the Framework Programme: Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and University College London.

Purpose of the STSM

The main purpose was to establish a strong link between the European Project Office (EPO) at UPM and the European Research and Innovation Office (ERIO) at UCL in order to exchange best practices on management issues of European R&I projects.

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and University College London take part in Vision2020, a network of Universities, Research Technology Organizations, SMEs and Large companies which work together for a better participation in the European Programme Horizon 2020. The network was created by UCL in 2013 and represents an appropriate framework for collaboration. The relationship between the two European research offices was started in the framework of this network and the idea was to go a step ahead with a physical visit to ERIO premises.

The STSM was focused on 3 main objectives to be completed:

- Get an in-depth knowledge about the way UCL and UPM promote participation in International R&D projects.
- Exchange methodologies and best practices used in both universities.
- Identify areas for potential future collaboration.

In the following sections we will explain how these objectives have been achieved.

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

The work carried out was structured in 5 days meeting different units in charge of management of European R&I programs. The following table depicts this planning:

Agenda	
Day 1	European Research and Innovation Office <i>Services to promote participation at UCL and UPM</i> Contract Management & Pre-Award Services Supporting the grant process: support services to researchers, interaction, providing information on funding opportunities, dissemination, pre-award European Proposal Management service. Host at UCL: Giles Machell
Day 2	European Research and Innovation Office <i>Services to support project management at UCL and UPM</i> Post-award services Project management services used at UCL and at UPM (negotiation and administration, management support and consultancy services, tools) Host at UCL: Ilaria Marsili
Day 3	Research Facilitator (UCL BEAMS) Research strategy, working with researchers, detection of opportunities, tools, support provided, proposal writing, relationships with European platforms or other lobbying bodies, providing costing and liaising with Research Services... Host at UCL: Henriette Bruun
Day 4	Research Facilitator (SLMS or SLASH) Research strategy, working with researchers, detection of opportunities, tools, support provided, proposal writing, relationships with European platforms or other lobbying bodies, providing costing and liaising with Research Services... Host at UCL: Sinead Kennedy European Research and Innovation Office Identifying areas for potential future collaboration between UCL and UPM Definition of actions points Conclusions Host at UCL: Michael Browne
Day 5	UCL Business Innovation UCL strategy and support to entrepreneurship Exchange of best practices on IPR management Host at UCL: Alex Weedon

Contribution to the goals of the COST Targeted Network

The establishment of a fruitful collaboration has implied a field visit in order to enhance the knowledge acquired in the COST BESTPRAC Action. The visit has fit perfectly with the target groups of the Action allowing the exchange of knowledge among staff of both universities carrying out administrative tasks in support of European projects during the pre and post-award phases.

The Short-Term Scientific Mission has contributed to promote a better and more consistent administration of European research projects at UCL and UPM. The mission has established connections between research projects administrators (including legal, administrative and financial staff in both universities) in order to improve the day-to-day work encouraging professional development and mobility between the two institutions.

Therefore, the mission has paved the way for a stable collaboration between UCL and UPM transnational research offices. This collaboration has included exchange of tools, guidelines, documents used... to support researchers in their participation in international R&I programs.

The applicant has transmitted the main results of the mission to his colleagues at the European Project Office at UPM and main best practices learnt will be analysed to be transfer to UPM.

Description of the main results obtained

The three objectives were widely achieved.

- **Get an in-depth knowledge about the way UCL and UPM promote participation in International R&D projects.**

In-depth knowledge about workflow at UCL, role of ERIO at UCL and EPO at UPM, the work of Financial Services at UCL and OTT at UPM, how research facilitators help researchers at UCL, what services are given at Department level at UCL, how UPM organize research management taking into account its decentralized structure...

- **Exchange methodologies and best practices used in both universities.**

UCL and UPM have a large experience in participating in International R&D projects, so both have set up a portfolio of services along the time to support researchers. The STSM has been used to exchange tools used for pre and post award support to researchers, to understand how both institutions work, to identify best practices to be carried out, to analyse of timesheets, to serve as liaison with researchers ...

- **Identify areas for potential future collaboration.**

The most important objective was to stablish a long-term collaboration between UCL and UPM. Management of research projects is a key service in both institutions and there are many things that both can learn from each other.

UCL provides support to researchers in their participation in European R&I Programmes through three units:

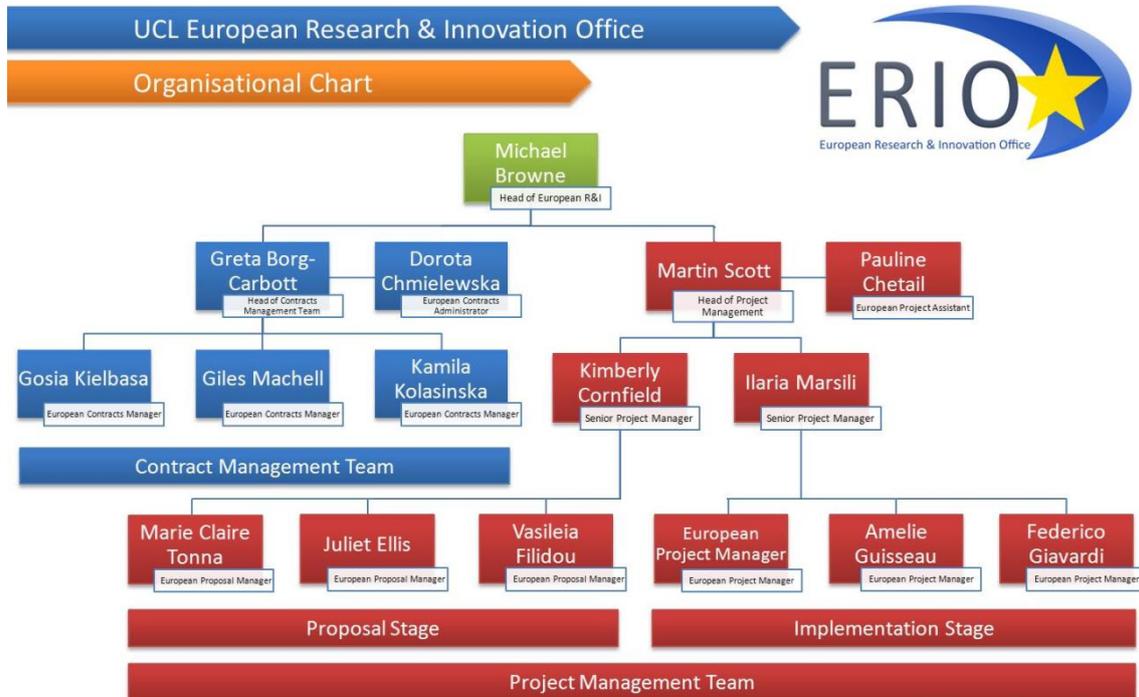
ERIO - European Research and Innovation Office

ERIO is a section within UCL Finance and Business Affairs and is in charge of giving advice to UCL researchers to participate in Horizon 2020. Specifically, ERIO offers five main services:

- Horizon 2020 funding information
- Proposal support services
- Project management

- Project costings
- Contract negotiations

It is composed of 16 people with permanent or temporary positions:



ERIO has implemented two innovative services to researchers with high impact by the moment:

- *Proposal writing service.* This is a service offered and funded via a success fee model. UCL Principal Investigators using the full consultancy service, in liaison with their departments and/or consortia, are asked to agree to the payment of ~1% of the total EU award for the project to ERIO, payable only if the supported proposal is successfully awarded. Fees will be used to sustain the proposal support service throughout the duration of the Horizon 2020 programme.
- *Project Management service.* Depending on the overall requirements and the available Management budget, ERIO is able to offer a range of advice, support and project management services from the negotiation stages until a project's closure, including:
 - Negotiation and administration of the Grant Agreement.
 - Drafting, negotiation and administration of the Consortium Agreement .
 - Project monitoring and reporting throughout the project's life cycle.
 - Facilitation of communications, including the setup and maintenance of collaboration software, project websites and the organisation of project meetings and reviews.
 - Management of Intellectual Property and confidentiality considerations.
 - Contractual management, including the maintenance of the various agreements and the drafting of sub-contracts and competitive calls.

This work is costed into the project's Management budget category, and by bringing ERIO (via UCL) into the project as a managing partner a considerable portion of the administrative burden of EU project management is removed from the coordinating scientists.

Personally, both services are really interesting and will be explored to be transferred into UPM's EPO portfolio of services. There are two main reasons for this:

- *To increase the success rate of winning proposals.* The first calls of H2020 have showed that competition is really tough, with success rates close to 10% in a lot of calls. Only excellent proposals, both technically and professionally prepared, will have a chance to be approved. For this reason, it's crucial to set up a specific team with high qualified people to write key proposals for the institution in order to increase their possibilities to win.
- *To increase the coordination of projects.* Coordination of projects, specially the big ones, requires a huge effort from the coordinating institution. Usually this work falls under the Principal Investigator's back, reducing significantly the available time for research. This fact has a negative effect over the coordination of proposals, because researchers prefer not to waste their time with management tasks. The pilot proved in UCL has demonstrated that researchers are in favour of using experienced project managers coordinated by the central services (ERIO in this case) instead to devote a big part of their time for managing the project. This is another relevant practice that will be explored to be implemented at UPM.

Research Facilitators

Research Facilitators are people who work at departmental level to support researchers to find sources to fund their research. These sources can be public (National or International) or private. Research Facilitators are close to researchers, understand their problems and usually have a scientific background that enable them to understand the topics in which researchers work.

The main impact activity in which Research Facilitators work is coaching young researchers to set up a research group around them. In this sense, the European Research Council is the main funding source that they explore. They accompany researchers in the whole process of submitting an ERC proposal, which highly increases the chance to be successful.

The Research Facilitators scheme would be very difficult to be implemented at UPM, because UPM is much decentralized (20 engineering schools, 17 Research Centres & Institutes). Nevertheless, some kind of network among project managers from all this centres will be explored in order to set up an extended network out of the headquarters where EPO is located.

Financial Services

This service is mainly used for costing and justification. Before the submission of proposals, financial services provide the required information to set up the budget and advise over any

doubt around justification of costs. Also, in ongoing projects, they support researchers with the declaration of costs, Forms C, audits, etc. Overall, financial services gives researchers the administrative information they need for reporting beyond scientific knowledge.

Conclusions

Based on the information depicted previously, UPM will develop an implementation plan to incorporate some of the services explained below:

- *Proposals support service*: specialists to write strategic proposals for the institution.
- *Project management service*: specialists to manage key projects coordinated by UPM.
- *Extended network of collaborators*: taking advantage of the existence of project managers at Research Centres & Institutes, EPO will set up a network with common tools and regular meetings in order to identify young researchers with high research potential.

Future collaboration with host institution

In the framework of the above mentioned vision2020 network, personnel of the European R&I Offices of both institutions have been exchanging common interests on this Programme, thus this STSM would pave the way for a more fruitful collaboration.

In addition, directors of the two Offices have met before in different events organized by the network with the aim of foster collaboration in management and financial issues of European Projects.

This STSM has opened a new field of collaboration between the two Offices. Exchange of information will be made as a regular basis, and physical meetings will be planned take advantage of other events where personnel of the both Offices will be present.

Confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM

UCL FINANCE DIVISION
EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OFFICE



London, 23rd September 2014

**Confirmation of the host institution on the successful completion of the Short-Term
Scientific Mission**

To the Grant Holder of the COST Targeted Network TN1302 – BESTPRAC

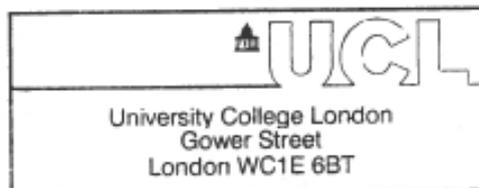
The host institution UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON hereby confirms the successful completion of the STSM stay of Roberto Martinez from 01/09/2014 to 05/09/2014.

Yours sincerely,

First name and last name: **Michael Browne**

Signature:


Stamp of the organisation:



Other comments

I would like to take advantage of this report to kindly thank to UCL personnel, especially Michael Browne, Head of the European Research & Innovation Office, and Greta Borg-Carbott, Head of EU Contracts Management for their priceless support for the development of this mission.