



Building international consortia in EU funded RDI projects and new skills needed

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Content

- Introduction to the topic
- Outcomes from the INORMS / EARMA 2025 discussion tables
- Questions and discussion



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Non-profit company with special tasks

» **Supporting research and innovation, education and public administration and culture organizations:** Expertise, ICT solutions, incl. supercomputing facilities and data management services, solutions advancing teaching and learning and interoperable ICT-systems and solutions

» **Total of 80 active RDI projects:** Involving 68 Finnish organisations, 13 M€ funding

Circa
670
employees



Volume
in 2023

89 M€

Headquarters
in Espoo,
Datacenter
in Kajaani,
Finland.

International partners in EU projects



- The EU's Horizon Europe funding programme for research and innovation intends to
 - intensify cooperation with international community
 - extend association agreements to include countries with excellent science, technology and innovation capacities, and
 - answer to global challenges and commitments
- Nearly all legal entities are eligible to participate in EU funded RDI projects and many countries outside the EU are also eligible for funding

International partners in EU projects



- Building large consortia involving EU and international partners requires specific skills and knowledge not only from project researchers but also from project support
- This could increase the need to develop the existing expertise and acquire new skills
- This provides also possibilities for career development

Discussion tables in INORMS and EARMA Congress in Madrid 2025

- INORMS and EARMA Congress in Madrid, Spain, May 2025
- Presenters: Jenni Poutanen and Noora Tiihonen, CSC
- 15 min round table discussions, 3 different groups
- In Discussion Tables, we introduced the different ways how international partners can join EU funded RDI projects and discussed on three different topics related to skills needed from project support staff
- Diverse crowd from Europe + USA, Canada, Australia, Africa





Discussion Questions in Madrid

- 1) What are the legal aspects that need to be considered when including international partners in EU projects? These might relate to e.g., national legislation and EU Grant Agreement requirements.
- 2) What type of competence and soft skills are required from project members and project support personnel already at the consortium building and proposal stage? These can relate to e.g., understanding funding requirements, legal knowledge and cultural sensitivity.
- 3) How to train and share knowledge with new international partners, who are new to EU rules and terminology, to ensure smooth start and running of the project.

Discussion Outcome – Question 1: Legal



1) What are the legal aspects that need to be considered when including international partners in EU projects? These might relate to e.g., national legislation and EU Grant Agreement requirements.

- A legal commitment already at proposal preparation stage (LoI, MoU)
- Possible standard agreement for APs to be prepared as they do not sign Grant Agreement, or is Consortium Agreement enough
- Utilise local knowledge of the legislation (Embassy?)
- Understanding that the legal and regulatory environments are different, e.g. GDPR, IPR

Discussion Outcome – Question 2: Skills



2) What type of competence and soft skills are required from project members and project support personnel already at the consortium building and proposal stage?

- **Soft skills**

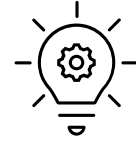
- cultural sensitivity
- communication and negotiation skills, diplomacy
- adaptability, flexibility, problem solving skills

- **Analytical skills**

- understanding the requirements for the application

→ The mix between soft and hard skills does the magic!

Discussion Outcome – Question 2: Skills



2) What type of competence and soft skills are required from project members and project support personnel already at the consortium building and proposal stage?

- **Social skills and social aspect is very important**

- team building: team spirit, positivity
- in person meetings
- bird's eye view

- **Know your partners**

- ask them how they would like to work together
- ask what type of PMO support they would need
- create a safe space for asking questions!

Discussion Outcome – Question 2: Skills



2) What type of competence and soft skills are required from project members and project support personnel already at the consortium building and proposal stage?

- **Mapping the current skills and experiences within the project support team**
 - including language skills
 - assess team's strengths and weaknesses
- **Project support staff training – both soft and hard skills**
 - including cultural sensitivity training
 - awareness of politically and culturally sensitive issues

Discussion Outcome – Question 3: Training



3) How to train and share knowledge with new international partners, who are new to EU rules and terminology, to ensure smooth start and running of the project?

Proposal phase

- **More tailored support**
 - map the current knowledge level of the partners on EU funding bureaucracy
 - have separate discussions and webinars to new partners
 - allocate more time than usually, repeat and overshare information!
- **Simplify the call and EU terminology**
 - explain what is expected from partners and different roles of the consortium members
 - explain EU jargon, focus on essential aspects, update on unfamiliar regulations
- **Cross-cutting issues in proposal**
 - open science, ethics, DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Discussion Outcome – Question 3: Training



3) How to train and share knowledge with new international partners, who are new to EU rules and terminology, to ensure smooth start and running of the project?

Proposal phase and project start

- **Who to train?**

- understand how their organisation work → country's work culture & organisation culture
- find the right persons in right roles (finance, legal) or make sure information reaches them

Project start

- **Tailored support continues**

- understand and ask the support needs
- separate session for newcomers in the kick-off meeting
- follow-up sessions and mentoring

Questions and discussion



Thank you!



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