RM FRAMEWORK

D1.1 Preliminary RM Framework Frame Report

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This report sets out a preliminary framework for Research Management (RM) training and networking in Europe. It provides an overview of the history, present-day diversity, and regulatory context of the RM profession across European countries and offers a foundation for the development of a competence-based European qualification framework.

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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Name/Full Explanation
ARMA	Association of Research Managers and Administrators (UK/other national variants)
ARMA NL	Association of Research Managers and Administrators, Netherlands
AURAM	Austrian Universities Research Administrators and Managers
BE-ARMA	Belgian Association of Research Managers and Administrators
BESTPRAC	Best Practices for Research Administrators and Managers in EU-funded projects
CARDEA	Career Development in Research Management project
COARA	Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service
CRIS	Current Research Information System
CZARMA	Czech Association of Research Managers and Administrators
DARMA	Danish Association of Research Managers and Administrators
EIC	European Innovation Council
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
ERA	European Research Area
ERA Action 17	ERA Policy Agenda Action 17 – Enhancing research management capacities
EARMA	European Association of Research Managers and Administrators
EUA	European University Association
EU	European Union
EURESTMA	European Training Programme for Research Support and Management
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (data principles)
FORTRAMA	Network of Research- and Transfer Management, Germany
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INORMS	International Network of Research Management Societies
IP	Intellectual Property
KRAB	Polish National Council for Research Project Coordinators
NARMA	Norwegian Network for Administration and Research Management
NCP	National Contact Point
PGR	Postgraduate Researcher
PI	Principal Investigator
RA	Research Administrator
RAAAP	Research Administration as a Profession
REA	Research Executive Agency
RM	Research Management / Research Manager
RMA	Research Manager and Administrator
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
RI	Research Infrastructure
RM Comp	European Competence Framework for Research Managers
RM Framework	European Framework for Research Management Training and Networking project
RM1–RM4	Career levels for Research Managers (entry to strategic/leadership)
R1–R4	Career stages for researchers, as per European Framework
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
SRAI	Society of Research Administrators International
SWARM	Swedish Association of Research Managers and Administrators

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1. Executive summary

This preliminary report presents the outcomes of the first nine months of the RM Framework project, establishing the foundations for a coherent and comprehensive framework for Research Management (RM) training in Europe. The work undertaken in Work Package 1 systematically maps and critically evaluates the current landscape of RM definitions, functions, roles, and competence frameworks, integrating insights from major European and international initiatives such as the Research Management ERA Action, RM Roadmap, CARDEA, BESTPRAC, foRMAtion, and EURESTMA, along with reference systems and best practice examples.

The report adopts a multi-phased methodology combining systematic literature review, analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from recent surveys, project documentation, and iterative stakeholder engagement through co-creation activities. By compiling and synthesising diverse sources, the report offers a baseline definition for RM, prepares the ground for developing a common language for RM qualification, segments functions and roles in RM, building on the outcomes of major EU initiatives for the advancement of the RM profession. Special attention is paid to mapping gaps in the existing ecosystem and offering suggestions to bridge these, responding to the varied institutional and national contexts and to emerging needs of the profession.

The findings demonstrate significant but uneven progress in the formalisation and professionalisation of RM in Europe, as well as ongoing fragmentation in the recognition, quality assurance, and mutual equivalence of RM training pathways. The report highlights the importance of coordinated efforts to link and elaborate existing elements into a common reference framework - an endeavour which will be further advanced through continued co-creation and peer consultation within the project and especially through the creation of a handbook for RM training providers. Iterative loops of stakeholder involvement and a pilot-testing phase will refine, validate, and adapt the preliminary concepts developed, ensuring that the final framework reflects both best practice and real-world relevance. The report offers initial recommendations to strengthen the RM profession, expand accredited and flexible training offers, and embed modular, competence-oriented approaches in the development of the European RM qualification system.

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2. Introduction

This report sets out a preliminary framework for Research Management (RM) training and networking in Europe, as part of the RM Framework project. It provides an overview of the history, present-day diversity, and regulatory context of the RM profession across European countries.

The mapping of the ecosystem describes major roles, networks, and functions found in RM, as well as the institutional and policy factors that shape professional practice. The report also includes a gap analysis, highlighting current challenges and areas where the training and qualification landscape does not yet meet the needs of research managers. By bringing together evidence about existing roles, regulatory frameworks, training opportunities, and identified gaps, this document offers a foundation for the development of a competence-based European qualification framework, relevant to training providers, policymakers, and all stakeholders engaged in the professionalisation of RM across Europe.

2.1. Aims

The aim of this preliminary report is to present the work done within the first nine months of the RM Framework project in Work Package 1, laying the foundations for establishing a coherent and comprehensive framework for RM training in Europe. This work aims at serving as the foundational basis for the development of an integrated and harmonised RM training approach. This entails systematically mapping and critically assessing the current landscape of RM definitions, segmentations of functions and roles, and frameworks for required skills and competences, as developed in Europe and internationally. The report specifically draws upon major outputs from projects and initiatives such as the Research Management ERA Action, RM Roadmap, CARDEA, BESTPRAC, foRMAtion, EURESTMA, and other relevant training programmes, integrating these with established systems including ESCO, the R1–R4 researcher descriptors, RM1–RM4 profiles for Research Managers, and European approaches to micro-credentials and lifelong learning.

By connecting and synthesising the elements identified through systematic mapping, the report develops a baseline definition and terminology for RM, presents a segmentation of its functions and roles, and proposes a classification of competences tailored to these areas. This evidence base is then analysed and evaluated for its relevance to the establishment of a European RM qualification framework, ensuring responsiveness to the diverse professional settings and emerging needs of research managers. In doing so, the report intends to set a preliminary frame of reference that aligns ongoing and future work with recognised standards and supports the advancement and professionalisation of RM practice across Europe.

The ongoing co-creation and peer-consultation processes within the project will contribute to refining and enriching the preliminary framework. Subsequent iterative cycles of stakeholder engagement, expert input, and targeted feedback will serve to deepen, validate, and elaborate the initial concepts, ensuring that the framework evolves in line with emerging practice, diverse institutional settings, and the real-world needs of Research Managers across Europe. Through these continued collaborative efforts, the foundations laid by this preliminary report will be progressively expanded and adapted, supporting the development of a robust, relevant, and widely endorsed European qualification framework for RM.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology for this preliminary report is grounded in a systematic mapping and critical assessment of the current landscape of RM across Europe and internationally. The approach began with an extensive review of major frameworks, competence systems, policy recommendations, and existing training offers, including but not limited to outputs from Research Management Action of the European Research Area (ERA), the RM Roadmap, CARDEA,

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BESTPRAC, foRMAtion, EURESTMA, The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and a variety of national and European training initiatives. Established reference systems such as ESCO, the R1–R4 researcher descriptors, and RM1–RM4 profiles for Research Managers were analysed alongside emerging approaches to micro-credentials and lifelong learning.

This evidence base was expanded through an evaluation of survey data, project documentation, and stakeholder consultation material provided by leading European and global projects. The review encompassed both academic and grey literature, drawing on recent surveys, co-creation outcomes, and the reports of professional networks and associations. In doing so, the analysis paid particular attention to capturing the diversity of roles, institutional contexts, and career pathways that shape the RM profession across Europe.

The methodological process was structured in two phases. First, a comprehensive mapping identified core definitions, segmentations of functions and roles, and the principal frameworks for required skills and competences as they exist in practice. Second, a critical synthesis connected these elements, evaluating their suitability and coherence for the establishment of an integrated qualifications framework. The process was iterative, drawing on peer review, stakeholder engagement, and validation among the project's consortium members.

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3. Overview of the RM Ecosystem in Europe

This section provides an overview of the European RM ecosystem, serving as the evidence base for the development of a coherent qualification framework for Research Managers. The analysis includes the evolution of the profession, the diversity of professional settings and roles, the regulatory and policy landscape, core initiatives, the training landscape, key networks, and a gap analysis that highlights challenges and prepares the ground for Part 2. For training providers, understanding the origins, evolution, context and diversity of the RM profession is crucial to address current qualification needs.

3.1. Historical context & evolution of RM

The RM profession in Europe is a relatively recent, yet rapidly evolving, phenomenon. Its roots trace back the expansion of collaborative scientific efforts, the formalisation of research and innovation policy at the European level after World War II and the increasing complexity of research funding and projects. In the post-war years, research activities were largely nationally funded and administratively supported, with only a handful of specialised roles directly supporting researchers. However, the subsequent launch of European initiatives such as the Framework Programmes (beginning in 1984) for research and innovation, the development of technology transfer offices, and the growth of intergovernmental cooperation fundamentally reshaped the research environment in Western Europe[2]. These changes required new professional expertise - professionals capable not only of navigating compliance and reporting requirements, but also of facilitating partnerships, advising on intellectual property, and supporting knowledge transfer and innovation. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, where "Research Management was non-existent as state funding did not pose similar expectations towards research as it did in Western countries"[3] were gradually involved in the EU Framework Programmes from the mid-1990s.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, linked to new governance paradigms in higher education and research, RM began to take shape as a distinguishable profession. New Public Management (NPM), EU-level policy integration through Framework Programmes, the expansion of third-party funding, research evaluation, and the institutionalisation of technology transfer created new tasks and competency demands. Networks and associations emerged – such as EARMA (European Association of Research Managers and Administrators), ARMA (UK), and other national counterparts across Europe – offering opportunities for shared learning, capacity building, and recognition[4].

Professionals performing research support have long been primarily regarded as auxiliary staff involved in bureaucratic tasks and were characterised as 'invisible workers[5], reflecting their marginalised position within academic hierarchies. Over time, the role of the Research Manager expanded beyond finance and contracts to include strategic dimensions such as project development, impact strategy, science communication, ethics, research data management, and, increasingly, leadership of organisational research strategy.

[2] Source: EU framework programmes for research and innovation – Evolution and key data from FP1 to Horizon 2020 in view of FP 9: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/608697/EPRS_IDA(2017)608697_EN.pdf

[3] Virág Zsár, History of RMA in Central and Eastern European Countries, in: The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration Around the World, p. 58 : https://library.oapen.org/viewer/web/viewer.html?file=/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/86164/9781803827018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[4] The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration Around the World: https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/86164

[5] Shelley, I. (2010). research managers uncovered: changing roles and 'shifting arenas' in the academy. Higher Education Quarterly, 64(1), 41–64. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2009.00429.x

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Today, Research Managers operate at the interface of science, supporting the full research life cycle across universities, research institutes, public funders, and private industry. Despite this evolution, many continue to face challenges in establishing clear organisational positioning within organisation structures, with institutional variations affecting recognition and career development. Furthermore, the transition to recognised professional status has been uneven across Europe, with Western and Northern systems formalising this shift earlier than many Central, Eastern, and Southern contexts[6].

The growing demands of internationalisation, funding competitiveness, and broader societal impact have accelerated professionalisation and helped solidify RM as a distinct career path with dynamic roles and increasing recognition. However, the sector still faces significant challenges regarding institutional recognition and impact measurement, as highlighted by the ERA Action on Research Management.

3.2. Where RMs work in Europe: types of institutions and settings

Research Managers, as defined in the EU-funded projects such as RM Roadmap and CARDEA, "enable, facilitate and support the performance of research in all its applications." They "hold generalist or specialised roles within the research and innovation ecosystem"[7].

Research Managers are employed across a wide variety of institutions that collectively make up the research and innovation ecosystem. European survey data indicates that the majority of Research Managers work in higher education institutions, with 63.7% employed in universities according to the RM Roadmap survey (2212 respondents)[8] and 81.4% in university contexts according to the RAAAP-3 survey (5076 respondents)[9]. Within these institutions, Research Managers support both central research offices – which typically oversee institutional strategy, major grant applications, policy, and compliance – and decentralised units at faculty, department, or research centre levels. RMs also work for non-university research institutes, independent research foundations, charities, non-governmental organisations or think-tanks.[10]

Here, their tasks may include overseeing grant calls, evaluating applications, managing public research funding portfolios, advising on science policy, and liaising with a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Especially in medical fields, RMs help manage research projects, clinical trials, grant funding, and regulatory compliance within health research environments.

Some RMs are employed by companies or in public-private partnerships, often focused on R&D coordination, intellectual property, technology transfer, or innovation management. A smaller but growing segment of RMs work in research consultancy firms, offering specialised services such as proposal writing, project management, training, and evaluation for research institutions and collaborations.[11]

Research Management structures differ significantly in small institutions compared to large organisations. "Whilst large institutions can hire support staff in discrete and specialised roles,

[6] Sources: RM Roadmap Survey 2024: https://www.rmroadmap.eu/rm-roadmap-survey; The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration Around the World: https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/86164; Professionalisation of science management—Comparing formal education and training across Germany, Poland, and Hungary: https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/feduc.2022.886173/full.

[7] Final report RM Roadmap D1.2: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/633ae0b47dc8ac471e5978a9/t/6878ba2e8464c26f256d9743/1752742449508/RM+Roadmap_D1.2_HETFA_Report+on+ERA-wide+landscape.pdf.

[8] https://www.rmroadmap.eu/rm-roadmap-survey

[9] https://sites.google.com/view/raaap/data

[10] Final report RM Roadmap D1.2.

[11] More details about the share or RMs based in various Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) are provided by the RM Roadmap Survey under https://www.rmroadmap.eu/rm-roadmap-survey.

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smaller institutions often need support staff to combine roles"[12]. At the institutional level, they contribute to overarching strategies, compliance frameworks, grant management, policy development, and training. Closer to individual academics, they are part of faculties, schools, and research groups, where their work focuses on supporting researchers directly in preparing grant applications, coordinating reporting requirements, and ensuring the day-to-day delivery of operational aspects of research. Beyond these core fields, RM also extends into more specialised domains: technology transfer and enterprise development, for instance, or areas concerned with ethics, data stewardship, and responsible research practices.

For training providers, recognising the diversity of RM's work settings has important implications. The wide range of institutional contexts not only illustrates the breadth of career opportunities within Research Management but also underscores the distinct demands and competencies that arise across different environments. Skills in policy analysis and strategic development, for example, may be important in central offices of organisation and on more senior levels, while expertise in proposal preparation, grant negotiation, or day-to-day project delivery is often more relevant in faculty or research group settings. Similarly, specialist roles connected to technology transfer, ethics, or data stewardship call for yet another spectrum of knowledge and practice. The RM Roadmap survey results also indicate that, in their everyday work, Research Managers are required to cover multiple areas simultaneously and therefore need a broad set of skills and knowledge at the same time. As identified by the European Competence Framework for Research Managers (RM Comp), Research Managers may work at four proficiency levels: Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert. This tiered structure adds an additional layer of complexity that training providers must address.

For an RM training market to be effective, it must therefore avoid one-size-fits-all approaches and instead reflect the varied realities of academic, non-academic, public, and private sectors. While requirements at the EU level provide a common set of standards and expectations, the institutional settings in which Research Managers must fulfil these requirements vary greatly across Europe. Effective training, therefore, needs to accommodate and respond to these varied local contexts. This perspective also strengthens the case for a Qualification Framework that balances breadth and detail: broad enough to accommodate sectoral and institutional differences, yet sufficiently precise to guide individual career development pathways.

3.3. Current job roles and their segmentation

The diversity of RM roles is reflected in the wide range of job titles, responsibilities, and organisational contexts within European Research Management. Key roles identified by the RM Comp based on the ESCO and ISCO classification include:

1. Research Manager (RM)
2. Research Administrator (RA)
3. Project Manager
4. Principal Investigator (PI)
5. Innovation Officer
6. ICT Research Manager
7. Strategic Planning Manager
8. Financial Manager
9. EU Funds Manager
10. Human Resources Manager

[12] Working paper ERA Policy Agenda – Action 17 – April 2022: https://era.gv.at/public/documents/4606/17_-_Enhance_public_research_institutions_strategic_capacity_explanatory_docum_4Fflm4c.pdf

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11. Policy Manager
12. Clinical Informatics Manager

This list is not exhaustive, and job titles have led to long discussions and have been a research question for numerous publications. The field is highly dynamic, new job profiles and titles being created constantly.

It is important to recognise that simply translating a job title or role into English does not always capture its full meaning or responsibilities across the varied contexts of European Research Management. Many functions, titles, and institutional positions are deeply rooted in national research cultures, legal frameworks, and organisational structures, which may not have direct equivalents elsewhere.[13]

This context makes the development of standardised training pathways and clear career progression for RMs challenging. As a result, training providers face the dual challenge of ensuring both clarity and flexibility in their curriculum design. They must offer programmes that are relevant and recognizable across borders, while also being adaptable to the specific needs of their local context. It therefore seems to be more beneficial to focus on areas of RM, developed through RM Roadmap and CARDEA in consultation with the European Commission and stakeholders.

3.4. Areas of Research Management

The RM Roadmap project conducted a broad survey and initiated the biggest collaboration between RM networks in Europe, engaging national and thematic RM communities across 40 European countries in a co-creation process from 2023 to 2025. Within this project, the subsequent areas of Research Management were described. RM job roles, tasks and functions can be assigned to these areas in a multiple way. Some functions are performed in more than one area, whereas most of the areas comprise several functions.

- Research, strategy and policy development, including but not limited to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of research policy and strategy, the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of knowledge valorisation policy and strategy as well as research assessment.
- Proposal development (pre-award), including but not limited to the identification and dissemination of funding opportunities, general support for the application, research project planning, internal negotiations for project formulation, framing the writing process, formulation of the content to be written, external negotiations and consortium building, costing, pricing and enforcing internal budget rules, legal aspects and providing organisational legal documents.
- Project support (post-award), including but not limited to negotiating contracts and sub-awards, managing amendments, internal setup of the project, managing the consortium and communication within, liaising with funders, administrative support, progress management, accounting, project evaluation, funder reporting, legal advice.
- Translation of results: science communication, including but not limited to communication and dissemination of research results, research impact, public engagement, public relations' management, stakeholder event organisation.
- Translation of results: uptake and utilisation, including but not limited to market research, mapping of business finance opportunities, business development, identification of business model, elaboration of business plan, technology transfer, intellectual property

[13] Insights about this diversity can be found in the Reports from the co-creation sessions of the RM Roadmap project under https://www.rmroadmap.eu/co-creation-results.

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management, legal advice on business models, IP and licensing, spin-out management, negotiation of valorisation deals with university partners.

- Management information and related functions, including but not restricted to information systems, electronic research administration, CRISs (Current Research Information System), audit processes, statutory returns.
- Research support service delivery, including but not limited to management, organisation, structuring of research support services as well as mapping, monitoring and reviewing research support service functions.
- Training, researcher development, Postgraduate Researchers (PGR), including but not limited to postgraduate (doctoral) research student administration, postdoctoral affairs, training researchers, managing and effectively communicating training activities to research/academic staff, collaboration with educational programmes, delivering training for Research Managers.
- Research ethics and integrity, including but not limited to ethics and integrity management, managing compliance, and dealing with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- International collaboration, institution branding, including but not limited to mapping institutional portfolio and institution branding, promotion of the institution at national/international events, and public relations management.
- Collaboration with industry, including but not limited to consultancy, securing access to infrastructure, coordinating R&I collaboration, coordinating internship programmes.
- Research infrastructure management, including but not limited to security and risk management, planning research infrastructure & developing sustainable funding model, infrastructure and resource management, as well as business development and innovation in research infrastructure.
- Research data, research information, intellectual property management, including but not limited to open access and open data, intellectual property and asset management, portfolio mapping, exploitation planning.
- Research Funding, including but not limited to the preparation, management, and assessment of Research and Innovation grants.

For each of these areas, relevant skills and competences were identified by the participants to the co-creation process, in four categories: Transversal skills relevant for RM, RM related soft Skills, RM related hard skills and Specialisation or role related skills. These will be used in the Handbook for a harmonised training approach.

3.5. The EU regulatory and support architecture

The regulatory environment for Research Management in the EU is complex and multi-layered, shaped by a combination of European regulations, national laws, and sector-specific requirements. While some regulations – such as the GDPR or the Clinical Trials Regulation – apply directly across all Member States, others are designed to be implemented differently depending on the research field, institutional setting, or national context. This diversity reflects the principle of subsidiarity, which ensures that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizens affected and that the EU acts only when objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by individual Member States.

In practice, this means that certain aspects of research governance are harmonised across Europe, while others remain the responsibility of national or regional authorities. For training providers, it is therefore essential to be aware not only of the key EU laws and frameworks that impact RM but also of how the subsidiarity principle influences their local implementation.

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Understanding both the common foundations and the national variations enables the design of training programmes that are compliant, context-sensitive, and practically effective.

3.5.1. Applicable laws and regulations for research in the EU

For the work of Research Managers, the following EU regulations are particularly important:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – Regulation (EU) 2016/679

As a regulation, GDPR is directly applicable and binding in all EU Member States. It applies to all research activities involving the collection, processing, or storage of personal data within the EU and EEA, regardless of the sector. Research managers must ensure compliance with GDPR in all research projects, including data handling, participant consent, data minimisation, and security measures. Special provisions exist for scientific research, but safeguards such as pseudonymisation and transparency are required.

- EU Clinical Trials Regulation – Regulation (EU) No 536/2014

The EU Clinical Trials Regulation is directly applicable in all Member States, superseding previous national laws. It governs the management of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use across the EU. Research managers overseeing clinical research must comply with harmonised procedures for trial applications, ethical approvals, reporting, and use of the Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS).

- Medical Devices Regulation – Regulation (EU) 2017/745

The Medial Devices Regulation regulates the clinical investigation and market placement of medical devices. Research managers involved in device-related research must ensure conformity assessment, post-market surveillance, and traceability (Unique Device Identification), even for non-commercial research.

- Horizon Europe and Research Funding Regulations

All EU-funded research is subject to specific requirements for research data management, open science, and reporting. It is a contractual obligation for beneficiaries of EU funding, enforceable through grant agreements. Research managers must ensure that projects submit Data Management Plans (DMPs), follow FAIR data principles, gender equality requirements, ethical issues, and comply with open access mandates. These requirements are embedded in the Model Grant Agreements and are legally binding for funded projects.

- Intellectual Property and Sectoral Regulations

Numerous EU directives and regulations on intellectual property, copyright, patents, and database rights apply to research outputs and their management. Research managers must ensure compliance with IP rules in collaborative agreements, data sharing, and dissemination activities. Depending on their format, they are either are directly applicable or require national transposition.

- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

While not a regulation, the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity is recognised by the European Commission as the primary standard for research integrity in all EU-funded projects. Compliance with this Code is a de facto requirement for Research Managers in EU-funded research, shaping institutional policies and practices.

- Administrative and Good Governance Requirements

EU administrative law and principles of good administration apply to the management of publicly funded research, including transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination. They are derived

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from EU treaties and general principles of law, enforceable in administrative contexts. Research managers must adhere to these principles in project administration, reporting, and stakeholder engagement.

3.5.2. The EU policy context relevant for RM

The European Union has developed several policy initiatives to support and professionalise Research Management, extending far beyond binding regulations. This architecture consists of strategic frameworks, policy initiatives, networks, funding programmes, and community-building efforts that collectively strengthen RM across the European Research Area (ERA).

The ERA[14] is the EU's vision for a single, borderless market where research, innovation, and technology circulate freely across Europe. The origin of this idea dates back to 2000, initiated to enhance Europe's competitiveness by fostering collaboration and reducing fragmentation among national research and innovation systems. ERA policies prioritize aligning research investments, boosting researcher mobility, facilitating knowledge transfer, and promoting access to excellent infrastructures across the continent. At its core, the ERA seeks to transform Europe into a dynamic knowledge society that accelerates sustainable economic growth and social benefits through coordinated research efforts.

Its implementation is guided by key policy mechanisms, such as the Pact for Research and Innovation, which articulates shared values and sets priorities for EU and member state action, and the ERA Policy Agenda, which translates vision into concrete initiatives like improving research careers or supporting research managers. The ERA Forum provides a platform for the Commission, member states, and stakeholders to jointly coordinate and shape these activities, ensuring broad participation in ERA governance.

Examples such as OpenAIRE illustrate how pan-European infrastructures underpin key ERA goals: supporting open science, enabling research data management, and helping institutions comply with EU research policies. University alliances and research organisations are also actively involved in implementing ERA priorities, including the recognition and integration of RM roles into policy and funding agendas.

3.6. EU-wide projects

RM Roadmap: The EU-funded project is a pan-European initiative developing a strategic roadmap for Research Management. RM Roadmap primarily mapped existing professional development opportunities, including training offers, mobility schemes, networking forums, and funding opportunities across Europe. By identifying current resources and gaps in professional development, the project fosters a community of practice, advocates for the profession, and supports evidence-based improvements to RM in the ERA.[15]

CARDEA: This project focuses on advancing professionalisation through training modules, a capacity maturity model, and a transnational hub for Research Managers. Both RM Roadmap and CARDEA provide online knowledge platforms, ambassador networks, and structured support for the future of RM in Europe.[16]

foRMAtion is a European project (Erasmus+) that empowers future Research Managers by offering educational modules and mentorship for students considering careers in RM. The project develops practical skills and raises awareness of the RMA profession through innovative training

[14] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-research-area_en
[15] https://www.rmroadmap.eu/
[16] https://www.ucc.ie/en/cardea/

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tools, online resources, and the building of educational alliances, helping to prepare participants for roles in European education and research projects.[17]

These three projects, RM Roadmap, CARDEA, and foRMAtion, represent leading-edge efforts to modernise RM training in Europe, each providing innovative tools, resources, and supportive networks for professional development. Focusing on these projects gives training providers access to community-tested approaches and structured platforms that foster interoperability, knowledge exchange, and the advancement of recognised standards across diverse European contexts. The projects´ contributions are an important input to the creation of a European training framework for Research Managers. Here is an overview that allows to compare their respective focus.

Initiative	CARDEA	FORMATION	RM ROADMAP
Job profiles	Outlines roles by career stage (RM1–RM4) and core responsibilities.	Uses "personas" and real job templates to ground learning in actual RM work.	Defines career levels and fields, mapping opportunities to job areas.
Activity domains	Aligns profiles with phases of the research cycle (pre-award, project, post-award, strategy, etc.).	Modules address areas like project management, compliance, communication, and more.	Differentiates by practice area, allowing targeted training needs assessments.
Competence framework	Provides a structured matrix of technical, social, and transferable skills for each role and stage.	Maps learning outcomes and modules to explicit competence goals for each job type.	Aggregates 7 core competence areas and over 50 skill sets, tiered by seniority.
Outcomes	Recommends what to teach, to whom, and at what experience level.	Emphasises measurable, practical learning outcomes.	Provides a modular and flexible structure for aligning competencies with roles.
Content & methods	Supplies example curricula, practical templates, and adaptation guidance.	Introduces innovative teaching and digital methods supported by ready-made resources.	Presents best-practice examples and links to country- or sector-specific context.

3.7. National support organisations

Public organisations provide national-level advice, information, and training on EU research funding.

National Contact Points (NCPs) for Horizon Europe are present in every EU member and associated country. They offer free, official support for researchers and Research Managers regarding Horizon Europe calls, rules, and project development. Examples are NCP Brussels in Belgium, NCP FFG in Austria, NCP AFNOR in France, Innovate UK NCPs in UK.

Agencies and EU liaison offices for national research provide information, workshops and one-on-one advice for EU funding applicants. They link national research communities and EU institutions and often coordinate with international networks. Some of these structures also fulfil the function of an NCP. Examples are APRE in Italy, ARIS in Slovenia, ETAg in Estonia, FFG in Austria, KoWi in Germany, Luxinnovation in Luxemburg, Rannis in Iceland.

3.8. Networks, associations, and community resources

There is a dynamic and diverse ecosystem of Research Management organisations active in the EU and associated countries, from pan-European networks and national associations to thematic

[17] https://www.formation-rma.eu/

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communities and policy-focused alliances. These organisations collectively drive professionalisation, capacity building, and policy development in RM across Europe.

3.8.1. European and International Networks

BESTPRAC brings together administrative, financial, and legal staff from universities and research-driven institutions to share best practices and develop guidelines for EU-funded research projects. (https://bestprac.eu/)

CoARA: The Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment is an international alliance of over 600 organisations – including universities, funders, and policy actors – established to reform how research and researchers are evaluated. Its aim is to shift research assessment away from an overreliance on publication metrics, focusing instead on qualitative judgment, the diversity of research outputs, and responsible use of quantitative indicators. CoARA's mission is to facilitate systemic reform based on common principles and commitments, as detailed in its Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, fostering collaboration and mutual learning among participants. (https://coara.eu/)

EARMA (European Association of Research Managers and Administrators): The leading European network for Research Managers and administrators, EARMA provides a forum for professional development, best practice exchange, and policy advocacy. Members work in academia, industry, and the public sector, bridging gaps between research funders and the scientific community. (https://EARMA.org/)

INORMS (International Network of Research Management Societies): INORMS connects Research Management societies worldwide, including many European associations. It facilitates knowledge sharing, training, and the development of international standards in RM. (https://inorms.net/)

SRAI (Society of Research Administrators International) is a global network representing over 5,000 RM professionals across more than 40 countries and over 1,000 institutions. The society offers education, professional development, and support in all aspects of Research Management, spanning universities, research hospitals, government agencies, non-profits, and industry. The network is highly diverse and acts as a convener for global dialogue and community building through initiatives such as the Global Research Management Summit and the Virtual International Convention for Research Administrators (VICRA). SRAI is a founding member of INORMS.

3.8.2. Main national and regional associations in Europe

This list is not exhaustive, as new associations emerge dynamically.

AIREN (All-Island Research Excellence Network) is a network dedicated to supporting Research Managers and administrators (RMAs) across the island of Ireland (IOI) and led by University College Dublin (UCD), Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (Ulster) (https://airen-network.ie/)

ARMA UK (Association of Research Managers and Administrators, UK): The UK's primary professional association for Research Managers and administrators, ARM supports over 2,700 members with training, networking, and advocacy. (https://arma.ac.uk/)

ARMA NL (Association of Research Managers and Administrators, Netherlands): The Dutch association offers a platform for exchange and professionalisation in Research Management, supporting members with training and knowledge sharing. (https://armanl.eu/)

AURAM (Austrian Universities Research Administrators and Managers) is an informal network connecting RMs at Austrian universities. The network was established in 2001 to foster best

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practice exchange and professional support in national and European research projects. (https://www.forschungsservice.at/)

BE-ARMA (Belgian Association of Research Managers and Administrators) is the national platform for RMs in Belgium. It offers networking, training, and advocacy for members working in various sectors of the Belgian research landscape. The association facilitates knowledge sharing and supports the professionalisation of RM. (https://www.be-arma.be/)

CARMA (Research Managers network in Catalonia, Spain) is the Catalan Research Managers network, serving professionals supporting research and innovation management in Catalonia. The network is closely linked with the regional research funder and offers resources for collaboration, training, and strategic development. (https://agaur.gencat.cat/en/international-support-for-european-projects/xarxa-de-gestors-00001/)

CZARMA (Czech Association of Research Managers and Administrators) is a professional community for individuals involved in research administration and grant management in Czechia. It provides training, networking, and advocacy opportunities for members working across academic and research institutions. (https://www.czarma.cz/)

DARMA (Danish Association of Research Managers and Administrators): DARMA promotes professional development and networking among Danish Research Managers, helping to establish RM as a recognised profession in Denmark. (https://darma.dk/)

Finn-ARMA (Finnish Association of Research Managers and Administrators) A network of Finnish universities' research services, Finn-ARM supports research funding, legal matters, innovation, and research administration in Finland. (https://finn-arma.fi/)

FORTRAMA (Network of Research- and Transfer Management, Germany) FORTRAMA is a non-profit association supporting research and transfer managers in Germany, offering conferences, training, and working groups. (https://fortrama.net/)

ICEARMA (Icelandic Association for Research Managers and Administrators) unites RM professionals from Icelandic universities and research organisations. Its focus is on capacity building, sharing best practices, and improving research support services in the Icelandic context. (https://icearma.is/)

IRMPA (Irish Research Managers and Professionals Association) focuses on supporting individuals involved in Research Management and administration within Irish HEIs/RPOs. (yet to be formally launched)

KRAB (Polish National Council for Research Project Coordinators) is a national network for research project managers and coordinators in Poland. It promotes knowledge exchange, policy input, and supports professional development in research administration. (http://www.krab.edu.pl/)

POLARMA (Polish Network for Administration and Research management) created in June 2025. (newly launched.)

NARMA (Norwegian Network for Administration and Research Management): NARM provides professional development and networking for Norwegian research administrators, with over 700 individual members. (https://narma.no/om-narma/english-about-narma-and-contact/)

PIC (Platform at the Interface of Science, Portugal) is a Portuguese platform connecting professionals at the interface between research, funding, and innovation in Portugal. It organizes networking, training, and advocacy for science management professionals. (https://pic.pt/)

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SWARM (Swedish Association of Research Managers and Administrators): SWARM supports Swedish universities and higher education institutions in interpreting and implementing research regulations and developing support for researchers. (https://swarma.se/en/english/)

3.8.3. Thematic and sectoral networks

EU-CONEXUS Community of Practice, part of the EU-CONEXUS Enables project, is a strategic initiative aimed at fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among RMs across EU-CONEXUS. The network focuses on the mobility, training, and professional development of Research Management, particularly in widening countries, through structured programmes and peer support. (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/research-management-administrators-mobility-and-network-program/)

EU-LIFE is an alliance of leading European life sciences research institutes dedicated to fostering excellence in research and innovation. The network is dedicated to advancing RM by promoting best practices, professional development, and capacity building for RMs. (https://eu-life.eu/)

ERRIN (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) is a Brussels-based platform of around 120 regional organisations from over 20 countries, supporting regional research and innovation capacities through policy engagement, project facilitation, and knowledge exchange. (https://errin.eu/)

3.8.4. European and National Research Funding and Policy Organisations

Europe's principal research funding and policy organisations – including the European Research Council[18], the European Innovation Council[19], the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation[20], the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions[21], the Research Executive Agency[22], the European Institute of Innovation and Technology[23], COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)[24] and the Joint Research Centre[25] - play a central role in shaping the Research Management ecosystem through the definition of funding frameworks, the establishment of regulatory and procedural requirements, and the promotion of excellence and innovation across disciplines. The overall orientation provided through clear research priorities and policy objectives, together with the regulatory, procedural and administrative frameworks guide and shape the activities of Research Managers.

3.8.5. Pan-European Research Collaboration Initiatives and Networks

Pan-European Initiatives and Consortia such as EUREKA (intergovernmental collaboration network) and the European Science Foundation (ESF) enable transnational and interdisciplinary research networks. Science Europe is an association of major European research funding and performing organisations, acting as a strategic umbrella and advocacy body; it coordinates, represents, and amplifies the collective interests and expertise of Europe's largest research funders and performers in research policy and strategy and supports policy and standard setting for research systems in Europe.[26]

3.8.6. National Funding Agencies

[18] https://erc.europa.eu/homepage
[19] https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en
[20]https://commission.europa.eu/about/departments-and-executive-agencies/research-and-innovation_en
[21] https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/
[22] https://rea.ec.europa.eu/index_en
[23] https://www.eit.europa.eu/
[24] https://www.cost.eu/
[25] https://commission.europa.eu/about/departments-and-executive-agencies/joint-research-centre_en
[26] https://scienceeurope.org/

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National funding agencies in Europe, such as the DFG (Germany), NCN (Poland), SRC (Sweden), AEI (Spain), UKRI (UK) and comparable bodies in all other European countries are responsible for allocating research funding within their respective countries, alongside comparable agencies in all other European states. These agencies often collaborate through consortia and policy forums with European counterparts to ensure strategic alignment and joint programming among national initiatives.

3.8.7. University Alliances

There are currently 64 European University Alliances recognised under the European Universities Initiative, bringing together more than 650 higher education institutions across Europe. These alliances are embedded in a broad network with over 2,200 associated partners. The European University Alliances are funded by Erasmus+. Their focus is on pedagogical and institutional transformation, although many alliances have also incorporated research and innovation (R&I) activities through Horizon Europe funding. 4EU+ for example has created a strong joint governance structure and legal entity, ensuring an increased, coordination of research policies, governance, and support services across its members.[27] This common governance model enhances cooperation, transparency, and the pooling of resources for Research Management, making it possible to launch joint grant support services, internal funding schemes, and unified training initiatives for Research Managers[28].

3.8.8. University networks/associations

University networks and associations such as LERU (League of European Research Universities)[29], YERUN (Young European Research Universities Network)[30], The Guild[31] are independent networks formed by their member universities. They play a strategic role in influencing European R&I and Higher Education policies, actively engaging with EU institutions through consultations and position papers, and advocacy efforts. In addition to policy dialogue, they foster collaborative research and institutional exchange among their members. These networks are primarily funded by their members and do not receive direct EU funding for their core activities.

They play a pivotal role in shaping RM standards, fostering policy dialogue, and facilitating collaboration among research-intensive institutions across Europe. For example, LERU developed models, toolkits, and recommendations on key topics – such as the LERU Roadmap for Research Data, further developed in the EU-funded LEARN project in 2015-2017, which resulted in a comprehensive toolkit for research data management[32].

Alongside the alliances and associations, specialised RM networks and platforms such as Research Community ENGAGE.EU[33] or European University Foundation EUF[34] further contribute to knowledge-sharing, professional development, accreditation, and the harmonisation of practices in RM across the continent. Commercial platforms such as Crowdhelix's Research

[27] https://4euplus.eu/4EU-470-version1-4eu_strategy2025_2035_draftdocument_20240924_final.pdf
[28] https://dspacecris.eurocris.org/bitstream/11366/2752/2/EUNIS2025-DeCastro-et-al_Common-Research-Information-Management-from-a-European-University-Alliance-Perspective.pdf
[29] https://www.leru.org/
[30] https://yerun.eu
[31] https://www.the-guild.eu/
[32] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/654139
[33] https://www.research-community-engage.eu/
[34] https://uni-foundation.eu/project-manager-advisor-community/

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Management Helix[35] are also recognised as significant contributors to research competitiveness when they operate transparently and in support of the public interest.

3.9. Trainings and good practice examples

A comprehensive understanding of the European Research Management landscape of professional development opportunities for Research Managers is now possible thanks to the RM Roadmap Catalogue, which systematically gathers and categorizes a great number of relevant courses and programmes across the ERA. The RM Roadmap Catalogue allows stakeholders to explore the diversity of offerings – from foundational to advanced levels – supporting varied career paths and skill needs.[36]

Good practice trainings in RM are characterised by features that foster international exchange, community building, flexible and modular learning, transparent recognition (such as ECTS points), and a clear, competence-oriented focus tailored to real-world tasks and project work. Such trainings have been endorsed, referenced, or used as examples within large-scale EU research programs and initiatives – for instance, Horizon Europe, ERA Policy Actions, or the RM Comp – and set the benchmark for future-oriented, effective professional development.

Based on principles from the Bologna-Process (competence-based learning outcomes, modular structure and ECTS, quality assurance, mobility and recognition, student-centred learning)[37], on the ETR-Methodology[38] and on state-of-the art didactical approaches[39]. The list of core features of good practice in RM trainings should be checked and validated by the consortium partners involved in the RM Framework project.

3.9.1. Competence Orientation

Training is closely linked to the specific roles and skills required, ensuring relevance to daily Research Management tasks. A good practice example of competence-oriented training is foRMAtion. foRMAtion (Innovative and Smart Module for potential Research Managers) was an Erasmus+ funded European programme successfully completed 2023 and took a distinctly competence-oriented approach to developing future RMs. The comprehensive learning materials are in free access on the foRMAtion learning platform. The programme is built around concrete competency development through competency-based learning outcomes, all activities being mapped to specific RM competencies, ensuring measurable skills development. The programme includes assessment mechanisms that validate acquired competencies against established RM Comp.

3.9.2. Project-Based Methodology

Participants practically experience all phases of a research project, covering process steps through hands-on, project-driven activities. The foRMAtion project focused on such an approach, students working on actual Research Management challenges within host organisations, developing practical skills and applying theoretical knowledge.

[35] https://crowdhelix.com/articles/new-networking-and-collaboration-hub-for-research-management-professionals-launched

[36] For detailed information see: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/633ae0b47dc8ac471e5978a9/t/673de74726788727642d67e9/1732110175524/RM-Roadmap+Catalogue+-Updated+Version.pdf

[37] https://ehea.info/

[38] https://www.uems.eu/web/content/2294?unique=09eeaf7d18d4505e5ec2ba6b8567e30b06f7885b&download=true

[39] https://www.lsst.ac/blogs/innovative-teaching-methods-in-higher-education-empowering-mature-non-traditional-learners/; https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf; https://arqus-alliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/d05-1--teaching-innovation-mapping-state-of-the-art-report.pdf

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3.9.3. Blended and Modular Learning

Blended learning combines the use of one or two different learning methodologies with the more conventional model of instruction in a classroom setting[40]. Several studies show that blended learning can have a positive impact on learning outcomes, engagement and satisfaction[41]. A flexible mix of in-person and online components for example allows for personalised learning pathways tailored to diverse needs. For example, the German ZWM (Centre for Science and Research Management) offers a RM Training Course "Lehrgang ForschungsmanagerIn" in a blended format (3 on-site modules alternating with 2 live-webinars). The course covers pre-award and post-awards activities and can be completed by several specialised online modules like "Research security in international cooperations" or "Transfer & Innovation" (in cooperation with the DUV German University for Administrative Sciences).

Modular trainings allow for flexible, learner-centred, and customizable educational pathways. The newly developed EARMA Academy programme is a further example. It is aligned with the RM Comp and offers open-access, self-paced modular courses with optional online certification, as well as in-person interactive, practice-oriented learning opportunities with assessment and an online certification option.

These combined modes ensure that learners can develop at their own pace while gaining recognition for both theoretical understanding and applied competencies.

3.9.4. Mentoring and Peer-to-Peer Learning

Trainings include structured opportunities for mentoring as well as peer exchanges, creating a collaborative learning environment. This is fostered for example by the EARMA Mentorship Scheme, introduced in 2023.[42] Mentors, preferably from outside the participant's organisation, act as professional advisers and discussion partners throughout the programme. The foRMAtion project also included professional mentorship: Each participant was paired with experienced RMA professionals who guided competency development through structured mentoring relationships.

3.9.5. Transparent Recognition of Credentials (e.g., ECTS)

Standardised, comparable credits support flexibility, mobility, and the stackability of qualifications. A good practice example is the EURESTMA certificate delivered by the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück. 15 ECTS credits are awarded upon successful completion of the EURESTMA certificate programme. The credentials are backed by an alliance of leading European academic institutions including University for Continuing Education Krems (Austria), POLIMI Graduate School of Management (Italy), Tampere University (Finland), Zentrum für Wissenschaftsmanagement (Germany), European Liaison Office (KoWi) and the Polish Science Contact Agency. The programme operates within established European frameworks for credit transfer and recognition, facilitating mobility and stackability with other European qualifications. A further example is the European Certificate in Research Management (CRM) which was offered

[40] Graham, C. R. (2006). "Blended learning systems: definition, current trends, and future directions," in *The Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs*, eds C. R. Bonk and C. J. Graham (Switzerland: Pfeiffer Publishing): https://media.kenanaonline.com/files/0036/36463/BLENDED%20LEARNING%20SYSTEMS.pdf

[41] M. De Bruijn-Smolders, F.R. Prinsen: Effective student engagement with blended learning: A systematic review. https://www.cell.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2405-8440%2824%2915470-9 ; Ashraf MA, Yang M, Zhang Y, Denden M, Tlili A, Liu J, Huang R, Burgos D. A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews on Blended Learning: Trends, Gaps and Future Directions: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8493276

[42] https://earma.org/news/mentorship-scheme-programme-2025/

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by EARMA till 2022. The new EARMA Academy is developing a modular certification system starting with RM1, an entry-level certification for early-career professionals. The Academy aims to expand this into a broader, tiered framework (RM1–RM3) with online and in-person learning options, mentoring, and CPD accreditation[43]

3.9.6. National and cross-border networking

The ERA Policy Agenda highlights networking, mobility, and cross-border staff exchanges as core actions (ERA Action 17) to upskill RMs and reinforce Research Management capacity across Europe. International exchange is seen as key for advancing both individual professional growth and the systemic capacity of Research Management throughout the ERA[44]. Some RM training programs enable participants to build (cross-border) professional networks and communities, supporting global best practice exchange. The LevelUp programme of SRAI specifically enables participants to connect with research administrators globally through shared learning experiences, access SRAI's international community and professional networks, participate in global conferences and events (like the International Convention for Research Administrators - VICRA). A further example is the upcoming EARMA Academy mentioned before. Previously, the CRM programme attracted participants from across all European countries, creating a diverse cohort of Research Managers who share learning experiences and build professional relationships that span national borders. CRM graduates became part of EARMA's alumni network and could participate in continuous professional development activities. The EURESTMA certificate involves two workshops and a peer exchange phase, thus supporting participants in building their professional network.

3.9.7. Multiprofessional Design

Trainings involve trainers and participants from a variety of countries and institutional backgrounds, promoting the exchange of different perspectives and expertise. These programs often involve multiprofessional constellations both among trainers and participants, thus reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of real RM environments and project consortia. EARMA Annual Conference and Training Programs regularly feature participants from diverse institutional backgrounds across Europe, including universities, research institutes, funding agencies, and government bodies. The programs promote exchange of different perspectives and expertise through case studies and collaborative learning sessions. University of Hamburg's "Research Management Certificate" is explicitly designed with a multiprofessional approach by merging target groups: doctoral/postdoctoral researchers and existing RMs. The programme aims to "foster a culture of learning from and with each other" through active networking between different career stages and institutional perspectives.

3.9.8. Stable Business Model and Funding

The sustainability and continuity of training offerings should be secured by robust financial and organisational structures. A robust organisational structure, strong institutional support and multiple funding streams also allow for continuity and consistent programme delivery.

3.9.9. Quality Assurance mechanisms

[43] https://earma.org/EARMA-academy/

[44] https://www.ncpwideranet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ERA_PolicyBrief_02.pdf; Hanley, N., Tyson, L. S., Wang, Z., Kwak, J., Akkad, A., Vari-Lavoisier, I., & Chankseliani, M. (2025). Impact of international professional mobility programmes: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, *0*(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/14779714241311007

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Systematic processes and standards ensure consistent, high-quality educational delivery and outcomes. These mechanisms ensure that training programs maintain credibility, deliver consistent value to participants, and meet employer expectations while supporting the broader professionalisation of RM across different institutional and national contexts. A good practice example here is again the EURESTMA certificate, which demonstrates following quality assurance mechanisms: External evaluation by ZEvA (German accreditation agency), multi-institutional partnership providing quality oversight and structured learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Also the ARMA qualifications across all levels (Foundation and Advanced) have a robust regulatory framework and operate with rigorous quality assurance systems (OFQUAL Regulations, regular audits and monitoring of assessment processes, external quality benchmarking against industry standards).

Such trainings may serve as models for the future design of Research Management development offers - ensuring European standards of quality, relevance, and professional mobility.

3.10. Filling the gaps: toward a robust European Research Management Training Frame

Europe is home to a growing network of RM organisations and sectoral networks. These provide growing communities of practice and drive standard-setting, training, and mutual support.

EU policies and initiatives support competency-building through projects like RM Roadmap, CARDEA, and dedicated knowledge platforms, community hubs, and ambassador networks. RM Roadmap and CARDEA provided important components for a coherent qualification framework. Especially the structures such as the set of RM competences, the differentiation of job profiles, qualification levels and task areas and the definition of learning outcomes are an extremely helpful basis to develop or optimise RM training programs.

Policy frameworks like Horizon Europe embed requirements for data management, open science, integrity, and transparency, shaping the content and focus of RM training and qualifications. Accredited, modular qualifications emerge, further national initiatives show that progressive professionalisation is rooted in competency mapping, multi-level training, and increasing alignment with the EQF and ECTS. The adoption of European codes (e.g., the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity[45]) and shared governance requirements (e.g. the governance models of the European University Alliances[46]) support alignment in training content and expected competencies across countries.

Still, significant gaps regarding professional development for research managers across Europe remain, as identified by RM Roadmap project regarding training, mobility opportunities and funding of professional development[47]. Following recommendations were issued to fill these gaps:

1. Strengthen and fund RM networks and associations as strategic development actors
2. Expand short-term accredited training and strengthen the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in professionalisation
3. Ensure career-stage sensitive training pathways
4. Prioritise EU-level institutional mobility schemes for systemic capacity-building
5. Develop and maintain a centralised, user-friendly information platform
6. Avoid mandatory professional certification frameworks at the current maturity level of the profession
7. Embed professional development within institutional strategies

[45] https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/
[46] https://www.eua.eu/images/publications/Publication_PDFs/eui_governance_paper_new.pdf

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Regarding the development of a European Research Management Training Frame, following dimensions seem relevant:

3.10.1. Fragmented qualification landscape

While networks and platforms exist, qualification systems remain patchy and are often country-or institution-specific, with wide gaps in formal recognition, accreditation, and mutual equivalence of certificates and degrees. Some formal qualifications like ARMA's Certificate in Research Management (CRM)[48] were accredited by Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE), regulated by OFQUAL, and recognised by UK employers, sector regulators, and institutions. In the rest of Europe, recent certificates like EURESTMA's[49], while backed by ECTS points, are not yet widely known or recognised by employers (for hiring, qualification ranking or professional advancement), sector regulators or accrediting bodies. Sectoral and geographic disparities persist – smaller countries or less research-intensive regions may lack accredited, comprehensive training, and not all RMs have equal access to executive education, networks, or mobility.

To compensate this fragmented progress, it would be beneficial to develop coordinated European framework for the formal accreditation and mutual recognition of Research Management qualifications, based on commonly agreed standards and competencies. Additionally, sustained investment in transnational training initiatives and the further expansion of professional networks would help ensure broader access, and capacity-building for Research Managers across all regions and career stages in Europe.

3.10.2. Need for more interoperability

Despite significant progress in professionalising Research Management, a key barrier remains the lack of interoperability among training programmes, competency frameworks, and qualification mechanisms across Europe. Existing offerings are often not designed for modular stacking, cross-organisational recognition, or the seamless transfer of learning achievements. Consequently, RMs frequently face barriers to effective cross-border mobility and the recognition of their competences, which limits the creation of a coherent and competitive European RM workforce.

Advancing interoperable standards such as modular curricula and common competence descriptors remains a core objective for the next phase of development in the field.

3.10.3. Need for a European coordinated framework

Beyond technical interoperability, and despite progress in developing advanced qualifications and certification programmes, the absence of a pan-European framework for professional recognition remains a significant barrier in Research Management. At present, the recognition and integration of qualifications into national career structures and public employment frameworks depend largely on voluntary uptake and local negotiation, leading to persisting fragmentation and limited cross-border portability. While RM Comp has established a common standard for Research Management competences, a fully operational system that systematically matches these competences with the requirements of employers and the offerings of training providers has yet to be implemented.

Establishing a coordinated European framework, underpinned by harmonised standards and mutual recognition, is therefore essential to ensure transparency, comparability, and mobility for Research Managers throughout the ERA.

3.10.4. Need for more standardised role descriptions

[48] https://arma.ac.uk/qualifications/
[49] https://www.hs-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/HSOS/Homepages/EURESTMA/EURESTMA_Flyer_Final.pdf

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Across Europe, Research Management roles – including Research Manager, Research Administrator, and Research Support Professional – are defined inconsistently, often encompassing a wide range of responsibilities that vary between institutions and countries. Job descriptions for these positions frequently rely on local or institutional priorities and seldom align with European or international competency frameworks such as ESCO, EQF, or RM Comp. This lack of standardisation creates ambiguity regarding role expectations, complicates benchmarking of skills and performance, and presents challenges in establishing clear pathways for human resource development.

Enhancing convergence in role descriptions, informed by agreed reference frameworks, is therefore critical to support transparency, comparability, and effective career development for RMs within the ERA.

3.10.5. Need for a systematic linking of job profiles with skills and competences

The RM Roadmap project and RM Comp have made significant contributions towards bridging the gap regarding the systematic linking of job profiles with skills and competences in European Research Management. RM Comp defines broad areas of competence and lists the relevant skills and learning outcomes that are important across a wide range of RM roles and specific to each proficiency level (RM1 to RM4).

This provides a shared reference for the competences needed in the field; however, it does not provide a one-to-one mapping between job profiles and the specific combinations or proficiency levels of those skills that each role should possess. Matching and validation between job profiles and competence frameworks are not systematically practiced by employers, institutions, or accrediting bodies, professional development often occurring ad hoc and in a fragmented way, leaving Research Managers unprepared for evolving demands and dynamic career transitions.

This makes recruitment, performance evaluation, and targeted staff development often inconsistent and subjective. Regarding training and qualification, the lack of a consistent role-based competency mapping hinders the development and recognition of modular training, such as micro-credentials or stackable pathways, and complicates validation of prior informal learning. A systematic linking of job profiles with requires skills and competencies for each proficiency level (RM1 to RM4) would help develop a more coherent qualification landscape as well as transparent and portable career ladders within the ERA.

The development of a coherent frame aimed at bridging these gaps is a core endeavour of RM Framework. Such a frame must not only facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications and support wider access to professional development, but also establish a shared language for roles, career progression, and competencies across Europe.

To lay this foundation, it is essential to clearly define and segment the diverse functions and roles within Research Management. By mapping the spectrum of responsibilities – from entry-level support to strategic leadership – against standardised competency levels, the framework can provide both clarity for individuals and comparability for institutions and employers. This segmentation serves as a critical first step toward creating transparent career pathways, aligning training offers with real job requirements, and fostering interoperability across national and sectoral boundaries.

4. A Coherent Frame for RM Qualification in Europe

A coherent frame within Europe ensures RMs can acquire the competences they need to perform their roles effectively. Such a frame includes several components: institutions that promote the development of RM and generate relevant knowledge, alongside a transparent offer of trainings delivering quality content and methods. This leads to training programs that provide qualifications

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aligned with the job and career requirements of Research Managers. Ideally, it forms a coherent and transparent system where targeted training can close individual gaps between existing and required competences, ensuring a flexible and lifelong learning path for Research Managers. This frame should integrate conclusions and recommendations contained in the RM Roadmap WP2 D2.3 Report on the professional development opportunities[50], provide a baseline definition of RM.

4.1. Baseline definition of Research Management

There is currently no universally accepted definition of the term Research Manager. As outlined in section 1, RM Roadmap and CARDEA has developed a concise and inclusive working definition for research managers during the development of the RM Comp:

"Research Managers enable, facilitate and support the performance of research in all its applications. Research Managers hold generalist or specialised roles within the research and innovation ecosystem. Research Managers are based in all types of research performing organisations, including public and private universities, research institutes, research funding organisations, medical institutions, NGOs, companies, public authorities, and so on."

"Based on the policy developments, the results of recent investigations as well as a Europe-wide co-creation in the frame of ERA Action 17 and RM Roadmap, we initiate an inclusive and flexible approach enabling the reflection on constantly emerging fields and job profiles when defining Research Management. Thus, Research Managers can work as research policy advisers, pre-award and post-award officers, project managers, impact managers, science communicators, financial managers and advisors, legal advisors, contract and compliance managers, data stewards, open science officers, research infrastructure managers and operators, equality, diversity and inclusion advisors, research ethics advisors, knowledge and technology transfer officers, innovation managers and business developers, knowledge brokers, human resource managers in research, AI experts, and leaders of research facilitation offices, etc."[51]

This flexible and general baseline definition is sufficient and operational for the overall concept of Research Management. More specific definitions are needed only at the subordinate levels, where concrete competency areas, tasks, and activities are identified and grouped.

4.2. Common terminology: towards a shared language

A shared Research Management terminology is essential for clarity, consistency, and professionalisation within the ERA. It enables all stakeholders – Research Managers, researchers, funders, and policymakers – to operate with a common understanding of key concepts, roles, and practices in the field. Shared terms also align with the frameworks and language used in major EU research programs, such as Horizon Europe, making it easier for participants to interpret calls, guidelines, and reporting requirements accurately. Harmonised terms also facilitate the development of interoperable digital tools and reporting systems, streamlining administrative processes across the EU.

Establishing such a terminology, however, is an ambitious undertaking, given the diversity of the European Research Management landscape and the multiple definitions and connotations that terms may carry across national, regional, institutional, and organisational contexts. This diversity

[50] RM Roadmap D2.3 Report on the professional development opportunities: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/633ae0b47dc8ac471e5978a9/t/68767073de13ae51598193ac/1752592500718/RM_Roadmap_D2.3_NOVA_Report+on+the+professional+development+opportunities.pdf

[51] RM Roadmap Final Report D1.2. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/633ae0b47dc8ac471e5978a9/t/6878ba2e8464c26f256d9743/1752742449508/RM+Roadmap_D1.2_HETFA_Report+on+ERA-wide+landscape.pdf

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has been clearly illustrated, for example, through the multi-voice dialogues fostered by the co-creation sessions of the RM Roadmap project.

European RM glossaries include a set of core terms that underpin the field's professional language. This section suggests and defines essential RM terms, focused on RM qualification, aiming at providing clear and standardised definitions to support training providers – both public universities and private organisations – in developing effective curricula and training concepts for the qualification of Research Managers.

The aim of this basic terminology will be to invite the RM community to engage in an ongoing, dynamic process of developing a shared language – one that supports the professionalisation of RM and ultimately strengthens research and innovation across the EU. It should reflect the current structure and diversity of the profession and answering the needs highlighted in recent co-creation processes. In the frame of the RM Framework Project (Task 1.2), we suggest structuring the terminology around the topics related to the Handbook for training providers into following topics:

- Areas of Research Management,
- Common funding-related terms (e.g. lump sum, cascade funding),
- Project lifecycle terms (i.e. pre-award, post-award, reporting, deliverables, amendments, compliance, evaluation panel, impact assessment),
- Instructional design terms (i.e., Competence, Qualification area, Job title, Job profile, Credit, Microcredential).

4.3. Segmentation of functions and roles

The field of RM is marked by significant functional diversity and continuous evolution. Segmenting functions and roles create clarity and comparability for professionals, institutions, and training providers, supporting curriculum relevance, professionalisation, and informed career planning across the ERA.

4.3.1. Areas of Research Management

Building on the RM Roadmap and co-creation outcomes, at least thirteen broad functional areas are recognised:

1. Proposal development (pre-award)
2. Project support (post-award)
3. Research strategy and policy development
4. Research ethics and integrity
5. Research data, information, and IP management
6. Research funding management
7. Research infrastructure management
8. Science communication, uptake, dissemination, impact
9. Training and researcher development
10. International collaboration and institutional branding
11. Management information & analytics (e.g., CRIS)
12. Open science and open data
13. Innovation management, technology transfer, and business development

Additional emerging areas include AI management, knowledge security, and dual use.

These thematic areas represent a segmentation of the diverse functions, roles, and competencies that constitute the professional practice of Research Managers across Europe. By capturing the

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complexity and variety of RM activities as collaboratively defined by practitioners and stakeholders, these areas provide a structured framework that can support training providers in mapping their curricula to the real-world scope of Research Management. The segmentation facilitates targeted and coherent structuring of training offers, ensuring relevance to varied institutional contexts and professional profiles. Ultimately, employing these community-driven areas as guiding pillars enhances the alignment of educational programmes with evolving professional requirements and fosters the harmonisation of standards and competencies across the ERA. Segmenting by area anchors the full landscape of RM functions and activities and enables targeted curriculum and profile design.

4.3.2. Role and Job Profile Mapping

As mentioned before, the profession of Research Manager is marked by a remarkable diversity of job titles, responsibilities, and organisational contexts, reflecting the evolving needs of research-performing institutions and the multidisciplinary nature of research itself. This diversity makes the development of standardised training pathways and clear career progression for RMs challenging. As a result, training providers face the dual challenge of ensuring both clarity and flexibility in their curriculum design. They must offer programs that are relevant and recognisable across borders, while also being adaptable to the specific needs of their local context.

To address this complexity, widely recognised standards such as the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) provide a central foundation. These frameworks offer a structured approach to classifying occupations and mapping them into key skills and competencies. Segmenting functions and roles could start around a small number of cores, widely recognised job titles and profiles identified in the RM Comp. Doing this, the approach should focus more on the job profile. i.e. the mix of qualification areas and competences needed for the role than on the job title alone.

At the same time, it is essential to maintain flexibility. Training providers should be encouraged to use these core roles as adaptable templates, recognising that actual job profiles may blend elements from multiple categories or include emerging specialisations. Where necessary, additional specialised or hybrid roles can be mapped to the core framework, ensuring inclusivity without sacrificing coherence.

4.3.3. Proficiency Levels: RM1 to RM4

The segmentation framework is deepened by defining four proficiency levels, following the RM Comp structure:

- RM1 – Entry/Foundation: Basic, supervised support or technical roles; limited autonomy.
- RM2 – Operational/Experienced: Fully competent in standard functions; manages routine cases; some responsibility for junior staff.
- RM3 – Advanced/Senior Specialist: Handles complex and specialised processes; strategic input; trains or supervises others.
- RM4 – Strategic/Leadership: Responsible for strategic direction, institutional vision, cross-organisational influence, and innovation leadership.

Each area and key role can be mapped to one or multiple levels, reflecting the progression pathways available and the corresponding training or credentialing needs. In line with the recommendations of the RM Roadmap project and the RM Comp, training programmes should be structured to ensure career-stage–sensitive training pathways. They should also be designed to clearly differentiate among proficiency levels, thereby supporting role progression and professional development throughout the Research Manager's career.

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4.4. Competence and skills architecture

Training programs should respond to the specific requirements of defined job profiles and individual learning needs, thus closing the gap between current competence levels and job-related requirements, supporting individuals in their professional growth and institutions in building capable RM teams.

RM Comp represents the most recent and comprehensive competence architecture developed at the European level for RM. It was developed in consultation with existing frameworks and drawing inspiration from established good practices (earlier frameworks from organisations like ARMA (2011), ARMS, SRAI, and SARIMA (2016). RM Comp provides the first EU-wide standardised framework with 7 competence areas, 50 competencies, and 800 learning outcomes across 4 proficiency levels, specifically designed to support consistency and mobility across the ERA.

4.5. The architecture of an RM qualification framework

Interoperability, in line with the FAIR principles[52] for data management, is increasingly relevant for designing and delivering training and qualification programmes in EU Research Management. When applied to professional development, interoperability ensures that training units, content modules, competency profiles, and certificates are structured and standardised to allow seamless cross-organisational exchange, modular stacking of credentials, and wider recognition of competencies. In practice, interoperable training solutions help overcome institutional silos, make micro-credentialing more feasible, and support lifelong learning by enabling flexible combinations and transfer of learning achievements within and across academic, public, and private sectors.

Recognising this value, the RM Framework project[53] focuses on developing standards and mechanisms that facilitate the comparability, combination, and international recognition of qualifications. For effective interoperability and mutual recognition of RM training programs, dedicated efforts must secure formal acknowledgment and endorsement from key stakeholders, particularly: leadership of Research Performing Organisations (RPOs), Research Funding Organisations (RFOs), Human Resources departments, and other relevant institutional decision-makers.

Without this stakeholder recognition, even well-designed and standardised training programs may not translate into career advancement opportunities, salary recognition, or professional mobility for Research Managers.

Embedding FAIR-inspired approaches in the training landscape ensures that programmes are transparent, adaptable, future-proof, and aligned with emerging trends in European higher education and research. This approach aligns diverse training offerings with broader goals of professionalisation, mobility, and innovation, pointing toward a more integrated and effective workforce development ecosystem.

The components of this architecture would be as follow:

4.5.1. Competences

Competences form the foundation of the entire qualification framework. At the centre is the guiding question: what must an individual be able to do to fulfil the requirements of a specific RM position? The framework thus considers the competences Research Managers already possess, those acquired through additional training, and how these fit together to create a coherent

[52] https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/
[53]https://rm-framework.eu/

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qualification pathway. In this regard, competences become the "currency" or "lubricant" of the qualification framework. The RM Comp provides a robust basis for defining these competences, and the challenge is to operationalise this framework within the broader qualification system.

4.5.2. Qualification areas

Qualification areas represent the major fields of activity within RM. Multiple areas may converge within a single position, reflecting the diversity of the profession. RM Roadmap offers an initial typology of these areas, which may encompass project management, research policy, compliance, or data stewardship, among others. Within each area, specific competences are required to address the tasks and responsibilities at hand.

4.5.3. Job titles

Job titles in RM reflect an extremely varied landscape and their diversity limits the practical value of strict standardisation for the qualification framework. However, each position can be described by its job profile, defined by the combination of qualification areas and the set of competences essential for the role.

4.5.4. Training programmes, curricula, modules and credits

These are core components of professional development in Research Management.

Curriculum architecture

- Competence-Oriented Structure: curriculum design based on clearly defined learning outcomes mapped to specific RM competencies and job profiles.
- Modular Organisation: trainings designed as stackable, standalone modules that can be combined flexibly for different career paths and specialisations.
- Credit Framework: modules aligned with ECTS to ensure transferability and recognition across Europe.

Module structure and learning design

- Learning Outcomes: Each module should specify measurable knowledge, skills, and competencies to be acquired.
- Progressive Levels: Structure modules from foundational to advanced levels, with clear prerequisites and progression pathways.
- Role-Based Tracks: Provide specialised pathways for different RM functions (pre-award, post-award, strategic, compliance).

Delivery methods and formats

- Blended learning: a combination of online, in-person, experiential learning components and mentoring.
- Flexible scheduling and length: both self-paced individual modules and structured cohort programs, as well as short and long formats should be offered.
- Accessibility: RMs from less resourced or less developed RSO should be able to engage in professional development opportunities.
- Practice-based learning: trainings should include case studies, simulations, and real project work.

Assessment frameworks

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- Authentic assessment: using real-world scenarios and project-based assessments to demonstrate competency.
- Multiple methods: combining various assessment approaches (written, practical, portfolio, peer review).
- Competency demonstration: focusing on skill mastery rather than time-based attendance.

Recognition and transferability

- Micro-Credentials: (increasingly digital) certificates for individual module completion as well as specific competencies developed through mentoring relationships should be provided.
- Prior learning recognition: mechanisms to assess existing competencies and experience should be included. Furthermore, it should be possible to validate experiential learning gained through informal professional development.
- Stackable credentials: mentoring experiences should be allowed to contribute toward larger qualifications.
- Cross-Border Compatibility: training providers should ensure qualifications are comparable and transferable across European institutions.

4.5.5. Quality assurance

Quality assurance forms a critical component of the architecture, encompassing several aspects: internal quality management systems or tools within institutions, the development of tailored instruments such as a dedicated quality label for RM training and, in the longer term, formal accreditation in accordance with European standards. Still, given the current maturity level of the profession, in accordance with the recommendations formulated in the RM Roadmap project[54], formalisation should not get in the way of developing broader access and a more coherent training and qualification offer. Mandatory professional certification frameworks should be avoided, and recognition of prior experience should continue to be central. Nevertheless, European Standards should be used as guidelines and orientation to enhance comparability among existing and future RM trainings.

Quality assurance encompasses the following dimensions:

- Design and standards: RM-trainings and qualification programmes should follow measurable standards and objectives, ensuring alignment with national and European qualification frameworks.
- Validation and certification: Trainings and qualification programmes should include transparent and reliable assessment procedures based on learning outcomes, as well as internal and external reviews of certification processes.
- Continuous evaluation: Regular cycles of self-assessment and external evaluation should be organised for RM programmes and training providers, ensuring feedback-driven improvement. The self-assessment tool recently developed under the European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp) may be an inspiring resource.55

[54] RM Roadmap NOVA WP2 D2.3 Report on the professional development opportunities, p. 52. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/633ae0b47dc8ac471e5978a9/t/68767073de13ae51598193ac/1752592500718/RM_Roadmap_D2.3_NOVA_Report+on+the+professional+development+opportunities.pdf

[55] https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/jobs-research/researchcomp-european-competence-framework-researchers/self-assessment-tool

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- Impact measurement: The impact of qualifications on graduate careers, institutional practices, and stakeholder satisfaction should be measured via mechanisms to track and analyse (before-after or longitudinal study designs, mixed-method evaluation approaches).
- Quality standards for mentoring/coaching/training: Transparent and relevant criteria should be set for mentor (coach/trainer selection and training).
- Quality Label/accreditation: a recognisable quality label or accreditation for programmes along set criteria should be put in place in a way that is compatible with the current maturity of the ecosystem, enhancing comparability and trust without setting to high thresholds.

4.5.6. Training and qualification platform

A training and qualification platform would serve as the central information system for the qualification framework. It makes the coherent frame for RM training in Europe visible and transparent and acts as a marketplace, bringing together comprehensive inventories of available training, mapped areas and competences, accessible training providers, and open learning materials.

4.5.7. Stakeholder engagement and review mechanisms

Stakeholder engagement and review mechanisms ensure the framework remains relevant and responsive. Engaging Research Managers, employers, policymakers, and training providers in dialogue and co-creation is essential for the continuous development and adaptation of the qualification system.

Based on the current European Research Management landscape, a two-level approach would be most realistic, combining both European and national elements:

European Level:

- Strategic framework and standards: High-level competency frameworks (like RM Comp), quality assurance principles, and interoperability guidelines
- Major stakeholder coordination: EU institutions, large international organisations (EARMA), and cross-border initiatives
- Policy alignment: Ensuring consistency with ERA policies and Horizon Europe requirements

National Level:

- Operational implementation: Day-to-day stakeholder engagement, curriculum development, and quality assurance
- Local contextualisation: Adapting frameworks to national legal systems, institutional cultures, and language requirements
- Practical consultation: Regular engagement with national RPOs, RFOs, HR departments, and RM associations
- Detailed governance: Managing working groups, surveys, and focus groups within manageable linguistic and cultural contexts

This hybrid approach is both practical and strategic for several interconnected reasons. European-wide stakeholder engagement across 27+ countries, multiple languages, and diverse institutional systems would be unwieldy for detailed operational decisions due to the sheer scale and complexity involved. Moreover, national RM associations and networks already exist and have

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established relationships with local stakeholders, providing a ready-made infrastructure for meaningful consultation and implementation.

The subsidiarity principle supports this model by allowing for local adaptation while maintaining European coherence, ensuring that frameworks remain relevant to diverse national contexts without losing their overarching consistency. This approach follows a proven model similar to how other EU education frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Framework, successfully operate by combining European-level strategic coordination with national-level operational implementation.

5. Conclusions

This preliminary report marks a step forward in the professionalisation and harmonisation of Research Management (RM) across Europe. Through a systematic mapping of the existing landscape – encompassing definitions, functions, roles, skills, and training initiatives – alongside a detailed analysis of both progress and persistent challenges, the report provides the basic foundations for developing a coherent and integrated European RM qualification framework.

Despite notable advancements, the report highlights ongoing challenges relating to the mutual recognition and quality assurance of qualifications, the patchwork nature of current training provision, and the need for greater alignment of standards. The findings underline the importance of continued co-creation, stakeholder consultation, and pilot testing to ensure the evolving framework remains flexible, relevant, and widely endorsed.

By consolidating outcomes developed collaboratively within major EU projects and involving the RM community, this first milestone aims at equipping training providers and policymakers with a robust structure for subsequent curriculum design, competence assessment, and career development, responsive to the diverse realities of institutions across the ERA.

Looking ahead, successive iterations of peer engagement and targeted feedback will refine and enrich the preliminary concepts presented here. The next project phases will translate this foundational work into a comprehensive handbook, practical guidelines, and the foundations for a quality label for RM training. These efforts will drive the sustainable development of RM by promoting mobility, interoperability, and professional growth for research managers across Europe. In doing so, the RM Framework project is prepared to strengthen the effectiveness, impact, and long-term recognition of the RM, benefiting the entire European research ecosystem.

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