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## The EARMA Annual Conference 2015 in Leiden, The Netherlands: Submit a topic before 17 November!

EARMA's Annual Conference 2015 will be held in the charming historic city of Leiden in The Netherlands between 28th June and 1 July 2015. The theme of the conference is:

Global Outreach: Enabling Cultures and Diversity  
in Research Management and Administration



*Images from Leiden and the conference venues: The welcome reception of EARMA's Annual Conference 2015 will be held in Leiden's old citadel (De Burcht, upper left) with spectacular view of the city. The main venue of the conference is the Kamerlingh Onnes Building (KOG) of Leiden University (upper right) and the official opening session as well as the conference dinner will be held in Hooglandse Kerk (lower left and right).*

## Submit a topic!

A brief outline of the track structure of the conference and some crucial information is outlined here; please refer to the [conference website](#) for comprehensive information and topic submission forms.

### **Important notes**

All members of EARMA that are active in the field of research management and administration, regardless of level of experience are welcome – and encouraged – to submit a proposal. The deadline for submitting topics to the conference is: **17 November 2014**.

Proposals must be submitted **online** (no paper forms available) using the format given. Only *complete* proposals will be considered.

Proposers of accepted proposals will act as session **organizers** and **chair** of their proposal unless they are volunteering to speak in which case they should also identify a chair. The proposer's details are automatically added to the proposal and he/she will remain the main contact person for this proposal.

The Annual Conference Committee (ACC) reserves the right to edit the final title of the session, or workshop and to edit abstracts for publication in publicity material.

### **Track structure of the conference**

The aim of the Tracks is to give the conference a clear structure. They are not designed to be restrictive and the ACC is open to any good ideas, even if they do not fit neatly into one of the Tracks below. For 2015, there will be 7 tracks, described in detail on the [conference web page](#):

- T0. EARMA Activities
- T1. Grants management of collaborative research (including Horizon 2020)
- T2. Responsible Research and Innovation: Compliance, engagement, gender, open access, ethics, integrity and legal aspects.
- T3. Recognition of the profession: Professional development and Career Development
- T4. Generic Skills Training New for Leiden
- T5. Research strategies and policies; How to develop; how to measure
- T6. RM&A for Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships & Global Collaboration; Support Structures

### **Formats of sessions/presentation and workshops**

Upon submitting a topic, you are asked to suggest a suitable format for the session. At the EARMA 2015 conference, 7 defined formats and one open format are available to choose from, each described in detail on the [conference web page](#):

- a) Presentation
- b) Plenary session
- c) Panel session
- d) Roundtable session
- e) Workshop
- f) Sponsored session
- g) Poster
- h) Other formats

## **Practical information and venue**

The web page will be updated with pictures and a floor plan of the conference venue. All conference rooms are equipped with laptops, beamers and microphone(s). The two big halls are also fully equipped with video and live-streaming facilities. In total, there is capacity and time slots for:

- 14 x 2 hour parallel sessions: ideal for hands-on learning experiences
- 7 x 1½ hour parallel sessions: ideal for hands-on learning experiences
- A number of 1-hour parallel sessions

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## **Report from the INORMS 2014 Conference:**

The **INORMS 2014 Conference** in Washington, DC, 10-13 April 2014 was co-organized by EAMA's sister organizations [SRA](#), [NCURA](#), and [CAURA](#) and gathered 445 registered participants from all over the world. The program, all the presentations, and photos from the conference are available from the [INORMS 2014 web pages](#).

Below, we are happy to present *Susi Poli's* report from the INORMS 2014 conference. Susi, from the Institute of Education University of London, received a travel grant from EARMA to allow her participation, and she held a session together with Jeff Newman of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. Their presentation can be downloaded from the [INORMS 2014 web page](#). Later this year, Susi was elected to the Board of EARMA at the General Assembly in Tallinn, Estonia.

## **Reporting Good Practice and Findings: My Impressions and Points of Reflection from INORMS 2014**

*By Susi Poli, recipient of EARMA Travel Fellowship for INORMS 2014*

Overall, the conference, which took place in Washington from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2014, introduced a set of excellent content to research managers bringing their experience from all over the world. The conference was inspiring and overall fruitful in order to raise several points of reflection and carry them out within EARMA.

I flew to Washington on 10<sup>th</sup> and the presentation that I gave jointly with the US colleague Jeff Newman, now director of the research services at Vanderbilt University, was scheduled for the following day, Friday the 11<sup>th</sup>. The title of our presentation was: **Using Cooperation with Collaboration as Management Skill and Strategy in Research Administration** and it dealt with a multiple set of interrelated topics:

- Research managers as professionals who are still expanding their field of action, tricky skills in research management,
- Working spaces in which research managers (RMAs) interact,

- Interpersonal relationships among RMAs and all the other players in today's research; lastly, the search of a strategy in research that takes all these factors into account.

For the exploration of the working spaces, we relied on the social capital theory; a paper has been written in order to analyse such spaces and the flow of the interpersonal relationships among today's players within the research environment more in depth. Given the complexity of these working spaces, further theoretical frameworks (dealing with the community of practice and the collaborative networked organisations theories) have been applied; our aim was to go beyond the familiar working spaces and expand our investigation to those relationships that exist within unexplored spaces in today's research. External partners populate those spaces, so in these, multiculturalism is most prevalent.



*Susi Poli (sitting in left side of the photo) and Jeff Newman presenting their workshop: "Using Cooperation with Collaboration as a Management Skill and then a Strategy in Research Administration" at the INORMS 2014 conference at The Washington Hilton in Washington, DC, USA.*

The last part of the presentation was more practical and perhaps inspiring: skills were exploited and analyzed in detail, before being contextualized within the every-day practice of the research division/office (e.g. difficult relationships, unskilled people, lack of resources, complexity of the workplace, among others).

**Particularly interesting the poster session**, perhaps not valorized enough. I was favorably impressed by the poster explaining the stage of development of research services in an African university and also one on ethics in research and new ways of promoting ethical sensitivity among staff and researchers in a UK university.

**Among the outcomes** from my participation: an excellent opportunity of networking and meeting up with colleagues from all over the world; in addition, of exploring their different research environments and the stages of development of their local contexts. But also an opportunity to see if the research management community is ready to deal with some (or a lot of) theory applied to the investigation of



research management once coupled with every-day practice. Several of the presentations were rather out-of-the-box in terms of contents (e.g. by mixing theory and practice or pointing out the impact of cultural factors on EU projects from the perspective of different players). I was again favorably hit by a number of presentations and posters trying to combine theory and practice on research management: some of them really had the academic structure that lies behind pieces of scientific research whilst others only tried to show findings coming up from a new way in which these people were running their research management services.

I believe that not only the quality of the provision of more specialised research support services but also the recognition of the profession of research manager should go through the knowledge of the academic skills needed to produce presentations in the form of academic studies. Among the complaints (if any should be found), perhaps the 10 parallel sessions run together were too much and I would have preferred less sessions run at the same time.

**The points of reflection** that I would like to raise are the following:

- A lot of training opportunities seen all around and certifications targeted to research managers: EARMA should find the way to valorize our training programme and raise the key assets in comparison with other programmes. I mean that despite all the programmes that have something in common we should make our certificate more attractive from external partners and propose to modify/adapt some of the contents. For instance, Japanese colleagues asked me for training opportunities on EU research projects and may be interested in the new EARMA EU certification, not in the current shape but in a shape targeted to their needs.
- Our training programme may be further developed (after selecting the first cohort of trainers) by adding further modules and assess their liking; then further promoted among EU colleagues as well as among RMAs from other countries or continents. It is all about the understanding of the international research arena and thus our programme, more than others, may be key for people from other sectors and places.
- Gender in research was not treated but was one of the key themes in the EARMA 2014 Tallinn Annual Conference. More focus should be put on gender under Horizon 2020, especially for the training opportunities that may arise (e.g. reimbursement of costs and new paths of exploration, so further research projects).
- The dissemination of the theory on research management should be core to all our annual conferences, since it is the theory that gives credibility and recognition to our professional community. The amount of international articles on research management is on raise and the discussion within our community can only raise further points of interest and therefore expand the borders of the discussion.

**Finally, among the new trends** that I'd like to see explored more:

- What new roles can we envisage for the research managers of the early future? This is one of the questions that I have brought home after the conference.
- What the skills in demand in an early future? Leadership, cultural awareness, networking and trust, empathy, and also a combination of several of these skills, for instance empathetic networking, empathetic cultural understanding, and others.

- Interpersonal relationships are key and perhaps more important/influential than technical skills. Should we work more on them (new modules within the EU certification, or also a new working group)?
- Dealing with leadership in research management: shaping different styles of leadership in managing research. It should be feasible to set up a discussion group, a survey and collect the variety of styles in managing today's research (e.g. in the leadership level of our certificate).
- Internationalizing staff in or through research and this may be one of the further modules of our EU certification. This point may be coupled with promoting cross-cultural awareness, understanding and communication.
- More focus on gender issues because gender is becoming a key topic: actions may include supporting women in research management, mentoring women in research management, adapting social capital to women's needs in research management, gender and leadership in research management, among others.



## **INORMS 2016 in Melbourne, Australia**

The next INORMS Conference, which will be the sixth, is organized by Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) will be held in Melbourne, Australia 11-15 September 2016 with the theme: **Research Management in a Connected World.**

Melbourne is a sophisticated, beautiful and safe city of 4 million people with a great public transport system, it is not just an ideal conference venue but a destination in its own right. Named the world's most liveable city for three years in a row, those who live there also boast of its great arts culture, attractions, sports icons and world-renowned café and dining scene.

The call for abstracts and posters will open 9 September 2015, so there is plenty of time. Melbourne is far from most EARMA members, so it is not too early to start planning your participation.

Read more about INORMS 2016 at [their website!](#)