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RM ROADMAP

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D2.3 Report on the professional development opportunities

This report provides a comprehensive, evidence-based analysis of the professional development landscape for Research Managers (RMs) in Europe. It draws on the mapping of 335 structured opportunities across five categories: Training, Mobility, Networking, Funding, and RM Networks, alongside a pan-European survey with over 2,200 responses, targeted trainer collaboration initiatives, and a co-creation consultation to inform future EU-level interventions.

WP2: Training and Development, NOVA University Lisbon (NOVA)

June 2025

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Project full title

"Creating Framework Conditions for Research Management to Strengthen the European Research Area"

Project acronym

RM Roadmap

Grant Agreement no.

101058475

D2.3 Report on the professional development opportunities

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List of abbreviations

ARMA	Association of Research Managers and Administrators (UK)
ARMS	Australasian Research Management Society
ASTP	Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals
EARMA	European Association of Research Managers and Administrators
EC	European Commission
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
ERA	European Research Area
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PDF	Professional Development Framework
R&I	Research and Innovation
RM	Research Management / Research Manager
SARIMA	South African Research and Innovation Managers' Association
WP	Work Package

Glossary of key terms

Category	Term	Definition
Mapping Definitions	Funding Opportunities	Funding programmes that target RMs or include them among eligible beneficiaries, enabling engagement in professional development.
Mapping Definitions	Mobility Opportunities	Schemes enabling RMs to move between institutions to gain exposure, share experiences, and strengthen collaboration.
Mapping Definitions	Networking Opportunities	Structured opportunities for RMs to connect, share practices, and collaborate, such as conferences or communities of practice.
Mapping Definitions	Training Opportunities	Programmes to enhance RM skills, ranging from short-term workshops to long-term academic or accredited courses.
Mapping Definitions	RM Networks	Formal or informal bodies supporting RMs through training, advocacy, peer mentoring, and knowledge exchange.
Mapping Definitions	Geographical Scope of Opportunities	Classified as National (one country), European (multiple EU countries), or International (beyond

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		Europe).
Thematic Areas of RM	Data Management	Systematic handling, storage, sharing, and governance of research data.
Thematic Areas of RM	Ethics	Oversight of ethical standards in research, including integrity and subject protection.
Thematic Areas of RM	Impact	Strategies to achieve and measure research benefits to society, policy, or science.
Thematic Areas of RM	Infrastructure	Management of research-supporting resources like equipment, IT systems, and facilities.
Thematic Areas of RM	Innovation	Transformation of research findings into practical or marketable solutions.
Thematic Areas of RM	Lab Management	Oversight of laboratory operations, compliance, safety, and resource management.
Thematic Areas of RM	Leading a Team/Office	Strategic and operational leadership of RM teams, including supervision and planning.
Thematic Areas of RM	Outreach/Community Engagement	Connecting research with society via engagement, dissemination, and stakeholder dialogue.
Thematic Areas of RM	Policy	Development of institutional and regulatory frameworks governing research.
Thematic Areas of RM	Post-Award	Project management after funding is granted, covering finance, reporting, and compliance.
Thematic Areas of RM	Pre-Award	Support for proposal development, budgeting, and strategic alignment pre-submission.
Thematic Areas of RM	Research Assessment	Monitoring research output quality and impact to guide improvement.
Thematic Areas of RM	Researcher/Talent Development	Training and support for researchers' career and skills advancement.
Thematic Areas of RM	Science Communication	Effective dissemination of research to diverse audiences.
RMComp Levels	RM1 – First-Stage Research Manager	Up to 2 years' experience; basic understanding; task-oriented responsibilities.
RMComp Levels	RM2 – Recognised Research Manager	Intermediate experience; broader responsibilities; may coordinate peers.
RMComp Levels	RM3 – Established Research Manager	Advanced experience; strategic advisory role; supervises and manages resources.
RMComp Levels	RM4 – Senior Research Manager	Expert level; strategic institutional leadership and mentoring responsibilities.

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1. Executive summary

This report presents the results of Work Package 2 (WP2) of the RM Roadmap project, coordinated by NOVA University Lisbon. It provides the most comprehensive, evidence-based overview to date of the professional development landscape for Research Managers (RMs) in Europe. The report draws on an integrated methodology that combines a systematic mapping of professional development offers, a pan-European survey with more than 2,000 respondents, and a participatory co-creation process conducted with RM communities in 34 countries. These three data sources were triangulated to produce an in-depth analysis of existing opportunities, unmet needs, structural barriers, and shared priorities for future policy design. In addition, direct action targeted at RM trainers and potential trainers was carried out to reinforce collaboration and practice exchange.

WP2 adopted a mixed-methods approach structured around the following four lines of action:

1. **Mapping professional development opportunities**: An inventory of 335 structured initiatives across 35 countries was compiled, encompassing training, mobility, networking, funding opportunities, and professional networks. These were analysed by type, provider, career stage (RM1–RM4[2]), and geographical reach.
   The results revealed a fragmented ecosystem, with strong reliance on general training and a marked underrepresentation of accredited, targeted, or internationally supported programmes – particularly in mobility and funding, which accounted for just 2.69% and 3.28% of mapped initiatives, respectively.

2. **Diagnosing needs through a pan-European survey**: A large-scale survey collected 2,212 valid responses between November 2023 and May 2024, offering an in-depth picture of how RMs across different countries and institutional contexts engage in professional development.
   Key insights include widespread time and funding constraints, limited institutional support (reported by 25–30% of respondents), and strong preferences for short, flexible, and accredited learning formats. Certification, in contrast, was not perceived as particularly useful for entering or progressing in the profession.

3. **Fostering trainer collaboration**: WP2 prioritised enhancing collaboration among RM training providers and promoting the internationalisation of existing programmes. This included the RM TrainerLink sessions and a regional workshop in Budapest, which supported peer learning and pedagogical exchange, particularly in under-resourced regions. A train-the-trainer programme further developed the instructional skills of active RM trainers, while building a diverse, cross-national community of practitioners committed to strengthening the RM training landscape.

4. **Consulting the community on EU-level support mechanisms**: The final phase involved a broad co-creation consultation with 34 national and thematic communities on two proposed EU-level schemes: an individual mobility and training grant, and an institutional collaboration model. While both were positively received, a clear preference emerged for the institutional

[2] As aligned with the European Competence Framework for Research Managers available here

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scheme as the most impactful and sustainable approach to building RM capacity through structured exchanges, peer learning, and inter-institutional cooperation.

The synthesis of the mapping, survey, and co-creation led to the following core insights:

- **A fragmented and unequal landscape**

  Professional development opportunities are growing but remain unevenly distributed. While training dominates (51% of mapped initiatives), mobility and funding are severely limited (2.69% and 3.28%, respectively), with a third of RMs never having participated in any mobility activity. This is exacerbated by fragmented information and a lack of coordination across systems.

- **Time, cost, and institutional gaps are major barriers**

  Lack of time is the most cited barrier to participation across all activity types (training, networking, mobility). Nearly 70% of respondents received no funding for professional development in the previous two years, and only about one-quarter felt adequately supported by their institutions.

- **Clear preferences for short-term, flexible, and practical learning**

  The majority of RMs favour short courses (under one week), interactive training, online and hybrid formats, and modular, accredited credentials. However, the mapping shows a stark supply-demand mismatch: only four formally accredited programmes and 15 ECTS-based courses were identified Europe-wide.

- **RM Associations and Networks are key enablers**

  Networks account for nearly one-third of mapped initiatives and are highly valued by the community. They play a central role in peer learning, mentoring, and advocacy, particularly in countries where institutional frameworks are underdeveloped.

- **Limited support for professional certification**

  Certification is not considered essential by most respondents: only 13.9% view it as useful for career entry, and 22.6% for progression. It is rarely required by employers and often inaccessible due to cost and availability.

- **Institutional mobility schemes are prioritised for EU-Level action**

  While both proposed mobility schemes were endorsed during the co-creation process, stakeholders prioritised a capacity-building model focused on structured staff exchanges. This reflects a strategic preference for interventions with long-term, system-level impact.

Eight policy recommendations were formulated grounded in empirical evidence and stakeholder input. These include:

1. **For national and European-level policy-makers and funders:**

   Strengthen and fund RM associations and networks, which are widely recognised as central actors in the professional development ecosystem. Their long-term sustainability is essential for delivering peer-led training, community-building, and professional advocacy.

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2. **For RPOs (such as universities) and national accreditation authorities**:

   Expand short-term accredited training opportunities, prioritising modular, flexible formats that accommodate different time availabilities and career stages. Institutions of higher education should be encouraged to develop stackable programmes that combine academic rigour with practical relevance.

3. **For RPOs, RM associations, and training providers**:

- ***Design career-stage-sensitive learning pathways*** that reflect the evolving needs of early-, mid-, and senior-career RM professionals. These pathways should be aligned with established competence frameworks, such as the European Competence Framework for Research Managers and embedded within institutional HR and staff development strategies.

4. **For the European Commission and other international, regional and national research funding agencies**:

   Establish an EU-level institutional mobility and capacity-building scheme for RM professionals. This initiative should facilitate cross-border institutional exchanges, peer learning, and long-term capability building within the European Research Area, addressing a priority repeatedly raised by stakeholders during the co-creation process.

5. **For the European Commission, in collaboration with RM associations and European infrastructures (e.g., EURAXESS):**

   Develop and maintain a centralised information hub that consolidates training, mobility, and funding opportunities in RM. The platform should ensure equitable access through user-friendly interfaces and curated content, reducing fragmentation and information asymmetry across Europe. Support the visibility of RM through postgraduate education, while avoiding the formalisation of degrees as mandatory entry requirements.

6. **For postgraduate education providers, including universities:**

   Promote the visibility of RM as a career path through postgraduate education and course offerings. While enhancing academic recognition of the profession, it is essential to avoid formalising academic degrees as mandatory entry requirements, which may inadvertently restrict access and diversity in the field.

7. **For national authorities, research funders, and institutional leadership**:

   Avoid the imposition of mandatory certification frameworks for RM professionals. Given the limited employer recognition and broad scepticism expressed by the community, voluntary models linked to competence development and institutional incentives are preferable.

8. **For RPOs and national policy-makers responsible for research and innovation:**

   Integrate professional development into institutional and national research strategies**,** ensuring structural support, protected time, and incentives for RM professionals to engage in training. Such integration is essential to professionalise the field and build long-term capacity.

This report provides a strategic blueprint for the development of an inclusive, coherent, and future-ready RM professional development ecosystem. By grounding its conclusions in real-world data and

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broad-based community consultation, it delivers actionable insights for institutions, policy-makers, and funders. Addressing the structural gaps identified here will be critical to ensuring that RMs are equipped to play their full role in advancing the European Research Area.

2. Introduction, aim and methodology

2.1. RM Roadmap

RM Roadmap charts a course for the future of research management (RM) in Europe and a community to support its delivery. Conducted over 36 months, it is funded to the amount of €1.5m by the European Commission Horizon Europe funding programme.

The overarching objective of RM Roadmap is to identify and adapt the research management capital base of the EU, including the widening countries, and emerging needs of its current and future research management workforce to improve the EU's competitiveness and sustain its economic performance.

RM Roadmap allows existing European networks to connect on a smart community platform consultation process in research management. This co-creation process gathers the existing communities and expands them to reach two main objectives: to create and inform a bottom-up consensus on the future of RM in a roadmap, and to inform the community about existing training, networking, funding, and career mobility opportunities.

Eight partners are working together on this project: European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (Belgium); HÉTFA Research Institute (Hungary); Nova University Lisbon (Portugal); Association of European Science & Technology Transfer Professionals (Netherlands); Crowdhelix Limited (Ireland), The Cyprus Institute (Cyprus) and associated partners Janssen Pharmaceuticals (Belgium) and Una Europa (Belgium).

For the implementation of the project, the following Work Packages were designed:

WP	Work Package name	Lead partner	Main goal
WP1	Intelligence	HETFA	To build a comprehensive evidence base on research management in Europe by mapping the RM value chain, analysing roles, skills, and career frameworks, identifying regulatory and training gaps, and compiling best practices to inform future recognition and policy development.
WP2	Training and Development	NOVA	To identify, systematise, and address training, networking, and funding opportunities for RM professionals, and support the design of a Europe-wide professional development scheme
WP3	Roadmap and Advocacy	EARMA	To co-create a strategic roadmap for RM in Europe, build a policy-oriented business case, and mobilise stakeholders through advocacy and an ambassador network.

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WP4	Community, Communication and Dissemination	Crowdhelix	To ensure visibility, engagement, and dissemination of project outcomes through a dedicated digital platform and community-building actions.
WP5	Project Management	EARMA	To coordinate the consortium, ensure timely delivery of results, and manage administrative, financial, and quality aspects of the project.
WP6	Sustainability and Exploitation	ASTP	To develop a long-term sustainability strategy for the project's outcomes and prepare the exploitation of tools, services, and community structures established.

2.2. Work Package 2 - Objectives, tasks, and methodological approach

Work Package 2 (WP2), coordinated by NOVA, was designed to strengthen the professional development ecosystem for Research Managers (RMs) across Europe. Grounded in the ambition to build a more inclusive, structured, and accessible environment for RM training and mobility, WP2 pursued four interconnected objectives: (i) to map existing professional development opportunities; (ii) to diagnose needs, barriers, and gaps through empirical evidence; (iii) to foster pedagogical collaboration among trainers; and (iv) to consult the RM community on future EU-level schemes. These objectives were implemented through dedicated tasks and supported by a multi-objective, mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative strategies. This ensured that the work was analytically robust, representative across institutional and geographic contexts, and aligned with real-world professional trajectories and stakeholder expectations.

2.2.1. Objective 1: Mapping Professional Development Opportunities

This task responded to the need to understand and make visible the current landscape of professional development for RMs in Europe. The mapping process, conducted between April 2023 and July 2024, included:

- **Desk research** to identify existing initiatives, institutional programmes, and relevant online platforms.
- **Definition of eligibility criteria** to ensure that mapped opportunities were:
  - Specifically targeted at RMs;
  - Regularly available (not one-off events);
  - Open to external participants.
- **Design and dissemination of an online data collection template**, inviting institutions and training providers to contribute detailed entries.
- **Classification of opportunities** into five categories: training activities, mobility schemes, networking formats, funding opportunities, and professional networks.

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- **Terminology alignment** with the CARDEA RM Career Matrix (RM1–RM4), replacing initial WP2 categories with standardised levels of experience.
- **Validation procedures** to clean and verify the information received, ensuring quality and comparability across countries and institutional types.

The exercise resulted in the identification of 335 professional development opportunities across 35 countries (see RM Roadmap Deliverable 2.2 - Catalogue of existing professional development opportunities at https://www.rmroadmap.eu/deliverables). A searchable, smart online catalogue was created in coordination with the CARDEA project and is publicly available here.

2.2.2. Objective 2: Diagnosing needs through a pan-European survey

Aligned with the objective of diagnosing the professional development needs of the RM community, Task 2.2 focused on the design, dissemination, and analysis of a comprehensive pan-European survey. Developed in close collaboration with WP1, the survey had two interrelated aims. First, it contributed to building a robust evidence base on the state of research management in Europe, encompassing skill profiles, institutional roles, recognition pathways, and systemic gaps, an analysis carried out by HETFA and reported in Deliverable D1.2: Final Report on the ERA-wide Landscape. Second, it supported WP2 by capturing how RMs currently engage with professional development opportunities, including training, networking, mobility, and funding – a perspective analysed in the present Deliverable D2.3.

The instrument was informed by internationally recognised methodologies, including the RAAAP (Research Administration as a Profession) series, and was tailored to the European context to reflect the diversity of RM roles, institutions, and career pathways. The full questionnaire is available in **Annex 1** of this report.

The survey was disseminated between **November 2023 and May 2024**, resulting in **2,212 valid responses** from across the European Research Area. Using the CARDEA-aligned RM1–RM4 framework, the data supported comparative analysis by country, institutional type, and career stage.

For the purposes of WP2, the survey specifically investigated:

- **Participation in training and mobility activities**, including frequency, types, and modalities;
- **Perceived obstacles to access**, such as cost, lack of time, institutional support, or relevance;
- **Preferences regarding training formats**, certification schemes, and accessibility;
- **Availability and need for networking and funding opportunities**;
- **Affiliation with professional networks** and participation in their activities – or the absence thereof.

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Survey results were triangulated with mapping data to produce a robust gap analysis, which underpinned the formulation of policy recommendations included in this deliverable.

2.2.3. Objective 3: Consulting the RM Community on future EU-Level schemes

To ensure that WP2's recommendations were grounded in community needs, a structured consultation was conducted on two proposed EU-level professional development schemes:

- **Scheme A:** An individual mobility and training grant for RMs, modelled on the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, with emphasis on flexibility and personal development.
- **Scheme B**: An institutional collaboration model for structured staff exchanges and training, following the logic of MSCA Staff Exchanges and ERA Talents.

Respondents were invited to assess each scheme's feasibility, institutional fit, expected benefits, and potential implementation challenges. Feedback revealed a strong preference for Scheme B, perceived as more sustainable, inclusive, and conducive to systemic capacity building. The exercise contributed to aligning WP2's policy recommendations with both ERA Action 17 on research management and the structural needs of institutions and RMs alike.

2.2.4. Objective 4: Fostering collaboration among RM trainers

Recognising the recent expansion of training initiatives and the absence of coordinated pedagogical strategies, WP2 promoted trainer collaboration and peer learning through three major initiatives:

- **RM TrainerLink online sessions (January – February 2025), which**:
  - Brought together trainers from long-term and short-term programmes across Europe to share formats, lessons learned, and training models;
  - Facilitated discussion of collaboration formats such as shared international classes, joint mentoring schemes, peer observation, and joint accredited modules, fostering dialogue between training institutions that had previously operated independently.

- **Train-the-Trainer course (March – April; May 2025), which**:
  - Delivered two courses, with four structured pedagogical sessions each, covering instructional design, competence-based learning, active learning strategies, and assessment and feedback;
  - Was designed and delivered by NOVA University Lisbon pedagogical experts, drawing on materials from the foRMAtion project (Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project, available at: https://www.formation-rma.eu)
  - Prioritised diversity in participant selection, with particular attention to Widening Countries, early-career professionals, and institutions with emerging training responsibilities.

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- **Regional engagement through the V4+WB workshop in Budapest (January 2025), which**:
  - Was developed in direct response to the WP2 mapping, which identified the Western Balkans as a region where structured professional development opportunities for RMs are still scarce, but where promising initiatives and informal training efforts have recently emerged;
  - Applied a participatory methodology (World Café and roundtable) to assess specific regional training needs and priorities across the Viségrad Group and Western Balkan regions, identified through the mapping as areas with limited but growing RM training ecosystems;
  - Mapped key stakeholders for future collaboration and explored potential partnerships among universities, funding agencies, RM networks, and national authorities;
  - Reinforced the role of national RM associations and regional networks as drivers of professional development, and strengthened the foundation for future joint initiatives across institutional and national boundaries.

Together, these actions contributed to creating a coherent and collaborative community of RM trainers, promoting mutual recognition, sharing of pedagogical expertise, and alignment with the broader goal of a structured and sustainable European training ecosystem for Research Managers.

3. Main Findings and Results

3.1. Mapping existing opportunities for professional development

3.1.1. A growing landscape: 335 opportunities identified across Europe

Between April 2023 and July 2024, NOVA University Lisbon led a comprehensive mapping exercise across EU countries to identify and characterise existing professional development opportunities available to Research Managers (RMs) in Europe. The exercise, carried out under Task 2.1 of WP2, resulted in the identification of **335 initiatives covering training, networking, mobility, funding, and RM network-based opportunities**.

3.1.2. Training and networking: the backbone of RM professional development

Training emerged as the most prevalent form of professional development for Research Managers, representing 51.04% of all mapped opportunities (n=171). This finding reflects a strong and growing demand for capacity-building, upskilling, and structured learning within the field. The variety of training formats suggests an increasingly responsive ecosystem: short-term training (under one week) was the most frequent (n=102), while a smaller but important share (n=40) consisted of long-term programmes extending beyond six months. These longer initiatives included postgraduate diplomas, master's degrees, and executive education formats, some of which signal increasing formalisation of the profession.

However, despite this growth, formal recognition of training remains limited. Only 15 training programmes offered degrees with European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits, and just 4 granted professional accreditation. The vast majority of training remains non-accredited or certified only by internal institutional mechanisms. This lack of standardised recognition across borders

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presents challenges for career mobility and benchmarking of acquired competencies.

Networking activities, while representing a smaller proportion (12.84% of mapped opportunities), play an equally essential role. These initiatives – ranging from thematic workshops and community meetups to annual conferences – enable peer learning, informal mentoring, and collaborative reflection across the RM profession. Notably, many are low-barrier in design: over 60% were free of charge and open to broad participation, reinforcing their role as accessible entry points to community engagement.

3.1.3. The pivotal role of RM networks in provision and coordination

One of the most compelling findings of the mapping was the central role played by RM networks and professional associations in shaping the RM training and development landscape. RM networks accounted for 30.15% of all recorded opportunities, either as direct organisers or key facilitators of training and networking activities. Also, **174 training initiatives were directly linked to these networks.**

These entities act as more than service providers – they serve as gatekeepers of knowledge, brokers of international collaboration, and conveners of professional communities. Their influence is particularly evident in countries with well-established networks such as Italy, Spain, Belgium, France, Germany, and the UK, where they often operate in parallel to institutional training, and in some cases, lead national-level coordination efforts. Moreover, networks are frequently the first point of entry for RMs in countries with underdeveloped institutional ecosystems, further amplifying their systemic relevance. These findings are completely in line with WP1 results on the importance of professional networks.

3.1.4. Severe gaps in mobility and funding support

Despite the recognised importance of international mobility and funded training for professional advancement, these two categories remain severely underrepresented in the current landscape. **Mobility initiatives comprised just 2.69% of mapped opportunities, and funding schemes accounted for only 3.28%.** Only a few countries such as Switzerland, Poland, and Malta, offer structured mobility frameworks tailored to Research Managers. At the EU level, RMs occasionally benefit from broader instruments like Erasmus+ Staff Mobility and ERA Talents, but access remains limited and often incidental, as these programmes were not originally designed with RM career progression in mind.

The scarcity of dedicated funding streams – particularly those supporting participation in long-term or cross-border training – represents a structural bottleneck for equitable professional development. Most RMs still depend on institutional discretionary budgets, external project funds, or personal investment to pursue training and mobility. This model is highly unequal and particularly unfavourable to professionals working in under-resourced institutions or in countries with lower R&I investment. These findings are somewhat opposed to the results of interviews carried out in WP1 where the main obstacle to participation in training was the lack of time instead the lack of funding.

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3.1.5. Broad accessibility, but limited specialisation by career stage

Another key insight concerns the alignment of training offers with career progression. A striking 97.7% of training opportunities (n=167) are open to all career stages. While this inclusive design removes access barriers and ensures wide eligibility, it also reveals a notable gap: **only a small subset of programmes is specifically tailored to the evolving needs of mid- and senior-career professionals**.

Twelve training opportunities were found to be specifically targeted at RM1 (early-career professionals), and 16 were aligned with RM2 (recognised professionals, typically with 2-5 years of experience). Critically, only two initiatives were targeted at RM3 (established RMs), and just one focused exclusively on RM4 (senior RMs). This lack of career-stage differentiation may impede professional growth, particularly in domains requiring leadership, strategic planning, and organisational change management skills. Without such targeted support, many experienced RMs risk stagnation or a lack of recognition as leaders within their institutions.

3.1.6. Cost as a barrier: unequal access to long-term, accredited programmes

Affordability can be a barrier to equitable participation in RM professional development, particularly for long-term and/or accredited training. **The mapping shows that 69.23% of all opportunities require some form of payment, with costs varying widely depending on format, duration, and level of recognition.** Short-term courses are typically priced between €50 and €500, while mid-range options, such as multi-day in-person courses, range from €1,100 to €4,350. Accredited programmes – particularly executive or postgraduate qualifications – can cost between €250 and €15,000 per year. Some of the highest-tier options, designed for senior staff or international cohorts, exceed €20,000, with the maximum identified reaching €25,300.

These costs, while potentially justified by content and credentialing, represent a relevant challenge for RMs in lower-income institutions and countries. In the absence of targeted funding mechanisms, access to advanced training is effectively stratified by institutional wealth, further deepening the inequalities already present in the European research and innovation landscape. Nevertheless, as it is presented in D1.2, more and more RPOs are committed to securing a fixed budget line for professional development opportunities over time.

3.1.7. Geographical reach: uneven visibility, but emerging activity

While the mapping covered 39 countries, it does not allow for definitive conclusions regarding the full distribution of professional development opportunities across Europe. The data were collected through a combination of stakeholder outreach, RM ambassador engagement, and voluntary institutional contributions. These methods, while effective in capturing a large number of initiatives, were also subject to variability in national uptake, awareness, and dissemination effectiveness. As such, the resulting country-level data should be interpreted with caution. For instance, Portugal appears among the top-listed countries, a likely result of NOVA University Lisbon's coordinating role and enhanced knowledge of domestic opportunities rather than necessarily reflecting a broader systemic advantage.

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Despite these limitations, the mapping reveals that most European regions show at least some level of professional development activity in research management. **Opportunities were identified across Northern, Western, Central, and Southern Europe, albeit with significant variation in volume, structure, and thematic coverage.**

However, **it is also clear that some regions – particularly parts of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans – remain significantly underrepresented in terms of structured professional development provision for Research Managers.** This finding is not only reflected in the mapping results, where few or no opportunities were recorded, but also corroborated by broader evidence gathered throughout the development of the RM Roadmap project and by previous efforts such as the BESTPRAC COST Action [BESTPRAC, 2019]. These sources consistently highlight the limited availability of national-level funding schemes, the scarcity of accredited training programmes, and the absence of institutionalised career structures for RMs in many countries across these regions. While lower participation in the mapping may partly result from dissemination limitations or weaker local infrastructures, the collective evidence confirms that persistent structural gaps exist in these areas, which merit targeted support and intervention.

Encouragingly, **the mapping also highlights positive developments in these underrepresented contexts.** Recent years have seen the creation of national RM associations, such as SARMA in Serbia and Research Management Albania, and the emergence of training activities embedded in regional and EU-funded initiatives, such as the V4+WB RMA Network. These developments demonstrate that, even where national ecosystems remain limited, bottom-up mobilisation and cross-border cooperation are beginning to address capacity gaps and lay the groundwork for more sustainable professional development structures.

3.1.8. A profession in motion: new programmes and networks are flourishing

Despite persistent structural gaps, the mapping reveals encouraging signs of momentum in the professionalisation of research management across Europe. **A total of 21 new training initiatives were launched in 2024, and 10 new RM networks were established between 2019 and 2023 – clear indicators of growing institutional engagement and community self-organisation.**

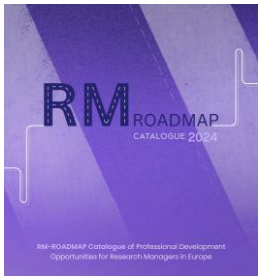
Importantly, this growth is not limited to countries with long-standing infrastructures. New initiatives are also taking shape in regions previously characterised by limited provision, particularly in **Central and Eastern Europe** (including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Croatia, and Bulgaria) – as well as in the **Western Balkans**. These developments, supported by regional cooperation and EU-funded frameworks, show that even in contexts with constrained institutional support, bottom-up efforts are gaining traction.

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RM-ROADMAP project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme under grant agreement number 101058475.

3.1.9. Mapping outputs and access to full results

To maximise usability and transparency, the results of the mapping were compiled and disseminated through three complementary outputs:

		
The **RM Roadmap PDF catalogue** provides a detailed overview of each opportunity and a broader analysis of the professional development landscape. URL: https://www.rmroadmap.eu/rm-professional-development-opportunities	The **interactive online dashboard**, developed in collaboration with the CARDEA project, offers a user-friendly and dynamic way to explore the data. URL: https://www.ucc.ie/en/cardea/dashboard/#rm-professional-development-opportunities	The **fully anonymised database** is publicly available on Figshare, enabling further analysis and research. URL: https://figshare.com/articles/dataset/RM-Roadmap-Final_data_WP2_mapping_final-anonymized_xlsx/27094096?file=49508637

A full discussion and interpretation of the mapping findings, including methodological notes and policy implications, is presented in **Deliverable D2.2 – "Report on Professional Development Opportunities."**

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3.2. Diagnosing needs through a pan-European survey

Between November 2023 and May 2024, a pan-European survey was carried out to collect comprehensive data on the professional landscape, development pathways, and unmet needs of Research Managers (RMs) across the European Research Area (ERA). The questionnaire was co-developed and implemented as a joint initiative between Work Package 1 (led by HETFA Research Institute) and Work Package 2 (led by NOVA University Lisbon). The survey was designed and hosted on the Alchemer platform and distributed via partner networks, European and national RM associations (including EARMA and ASTP), social media channels, and the RM Roadmap Ambassadors. It used a non-probability sampling method, aiming to reach a broad cross-section of the RM community across all ERA countries.

A total of **3,069 responses** were submitted during the data collection period. Following rigorous quality control procedures, including the exclusion of duplicate IP addresses and partially completed questionnaires that did not reach the required threshold (i.e., completion of demographic block and question 9 on the RM area of activity), **2,212 completed responses** were retained for analysis. **These constitute the largest validated dataset on research management professionals in Europe to date.**

The survey addressed two complementary aims. First, the analysis conducted by HETFA, and included in Deliverable D1.2 Final Report on the ERA-wide Landscape, focused on profiling the RM profession, assessing the maturity of the RM ecosystem in Europe, and identifying gaps in recognition, career frameworks, and policy. Second, and forming the empirical basis for the current deliverable, the data analysis carried out by NOVA targeted questions from item 27 onwards, which focused specifically on engagement with training, networking, mobility, and funding opportunities.

This effort aimed to ensure that all subsequent recommendations emerging from WP2 – particularly on training design and funding schemes – were firmly grounded in the lived experiences and expectations of the RM community. The analysis presented in this section draws on these findings to identify key patterns of engagement, obstacles to participation, and preferences regarding professional development formats, recognition mechanisms, and future EU-level support.

The WP2 analysis examined topics such as: participation in structured and informal training; time allocated for professional development; preferences for delivery modes, certification, and modularity; perceived institutional and systemic barriers; participation in national or international RM networks; and views on potential EU-level interventions (e.g., mobility schemes, shared curricula, and centralised information platforms). These questions were designed to inform a robust and comparative gap analysis across countries, institutional types, and career stages.

The full survey instrument is provided in **Annex 1**, while the ***anonymised dataset and codebook*** are openly available via Figshare at:
https://figshare.com/articles/dataset/RM_ROADMAP_survey_dataset/26503675.

A short summary of the key findings is also available on the RM Roadmap project website: https://www.rmroadmap.eu/rm-roadmap-survey.

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3.2.1. Time dedicated to training, mobility, and networking activities for professional development

A total of 1,825 research managers responded to this question, providing insights into how much time per year they dedicate to training, networking, and mobility activities, based on their average participation over the last two years. The findings highlight a strong preference for short-term engagement, with 81.9% (n=1,459) of respondents dedicating less than one month per year to professional development across all three types of activities.

While training (93.3%, n=1,702) and networking (93.1%, n=1,699) are widely practiced, mobility emerges as the least accessible form of professional development activity, with 32.1% (n=585) of research managers reporting no participation at all. This may indicate that barriers such as funding, institutional support, or work constraints may limit opportunities for extended mobility experiences, reinforcing a reliance on short-term professional development activities. Such an interpretation is further supported by the observation that **long-term engagement remains uncommon across all three types of activities**. Only 14.1% (n=258) of respondents spend more than one month per year on training, 18.2% (n=331) on networking, and just 7.5% (n=137) on mobility.

The stacked bar chart in Figure 1 visually reinforces these trends, particularly the high non-participation rate in mobility and the strong preference for short-term training and networking activities.

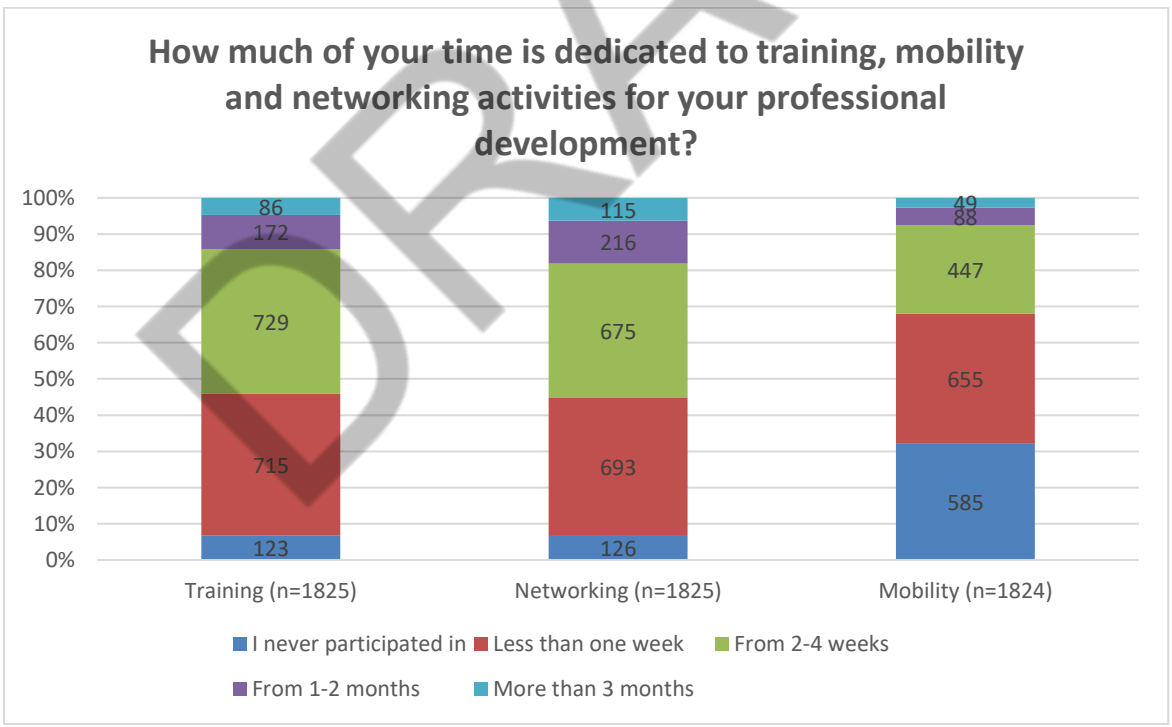


Figure 1 - Time dedicated per year to training, mobility, and networking for professional development (average over the last two years)

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3.2.2. Training activities

Training remains a cornerstone of professional development, with 93.3% (n=1,702) of research managers reporting participation over the past two years.

- **39.2% (n=715) dedicate less than one week per year to training.**
- **39.9% (n=729) spend 2-4 weeks per year on training activities.**
- **Only 14.1% (n=258) dedicate more than one month per year to training, and a mere 4.7% (n=86) spend over three months annually.**

These results indicate that while training is widely recognised as essential, research managers generally allocate limited time per year to such activities. Also, this may suggest that training is often conducted in short, intensive formats, such as workshops, online courses, or structured learning sessions, rather than long-term, ongoing educational programmes.

The mapping results from the RM Roadmap, which identified 335 professional development opportunities for Research Managers across Europe, reinforce this conclusion. Among the 171 mapped training opportunities, short-term training (less than one week) is the most prevalent, representing 49.7% (n=85). Medium-length training programmes (one week to six months) account for 9.36% (n=16), while long-term structured programmes (over six months) make up 11.70% (n=20). These findings highlight a strong emphasis on short-duration training formats in research management professional development.

3.2.3. Networking activities

Networking is another key component of professional development, with 93.1% (n=1,699) of respondents reporting engagement over the past two years.

- 38.0% (n=693) dedicate less than one week per year to networking activities.
- 37.0% (n=675) engage in networking for 2-4 weeks per year.
- A smaller share (11.8%, n=216) spends 1-2 months per year on networking opportunities, while only 6.3% (n=115) dedicate more than three months annually.

The survey findings indicate that research managers allocate only a limited portion of their annual time to networking, suggesting that networking is episodic rather than regular. Most research managers likely engage in structured, event-based networking opportunities, such as conferences, professional association meetings, and informal peer interactions, rather than ongoing professional exchanges.

This pattern is further supported by the RM Roadmap mapping exercise, which found that large-scale conferences and annual meetings represent the most common networking format, accounting for 41.86% (n=18) of identified networking opportunities. These events offer high-impact but time-limited engagement, aligning with survey results that show most research managers dedicate only a few weeks per year to networking. Additionally, 27.91% (n=12) of mapped networking opportunities are thematic workshops, which provide structured yet time-bound opportunities for targeted professional exchanges.

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Moreover, the strong presence of RM networks (n=101, 30.15% of all mapped professional development opportunities) suggests that while research managers do engage in networking, much of it may be facilitated through formal or informal RM networks rather than continuous peer-to-peer interactions. The high representation of RM networks in the mapping results highlights their crucial role in sustaining professional connections beyond short-term events, serving as a bridge between episodic engagement at conferences and ongoing professional support.

3.2.4. Mobility activities

Mobility activities show a distinct and concerning trend, with significantly lower participation rates compared to training and networking.

- **Nearly one-third of respondents** (32.1%, n=585) **reported never engaging in mobility activities**, the highest non-participation rate among all three types of activities.
- 35.9% (n=655) participate for less than one week per year, while a smaller proportion (24.5%, n=447) engage in mobility for 2-4 weeks annually.
- Long-term mobility participation is very limited, with just 4.8% (n=88) engaging for 1-2 months per year, and only 2.7% (n=49) spending more than three months per year.

These findings suggest that mobility is the least integrated component of professional development for research managers. However, whether this is due to external barriers, or a lack of interest remains unclear. On the one hand, mobility may be actively deprioritised by research managers who prefer local or virtual professional development opportunities. On the other hand, the **low participation rates could reflect structural constraints such as financial limitations, lack of institutional support, or work-life balance concerns that make mobility impractical.** This uncertainty is reinforced by the RM Roadmap mapping results, which found that mobility constitutes just 2.69% (n=9) of all mapped professional development opportunities, making it the most underrepresented category. If demand were higher, more programmes might exist, but it is equally possible that the limited availability of structured mobility programmes discourages engagement in the first place. While some EU-led initiatives, such as Erasmus+ Staff Exchange Mobility and NCP_WIDERA.NET Study Visits, provide structured mobility options, they remain limited in scope and accessibility, suggesting that even if research managers are interested, they may struggle to participate.

This challenge was also echoed during the **third RM Roadmap co-creation session**, where several national and thematic communities identified long-term mobility as particularly difficult to pursue. Reported barriers included family responsibilities, residency requirements, institutional effort required for coordination, and the personal and professional disruption caused by extended absences from one's job (RM Roadmap, 2025).

The findings highlight an **urgent need to better understand the underlying reasons behind low mobility engagement**. If barriers such as funding and institutional policies are the primary issue, **expanded support mechanisms** will be essential to making mobility a viable component of professional development. Even so, as interviewees in WP1 presented job-shadowing as one of the best opportunities for professional development. Conversely, if research managers are **not interested in mobility due to professional preferences**, alternative models of engagement – such as virtual or hybrid international exchanges – may be a more effective way to support international collaboration.

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3.2.5. Funding opportunities

Funding remains a critical enabler of professional development and career progression for research managers. However, survey results indicate that **financial support for research managers is largely insufficient**, creating significant accessibility challenges across training, networking, and mobility activities. When asked, *"Have you benefited from funding schemes, grants, or programmes for engaging in any type of research management activities in the last two years?"* only 32.2% of the 1,790 respondents indicated that they had, while **67.8% (n=1,213)** reported they had not benefited from any such support.

It is important to note that this question captures only the outcome – having benefited from funding – and not the underlying cause. Respondents may not have received funding because they did not apply, did not require external resources due to internal institutional support, or applied unsuccessfully. Therefore, while the data point highlights the limited diffusion of funding among RMs – only **32.2% of respondents (n=577)** reported having benefited from funding schemes in the past two years, while **67.8% (n=1,213)** had not – it does not allow for definitive conclusions about application rates or funding success.

However, additional indicators in the survey provide further insight into potential structural constraints. When asked to identify barriers to participation in professional development activities, **38.4% of respondents (n=876)** cited financial barriers as an obstacle to training, **37.4% (n=849)** highlighted financial constraints in relation to networking, and **28.9% (n=656)** identified funding challenges as limiting their ability to engage in mobility. Moreover, over **70% of respondents** rated available funding as either *"not sufficient"* (n=586) or *"barely sufficient"* (n=498) to meet their professional development needs. Responses to open-ended questions also frequently referenced the absence of dedicated institutional or national funding mechanisms tailored to the RM profession, further suggesting that access to funding is not universally available or straightforward.

Taken together, while not all research managers may require or pursue external funding, the available evidence suggests that for those who do, financial support is not systematically accessible. This reinforces the case for targeted, inclusive funding schemes to broaden participation in professional development, especially among those working in under-resourced institutional or national contexts.

A cross-tabulation of responses with **years of experience in research management** reveals key patterns in funding access:

- **Mid-career professionals (10-19 years of experience) were the most likely to benefit from funding (33.7%)**, potentially reflecting the advantages of more established professional networks, increased visibility, and possible involvement in externally funded projects.
- **Early-career research managers (less than 5 years of experience) had lower funding access (26.2%)**, which may reflect factors such as reduced visibility of opportunities, limited eligibility due to career stage, or occupying roles – often administrative – with fewer opportunities to engage in externally funded professional development.
- **Among those with 20+ years of experience, only 11.3% had received funding**. This likely reflects the scarcity of professional development schemes specifically tailored to senior-level research managers, as identified in the mapping exercise. Additional factors may include limited time due to strategic responsibilities and a possible preference to prioritise opportunities for junior colleagues.

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3.2.6. Perceived Sufficiency of Research Management Training, Mobility, Networking, and Funding Opportunities

The survey results highlight a **widespread perception of insufficiency** in the current offer of professional development opportunities for research managers across training, mobility, networking, and funding. A **majority of respondents (66.2%, n=3,744)** rated the available opportunities as either "not sufficient" (31.6%, n=1,788) or "barely sufficient" (34.6%, n=1,956), while only **28.4% (n=1,605)** considered them "sufficient" and **just 5.5% (n=311)** found them "very sufficient" (Figure 2).

Cross-tabulations by country of affiliation and years of experience were also performed, but no relevant differences were found indicating that the perception of insufficiency is broadly shared across national contexts and levels of professional seniority.

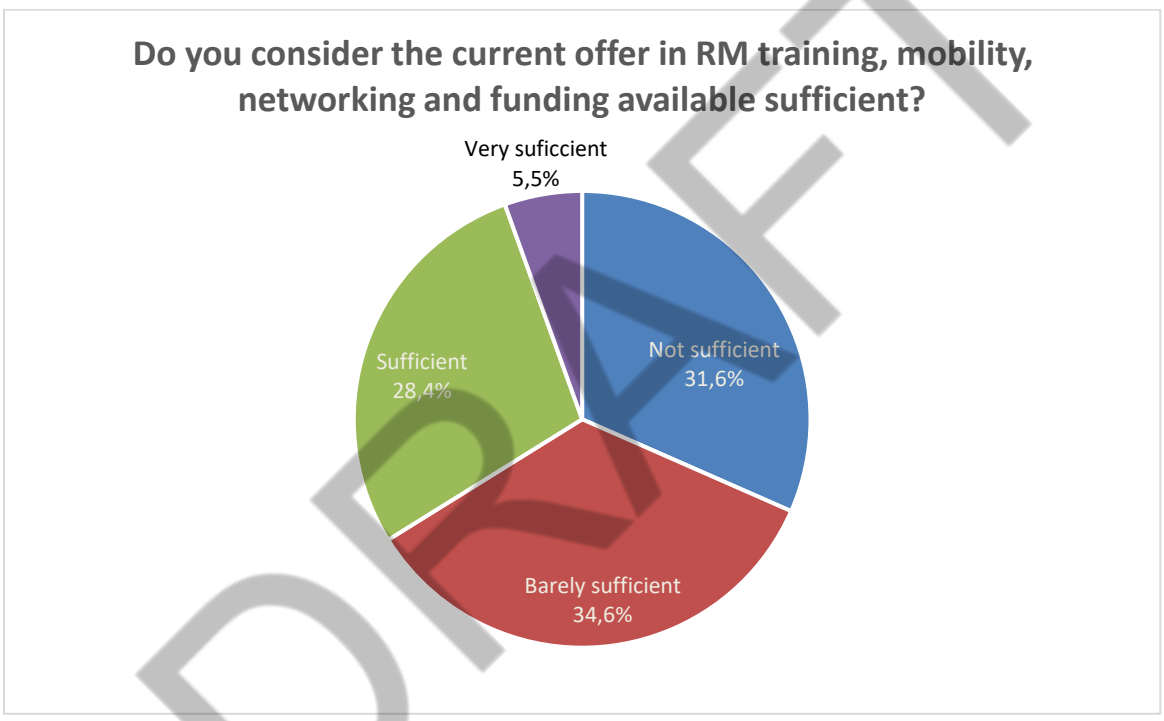


Figure 2 - Perceived sufficiency of research management training, mobility, networking, and funding opportunities

When analysed by category (Figure 3), the perception of sufficiency varies significantly:

- **Mobility and funding were identified as the most insufficient areas**, with 35.2% (n=489) and 43.3% (n=586) of respondents, respectively, indicating that current opportunities are "not sufficient". Additionally, 36.9% (n=512) and 36.8% (n=498) rated them as "barely sufficient", indicating that **over 70% of respondents find existing mobility and funding opportunities inadequate to fully support their professional development**.
- **Training and networking were evaluated more favourably** compared to mobility and funding. However, **61.7% of respondents still rated training as either "not sufficient" or "barely sufficient"**, and **52.1% expressed the same concerns about networking opportunities**.
- **Networking was the most positively rated category**, with **39.2% (n=572)** of respondents considering the available opportunities "sufficient" and **8.9% (n=130)** finding them "very

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sufficient", indicating a relatively stronger perception of adequacy compared to the other areas.

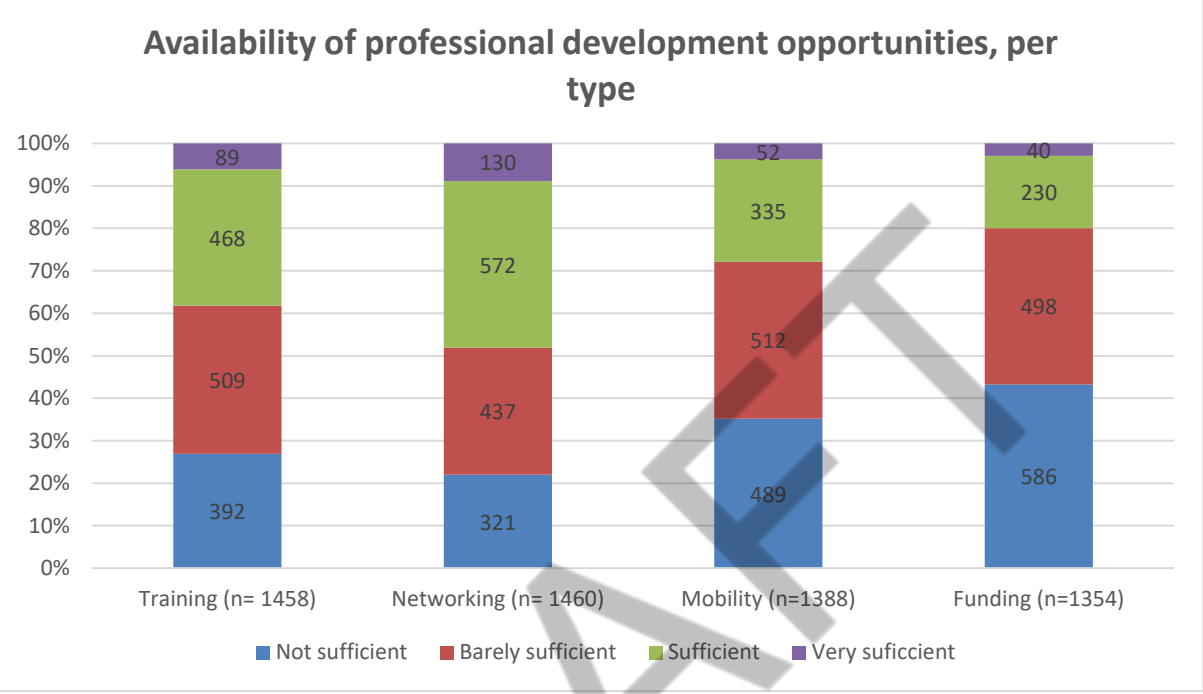


Figure 3 - Breakdown of sufficiency ratings for training, networking, mobility, and funding opportunities

These findings reinforce the disparity between different types of professional development opportunities, particularly the systemic lack of support for mobility and funding. The data aligns with the mapping results from the RM Roadmap, which showed that mobility constitutes only 2.69% of all mapped professional development opportunities, making it the most underrepresented category. Similarly, funding mechanisms for research managers remain scarce and fragmented, as highlighted in previous analyses.

The fact that over 70% of respondents find mobility and funding inadequate to their needs suggests that these areas pose significant barriers to professional development, likely due to financial constraints, limited institutional support, and a lack of dedicated funding schemes. Training and networking, while perceived as more available, still require improvement, particularly in terms of accessibility and long-term engagement opportunities. These results underscore the need for expanded, structured, and well-funded professional development programmes for research managers, particularly in mobility and funding support. Addressing these gaps would help strengthen international collaboration, career progression, and capacity building within the research management profession.

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3.3. Obstacles to participation in training, mobility, and networking activities

Understanding the barriers that hinder participation in training, mobility, and networking activities is crucial for addressing gaps in professional development opportunities for research managers. The survey results reveal a complex interplay of **time constraints, financial limitations, lack of information, and institutional support deficits**, which significantly impact engagement across all three types of activities (Figure 4).

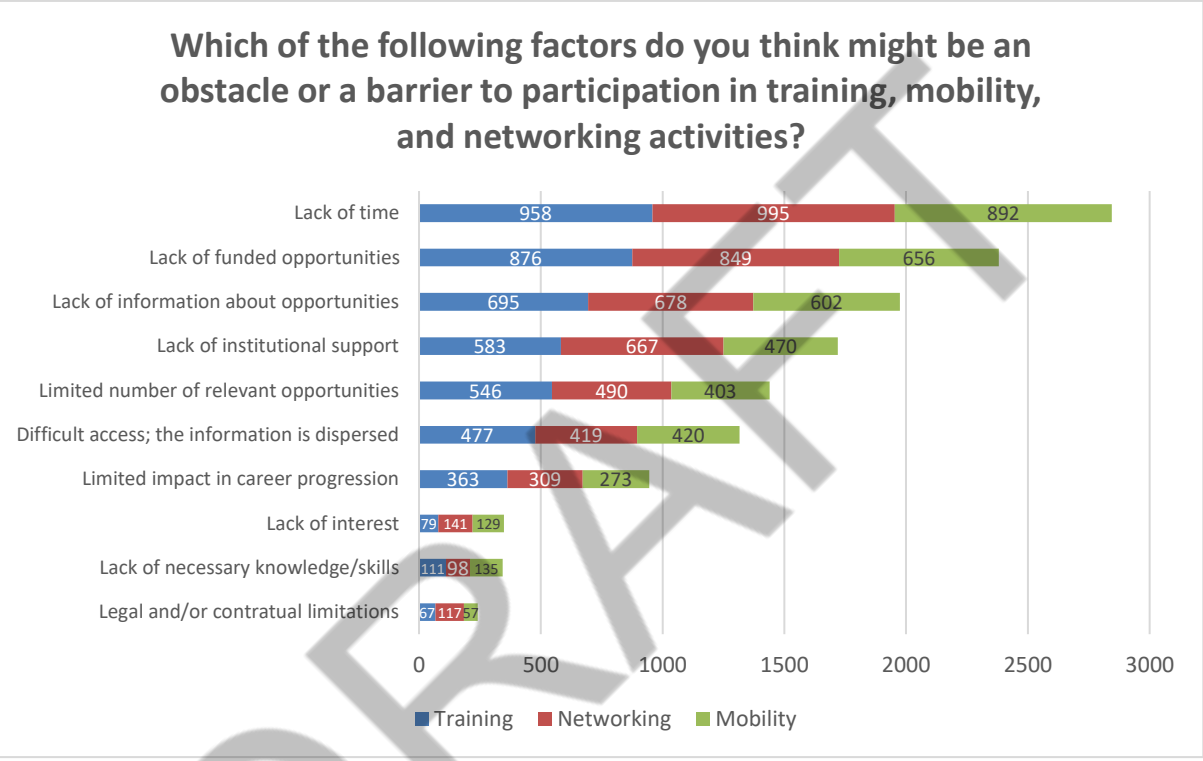


Figure 4 - Barriers to participation in training, mobility, and networking activities: perceived obstacles among research managers

3.3.1. Time constraints as the most significant barrier

Among all obstacles, "**lack of time**" emerged as the most frequently cited barrier across the three activity types, with 995 respondents (43.8%) identifying it as an obstacle to networking, 958 (42.2%) to training, and 892 (39.2%) to mobility. These findings align with previous results showing that research managers mostly engage in short-term training and networking activities rather than long-term or mobility-based professional development.

A possible explanation for this challenge is the high workload many research managers face, often juggling pre-award and post-award support, project management, science communication, and knowledge valorisation within a single role. This multiplicity of tasks and expectations is a common feature of the profession, which remains insufficiently formalised across most European contexts, as described by Virágh, Zsár, and Balázs (2019), who underscore the fragmented nature of professional roles and the chronic lack of formal recognition or structured career pathways in the field. This broad and demanding workload leaves little time for structured professional development, forcing research managers to prioritise immediate operational tasks over long-term career-enhancing opportunities.

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Another explanation may rely on the lack of structured professional development pathways for RMs. As far as professional development relies primarily on individual interest and motivation without systemic needs and opportunities as well as institutional recognition, research managers will be reluctant to prioritise their own professional development. Without dedicated time allocations, research managers struggle to engage in training, networking, or mobility, even when opportunities exist.

Addressing this challenge requires **structural changes within institutions**, including the formal allocation of **protected time for and recognition of professional development**. Without such institutional backing, research managers will continue to struggle to balance their daily responsibilities with opportunities to enhance their skills, expand their networks, and gain international experience.

3.3.2. Financial barriers: lack of funded opportunities

A **lack of financial support** emerged as another major obstacle, with 876 respondents (38.4%) citing it as a barrier for training, 849 (37.4%) for networking, and 656 (28.9%) for mobility. These results reinforce previous findings on the perceived insufficiency of funding opportunities, with over 70% of respondents rating funding as either "not sufficient" (n=586) or "barely sufficient" (n=498).

However, financial barriers cannot be seen in isolation; they are closely tied to institutional recognition of research management as a specialised profession and requiring investment. The WP2 mapping of professional development opportunities found that 69.23% of identified training, mobility, and networking programmes require financial investment, creating a significant accessibility challenge. Most training programmes mapped (78.70%) are not free, with costs ranging from €50 for short courses to over €20,000 for executive programmes. Long-term accredited programmes mapped typically cost between €250 and €15,000 per year, making affordability a key issue for research managers, especially those in underfunded institutions.

Financial constraints also impact networking and mobility participation, as most conferences, structured workshops, and exchange programmes involve registration fees, travel, and accommodation costs. Mobility programmes are particularly affected, as they require sustained financial support, and yet they account for only 2.69% of all mapped professional development opportunities, making them the least accessible type of activity. Without dedicated funding mechanisms, research managers in less resourced institutions and/or countries struggle to engage in cross-border knowledge exchange, limiting their international collaboration opportunities.

3.3.3. Institutional support deficits

Institutional barriers also play a significant role in limiting participation. A lack of institutional support was reported by 583 respondents (25.7%) for training, 667 (29.4%) for networking, and 470 (20.7%) for mobility. These findings correlate with previous mentioned results, as well as with the results from the 3rd RM Roadmap co-creation exercise (RM Roadmap, HETFA Research Institute, & NOVA University Lisbon, 2025), where institutional constraints were identified as a key factor limiting research managers' engagement in long-term training and mobility. Many research managers work in highly structured environments where professional development is not prioritised, often because institutions do not view investment in research management training and career progression as a strategic priority. As a result, participation in training, networking, and mobility often depends on external competitive grants or personal funds. While some EU-level funding schemes, such as Erasmus+ Staff Exchange, ERA Talent, and targeted COST Actions, provide limited support, national and institutional funding remains scarce, particularly in countries and research & innovation ecosystems where the research management profession is not yet fully recognised or valued.

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This highlights the **urgent need for institutional policy interventions**, including:

- **Formal recognition of professional development** as a career-enhancing activity.
- **Dedicated institutional funding schemes** to support research managers' engagement in training, networking, and mobility.
- **Greater integration of professional development within institutional career progression frameworks**, ensuring that participation in training and international exchange is valued and rewarded.

Without these measures, research managers – particularly those in underfunded institutions – will continue to face barriers to career development, limiting their ability to contribute effectively to the evolving research ecosystem.

3.3.4. Lack of information: a systemic challenge

The availability of opportunities alone does not guarantee participation if potential users are unaware of them. 695 respondents (30.6%) cited a lack of information about training opportunities as a major barrier, along with 678 (29.9%) for networking and 602 (26.5%) for mobility. Additionally, dispersed information was flagged as an issue by 477 (21.0%) respondents for training, 419 (18.5%) for networking, and 420 (18.5%) for mobility. **These findings indicate that even when opportunities exist, their visibility and accessibility remain problematic, limiting engagement.**

To address this issue, the RM Roadmap project conducted a pilot mapping exercise (WP2), consolidating data on professional development opportunities across Europe into an online catalogue and dashboard in articulation with the CARDEA project (available at https://www.rmroadmap.eu/rm-professional-development-opportunities). This has provided a structured overview of available training, mobility, and networking opportunities for research managers. While this exercise offered a valuable snapshot of the landscape, it also highlighted the need for a sustainable and regularly updated platform that can serve as a long-term resource for research managers. Moving forward, integrating this work into a broader, continuously maintained system would enhance accessibility and ensure that research managers have access to reliable, up-to-date information on professional development opportunities.

3.3.5. Limited number of relevant opportunities

Beyond financial and institutional constraints**, the availability of relevant professional development opportunities remains a relevant concern**. 546 respondents (24.0%) identified this as a challenge for training, 490 (21.6%) for networking, and 403 (17.7%) for mobility. These findings reinforce previous concerns about the insufficient supply of mobility programmes, with the RM Roadmap mapping revealing that mobility opportunities represent just 2.69% of all mapped professional development opportunities in Europe. The perceived lower sufficiency of training and mobility options compared to networking highlights the need for a more diverse and targeted offering of professional development programmes.

Regarding this issue, the **RM Roadmap WP2 mapping provides relevant insights into the lack of professional development opportunities tailored to different career stages in research management**. While many training programmes are open to all career levels, there are notably fewer opportunities specifically designed for mid-career (RM3) and senior (RM4) research managers, despite their perceived need for advanced leadership, strategic planning, and high-level management training. The

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mapping showed that while 167 training programmes were available to all career stages, only 12 training activities specifically targeted RM1 (early-career), 16 targeted RM2 (recognised professionals), just 2 focused on RM3 (established professionals), and only 1 was designed for RM4 (senior leadership). This imbalance suggests that professional development in research management remains largely focused on entry-level or generalist training, while there is a lack of structured and specific programmes to support career progression and specialisation into senior leadership roles. Addressing this challenge requires:

- Expanding targeted training programmes that align with the competencies needed at each career stage.
- Developing executive RM leadership programmes to support research managers transitioning into high-level strategic roles.
- Strengthening career pathways by integrating structured professional development into institutional HR policies.

Without these tailored opportunities, career advancement in research management may be hindered, particularly for those seeking leadership roles. Expanding stage-specific training and mobility programmes will be critical in ensuring that research managers can continue developing their skills throughout their careers, rather than facing stagnation and potential ensuing demotivation due to a lack of suitable opportunities.

The recently launched *RM Comp* (European Competence Framework for Research Managers), published by the European Commission in January 2025, offers a key tool to support these objectives. By defining 53 competences across four proficiency levels, the RM Comp provides a shared vocabulary and structured progression model that can guide the design of stage-specific training, facilitate career planning, and support institutional HR alignment (European Commission, 2025).

3.3.6. Limited career incentives for participation

Another significant challenge is the **perceived lack of career benefits associated with professional development**. 363 respondents (16.0%) cited this as an obstacle in training, 309 (13.6%) in networking, and 273 (12.0%) in mobility. These findings suggest that many research managers do not see a direct link between engaging in professional development activities and advancing in their careers, likely due to insufficient institutional recognition and the absence of structured career pathways that reward such participation.

This issue is closely connected to the aforementioned lack of career-stage-specific training and the ad hoc nature of professional development based on individual decisions instead of strategic planning. Without training and mobility opportunities that are clearly tied to career progression, research managers may not perceive participation in professional development as a strategic investment. This is particularly evident in the tendency for research managers to engage primarily in short-term training and networking rather than long-term mobility, reinforcing the idea that professional development remains episodic rather than continuous.

3.3.7. Lack of interest and legal constraints

Although less prevalent than other barriers, some research managers choose not to prioritise professional development. 141 respondents (6.2%) cited lack of interest as a barrier in networking, 129 (5.7%) in mobility, and 79 (3.5%) in training. While these numbers represent a minority, they suggest that for some professionals, other work responsibilities take precedence, or they do not find

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sufficient value in participating in training, mobility, or networking activities.

In addition to personal prioritisation, institutional and legal constraints were also mentioned, though less commonly. Legal or contractual limitations were identified by 117 respondents (5.2%) in networking, 67 (2.9%) in training, and 57 (2.5%) in mobility. Although not widespread, such restrictions may reflect institutional policies or employment conditions that hinder participation in externally offered professional development, especially in environments where these activities are not systematically supported or financially incentivised.

3.4. Professional development needs of research managers across Europe

Following the analysis of obstacles to participation in professional development activities, this section explores the specific training, mobility, and networking formats that research managers across Europe consider most suitable for their professional growth in the future. Understanding these preferences is essential to ensuring that professional development initiatives align with research managers' time constraints, learning preferences, career progression needs, and institutional support structures.

3.4.1. Training needs of research managers across Europe

The findings, illustrated in Figure 5, indicate that **transferable skills are the most frequently selected training need**, with 1,288 respondents (31%) identifying them as essential. This suggests that research managers highly value competencies that can be applied across different contexts, such as leadership, communication, project management, and strategic thinking, which are crucial for navigating the complexities of research management.

In addition to transferable skills, there is a **strong demand for technical knowledge within specific professional tasks**, with 1,203 respondents (29%) prioritising this type of training. This underscores the need for specialised programmes that enhance efficiency and effectiveness in research managers' day-to-day responsibilities, ensuring they remain equipped with the latest tools, informed about the latest policies, and aware of best practices relevant to their roles.

Interest in emerging and future technologies or areas is also significant, with 1,073 respondents (26%) selecting this category. In line with the results of WP1 and the co-creation exercise (RM Roadmap, HETFA Research Institute, & EARMA, 2024), this reflects the evolving nature of research management, where staying updated on new digital tools, research impact metrics, open science policies, and artificial intelligence applications is increasingly important for ensuring institutional competitiveness and efficiency.

Conversely, technical knowledge outside one's specific professional tasks was selected by 564 respondents (14%), indicating that while some research managers seek to expand their expertise beyond their core responsibilities, the majority prioritise training that directly aligns with their current roles. Notably, only 29 respondents (1%) indicated that they do not have any specific training needs, reinforcing the widespread demand for continuous professional development in the field.

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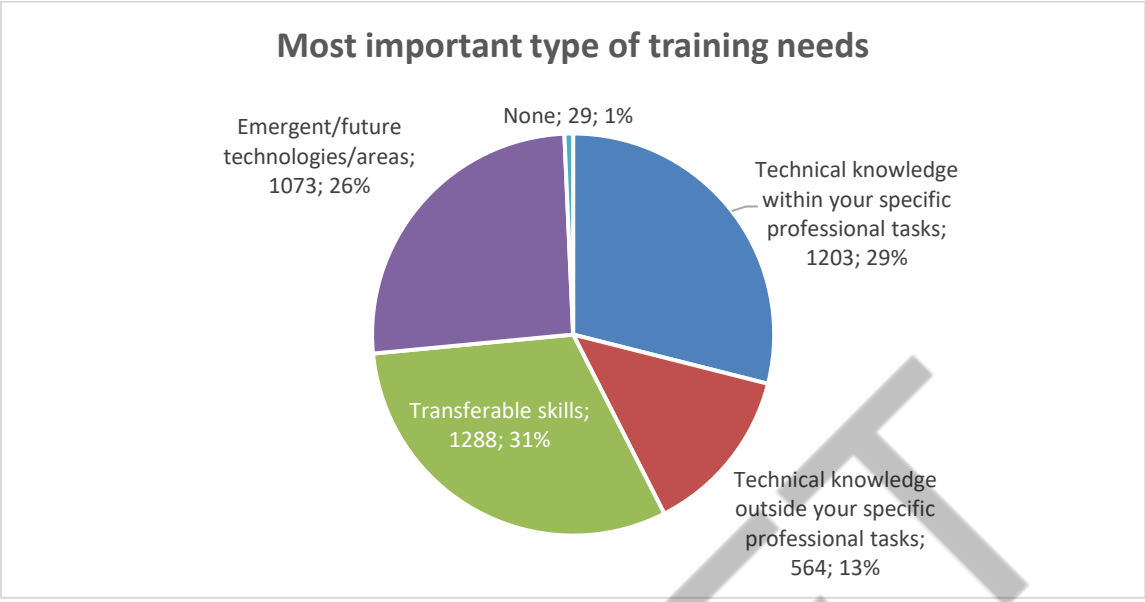


Figure 5 - Most important training needs for research managers

These results highlight the diverse but targeted nature of training demands among research managers, with a clear preference for practical, transferable, and role-specific skills. Since the following sections examine preferred training formats, it is crucial to ensure that professional development opportunities align with these evolving needs, providing accessible and effective learning experiences.

3.4.2. Preferred training formats for research managers

To capture these insights, research managers were asked: **"What type of RM training format would be suitable for you to attend in the next two years?"**. The responses reveal a clear demand for **short, flexible, and interactive training programmes** that integrate well with their professional responsibilities.

Table 1 showcases the preference for shorter training programmes, with **intensive courses of less than one week (n=1820) receiving the highest level of approval**. 1,436 respondents (78.9%) considered them "suited" or "very much suited", confirming that research managers favour concise training formats. Short-term courses lasting one to six months (n=1817) were also widely accepted, with 756 respondents (41.6%) rating them as "suited" or "very much suited". In contrast, long-term courses exceeding six months were the least preferred, as 1,080 respondents (59.4%) found them not suited for their professional development needs.

When analysing preferred training methods, **hands-on participation** (n=1817) was the most favoured learning approach, with 1,390 respondents (76.5%) rating it as "suited" or "very much suited". Lecture-based training (n=1816) was considered suitable by 1,115 respondents (61.4%), though it ranked lower than participatory approaches. Mentorship programmes (n=1817) were also well-regarded, with 1,148 respondents (63.2%) supporting this format. Self-paced learning (n=1816) was another preferred option, with 959 respondents (52.8%) finding it effective, highlighting the growing need for asynchronous, flexible learning opportunities.

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Table 1 - Training formats for research managers: preferences by length, method, certification, and venue

		Not suited	Somewhat suited	Suited	"Very much suited"
Length	**Intensive courses (less than 1 week)** (n= 1820)	104	280	750	686
	Short-term courses (from 1 week to 6 months) (n= 1817)	434	627	563	193
	Long-term courses (more than 6 months) (n= 1817)	1080	443	210	84
Method	Lecture/ Instructor-led (n= 1816)	201	500	824	291
	Active Hands-on Participation (n= 1817)	132	295	852	538
	Mentorship (n= 1817)	222	447	720	428
	Job shadow (n= 1816)	381	570	553	312
	Self-paced (n= 1816)	287	570	650	309
Certification	**Professional certification** (n= 1817)	126	327	693	671
	ECTS accredited (n= 1817)	352	481	579	405
	Non-certified (n= 1817)	302	624	707	184
Venue	**Online** (n= 1817)	126	342	779	570
	On-site (n= 1817)	162	471	813	371
	Hybrid (n= 1817)	167	353	851	446

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In terms of training, **online and hybrid learning formats were slightly more favoured than fully in-person training**. Online learning (n=1817) was rated as "suited" or "very much suited" by 1,349 respondents (74.2%), indicating a strong demand for remote, accessible training opportunities. Hybrid training (n=1817), which blends online and in-person elements, was also well received, with 1,297 respondents (71.4%) finding it suitable. In contrast, on-site training (n=1817) had lower overall support, with 657 respondents (36.1%) considering it not "suited" or "somewhat suited", suggesting that fully in-person programmes may present logistical challenges. This preference for online and hybrid formats likely connects with the time constraints and limited funding opportunities previously identified as a major obstacle to participation in professional development. Online learning eliminates the need for travel, making it more accessible to those managing multiple responsibilities. Additionally,

international training opportunities are easier to access when offered online or in a hybrid format, facilitating knowledge exchange beyond institutional and national borders.

Regarding **certification preferences**, **professional certification (n=1817) was the most desired option**, with 1,364 respondents (75.1%) rating it as "suited" or "very much suited". ECTS-accredited courses (n=1817) were also valued, but slightly less than professional certification, with 984 respondents (54.2%) supporting them. Non-certified training programmes (n=1817) were the least favoured, with 926 respondents (51.0%) finding them "not suited" or "somewhat suited", indicating that research managers seek formal recognition for their professional development efforts.

This strong demand for formal recognition of professional development contrasts sharply with findings from the **WP2 mapping exercise**, which highlights the **scarcity of accredited training opportunities for research managers**, with only 15 training programmes mapped offering degrees with ECTS credits (such as Master's, Postgraduate, and Specialisation courses), and just four programmes providing professional accreditation. Instead, the majority of programmes (n=83) issue only certificates of participation, which, while valuable, do not provide formal academic or professional recognition.

The limited availability of accredited training is further reflected in Q30 where we asked respondents to "**Please select all professional accreditations that you have related to RM**". As shown in Figure 6, a majority of 57.5% (n=1,306) of research managers reported having no professional accreditation. Among those who do hold accreditation (n= 525), the most cited qualifications were:

- Masters in Research Management (n=118)
- EARMA Certificate in Research Management (n=109)
- Postgraduate degrees in Research Management (n=99)

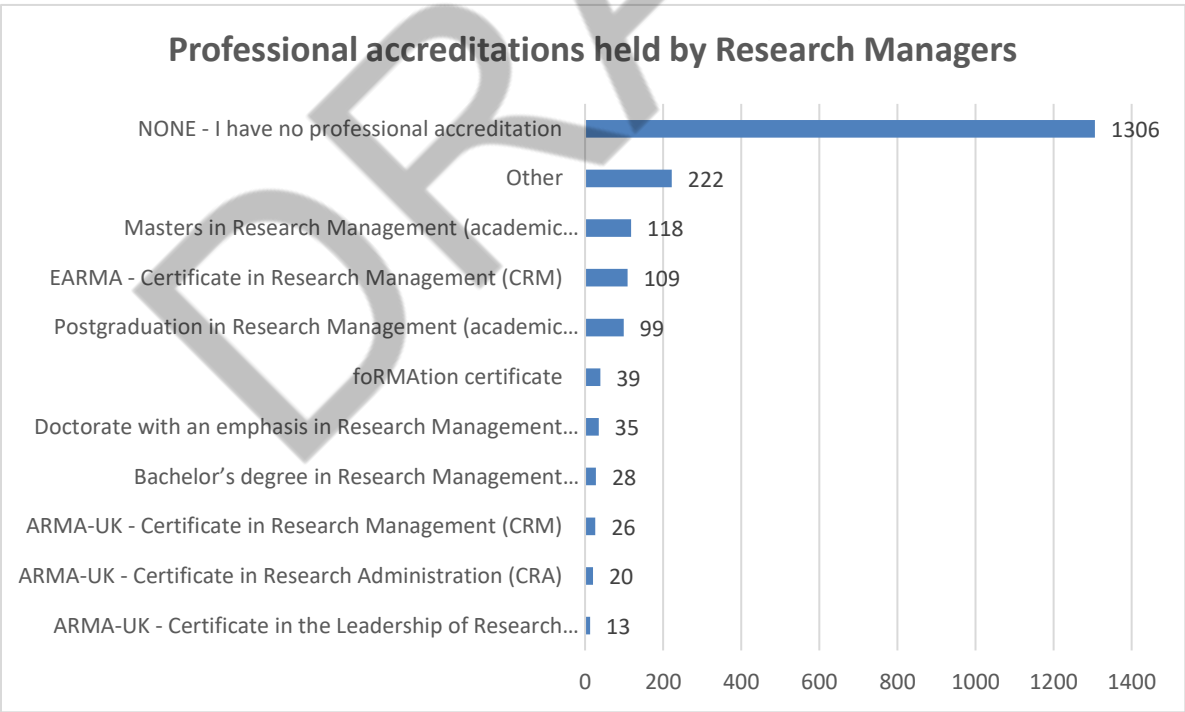


Figure 6 - Professional accreditations held by research managers

Although these results highlight a growing number of accredited programmes across various disciplines, widespread adoption remains limited. The overall low rate of formal accreditation in

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research management suggests that most professionals enter and progress in the field without structured certification pathways.

The **lack of standardised accreditation** is further underscored in **Q31**, **"Please select all professional accreditations that you have related to RM"**, completed by the 495 respondents who indicated holding such a professional accreditation. The results, presented in Figure 7, suggest that while a slight majority (53.9%, n=267) of accredited professionals reported that their certification was valued in some capacity by their employer, there is still **no uniform approach to recognition across institutions**. This indicates **mixed perceptions regarding the added value of accreditation in research management careers**.



Figure 7 - Employer recognition of professional certification in research management

Although certification is not a formal requirement for most research management positions, the data suggests that it can still provide some career advantages. Only 8.5% (n=42) of respondents indicated that their certification was explicitly required for their job, while 19.8% (n=98) stated that it was valued during hiring, and 13.7% (n=68) reported that it contributed to career progression. Additionally, 11.9% (n=59) noted that their certification was valued in other ways, which may include informal recognition of expertise, credibility within institutions, or influence on responsibilities and professional standing. **On the other hand, 46.0% (n=117) of respondents indicated that their certification was either not recognised** (23.6%, n=60) or that they were unsure about its value (22.4%, n=57). This suggests that while certification may provide benefits, there is no consistent standard across institutions regarding its impact on hiring and career progression. The lack of uniform employer recognition could contribute to uncertainty among research managers about whether pursuing certification will have a tangible impact on their professional advancement.

These findings reinforce the ongoing need for greater clarity and consistency in how professional certification is recognised within research management career paths. While certification is valued in some cases, its benefits remain uncertain in others, which may discourage professionals from pursuing formal certification – particularly if employers do not explicitly integrate it into career progression frameworks. **Rather than advocating for a single accreditation model, these results highlight the importance of ensuring that professional development opportunities, including certification, are meaningfully aligned with the skills and competencies valued in research management roles.**

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3.4.3. Preferred networking formats for research managers

To explore these preferences, research managers were asked: **"Which RM networking activities would be suitable for you to participate in over the next two years?"** The responses (n= 1,790) indicate a strong preference for **structured and accessible networking opportunities** that promote knowledge exchange, foster collaboration, and support professional development while requiring limited time commitments.

As shown in Table 2, the most widely supported activity was attending RM conferences and events, with 1,520 respondents (85.2%) rating it as "suited" or "very much suited". This underscores the key role of conferences as a central networking platform, enabling research managers to expand their professional connections, engage with sector developments, and share best practices.

Table 2 - Preferred networking formats for research managers

	Not suited	Somewhat suited	Suited	Very much suited
To attend an RM conference/ event	52	218	664	856
To participate in RM project meetings	94	364	720	612
To participate in the organisation of activities of RM professional associations	185	480	655	470
To participate in other local/ national RM events	77	335	818	560
To participate in other international RM events	120	403	725	542

Similarly, **participation in RM project meetings was highly rated**, with 1,332 respondents (73.3%) considering it "suited" or "very much suited". Given that many RMs work alongside project implementation, these meetings can provide a natural setting for professional engagement, allowing them to expand their networks, exchange knowledge, and build collaborations within the scope of ongoing initiatives. A notable preference was also observed for **participation in other local/national RM events**, which 1,378 respondents (77.0%) found "suited" or "very much suited". As this category likely includes a diverse range of activities, such as workshops, training sessions, and networking forums – it reflects a broader interest in localised professional engagement opportunities that are relevant to institutional or national research management contexts. **International RM events** were also well received, with 1,267 respondents (72.2%) rating them as "suited" or "very much suited". This indicates a strong interest in cross-border networking and knowledge exchange, though logistical challenges such as travel costs and institutional constraints may impact participation levels.

While participation in the organisation of RM professional association activities received slightly lower enthusiasm compared to other formats, a substantial majority - 62.9% of respondents – still considered it "suited" or "very much suited" as a networking activity. This places it just below participation in local/national and international events in terms of perceived relevance. The relatively lower rating may not reflect disinterest in professional associations per se, but rather a preference for **less formal or governance-oriented involvement**, with many research managers likely prioritising event-based engagement over organisational leadership roles. These findings suggest that while associations

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remain a valued component of the RM community, networking formats that focus on knowledge exchange and peer interaction may have broader appeal.

This interpretation aligns with findings from Q36, which asked: **"With which professional organisations/associations/networks are you affiliated?"**. As this question allowed for multiple selections, the percentages reflect levels of affiliation and participation without being mutually exclusive. The data show that while **formal membership in RM associations is relatively modest**, participation in their activities tends to be somewhat broader. For example, 33.8% reported being members of EARMA, 5.0% of ARMA-UK, 4.8% of ARMA-NL, and 4.6% of BESTPRAC. In contrast, **participation in activities** (e.g., events, working groups, or training) was slightly higher for some networks, with EARMA at 34.1%, BESTPRAC at 10.8%, and INORMS at 6.3%.

Importantly, only 32.0% of respondents stated that they were not affiliated with any professional association, which marks a noteworthy improvement when compared to the previous RM surveys, where approximately one-third of respondents (32–33%) reported being members of *any* association. This reversal suggests a strengthening of professional identity and community engagement among research managers across Europe.

3.4.4. Preferred mobility formats for research managers

To capture these insights, research managers were asked: **"What type of RM mobility format would be suitable for you to attend in the next two years?"**. The responses (n= 1,795) indicate a strong preference for **short and flexible mobility opportunities** that promote knowledge exchange, foster collaboration, and support professional development while **minimising long-term commitments**.

Table 3 highlights a strong preference for short-term mobility opportunities, where conferences and professional meetings emerged as the most preferred mobility formats, with 1,544 respondents (84.7%) rating them as "suited" or "very much suited". This underscores the importance of short-term travel for research managers, facilitating knowledge exchange, professional networking, and collaboration while minimising disruption to their regular responsibilities. Similarly, short-term courses (up to one week) were highly favoured, with 1,385 respondents (76.2%) considering them suitable, reinforcing the preference for time-efficient professional development. In-house mobility, where professionals engage in exchanges or collaborations within their own institution, was also well received, with 1,171 respondents (65.5%) rating it as "suited" or "very much suited".

National and international mobility opportunities also received strong support. National mobility, involving exchanges between different institutions within the same country, was considered "suited" or "very much suited" by 1,293 respondents (71.2%), while international mobility, enabling mobility across institutions in different countries, was similarly well regarded, with 1,306 respondents (72.0%) indicating it was suitable for their professional development. Intersectoral mobility, which involves movement between academic and non-academic institutions, was somewhat less popular but still supported by 1,018 respondents (56.0%) as "suited" or "very much suited".

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Table 3 - Preferred mobility formats for research managers

	Not suited	Somewhat suited	Suited	Very much suited
Event attendance (eg.: conference)	63	188	652	892
Short-term courses (up to 1 weeks)	105	304	755	630
Medium-term (from 1 week to 1 month)	682	547	403	162
Long-term courses (more than 1 months)	1177	353	184	80
In-house (within the same institution)	243	381	662	509
National (between different institutions in the same country)	149	353	801	492
International (between different institutions of different countries)	156	333	688	618
Intersectoral mobility (between academic and non-academic institutions)	285	492	620	398

In contrast, longer-term mobility activities were the least preferred. Medium-term mobility (one week to one month) had lower support, with 682 respondents (37.5%) rating it as "not suited", while long-term mobility (more than one month) was the least favourable, with 1,177 respondents (64.7%) indicating it was not suited for their needs. These findings align with previous results emphasising research managers' preference for short, intensive engagements over extended professional development commitments.

3.4.5. Preferred funding support for research managers

To capture insights into funding needs, research managers were asked: "**Which funding-related activities would be suitable for you to receive support for in the next two years**?". The responses (n=1,790) indicate a strong demand for financial support in **areas directly linked to professional development**, particularly conference attendance, training, and participation in mobility opportunities.

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Table 4 - Preferred funding support for research managers

	Not suited	Somewhat suited	Suited	Very much suited
To attend an RM conference/ event	241	375	631	543
To organise an RM conference/ event	937	448	266	139
To go on an RM training	210	447	652	481
To organise an RM training	978	418	265	129
To participate in an RM mobility	381	507	532	369
To organise RM mobility programmes	1052	383	235	120
To cover fees of RM networks/ professional associations	700	445	382	263
To run an RM network/ professional association	1087	345	242	115
To participate in an RM project	368	511	523	388

Among all categories, **attending RM conferences and events** (65.7% "suited" or "very much suited", n=1,174) and **participating in RM training** (63.5%, n=1,133) received the highest suitability ratings, as showcased in Table 4. These findings confirm that research managers prioritise financial support for professional development activities that enhance knowledge exchange and career growth. The demand for funding to **participate in RM mobility** was also relatively high, with **50.3% (n=901) rating it as "suited" or "very much suited"**. This aligns with prior findings that mobility opportunities are limited by financial constraints, as evidenced by the high proportion of respondents citing a lack of funding as a barrier to participation in training (38.4%), networking (37.4%), and mobility (28.9%).

Conversely, the least supported funding needs were **organising conferences (22.6% "suited" or "very much suited", n=405), running a professional association (19.9%, n=357), and organising RM mobility programmes (19.8%, n=355).** This is justified by the fact that these activities are relevant only to a smaller subset of research managers who take on leadership, administrative, or coordination roles within RM networks and events, rather than being a widespread funding priority across the profession.

The **funding of RM networks and associations** (45.6% "suited" or "very much suited", n=645) and funding to **participate in RM projects** (50.8%, n=911) received moderate support. These findings suggest that while some research managers recognise the value of funding to engage in structured, collaborative projects or professional networks, some may already receive institutional support or may not see these activities as personal funding priorities.

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3.5. Future policy considerations for research management professional development

The final section of the survey aimed to assess research managers' perceptions of potential future actions to enhance professional development opportunities, improve the recognition of the profession, and strengthen the role of research managers in research-performing organisations.

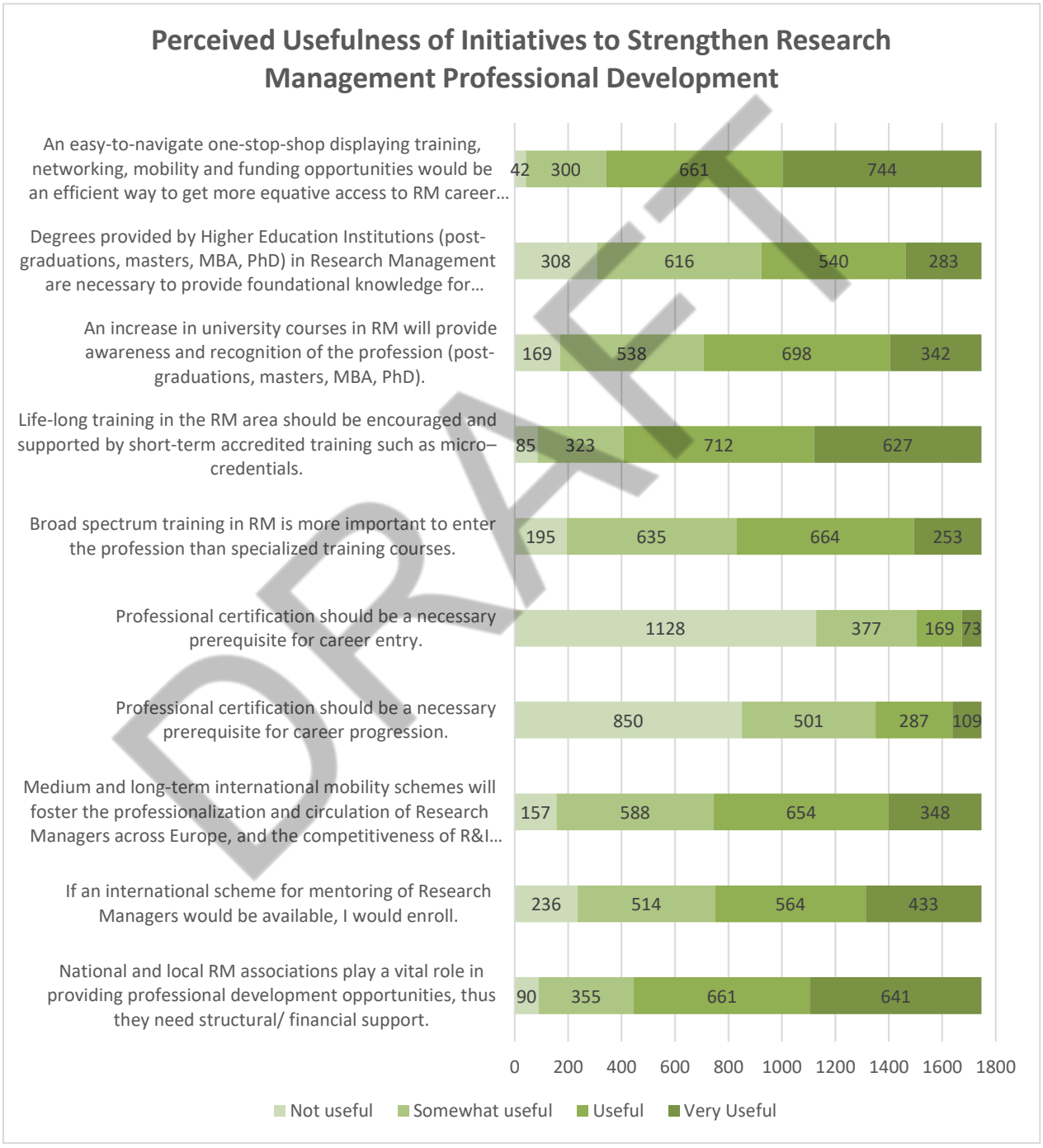


Figure 8 - Research managers' perceptions on key initiatives for strengthening professional development in research management

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The responses (n=1,747) provide insight into the perceived usefulness of different strategic initiatives, ranging from the creation of centralised information hubs to the implementation of formal certification requirements and expanded training opportunities, as shown in Figure 8.

3.5.1. Centralised access to training, networking, mobility, and funding opportunities

A substantial majority of respondents (80.4%; n=1,405) rated the idea of a one-stop-shop platform consolidating training, networking, mobility, and funding opportunities as useful or very useful. This strong level of support aligns with prior survey findings that identified a lack of information (30.6%; n=695) as a significant barrier to participation in professional development activities. The positive response reinforces the importance of structured, accessible, and continuously updated platforms – such as the RM Roadmap online dashboard – to help research managers navigate available opportunities.

3.5.2. The role of higher education degrees in research management

The survey results reveal **divided opinions regarding the necessity of university degrees in research management**. A notable 52.9% (n=924) of respondents rated degrees as either not useful or only somewhat useful in providing foundational knowledge for RM professionals, suggesting that many do not see traditional academic programmes as a primary pathway into the profession. However, 47.1% (n=823) considered these degrees useful or very useful, indicating that while degrees can be beneficial, they may not be universally applicable or well-aligned with research managers' career trajectories.

When asked whether **increasing the availability of RM degrees would improve awareness and recognition of the profession**, a more favourable response emerged. **59.6% (n=1,040) rated this as useful or very useful**, suggesting that while degrees may not be seen as essential for individual career development, they could contribute to broader professional recognition. This interpretation aligns with previous survey results where a lack of standardised certification was identified as a challenge, reinforcing the need for more structured career pathways for research managers. The 40.5% (n=707) of respondents who were neutral or sceptical about this initiative highlight **the need for further exploration into how university-level programmes can better align with the evolving demands of research management.**

3.5.3. Lifelong learning and short-term accredited training

Short-term accredited training, such as **micro-credentials**, received **strong support, with 76.7% (n=1,339) of respondents rating this initiative as useful or very useful**. This result is consistent with previously mentioned survey findings that demonstrated a clear preference for short, flexible, and intensive training formats, such as workshops and short courses. The correlation between time constraints and training participation suggests that modular, stackable learning pathways would be a particularly effective approach to meeting the needs of research managers, allowing them to accumulate credentials over time without requiring extended absences from work.

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3.5.4. Broad-spectrum vs. specialised training

Research managers expressed moderate support for broad-spectrum training as a more important entry point to the profession rather than specialised courses. 52.5% (n=917) rated this as useful or very useful, while an additional 36.3% (n=635) considered it somewhat useful. The relatively low proportion of respondents who found broad training to be very useful (14.5%; n=253) suggests that **while foundational knowledge is valued, many research managers likely prefer training opportunities tailored to their specific roles**. This aligns with previous survey results where research managers expressed a high demand for training in technical knowledge specific to their tasks (29%; n=1,203).

These findings underscore the importance of distinguishing between professional development needs at different career stages: broad-spectrum training is especially relevant for newcomers to the profession, whereas more experienced professionals' benefit from specialised training aligned with their strategic and technical responsibilities. Interviewees in Deliverable 1.2 of the RM Roadmap project also reported that significant time and resources are often required to train new colleagues. This burden could be mitigated by expanding the availability of broad-based training for career entrants or by integrating research management content into higher education curricula, thereby reducing the number of professionals who "fall into" the role without formal preparation.

The findings also suggest that professional development efforts should strike a balance between providing broad entry-level training and ensuring access to more specialised, role-specific learning opportunities. However, these results also reflect a challenge previously identified in the WP2 mapping exercise, which found that **the majority of professional development opportunities (n=167) are open to all career stages rather than being tailored to specific needs.** While this ensures accessibility across different levels of experience, it may also limit the depth and relevance of training for professionals at different career points.

The distribution of professional development opportunities by career stage further highlights this gap. According to the mapping, targeted training for early-career Research Managers (RM1) is scarce, with only 12 exclusive training opportunities, despite the critical need for foundational skills and structured career entry pathways. Similarly, mid-career (RM2) and established (RM3) Research Managers, who require specialised knowledge and mobility opportunities to advance their expertise, have limited access to stage-specific training, with only 16 and 2 mapped opportunities, respectively. At the senior RM4 level, where strategic leadership and mentorship skills become essential, only one tailored training opportunity was identified, highlighting a critical gap in leadership-focused professional development. These findings reinforce the need for a more structured approach to training in RM, ensuring that broad-spectrum training is complemented by targeted professional development at each career stage. Without adequate differentiation, research managers may struggle to find training opportunities that align with their evolving responsibilities, particularly as they progress from entry-level roles to strategic leadership positions.

To address this challenge, future professional development initiatives should focus on:

- **Modular training programmes** that can be **customised based on career stages**, allowing research managers to build foundational knowledge and later specialise in advanced topics.
- **Peer-learning and mentorship initiatives** to facilitate **cross-stage knowledge transfer**, particularly between experienced research managers (RM3 and RM4) and those entering the profession (RM1).

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- **Competency-based frameworks**, such as those proposed in the RM Comp initiative by the European Commission, to align training programmes with the specific skills required at different career stages, ensuring **progressive career development**.

Additionally, the limited number of specific training opportunities for individuals seeking to enter the RM profession suggests a lack of structured pre-entry training. Past studies, such as those from the HETFA Research Institute (Virágh, Zsár, & Balázs, 2020), have emphasised this issue, leading to initiatives like the foRMAtion project (2019-2023, Erasmus+), which developed an international course on Research Management for graduate students. Expanding such initiatives could help bridge the gap between academia and research management, ensuring that new professionals are better prepared for their roles and institutions can save investment in training newcomers.

3.5.5. Professional certification: entry and career progression

The role of professional certification in research management (RM) careers is met with widespread scepticism, both in terms of entry into the profession and career progression. Overall, 64.6% (n=1,128) of respondents stated that certification is not useful for entering the profession, indicating that most research managers do not see formal accreditation as a necessary requirement to begin an RM career. Perceptions improve slightly when it comes to career progression: 22.6% (n=396) considered certification useful for advancement, compared to only 13.9% (n=242) who supported it for entry-level roles.

While certification is somewhat more positively regarded as a tool for career advancement, a large majority, 77.4% (n=1,351), remain neutral or negative about its necessity. This aligns with previous survey data showing that only 8.5% (n=42) of accredited professionals had certification as a job requirement, and just 19.8% (n=98) found it helpful during hiring. The limited recognition of certification by employers appears to be a major factor in its low perceived value. These findings suggest that making certification mandatory could face significant resistance unless it is more clearly tied to institutional career frameworks and professional development pathways.

Further analysis of the results reveals that these views are relatively stable across different groups, but with some important nuances. By **country group**, support for certification is weakest in Northern and Western Europe – regions where RM career structures are more established – with 79% and 77% of respondents, respectively, rejecting the idea of certification as a prerequisite for entry. In contrast, support is stronger in Southern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and especially among respondents from **non-EU countries**, where up to 31% viewed certification as moderately useful and 16% as very useful for entering the profession. A similar pattern appears when certification is considered in the context of **career progression**, with more respondents in these same regions viewing it as potentially helpful, particularly in contexts where formal recognition and career routes are less developed.

When disaggregated by **educational background**, responses are strikingly consistent: across all qualification levels – undergraduate, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate – about half or more of respondents viewed certification as not useful for either entry or progression. This indicates that support for certification does not increase with academic attainment and further reinforces the conclusion that formal education is not seen as linked to certification needs in RM careers.

No statistically significant differences were observed when analysing responses to this question by

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years of experience in research management, indicating that perceptions of certification remain consistent across career stages.

A breakdown by **research management functional areas** – including pre-award, post-award, research strategy, ethics, and data management – shows the same trend. Most respondents in each area do not see certification as essential for entering the profession, and only a small proportion (typically between 6% and 10%) regard it as very useful for career advancement. The consistency across such varied roles within RM suggests a broad, shared perspective across the profession.

One likely reason behind this overall scepticism is the **limited availability and visibility of standardised certification opportunities**. Survey data indicate that 57.5% (n=1,306) of research managers do not hold any form of certification. This absence may contribute to the low perceived relevance of certification. However, it also raises a question: would attitudes shift if more accredited, accessible, and widely recognised training pathways were available? Particularly if these were integrated into formal education or institutional promotion systems, certification could become more valued.

A further barrier is the **financial cost** of certification, which is often borne directly by research managers or their institutions. Given that more than 70% of respondents rated available funding as either "not sufficient" or "barely sufficient" for professional development, the cost of certification programmes remains a major obstacle. Without dedicated funding mechanisms and institutional support, certification is likely to remain an optional, rather than essential, element of career development in research management.

In the current context, it appears unfeasible nor desirable to impose certification requirements, particularly on professionals who have long been in the field. However, over the long term, the gradual development and institutionalisation of certification frameworks could contribute to the professionalisation and formal recognition of the RM role. Until then, it remains essential to acknowledge and validate the experience and contributions of those already working in the profession, regardless of whether they hold formal certification.

3.5.6. International mobility and mentoring for research managers

Medium- and long-term international mobility schemes are generally viewed as a valuable way to support the professionalisation of research managers (RMs) and to enhance the competitiveness of the European research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem. In the survey, 57.3% (n=1,002) of respondents rated such schemes as useful or very useful. However, as noted in earlier findings, mobility remains one of the most underfunded areas of RM professional development. Nearly one-third of respondents (28.9%, n=656) cited financial constraints as a barrier to participating in mobility programmes. The feasibility of these schemes is therefore a concern, especially given the need for sustained funding to cover travel, accommodation, and institutional support.

Cross-tabulation by **country group** confirms a broadly positive perception of mobility schemes, but also reveals regional variation. Respondents from **Southern Europe** and **Central and Eastern Europe** were among the most supportive: 28% and 23%, respectively, rated mobility programmes as "very useful" – a significantly higher proportion than in Northern (9%) or Western Europe (16%). This suggests that in countries where RM career paths are still being formalised or face greater structural challenges, mobility is seen as a more important tool for capacity building and international integration. Support was also high among respondents from **non-EU countries** (28% very useful), further emphasising the perceived potential of mobility in regions seeking greater engagement in the

European R&I landscape. However, respondents from these regions also face more acute funding challenges, which may limit the practical implementation of such initiatives despite their perceived value.

When disaggregated by **research management areas**, the perception of international mobility remained consistently positive. Across all roles, from pre-award and post-award to science communication, infrastructure, and data management, between 35% and 40% of respondents rated mobility schemes as moderately useful, and 18% to 28% rated them as very useful. This widespread support across functional areas indicates that mobility is seen not as a niche opportunity but as a broadly relevant mechanism for advancing professional capacity in RM. Even in more administrative or technical fields such as infrastructure or research data management, there is recognition of the potential value of international exposure and experience exchange.

On the other hand, the idea of launching an **international mentoring scheme** for RMs received a more mixed response. While 57.1% (n=997) of respondents considered it "useful" or "very useful", a substantial 42.9% (n=750) remained neutral. This divided opinion likely reflects both practical concerns and variations in individual needs. Implementation challenges, such as the availability of mentors, coordination efforts, and funding for participation, may limit the perceived feasibility of mentoring, particularly on an international scale. Additionally, the relevance of mentoring appears to vary by career stage. Early-career research managers (RM1) are likely to benefit most from structured mentoring, whereas those in advanced roles (RM3, RM4) may already have established networks and feel less need for such support.

Both findings underline a common challenge: while international mobility and mentoring are viewed positively in principle, especially in underrepresented or emerging RM systems, their impact depends heavily on the availability of dedicated funding and institutional structures. Without addressing these structural barriers, the professional development potential of these initiatives risks remaining underutilised.

3.5.7. The role of national and local RM associations

Survey results strongly underline the central role of **national and local research management (RM) associations** in supporting the professional development of research managers. An overwhelming 74.5% (n=1,302) of respondents believe that these associations play a vital role and should be given structural or financial support. This finding aligns closely with previous observations and WP1 results on the value of networking, where formal RM networks were identified as some of the most widely used platforms for peer learning, collaboration, and professional engagement.

This broad consensus is confirmed by a **cross-tabulation by country group**, which reveals remarkable consistency across different regions of Europe and beyond. In all country groups, a majority of respondents rated national and local RM associations as either "useful" or "very useful". The share of respondents who considered them "very useful" ranged from 32% in Northern Europe to 48% among respondents from outside Europe. Support is particularly high in **Southern Europe** (42%) and **non-EU countries** (43%), suggesting that in regions where institutional professional development structures may be less developed, RM associations fill an important gap. Even in more established systems such as Western Europe (35%) and Northern Europe (32%), a strong level of recognition was expressed.

Looking across **functional RM areas**, the pattern remains consistent. In all domains, from pre-award

and post-award to science communication, research ethics, and collaboration with industry, respondents overwhelmingly endorsed the importance of RM associations. Between 36% and 45% of respondents across these areas considered associations to be "very useful" for professional development, and the proportion who found them "not useful" remained consistently low (around 3%–6%). This broad-based support across functions reflects the cross-cutting role associations play: offering training, sharing resources, facilitating peer mentoring, and creating platforms for advocacy and institutional change.

Together, these results point to a clear policy implication: ensuring the **sustainability and growth of national and local RM associations** should be a strategic priority. This includes providing **dedicated funding**, recognising their role within national research systems, and integrating them into broader frameworks for research workforce development. Supporting these associations is not only essential for enabling ongoing professional development – it is also key to strengthening the RM profession as a whole, particularly in countries where institutional capacity is still emerging.

3.5.8. Consulting the RM community on future EU training schemes

Evidence collected throughout WP2 – via mapping, survey analysis, and capacity-building activities – revealed a clear gap in structured, accessible, and internationally supported professional development for Research Managers (RMs). While training opportunities have increased, access to mobility and long-term capacity-building remains limited, particularly for institutions without dedicated resources.

This was evident in the WP2 mapping, where mobility (2.69%) and funding (3.28%) were the least represented types of opportunities, and in the survey, where over 70% rated support in these areas as "barely sufficient" or "not sufficient." Nearly one-third of respondents had never taken part in a mobility activity, reflecting persistent structural barriers.

At the same time, the RM TrainerLink sessions (Task 2.3) demonstrated strong interest among RMs in cross-border learning and collaboration, but also highlighted the absence of sustainable mechanisms to support these efforts. **To validate the direction forward and identify priorities, WP2 launched a broad consultation with the RM community during the third RM Roadmap co-creation session (January–March 2025).**

3.5.8.1. The consultation process

During the 3rd and last co-creation exercise, the research managers community across Europe was invited, through the RM Roadmap national and thematic RM communities, to reflect on two proposed EU-level funding schemes, both inspired by successful models in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions:

- **Scheme A**: An individual training and mobility grant aimed at early- and mid-career RMs, supporting flexible, short-term international experiences;
- **Scheme B**: An institutional collaboration model for structured staff exchanges and organisational capacity-building.

A total of **34 consensus documents** were submitted – **28 national** and **6 thematic** – providing insight into how these schemes could be shaped to respond to national contexts, institutional needs, and professional expectations. All consensus documents as well as a Consensus Report are available with

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all the detailed information on the RM Roadmap project website.

3.5.8.2. Key findings: design features and community priorities

One of the most valuable outcomes of the consultation was the **clear identification of features that would make each scheme feasible, attractive, and impactful** at both the individual and institutional levels. These insights can directly inform the future design of targeted EU-level funding schemes for the RM profession.

Scheme A – the individual grant – was broadly welcomed as a tool to support **early- and mid-career RMs** seeking to build their competencies through international experience. Common priorities identified across country submissions included:

1. **Short-term and flexible mobility** formats (from a few weeks up to 1 month, with some support for 3–6 month stays);
2. **Training formats** focused on mentoring, job shadowing, and course participation;
3. **Robust financial support**, including salary coverage, mobility costs, and family-related allowances;
4. A **guarantee of return to post**, to ensure career security during the mobility period;
5. **Eligibility across all types of research-performing organisations**, including both university and non-university institutions;
6. **Transparent, straightforward application procedures**, with clearly defined eligibility and evaluation criteria;
7. An emphasis on **individual development** and career progression.

Scheme B – the institutional model – was broadly viewed as having greater potential for **systemic, long-term impact**, particularly in strengthening organisational capacity and promoting inter-institutional collaboration. Shared priorities included:

- **Formal institutional commitment**, such as signed endorsements, resource allocation, and designated contact points;
- A culture of **peer learning, good practice exchange**, and internal capacity transfer;
- **Short-term, flexible mobility** formats embedded in structured institutional programmes;
- Targeting of **mid- and senior-level RMs**, who are positioned to lead change and implement institutional strategies;
- Inclusion of **a diverse range of organisations**, including universities, research institutes, funding agencies, and private-sector entities to promote cross-sectoral exchange.

While both Scheme A and Scheme B were recognised for their complementary value, **a clear tendency emerged to prioritise Scheme B for its long-term institutional impact** — though many stakeholders emphasised the need to implement both schemes to address different but equally relevant dimensions of professional development in research management.

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3.5.8.3. Strategic relevance

The consultation provided not only practical input for scheme design but also a strategic confirmation of WP2's broader findings: **the absence of coordinated, international-level support is a critical limitation to RM professional development in Europe**. The community's strong engagement with this process reinforces the need for EU-level funding instruments that reflect the diversity of RM roles and institutional realities, while enabling professional growth, mobility, and the consolidation of the RM function across the ERA.

3.6. Fostering collaboration among RM trainers

The mapping conducted under WP2 confirmed that training is the most prominent form of professional development for Research Managers in Europe, representing 51.04% of the 335 opportunities identified. Among these, 174 training activities were directly or indirectly connected to formal or informal RM networks, underscoring their central role in shaping and delivering learning opportunities. These networks not only coordinate access to training, particularly in Widening Countries, but also frequently mobilise RMs themselves to act as trainers – drawing on their practical expertise, even when often facing the absence of formal pedagogical preparation.

The mapping also revealed a significant recent expansion in training provision, with 21 new initiatives launched in 2024 alone. These developments suggest a dynamic shift: not only are more institutions offering training, but many of these initiatives are now being developed and delivered by Research Managers themselves, often without formal training in education or instructional design.

Recognising this as both a challenge and an opportunity, WP2 identified pedagogical capacity-building as a transversal skill need that cuts across institutional types, RM functional areas, and national contexts. The goal was not only to enhance the instructional quality of training delivery, but also to bring together RM professionals from diverse settings – facilitating shared practices, fostering mutual support, and encouraging collaboration in the co-design of future training offers.

This strategic objective was implemented through three complementary initiatives between January and June 2025, described below.

3.6.1. RM TrainerLink Online Sessions (January–February 2025)

The RM TrainerLink online sessions were conceived as a platform to **connect existing training programmes** for Research Managers across Europe and to explore models for structured collaboration. They responded directly to a key finding of the mapping and survey: while many new training offers have emerged recently, they are often designed and delivered in isolation, with limited opportunities for cross-programme exchange or alignment.

Held in January and February 2025, the sessions brought together representatives from a variety of training programmes, including long-term postgraduate diplomas and short-term executive courses from countries such as Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the UK. Over **two sessions, 99 participants from more than 20 countries** engaged in

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presentations and structured discussions around **five concrete collaboration formats**, including joint international classes, shared mentoring schemes, peer observation, and the development of joint accredited modules.

These sessions demonstrated the feasibility and interest in building transnational partnerships in RM training. Trainers emphasised the added value of joint activities for both learners and institutions, and noted that collaboration would be greatly facilitated by institutional recognition, co-funding mechanisms, and frameworks such as the **RM Comp**. Discussions also highlighted a **shared aspiration to align RM training more explicitly with career development and policy agendas**, including Action 17 of the ERA Policy Agenda.

By initiating this dialogue and surfacing concrete pathways for future cooperation, the TrainerLink sessions planted the seeds for **a European community of RM trainers** capable of co-developing and co-delivering training across institutional and national boundaries.

3.6.2. Regional workshop: advancing RM training in the V4 and Western Balkans (Budapest, January 2025)

In line with the mapping's identification of the Western Balkans and parts of Central and Eastern Europe as **underrepresented regions in structured RM professional development**, the Budapest workshop was designed to **deepen regional engagement** and foster strategic dialogue among stakeholders in the Viségrad Group and Western Balkan countries. Organised in collaboration with the V4+WB RMA Network and held during its final conference on **23–24 January 2025**, the workshop brought together participants from universities, funding agencies, RM associations, ministries, and consultancies from across **10 countries**, with strong representation from Widening Countries.

The workshop consisted of two parts. In the first session**,** a participatory World Café methodology was used to collect insights across three thematic stations: regional training needs, differentiated approaches across career stages (RM1 to RM4), and mapping relevant stakeholders for future partnerships. The discussions revealed a **clear demand for practical, flexible, and career-stage-specific training**, as well as for institutional commitment, mobility opportunities, and professional recognition mechanisms. Participants also identified missing national RM associations in some countries, and proposed concrete actions, such as applying for a COST Action, to strengthen the regional ecosystem.

The **second session featured a roundtable** showcasing diverse training initiatives in the region, including the **MUST Week at Masaryk University (CZ)**, the Research and **Innovation Manager Training at Corvinus University (HU)**, and the **Horizon Europe Managers' Academy (PL)**. Discussions focused on the origins, funding, institutional support, and future internationalisation strategies of these programmes. Participants highlighted common challenges, such as funding constraints and the need for policy alignment, and endorsed collaboration as a means to increase sustainability, quality, and reach.

By combining structured needs analysis with the showcasing of promising practices, the Budapest workshop reinforced the strategic importance of regional collaboration in areas where RM training ecosystems are still developing. It also strengthened the role of RM associations and cross-border platforms in acting as catalysts for long-term capacity-building**.**

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3.6.3. Train-the-Trainer courses (March–April; May 2025)

The Train-the-Trainer initiative was developed to strengthen the pedagogical competencies of research managers involved in the design and delivery of professional development activities. In response to the growing number of training initiatives led by RMs – many of whom lack formal training in education or instructional design – these courses aimed to offer foundational tools for structuring impactful, learner-centred training in the RM context.

Designed and delivered by education experts from NOVA University Lisbon, each edition of the course consisted of four interactive online sessions. The sessions covered: the learning process and basic pedagogical principles; instructional design and constructive alignment; active learning methodologies (such as Problem-Based and Case-Based Learning, including the integration of AI tools); and assessment and feedback strategies.

The first edition of the Train-the-Trainer course was delivered between 27 March and 8 April 2025, with the second edition taking place from 13 to 22 May 2025. Across both editions, a **total of 54 participants from 20 countries** were selected through a process that prioritised diversity in institutional background, career stage, and regional representation. The group included professionals from **universities, research centres and national funding bodies**, aligned with WP2's objective to reinforce training capacity across the full spectrum of the European RM ecosystem.

Participants represented a **wide range of research management roles**, including pre-award and post-award support, project implementation, researcher development, innovation, and training coordination. This diversity reflects the **functional breadth of the RM profession**, as evidenced in the WP2 mapping, and resonates with survey results showing that RMs across domains are increasingly involved in training activities, yet often lack formal preparation for this role.

Of the 54 participants:

- **35 had prior experience delivering training**, while **13 were new to this responsibility**, ensuring the course supported both established and emerging trainers;
- Only **14 had previously attended a pedagogical or train-the-trainer course**, reaffirming the scarcity of structured pedagogical development identified in the survey;
- The participant cohort included professionals from **EU Member States and associated countries**, with **notable participation from Widening Countries**, reflecting a deliberate effort to support regions identified in the mapping as underrepresented in structured professional development. Participants from countries such as **Croatia, Serbia, Romania, and Albania**—where the training landscape is still developing—benefited from targeted inclusion. The five most represented countries were **Spain (11), Italy (5), the United Kingdom (4), Croatia (4), and Portugal (4)**.

By selecting a diverse and inclusive cohort, the Train-the-Trainer initiative not only addressed a key transversal competence gap, but also contributed to levelling the playing field across the RM community – strengthening capacity in countries where systemic support is still emerging.

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4. Main conclusions and recommendations

The RM Roadmap project represents the most robust, data-driven assessment to date of professional development for Research Managers (RMs) across Europe. By triangulating data from a mapping of 335 professional development opportunities, a pan-European survey with 2,212 respondents, and a co-creation process involving 34 national and thematic consultations, the project provides an unparalleled overview of systemic challenges and community-defined priorities.

A key finding of the RM Roadmap project is that, despite the growing number of professional development opportunities at the European level – over 300 training, networking, and mobility activities mapped – **there remains a widespread perception among RMs that current offers are not fully aligned with their diverse and evolving needs**. Specifically, 66.2% of respondents rated existing opportunities as either insufficient (31.6%) or barely sufficient (34.6%). The most frequently cited limitations relate to mobility and funding – areas where over 70% of respondents expressed a need for more targeted and accessible formats.

While the availability of short-term training is expanding, the professional development landscape remains fragmented, with **few career-stage-specific offers, limited accreditation pathways, and numerous barriers to access.** The vast majority of initiatives are short-term – aligning with the reality that 81.9% of RMs engage in professional development for less than one month per year.

These patterns are not incidental but directly shaped by structural constraints. Lack of time is the most frequently reported barrier across all activity types – training (42.2%), networking (43.8%), and mobility (39.2%) – reinforcing the preference for short, intensive formats. Similarly, financial limitations and insufficient institutional support significantly hinder participation. A third of RMs have never participated in mobility activities, and 67.8% report receiving no financial support for any form of professional development over the past two years. It is not surprising, then, that short, cost-effective, and flexible learning modalities dominate both the offer and demand.

Despite these constraints, the needs and preferences of the RM community are clear. Research Managers consistently express strong interest in **short, practical formats**, such as intensive courses under one week (favoured by 78.9%), **hands-on methods** (76.5%), and **hybrid or online delivery**. Transferable skills, such as leadership, communication, and strategic planning, alongside role-specific technical knowledge, are identified as top training priorities. There is also considerable interest in mobility, particularly short-term and international exchanges, yet this remains the most structurally underdeveloped area, representing only 2.69% of all mapped opportunities.

The following recommendations are grounded in the community's own expressed priorities, and reflect what is both feasible and impactful for strengthening the profession across the ERA:

1. Strengthen and fund RM networks and associations as strategic development actors

RM associations and networks are the most prevalent form of professional development support, accounting for 30.15% of all mapped opportunities. They serve as key facilitators of training, mentoring, peer exchange, and international collaboration, especially in countries with less formalised institutional support. This is corroborated by 74.5% of survey respondents who rated national and local

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associations as "useful" or "very useful" for their development. Targeted structural and financial support for RM networks is essential to ensure their continuity, inclusiveness, and long-term impact.

2. **Expand short-term accredited training and strengthen the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in professionalisation**

There is a strong demand among RMs for short, intensive, and flexible training offers: 76.7% of survey respondents support micro-credentials and similar formats, and 78.9% favour intensive courses of less than one week. These preferences align with structural constraints in the profession - 81.9% of RMs dedicate less than one month per year to training, networking, or mobility – and with their preference for practical, hands-on learning formats (favoured by 76.5%).

Although the mapping may not fully reflect all national or decentralised offers, it points to a notable gap in formalised and accredited training provision at the European level. Universities and training providers play a critical role in addressing this deficit. Their engagement in developing modular, stackable, and accredited training – such as postgraduate certificates, micro-credentials, and short courses – can offer RMs greater recognition for acquired competencies, improve transferability across institutions, and elevate the profile of the profession.

Importantly, 59.6% of respondents support the expansion of RM-related university programmes to improve awareness and legitimacy of the profession. However, only 47.1% see such degrees as useful or very useful for foundational knowledge, and 52.9% are sceptical or neutral. This highlights the need to avoid formalising university degrees as mandatory career entry points, while still valuing their role in promoting recognition, quality standards, and structured learning pathways.

3. **Ensure career-stage sensitive training pathways**

Although training represented over half (51.04%) of the mapped opportunities, the vast majority were generic and open to all levels. While it is important to ensure adequate training for career entrants, only two were specifically designed for mid-career professionals (RM3) and one for senior professionals (RM4). This lack of differentiation impedes professional growth and leadership development. Future training programmes should be modular, aligned with recognised competence frameworks such as RM Comp, and tailored to the evolving needs of RMs at different career stages—from entry to senior leadership.

4. **Prioritise EU-level institutional mobility schemes for systemic capacity-building**

International mobility remains one of the least developed areas within RM professional pathways. While 57.3% of respondents rated mobility as useful or very useful, only 2.69% of mapped opportunities support it, and 32.1% of RMs had never participated in any mobility activity. Financial constraints, cited by 28.9% of respondents, are a key barrier.

Informed by these findings, the RM Roadmap co-creation process generated strong consensus around the need for a dedicated EU-level institutional mobility and collaboration scheme. This scheme should prioritise mid- and senior-career professionals and support structured, short-term staff exchanges aimed at peer learning and institutional capacity transfer. Key design features include formal institutional commitment, embedded mobility within broader strategies, flexible implementation formats, and inclusion of diverse research-performing organisations. Such a scheme would strengthen transnational collaboration, foster leadership, and address institutional disparities across the ERA.

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5. Develop and maintain a centralised, user-friendly information platform

Thirty percent of survey respondents cited fragmented information as a barrier to accessing professional development. In response, 80.4% endorsed the creation of a one-stop-shop platform. The RM Roadmap dashboard provides an initial solution, but future efforts should ensure its sustainability, regular updates, and alignment with tools like the CARDEA RM Career Matrix. Clear eligibility, evaluation, and application criteria must guide all listings to ensure transparency and usability.

6. Avoid mandatory professional certification frameworks at the current maturity level of the profession

Certification is not widely perceived as valuable in the current RM context. Only 13.9% of survey respondents found it useful for entering the profession, and 22.6% for career progression. Most respondents (64.6% and 55.5%, respectively) considered it not useful for either. Certification is also rarely required by employers – only 8.5% of certified respondents reported it was a job requirement – and access remains limited by cost and availability. While certification may serve a valuable role in the long term by contributing to professionalisation and recognition, it cannot be introduced abruptly or imposed at the current stage. For now, efforts should remain voluntary, supportive, and tied to institutional frameworks, ensuring that recognition of prior experience continues to be central.

7. Embed professional development within institutional strategies

Across all findings, a structural gap persists in institutional support for RM professional development. Only 25–30% of survey respondents reported receiving organisational support for training, mobility, or networking. Protected time, internal funding, and the formal recognition of development activities in HR policies and promotion frameworks are critical to ensure that RMs can meaningfully engage with available opportunities. Without institutional commitment, even the most ambitious EU-level schemes risk achieving limited impact.

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6. Annex RM ROADMAP – Online survey

Part 1: Introduction and consent

The main aim of the survey developed by the RM ROADMAP project is to get a comprehensive picture of the current situation of Research Managers (RMs) across Europe. In our understanding, **the term RMs covers a wide range of experts** at different professional levels bearing specific knowledge:

1. to streamline/facilitate the planning, the development, management, administration, communication and valorisation of research and innovation,
2. to ensure compliance with policy objectives, funding programme requirements, financial rules and legal regulations,
3. to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of R&I projects/system, and/or
4. to enhance the impact of R&I on the society.

Whether they are generalists or specialised in a particular field, RMs are involved in different phases of the research and innovation projects/system.

This survey builds on previous surveys, primarily on the RAAAP (Research Administration As A Profession) series, an international, longitudinal set that has identified the key skills, attitudes and behaviours of successful research management and administration leaders, their involvement in support for impact, and their routes into the profession. This approach makes the answers comparable and provides an opportunity for a deeper analysis. However, its inclusiveness and European focus make the present survey unique, which predicts the setting of further goals, namely, the formulation of recommendations:

- on an inclusive definition and terminology including RM professional categories;
- on an RM career development framework;
- on an RM skill and competence matrix; as well as
- on a future RM training scheme.

Participation

The completion of the survey approximately takes ca. 25 minutes. Using a laptop or a similar device is recommended as several questions have multiple parts. You can save your answers by clicking on "Save and continue later" on the top of the page; thus filling in the survey can be paused any time and you can resume later. When navigating through the survey, however, please do it through the 'back' and 'forward' buttons, otherwise you will loose your data.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, without any consequence, by simply closing the survey.

Data management

All data will be collected anonymously and then cleansed. If you are interested in being informed about the results of the research and/or would like to volunteer for interviews, you will have the opportunity to give us your email address at the end of the survey.

Collected data will be shared on online open access repositories (Figshare and Zenodo) after thorough anonymization. Any information that could lead to an individual being identified will be

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completely and irreversibly redacted. Results of the research will be also published open access in research reports and possibly in peer-reviewed scientific publications.

Contact
If you have any questions or complaints about the survey or your participation, please contact the research team at rm-roadmap@hetfa.hu and rm-roadmap@novaims.unl.pt

1. Consent Statement

If you have read and understood the information above, and are committed to take part in the research, please tick the boxes below.

- ☐ I have read and understand the information provided above.
- ☐ I am 18 or older.
- ☐ I consent to take part in this research.

Page 2: About you

2. Please select your gender identification *
   - Female
   - Male
   - other
   - Prefer not to provide
3. Please indicate your age *
4. In which country do you currently work? *
   - Selection
   - Prefer not to provide

Page 3: Your job profile

5. How would you define your current employment? *
   - Full-time Research Manager
   - Part-time Research Manager
   - Full-time, combining Research Manager and research/academic role
   - Full-time, combining Research Manager and another (not research/academic) role
   - Part-time, combining Research Manager and research/academic role
   - Part-time, combining Research Manager and another (not research/academic) role
   - Self-employed
   - Retired
   - currently not active in this role
   - Not sure – none of these options seem to fit my role – please specify
6. How would you characterize your current employment contract? *
   - Permanent (an open-ended contract of employment with no fixed end date other than retirement)
   - Fixed-term (there is a date where if nothing changes you will no longer be employed in your current position)
   - Secondment (after a fixed term "secondment"/project you will return to your previous position)

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- Other [Please give details]

7. How many hours a week do you typically work on RMS activities?

	Total hours worked	Hours worked in the office/ laboratory/etc.	Hours worked from home	Hours spent by travelling and attending meeting abroad
Weekly working hours – in practice				

8. If there is a difference between the total weekly working hours according to your contract and the total hours worked in practice, does your employer recognize and value this in some way? Please elaborate briefly.
   - No, generally there is no difference
   - Yes, but it is not recognised or valued
   - Yes, the extra time is paid
   - Yes, this extra time can be converted to days off
   - other, please explain
9. Defining the areas you work in (you are asked to tick the main categories, even if you do not work in all the listed fields) *
   - **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, legals 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 utilization** 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 management, legal advice on business models, IP and licensing, spin-out management, negotiation of valorisation deals with university partners.

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- **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.

10. What is your job title, according to your contract of employment? Please add the translation of your job title in English.
11. If we should have an umbrella term to define the group of professions you fit in which of the following options do you identify with? * Select the 3 most suitable.
    - Professional on the Interface of Science
    - Research Administrator
    - Research Advisor
    - Research Consultant
    - Research Management Expert
    - Research Management and Support Professional
    - Research Developer
    - Research Enabler
    - Research Facilitator
    - Research Manager
    - Research and Innovation Manager
    - Research Manager and Administrator
    - Research and Innovation Support Professional
    - Research Support Professional

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- Knowledge/Technology Management Professional
- Other, please specify

Page 4: Your career path as a Research Manager

12. Your current educational background: Please indicate the level of the academic qualification gained
    - Left school with no formal qualifications / No additional qualifications
    - Left school/college with pre-degree qualifications (high school diploma/A level/…)
    - Associates Degree / Foundation Degree
    - Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, BSc, BS)
    - Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MBA)
    - Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD, DBA, DProf)
13. Your current educational background: Please indicate the subject area of the academic qualification gained*
    - Natural and life sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, and math
    - Medicine & Health Sciences
    - Engineering (including computing)
    - Business
    - Social Science
    - Humanities
    - Arts
    - General/All
    - Other, please specify
14. Is your education background aligned to the subject area(s) that you support in? *
    - Yes - I support research in a subject area that I know about (by education or experience)
    - Partially – my education / experience is in a related area(s)
    - No - my education / experience is in an unrelated area(s)
    - Not Applicable – I cover the whole institution, not specific subject areas
    - Other, please specify
15. How important were the following factors to move into Research Management (either by choice or because you applied for the job) *
    Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree, 4: strongly agree, 5: neutral)
    - It was a profession I was interested in while studying
    - It was a profession I felt my skills would be a good match for
    - It was a temporary role… but I'm still in Research Management
    - A colleague/friend encouraged me to get into the field
    - A position was available, so I applied and got the job, even though I did not have any experience
    - I was previously an academic/researcher and moved into Research Management
    - I was previously an PhD Student and moved into Research Management
    - I was previously an industry professional and moved into Research Management was previously an administrator and moved into Research Management

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- I was looking for a job without having to move house
- I wanted to work at this particular University/College/etc
- Other – Reason [Please describe how/why you became a Research Management]

16. Why have you stayed in Research Management? *Please indicate to what extent the following statements are important for you (1: not important at all, 2: unimportant, 3: important, 4: very important, 5: neutral)
    - It pays well
    - The work is never boring or monotonous
    - I see the opportunity for personal advancement
    - I haven't found better job opportunity yet
    - Job security (long-term/permanent contract)
    - I enjoy the profession, it's fun
    - I like working in the science / academic sector
    - I like the challenges of this job
    - It's a new profession and I like to help shape it
    - Too late to change career now
    - I like being part of a team
    - I like supporting innovation, and the creation of new knowledge
    - I like networking and support others to find new connections
    - I have flexible work arrangements
    - I can reconciliate this job with my personal life (work life balance)
    - I have the opportunity to earn extras
    - Other – Reason – Please explain
17. Approximately how many years in total have you been employed in Research Management? Please insert the number *
18. What are the top challenges and problems you face in your current RM job? *Please indicate to what extent the following statements are important for you (1: not important at all, 2: unimportant, 3: important, 4: very important, 5: neutral)
    - lack of professional network for support
    - lack of knowledge, expertise
    - lack of training
    - lack of understanding of culture in research
    - new profession in the institution
    - low professional recognition
    - not a permanent position
    - unclear career framework / job architecture at the institution
    - lack of institutional policies
    - demanding/stressful environment
    - lack of peers, peer support
    - monotone tasks
    - Lack of opportunities for professional development
    - low salary
    - often asked to do things beyond your job description

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- expectation to work outside normal hours
- Less respected by researchers
- Seen as a gatekeeper not an enabler
- Lack of professional identity
- Low job security
- other, please specify

19. How do you see yourself progressing in the Research Management career? * (Multiple choice)
    - Going through the institutional career ladder
    - Aspiring for promotion towards leadership
    - Changing job to another institution
    - Getting a certification in the profession
    - Having a mobility experience
    - Getting peer support / mentoring
    - Accomplishing a doctorate
    - Other, please specify

Page 5: Skills and competencies

20. Which skills do you need for your current position and job role?*

	Not needed at all	Not needed	Needed	Very much needed	important for career progression	I don't know
Transversal skills						
Oral communication skills						
Written communication skills						
Interpersonal skills						
Intrapersonal skills						
Problem solving						
Multitasking						
Cultural and diversity skills						
Flexibility						
Assertiveness						

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Openness						
Critical thinking						
Self-motivation, proactiveness, initiation						
RM related soft skills						
Analytical skills						
Mediation						
Negotiation						
Information management						
Working in teams						
Teamwork						
Teambuilding, motivation building						
Leadership, decision-making						
Planning, strategic thinking						
Creativity						
Efficiency and effectiveness						
Reliability, trustfulness						
Stress management						
Time management						
Priorisation						
Diplomatic skills						
Conflict management						

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Curiosity						
Adaptability						
Resilience						
RM related hard skills						
Understand research and the R&I ecosystem						
Understanding institutional governance						
Knowledge of rules and regulations of funders						
Ethics, integrity						
IT skills						
Language skills (EN)						
Managing resources						
Management skills						
Specialisation or Role related skills						
Building and maintaining networks						
Administrative skills						
Financial skills						
Legal and regulatory skills						
Understanding politics and policy cycles						
Appreciating values and understanding interests						
Nurturing innovation						
Lobbying						

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Stakeholder engagement and management						
Intellectual asset recognition, IP strategy						
Cross-cutting issues in HEU						

21. What is (are) your mother tongue(s)?
22. Please add other languages and your fluency

	Language	Basic user	Independent user	Proficient user	Important for my job

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Page 6: Your organisation

23. Please indicate the status of your employer organisation: *
    - Public
    - Non-profit private
    - Private
    - Not sure
24. Please indicate the type of your employer organisation: *
    - University - Predominantly Undergraduate Institution / Primarily Teaching Institution
    - University - Research Active
    - University - Research Intensive (a "top tier" research university in my country)
    - College
    - Research Institute
    - Research Funder (governmental or non-governmental)
    - Private Company
    - Hospital
    - Charity / NGO
    - Other Government Department
    - Other, please specify
    - Not sure

25. Which part of your organization do you work? *
    - Central office/service or department (e.g. Sponsored Projects Administration)
    - Non-central office/service department (e.g. Grants Office within an academic department/school/college)
    - Academic/research department (e.g. Department of Medicine / School of Social Work / Faculty of Humanities / servicing a number of PIs) possibly on your own
    - None of the above seem to fit my situation – please specify
26. What is the approximate number of staff employed at your organization?
    - 1-50
    - 51-250
    - 251-1000
    - 1001-2000
    - 2001-5000
    - 5001-10000
    - more than 10000

Page 7: Training

27. How much of your time per year is dedicated to training, mobility and networking activities for your professional development? Please consider the average of the last 2 years.

	I never participated in	less than one week	from 2-4 weeks	from 1-2 months	More than 3 months
training					
mobility					
networking					

28. What type of RM training format would be suited for you to attend in the next 2 years?

Type of training	insert drop-list Likert 1-4 1 - Not suited 2 - Somewhat suited 3 - Suited 4 - Very suited

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Length: Intensive courses (less than 1 week)	
Length: Short-term courses (from 1 week to 6 months)	
Length: Long-term courses (more than 6 months)	
Method: Lectures/ Instructor-Led	
Method: Active Hands-on Participation	
Method: Mentorship	
Method: Job shadowing	
Method: Self-paced	
Venue: Online	
Venue: On-site	
Venue: Hybrid	
Professional certified	
Accredited (ECTS)	
Non-certified (informal)	

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29. Please select your most important type of training needs
    - Technical knowledge within your specific professional tasks
    - Technical knowledge outside your specific professional tasks
    - Transferable skills (eg., conflict management, leadership)
    - Emergent/future technologies/areas (eg. Artificial Intelligence)
    - None
30. Please select all professional accreditation that you have related to Research Management (RM).
    - EARMA - Certificate in Research Administration (CRA)
    - EARMA - Certificate in Research Management (CRM)

- EARMA - Certificate in the Leadership of Research Management (CLRM)
- Bachelor's degree in Research Administration (academic programme)
- Postgraduation in Research Administration (academic programme)
- Masters in Research Administration (academic programme)
- Doctorate with an emphasis in Research Administration (academic programme)
- ARMA-UK - Certificate in Research Administration (CRA)
- ARMA-UK - Certificate in Research Management (CRM)
- ARMA-UK - Certificate in the Leadership of Research Management (CLRM)
- foRMAtion certificate
- Other [Please give details, including: the provider, level of accreditation and webpage.]
- NONE - I have no professional accreditation

31. If you have professional accreditation in Research Management, is this certification recognized by your employer?
    - Yes, it was requested to get the job
    - Yes, it was valued when getting the job
    - Yes, it is valued in career progression
    - Yes, it is valued in other ways
    - Not sure
    - No
32. What type of RM mobility format would be suited for you to participate in the next 2 years?

Type of mobility	insert drop-list Likert 1-4 1 - Not suited 2 - Somewhat suited 3 - Suited 4 - Very suited
Length: Event attendance (eg. conference)	
Length: short-term (up to 1 week)	
Length: medium-term (from 1 week to 1 month)	
Length: Long-term (more than 1 month)	
In-house (within the same institution)	

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National (between different institutions in the same country)	
International (between different institutions of different countries)	
Intersectoral mobility (between academic and non-academic institutions)	

33. What type of RM networking format would be suited for you to participate in the next 2 years?

Type of networking	insert drop-list Likert 1-4 1 - Not suited 2 - Somewhat suited 3 - Suited 4 - Very suited
RM conference attendance	
Participation in RM project meetings	
Participation in organization of activities of RM professional associations	
Participation in other local/ national RM events	
Participation in other international RM events	

34. Have you benefited from funding schemes, grants or programmes for engaging in any type of research management activities in the last 2 years?

    Yes

    No

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35. What type of RM funding schemes would you like to apply to in the next 2 years?

Type of funding	insert drop-list likert scale 1-4: 1 - Not likely to apply 2 - Somewhat likely to apply 3 - Very likely to apply 4 - Definitely would apply
To attend a RM conference/event	
To organize a RM conference/event	
To go to RM training	
To organize RM training	
To participate in a RM mobility	
To organize RM mobility programmes	
To cover the fees of RM networks/ professional associations	
To run a RM network/ professional association	
To participate in a RM project	

36. With which professional organizations/associations/networks are you affiliated?

Indicate which organizations/associations/networks you are normally a member of in the first column, and any others that you also have had a membership of in the past and/or attended conferences/events and/or some other activity with in the second column.

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	I am member of	I have participated in activities or events of
ACU [Commonwealth]		
ARMA [UK]		
ARMA-NL [Netherlands]		
ARMS [Australia]		
AUA [UK]		
AURAM [Austria]		
AUTM [USA]		
BESTPRAC [Europe]		
BRAMA [Brazil]		
CabRIMA [Caribbean]		
CARA/ACAAR (was CAURA) [Canada]		
CARIMA [Central Africa]		
CASSSP [China]		
CLASP [USA]		

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CZARMA [Czechia]		
COGR [USA]		
DARMA [Denmark]		
EARIMA [Eastern Africa]		
EARMA [Europe]		
FDP [USA]		
Finn-ARMA [Finland]		
FORTRAMA (was GARMA) [Germany]		
Ice-ARMA [Iceland]		
INORMS		
IRMI [Indian Association]		
Italian (informal network) [Italy]		
KOSRIS-II [Slovenia]		
KRAB [Poland]		
NARMA [Norwegian]		

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NCURA [USA]		
NORDP [USA]		
PIC [Portugal]		
PraxisUnico [UK]		
RMAN-J [Japan]		
SARIMA [Southern Africa]		
SARMA [Serbia]		
SRA International [USA]		
SWARMA (to be launched) [Sweden]		
WARIMA [Western Africa]		
I am not a member of any of the above		

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37. Do you consider the current offer in RM training, mobility, networking and funding available sufficient?

	Not enough	Barely sufficient	Sufficient	Adequate	Very adequate

RM-ROADMAP project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme under grant agreement number 101058475.

Training					
Mobility					
Networking					
Funding					

38. Which of the following factors do you think might be an obstacle or a barrier for you to participate in training, mobility and networking activities?
(Choose the three more relevant option for each type of activity)

Obstacles and barriers to training, mobility and networking	Lack of institutional support	Lack of funded opportunities	Lack of necessary knowledge/ skills	Lack of interest	Lack of time	Legal and/or contractual limitations	Lack of information about opportunities	Difficult access, the information is somewhat dispersed	Limited number of relevant opportunities	Limited impact in career progression
Training										
Mobility										
Networking										

39. If you have other type of obstacle or barrier, please indicate, adding to each activity it applies (training, mobility and/or networking)

40. How do you rate the following statements in terms of their usefulness and relevance as actions to be considered for the future?

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Statements	Not useful/not relevant	Somewhat useful/ relevant	Useful/ relevant	Very useful/relevant
An easy-to-navigate one-stop-shop displaying training, networking, mobility and funding opportunities would be an efficient way to get more equative access to RM career development opportunities across Europe.				
Degrees provided by Higher Education Institutions (post-graduations, masters, MBA, PhD) in Research Management are necessary to provide foundational knowledge for professionals in this area.				
An increase in university courses in RM will provide awareness and recognition of the profession (post-graduations, masters, MBA, PhD).				
Life-long training in the RM area should be encouraged and supported by short-term accredited training such as micro–credentials.				
Broad spectrum training in RM is more important to enter the profession than specialized training courses.				
Professional certification should be a necessary prerequisite for career entry.				
Professional certification should be a necessary prerequisite for career progression.				
Medium and long-term international mobility schemes will foster the professionalization and circulation of Research Managers across Europe, and the competitiveness of R&I ecosystem.				
If an international scheme for mentoring of Research Managers would be available, I would enroll.				
National and local RM associations play a vital role in providing professional development opportunities, thus they need structural/ financial support.				

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RM-ROADMAP project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme under grant agreement number 101058475.

41. If you want to share any comments related to the questions or beyond, please free to elaborate:

42. If you are interested to take part in the interviews and share more details about institutional practices related to recognition, career frames, training and mobility opportunities, please share your contact details.

Please note that your data is only used for the purposes of this respective project activity, namely to contact you for possible future consultation related to the topic of the project. All the collected data is treated confidentially and is not shared with any third parties. In general, access to your personal data you directly provide is limited to appropriate staff within HÉTFA who are involved in the respective project. This data is usually kept for maximum 5 years after the end date of the respective project. For more details you can check our privacy policy.
Name
Institution
Country
Email

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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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RESEARCH INSTITUTE

NOVA
UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA

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una europa

RM ROADMAP

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RM-ROADMAP project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme under grant agreement number 101058475.