

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) FINAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: TN1302

STSM title: Sharing best practices on pre award activities and activities useful to develop and support the scientific career of researchers.

STSM start and end date: 23/04/2018 to 24/04/2018

Grantee name: Edwin Kanters

PURPOSE OF THE STSM:

The aims of this STSM were the followings:

- to share the best practices in EU grant support between TU Wien and VU/VUmc Amsterdam;
- to learn about the different approaches between the Research Offices;
- to share best practices regarding useful activities to develop and support the scientific career of researchers;
- to receive knowledge on EU research support and project management;
- learn about the previous years of Bestprac by one of the former grant holder to understand the past and to be able to proceed better with the future;
- to meet and learn from various professionals from different departments, institutions involved in grant support.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSMS

The programme:

The Programme was hosted by the TU Wien which is a technical university with 8 faculties. During these two days I spoke with Martina Pöll a research administrator at the institute for mechanics of materials and structures. and with Verena Dolovai and Sabine Rainalter from the EU and International Research Support.

Day 1

Martina is an experienced research administrator, she works in the faculty of civil engineering of the Vienna University of Technology. She is responsible for the management of national and EU funded projects and involved in the administration and financial aspects of these projects during the entire life cycle (both pre as well as post award). The legal aspects are dealt with by a centralized office. She also organizes scientific conferences and congresses. In addition Martina also was the grant holder of Bestprac in the first 4 years an additional aspect why this STSM has been a valuable visit learning more about the past of Bestprac to be able to proceed successfully with the future.

The first day I joined Martina in her daily work and discussing the way grant support is organized at the TU Wien provided insight in the organization and differences. The organization has a central EU and international research support office that provides support on certain areas.

Most support is organised decentral at department or institute level but not all institutes and departments have a research administrator. The support at institute level is tailor made and the way it is organized makes it easy to reach and can be adapted to the needs (flexible) of the institute. It does mean that the support and knowledge is not available for all the institutes at the university. The way it is organized does feel logical regarding the decentralized history of the organization of the university. An interesting thing I learned was the position of the national contact points (NCP) in Wien. They are organized as a grant support office helping scientists to check grants for the whole of Wien (and Austria) and very much oriented on research. In addition we shared a lot of information about the history of the first 4 years of Bestprac. I can use this knowledge for future decisions and avoid a repetition of topics, requests, making documents etc. and being able to better use the heritage of Bestprac1.

Reflection on day 1

This first day made me think about how to structure of the research support at my organization We have a more centralized support but also people at positions in the faculty or departments, sometimes even small research offices. At the TU Wien it feels like the way the support is organized fits with the way the university is organized. At our university is feels like we are still searching for the right fit considering that changes that happened the past couple of years. The importance of local support and the right fit for the organization is essential. In addition the support by checking grant by the NCPs could fit in some research support for all the research organizations in Amsterdam by collaborating more in the whole region of Amsterdam.

Day 2

On day 2 I had a meeting with the EU and international Research Support Office. This office provides the following services for the TU Wien: General information and advice on the EU Research Programmes and Technology Initiatives, Legal, financial and administrative information and advice during the application; drawing up and reviewing EU research contracts, Consortium agreements, subcontracts, NDAs, etc. proving legal support post award for European and international research projects. The office provides services for 8 faculties and a total of 3708 scientists. Most international grants of the TU Wien are MCSCA grants. The focus of the office is on the legal aspect of the projects and as a decree of the university all the contracts of research projects need to be evaluated by the support office. The perspective of looking at research grants by the university is to reduce the risks and to make sure that the interests of the university are secured. The high number of MCSIs can be explained by the expertise present at the support office.

Reflection on day 2

The risks of the research projects at our organization are more viewed from a financial point although the agreements of the research projects are also viewed by the legal experts of the VU and VUmc. This point of view has to do with the objectives of the university. In Wien a lot is decentral and the central organization of the university needs to reduce the risks as much as possible and safeguard the interest of the whole university (for instance IP). In Amsterdam there is a more collaborative effort in obtaining grants and therefor the pre-award phase is organized mostly central and knowledge and information is dispersed throughout the institute in the form of templates, intensive support and courses. This again fits the organization.

Networking

During my short stay in Vienna and the TU Wien they have left a lasting impression. The hosting institution has made me feel like TU Wien is my second home. I am very grateful for the opportunity that has emerged and have been touched by the warm welcome by Martina, Verena and Sabine. I am looking forward to share ideas, best practices and learn from each other in the future.