

**TN 1302 - BESTPRAC**  
**Short Term Scientific Mission**  
**Scientific Report**

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**Summary**

In the frame of the BESTPRAC Short Term Scientific Mission I had the opportunity to visit the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), an independent, non-profit and policy-oriented research and training institute based in Athens, Greece. The visit took place between October 6-10, 2014. During the week I had the chance to participate in discussions with the whole range of ELIAMEP staff including colleagues responsible for administrative and managerial issues just as well junior and senior research fellows. The variety of these meetings provided me not just a thorough overview of how research management tasks are carried out in a research institute with similar size and scope but I could gain experience and new ideas about the ways that researchers preferred to be and/or can be involved in administrative processes.

**Purpose of the STSM**

The main purpose of the STSM was to exchange best practices with another research center, which has more or less the same size and similar topical areas as my home institution, related to numerous fields of research project administration and management with the focus on externally funded projects.

**Description of the work carried out during the STSM**

During the one-week visit I had the chance to have meetings and engage in fruitful discussions with almost all ELIAMEP staff members located in the Athens office about tips and traps of research project management and the ideal division of administrative tasks from different point of views.

On the first day (October 6<sup>th</sup>) my program started with meeting Alexandra Nikolakopoulou, the Development and Europe Direct Coordinator, who after showing me around and introducing me to her colleagues gave me a short introduction about their center, the different research teams and

the ongoing projects at ELIAMEP. After I got more familiar with the host institution we started exchanging our management experiences regarding the different phases of a project lifetime, starting from introducing and advertising a call towards the researchers till working on getting the most publicity for a newly published research output. The day continued with a discussion with Elizabeth Phocas, Deputy Director of the center about financial management and dissemination activities from the point of view of the administration. During this session I learned about the importance of having a good board of trustees related to financial decision making and the need of well-maintained media connections to enhance the visibility of dissemination activities.

The next day (October 7<sup>th</sup>) I had a meeting with Kyriakos Filinis, representative of the Crisis Observatory Team. This relatively small research team was founded less than two years ago and it already produced a big number of research reports and working papers, some of them available in even two languages so the focus was on how this can be achieved parallel with building a database, a library and a repository especially if a researcher is responsible for the administrative tasks of the project as well. The Crisis Observatory team also recently won an H2020 project and since I had no experience with this new funding scheme I could learn about the process of submitting a proposal under this framework. Later I continued with a meeting with four researchers, seniors and juniors as well, from the Migration Research Team when we talked about project management from the point of view of the researchers. All of them are involved in the project management up to a certain level and it was instructive to hear the different opinions about the pros and cons of certain funding schemes and the utility or futility of being involved in administrative tasks. The Migration Research Team is also the group with whom we are partners in two ongoing research projects so we devoted some time to compare our country specific approaches to the research goals and management issues.

The third day (October 8<sup>th</sup>) I met Panagiota Emmanouilidou, a junior research fellow working on a five-year long project financed by the European Research Council. She is involved in both conducting the research and managing the administrative part of the project thus I could gain insights into the rules and regulations of this specific funding scheme which I had no knowledge before. I could get familiar with the structure of the budget, the timesheet requirements and types of deliverables just as well the details of how a proper ethical guideline should be prepared for researches involving humans. The next session was with Nina Papaioannou, Head of Administration with whom we discussed general administrative processes which are not strictly project related but essentials for smooth run of business. Since she is also involved in designing and creating layouts, we could talk about the benefits of using only the most common graphics softwares for designing logos, publications and various advertising materials. The day ended with a meeting with Giannis Skiadaresis, who is responsible for maintaining the visual appearances of some projects and could give me a practical training on the basics of video editing. I could get a picture of what are the most essential steps of turning a raw material into a video ready for the public with logos, subtitles and music, and which are the most efficient and user friendly open access softwares that can be used for this purpose.

The next day (October 9<sup>th</sup>) I spent the first part of the day with George Tzogopoulos, who is the website editor at ELIAMEP and also works as a researcher on the field of media and communication studies. During the meeting I had the chance to go through all website and social media related issues starting from the content management system they use for the different institutional and project websites, through the optimal frequency of updates, the ideal structure and format of newsletters, the importance of having illustrations and videos till the ways of future developments should go to follow the trends and gain more publicity for scientific research results. The second part of the day was about financial management with Sofia Hantzopoulou, Financial Officer and Alexandra Nikolakopoulou. I was introduced to the new H2020 type of global timesheet and how it is applied to initiate payments, the budget management and record filing system for direct and indirect costs used at ELIAMEP and the details of researchers' involvement in reports preparation.

On the final day (October 10<sup>th</sup>) of my visit I had a meeting series with Alexandra Nikolakopoulou, who was my main contact point at the host institution and with whom I have the most of my regular tasks and responsibilities in common. We did our best to cover the numerous items from the original workplan which were still to be discussed such as project management tools, dissemination activities and external funding opportunities. We started with comparing our experiences regarding the different project management tools, including free ones and the ones are designed for a project specifically and got to that conclusion that their usability varies significantly depending on the role of the institution in the project and on the complexity of the tasks to be delivered. Regarding dissemination activities the focus was on the recently introduced open access approach, the requirements in case of a H2020 project and the new possibilities that it will allow us to make research related data and research results available for the wider public. Finally in terms of available fundraising possibilities we discussed the pros and cons of different financial supporting schemes and had an inspiring brainstorming session based on which a list of ideas was prepared for the future use.

### **Contribution to the goals of the COST Targeted Network**

I believe that my visit at ELIAMEP was perfectly in line with the goals of the BESTPRAC project, it gave me and the research administrators working at the host institution the opportunity to compare our experiences and approaches, exchange best practices and our know-how in various field of project management. I would like to confirm that even a week-long series of discussions with colleagues working on the same field could add a lot to reducing the feeling of isolation and to professional development.

## **Description of the main results obtained**

From the numerous new ideas and information I collected at ELIAMEP I would like to highlight the followings:

- ❖ H2020 features: global timesheet, open access, ethical issues
- ❖ ERC grant scheme rules and requirements
- ❖ Mutual benefit of researchers and administrators if researchers involved in administrative tasks from the application phase till final reporting
- ❖ Importance of having a good advisory board built of carefully selected people with various professional background
- ❖ Supporting researchers in re-allocating capacities to publish as much as possible
- ❖ Devoting time to continuously establish and maintain connection with the media
- ❖ Designing high-quality dissemination materials in-house with free graphic softwares
- ❖ Following trends: putting emphasis on preparing infographics and video files, regular posting at various social media sites