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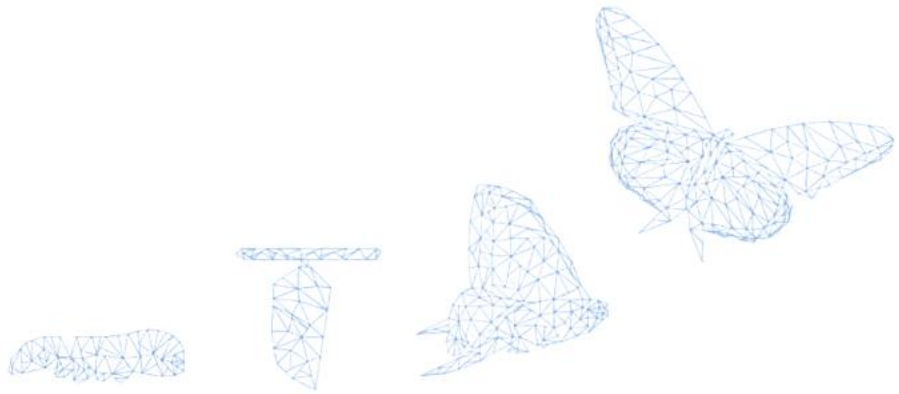
Research Management in Practice: Roles, Skills and Tools Across the Research Lifecycle

NRFU, DLR-PT
Online

19th Nov. 2026
11:30 – 13:00 EET
10:30 – 12:00 CET



About project

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Agenda

1. Welcoming Remarks
   Frederik Søndergaard, DG RTD, EC

2. Research Management in Europe
   Virág Zsár, HÉTFA Research Institute

3. Research Managers across the Research Lifecycle
   Nataliia Didenko, Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine 2.0, NRFU

4. From Project Support to Institutional Capacity
   Olga Polotska, NRFU

Welcoming Remarks



Frederik Søndergaard,

DG Research and Innovation, European Commission

Research Management in Europe



Virág Zsár,
HÉTFA Research Institute



Virág Zsár

zsarvirag@hetfa.hu

Chair of **HUNARMA**, the Hungarian Association of Research Managers and Associations (2026-), observer in the Board of **EARMA** (2026-)

Professional coordination of projects related to the **professionalisation of Research Management and Administration** (RM Framework, MAPIT, RM ROADMAP, foRMAtion, V4+WB RMA Network) and **research careers** (SECURE2) at HETFA Research Institute

Research Attaché, co-chair of the Research Working Party during the Hungary Presidency of the Council of the EU (2024-2025)

Professional support and quality assurance of proposals for submission and projects under implementation (COST action, Horizon Europe, Erasmus +, Norway Grant, etc.)

Member of the Core Group of **ERA Action 17, the Research Management Initiative** (2022-)

Management Committee Member of COST Action

- CCA on young researchers (2024-)
- CCA on Science Communication (2019-2022)
- BESTPRAC and co-leader of WG1 (2017-2023)

Senior Expert in **Horizon Results Booster** service (2021-2024), now **Booster** service (2025-)

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The European Research Area (ERA) in the broader policy framework

ERA Policy Agenda

- Non-binding instrument: Council Recommendation (25-27) and Council Conclusions (22-24)
- Encourages voluntary collaboration and commitments on ERA activities

ERA Act

- **Mission letter** of Commissioner Zaharieva‘s
- **Legal instrument** to tackle enduring issues that are not solved through voluntary measures
- Propose measures to foster the free movement of research, knowledge and technology (5th freedom)
- Commission proposal **planned for 2026**

ERA in Horizon Europe

- Grant-based funding framework
- The current WIDERA work programme specifically supports the implementation of the ERA Policy Agendas

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Policy Agenda 2022-24: Action 17 Strategic capacity of public RPOs

Four objectives:

- **RECOGNITION:** promotion for professionalization, initiatives for diverse careers, awareness raising on added value
- **UPSKILLING:** definition of skills, training programmes, coordination between MS and EU-level
- **NETWORKING:** support networks, create national communities
- **CAPACITY BUILDING**: fill gaps

Core group of implementation:

European Commission, Germany, Hungary, Aurora + National and organisation contacts of all committed parties

Supporting Horizon Europe projects:

CARDEA (1 Juni 2022 – 31 July 2026)
RM Roadmap (1 September 2022 – 31 August 2025)

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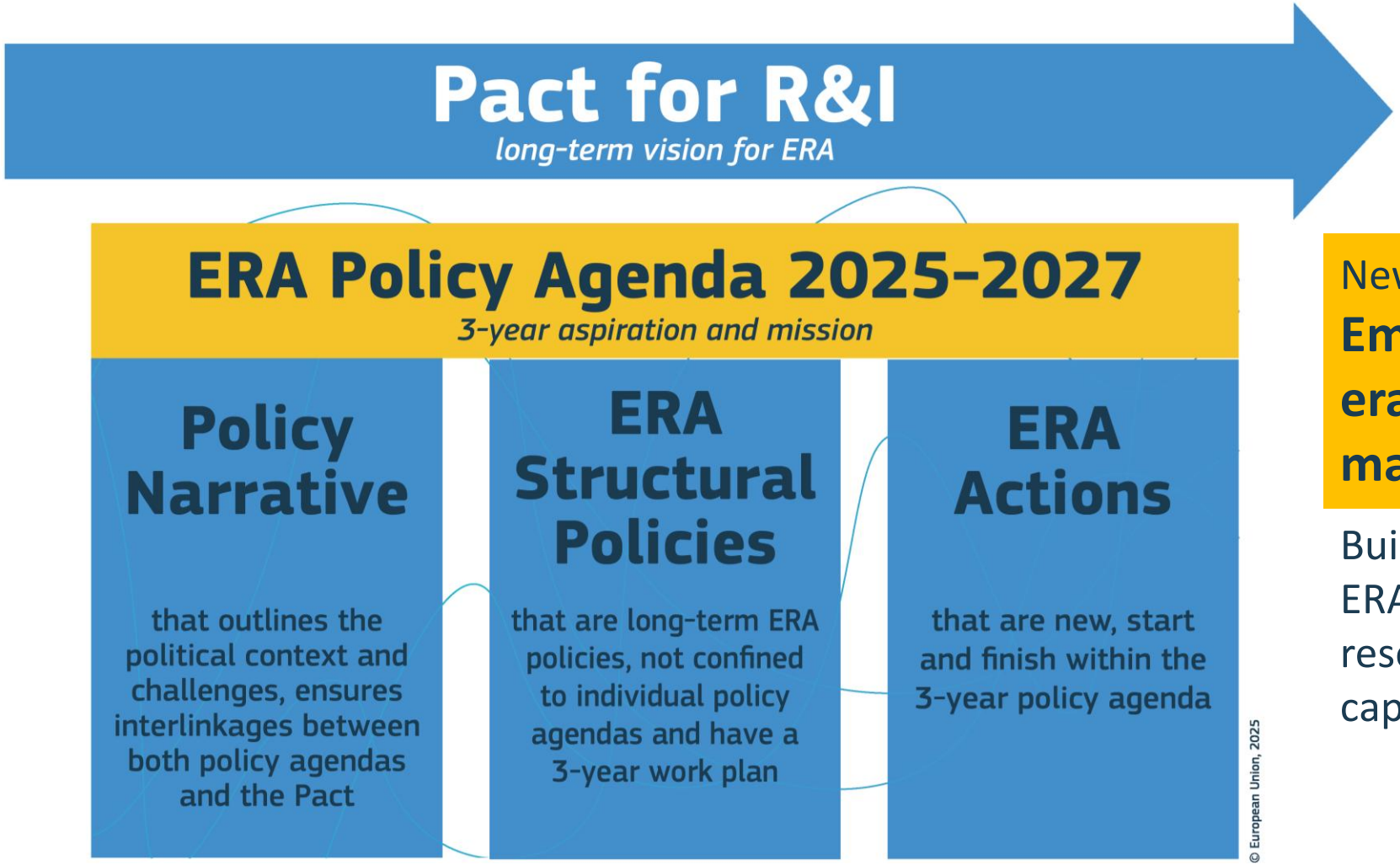
ERA Policy Agenda 2025-27



New ERA action:

Empowering R&I: An new era in research management

Building on the achievements of ERA Action 17: 'Enhance public research institution strategic capacity'

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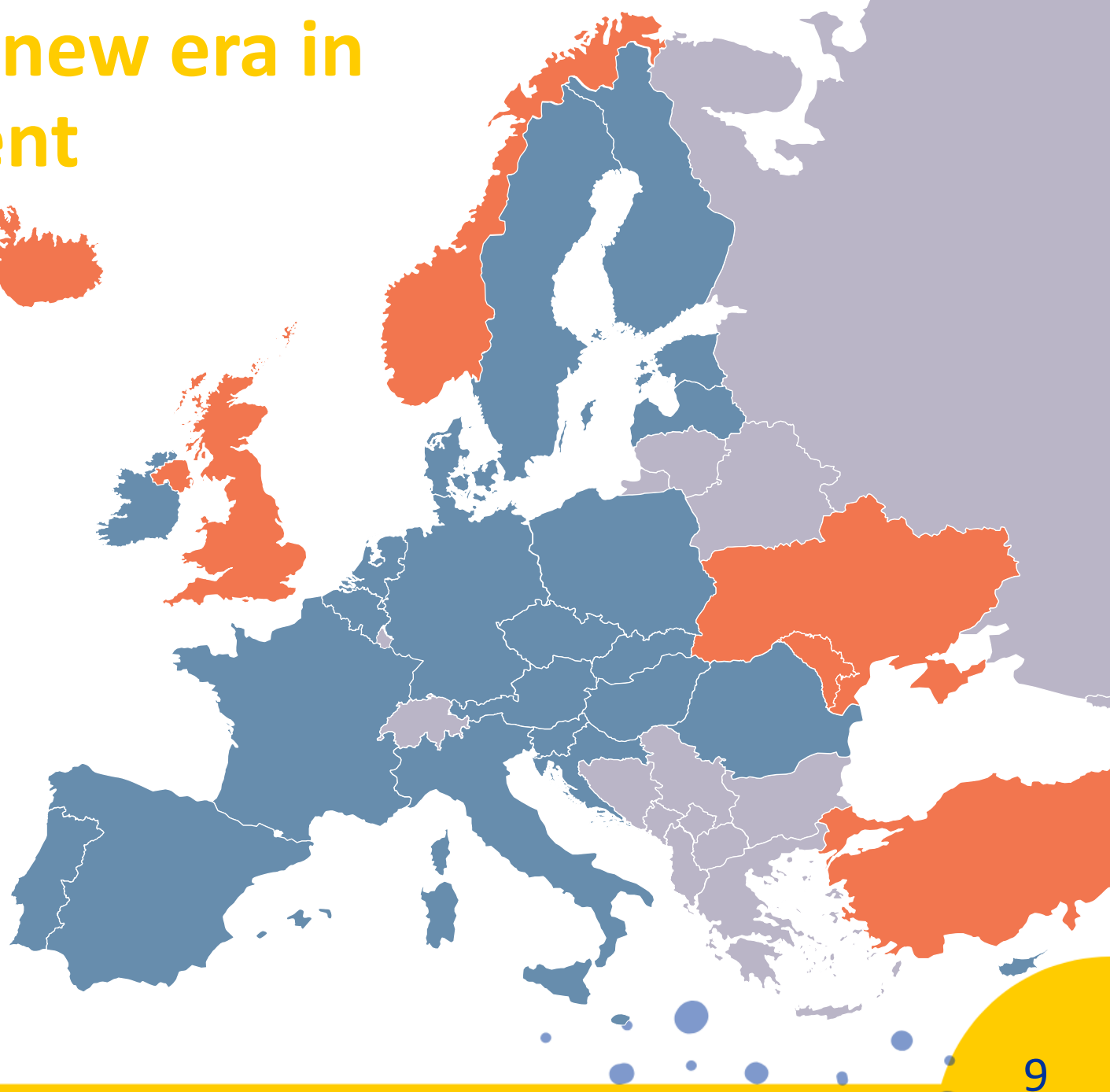
Empowering R&I: A new era in research management

- Research Managers as enablers of other ERA activities
- Extension of core group (European Commission, Germany, Hungary, Aurora) to include EARMA and EU-LIFE
- Supported by 23 Member States

13 stakeholder groups: Aurora, Coimbra, EARMA, EARTO, EASSH, ERIC Forum, EUA, EU-LIFE, EURASHE, Individual researchers, Science Europe, The Guild, YERUN



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NETWORKING

AIM	HAS BEEN DONE	TO BE DONE
Support the exchanges of best practices	ERA Action 17 workshops	Continuation and adjustment of Europe-wide networking & mobility programmes
	RM Roadmap Ambassadors and co-creations exercises (national and thematic)	Links with industrial RMs through a triangle approach
	Launching and extending the membership of professional RM associations	Support national professional RM associations

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UPSKILLING

AIM	HAS BEEN DONE	TO BE DONE
Improve training and skills of research management staff	RM Roadmap Resource Catalogue & Dashboard of Professional Development Opportunities	A single Europe-wide platform equipped with available curricula, educational materials, upskilling activities and tools for RM
Ensure broad and easy access to educational material and upskilling activities/tools of RMs	European Competence Framework for Research Managers (RM Comp)	Create a recognised Europe-wide learning and skills development scheme for Research Managers with peer-to-peer learning and mobility
	RM Framework Handbook & Quality Label	
	EARMA Academy, CARDEA Academy	

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CAPACITY BUILDING

AIM

Support less R&I intense regions and organizations in building RM capacities

Designing approaches for capacity building

HAS BEEN DONE

European Competence Framework for Research Managers (RM Comp)

RM Framework Handbook & Quality Label

MAPIT module: Building Strong and Sustainable Research Support Services

TO BE DONE

Embedding RM into HR policies and institutional strategies

Established and standardised Research Support Services

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RECOGNITION

AIM	HAS BEEN DONE	TO BE DONE
Contribute to the professionalisations of Research Management	Terminology, definition & segmentisation of RM	Co-creating a European Charter for RMs
	Success stories from the RM Community	Analysing the role of RM in under the 'widening' part of Horizon Europe to monitor the impact in R&I system
	Overarching Roadmap	
	Evidence-based awareness campaign in Member States	Including RM into national R&I, educational and employment frameworks & systems

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Follow us, learn more and contribute!

RM FRAMEWORK

WEBSITE

www.rm-framework.eu

LINKEDIN

www.linkedin.com/company/rmframework/

PODCAST

thegrant.eu/rm-framework



https://ec.europa.eu/era-talent-platform/#about

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Research Managers Across the Research Lifecycle



Nataliia Didenko,
Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine 2.0,
National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU)

A Research Manager (RM) & Research Management and Administration (RMA)



A Research Manager (RM) is a professional who supports researchers and research organisations throughout the **research lifecycle** – from identifying funding opportunities and developing proposals to project implementation, financial management, reporting, dissemination and exploitation of results

Research Management and Administration (RMA) is the field that encompasses the functions and processes that support research.

Organisational Structures

Purpose of RMA Structures

- Support institutional knowledge accumulation and organisational learning.
- Strengthen collaboration networks and build trust.
- Improve resource availability and project management effectiveness.

Factors Influencing RMA Structures

- Institutional size, structure and culture.
- Organisational needs and existing staff competencies.
- Institutional maturity and strategic development.
- Changes in team size and operational requirements.

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RMA support across the whole research lifecycle



***RMA support** across the whole research lifecycle*

Strategic advice → Administrative support → Financial management → Compliance → Coordination → Impact

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From Funding Opportunity to Competitive Proposal

How Research Management and Administration (RMA) supports research teams





1 · Identify & assess the opportunity	2 · Develop the proposal
➢ Monitor funding programmes and shortlist calls that match the team's expertise and institutional priorities.	➢ Explaining details of call requirements and evaluation criteria into a proposal plan with clear responsibilities and internal deadlines.
➢ Review the scope, expected outcomes, eligibility, funding conditions and deadline.	➢ Advise on consortium composition and partner roles. Coordinate input from researchers, partners and institutional teams.
➢ Assess institutional capacity, resource needs and risks. Brief researchers and support the decision to apply.	➢ Help develop and justify the budget. Check the proposal for completeness, consistency and compliance before submission.

RMA Support Across the Project Lifecycle

From successful evaluation to long-term use of research results



Stage	*What research managers and administrators do*
3 · Grant Preparation & Contracting	Coordinate beneficiary documentation and budget checks. Support preparation of the Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement.
4 · Project Set-up	Organise the kick-off, clarify partner roles and establish the work schedule, internal procedures and systems for tracking costs and records.
5 · Project Implementation	Coordinate partners' day-to-day work, track milestones and deliverables, advise on funding rules and help resolve emerging issues.
6 · Monitoring & Reporting	Coordinate technical and financial reporting, verify costs and supporting evidence, document deviations and prepare for reviews and audits.
7 · Dissemination, Exploitation & Impact	Support communication and stakeholder engagement, advise on open science and intellectual property, and plan for the uptake and long-term use of results.

Modelled example: RMA Support in Horizon Europe Project

Before getting a grant



RM of BEN2

1.
- Relevant Horizon Europe call identified.
- Eligibility confirmed; internal approval obtained.

2.
- Five-partner consortium established.
- Work packages and €4.8 million budget agreed.
- Compliant proposal submitted on time.



Project: SMART-WATER
Climate-Resilient Irrigation and Soil Health

Aim: Develop and test water-smart and soil-friendly solutions for climate-resilient agriculture

Consortium: 5 partners
(BEN1-CO, BEN2, BEN3, BEN4, BEN5)

Budget: € 4.8 million

Duration: 36 months (2026-2029)

Role BEN2: research on water regime and soil fertility

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Modelled example: RMA Support in Horizon Europe Project

After getting a grant



3. Grant Agreement signed.
   Consortium Agreement signed; partner obligations agreed.

4. Kick-off meeting held; management procedures approved.
   Reporting calendar and financial management system established.

5. Field trials launched; partner activities coordinated.
   Deliverables submitted on time; resources allocated as planned.

6. Technical and financial reports prepared.
   Progress reviewed; risks identified and addressed.
   Periodic report submitted on time.

7. Two scientific papers prepared; stakeholder workshop organised.
   Exploitation plan developed; research outputs made available as required.

8. Lessons learned documented; project experience evaluated.
   New funding opportunity identified; follow-up proposal concept developed.

Impact and added value for the institute (with RMA support)

- Successful participation in Horizon Europe
- Stronger international partnerships
- New research results and practical solutions for climate-resilient agriculture
- Higher visibility and competitiveness for future calls

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RM Comp, the New Key Tool to Strengthen Research Management in Europe

RM Comp



How to Use RM Comp?

Research managers

Assess your skills
Identify strengths and skills gaps.

Plan your development
Choose training or mentoring.

Apply it in daily work
Improve work practices and collaboration.

Research organisations and industry

Integrate it into HR practices
Use it in hiring, training and performance reviews.

Support staff development
Provide learning resources and funding where possible.

Monitor impact
Assess practices and identify gaps.

Funding agencies and policy advisers

Inform funding criteria
Use competencies to guide funding applications and evaluations.

Build capacity
Fund training and conferences on RM Comp competencies.

Facilitate collaboration
Develop aligned policies and share good practices with institutions.

Who can benefit from RM Comp?

Research managers

At any career stage
- Explore career paths
- Identify skills gaps
- Choose relevant training

Research institutions

Public and private organisations
- Standardise practices
- Guide staff development

Research funders and policy advisers

Across sectors
- Promote consistent funding policies
- Build capacity
- Support collaboration

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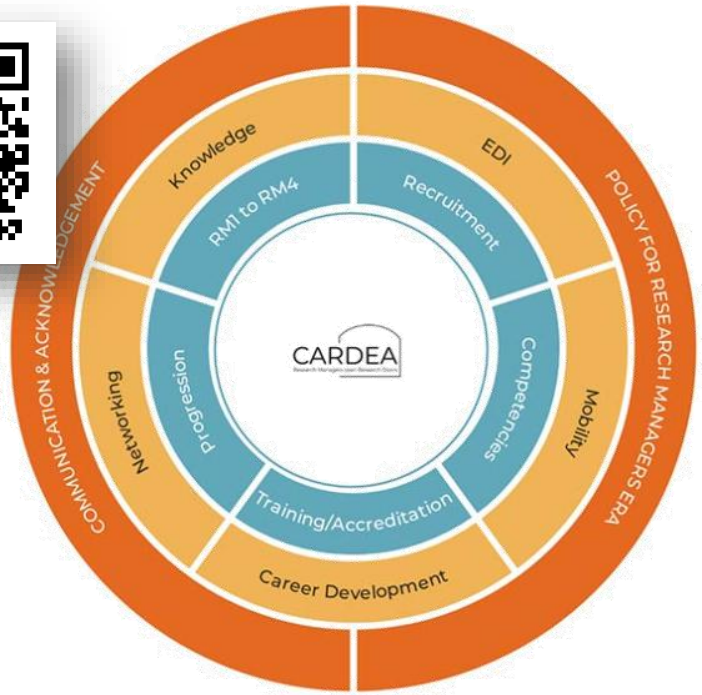
CARDEA and RM ROADMAP

CARDEA

The CARDEA Academy, part of the CARDEA online Hub, is dedicated to supporting research managers.
The Academy addresses the specific needs of research managers by offering various programs, resources, and toolkits to help them develop and advance their careers.



RM ROADMAP



RM Roadmap is a pan-European community of research management excellence, coming together over three years to define a roadmap for our profession. A short description of the project and its objectives can be found in the project workflow.

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European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA)

EARMA
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
RESEARCH MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

- **Professional community** — represents research managers and administrators across Europe and beyond.
- **Collaboration and policy** — connects research funders, researchers, universities and industry to support project delivery, share good practices and contribute to policy consultations.
- **History and governance** — founded in Italy in 1995 and based in Brussels. The Board sets strategy, committees and expert groups support its work, and internal auditors provide independent oversight.

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From Project Support to Institutional Capacity: Why Research Management Matters Beyond a Single Grant



Olga Polotska,
National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU)

The funder’s perspective

What strong research management looks like to a funder:

- Clear communication
- Defined responsibilities
- Anticipated risks
- Effective response when plans change

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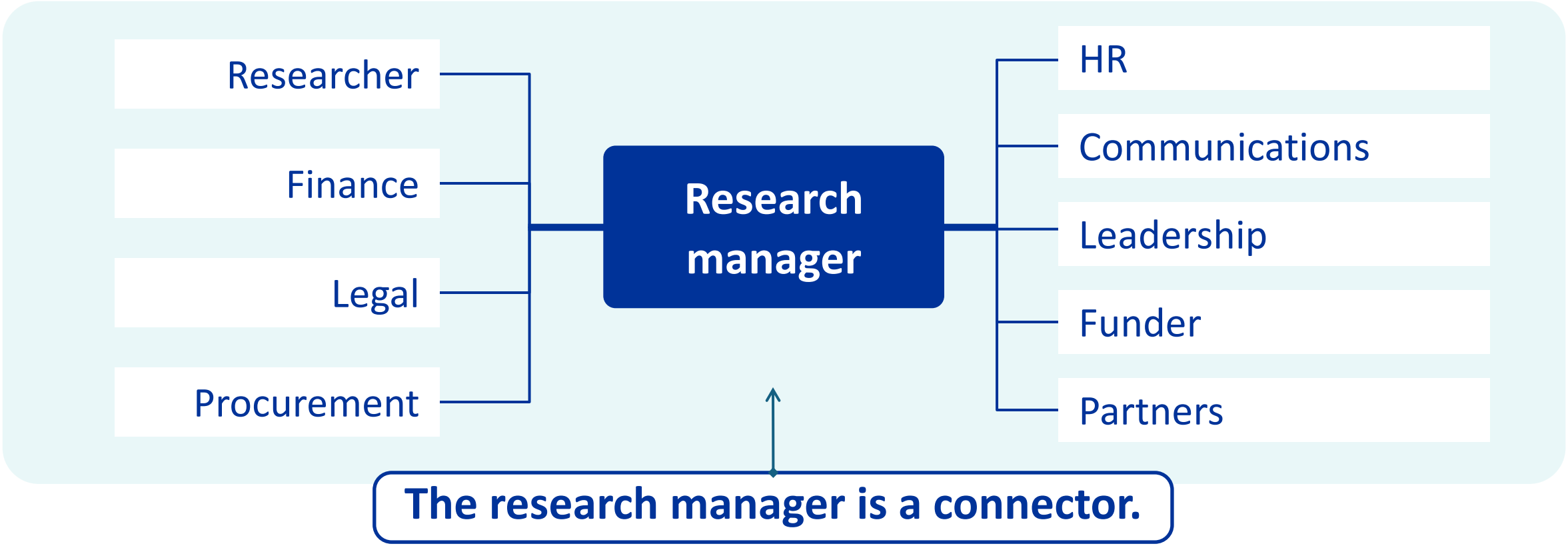
Beyond forms and deadlines

RMA is more than administrative support



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Two kinds of capacity

Project capacity

"We delivered this grant."

Institutional capacity

*"The **next project** will be easier, faster and better managed."*

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What should remain after a grant?

01 ▸ Funder knowledge and internal procedures

02 ▸ Contracts, procurement and reporting experience

03 ▸ Partner relationships and risk lessons

04 ▸ Skilled staff and institutional memory

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RMA as institutional memory and resilience

People change. Teams move. Programmes evolve.

Institutional knowledge must endure.

For Ukrainian institutions, **continuity is resilience.**

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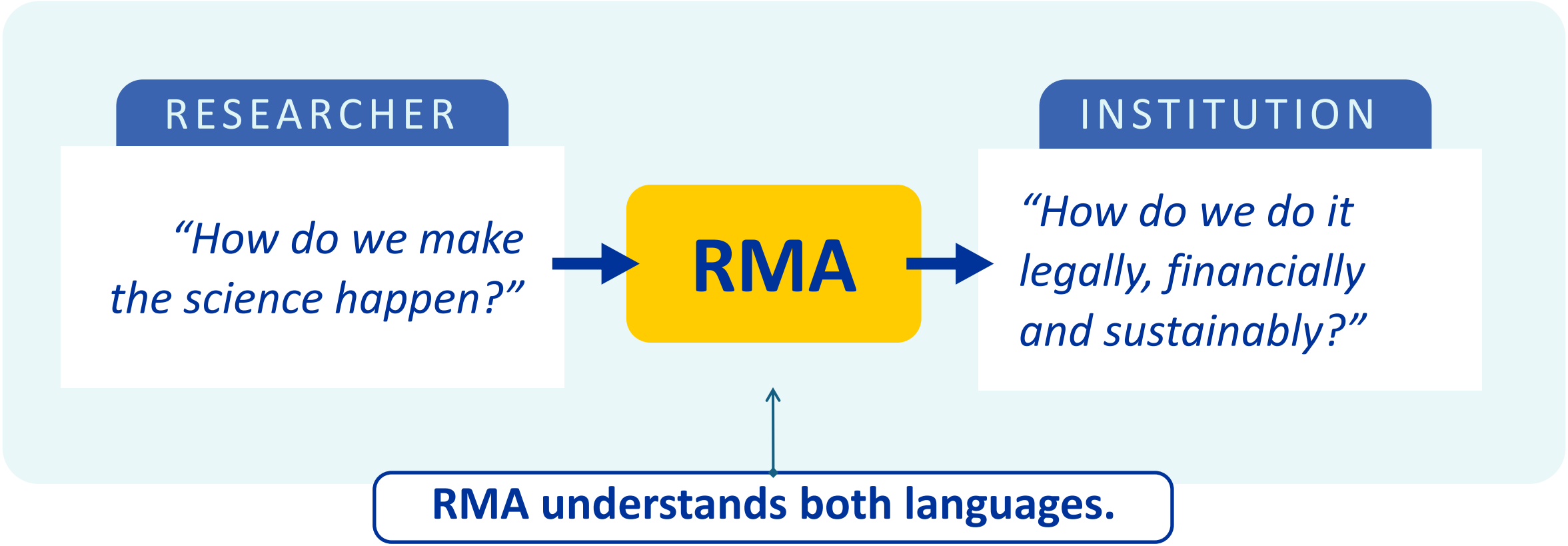
The bridge between science and the institution



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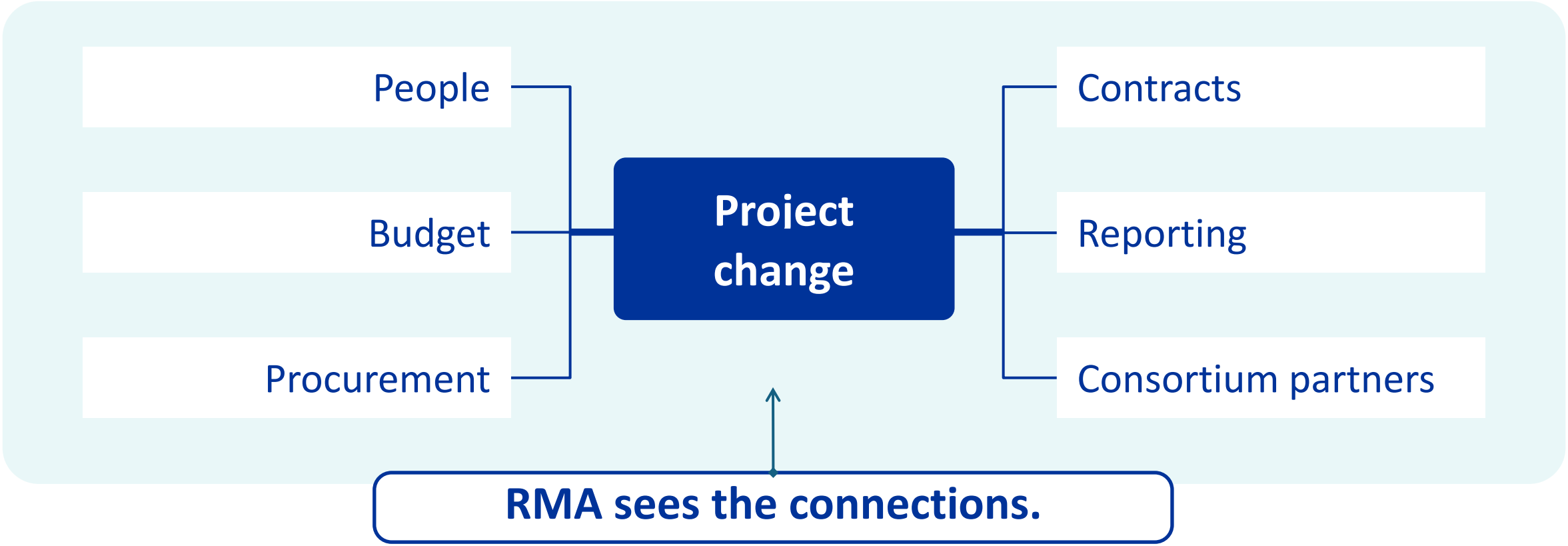
Why the horizontal view matters

One change in a project can affect:



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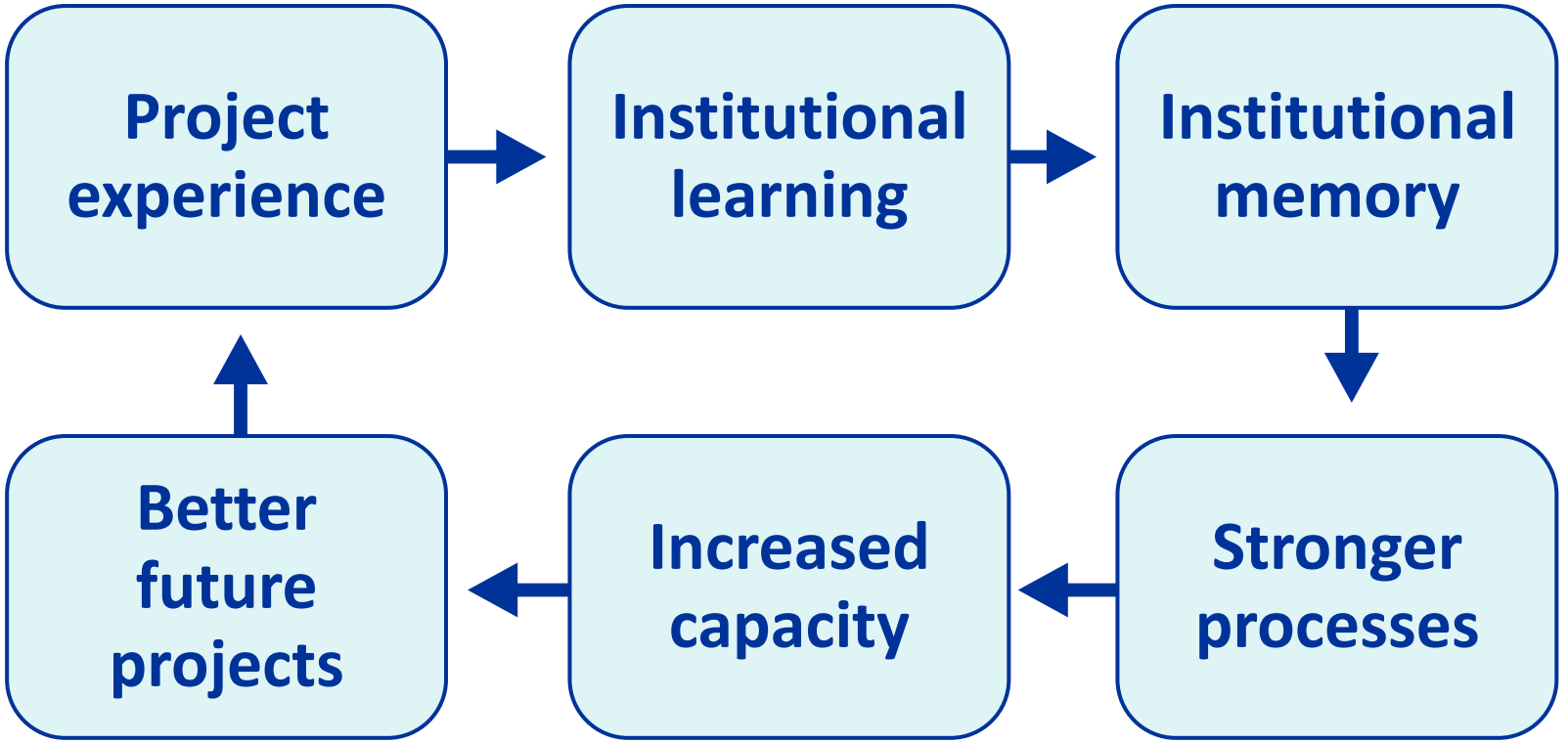
What institutions must put in place

RECOGNITION	→	RMA as a profession
EARLY INVOLVEMENT	→	before the grant is won
ACCESS	→	to people, decisions and information
LEARNING	→	every grant improves the system

The capacity flywheel

> **Success means *being better prepared for the next grant*.**



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Project partners:

Project coordinator

DLR Projektträger — Germany

Responsible for implementation of the capacity building

ZSI Centre for Social Innovation — Austria

Democracy X — Denmark

civitta — Ukraine, Lithuania

Національна академія наук України — Ukraine

Інститут економіки та прогнозування НАН України — Ukraine

IMTEI — Ukraine

R&I Funding Agencies

National Research Foundation of Ukraine — Ukraine

TA ČR — Czechia

FWF Austrian Science Fund — Austria

FFG Promoting Innovation. — Austria

Latvian Council of Science — Latvia

Estonian Research Council — Estonia

UEFISCDI — Romania

National Science Centre Poland — Poland

ANCD — Moldova

SRNSFG — Georgia

TÜBİTAK — Türkiye

Ministries

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine — Ukraine

Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space — Germany

Guvernul României — Romania

Associated partners

DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft German Research Foundation — Germany

Swiss National Science Foundation — Switzerland

Research Council of Finland — Finland

Georgia's Innovation & Technology Agency — Georgia

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ДЯКУЮ!

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Horizon Europe project LUKE
"Linking Ukraine to the European Research Area – Joint Funding and Capacity Building Platform for Enhanced Research and Innovation Cooperation"

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About project