



## **A2.1, O1: Research support mapping document**



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## Beneficiaries

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- Dublin City University, Ireland
- Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania
- Linköping University, Sweden
- Tampereen Korkeakoulusäätiö sr, Finland
- Hamburg University of Technology, Germany
- Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal
- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
- University of Stavanger, Norway
- Università degli Studi di Trento, Italy
- University of Twente, The Netherlands

## Abstract

This is the first deliverable document deriving from Activity 2.1: Joint research development of Work Package Two (Challenged-based Research). This document outlines the results of a survey of Alliance members on their existing research support services. Results show much similarity of services that are offered across the network. This is followed by a selection of innovative practices from various members in the Alliance. This document will be used to identify areas for potential joint activity.



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## 1 Introduction

The ECIU University (ECIUUn) project seeks to transform research practices in the member universities. The project seeks to create a stronger link between research and education, provide more two-way knowledge exchange between society/industry and the universities, and develop more collaboration between the partners on how research is supported across the network to benefit both from the scale and expertise of the individual universities. In line with the overall aim for ECIU member universities to further integrate, providing joint research supports and practices is a key aim of Work Package Two (WP2).

Activity 2.1 aims to facilitate greater collaboration on research supports within the broad Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 area with the objective to achieve:

- 1) Quality research with more impactful outcomes on SDG 11 related topics.
- 2) Translation of the outputs of cutting edge SDG 11 research into ECIUn WP3 – 5 activities.

The first stage of this is collection of the existing research support practices amongst Alliance members. The purpose of this exercise is to provide a snapshot of our existing practices and supports, as a starting point from which to devise shared services to achieve the stated objectives. To this end, a survey was circulated to the members and it was completed between June 2019 and February 2020.

## 2. Objectives

This document presents an overview of the research support services currently offered by the Alliance members. It also highlights particularly innovative or unique practices among the members which could potentially be scaled up across the network. Section one presents an overview of the responses given by all members, including an overview of what research support services the universities offer as well as a general description of what research support services offered by the universities. Section two provides case studies of innovative and unique practices at individual universities. This document will be used as a baseline to inform new innovations and common joint practices across the ECIUn network in the next phase WP2 activity. The document is intended to be read by those involved in research support services across all member universities. It should also be of interest to those in senior management at the universities and ECIUn leaders.



### 3. Overview of Existing Research Support Services offered by Alliance Members

Table 3.1: Overview of research support services offered by the member universities

	Proposal workshops	Researcher training course	One-to-One proposal development support	Access to previously successful awards	Institutional travel grants	Mentorship schemes	Monetary incentives for applications	Other institutional incentives for application	Funding for consultancy services to work on applications	Academic peer review of draft applications	Research Career planning
AAU	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
DCU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
INSA	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	
KTU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
LiU	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓
TUHH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
TAU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
UAB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
UiS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
UNITN	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
UT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
UAVR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
% Uni offering	100%	92%	100%	83%	83%	58%	67%	83%	67%	67%	58%
ECIU*	✓	✓			✓				✓		

\* ECIU network activities prior to receiving the European Universities award



Table 3.2: Detail on Existing Research Support Practices at Alliance Member Institutions


Service	Alliance Member Responses
<b>Proposal workshops</b>	All members reported running Proposal Workshops for their research staff. Most members reported that workshops were mostly run for European research schemes, with European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska Curie Action (MSCA) schemes receiving specific mention by several respondents.
<b>Researcher training course</b>	Almost all the universities reported running Researcher Training Courses. Common responses included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training courses organised with external experts</li> <li>2. Training courses for early career-stage researchers</li> <li>3. Training course specifically for ERC</li> </ol>
<b>One-to-One proposal development support</b>	All university members reported providing one-to-one support for proposal development. Main variations related to whether this was provided as a function of the individual Faculty or as a central Research Office function. Some members also stated that this level of support was mainly reserved for those applying for certain schemes, ERC in particular, or those leading large collaborative proposals.
<b>Access to previously successful awards</b>	While most universities reported that they did offer access to previously successful awards, it was with significant caveats. For most this was an adhoc process, with the prerequisite of PI approval for proposal sharing.
<b>Institutional travel grants</b>	For those universities that have schemes, several mentioned the ECIU Researcher Mobility Scheme as their institutional scheme. Other stated it was only for certain groups (early-career stage) and for certain schemes e.g. (Horizon 2020).
<b>Mentorship schemes</b>	For those universities offering mentorship schemes two main models were described: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peer-to-peer, or matching senior with junior researchers</li> <li>2. A scheme for newly appointed or new tenure track staff</li> <li>3. A scheme for those targeting ERC applications</li> </ol>
<b>Monetary incentives for applications</b>	For those who responded, monetary incentives were offered to applicants focused on coordinating a H2020 application or applying for an ERC award. Two universities mentioned further financial support/incentives for successful applications, in certain circumstances.
<b>Other institutional incentives for application</b>	Those reporting further institutional support generally fell into two categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Description of further supports to applicants offered by Research Offices, e.g. information, tailored research strategies</li> <li>2. Reducing teaching load for some successful applicants.</li> </ol>
<b>Funding for consultancy services to work on applications</b>	For those reporting on the possibility of funding for external consultancies, this is often via national schemes to which the applicant can apply when they are applying for certain awards, most Horizon 2020. If not via national schemes, providing funding for this was described as a Faculty level decision.
<b>Academic peer review of draft applications</b>	Most of those who reported academic peer review described it as an adhoc process, whereby researchers are encouraged to ask colleagues, or other subject matter experts that they know, to review their drafts. For most of



	those who offer this in a more systematic manor, it is only for certain funding schemes.
<b>Research Career planning</b>	For those reporting research career planning this was delivered through workshops for PhDs and Post-docs, or for certain schemes e.g. MSCA Individual Fellowships.

## 4. Case Studies on Innovative Practices

As the previous section shows, most partner institutions have similar resources and programmes to assist their research staff. In this section we highlight a number of innovative practices. These are programmes which stand out from the general research support offering and may provide inspiration for development of a joint ECIU support structure.



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**


### AAURA – The AAU Research Academy

The AAU Research Academy AAURA is a program for building the research competences for young researchers at AAU. The programme targets researchers who have obtained their doctorate (PhD) no earlier than ten years before joining AAURA activities. AAURA is part of AAU's competence development strategy, and it maintains strong links with the Departments and sections of AAU. AAURA provides a range of modules and activities, and participants may choose one specific module or participate in a range of activities.

The AAU Research Academy aims to strengthen participants' competences in:

- Career development planning
- Fundraising for research and/or commercial projects
- Project management
- Professional communication
- Personal leadership

Besides the formalized training, AAURA also serves as a framework to support cross-faculty cooperation and networking by offering seminars, workshops and social events focusing on the challenges and needs of a young researcher.



**LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY**

### Impact Officers at Linköping University

Working as a part of the Grants and Innovation Office at Linköping University, the impact officers help to identify, develop and manage the delivery of innovation and impact from faculty research and student entrepreneurship activities, including providing focused support for intellectual property management and commercialization working in close concert with the University's Technology Transfer Office and Incubator system, as well as the broader aspects of valorization.



The impact officers will also provide strategic support for impact (or knowledge exchange) projects throughout the research and innovation lifecycle and assist in the compilation of Impact Case Studies.

With an excellent understanding of stakeholder needs and the ability to influence others, the impact officers have experience of communicating with and building strong working relationships with funders, researchers, policymakers, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. Thus, they have demonstrable abilities in articulating the pathways to impact for researchers, achieving impact through translating research into policy and practice.



*Hamburg University of Technology*

#### **Academic peer review of draft applications**

Large proposals of ten to thirty scientists are a lot of work to put together. Accordingly, the applicants want to make sure that they submit the best proposal possible. At the same time, TUHH is one of the smaller universities. Therefore, such a proposal, if successful, is important to the whole of TUHH. For that reason, we encourage the scientists to use an instrument we call a “critical friend”: Two or three weeks before the due date of the proposal, an almost-final version is sent to a well-established scientist outside the TUHH. This person usually has good contacts to at least one of the leading scientists, is an expert in the field of the proposal, but is not involved in it. This researcher reads and comments the proposal with a critical eye to weaknesses, contradictions and all other issues the referees might have later on, too. The proposal writers then have the opportunity to go through the text again, hopefully resulting in a better overall quality. As this is a lot of work for the critical friend, we offer a small fee for his or her trouble.



**Universitat Autònoma  
de Barcelona**

#### **Ideas Generation Program**

The Ideas Generation Program is aimed to Researchers and PhD students from all academic fields in their search for the best applications of their research.

The starting point for this initiative is one or two co-creation sessions with quadruple helix to define sector challenges. Companies, university, government offices and the citizen organisations are involved to jointly define projects that respond to the real needs of all sectors of society. Once the challenges have been defined, there is an open call to the UAB campus research staff. The participants take part on specialized entrepreneurship training, creating multidisciplinary group to develop innovative solutions to the challenges. This second stage of the program includes prototyping and validation of solutions at the UAB Open Labs. Throughout the course, they are



accompanied by professionals in the sector, who help them validate their ideas with the aim that they reach the market faster.

Finally, the Program celebrates a demoday where participants present their projects and prototypes and a jury of industry experts chooses the best solutions, and the winner gets an award and support to develop the project

<https://www.generacioidees.cat/en/>



UNIVERSITY  
OF TRENTO

### Proposal development support for ERC candidates

The research policy of the University of Trento is based on few key principles. One of these is the recruitment and/or support of highly-qualified, proactive, enthusiastic, young researchers able to develop both fundamental and ground-breaking research areas. Another principle is that the University of Trento pays great attention to the organizational structure for research support which is continuously redesigned in order to better help researchers during the entire grant process, from project development and submission to grant management and reporting.

A dedicated support is offered to ERC StG applicants and this includes:

- Individual («personalized») support from the Research office in drafting abstract, CV, budget, B1, B2: checking eligibility criteria, also considering maternity / paternity leaves and discussing about using career breaks to remain in an ERC profile; giving applicants a self-evaluation questionnaire to guide them to see if they are ready for an ERC; confirming panel choice and checking panel members in previous evaluations; planning deadlines for co-working;
- commenting through a “back and forth feedback process” on abstract (i.e. length of the text, focus, using 1<sup>st</sup> vs 3<sup>rd</sup> person), on B1 and B2 (formal aspects such as using official templates, formatting, text structure, and how the text is easy to read for a lay person);
- preparing for the interview in Brussels:
  - a) organising the “mock panel” composed of at least two ERC winners;
  - b) asking candidates to follow instructions from invitation letter (duration of presentation and of total interview, power point presentation, print-outs or use of flip-chart without PP presentation;
  - c) In-depth comments, remarks from mock panel members



## Symbols, abbreviations and acronyms

AAU	Aalborg University, Denmark
DCU	Dublin City University, Ireland
EC	European Commission
ECIU	European Consortium of Innovative Universities
KTU	Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania
LiU	Linköping University, Sweden
TAU	Tampereen Korkeakoulusäätiö sr, Finland
TUHH	Hamburg University of Technology, Germany
UA	Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal
UAB	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
UiS	University of Stavanger, Norway
UNITN	Università degli Studi di Trento, Italy
UT	University of Twente, Netherlands



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