



Day-to-day management of EU projects: Implementation of a local manager network to secure knowledge transfer

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In the past years there has been a strong push in Norway for increasing participation in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. EU projects coordinated by the University of Bergen (UiB) usually receive management support from the central administration (mostly financial) in collaboration with a full- or part-time scientific project manager working on a fixed-term contract at the same institute as the project's principal scientist. With an increasing amount of granted EU projects, the number of scientific project managers employed across the whole university has also increased, and a need for coordination and professionalization of this service became obvious.

Until recently, UiB had no unified structures and routines for training of newly recruited project managers, or for archiving and transferring routines and skills after the end of the project and the manager's employment contract. To overcome this administrative knowledge gap, the "Forum for scientific EU project managers at UiB" was founded in spring 2016 as an informal communication platform. Its purpose is to bring together current and previous scientific EU project managers from different disciplines to share their experiences. The main aim of the forum is to transfer and improve knowledge, skills and routines on effective management of EU funded projects, but also to function as a discussion forum where issues arising from handling international consortia can be reviewed.

The group meets monthly and discusses current challenges from on-going EU projects as well as routines for specific project operation tasks. These routines are archived in an online best-practise guide which the group currently develops. The regular personal meetings are supplemented with an intense communication via a group mailing list and several individual mail- and phone-meetings. Since lessons learned during project implementation may improve future proposals, UiB research advisors for proposal support frequently interact with the members of the forum. The forum is also used to spread relevant information received from other sources.

We already realize that the forum and its products lead to increased competence of scientific EU project managers and research advisors at UiB. To further harvest these synergy effects, we aim to increase our interaction with similar groups, networks, and online platforms in and beyond Europe.