(Proposed) European Charter for Research Managers

The European Charter for Research Managers is a set of core pillars and principles intended to promote the professionalisation and acknowledgement of rewarding careers in research management. Its primary goal is to bolster excellence in research and innovation across the European Research Area (ERA). While aligning with existing frameworks, namely the [European Charter for Researchers](), this charter specifically centres on outlining the rights and responsibilities of research managers (RM), employers, funders, and policymakers. It consists of 20 key principles.

Basic Principle: RMs play a crucial role in supporting the performance and impact of research activities across institutions. This charter establishes principles and guidelines to enhance the recognition, development, and effectiveness of research management as a critical professional role within the ERA. The RM Charter is a text of reference to reinforce the activity of RMs in research organisations and institutions to support and improve research performance. The best research requires the best support, which means excellent RMs.

Purpose and Scope of the Charter: This charter provides a framework to support and promote the visibility of RMs' role within the European research ecosystem. It aims to outline RMs' rights, responsibilities, and professional development opportunities while also detailing the responsibilities of employers, funders, and policymakers in fostering a collaborative, innovative, and effective research environment. This charter is necessary to increase the capacity for professional excellence in research management and to improve the overall ERA.

Definition of RMs:

It is important to define what the term RM means. RM is an umbrella term which encompasses a wide range of research management roles and specialisations at the "interface of research"[1] Under a single classification. It groups together multiple research management roles and specialised subject matter experts who share common role objectives and competencies within public and private sector research-performing organisations.

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[1] Margarida Trindade - Head of ITQB NOVA Science Funding Office

Our definition is: "***Research managers enable, facilitate, and support the performance of research in all its applications. Research Managers hold generalist or specialized roles within the research and innovation ecosystem.***"

Based on the policy contexts, the results of recent investigations, and a Europe-wide co-creation in the frame of ERA Action 17 and RM Roadmap, we initiate an inclusive and flexible approach enabling the reflection of constantly emerging fields and job profiles when defining research management. Thus, RMs can work but are not limited to research policy advisers, pre-award and post-award officers, project managers, impact managers, science communicators, financial managers and advisors, legal advisors, contract and compliance managers, data stewards, open science officers, research infrastructure managers and operators, equality, diversity and inclusion advisors, research ethics advisors, knowledge and technology transfer officers, innovation managers and business developers, knowledge brokers, human resource managers in research, AI experts, and leaders of research support offices.

Importance of Research Management in the Research Ecosystem: Research management is vital to the sustainability and growth of the European research ecosystem. Effective RMs ensure that research is conducted efficiently, ethically, and in accordance with strategic objectives. RMs also support researchers in navigating complex administrative, financial, and regulatory landscapes, enhancing the overall quality and impact of research outcomes.

The European Charter for RMs consists of key principles grouped under the following four pillars:

> (a)**Ethics, Integrity, and Open Science**
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> (b)**Assessment, Recruitment, and Progression**
>
> (c **Working Conditions and Practices**
>
> (d) **Research Management Careers and Talent Development**

The Charter for RMs is directed at all RMs, research-performing/management sectors, and their respective umbrella organisations (stakeholders). This includes:

a) **RMs in all sectors** – academia, public, and private organisations supporting research activities.
b) **Employers of RMs** in the public and private sectors;
c) **Funders of research and RMs** in the public and private sectors.
d) **Policymakers** concerned with policies relevant to the Charter for RMs.

In line with the Charter for Researchers, it comprises RMs across all disciplines, including Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), and Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). It covers all types of research, from frontier to targeted, strategic, applied, and close to market.

Pillar 1: Ethics, Integrity, and Open Science

> 1. Professionalism and Integrity
> 2. Upholding Ethical Standards
> 3. Compliance with Regulations
> 4. Open Science

This pillar embodies the fundamental principles of the Charter for RMs and the commitment to advancing the highest ethical standards and integrity in research and inclusive research environments. In this context, it focuses on developing the best possible research management practices, creating teams and projects free from gender bias and other forms of discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities, and fostering an inclusive culture. The principles under this pillar are designed to build a solid foundation for a vibrant ERA, inspiring RMs, employers, funders, and policymakers to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and fairness. Given the cross-cutting nature of these values, they are intended to be integrated and upheld throughout all other principles of the Charter, ensuring they are reflected in every aspect of research management practices.

1. Professionalism and Integrity

RMs are tasked with a demanding role that requires them to apply advanced analytical techniques, compliance, and ethical considerations to all research activities. RMs are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and integrity, nurturing a culture of transparency and accountability across all aspects of their roles. Employers should establish a culture of integrity within their institutions by providing resources that support RMs, ensuring that professional standards are consistently maintained.

2. Upholding Ethical Standards

RMs are responsible for upholding the highest ethical standards and promoting fairness, integrity, and respect for all parties involved in the research process. This consists of managing and disclosing conflicts of interest, navigating complex research environments, and ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines and institutional policies. Employers should provide clear ethical guidelines and training for RMs, ensuring mechanisms are in place to support a culture of accountability. RMs should develop and implement strategies for identifying, managing, and disclosing conflicts of interest, ensuring impartiality and fairness in all decisions and actions. This includes understanding the legal implications and maintaining a transparent conflict resolution process. RMs need to ensure impartiality and fairness. Employers and funders should create clear conflict-of-interest policies and ensure RMs can identify and address conflicts promptly and systematically.

3. Compliance with Regulations

RMs must be proficient in applying relevant national and international laws and regulations. They should also promote adherence to these regulations within their teams, leveraging their

legal skills to ensure all research activities meet compliance standards. All stakeholders should strive to ensure professional, research and academic integrity. Employers should provide RMs with the necessary legal and compliance training and support their efforts to implement regulatory standards.

4. Open Science

RMs should support and be supported in implementing the Open Science principles by promoting transparency, accessibility, and reproducibility in research management practices. This includes encouraging open access to publications, FAIR data principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable), and fostering an open collaboration culture within their institutions. Employers and funders should provide the tools, platforms, and resources to implement Open Science practices. They should promote open access policies and incentivise RMs to prioritise data sharing and transparency.

Pillar 2: **Assessment, Recruitment, and Progression**

> **5. Clear Definition of Roles and Responsibilities**
> **6. Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment**
> **7. Fair Assessment Recognition and Reward**
> **8. Measuring Impact**

This pillar advocates for a clear definition of Roles and Responsibilities of RMs. As with **HR Excellence in Research (HRS4R)**, this pillar emphasises the importance of open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment practices, recognising diverse competencies and career trajectories in research management. It also calls for systems that appropriately assess and reward the contributions of RMs, from entry-level roles to senior leadership positions (RM1-RM4). By establishing these standards, the principles under this pillar aim to create an equitable and inclusive environment where all RMs are valued, supported, and motivated throughout their professional journeys.

5. Clear Definition of Roles and Responsibilities

RMs, employers, and funders are jointly responsible for defining roles and responsibilities and implementing these standards. Frameworks like the CARDEA Framework Profile for RMs and RM Comp can be used interdependently to define roles clearly and ensure transparency in decision-making processes. As with the European Framework for Research Careers[2] In the CARDEA Framework Profile for RMs, there are four broad profiles for RMs, which are independent of any particular sector with the following working titles:

First Stage Research Manager (RM 1)

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[2] Towards a European Framework for Research Careers
towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf (europa.eu)

The term *First-Stage RM (RM1)* refers to RMs in the first two years (full-time equivalent) of their research management activity who demonstrate the competencies and skills for successful performance in the role. The role requires a basic understanding of the research/business structures and operations and includes responsibility for implementing and achieving results.

Recognised Research Manager (RM 2)

The term *Recognised Research Manager (RM2)* refers to RMs with an intermediate level of experience in their research management activity whilst demonstrating competencies and skills for successful performance in the role. The role requires a moderate understanding of overall research/business operations, including responsibility for monitoring the implementation of research strategy. This has limited or informal responsibility for colleagues and/or needs to consider broader approaches or consequences through one's actions rather than through others.

Established Research Manager (RM 3)

The term *Established Research Manager (RM3)* refers to RMs with an advanced level of experience in their research management activity whilst demonstrating competencies and skills for successful performance in the role. The role requires a strong understanding of the organisation's environment, operational plans, current strategic position and direction, strong analytical skills, and the ability to advise on strategic options for the research/business. This includes formal responsibility for colleagues and their actions and the fact that their decisions have a broader impact.

Senior Research Manager (RM 4)

The term *Senior Research Manager (RM4)* refers to RMs with an expert level of experience in their research management activity who demonstrate the competencies and skills for successful performance in the role. The role requires expert knowledge to develop a strategic vision and provide unique insight into the overall direction and success of the research/organisation. This is formal responsibility for research/business areas, and their actions and decisions have a high-level strategic impact.

> *For the purposes of the Framework, RM 1 and RM 2 profiles should be considered early to mid-stage RMs, and RM 3 and RM 4 profiles should be regarded as leadership-level Research Managers.*

6. Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTMR)

Inclusive and Fair Recruitment Processes: Recruitment practices must be fair, unbiased, and transparent, ensuring that all applicants are evaluated solely on their skills, experience, and potential. Institutions should implement OTMR policies that emphasise equal opportunities and mitigate the risk of biases during the recruitment process.

Recognition of Diverse Competencies and Career Paths: Recruitment practices should recognise the diverse competencies outlined in the RM Comp and the CARDEA Career

Framework, valuing professional experience across different sectors and acknowledging non-linear career paths. This includes welcoming candidates who have transitioned from academia to industry and back (without penalty) and those moving from research management to policy or other roles.

Competency-Based Assessment: The selection process could include assessments that align with the key competencies required for research management roles, such as strategic planning, financial management, compliance, and team leadership. This would ensure that candidates are assessed holistically, beyond traditional qualifications or linear career progression.

7. Fair Assessment and Recognition and Reward

RMs have the right to be evaluated based on the results of their individual and/or collective work produced in their offices or institutions. At the same time, research evaluation of institutions should include evaluating management and support. The development of fair assessment and recognition procedures for RMs should reflect the diversity of their contributions, including leadership, team management, funding acquisition, strategic planning, and community engagement. Therefore, we must ensure the assessment is based on multiple evaluation measures, such as qualitative evaluations supported using quantitative indicators.

Recognition and Reward of Effective Research Management (RM1 to RM4)

Employers and funders should establish systems to recognise and reward effective research management at all levels (from RM1 to RM4). This may include:

- Awards and Honors: Creating awards or honours for RMs (at different levels RM1-RM4) to recognise excellence in project management, strategic planning, compliance, and innovation.
- Promotion Pathways: Providing clear pathways for promotion within the research management career structure, acknowledging diverse contributions and skills at each level.
- Financial Incentives: Offering financial incentives such as performance bonuses, salary increments, or grants for continuing education to reward exceptional performance.
- Professional Recognition Programs: Supporting professional recognition programs that highlight the achievements of RMs, both within the institution and at national or international levels.
- Acknowledge and value diverse career paths: vertical advancement and horizontal specialisation across various research management areas.

Recognition of Contributions Across All Proficiency Levels (RM1 to RM4): A comprehensive recognition system should reward RMs at all proficiency levels—from entry-level to senior

leadership roles. Recognition should not be limited to traditional career milestones but should also encompass contributions such as effective project management, innovation, collaboration, and mentoring.

Diverse Forms of Recognition: A range of recognition mechanisms should be developed to value the contributions of RMs. Recognition and reward systems should be embedded within institutional HR policies and aligned with broader frameworks such as the HR Excellence in Research (HRS4R) to ensure a consistent and strategic approach to valuing research managers' contributions.

8. Measuring Impact

To fully capture the contributions of RMs and ensure their activities are recognised and valued, specific metrics should be developed and implemented to assess the effectiveness and impact of research management. These metrics should extend beyond traditional research indicators, such as publications and citations, to include key aspects of research management activities that are often overlooked. These outcomes should be regularly reported and reviewed to ensure transparency, continuous improvement, and the alignment of research management practices with institutional and societal goals.

Co-creation of Research Management-Specific Metrics: Institutions, in collaboration with RMs, employers, funders, and policymakers, should develop a set of comprehensive metrics tailored to research management activities. These metrics may include:

- **Project Success Rates**: Tracking the success of research projects under the supervision of RMs, including timely delivery, meeting goals/deliverables, and overall project execution.

- **Funding Acquisition and Efficiency**: Measuring the effectiveness of RMs in securing grants and ensuring efficient use of resources.

- **Collaboration and Partnership Building**: Evaluating the role of RMs in establishing strategic partnerships and collaborations both within and outside the institution.

- **Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination**: Assessing the extent to which RMs facilitate the dissemination of research findings through conferences, publications, media, and public engagement efforts.

- **Innovation and Process Improvements**: Tracking initiatives led by RMs to innovate research management processes, reduce inefficiencies, or enhance research outcomes.

- **Team Development and Leadership**: Measuring the impact of RMs in developing talent, team cohesion, and promoting career growth within research teams.

*Regular feedback should be collected from stakeholders, including researchers, administrative staff, and external collaborators, to evaluate the effectiveness of RMs.

Pillar 3: **Working Conditions and Practices**

> 9. Rights Of Research Managers
> 10. Supportive Policies for Work-Life Balance
> 11. Stability of Employment
> 12. Responsibilities of Research Managers
> 13. Support for Mobility
> 14. Freedom to Innovate
> 15. Accountability and Transparent Decision-Making
> 16. Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This pillar establishes RMs' essential rights and responsibilities in working conditions and Practices, including work-life balance and stable employment. It emphasises the need to foster an inclusive, supportive, and innovative research environment. This pillar also includes the responsibilities of the RMs to uphold these principles and the employer's duty to support mobility, freedom to innovate and the collective commitment to uphold the principles of Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These principles aim to empower RMs by ensuring they have the necessary support and resources to effectively lead their teams and contribute to the research ecosystem. Given their fundamental importance, these principles are expected to guide the development and implementation of all other aspects of research management.

9. Rights of Research Managers

Supportive and Inclusive Work Environment: RMs have the right to a work environment that is inclusive, supportive, and free from discrimination. As valued employees, RMs are entitled to an active voice in decision-making processes that affect their work, ensuring they are informed of and involved in strategic discussions within their institutions. They should be recognised as integral contributors whose insights are crucial for effective research management.

Employers and funders should ensure that RMs are treated as equal stakeholders within research teams, with access to information and involvement in decision-making processes at all levels. Employers must actively create opportunities for RMs to contribute to institutional strategies, policies, and project-related decisions, acknowledging their expertise and perspectives. Employers and funders should also provide the necessary resources to support the well-being and professional growth of RMs. This includes funding for continuous professional development, mentorship opportunities, and providing tools to foster a positive and equitable work environment.

- Access to Professional Development: RMs should have opportunities for continuous professional development, including training in specialised areas such as data management, research ethics, and AI for research. The European Charter for Researchers states that RMs should have access to continuous professional

development, lifelong learning, and career progression pathways; RMs should have the same provisions in their professional development.

- <u>Provision of Adequate Resources and Support</u>: Employers and funders are encouraged to provide employees with adequate resources and support tools to perform their roles effectively. This includes access to appropriate technology, sufficient staffing levels, training budgets, professional development opportunities, and dedicated funding.

<u>Raising Awareness and Valuing the Role of RMs</u>: Employers, funders, and policymakers should actively raise awareness about RMs' critical role in supporting research excellence and innovation. They should promote the value of research management through internal and external communication channels, recognising their strategic contributions in planning, compliance, funding acquisition, project execution, and stakeholder engagement. Employers should develop and maintain a supportive research environment and a working culture where all the actors involved in the research cycle (researchers, senior and junior research managers) are valued, encouraged and supported. This also implies that employers should recognise the role of research managers (other than that of the rest of the administrative and technical staff) and valorise them regarding career recognition and valorisation. Employers should also take adequate measures to raise awareness among the research community and stakeholders of the role and added value that RM can give to the institution and its local ecosystem and foster collaboration between researchers and researcher managers.

10. Supportive Policies for Work-Life Balance

Employers should implement work-life balance policies, such as flexible working arrangements (e.g., remote work options, flexible hours, paid overtime or paid leave options) and well-being initiatives. They should also encourage RMs to develop stress management, prioritisation, and time management competencies, supporting a healthy work environment.

11. Stability of Employment

Employers should provide stable employment conditions, reduce precarity, and support career continuity through targeted career development services and opportunities for skill enhancement (e.g., mentorship programs, career coaching, or skill-building workshops).

12. Responsibilities of Research Managers

<u>Promotion of a Culture of Excellence and Innovation</u>: RMs have a responsibility to nurture a culture of excellence and innovation, supporting their teams in developing competencies across diverse areas such as research project management, community engagement, and strategic planning. Employers and funders should provide the resources, support, and infrastructure necessary to enable innovation, including access to training, development opportunities, and a collaborative environment that encourages creativity and strategic

thinking. Together, they should create an ecosystem where innovative practices are recognised, rewarded, and continuously cultivated to enable RM excellence.

13. Support for Mobility

RMs, employers, funders, and policymakers should encourage geographical, disciplinary, inter-sectoral, and inter-organisational mobility for RMs. The institutional environment of RMs should provide opportunities for mobility or exchanges for short periods to allow discussion, training and networking to upskill their competencies. RMs need to connect and network with external colleagues and researchers of institutions and industries to create and maintain channels to learn, upskill and support in an environment of open science and innovation. Employers and funders should encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing among RMs within and across institutions to foster innovation and best practices. They should also promote mobility programs and exchanges to enhance professional development and exchange best practices across Europe.

This can include:

- **Mobility Programs**: Supporting mobility programs that enable RMs to work across different institutions, sectors, or countries. Such programs could be short-term secondments, exchanges, or fellowships promoting knowledge and skills transfer.

- **Networking Opportunities**: Facilitating participation in professional networks, conferences, and forums where RMs can share experiences, learn from peers, and build valuable connections.

- **Cross-Institutional Collaborations**: Encouraging and funding cross-institutional collaborations, joint projects, and research management initiatives to promote knowledge exchange and collaborative problem-solving.

- **Building partnerships** with other institutions and industries

- Participation **in international research networks**

14. Freedom to Innovate

RMs should also have the freedom to innovate in their management practices to enhance the effectiveness and impact of research projects. They should be empowered to implement new methodologies, tools, and frameworks that best support the research teams they manage. Employers and funders are responsible for creating an environment that encourages innovation in research management. This includes providing the necessary resources, flexibility, and support for RMs to experiment with novel approaches and adopt innovative practices. Employers and funders should recognise and reward innovative management practices, promote a culture that values creativity, and remove barriers that may hinder the implementation of creative ideas.

15. Accountability and Transparent Decision-Making

RMs must establish clear and transparent decision-making processes, maintain accountability, and ensure that all actions are justifiable and open to scrutiny. Employers and funders are responsible for creating an environment that supports accountability and transparency in research management. They should provide frameworks, tools, and resources that enable RMs to make informed decisions and regularly monitor and evaluate these processes. Employers and funders should also promote open communication channels, encourage ethical conduct, and establish systems that facilitate oversight and accountability at all levels.

16. Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

RMs, employers, and funders are jointly responsible for promoting and implementing gender equality, diversity and inclusion in research activities and the workplace. This includes diversity across race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic background, age, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. It includes implementing inclusive recruitment and promotion practices, ensuring diverse representation in decision-making, and integrating EDI principles into all aspects of research management. There is a shared responsibility to combat discrimination and harassment through clear policies, training, and accountability while creating a welcoming and equitable workplace for everyone.

Pillar 4: Research Management, Careers, and Talent Development

17. Training and Development
18. Career Progression
19. Management, Supervision and Mentoring
20. Internal Collaboration, External Collaboration and Networking and Public Engagement

This pillar advances RMs' continuous growth and advancement through structured professional development and clear career pathways. It highlights the importance of ongoing training, mentorship, and fair recognition of diverse career trajectories. The principles under this pillar aim to support a dynamic and skilled workforce that is well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of research management. As a cornerstone of the charter, these principles support a lifelong learning and adaptability culture, which is integral to the ERA's success.

17. Training and Development

RMs should have access to training programs that develop core competencies identified in the RM Comp framework, such as cognitive abilities, soft skills, technical proficiency, subject matter expertise, and more. Institutions should adopt a culture of lifelong learning, encouraging RMs to pursue continuous professional development through various channels, such as workshops, conferences, mentoring, e-learning, and access to accredited training.

Through the implementation of the RM Comp Framework, which identifies 7 core competency areas critical to research management: ***Cognitive Abilities/Personal Attributes, Technical Proficiency, Research Project Oversight, Stakeholder Engagement, Line Management and Talent Development, Communication, Subject Matter Expertise/Specialised Knowledge.*** Each competency area includes specific skills required for effective performance in research management roles.

As this conceptual model is in line with other competence frameworks developed by the European Commission, particularly Research Comp, it follows a similar structure, including four levels of proficiency for each of the competences that specify where RMs can position themselves and what is required to progress to the next level:

- **Foundational**: developing expertise with guidance;
- **Intermediate**: building independence;
- **Advanced**: taking responsibility and guiding others;
- **Expert**: driving transformation, innovation and growth.

In addition employers should:

Develop Professional Development Pathways*:* Provide pathways for RMs to progress through various levels of proficiency, from foundational to expert. This should include development opportunities such as targeted training, mentorship, job shadowing, and peer-to-peer learning to enhance competencies in specific areas.

Support Performance Management and Evaluation: Establish clear criteria for assessing the performance of RMs at each proficiency level. Learning outcomes are provided for each competency, which can be used to set goals, measure progress, and identify areas for further development.

> For example, based on RM Comp:

> ***Cognitive Abilities/Transversal Skills:*** *Assess creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.*
>
> ***Technical Proficiency****: Evaluate skills in data management, legal knowledge, and IT for research activities.*
>
> ***Line Management and Talent Development:*** *Measure effectiveness in team performance, change management, and coaching skills.*

Facilitate Cross-Organisational Mobility: Employers and funders should follow the framework, which facilitates the mobility of RMs across institutions, sectors, and countries by offering a standardised competency framework that encourages horizontal mobility. The framework

promotes a common language for describing skills and competencies, making it easier for RMs to transition between roles and organisations.

Encourage Continuous Learning and Adaptation: Encourage RMs to engage in continuous professional development. It includes a progression model that outlines specific learning outcomes and competencies for each level, enabling managers to self-assess and plan their own growth. This model supports vertical progression (advancing to a higher level) and horizontal mobility (specialising in a different area of research management).

Promote Recognition of Diverse Career Paths: The framework acknowledges that career progression in research management is not linear. It allows for specialisation in multiple areas, recognising diverse career trajectories, such as moving from post-award management to impact assessment or technology transfer to strategic policy development. This flexibility ensures that RMs are recognised for their unique skills and contributions to the research environment.

18. Career Progression

Clear Pathways for Career Advancement: Establish clear pathways for career progression aligned with the four proficiency levels outlined in RM Comp and the Career Progression Framework.

RM1: First Stage RM
Foundational
RM2: Recognised RM
Intermediate
RM3: Established RM
Advanced
RM4: Senior Stage RM
Expert

Recognition of Diverse Career Trajectories: Employers, funders and policymakers should acknowledge and value diverse career paths, including vertical advancement and horizontal specialisation across various research management areas. This acknowledgement should be considered through fair assessment and recognition procedures and recruitment processes.

19. Management, Supervision and Mentoring

Adequate supervision and mentoring in research management should be considered, including training in people management, conflict resolution, and leadership skills. Senior RMs should mentor junior colleagues and foster a positive and inclusive team environment.

20. Internal Collaboration, External Collaboration, Networking and Public Engagement

RMs, employers and funders should promote a culture of collaboration and teamwork, encouraging interdisciplinary projects and partnerships within their institutions and beyond.

As outlined in the RM Comp framework, they should be skilled in community engagement, line management, and relationship management. Research institutions are complex ecosystems, with several offices of RMs and researchers. The collaboration between different teams and offices must be promoted to explore successful and practical approaches to institutional challenges.

Building partnerships with other institutions, industries, and stakeholders (e.g., cross-institutional projects and public-private partnerships) should be encouraged. Engaging in international research networks, promoting the mobility and transferability of RMs across borders, and leveraging competencies in communication, networking, and strategic planning should also be encouraged. RMs can leverage European networks or programs to promote mobility and knowledge exchange. The local, national, and international communities of RMs have the right to meet to discuss the challenges of their professional activities, benchmark, and share problems and solutions.

All stakeholders should encourage RMs to facilitate public engagement by promoting open communication of research activities and their impact on society. RMs should support initiatives that make research understandable and accessible, ensuring that research outcomes are communicated clearly to the public. They should also promote opportunities for public involvement in co-creation and citizen science projects where appropriate, facilitating a more inclusive approach to research dissemination. Employers and funders should provide RMs with the necessary resources and platforms for effective public engagement. This includes support for outreach activities, workshops, and public dissemination of research findings. Employers and funders should also incentivise public engagement efforts by recognising them as integral to the overall success of research projects.

Conclusion

The **European Charter for Research Managers** establishes a comprehensive set of principles and guidelines designed to professionalise and elevate the role of Research Managers across the European Research Area. By establishing clear rights, responsibilities, and professional development pathways for RMs, the charter ensures that research management is recognised as a critical profession that directly contributes to research excellence and innovation.

The pillars outlined in the charter—ranging from ethics and professional standards to rights, responsibilities, collaboration, and recognition—serve as the foundation for building an effective and inclusive research ecosystem. The charter emphasises that RMs are essential partners in research, deserving of a supportive and equitable work environment that values their contributions, includes them in decision-making processes, and fosters their professional growth.

This charter aims to create a culture where RMs are empowered, recognised, and supported in their roles, ultimately enhancing the performance and sustainability of research across Europe. The success of the ERA depends not only on the researchers but also on the effective

management that RMs provide, ensuring that research activities are carried out efficiently, ethically, and innovatively.

Call to Action for Adoption and Implementation

Research institutions, employers, funders, and policymakers are encouraged to adopt and implement this charter, recognising research management as a vital and distinct profession. Suggested steps include conducting audits of current practices, setting up task forces to promote these principles, and incorporating the charter into the HR Excellence in Research (HRS4S) assessment. By doing so, we can collectively foster an environment where research management thrives, contributing significantly to the ERA's vision of excellence.

Vision for the Future of Research Management in Europe

We envision a future where Research Managers are fully integrated into the research ecosystem, recognised for their unique contributions, and provided with the resources and support they need to excel. A future where research management is not just a support role but a key driver of innovation, collaboration, and impactful research outcomes across Europe.