Science 2 Society

Blueprints - Intersectoral mobility

University – Industry Interaction Mechanisms 2.0

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 693651

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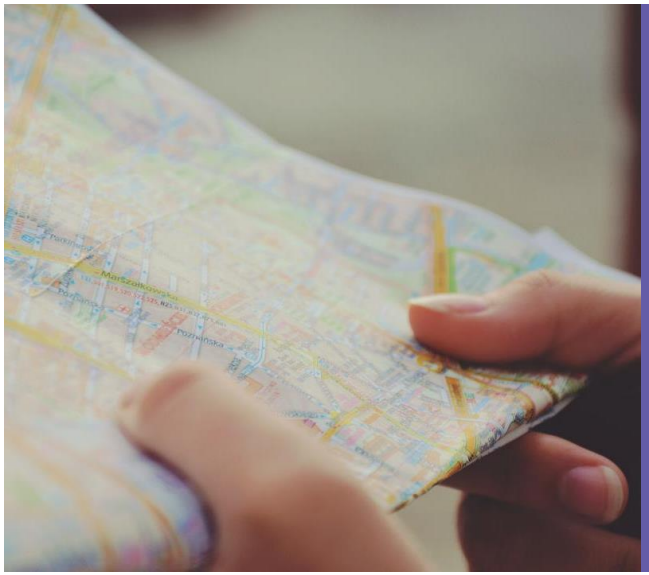
Intersectoral mobility as an enabling tool for Open Innovation/Science



PROJECT TEAM – INTERSECTORAL MOBILITY

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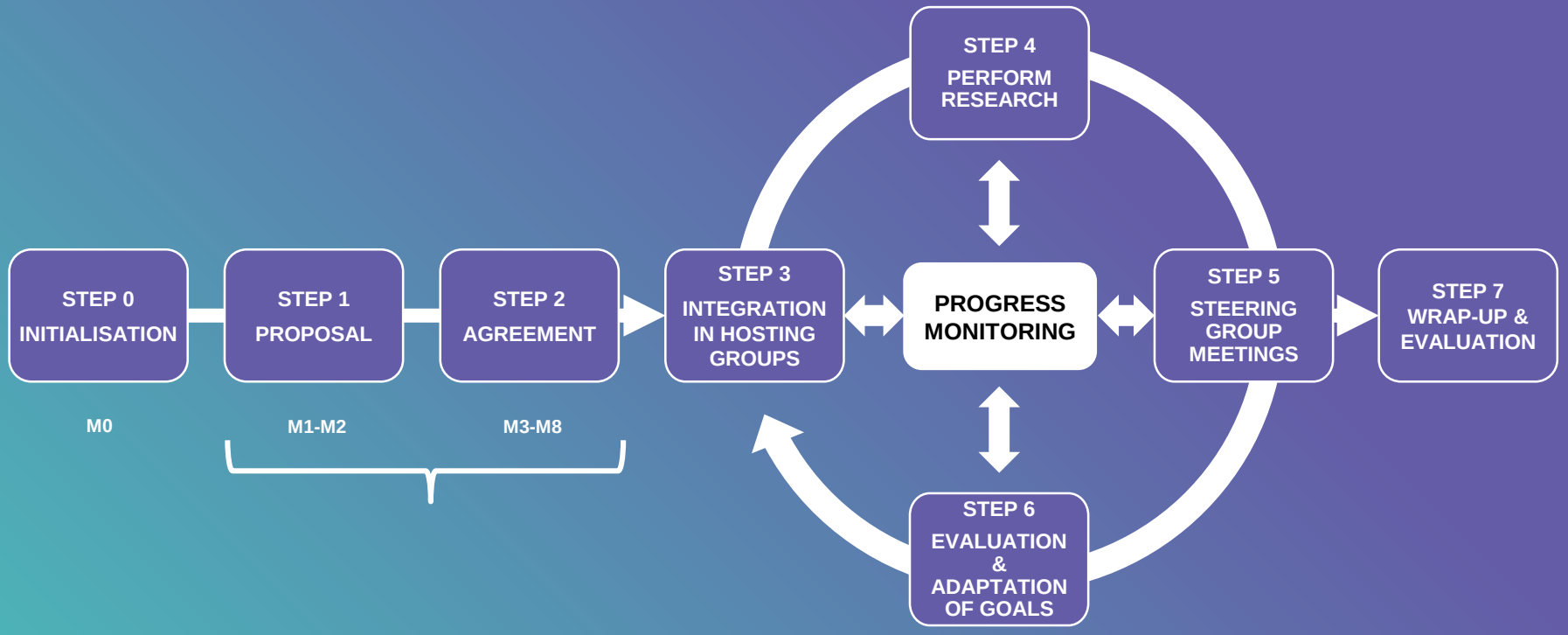
Intersectoral mobility (Definition)

"Intersectoral mobility" (ISM) is defined as the temporary or permanent mobility from one sector to another, mainly from the public (academia/research technology organisation) to the private sector (industry/social sector) and back. [1]

1 Intersectoral mobility and knowledge transfer. Preliminary evidence of the impact of intersectoral mobility policy instruments. (https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/intersectoral-mobility-and-knowledge-transfer-preliminary-evidence-impact-intersectoral)

Process overview



STEP 0

Pre-Phase

- A company and a university share a common interest in a scientific research goal.
- The company and the university consider formalising a research collaboration in which a researcher can be mobile between the two organisations.

STEP 1

Establishing the mobility framework

- Investigation of the kind of funding schemes available.
- Alignment of vision of the research goals, duration, logistics, etc. between the partners.
- Discuss on the commitment, IP, financial provisions, etc.
- Drafting a project proposal.

MAIN ACTORS

- Academic supervisor
- Research team leader
- Academic legal and HR department
- Company legal and HR department
- Funding agency
- Mobile researcher

ENABLING ELEMENTS

- Experience with ISM schemes
- An existing research relationship with the other party
- Fixed administrative and contractual procedures

TIMEFRAME

2 months

STEP 1

Establishing the mobility framework

TIPS

Insights

- Long term: fostering trust by gradually building up the frequency and depth of interaction through different projects.
- Short term: reducing risk by agreeing on a gradual project with increasing cost for industry to keep participating as results become more interesting.

STEP 2

Agreement between all partners

- The project proposal is accepted by all parties, including the funding agency, if applicable.
- The framework agreement is signed by all parties.
- The mobile researcher is selected.

MAIN ACTORS

- Academic supervisor
- Research team leader
- Academic legal and HR department
- Company legal and HR department
- Funding agency
- Mobile researcher

ENABLING ELEMENTS

- Experience with ISM schemes
- An existing research relationship with the other party
- Fixed administrative and contractual procedures

TIMEFRAME

6 months

STEP 2

Agreement between all partners

TIPS

Insights

- Careful selection of candidate with an eagerness to collaborate.
- Easing administrative load by having fixed administrative and contractual procedures.

STEP 3 - 6

Continuous evaluation and monitoring

- The mobile researcher is immersed in both the academic and industry environment and builds up a social network with his/her peers.
- The researcher performs his/her research in collaboration with both research groups.
- Fixed steering group meetings with both supervisors are foreseen to evaluate progress and understand each others points of view.
- The agreed upon KPIs to assess the specific activities (e.g. conference participations or the deadline for finishing an experimental campaign) are monitored and steering action is taken, if required.

MAIN ACTORS

- Academic supervisor
- Academic research group
- Research team leader
- Industrial research group
- Mobile researcher

ENABLING ELEMENTS

- People with academic and industry experience at both sides
- Fixed evaluation meetings with all stakeholders

TIMEFRAME

Duration of project

STEP 3 - 6

Continuous evaluation and monitoring

TIPS

Insights

- Construct a culture of collaboration by educating researchers on Intellectual Property (IP) so they know what they can share.
- Include people with intersectoral mobility experience around the table to increase mutual understanding.

STEP 7

Wrap-up and evaluation

- Mobile researcher returns to original organisation.
- Secure knowledge transfer: text, models, algorithms.
- Evaluate project KPIs.
- Initiate follow-up projects.

MAIN ACTORS

- Academic supervisor
- Research team leader
- Mobile researcher

ENABLING ELEMENTS

- f2f meetings

TIMEFRAME

Last month

Learning points

- **Most important findings**
  - Having experienced intersectoral researchers on both sides, improves mutual understanding and the ability to see the partners' points of view.
  - Having a step-wise approach to let small companies build an innovative DNA: start with small projects with part-time person/months from universities and gradually build to larger projects or have gradual projects.
  - Having strong interwoven relationships with universities: bidirectional student exchanges for small projects and lectures, enabling the inclusion of industry representatives on university boards to discuss curricula. As mutual understanding grows, this is how academic research and industrial needs can be better matched.

- **Most important recommendations**
  - The following issues were reported to hinder mobility research collaboration:
    - Confidentiality and IP strategies resulting in people that cannot disclose certain things, or are not certain about what they can disclose.
    - Lack of a collaboration culture with people of different backgrounds or lack of innovation culture; an unwillingness to try novel approaches.
    - The difference in time horizon between industry and academia.

References

- The mobile academic: A survey of mobility among Marie Skłodowska-Curie doctoral fellows (http://www.e-pages.dk/aarhusuniversitet/1644/)
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- Collaborative Doctoral Education: University-Industry Partnerships for Enhancing Knowledge Exchange (http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/research-and-innovation/doctoral-education/doc-careers/)
- DOC-CAREERS II - Promoting collaborative doctoral education for enhanced career opportunities (http://www.eua.be/activities-services/projects/past-projects/research-and-innovation/doc-careers-ii.aspx)

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