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#4 Best practices and common standards for RI Business Planning

Presentation of InRoad's insights on theme 4

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InRoad has been funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No 730928.



synchronising research infrastructure
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Recommendations

Best practices and common standards for RI Business Planning

9 InRoad advises RI Business Plans to address at least the following topics:

- Mission and objectives
- RI user strategy
- Access policy and data management
- Governance and management structure
- Financial and funding framework
- Stakeholder engagement and communication strategy
- RI implementation plan and monitoring
- Ethical and regulatory aspects

Q. Please **identify** potential **gaps** / **recommendations for changes** in the list above. (5 min.)

10 InRoad advises all RI to develop a Business Plan that aligns strategy, resources and goals.

10.1 InRoad recommends an early and continuous stakeholder involvement for the development, implementation and updating of Business Plans.

10.2 For distributed RI to be able to develop coherent strategies, InRoad recommends Central Hubs to have a Business Plan that serves as a guiding framework of those used by national nodes.

- This would not only allow the Central Hub's **Business Plan** steer the nodes in the same direction and **ensure coherency across** the **distributed RI**, but also **achieve greater coordination** and **defragmentation**.

Q. What challenges would you see in the **development of connected Business Plans** at **hub** and **node** level? (10 min.)

10.3

InRoad encourages funders and decision-makers to include Business Plans in their national RI roadmap application and evaluation procedures (e.g. as evaluation criteria) and also as a prerequisite in RI funding programmes.

- **Requiring** Business Plans for **roadmap and funding applications** could help **raise awareness** of their **importance** in all stages of the RI lifecycle and further develop a management culture that contributes to the effective operation of RI; also
- **funders** are encouraged to **include Business Plan** and **management experts** in their RI **evaluation processes**; but
- **supportive measures** should be considered to **improve Business Plan preparation** among **applicants**.

10.4

InRoad recommends Business Plans to be used as a reference for the development of other operational documents (e.g. annual work programmes, data management plans, access policy, etc.).

Q. What are the **pros and cons** involved in the **inclusion** of **Business Plans** in **national RI roadmap application** and **evaluation procedures** and also as a **prerequisite** in **RI funding programmes**? What challenges do you foresee? (10 min.)

11 InRoad recommends using Business Plans as a management tool, in the form of a living document aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of RI.

11.1 InRoad recommends using Business Plans as a strategic tool to connect RI mission with national and international strategic research agendas.

- In order to **align RI** with the **policy level**, when designing the value proposition, RI are encouraged to **consider** relevant **external developments** such as **national strategic agendas** for Science & Innovation.

11.2 InRoad stresses the importance of short- and long-term financial forecasting.

This includes:

- **Separate cost and funding estimates** for **implementation** and **operational phases**.
- **Common accounting practices** (e.g. IPSAS) could provide a **consistent framework among pan-European RI** and a **familiar** system of accounting **rules** for **all countries** involved in the RI.
- **KPI** and **milestones** to set **expectations** and **priorities** between phases, as well as **monitor progress** in a transparent and factual way.
- **Contingency plans** as a blueprint to **deal** with **unforeseen events** can be helpful.

11.3

InRoad encourages using and periodically updating the Business Plan throughout the entire RI lifecycle.

This would help:

- **Assess** whether the **RI strategy** is still in line with the **initial objectives** and whether further **adjustments** are **needed** to meet them.
- Establish **monitoring mechanisms, i.e. KPI** together with **regular meetings, periodic internal reports** and **feedback** from **external stakeholders** to achieve **greater organizational efficiency**.

Q. What are the **consequences** (positive & negative) of **common accounting standards** for all **pan-European RI**? What would be required for this to be in place? (10 min.)

Q. Which support measures can be **proposed** at the national and European level to support Business Plan drafting and implementation? (10 min.)

12 InRoad calls for the professionalization of Business Plan drafting and implementation.

12.1

InRoad encourages the development of HR strategies to attract and retain personnel with financial and managerial experience.

- A **'double-headed management' structure** providing **scientific and managerial expertise** would be helpful to **implement** the RI **Business Plan**. Host institutions at national level are advised to remove **obstacles** in their **procedures** to **hire** and retain staff **with financial and managerial expertise**.

12.2

InRoad encourages the development of training schemes, the exchange of practices and mutual learning exercises for RI managers.

- **Support measures** for **RI managers** at national and European level (e.g. ERIC Network Forum) can **facilitate** the **exchange of good practices**.
- **Seminars** and **courses targeted** at **auditors** and **RI managers** on **the challenges of pan-European RI** on issues such as VAT, in-kind contributions, HR policies and accounting practices and **the implications** of the **ERIC legal framework**, could help **prevent** future **misunderstandings**, or **cumbersome situations** faced by RI managers.

Group discussion on the insights (50')

Questions to be addressed during the discussions

Q. What challenges would you see in the **development of connected business plans at hub and node level?** (10 min.)

Q. What are the **pros and cons** involved **in the inclusion of Business Plans** in **national RI roadmap application and evaluation procedures** and also as a prerequisite in RI funding programmes? What challenges do you foresee? (10 min.)

Q. What are the **consequences** (positive & negative) of **common accounting standards** for all **pan-European RI?** What would be required for this to be in place? (10 min.)

Q. Which measures can be **proposed at the national and European level** to **support Business Plan drafting and implementation?** (10 min.)

Q. Please **identify potential gaps / recommendations for changes** in the proposed list of **Business Plan elements.** (5 min.)

Wrap-up: general feedback on theme 4's recommendations.

Group discussion on the insights (50`)

Aim of the group discussions

- **Your view on each recommendation and sub-recommendation presented: Agree/Disagree/Modify?**
- **Examples** of good practices or practical challenges on the sub-recommendation are most welcome;
- Define the **relevant target groups** to address for an effective implementation of each sub-recommendation;
- Identify topics to be further explored within the recommendations presented.