



## Cofinanciado pelo Programa Erasmus+ da União Europeia

Designação do projeto | TRANSPEER: a transnational skills programme to enhance the employability of researchers

Código do projeto | 2017-1-SE01-KA203-034535

Objetivo principal | Achievement of relevant and high quality skills and competences

Região de intervenção | Não Aplicável

Entidade beneficiária | Instituto Politécnico de Santarém

Data de aprovação | 24-05-2017

Data de início | 01-09-2017

Data de conclusão | 31-08-2020

Custo total elegível | 68.020,00 EUR

Apoio financeiro da União Europeia | FSE – 68.020,00 EUR

### About the Project

From September 2017, the GIO will lead a three-year Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in developing a skills programme to enhance the employability of research staff for careers both within and beyond academia. The project consortium includes research support and academic staff from Inland Norway University of Applied Science, Liverpool John Moores University, Nova University of Lisbon, and the Polytechnic Institute of Santarém.

At present, research skills, largely derived from publicly-funded research degrees and projects, are often not fully utilised by researchers. Many struggle to progress within the academy, or to articulate their skills to non-academic employers, and so their potential is not fully realised. The TRANSPEER programme seeks to enhance the skills awareness and employability of a cross-disciplinary cohort of 36 participating researchers, drawn from the partner institutions. A key aim of the project is to make this training programme freely available for the future use of other universities across Europe and beyond.

This project addresses the skills equivalent of the European Science Paradox through the development, delivery, and dissemination of a transnationally-informed training programme. At present, research skills – largely derived from publicly-funded research degrees and projects – are often not fully utilised by researchers, and, consequently, society at large fails to benefit optimally from its investment. Many researchers struggle to develop their potential within the academy, or to articulate their skills to non-academic employers, and so their potential is not fully realised.

Currently, entrepreneurship programmes in higher education tend to be targeted at undergraduate students, rather than postgraduate research students or early career researchers (ECRs). There is also considerable variation in how different countries' HEIs support the professional development of ECRs. Work from the European Research Area (ERA) has highlighted that ECRs are often poorly informed about non-academic career paths and are not equipped with the skills needed to gain rewarding wider employment. While ERA policies to address this through greater innovation-focused doctoral training have been in place since 2011, progress remains slow.

The focus of the project would be the creation of a programme to enhance the wider skills awareness and employability of a cross-disciplinary cohort of researchers. It would focus on ECRs, but participants would also include doctoral students and supervisors, to encourage students to consider these issues at an early stage, and to ensure that supervisors have the tools required to support them. KAU, LJMU, and INN would contribute three participants of each type, with the Portuguese partners sending a combined nine, making a cohort of 36. All participants would attend all training, enabling the development of an international cohort, who would benefit both from the training, and from their interaction with each other. In addition to enhancing the skills and knowledge of researchers, the project would add to the professional development of the support staff involved, through their exposure to the different areas of expertise and methodologies of the other partners.

The project must be undertaken as a transnational enterprise to provide a European overview and to allow effective sharing of good practice. The programme, covering academic and wider careers, benefits from the transnational nature of the project consortium. While many elements of research support are recognisable across Europe, the focus often varies from country to country, with the result that different areas of national expertise are developed. A transnational project allows the sharing of best practice in these areas, with the creation of a programme stronger than one based on a single, national experience. The intention is that the programme would be embedded in the training provision of the partner institutions. It would be advertised through several channels, including national multiplier events, and be reproducible at other universities after the project's end, through the dissemination of high-quality course materials.

Project start: September 2017; duration: 36 months; format: three 'work packages'.

Work Package 1: project start-up (Sept. 2017 to May 2018)

- Developing professional course materials (A1).
- Design of robust evaluation tool, and plan post-project dissemination (A2).
- Logistics and refinement of training (A3), ensuring a mutually-reinforcing package. Proposed foci:
  - o KAU: innovation, value-creation, conflict management.
  - o INN: private and public sector co-operation.
  - o LJMU: personal effectiveness, research impact.
  - o ITQB NOVA/ IPSantarém: engaging policy-makers, career development, supervisor/mentor best practice.

Work Package 2: programme delivery (June 2018 to Jan. 2020)

- Four 3-day training events (in English); one hosted by each partner.
- Inclusion of group bonding activity (i.e. visit to research group/local partner/cultural event).

Work Package 3: evaluation, dissemination, and sustainability (Feb. 2020 to Aug. 2020)

- Project wash-up meeting.
- Evaluation of experience survey/ ongoing career-monitoring of sample group (A4).
- Four national multiplier events with public/private actors.
- Project presentation at key conferences (e.g. Vitae, EARMA). Article submission to professional journal (i.e. International Journal for Researcher Development) (A5).
- Producing project report. Distributed to HEIs in Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK.
- Revising course materials to reflect delivery-phase experiences; place in institutional e-repositories.

The project's key objectives would be threefold, to:

- create an effective and reproducible skills development programme;
- enhance the international competitiveness of participating researchers;
- enhance the reputations of the HEIs delivering the programme. As alumni develop, their HEIs will become known for creating outstanding job candidates.