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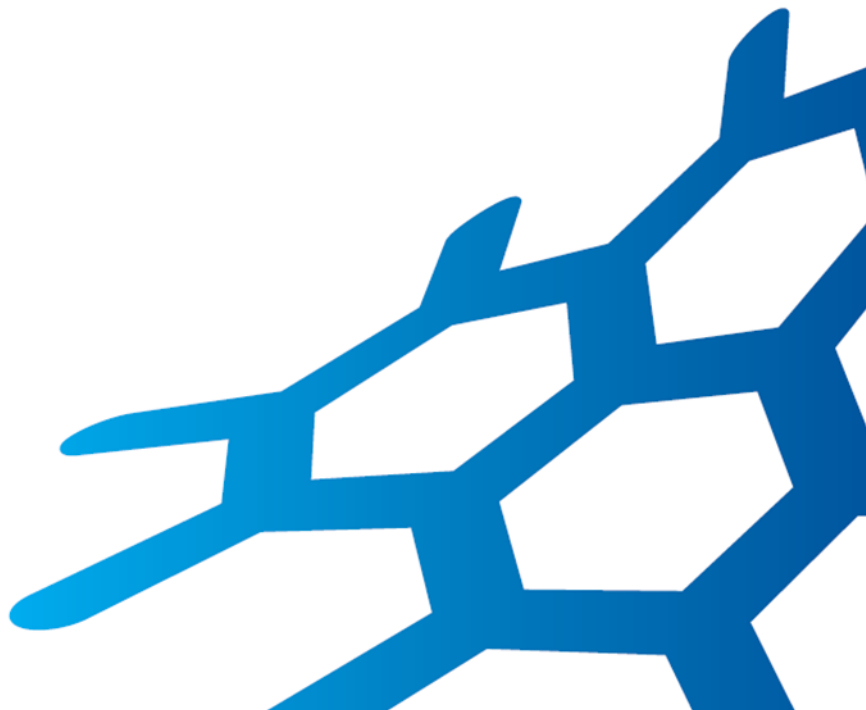
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**Feedback from our EARMA 2015  
workshop:**

**Research Funding – Identification,  
Engagement and Dissemination  
Strategies**

June – July 2015

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## Introduction

The European Association for Research Managers and Administrators' (EARMA) Annual Conference presented a great opportunity for me and my colleagues to meet with representatives from across the European research community.

Recognised as Europe's leading authority on grant funding, Idox has a successful track record in supporting researchers and institutions and always seeks to encounter and share the experiences of those from the research community.

To that end, as well as exhibiting at the 2015 conference as Gold Sponsors, we hosted a workshop on 29 June 2015, entitled **Research Funding – Identification, Engagement and Dissemination Strategies**. The workshop included a presentation from Karen Lewis, Research and Strategic Bidding Manager at The University of Northampton and previous winner of The Times Higher Education Supplement's Outstanding Research Management Team of the Year.

This report includes Karen's presentation, which explored how **RESEARCHconnect** (a dedicated research funding service) has been integrated into research strategies within the university to source non-traditional sources of research funding. The workshop also provided research managers and administrators with the opportunity to share best practice tips and advice on the process of identifying research funding.

We trust that you all enjoyed the conference as much as we did.

We look forward to supporting future EARMA endeavours and engaging with you again at upcoming events and seminars.

### Zoe Wood

Head of Content – Idox

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# The University of Northampton – A Case Study







 THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

## Research Funding Opportunities: Identification, Dissemination and Academic Engagement


*Zoe Wood – Head of Content, Idox*  
*Karen Lewis – Research and Strategic Bidding Manager, University of Northampton*

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Aims 

- > To share experiences about:
  - Where we find funding opportunities
  - How we communicate these to the right people
  - Looking beyond traditional funding sources
  - Encouraging new people to seek funding for their research

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Session outline 

Northampton's approach to:

- > Looking for funding
- > Disseminating information
- > Academic engagement

Your approach: Lessons learned

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Looking for funding – reactively




- > On mailing lists of the major funders e.g. Research Councils, Innovate UK etc
- > Tender databases
- > Subscribe to information sources such as the UK Research Office (UKRO) and the Higher Education European Funding Service (HEEFS)
- > Funding databases: used to have several but now we use RESEARCHconnect (as part of Idox's GRANTfinder 4 Education funding package)

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Looking for funding – proactively



- > Proactive:
  - Engagement with the funder e.g. through personal contact
  - Engagement with potential partners
  - Attend funding information days
  - Use organisations to identify funding opportunities and to lobby on your behalf e.g. European Funding Office
  - Encourage academics to network



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Reactive and proactive searching – a case study



- > Margaret Bates, Professor of Sustainable Wastes Management
- > Academic networking
- > From little acorns...£50k from the British Council...




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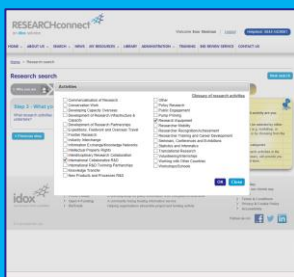
Searching for funding on RESEARCHconnect 

- > Thousands of funding opportunities
- > Content grown by 30% over the last 12 months
- > Funding opportunities for research:
  - R&D
  - Capital equipment
  - International collaboration
  - Training and career development
  - Overseas travel
  - Non-traditional funding pots

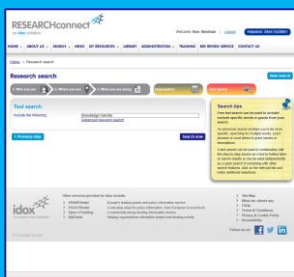



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Funding search 




Project search





Text search

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Dissemination 

- > Blanket emails to all staff, not targeted
- > Monthly e-bulletins bespoke for each school
- > Maintaining key contacts:
  - Spotting academics and research groups with potential
  - Finding someone who can take responsibility for passing opportunities on (and spotting them?)
- > Producing editable reports to email
- > Increasing competence in using databases: need to motivate and provide the tools

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Dissemination using RESEARCHconnect

- > Funding alerts
- > Bulletin
- > Newsflash service
- > Commenting area
- > Editable reports to email
- > Workgroups

RESEARCHconnect International

**Newsflash**  
23 May 2015

**Support Established on Collaboration Between Idox and Universities**

Commissioned by Idox for the European Research Council (ERC) this report aims to explore the challenges faced by researchers in identifying and applying for funding opportunities to complete their research. It includes a list of potential funding sources, such as the ERC, and provides a guide to the application process.

The study, based on a series of interviews and focus group discussions, identified the main barriers to funding, including a lack of information, time constraints, and a complex application process. The report also explores the role of Idox in supporting researchers and the challenges faced by the funding bodies.

The report will help researchers to understand the funding landscape and to identify the most appropriate funding sources for their research. It will also provide a guide to the application process, including the importance of a strong proposal and the role of the funding body.

**Executive Summary** Idox Chief Executive said:

"Idox is pleased to share this knowledge, skills, and expertise with researchers and funding bodies. We believe that this report will help researchers to identify the most appropriate funding sources for their research and to apply for funding more effectively. We will continue to work with researchers and funding bodies to support their research and to improve the funding process."

The report and news flash will be available to view on the Idox website.

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Academic engagement through RESEARCHconnect

- > Challenges faced by moving from one database to another
- > Scheduled inhouse training sessions
- > Idox's responsiveness to product enhancements
- > Importance of:
  - User-friendly search
  - A holistic view of the funding landscape, all information is in one place
  - Search alerts, newsflashes and newsletters

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Lessons learned – group exercise

How do you...

1. Proactively identify funding?
2. Disseminate information to the right people and make sure it's read?
3. How do you best engage with a diverse research population?
  - Consider potential barriers and engagement with new staff

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## Outcomes of the workshop

During the interactive part of the workshop, we asked each group to share best practice on three key topics:

- Proactively identifying funding
- Disseminating information to the right people, and making sure it's read
- Engaging with a diverse research population

The following comments were captured on the day, both from the floor and included on the flipcharts and through the notes submitted at the end of the workshop.

### Proactively identifying funding

- Forge good working relationships between staff in the research office and academics
- Identify and maintain personalised contact with key contacts e.g. face-to-face and telephone
- Track key websites and publications e.g. participant and research portals and national research councils
- Hold interactive meetings involving key stakeholders
- Scan research blogs to identify what others may be applying for
- Sign up for internet/newsletter subscriptions

### Disseminating information to the right people and making sure it's read

- Determine the sender and ensure all communications are targeted
- Get management buy-in (Heads of departments/divisions)
- Through workshops, meetings, the intranet or the organisation's own website
- Through personal contact e.g. over the phone with members of your network
- Get feedback at every opportunity
- Always include a 'human element'

### Engaging with a diverse research population

- Identify the key contacts in given areas
- Utilise multiple communication channels and methods including workshops, meetings and internal websites
- Be mindful of 'information overflow'
- Make it personalised (meetings, phone calls)
- Nurture a culture of space and freedom where colleagues are encouraged to talk to one another
- Set up a dedicated H2020 working group

## Additional workshop feedback

Our workshop has previously supported the ARMA Annual Conference programme.

We thought you may be interested to read some of the additional intelligence that we have gathered from delegates sharing their opinions and experiences about research funding:

## Proactively identifying funding

- Departmental research facilitators – ensuring there are dedicated staff who are acting as the bridge between academic staff and research administrators
- Scan research blogs to identify what others may be applying for
- Use research databases to ensure you're up-to-date on the latest funding opportunities, both mainstream and more obscure sources
- Encourage academics not to rely on the usual suspects (e.g. Research Councils) but to consider new funders
- Track proposals to identify trends
- Training academics
- Maintain face-to-face contact with academics
- Know your audience to ensure that you're identifying funding that is directly relevant to your staff
- Encourage academics to use their networks and collaborative partnerships to feed back intelligence
- Use targeted funding bulletins
- Involve central services and schools
- Ensure that there is adequate forward planning of bids – allowing time to get people working together
- Encourage academics to take responsibility for identifying new sources of funding themselves
- Arrange drop-in sessions to look for Calls together
- Include this activity in staff performance reviews
- Set individual staff targets in raising funding

## Disseminating information to the right people and making sure it's read

- Employ blogging to best effect to encourage staff to share success stories and news
- Ensure all communication is targeted, engaging and populated by both academics and the research team
- Track links from newsletters so you can get feedback (albeit staff don't know they're providing it!) on what's being found to be the most interesting
- Work with management to identify the right people – i.e. those who are going to be the most proactive, innovative and determined in procuring research funding
- Add kudos to the message by asking a Head of Department or similar senior figure to send communications
- Arrange networking meetings over lunch (by theme or department) so that the activity seems less of a chore!
- Make sure it's not a one-way flow of information, get feedback at every opportunity
- Keep it succinct
- Make it positive
- Maintain team visibility so academics know who's supporting them and how
- In a virtual world where written communication has exploded, remember the power of verbal communication!

## Engaging with a diverse research population

- Arrange drop-in coffee sessions so that staff from different teams can share best practice
- Organise social events at month end where all academics and research staff are invited (an open bar with an honesty box perhaps)
- Offer support to new staff who may have a lack of confidence and skills
- Encourage new staff to network to find experienced academics with a track record
- Introduce a full training programme including proposal writing for early-career researchers
- Use funding tools to set up highly targeted opportunities, personalised to areas of interest for each recipient
- Be mindful of barriers, e.g. teaching commitments getting in the way, academics' occasional reticence of not wishing to collaborate internally



## More information

Thanks to all who attended our session and who provided such great feedback.

If you have any further comments, please feel free to contact the team at [rc.research@idoxgroup.com](mailto:rc.research@idoxgroup.com)

## Stay in touch

Looking for further information or wanting to access the latest EU funding and policy insight?

We have a number of ways for you to keep in touch:



[@IdoxGrants](https://twitter.com/IdoxGrants)



[@RESEARCHconn3ct](https://twitter.com/RESEARCHconn3ct)



[www.researchconnect.eu](http://www.researchconnect.eu)



[www.grantfinder.eu](http://www.grantfinder.eu)



Watch Karen Lewis's supporting video on how The University of Northampton use RESEARCHconnect [here](#).



Read the full blog – *Striving for Research Excellence in Europe* – available to view on the Idox blog at <http://blog.idoxgroup.com>

## Gallery

