

# **Improving RDI management skills:** **a right equation between people's employability and research centre's competitiveness?**

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For the little story.....

Almalaurea Bologna, March 2011: Human capital in the Mediterranean countries?

**Human Capital** (European Training Foundation):

*« Knowledge, competences and skills that people have and can mobilise/use to (1) improve their lives (mainly through gainful employment) and (2) contribute to the social and economic development of their countries »*

- How is the stock of human capital is used and mobilise in the economy? Key employment indicators and labour allocation mechanism?
- How human capital flows (young generations) are prepared for a knowledge economy? Performance review of education and training scheme.

## Expected results of the article

- To propose a comprehensive definition of the RDI management skills
- To verify to which extent it corresponds to growing needs embedded in the knowledge economy and the international pressure (« niche of opportunity »?)
- Brain circulation (offered by networks) to cope with brain drain?

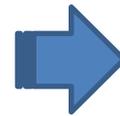
# Frame and context

- Trends of the knowledge economy:
  - Knowledge economy is characterised by the dynamic of changes
  - Over the last two decades, the public policies have highlighted progressive multiplication of the financial resources[1].
  - The substantial change in the modalities of allocation of funding for research has generated an important increase in the percentage of funding attributed through competitive mechanisms of grant allocation.
  - Pressure for research results valorization (“Innovation”)
  - The confrontation of two dynamics - scientific production and management of research teams – in a reduced time scale has resulted in high organizational stress.
- Competitiveness of a research institution is not only measured in terms of the quality of its scientific production, but also of its ability to plan, manage and optimize resources and communication.
  - A revealing example is the evaluation criterion used in FP7, where the total scoring is divided equally among three components: (i) scientific quality (5/15), (ii) management (including finance and governance) and composition of consortium partnering (5/15), (iii) the impact generated by research on the socio-economic and environmental needs (5/15).

[1] OECD report on the governance of research policies (OCDE, 2003)

# RDI management: a niche for job creation?

- Accordingly, research institutions are now bound to organize themselves in new ways in order to:
  - be able to respond to this phenomenon and position themselves against this new market;
  - Improve their capacities of absorption (of opportunities / constraints)



Competitiveness

- On the other end, Mediterranean societies have to cope with the unemployment of highly educated students
- Could highly educated students become RDI managers?

# RDI managers

- Who are they?
  - Supportive functions versus strategic functions
  - Managers of the complexity
  - Managers of the human capital : chefs d'orchestre?
  - Translators?
  - Specialization?
    - In terms of skills and abilities: administrators? HRM? lawyers? Coach (= « partner in success »)?
    - In terms of knowledge: Legal officer / Financial officer / Scientific Officer / Policy officer / National Contact Points / Project Coordinators?
- What are their background and profile?
  - Variety, diversity, adaptation: often original careers or stories
  - Understanding of the different interests from the different stakeholders involved in RDI chain
  - Needs to learn and to be challenged
  - Engagement , curiosity, initiative, creativity, problem-solving orientation, risk-taking, responsiveness, autonomy, trust makers?

# RDI Managers' employability

- **What are their statutes?**

- Career development?
- Working conditions?
- High-level recognition?
- Which investment?



Employability: a person's ability to gain initial employment, to maintain that employment and to obtain new employment if required (assets, marketing and deployment, presentation skills and context)

- Evolution du métier de chercheur vers le chercheur-entrepreneur ou création d'un nouveau métier?

- Employabilité et flexibilité vs protection sociale? Fonctionnaires ou contractuels?
- Conditions de travail: efficacité en termes d'organisation du temps de travail?

- **Are they legally recognized? Which professional corpus do they belong to?** Some examples:

- Europe: European Administrators and Research Managers Association (EARMA)
- France: « Ingénieurs d'étude / de recherche » -> professional corpus
- Africa: Research and Innovation Management Improvement for Africa and the Caribbean - <http://www.rimi4ac.net>
- Tunis? Mediterranean countries?

# A niche for job creation?

- Analysis investment/return:
  - *Investment* for attracting talents (working conditions, mobility, trainings, recognition, challenge, will, engagement)
  - *Return* in terms of working conditions, valorization, mobilization, strategy-orientation, absorption and responsiveness, inclusiveness of the knowledge economy
- Researchers + RDI managers = change makers?
- Comparaison between RTD Center / Enterprise?

## Absorptive capacities monitoring system

	Individual (micro level)	Research institution (meso level)
<b>Objectives</b>	Human capital development	Fund rising
<b>Means</b>	Participation to networks : positioning	Participation to networks : positioning
<b>Results</b>	Access to Training /Infrastructure	Visibility and attractiveness
	Increase of contacts	Lobbying - incidence
	Interdisciplinarity	Partnerships and signature of contracts
	Opportunities development	Programmes negotiation
<b>Costs</b>	Up / Down	Up / Down
<b>Objectives</b>	Carrier opportunities	RDI Management capacity building
<b>Means</b>	Strategic orientations development	Strategic orientations development
<b>Results</b>	Skills specialisation	SWOT analysis
	Initiative and decision margin	Raise of the autonomy - issue of the statute and decision-making process
	Adaptation / solidarity	Human resources organisation
	Quality control	Equipments and infrastructures
	Valorisation	Budget mastering
	Turn-over / integration of new colleagues	Audit
<b>Costs</b>	Up / Down	Up / Down



*Competitiveness, social cohesion and Limit throughout resources conservation*

### Indicators

Number of initiatives taken / Responses  
 Capacities of planning and risk taking  
 Number of agreements and contracts signed / under discussion  
 Previsional budget

Services efficiency  
 Timing of decision-making process  
 Number of contracts, types of contracts  
 Timing of equipment use  
 Level and share of the budget Evolution of financial schemes

# Conclusions

- To propose a comprehensive definition of the RDI management skills
- To verify to which extent it corresponds to growing needs embedded in the knowledge economy and the international pressure (« niche of opportunity »?)
- Brain circulation (offered by networks) to cope with brain drain?

- **Lisbon strategy, 1999 - ERA aims:** *‘to enable researchers, research institutions and businesses to increasingly circulate, compete and co-operate across borders; to give them access to a Europe-wide open space for knowledge and technologies in which transnational synergies and complementarities are fully exploited’*
- **Stratégie Europe 2020 « A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth »** (adoptée en mars 2010) mentionne la « *capacité de s’autoréguler de manière intelligente, durable et inclusive, en inventant des débouchés pour créer de nouveaux emplois adaptés à la diversité des cas et offrir un sens à l’évolution de nos sociétés* ».
- La Stratégie Europe 2020 propose pour cela de se concentrer autour de cinq axes dont la mesure des progrès devrait pouvoir se refléter au niveau national : l’emploi, la recherche et innovation, le changement climatique et l’énergie, l’éducation et la lutte contre la pauvreté.
- Dans la préface de la Stratégie Europe 2020, le Président de la Commission Européenne Jose Manuel Barroso lance un message politique fort, encourageant une plus forte responsabilisation et mobilisation des acteurs (individus-institutions) en tant que moteurs (« leaders ») de la société et de son évolution. Il semble ainsi appeler à un éveil des consciences et au changement de nos manières de faire et d’interagir dans la société, notre système de gouvernance.

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Thanks for your attention and participation

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