



REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD ON THE RITRAIN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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EAB Members

Ivan Baines

Pascale Goy

Vincent Mangematin

Carlo Rizzuto

Overall statement

The EAB members unanimously recognize the high quality of the work done. They strongly encourage the RItrain participants to be proud of all the accomplishments. The training curricula presents a real added value for RIs and RI managers, and this value for money may be emphasized. Based on the on-going work and achievements presented at the General Assembly, the EAB members have three suggestions to enhance the sustainability of the program.

1. Targeted population

We suggest to better take into consideration two different populations with different profiles and needs. First of all, senior managers whose competencies are about global vision/strategy/fund-raising/accountability. For this specific population, the diploma is not really an issue, fees can be adapted and face-to-face interactions may take place during weekends. Second, functional managers whose responsibilities are more function specific as they are managing part of the RIs. Given the quality of the curriculum, some learning objectives can be shared between the two different populations, while others must be specific to each of them. Delivering an executive master diploma is important and fees should be adapted. Fees must cover full cost of the program.

2. Identity/institutionalization/professionalization

One of the most important elements is to support the identity transformation related to the shift from scientists to science management. It is thus important to conduct reflexive interactions with RI managers to help them develop their managerial competencies and get a clear professional identity. The creation of Alumni and communities of practice should be considered as a second step towards such professional identity.

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3. Capability acquisition methodologies

Surveys are not sufficient to obtain information about needs. Obtaining qualitative data about requirements is key for the design of such curriculum. Therefore, interviews of applicants for the first in-take can be used to refine the different profiles of learning.

The diversity of methodologies to interact with participants enhances the learning processes. In that respect, gamification can be considered. In addition, interactive webinars are a very suitable way to expose the participants to top RI executives. Finally, to strengthen reflexive capabilities, we suggest to consider group work using experiential learning. Projects for the Master degree can be conducted by a group of students, not about their own organization, but rather in a different organization to maximize the diversity of situations.

Finally, it is usually a careful approach not to put all your eggs in one basket. The program shaped high quality **building blocks** which can be branded as such and which have value per se. Branding building blocks goes far beyond delivering ECTS.

4. Staff Exchanges

While the EAB members recognize the need and the interest for such initiative, recent experience has shown that some difficulties arose in the implementation. We recommend to bring further clarity to the overall communication. For example, changing the title (as staff exchanges generally refer to detachments or secondments) and explaining to participants in which capacity they will interact (representing their organization/institute/node or not) during the seminar.

We would like to thank the RIttrain participants for driving this complex project with dedicated enthusiasm and energy.