

Development of a National RDM Costing Model

Co- Applicants

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Aoife Coffey joined UCC Library in 2018 as Research Data Coordinator. She has a PhD in Plant Science and experience as a Data Quality Officer in the National Cancer Registry. Since joining UCC Library she developed the Research Data Service which provides university wide support for RDM, FAIR and Open Data sharing. She is Chair of the CONUL Research Sub-Group which is currently leading the development of a guide to Open Research for early career researchers. She is also PI for Sonraí Irish Data Stewardship Network, a National Open Research Forum funded project.

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Armin Straube is the Research Data Manager at the University of Limerick. His tasks include teaching and consultancy around open research in general and research data in particular. He is a member of the Research Data Alliance, an EOSC FAIR champion, a licensed Data Carpentry instructor, and the project lead of iFrame, a National Open Research Forum funded project that develops a national framework for research data in Ireland.

Before joining the University of Limerick, he was working in various data roles for the national libraries of Germany and Qatar and was a teaching fellow at the University College London in Qatar. Armin holds master's degrees in archives and records management, history, and geography.

Overview:

Effective Research Data Management (RDM) is not free, and with the growing requirements for data governance, FAIR and Open Data sharing, the costs involved are much more than just paying for data storage. Cost associated with RDM can include infrastructure, expertise, time and training. These costs are often absorbed by the units providing support for RDM centrally, such as Libraries, and IT Services but as demands grow due to increasing requirements, it is more important than ever that those supporting units understand, and can articulate fully, the cost of those services. If such supports and services can be costed effectively in to funding applications, it is an opportunity to channel much needed resources to those services and will allow those units to plan and develop additional capacity and services to meet future needs.

It is also essential that clarity over the true cost of RDM for projects of different disciplines, duration and methods is established for researchers, PIs and funders so that it can be meaningfully included in grant budgets. On every research project there is - at a minimum - time and expertise required to draft and implement an appropriate data management plan (DMP). Support is sometimes available from central units, but often discipline-specific knowledge and expertise around RDM is not. Therefore, to effectively support RDM at institutional level, and at a within projects it is essential to establish a standardised methodology for calculating RDM costs and resourcing across diverse projects and disciplines, to ensure consistency, transparency and sustainability in the allocation of resources.

This project proposes to develop a national RDM costing model by working with project partners, experts and key stakeholders across the research landscape. By doing so we aim to provide a standardised, scalable solution for estimating the financial requirements of RDM services, thereby enhancing institutional and project-level RDM support across Ireland. It directly speaks to the CONUL strategy 2020-2024 and its remit for supporting libraries in facing the challenges of Open Scholarship. It also directly supports the NORF Action Plan Theme 1 to *'Establish a culture of open research,'* and Theme 3, to *'Enabling FAIR research data and other outputs'*. Finally, it is aligned with the aims and objectives of several NORF-funded projects including Sonraí Irish Data Stewardship Network, iFrame Project, ROCHE and ABOARD.

Objectives:

- **Develop a Costing Model:** Create a comprehensive model for estimating the costs associated with RDM activities, support and services focusing on:

- central services currently housed within libraries, research services and other dedicated research data support services
- embedded data stewardship, within project activities dedicated to RDM.
- **Test for Broad Applicability:** Using case studies from various disciplines and institutions to validate the model's assumptions, ensuring that it is scalable and adaptable to the national research landscape.
- **Secure Endorsement and Adoption:** Obtain endorsement from key stakeholders, including NORF, Research Funders and Research Performing Organisations, to drive the adoption and integration of the model across the research ecosystem.

Activities and Methodology:

1. **Landscape Review:** Conduct a thorough desk review of existing RDM costing models, consulting both national and international sources to gather insights and best practices.
2. **Model Development:** Based on the findings, develop a flexible and robust costing model applicable across multiple disciplines and institutions.
3. **Validation with Case Studies:** Test the model through national case studies to ensure its practicality and accuracy across different research settings. The case studies will be conducted by the project partners as a self-evaluation of practices in their institutions.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with key stakeholders, including Research Funders and Research Performing Organisation's to gather feedback and foster early buy-in and endorsement before finalising the model. This will take the form of two half-day workshops for open consultation on the model. The first workshop, to be co-located with the CONUL Conference 2025, will launch the consultation process and aims to be a hybrid event. The second workshop, finalising consultations will be an in-person event.
5. **Model Publication and Implementation:** Publish the final model on Zenodo and promote its use among the research community, including libraries, research support offices, funders, and researchers, the existing networks of the working group, such as RESIN, CONUL, Sonraí.

This research relies on publicly available information and case studies are conducted as self-evaluation of project partners. These activities do not require ethics approval.

Outputs:

- Data Management Plan
- RDM Costing Model

- Report on project activities

Budget:

- €400 - travel costs for project partners to the workshops and project meetings
- €250 – technical support for hybrid session
- €800 - catering for a 2 half-day workshop for 20 attendees per session

Total €1,450

Timeline:

Activity	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Landscape Review	█	█	█									
Model Development		█	█	█	█	█						
Validation					█	█	█	█				
Stakeholder Engagement					█	█	█	█	█			
Model Publication and Implementation, Report Publication										█	█	█

Project Management:

- See associated Gantt chart for the timeline
- Roles and Responsibilities will be articulated at the outset of the project.
- A secure share file store has been established by a project partner in TU Dublin.
- A data management plan will be developed at the outset of the project using the Science Europe Template for RDM.

Project Partners:

- Dr Aoife Coffey, Research Data Coordinator, Library, University College Cork
- Lindsay Dowling, Open Research Support Unit Lead, Technological University Dublin
- Andrew Simpson, Associate Librarian - Education, Research and Clinical Support, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
- Jenny O’Neill, Research Engagement Officer, HEANet
- Armin Straube, Research Data Manager, Library, University of Limerick
- Dr John Hyland, Data Value Platform Manager, Teagasc