

# REVIEW OF CHAPTER 5.19 OF THE EMERALD HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION AROUND THE WORLD – THE PROFESSION OF RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES: ESTONIA, LATVIA, AND LITHUANIA

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This chapter (Povilaike, 2023) gives an overview of the development, current state and future prospects of the Research Management and Administration (RMA) profession in Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. I find this chapter intriguing because it blends historical context with current professional insights for readers. It draws attention to the challenges, growth and resilience that define the RMA profession in emerging research environments.

The first key finding deals with historical context and research ecosystem. A key strength across all three Baltic nations is their long-standing dedication to education and research. Their history is rich with academic excellence, reflected in institutions like Lithuania's Vilnius University, founded in 1579, and Estonia's Tartu University, established in 1632. However, Soviet-era policies restricted research and innovation until the early 1990s, when Baltic States regained independence. After gaining independence, Estonia has always maintained an advantage over Latvia and Lithuania in terms of impact and scope of international collaboration, even surpassing them in participation in EU-funded programs. As of 2019, Estonia was ranked 13th within the EU for scientific impact while Lithuania was leading in growth of research output and Latvia was trailing behind on both impact and output ranking. By 2002, Estonian scientists produced the largest number of high-impact papers (4,429) and also received the largest number of citations (22,274); the impact factor was highest in Estonia (5.03) followed by Lithuania (3.97) and Latvia (3.52).

The second key finding addresses research funding and policy. Estonia's research ecosystem is driven by competitive funding and a strong commitment to quality, strong participation in EU programs and a higher R&D expenditure relative to GDP (1.792% in 2020). Latvia faces chronic underfunding (0.702% of GDP in 2020), heavy dependence on EU structural funds, and a fragmented governance system, which limits its attractiveness to researchers and its ability to participate in international programs. Lithuania occupies a middle-ground performance (1.155% of GDP R&D expenditure in

2020) with a single national funding agency (Research Council of Lithuania) playing a key role, but still facing challenges in international competitiveness and funding levels.

The next key finding is evolution of the RMA profession in the region. The RMA profession remains unofficial and underdeveloped across the region. Most research support staff perform a range of administrative duties, with research management often a secondary, reactive responsibility. Some progress was observed in selected institutions, especially those reliant on external funding. For example, the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis and Vilnius University, Lithuania have developed more specialized research support structures, including dedicated grants offices and research managers. Estonia's University of Tartu stands out for its early strategic focus on international partnerships and the establishment of a professional Grants Office, which has contributed to its success in securing EU funding. The author correctly noted that the RMA community in the Baltic countries is gradually becoming more visible and professionalized but it remains relatively small and fragmented. Demographically, the RMA workforce in the Baltics is predominantly female (aged 35–44) and highly educated, with many holding advanced degrees. However, the profession still lacks formal recognition, standardized job titles, and clear career pathways. The chapter draws on the RAAAP-3 (Research Administration as a Profession) global survey data to provide a snapshot of the Baltic RMA landscape. Based on my own experience in the field, I fully align with the author's observations on this point.

The final key findings are focused on regional challenges and opportunities. Research managers in the Baltic countries often work without formal recognition or clear career paths, making their roles undervalued. I've witnessed significant transformation in the profession—particularly in Central and Eastern Europe—where RMA is still taking shape. The progress in the Baltic region, especially Estonia, offers a hopeful blueprint for neighboring countries striving to strengthen their research ecosystems. However, as the chapter rightly highlights, the gap between *"resource-rich"* and *"resource-constrained"* regions remains stark. Without sustained investment in capacity building, professional training, and cross-border collaboration, this divide will continue to hinder global research equity. I concur that initiatives like Horizon Europe's WIDERA and peer-led communities such as L-ARMA are promising steps forward, but much more institutional support and international solidarity are needed to truly empower RMAs in underrepresented regions.

In closing the chapter, the author noted the future direction. The future of research management in the Baltics is optimistic, with growing recognition that researchers need skilled support to succeed in competitive funding environments. Estonia has taken the lead but Lithuania and Latvia still need stronger leadership commitment to treat research management as a valued profession, not just administrative work. Empowering RMAs could unlock greater research impact across the region.

The author has done a wonderful job of capturing both the progress made and the challenges that still remain in the profession. From my own experience, I see this

chapter as a meaningful and timely contribution; it not only informs but also inspires further growth and reflection in the field.

## REFERENCE

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Povilaike, A. (2023), "The Profession of Research Management and Administration in the Baltic Countries: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania", in S. Kerridge, S. Poli, and M. Yang-Yoshihara (Eds.) *The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration Around the World*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 579-585.  
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## BIOGRAPHY

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