

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORT

D3.1 Training Needs Analysis: Report on Training Needs Analysis TNA, and outputs in the form of country specific and integrated reports

EU-CONEXUS ENABLES

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June 28th, 2024

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to present the outcomes of the **Training Needs Analysis of Early Career Researchers** from Widening Countries within **EU-CONEXUS ENABLES – Promoting excellence through innovative eco-systems (EU-CONEXUS ENABLES)** project. This project is funded by the HORIZON WIDERA 2023 – Access-03, under grant agreement ID: 101017436 by the European Research Executive Agency. Specifically, Work Package 3 focuses on upskilling and reinforcing academic expertise transfer towards widening countries. It will provide support and training for early-career researchers, offering opportunities for professional development, networking, and collaboration.

Background: *This report focuses on the findings of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) survey undertaken across the ENABLE widening partner Universities.*

Objectives: *The aim of this study was to explore the training needs of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from widening countries across the ENABLES consortium, with a focus on informing the content of the ENABLES Expanding Your Horizons Researcher Development programme.*

Methods: *An online survey was undertaken to gather data from ECRs regarding their training experience and preferences.*

Results: *There were 367 responses to the survey.*

Conclusion: *The results of this survey have been used to inform the content of the Expanding Your Horizons Researcher Development Programme.*

Keywords: *Widening Countries, Professional Development, Training, Research Skills, Support, Research Culture.*

1. Introduction

Researchers are a fundamental resource for research and innovation and for society at large. It is important that they are equipped with the transferrable skills necessary for effective and successful careers in all relevant sectors of the society, including academia, industry, the public administration and the non-profit sector (European Commission). It is widely accepted for early career to have the best chances of achieving their career goals they need to not only acquire discipline-specific research experience, but also additional transferable skills vital for future employment inside or outside academia. They also require access to information and mentoring that will help them strategically plan and make informed decisions about their future. The aim of this deliverable was to conduct a Training Needs Analysis of Early Career Researchers from widening countries across the Enables consortium. Specifically, deliverable 3.1 aimed to conduct a robust development needs analysis process to enable researchers to identify gaps in knowledge and skills required to fulfil their research requirements, but also to ensure researchers are prepared for the next step in their careers.

The ENABLES ambition is for the Training Needs Analysis to be a continuous process that is people-centred, promotes engagement with, and reflection on, a range of research and professional development opportunities, enabling the researcher to be aware of their own skill sets. The wider aim is to develop globally competitive researchers; who can operate in interdisciplinary, collaborative, and challenge-led environments; across a range of sectors; and that are characterised by diverse backgrounds and experiences.

1.1 Benefits of Training Needs Analysis

- Creates a framework to identify and assess individuals training needs
- Formulates a plan to meet identified training needs
- Establishes priorities, so that we can identify relevant opportunities
- Develops high-level skills and experience, to strengthen researchers career prospects beyond current research.

1.2 EU-CONEXUS ENABLES Training Needs Analysis of Early Career Researchers

This report highlights findings from the ENABLES Training Needs Analysis Survey (May- June 2024). It explores the training needs of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in Widening partner Universities across the ENABLES consortium.

ECRs are a group of scholars who need to develop themselves in a changing academic workplace, characterised by a strong competitive and ‘managerial’ culture (Elizabeth & Grant, 2013, p.123), budgetary constraints, a low availability of postdoctoral appointments compared to the increasing number of PhD graduates, and an ever increasing pressure to combine multiple responsibilities under a tight budget (Austin et al., 2007; Gappa et al., 2007; Hughes, 2009).

ECRs are the research leaders of the future, and thus need to continuously upskill themselves to thrive and survive in the academic labour market and beyond. But how do ECRs themselves feel about their own development, and which specific training needs do they recognise as being vital in order to fulfil their career ambitions. Thus, the aim of this study is to increase knowledge and understanding on how to best support and train ECRs across the ENABLES consortium in the early stages of their careers in a way that is valuable and meaningful to them.

It includes an overview of the approach and methods used (including their strengths and

weaknesses), along with quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data, along with our interpretation of the data. Whilst this report provides key insights into the training needs of early career researchers, it is important to note that the responses received will not have captured everyone's views, especially given that people's experiences vary across each organisation across the consortium.

The findings capture perceptions and experiences of early career researchers across a cross-section of the Enables research community from widening partner universities who are involved in enabling and delivering research. The insights provided by respondents have illuminated the types of training that early career researchers want and need, it also sheds some light on the research culture, and the ECR career.

2. Methods

Early Career Researcher Training Needs Survey

This study was designed to understand early career researchers' training needs from widening partner countries, to:

- I) Identify training needs and training preferences
- II) Inform the training offering to be provided as part of the ENABLES "Expanding Your Horizons" Researcher Development Programme.

2.1. Methodology

The survey was live between 20 May 2024 and 03rd June 2024 and was hosted by the third-party online survey platform Qualtrics. A link to participate in the survey was circulated widely across the widening partners, including via university-wide mailing lists for colleagues and postgraduate students, posting on internal websites, and sharing through events. Respondents provided their consent before starting the survey. The survey consisted of closed-ended statements with fixed answer options (Likert scale, with the option not to answer if the statement didn't feel applicable), and open-text questions which allowed participants to comment further and expand on their answers or suggest practical steps that the trainings should take. The survey comprised Three sections: (1) Research Culture/Environment; (2) Training and Development Assessment using the ResearchComp framework; (3) Demographics. These domains were selected to enable the team to understand ECR's current level of training experience along with the key areas the Expanding Your Horizons programme should cover to meet the desirability of training needs.

The survey was piloted in April 2024 across the Enables consortium, with lead partner AUA participating in a de-brief interview conducted by SETU. The pilot ensured the flow of questions was acceptable, including checking the logic (i.e., skips) and user feedback helped to identify questions that could be made clearer, summarised or expanded upon and topics felt to be missing. The time taken to complete the pilot surveys were recorded, to inform future users of an expected completion time. Feedback from each partner was sent via email and used to improve the survey content. Ethical approval for the study was not required as no personal data was gathered. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively. Participant responses in the free text boxes were analysed thematically. Themes identified by author EF, SETU. All data for the survey are stored within Qualtrics secure data centres SETU University servers.

2.2. Strengths and Limitations

This survey has value in capturing a diverse range of perspectives on training and development needs of early career researchers that can be used to inform the Expanding Your Horizons Researcher Development Programme and as a benchmark to measure future improvements. The survey was completed by 367 early career researchers. This survey does not capture everyone's views, and not everyone who completed the survey opted to complete all questions with some questions perhaps being misinterpreted or not answered.

3. Findings

In total, 367 respondents completed the survey (only complete responses from the research community were included in the analysis). **98%** of Respondents consented to partake in the survey. This section provides an overview of the responses in relation to the Research Culture and the Research Environment at the respondents respective University.

- **33%** of respondents **strongly agreed** that their university provides training and development opportunities for their professional growth and development, **39% somewhat agreed**, **18% neither agreed nor disagreed**, with 7% **somewhat disagreeing** and **3% strongly disagreeing**. This provides us with a good insight as only a small minority of respondents disagreed with this statement, highlighting that training and development opportunities are at the disposal of ECR's.
- **59%** of respondents declared that they had access to a **Mentoring** Scheme within their University, whilst **41%** of respondents **do not have access** to a Mentoring scheme at their university. One would need to delve into the 41% of respondents who do not have this mentoring access and establish what the reasons for this is.
- Just **over half** of respondents (**51%**) have availed of a **Mentoring scheme**, with **49%** who **have not**. This poses the question as to why half the respondents have almost not availed of mentoring despite it being at their disposal. It would warrant further research as to what type of Mentoring is available, is it near to peer, peer to peer or a traditional Mentor/Mentee relationship. Is the scheme formal or informal, is it adequately resources and widely promoted.
- When asked about receiving assistance in **Career Planning** and **CV advice** from Human Resources or another internal source, only **13%** of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. This highlights that greater support and guidance needs to be provided to ECR's in this area.
- Respondents were asked if they receive constructive feedback regarding their **professional growth and development** from their Line Manager/Supervisor - **34% Strongly Agreed**, **25% Somewhat Agreed**, **21% Neither Agreed nor Disagreed** whilst **9% Strongly Disagreed** and **12% Disagreed**.
- The University provides appropriate opportunities for **Research Mobility**. **41% Strongly Agreed**, **40% Somewhat Agreed**, **11% Neither Agreed nor Disagreed** whilst **5% Strongly Disagreed** and **2% Disagreed**. This is a **positive** reflection on the **research culture** at the Universities as research mobility promotes strong networks and research collaboration among researchers. It can help catalyse international research excellence and improve high-quality research outputs, for example working collaboratively towards joint research funding applications, publications, and research projects. It also helps support professional development through acquiring specific know-how from experience and good practice at another institution. Finally, it can provide access to the excellent research facilities and contribute to a new life experience of living in a different country and experiencing a new culture.
- **Individual research roles and responsibilities** at my host Institution are clearly defined (e.g. selection criteria, job descriptions, working conditions and entitlements, professional development opportunities etc. **28% Strongly Agreed**, **36% Somewhat Agreed**, **21% Neither Agreed Nor Disagreed** whilst **8% Strongly Disagreed** and **6% Disagreed**.
- **Open and Transparent Merit Based Recruitment Practices (OTM-R)** -The University practices open, transparent and merit-based recruitment for research staff (OTM-R) **38% Strongly Agreed**; **27% Agreed**; **23% Neither Agreed Nor Disagreed**, **6% Strongly Disagreed** whilst **5% Disagreed**.

- Word clouds were produced from words provided by participants when asked **Why did you decide to do a Postdoc** if applicable (Figure 3.1). The statements and words used to describe their reasons reveals their passion and pure love of research as the main motivator for choosing this career path. Common threads included, “Love for Research”, “Curiosity”, “Advancement” “Personal Development”, “Professional Development “; “Creativity” “Growth”.



Figure 3.1 Reflections on Choosing a Postdoc Career (Created in wordart.com).

3.1. The European Competence Framework for Researchers (Research Comp)

Research Comp delivers on the new European Research Area and the Skills Agenda, contributes to the European Year of Skills, and it is the first competence framework aligned with the European Skills, Competences, and Occupations classification (ESCO). It establishes a common language and a common understanding of researchers' transversal competences, and it can be used, on a voluntary basis, by researchers; universities, research organisations, and training providers; employers; policy makers to assess and develop researchers' transferable skills and foster career development. Progression across levels for the various competences can be the result of dedicated training courses, on-the-job-training, peer-to-peer learning, coaching and mentoring. The framework refers to a range of qualities and attributes needed to succeed in academia (European Commission). Research comp consists of 3 main dimensions:

- 7 competence areas (cognitive abilities, doing research, managing research, managing research tools, making an impact, working with others, self-management)
- 38 competences
- 389 learning outcomes along 4 proficiency levels (foundational, intermediate, advanced, expert)

The Training needs analysis questionnaire devised for the study has been designed to represent the Research Comp Dimensions. Since this section is concerned with capturing ECRs' training and development needs, a linear-scaling model was used because traditionally such scaling is considered the best for evaluating attitudes (Oppenheim, 1992).

A Likert scale (with 1 being the lowest and 8 the highest) was used to measure the importance of getting trained in the Research Comp descriptors based on ECRs own career plans.

The section on Training and Development contained questions based on the 7 competence areas identified by Research Com. Participants were asked to provide a level of importance of getting trained in each competence area based on their career plans and aspirations. Some descriptors were combined into one based on the similarity in their features to minimize the number of items under each question stem and reduce the time of the questionnaire.



Figure 3.2 The European Competence Framework for Researchers, 2023.

3.2. Training and Development

It has been well documented that many ECRs are unaware of their own skills and capabilities, especially for those skills that aren't tied to their specific research project. Skills such independent working, project management, managing relationships, meeting deadlines and targets, juggling resources, communicating research, can be quite difficult to see, however it is important for ECRs to realise these skills are valuable. Not recognising their own skills can lead to ECRs limiting themselves and their options, both within and beyond academia. Far too often, ECRs, Postdocs in particular, have no idea about the depth of transferable skills they already have and how really important they are. Thus, the aim of this section in the survey is to explore the types of transferable skills training that ECRs could avail of but more importantly for them to assess and reflect upon which ones they deem the most relevant and most essential to them.

3.2.1. Self-Management / Working with Others

Self-Management/Working with Others - This development category outlines the skills needed to operate effectively and manage yourself and others. Please indicate the topics you would most like to receive training in, please rank your choices in order of most important to least important.

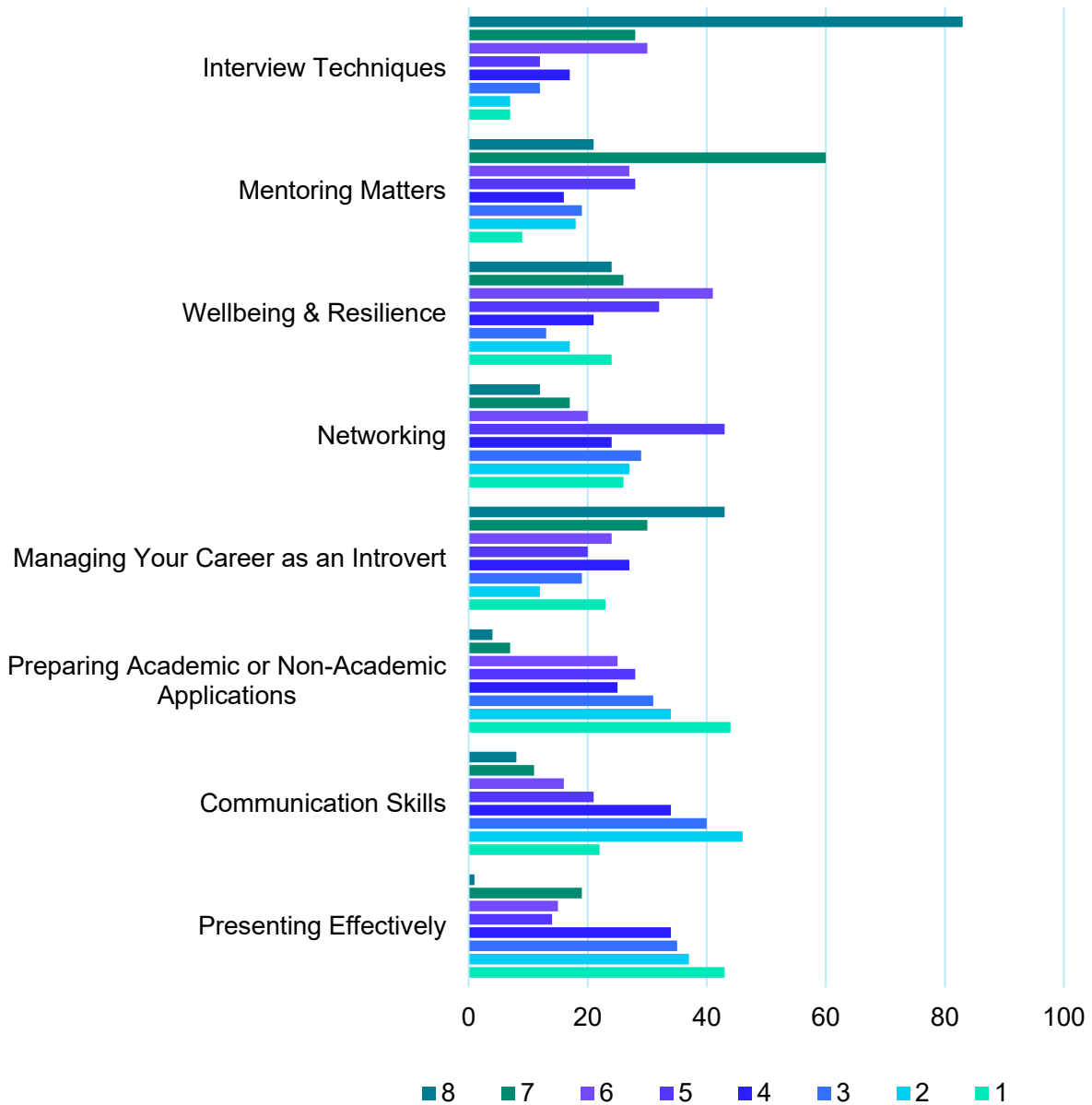


Figure 3.3 Self-Management / Working with Others. Ranking of suggested training sessions (1 = most important/interest, 8 = least important/interest).

Figure 3.3 above shows the overall ranking where respondents were asked to rank in order of importance which training topics, they would be most interested in receiving in relation to Self-Management/Working with Others.

'Preparing Academic or Non-Academic Applications' was ranked number one by 44 of the 192 respondents (23%) with **'Presenting Effectively'**, ranking number one by 43 of the 192 respondents (22%). **'Communication Skills'** was ranked second most important by 46

of the respondents, with **‘Presenting Effectively’** followed by **‘Preparing Academic or Non-Academic Applications’**. Surprisingly, **‘Interview Techniques’** was ranked as the least important by 83 participants, followed by **‘Managing Your Career as an Introvert’** ranking as the least important by 43 participants. It is important to highlight that only 9 respondents ranked **‘Mentoring Matters’** as the most important topic, with 60 respondents ranking mentoring as the second least important.

Managing/Doing Research - This development category covers the practical aspects of translating critical and original thinking into published research and how to manage a research project cycle through all its stages. Please indicate the topics you would most like to receive training in, please rank your choices in order of most important to least important.

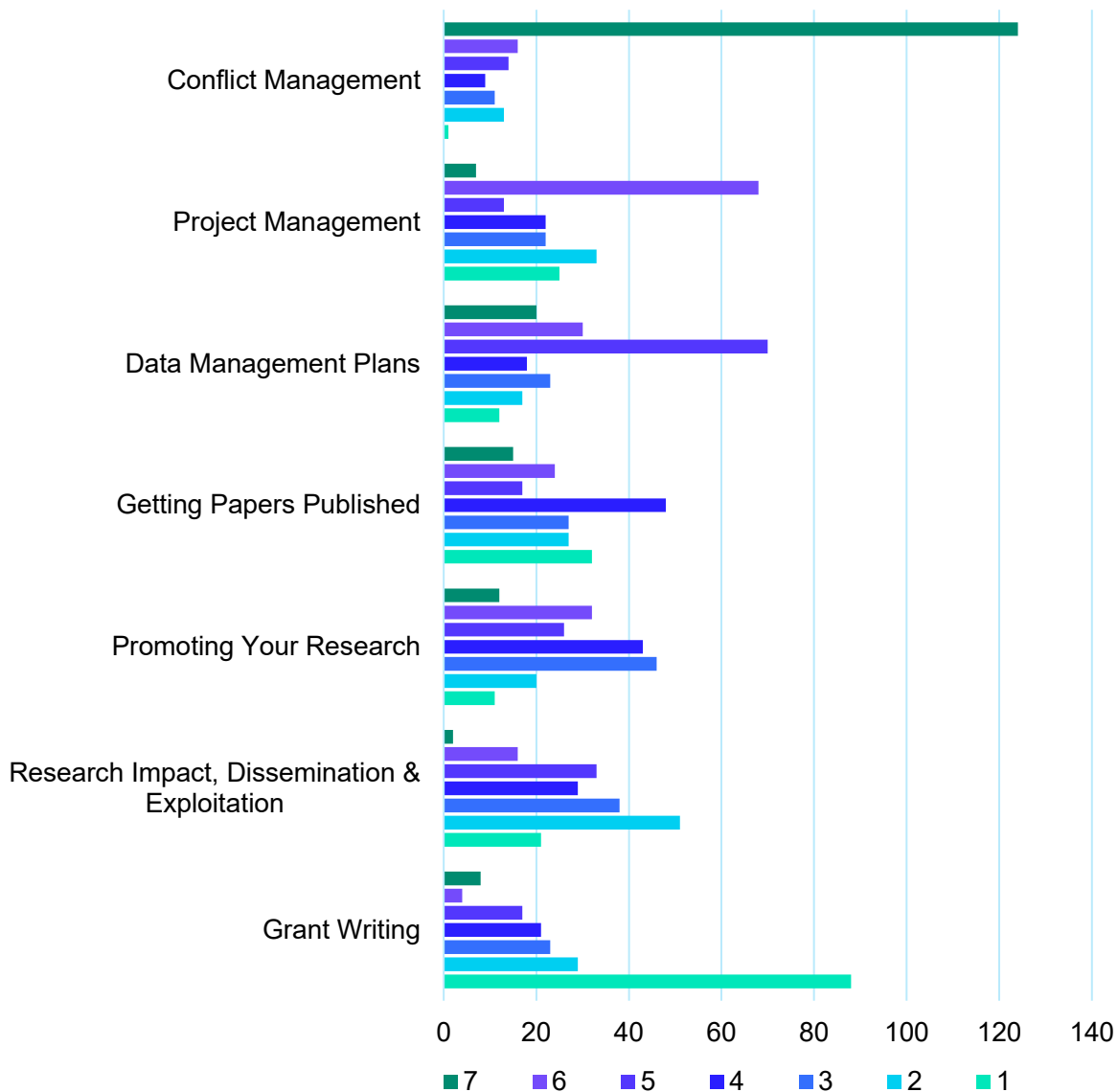


Figure 3.4 Managing/Doing Research

As Figure 3.4 above depicts, **‘Grant Writing’** was ranked number one by 88 of the 190 respondents (46%) with **‘Getting Papers Published’** ranking number one by 32 of the 190 respondents (16%). **‘Research Impact, Dissemination & Exploitation’** was ranked second most important by 51 of the respondents, followed by **‘Project Management’**. **‘Conflict Management’** was ranked as the least important by 124 participants (65%).

3.2.2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality Diversity and Inclusion - This developmental category explores best practices in embedding EDI principles across various levels within research. Please indicate the topics you would most like to receive training in, please rank your choices in order of most important to least important

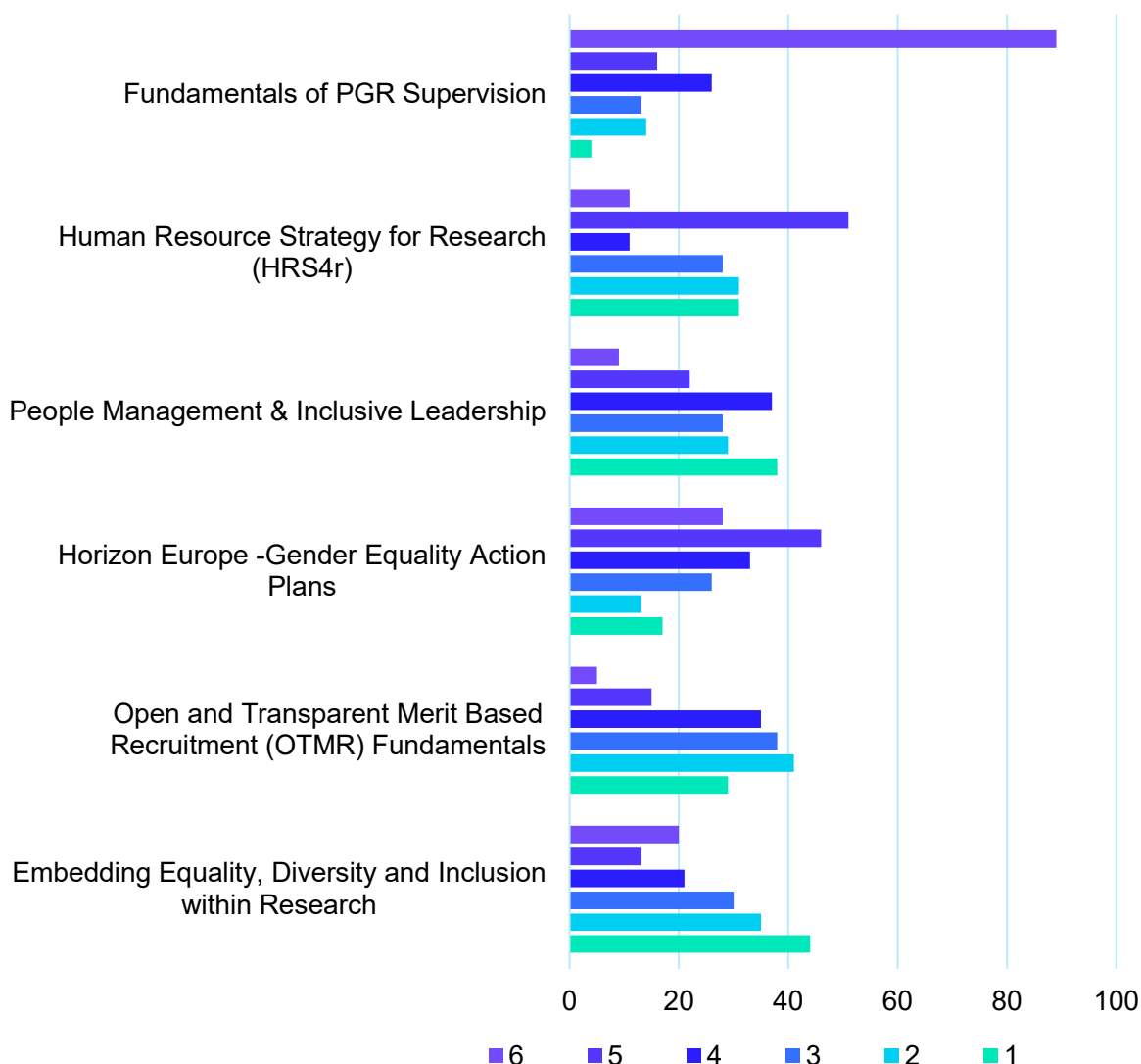


Figure 3.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Figure 3.6 above reveals, in total 163 respondents answered this question. **‘Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within Research’** was ranked number one by 44 of the 163 respondents (26%) with **‘People Management and Inclusive Leadership’** ranking number one by 38 of the 163 respondents (23%). **‘Human Resource Strategy for Researchers’** was ranked number one by 31 of the respondents (19%). Whilst **‘Fundamentals of PGR Supervision’** ranked the least important by 89 (54%) of the respondents.

The responses outlined above highlight that researchers recognise the need for continued development and training. It was found the respondents, early-career researchers consider ‘Writing grant proposals’, ‘Commercialising Your Research’, ‘Preparing Academic/Non-Academic Applications’ and ‘Embedding EDI within Research’ as the most important training topics they feel they need, across the four domains.

3.2.3. Making an Impact

Making an Impact -This development category covers acquiring knowledge and experience that support alternative career options, as well as understanding how to capitalise on the commercial potential of your research and enhance the marketability of your own skills, knowledge and expertise Training topics include Innovation in Research, Commercialisation of your Research and Intellectual Property. Please indicate Yes or No if you feel you need training in this area

QID21 - Making an Impact -This development category covers acquiring knowledge and experience that support alternative career options, as well as understanding how to capitalise on the commercial potential of your research and enhance the marketability of your own skills, knowledge and expertise Training topics include Innovation in Research, Commercialisation of your Research and Intellectual Property. Please indicate Yes or No if you feel you need training in this area.	Percentage	Count
Yes	86%	179
No	14%	30

Figure 3.5 Making an Impact

Highlighted above in Figure 3.5, **86%** of respondents to this question on **Making an Impact**, felt that they needed training in this development category which covers acquiring knowledge and experience that support alternative career options, as well as understanding how to capitalise on the commercial potential of your research and enhance the marketability of your own skills, knowledge and expertise. Training topics include **Innovation in Research, Commercialisation of your Research and Intellectual Property.**

3.3. Mentoring Matters

The importance of mentoring is widely recognised, positive mentoring experiences have been linked to increased productivity, career satisfaction, and research success of early career researchers. Strong mentorship has been shown to increase recruitment, retention, and persistence in research careers. A significant benefit of having mentors is access to resources and networking opportunities. Networking entails establishing enduring contacts that can boost one’s research career. Specifically, networking opportunities can boost visibility of mentees while increasing contact with established and potential collaborators for mentors. Networking can also provide a source of external career advisors for mentees.

Q: I am encouraged to attend training and development opportunities provided by the University

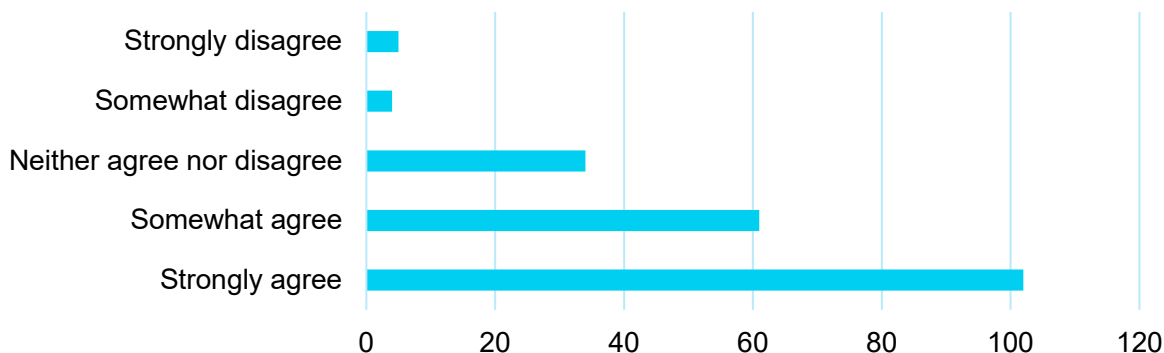


Figure 3.7 Training and Development Support

As highlighted in figure 3.7 above, **50%** of respondents **strongly agreed** that their university **encourages** them to attend **Training and Development** opportunities available to them, **30% somewhat agreed**, **17% neither agreed nor disagreed**, with **2% somewhat disagreeing** and **2% strongly disagreeing**. This provides us with a good insight as only a very small minority of respondents disagreed with this statement, highlighting that training and development opportunities are well supported and encouraged at their university.

As previously alluded to the findings from the survey suggest that although mentoring schemes are offered at each University, only 51% of respondents have actually availed of mentoring. Given that 49% of the respondents have not availed of mentoring before despite it being available to them warrants further review as to what these barriers are and how they can be overcome. As previously highlighted, the survey revealed that ‘Mentoring’ was chosen as the least important topic that respondents wanted training on.

Q: My current role in research enables my personal career goals

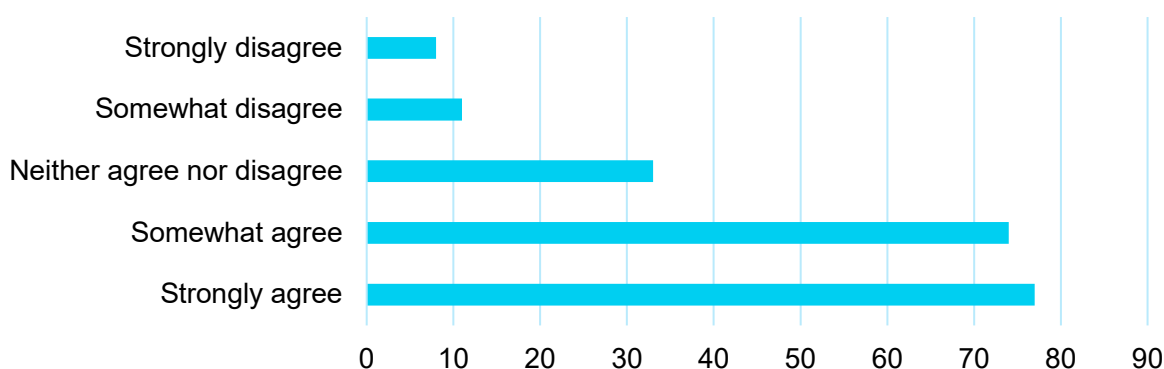


Figure 3.8 Personal Career Goals

Based on the results of figure 1.8, **38%** of respondents **strongly agreed** that **their current role in research enables their personal career goals**, **36% somewhat agreed**, **16% neither agreed nor disagreed**, with **5% somewhat disagreeing** and **4% strongly disagreeing**. Again, this shows that over half of the ECR’s who answered this question are **happy** with their current role and how it is enabling them to meet their career ambitions.

The results of the survey depicted in the graphs outlined above, will guide the work of deliverable 3.2 WP3 to develop the Expanding Your Horizons Researcher Development programme.

3.4. Self-Reflection

This open text question was answered by 100% of the respondents (367). “How would you describe your career journey (to date and future aspirations) in your own words”? A sample of responses are presented below:

“Single fighter”. “I have been satisfied with my career so far. I think there is enough time for me to fulfil my goals”. “I would describe it as difficult, but this is mostly due to the systemic problems of our higher education system (e.g. few (permanent) job opportunities for young researchers, lack of support in terms of affordable housing, childcare, etc. for young families, low wages). On the other hand, I am extremely thankful for the continuous support and encouragement of my more experienced colleagues without whom I wouldn’t be able to pursue my career in this field”.

“Bumpy. Many disappointments”. “I think I managed better than most but have no big satisfaction from it or any credit. Considering other career choices in hope of finding a more

a balanced life trajectory". "Continuous learning acquiring new knowledge daily". "Overwhelming". "Lonely". "Stressful".

"I am recognized for my contribution to the research team". "Love to do research and teaching and hope to do it in the future". I'm at the beginning of my career journey and am looking forward to expanding my knowledge and skills on PhD program I enrolled in.

"Climbing to the Everest". "After working in schools, soon my work got recognized and I got a job at the University". "As a postgraduate teaching assistant I got a chance to develop my research skills, improve student knowledge and work in a stimulating environment".

I aim to improve educational practices regarding natural sciences. "As a young researcher in construction material design and development, I would prefer to continue with postdoctoral positions to further my professional development and enhance my skills in advanced research". "It is really wonderful and helpful journey for my future career" "Slowly progressing".

"I hope I can start my career at university for now". "Difficult but promising". "Unstable". "It took a lot of work, personal and financial sacrifice to qualify for a job in academia. Now, at a Postdoctoral level, my future is still uncertain because of possible reductions in university funding and the number of students. I'm almost certain that I will have to change jobs in the future, in academia or related fields, and even outside my current employment, interests and expertise". "Hard ". "The career path is thorny "Messy". "I think to be on the right pathway I really love working on applied research, I enjoy teamwork and networking and I am looking forward to conduct my own research projects with ups and downs I am a master of my own destiny. Therefore, I try to do everything what I can to fulfil my goals. Purposeful and global. "So far so good". "Slow".

"Empowering my know-how not only in academia, bus business, too, it is going to somewhere interesting". "Slow". "As a university teacher, my career journey has been a fulfilling blend of scholarship, mentorship, and personal growth. Beginning with a passion for my subject matter, I embarked on a path of continuous learning and professional development. To date, my journey has been characterized by a commitment to excellence in teaching and research. Looking ahead, my aspirations as a university teacher are to continue making a positive impact in the classroom and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in my topic. I am mostly interested in giving lectures, not the research, don't like the bureaucracy and more and more requirements and papers that we need to fill instead of doing our job with students. I am not interested in the career in my institution, just want to be a better lecturer and help more students. I wrote a few articles and participated in a few projects. I would like to improve my skills and be capable of writing my own projects. I am still learning God works in mysterious ways!

"In consideration of the effort, the course was outstanding. Slow Precarious Hectic Trying to work in different places to get different skills The pay check-to-requirements ratio is disappointing and not worth striving for". "I am just a student, and I don't have any career". "A long journey, fighting to be recognized, fighting for my team, fighting as a woman". "I would like to continue my research".

As outlined in Figure 1.11 below, 203 respondents opted to answer the question in relation to which gender they identify. The survey revealed Male 35%; Female 57%; Non-Binary/Third Gender 1%; Prefer Not to Say 6%.

Q: With which Gender do you identify

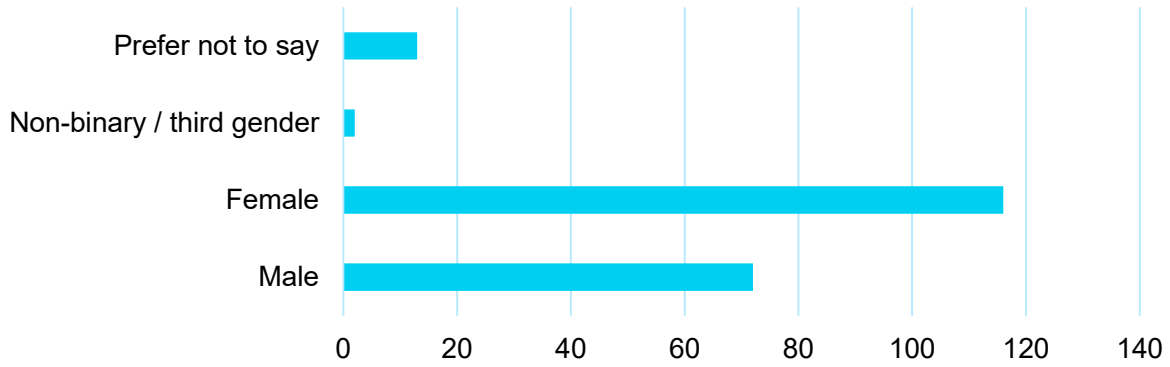


Figure 3.11 Gender Breakdown of Respondents

4. Future updates and conclusion

The Training Needs Analysis survey has given us a great insight into the Professional Development needs of Early Career Researchers from Widening partner countries across the ENABLES consortium. Specifically, we now have valuable input into the training topics that this cohort of the Enables community have identified as the most relevant and most valuable to them. This valuable feedback has helped us to devise the “Expanding Your Horizons” Researcher Development programme, and tailor programmes to meet their needs and challenges, whilst also using our knowledge and understanding to offer practical and impactful learning and development opportunities. The Expanding Your Horizons Researcher Development Programme will aim to:

Support ECR's in their personal, professional and career development;

Empower them to take responsibility for and be proactive in engaging with their own professional development;

Promote an awareness of the skills, knowledge and qualities needed to produce both high-quality and impactful research, and to be an effective Researcher through a provision that is inclusive,

flexible and responsive to researchers' needs;

Enhance inter-disciplinary collaboration and support.

Expand the Enables ECR Community

Finally, it is important to highlight that although respondents did not identify Wellbeing as a core topic they would like to receive additional training in, one cannot ignore the responses from ECR's in the self-reflection section on their career journey to date. Precarity, isolation, stress, overwhelm and uncertainty were common themes identified. As researcher developers, supervisors, line managers, principal investigators, professors we understand the ECR journey and potential stressors particularly the potential intersection between the intellectual challenge of research and burnout. Hence, the Expanding Your Horizons Researcher Development programme will aim to provide wellbeing support in addition to the topics identified throughout the report in an attempt to combat some of these feelings and provide ECR with greater coping mechanisms for their own wellbeing. This report has emphasized the importance of recognising ECR's as a distinct population who are highly aware of the types of training they deem as necessary and valuable to them.

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Annex 1 – ENABLES -Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire

EU-CONEXUS ENABLES-WP3 Training Needs Analysis Survey

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in this project. It is being undertaken as part of the HORIZON-WIDERA- 2023-ACCESS-03-01 Programme. The aim of the EU-CONEXUS ENABLES project is to establish an innovative ecosystem that nurtures sustainable synergies among the Alliance and its partners, including municipalities and stakeholders. Through the Digital Twin approach, we aspire to develop enduring solutions for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability challenges. Key to our approach is the promotion of effective knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and joint efforts among all stakeholders. The project offers upskilling opportunities covering various topics including team management, fundraising, mobility, and networking. Sessions focus on leadership, wellbeing, impact, and career prospects beyond academia, aiding researchers in navigating their careers effectively. For further details please visit: <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/eu-conexus-enables/>

INFORMATION SHEET

“Researchers at all career stages should seek to continually improve themselves by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies. This may be achieved by a variety of means including, but not restricted to, formal training, workshops, conferences and e-learning”. – “Continuing Professional Development - European Charter for Researchers”. Work Package 3 “Research Career Development Support Activities-Upskilling and Reinforcing Academic Expertise Transfer Towards Widening Countries. This work package aims to improve knowledge for Widening partners Institutions about the training and networking required by early career researchers. Increase awareness amongst research management staff about existing training, networking and mobility opportunities at EU, national, and regional levels; provide early career researchers from widening country partner institutions with the most appropriate “fit for purpose” transferable skills training, enhancing their role in line with the recommendations of the new European Research Competence framework. You will find it here: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/ec_rtd_research-competence-presentation.pdf

Confidentiality and Data Procedures-

This survey is anonymous and confidential. All data collected through this survey will be held securely and deleted as soon as it is no longer required for the purposes of this survey. No personally identifiable information will be collected from this questionnaire.

CONSENT

I have read and understood the information provided. I consent to take part in this research project.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

Please indicate your research role within your Host Institution i.e the University you are currently working/studying in. If you selected Something Else, please specify:

- Postgraduate Researcher - R1 (1)
- Postdoctoral Researcher - R2 (2)
- Senior Postdoctoral Researcher - R3 (3)
- Something Else (Please specify) (4) _____

The University provides training and development opportunities for my professional growth and development

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

I have access to a mentoring scheme within my University. Mentoring enables Early Career Researchers (Mentees) to receive encouragement, support, guidance, specific skills and knowledge from more experienced researchers (Mentors) that will enhance the Mentees career and personal growth during their research journey.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

I have availed of the mentoring scheme within my University. A Mentoring scheme provides opportunities for Early Career Researchers to be mentored by experienced researchers within the University. Mentees and mentors engage in an active partnership to identify achievable career goals and address challenges.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

I receive assistance in Career planning and CV advice from Human Resources or another internal source

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

I receive constructive feedback regarding my professional growth and development from my Line Manager/Supervisor

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

The University provides appropriate opportunities for research mobility

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

OTM-R Open and Transparent Merit Based Recruitment is one of the pillars of the European Charter for Researchers, it ensures that the best person for the job is recruited, ensures equal opportunities for all researchers. Individual research roles and responsibilities at my host Institution are clearly defined (e.g. selection criteria, job descriptions, working conditions and entitlements, professional development opportunities etc.)

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

The University practices open, transparent and merit-based recruitment for research staff (OTM-R)

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Why did you decide to do a Post Doc/Senior Post Doc? (if applicable to you)

What are your current career expectations? (e.g. academia, research in academia, beyond academia, industry, government)

Self Management/Working With Others- This development category outlines the skills needed to operate effectively and manage yourself and others. Please indicate the topics you would most like to receive training in, please rank your choices in order of most important (1) to least important (8).

- _____ Presenting Effectively (1)
- _____ Communication Skills (2)
- _____ Preparing Academic or Non-Academic Applications (3)
- _____ Managing Your Career as an Introvert (4)
- _____ Networking (5)
- _____ Wellbeing & Resilience (6)
- _____ Mentoring Matters (7)
- _____ Interview Techniques (8)

Managing/Doing Research- This development category covers the practical aspects of translating critical and original thinking into published research and how to manage a research project cycle through all its stages. Please indicate the topics you would most like to receive training in, please rank your choices in order of most important (1) to least important (7).

- _____ Grant Writing (1)
- _____ Research Impact, Dissemination & Exploitation (2)
- _____ Promoting Your Research (3)
- _____ Getting Papers Published (4)
- _____ Data Management Plans (5)
- _____ Project Management (6)
- _____ Conflict Management (7)

Making an Impact -This development category covers acquiring knowledge and experience that support alternative career options, as well as understanding how to capitalise on the commercial potential of your research and enhance the marketability of your own skills, knowledge and expertise Training topics include Innovation in Research, Commercialisation of your Research and Intellectual Property. Please indicate Yes or No if you feel you need training in this area.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Equality Diversity and Inclusion - This developmental category explores best practices in embedding EDI principles across various levels within research. Please indicate the topics you would most like to receive training in, please rank your choices in order of most important (1) to least important (6).

- _____ Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within Research (1)
- _____ Open and Transparent Merit Based Recruitment (OTM-R) Fundamentals (2)
- _____ Horizon Europe -Gender Equality Action Plans (3)
- _____ People Management & Inclusive Leadership (4)
- _____ Human Resource Strategy for Research (HRS4r) (5)
- _____ Fundamentals of PGR Supervision (6)

I am encouraged to attend training and development opportunities provided by the University

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

My current role in research enables my personal career goals

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

I am recognised for my contribution to the research team

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

How would you describe your career journey (to date and future aspirations) in your own words?

If there is anything else you feel is relevant, please use the space below to let us know.

With which Gender do you identify?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Please indicate which country you are currently located in to conduct your research.

DEBRIEF

Thank you for your participation in this project. Your participation will help us gain greater understanding of the training needs requirements of early career researchers and tailor the Expanding Your Horizons researcher development training programme to meet the needs identified, as best as possible. We appreciate your time and valuable contribution.