



INORMS Sister Association Membership

This paper arises from a meeting of the Associate Membership Working Group, established and chaired by Steph Bales, which took place on 7th September 2020.

1. Background

This initiative develops an original idea from SRAi. It coincided with a discussion at Council surrounding how the reach of INORMS membership could be extended to associations' own memberships, the goal being to offer our respective memberships access to each others' resources and development opportunities, ensuring that we are collectively sharing best practice in RMA (Research Management and Administration) across the world.

2. Revised Name

As the term 'associate member' was going to cause confusion and difficulty for some of our associations, the Working Group elected for the rather more descriptive 'INORMS Sister Association Membership' instead.

3. Definition of INORMS Sister Association Membership

... where INORMS associations offer members of other associations that are part of the INORMS network (and outside of their geographical territory) access to certain services and products (e.g. training workshops, webinars, and conference) at 'normal' member rates for that association, rather than full non-member rates.

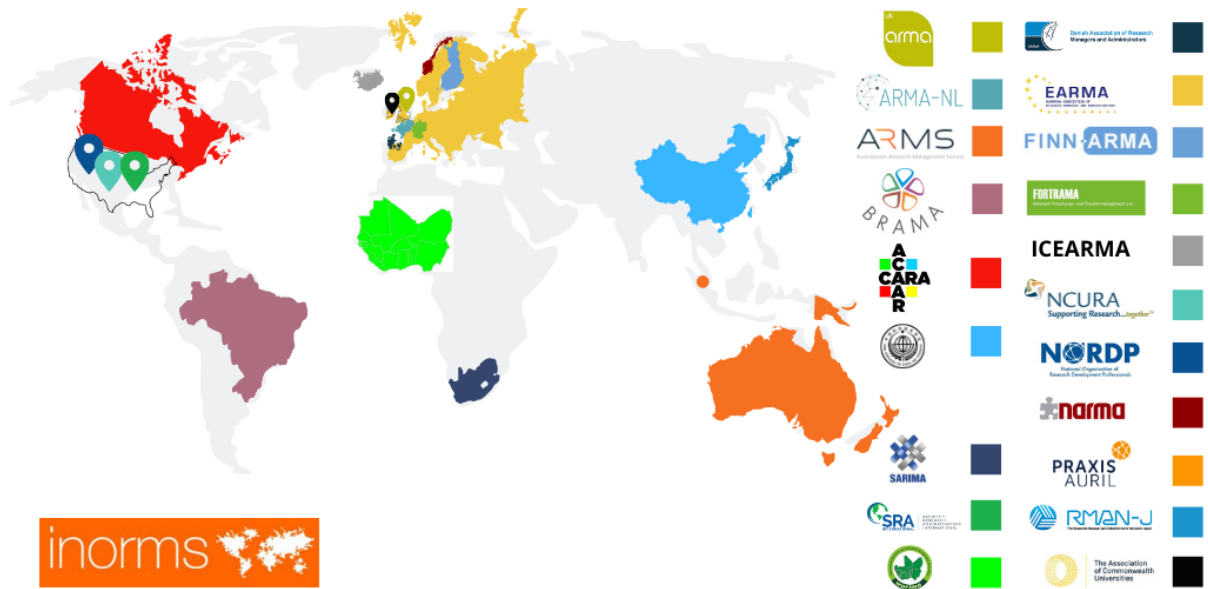
4. Accessing paid-for services and products

4.1 Geographical Territories issue

With regards to geographical territories, it was agreed that some mapping was required to ensure that we weren't unintentionally creating tensions between some of our member associations or introducing competition which did not previously exist.

For income-generating services and products (Conference, Training and Development Workshops, Webinars etc), it was suggested that a way of overcoming this was that members of a given association could then only take advantage of discounts from other associations if they did not

occupy the same geographical territory. The following map prepared by Maria Zollo, ARMS, shows that, for most member associations, the geographical territories are quite distinct. However, in North America, three associations share the same territory, in the UK – two, potentially three, and EARMA shares the same territory with all national associations based in Europe (including the UK). Similarly, ACU reaches out to all commonwealth nations (not marked on the map for simplicity!).



It is proposed, then, that associations cannot derive Sister Association Membership (i.e. discounted) benefits from any other associations sharing the same geographical territory as follows:

| Geographical Territory | Associations |
|------------------------|---|
| North America/ Canada | CARA NCURA SRAi NORDP |
| South America | BRAMA |
| Europe | EARMA ARMA Praxis Auril ARMA-NL DARMA Finn-ARMA Fortrama ICE-ARMA NARMA |
| Africa | WARIMA SARIMA |
| Australasia | ARMS |
| China | CASSSP |
| Japan | RMAN-J |

We have not included ACU in this list. While it spans a number of the above geographical territories, it does not provide the same kind of services and products as 'traditional' associations and is therefore exempt.

In similar vein, a case could be made by an association sharing a territory that its mission and goals, and therefore its services and products, are substantially different and therefore not in competition with one or a number of associations in its territory. An example of this might be in the UK with Praxis Auril, which covers the technology transfer/ company formation/ commercial development area of the RMA spectrum, as compared with ARMA's remit which focuses much more on research facilitation and management. It is suggested, therefore, that this policy makes provision for local arrangements of this nature, on the proviso that all parties in the relevant territory are in clear agreement.

As things currently stand in Europe, if we were to follow the above methodology, ~~none of the European associations could provide services or products- an Association's member rate would not apply to those members of associations elsewhere in Europe to other European members.~~ On reflection, however, while this is a clear starting point, there may be some kinds of activity (such as National conferences, for example) that might be deemed exceptions. Again, it is suggested that this policy makes provision for such exception cases on the proviso that all parties in the relevant territory are in clear agreement.

For the benefit of doubt, if agreement cannot be reached on such exception cases, the territory rule applies. Unresolved issues will be brought to Council for resolution and, if required, the Chair of Council will be the final arbiter.

4.2 Logistics, and keeping them simple

It was agreed that, for this initiative to work, operations needed to be light-touch and not incurring significant additional workload for associations.

Key logistical components would include:

- A simple code of practice that articulates the spirit of the agreement and sets down some basic rules of involvement (including how to present paid-for benefits and services, including clear advice on timezone, language and currency)
- Discount codes: as we all have different member administration systems, associations would be invited to come up with a series of discount codes for each of the other associations. Members would be informed of these codes, enabling them to secure discounts on the paid-for services and products offered by sister associations. These would be renewed every 6 months or so, to avoid misuse. There is some risk of malpractice here, but this would be monitored. While codes would likely apply to all paid-for services and products, each association can determine which activities it proactively promotes.
- Events and initiatives could be promoted off the INORMS website as currently is the case for conferences, but the detail and mode of booking would be held on associations' own websites.
- There would be a light-touch reporting and monitoring exercise, twice per year, to review take-up and any unintended consequences.

4.3 Timescales

It was proposed that this initiative be piloted for a year, commencing 1st January 2021. Council is invited to discuss this initiative with their governing bodies and establish a set of discount codes for each association.

5. Shared resources

Clearly member associations will determine what resources they are prepared to make available in the public domain, and links to such resources can be provided via the INORMS website.

Curation of these resources would thus remain with the originating association, with the INORMS website simply providing signposting.

To help scope out what kinds of material could be included here and to arrive at a suitable structure on the website, it was proposed that this initiative could be tasked to the INORMS Working Group, with Council's approval.

6. *Developing Nation Associations*

There was a view that associations in developing nations would benefit from this scheme especially if supported, via Wellcome and other funders, to access resources at reduced rates.

It was agreed that this was a rather larger project which would require liaison with a number of organisations including the African RIMAs, the fledgling Indian association and the Wellcome Trust. The Working Group agreed with the Chair's view that Council invite ARMA's Eva Kagiri to take this initiative forward, given that she is in close contact with these organisations.

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