



MARA GABRIELA DIACONU

EU Collaboration |

PhD Candidate: Innovation in Engineering and Education

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

MSc Project Management for International Projects / MASTER
Communication and Public Relation
Faculty, SNSPA, Bucharest,
Romania 2007 -2009

Communication and Public Relation Specialist / BACHELOR
Communication and Public Relation
Faculty, SNSPA, Bucharest,
Romania 2003 -2007

Recognitions

Finalist Årets DigIT Kvinne 2023
Women in technologies and innovation

Global Talent Week 2023 – Bronze medalist at the [Global Talent Week](#) on the SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities challenge!

Winner - AFINO hackathon, NTNU Sustainable Healthy Futures pilot project

PROFILE

I am an energetic, mature, and dedicated professional constantly looking for new challenges and inspiration in my work. I had the privilege of being part of the innovation development, coordination, and management in various organizations ranging from governments to private sectors and universities. I have a track record of driving innovation, fostering collaboration, external relations and managing diverse teams in various sectors. Currently, I am pursuing a PhD in Innovation and Exploitation of Research at NTNU. My goal is to improve innovation processes and cultivate fresh competencies within academia, ultimately bringing research and innovations from academia closer to both the market and society.

In 2023, I achieved recognition as one of the four finalists for Årets DigIT Kvinne Women in Technologies, in Norway. My extensive experience extends to more than 15 years of leading national and European projects aimed at societal transformation and commercializing innovative solutions. I am passionate about knowledge sharing, mentoring, and acting as a connector hub within the innovation ecosystem.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PI, NTNU – WISH Women's Integrated Support for Hormonal Health in early breast cancer/ Faculty of Engineering /NTNU/ starting 1 April 2026

- THCS 2025 funded (3 years)
- Lead Stakeholders, exploitation, dissemination and communication

Mentor for ENHANCE - The European Universities of Technology Alliance/starting December 2025

PhD Candidate – Exploring Sustainable Innovation in Universities and Industry, Faculty of Engineering /NTNU/ starting August 2022.

- Developing a Framework for sustainable innovation in universities, education, and transfer of technology by creating supportive education and processes that value sustainability, innovation, and a common contribution to technology development.
- Coordinating Let's Talk Innovation initiative at the Faculty of Engineering
- Driving actions as Innovation arenas at the faculty, Innovation talks and Business pitching, acting as a hub for knowledge sharing in the tech arena and innovation products

Co-Founder [ByMaker](#)

- Innovation and Business developer from innovation idea to startup and market opening

EU Collaboration | Coordinator [IDUN project](#) **Gender balance in top research positions | Empower Women in Innovation** Faculty of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering / NTNU / September 2021 – July 2022

- Lead the mentor programme in engaging women in ICT and STEM.
- Support Women innovators – Mentor for women.
- Create opportunities for increasing the number of female scientists in top positions at NTNU's Faculty of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering.

SKILLS

PROFESSIONAL

- Leadership
- Business analytic
- Analytical thinking
- Communication
- Organizational Understanding
- Strategic planning
- Negotiation and mediation
- Multicultural adaptability
- Pro-active
- Risk Management
- Financial Management

ORGANISATIONAL

- Project manager
- Team Leader
- Solution-oriented
- Teamwork
- Scrum and Agile Methodologies

TECHNICAL

- MS Office
- Social Media
- Web design
- Adobe Suite
- Trello, Slack

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

Norway Member Committee and WG co-Lead - [NET4AGE-FRIENDLY](#) International Interdisciplinary Network on Smart Healthy Age-friendly Environments
(COST Action 2019-2024)

- **Co-Lead WG1: User-centred inclusive design of age-friendly environments and communities**
- Coordinating the activities: to synthesise existing knowledge and critically assess the practices of the inclusive design of innovative solutions of SHAFE.
- Organisation of meetings and working groups,
- Presentation of results in conferences, networking events.
- Building cooperation with other networks.
- Co-Coordinate the national efforts for research and networking in the field

COMMUNITY MANAGER – [Mobilise-D](#) project
(H2020 - Innovative Medicines Initiative IMI)

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences/NTNU/April 2019 – June 2024 (20%)

Main projects/tasks under coordination:

- Managing the Communication and Dissemination activities of Mobilise-D project a 34 partners consortium and more than 380 researchers working.
- Impact and innovation monitorization of solutions and products from the project to reach the overall goals and expected impact for the patients, MedTech industry and society.
- Coordination of the development of the project identity, project website, and Social Media accounts; organising the events and workshops.
- Monthly updates of the tasks status to the Project Executive.
- Development of the Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Strategy for Mobilise-D project; participation in the PPIE Board.
- Collaboration in writing various articles and project social media messages.
- Participation and developing the annual project reporting to EC.
- Coordination of the activities for the [MobilNOR](#) national financed project by The Research Council of Norway.

EU Cooperation | SENIOR EU ADVISOR

Norway Health Tech / Oslo/ September 2020 – February 2022

Strategic development and implementation of Norway Health Tech EU projects, Cluster members advisory for EU funding and innovation. Bring innovations in companies with multicultural and international teams, grow new opportunities, build sustainable partnerships, and bring research to market.

Achievements:

- EDIH NemoNOR won proposal (European Digital Innovation Hub).
- NHT became member of 2 international networks - ECHAlliance and Digital Innovation Hub label from the European Commission.
- 7 EU applications submitted for the cluster.
- 50 SMEs evaluated from the innovation and maturity of their ideas.
- 25 supported to submit EU or national proposals.
- 3 fully organised and presented webinars in Norway to present the funding opportunities to cluster members, more than 500 participants.

LANGUAGES

Mother tongue: Romanian

English – Proficiency

Spanish – Proficiency

Norwegian –
Beginner/Intermediate

French – Intermediate

Portuguese - Intermediate

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

My key responsibilities and tasks:

- Actively support for the Norwegian industry and research, health providers and larger organizations with identifying relevant funding instruments.
- Organise workshops, events and meetings with the Cluster members – ca. 270 members SMEs, universities, hospitals, and municipalities.
- Coordinate the H2020 European projects (SMILE and CareMatrix) awarded to Norway Health Tech, organise the team, manage the technical and finance reporting, grant agreements, amendments, meetings, events.
- Coordinate with national, and international funding instruments and innovation agencies for achieving larger synergies and ensuring maximum impact.
- Coordinate the accession of NHT and NTNU at EIT Health
- Meetings with Research Council of Norway and Innovation Norway to discuss strategies, programmes and funding in Norway.

EU PROJECT DEVELOPER – Health Technologies

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences/NTNU/August 2017 – August 2020

Project development activities:

Coordination of teams and development of proposals and project ideas in the field of Health Technology for Active Ageing and Self-Management of Health with international finance (e.g. Horizon 2020, AAL, EEA Grants, Horizon Europe) and national funding (e.g. SFI, SFF) for Prof. Ulrik Wisløff, Prof. Jorunn Helbostad, Prof. Beatrix Vereijken and Prof. Artur Serrano.

- Initiation project ideas and bridge the gap between the academic and business sector, by finding the right partners to develop the project idea and pushing the innovation to market.
- EU positioning for the NTNU's researchers in various platforms, forums, associations and strategic partnerships.
- Managing the teams for project writing and the project implementation.
- Establishing long-lasting partnerships and agreements with international and national partners.
- Organising workshops and coaching sessions with NTNU's researchers to develop their skills in project writing.
- Business plan and innovation to market for solutions developed by NTNU.

Achievements:

- August 2017 – August 2020: 44 EU applications and one SFI submitted, out of which 9 successful - 2 as coordinator awarded.
- Sense-Garden project to innovation product and Association in Norway
- Contracted: 4,5M EUR in grants for NTNU. See the CV annex for details about the projects and my contribution to writing and implementation for each of them.
- Part of the implementation teams:
 - [Mobilise-D](#) (IMI2-H2020) - Community Manager;
 - [LIFEBOTS Exchange](#) (MSCA RISE, NTNU Coordinator) – Consortium Network Coordinator;
 - [MobilNOR](#) (Forsterkningsmidler NFR, Internasjonalisering, start-2020, NTNU sole coordinator); - Coordinator together with Beatrix Vereijken
 - PAIR (ERASMUS+ Sport action) – contracting and implementation.
 - SIFOOTWORK (AAL) – writing and implementing, business plan.
 - SENSE-GARDEN (AAL) – product on the market 2022

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Community Manager

Fundación UNED, Madrid, Spain
2016 - 2017

Certified Project Manager

National Centre for Life Long Learning (CNFPA) Bucharest, Romania
2011

Graduation Certificate of Young Professional Scheme

National Institute of Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania
2009 - 2010

Internship work experience – Project Manager

Scottish Government, Edinburgh, Great Britain
2010 (six months)

Certified Train of Trainers

National Centre for Life Long Learning (CNFPA) Bucharest, Romania
2008

Erasmus Graduation Certificate

KATHO – Katholieke Hogeschool Zuid-West-Vlaanderen Associatie K.U. Leuven, Belgium
February 2006-July 2006

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

ERC PROJECT MANAGER & COMMUNITY MANAGER

Laboratorio de Innovación en Humanidades Digitales (LINHD), The National Distance Education University (UNED) /Spain / June 2016 – July 2017

Managed the implementation of the ERC Starting Grant [POSTDATA](#). In addition, I have been the Community Manager for the LINHD keeping the communication in the social media and updates on the website and blog.

- Coordination of two teams of six senior researchers and professors, three junior researchers and two interns from two faculties: Philology and Computer Sciences.
- Implementation of the project plan to fulfil the technical, administrative and financial requirements, EC reporting and administration.
- Presenting the project at four International conferences in English and Spanish: Krakow, Salamanca, Granada and Lyon.
- Organizing of two Summers Schools in Madrid (2016 and 2017) with more than 50 students and 10 international lectors.
- Developing new projects with the research team at the national and international level: two national applications, four applications for Horizon 2020 and preparing for a future ERC PoC (funded).
- Coordination of the start of the project **Horizon 2020 INFRADEV– DESIR**.
- Lector Collaborator for two courses held by the School of Computer Science, UNED in English and Spanish: Technical English and Training and career counselling.
- Research activities: writing two papers and participating in various conferences linked with the project POSTDATA. I have an interest in research in linked open data in cloud and platform building. During my work in the project, I have done research on standardization, interoperability and multilingual challenges for digital humanities.

R&D PROJECT DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT & PROJECT MANAGER

COMPEXIN S.A & Canary Technology Innovations
Romania / December 2015 – December 2018 (part-time)

I have been working with two Romanian companies in growing their business and writing projects to develop innovative products for Romanian and international markets.

- Coordination of development and implementation of new projects and opportunities for the companies – four new projects won: [SENIOR-TV](#) (AAL, 2015-2018); [Many-Me](#) (AAL, 2017-2020); [SENSE-GARDEN](#) (AAL, 2017-2020); [Coachmylife](#) (AAL, 2019 – 2022).
- Managing the implementation team and monitoring and control of project throughout the project life- cycle.
- Develop the business plan and manage the IPR issues related to the project results.
- Participation in events and create a network of collaborators.

INTERESTS

- Reading
- Travel and explorations
- Dancing
- Biking
- Guitar playing

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

CONSULTANT

Self-employed / Spain / August 2014 – May 2016

I have worked with various companies in the field of technology development and tourism to develop their business through EU funding or investment from private sources.

- Identification of project opportunities related to Horizon 2020, AAL, Erasmus+ and including participation at events and conferences.
- Developing partnerships with R&D organizations for two major clients, writing and submitting five projects proposal, 2 winning projects.

EUROPEAN FUNDING ADVISOR / TEAM LEADER

TEAMNET WPS / Romania / August 2012 – July 2014

I have started working as European funding advisor with the aim of building a team to write and submit projects. After 17 months, I became the Team leader coordinating three EU Advisors, the communication with the technical team and the top management. Research and development fields: ICT, Health, robotics, transport, security and e-learning, FP7, CIP, AAL, Eureka, LifeLong, Horizon 2020.

- Coordination and guidance for the European Programs team based on management direction, coach and support the team members.
- Developing strategic alliances and partnerships with R&D organizations at the national and international levels.
- Development of projects: 10 projects as Coordinator, 20 projects as a partner; 8 projects awarded, with a 4.5 million € budget for the company.
- Monitoring and control of project implementation, throughout the project life-cycle including IPR agreements and exploitation of products.

EUROPEAN FUNDS CONSULTANT

UTI Security and Fire / Romania / June 2011 – July 2012

- Development of proposals, feasibility studies and business plans for projects funded from European Programmes.
- Management of two EU funded projects, including reimbursement, procurement, intermediate and final reports, audit visits.

EUROPEAN PROJECT EXPERT

Indice Consulting and Management / Romania / September 2010 – May 2011

- Provision of expertise to public and private clients of the company to identify funding opportunities from national and European Programmes.
- Development of project pipeline with over 20 proposals, the total value of submitted proposals exceeded 11 million euros.
- Management of three EU funded projects, including reimbursement, reports, development, and delivery of training materials.

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATION OFFICER

Ministry of Public Finance / Romania / May 2007 – May 2009

- Monitoring the implementation of projects funded by the EU pre-accession programmes in Romania, including the approval of the communication plans and promotion materials and activities.
- Design and delivery of training sessions for final beneficiaries of grants.
- Development and implementation of the internal communication strategy of the organization.

Training School - Policies, Technologies, and Entrepreneurship for Digitalization of Society

NET4Age Friendly COST Action and University Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia - 26-28 September 2023

Title: Innovation mission thinking - how to find your innovation points.

Title: Pitch - the 4 "I"s

Summer School: Digital Mobility Outcomes for Health Promotion and Prevention: Extracting actionable insights from real-world data

NTNU, Mobilise-D project and University of Bologna, DARE Foundation, Bertinoro, Italy – 30 July – 4 August, 2023

Title: Innovation thinking, taking your research to the next level! Pitch your idea.

CIB W070 Conference in Facility Management and Maintenance 2023, Trondheim

Leading the Innovation Workshop: [Green 2050 Innovation workshop](#) - Challenge your innovative brain! – 8 May 2023

Title: Innovation thinking, taking your research to the next level. Dream bigger!

Master NTNU MDV6125 - Welfare Technology

NTNU, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences - 28 April 2023

Title: The complex world of technology clusters, innovation hubs and matchmaking

Experts in Teams (EIT NTNU) course – 23 February 2023

NTNU, Faculty of Engineering

Title: Innovation thinking, taking your idea to the next level Dream bigger!

Public debate - [LifeLong Learning ICDE Conference](#) – 15- 17 February 2023

Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

A National Platform for Lifelong Learning on Responsible AI

Introduction by Roar Olsen, CEO SIKT

Debate by: Sveinung Skule, Director General, Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education | Mara Diaconu, PhD, NTNU | Line Gaare Paulsen, Director Education, IKT-Norge | Christopher Frenning, Data Center Strategy Lead, Microsoft.

Moderator: Annita Fjuk, Head of Lifelong Learning: Competence & innovation, Digital Norway

TBA4170 - Transformation and Adaptive Re-Use of Existing Buildings

Bachelor course, NTNU, Trondheim – 11 January 2023

Title: Technology and Innovation. Dream big!

Experts in Teams (EIT NTNU) course – February 2022

NTNU, Faculty of Engineering

Title: Mission oriented Innovation – Dream bigger!

LECTOR, European Joint Master's In Strategic Border Management

FRONTEX European Border and Coast Guard Agency / 2018 - 2021

Module 5: Innovation and Technology in Border Security - EU priorities and funding for Innovation: R&D&Innovation and creative approach

EXPERT Roles

EVALUATOR:

- ARMA courses
- European Commission

JURY Member in competitions:

- WomENCourage Hackathon, 20 September 2023
- EIT course, NTNU 2020-2026
- Ursa Major Autumn School 2022