



Brussels, 23 May 2012

## **Access to and portability of grants**

*Report adopted by the ERA Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility*

### **1. Context: the issue, who is affected and the objectives of this report**

As announced in the Innovation Union Communication<sup>1</sup> of October 2010, *"in 2012, the Commission will propose a European Research Area framework and supporting measures to remove obstacles to mobility and cross-border co-operation, aiming for them to be in force by end 2014"*.

In particular, the ERA framework is intended to *"ensure through a common approach the mobility of researchers across countries and sectors"*, and the *"cross-border operation of research performing organisations, funding agencies and foundations, including by ensuring simplicity and mutual coherence of funding rules and procedures, building on the work of stakeholders, funding agencies and their representative organisations"*.

This note concentrates on two distinct but related phenomena: cross-border access to and portability of grants, which are likely to figure in the June 2012 ERA framework Communication. Access to and portability of grants relate to the issue of mobility<sup>2</sup> and mobility is one of the declared objectives of the European Research Area. Learning from existing access conditions to grants in Europe as well as the extent to which these grants can be portable, can be of importance to better understand how to foster the mobility of researchers. The impact of access and portability may differ at the various career stages (from R1 New Researcher to R4 Leading Researcher).

Both access to and portability of grants are deemed to affect researchers, universities, other potential host institutions, and funding organisations. Unfortunately, concrete figures as to the number of researchers who are directly affected are not available. Also, there is a wide lack of attention given to this issue in both the specialized literature and policy reports, which leads this report to have an exploratory approach on the issue at hand.

In this framework, the ERA Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility has set up a Working Group (WG) to assess the conditions under which access to and portability of grants could be facilitated.<sup>3</sup> Member States designated experts from

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<sup>1</sup> Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative - Innovation Union COM(2010) 546 final

<sup>2</sup> The issue of grant portability has been referred in previous EU policy initiatives; see Annex 1.

<sup>3</sup> For detailed information regarding the mandate of the WG "Portability of Grants" and nominated experts see Annex 4

funding agencies. The Commission invited staff members from Science Europe to take part in the debate. The WG was chaired by the Steering Group delegate from Portugal, Hugo Horta.<sup>4</sup>

The report is based on the experience of Steering Group and WG members with their own funding practices in their respective scientific systems and their cooperation within ERA. Data were used from existing studies and surveys as well as the interim results from the upcoming *Researchers Report* (EPR monitoring) for which a questionnaire was answered in 2011 by the members of the Steering Group (national delegates of the member and associate states with the support of ministries and funding agencies<sup>5</sup>). A small additional survey was carried out among the same constituency to cross-check and complete its findings (see Annex 1).

The report focusses on the main fellowship and grant programs offered by major national funding organizations, including those provided by national ministries.

The report first assesses the access to grants, followed by grant portability. For both issues, a working definition is given and the main characteristics are reviewed. Then based on this overview, the report provides some recommendations. When discussing both subjects, the report refers to the following types of grants:

#### *Individual grants*

Individual fellowships or grants that primarily pay the remuneration of an individual researcher (at any career stage including at pre-doctoral level), possibly accompanied by a certain amount for research and/or research training costs and other expenses that are clearly linked to the research carried out by the individual (this would include many of the typical postdoctoral fellowships awarded by national Research Councils including "Marie Curie style" mobility fellowships). They are sometimes awarded through a direct employment contract between the funder and the individual, or on the basis of a stipend agreement. The more common situation is however that the funder engages in a contract with the hosting institution which then awards an employment contract or a stipend to the individual researcher (and possibly team members also included in the grant).

#### *Project grants (awarded to a single PI)*

Research grants that are awarded to an individual PI for a (small or large) research project that could (but do not necessarily) include costs for significant infrastructure and personnel (PI and/or team members such as PhD candidates and postdocs, other researchers, technicians etc.) in addition to research and research training costs incurred by the PI and the team members. This category would include for example grants for (junior) team leaders ("ERC Starting or Advanced Grant style"), but also smaller grants that provide research costs without any major contribution to the remuneration of the PI.

#### *Project grants (projects with several PIs)*

The third category of grants would include the situation where a project with various PIs is being funded, each one of them being in charge of a clearly identified part of the project with responsibility for her or his own team and the associated budget. This situation would include large multiannual grants such as the "ERC Synergy Grants".

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<sup>4</sup> See list in Annex 5

<sup>5</sup> prepared by the contractor Deloitte in the context of the preparation of the "Researchers' Report", to be published in summer 2012, which is part of the project "Monitor human resources policies and practices in research"

## 2. Concerning Access

### 2.1. Working definition

For the purpose of this report the following working definition is used: "Access to research grants is the right to apply across national borders".

This definition encompasses the conditions researchers have to fulfil to submit a grant proposal for a funding agency in the ERA countries, and if awarded the grant, being able to receive funding and pursue research work in the framework of that grant. Therefore, the key assumption implied in this definition is related to factors associated with eligibility criteria to submit and to implement research grants.

### 2.2. To whom does this matter?

Access to grants is important to a number of actors, such as researchers, research funding agencies, research performers such as universities or research institutions, and national authorities.

For researchers, open access to grants in ERA means opportunities for career development, international collaboration and mobility. They will need to get acquainted with the application procedures of the respective funding agency in the country of destination.

For research funders and national authorities, open access brings applications from researchers from abroad who can contribute to the advancement of certain scientific areas that a country needs to reinforce. Open access may lead to a higher demand (also because of multiple applications by the same person to different agencies), thus increasing the administrative burden on the agencies. More experts may be needed to assess a growing number of applications. Increases the short term may even out in the longer term. Impact over time will need to be monitored.

For institutions, open access means the ability to attract international researchers from the global scientific arena and eventually create more cosmopolitan career options for staff in general. Brain drain may have detrimental effects in the short term, but may eventually be compensated by brain circulation effects in the longer term. This issue warrants further research.

### 2.3. Analysis of accessibility of grants

Access to grants is relevant to all research career stages.<sup>6</sup> Scientific European systems can be considered as relatively open systems in terms of access, despite a heterogeneous set of conditions regarding access to grants across Europe by the country's main science funding agencies and funding programmes. **Residency and institutional affiliation**, sometimes both linked to one another, tend to be the key eligibility criteria for both accessing grants, and if these were awarded, for allowing the researchers to perform research within their scope.

#### Submission stage

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<sup>6</sup> R1-First stage researcher), R2-Recognized Researcher, R3-Established Researcher and R4-Leading Researcher

Several fellowship and grant schemes require that the applicant is a resident in the country of the granting organisation and/or employed by or otherwise affiliated to a recognised institution in that country in order to be eligible to apply.

In most cases (envisaged) affiliation to a recognised institution is more relevant than residency as the main eligibility criteria to access research grants. In some cases previous residency or employment is a requirement (see Annex 1). Some examples from the responses of the Steering Group delegates to the EPR questionnaire:

*"Independent applicants, i.e. researchers who are not affiliated to an Austrian research institution or university who apply for grants at the FWF must have been based in Austria for at least three of the previous ten years (principle of territoriality) at the time the application is submitted."*

*"Estonian Science Foundation awards research grants to individuals and research teams. The grant competitions are open for the permanent residents of the Republic of Estonia, whose active legal capacity is not limited. The grant shall be allocated to the citizens of a foreign country, provided that the application is submitted through an Estonian Institution."*

*"Any researcher who has been appointed to an eligible post at a UK University can apply for a Research Council grants regardless of nationality."*

#### Implementation stage

The same holds true concerning the implementation stage, since several programmes ask researchers to maintain or establish their principal residence in the country of the granting organization (thus, making residence a key eligibility criteria once more), and more often the research activities have to be carried out in the country of the granting body. Some examples from the responses of the Steering Group delegates to the EPR questionnaire:

*"The calls from MICINN are open to researchers from all around the world and no nationality restrictions are included. The only obligation is that the host R&D centre that has to be Spain."*

*"The majority of the grants are open to Dutch and foreign candidates regardless their nationality. As a general rule the research which will be conducted through the received grant should contribute to the Dutch research system."*

In some cases there is an official list of recognized institutions in the country that are eligible to act as host institutions, orienting the choice of possible hosts. The research funders need to make sure that the host institutions are acknowledged and high-quality institutions.

*"Access to research grants is open to researchers from any nationality, as long as they are affiliated to national institutions that have been evaluated by the National Assessment Exercise of R&D units"*

Also, it was found that research stays abroad are possible for widely varied percentages of time of the overall grant duration and many schemes exist to usefully support this mobility. Moreover, for the great majority of the ERA countries, nationality was not a condition for one to be eligible or not to access a research grant. Funding programmes requiring that applicants have the nationality of the granting organisation or at least citizenship of an EU Member State were residual. Language was also considered as a non-problem, since in the vast majority of the countries applications for grants could be

submitted in English, the lingua franca of science. No other problems were identified concerning access to research grants in member countries and associate member countries to ERA.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, some funding programmes have policies to curtail brain-drain as granting organizations accept the eligibility of third country researchers on the condition that they return to the country of origin (especially for grants related to development aid), or to the country of the granting organisation (in case of mobility fellowships implemented abroad).

### **3. Concerning portability**

#### *3.1. Working definition*

For the purpose of this report the following working definition is used: *"Grant portability occurs when an individual researcher or a group of researchers continues the research at another institution in another country than originally foreseen in the grant agreement and the remainder the grant is transferred for that purpose"*.

Portability, may imply that financial support granted (for the remuneration of the individual researcher, for associated research and research training costs, for the remuneration of team members, for equipment covered by the remainder of the grant, for overheads...), can be transferred, fully or in part, from the original host institution to a new one, provided certain transfer conditions are fulfilled. Transfer conditions may include:

- Portability only allowed after a X months (vesting period required)
- Portability only allowed for a remaining period of minimum X months
- Agreement by the host institution to provide the working conditions for the research to take place
- Agreement on IPR issues
- Which of the components paid by the grants are portable (Salary of the grant holding PI, salary of the team members, overheads, equipment, consumables (including travel expenses))
- Commitment to continue and report the results of the project
- Mentoring and monitoring.

#### *3.2. To whom does this matter?*

Similarly to the analysis of access to grants, the brief review of grant portability also affects a number of actors, such as researchers, research funding agencies, research performers such universities or research institutions, and national authorities.

For researchers, grant portability is likely to further empower researchers giving them freedom to bring their research and research team with them, something that the Money Follows Research (MfR) already underlines and considers as particularly relevant<sup>8</sup>, but above all, it enables that on-going research projects are not discontinued or stopped due

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<sup>7</sup> To be cross-checked against recent surveys

<sup>88</sup> EUROHORCS: <http://www.eurohorcs.org/E/initiatives/mfr/Pages/mfr.aspx>

to a job change from a institution from one country to another institution from another country. This is particularly important for research continuity, stability, team building purposes and networking. It may facilitate dual careers.

or funders and for national authorities, the portability of grants schemes guarantees that the research projects that were started and are on-going do not get disrupted and eventually stopped before any meaningful results have been achieved. The fact that the research project would be portable would also be likely to ensure that links to the original institution and country would be maintained after the researcher moved to the new country. In this context, the potential for brain circulation could be there as networks could be set-up between researchers involved in the project at the original country and colleagues at the institution to where the researcher has moved to.

The eventual downside is related to risk of having substantial national funding being transferred abroad in case of large research projects (in this regard, the size of the grants and its allocated funding can be of relevance). Also, delays associated to bureaucratic and administrative processes to transfer the portable grant from one country to the other may hamper portability of grants, and to avoid this, funders will require simple transferability procedures, as complex procedures can represent a burden to funders and researchers alike (eventually leading researchers to quit the grant in the middle of the administrative process with detrimental effect for all involved).

For the institution, the benefits can be related to a faster integration and setting-up of the newly hired researcher laboratory if the research team comes alongside with the remainder of the grant, as well as if equipment in the scope of the grant is also partially transferred, however, these same features can represent costs and losses of institutional competitiveness for the institution where the researcher departed from.

### *3.3. Analysis of portability of grants*

Portability of grants affects directly recognized researchers (R2), established researchers (R3) and leading researchers (R4), while affecting indirectly first stage researchers (R1) and in some cases recognized researchers (R2).

Examples such as the "Money Follows Researcher" demonstrate how research organisations can organise access to and portability of national grants, with respect for the interest of all parties concerned.<sup>9</sup>

In the large majority of the European countries, however, the portability of grants is not possible or permitted (see Annex 1). This was confirmed by the EPR questionnaire, a JRC-IPTS policy brief based on information from ERAWATCH<sup>10</sup> and the recent Steering Group survey (see Annex 1).

Funds from the funding organization are linked to national institutions as official beneficiaries since this funding is associated to tax-payers contributions to the nation-state development. Grant portability is therefore perceived as not being in the national interest. Some examples from the responses of the Steering Group delegates to the EPR questionnaire:

*"The funding granted by the MICINN for human resources in research are always received by Spanish R&D centres. This way, the beneficiaries of the grants, and thus the*

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<sup>9</sup> 2009 ESF/EUROHORCs "Vision on a Globally Competitive ERA and their Road Map for Actions"

<sup>10</sup> JRC-IPTS policy brief: "*Barriers and bottlenecks to making research careers more attractive and promoting mobility*" (Fernández-Zubieta and Van Bavel, 2011).

*legal beneficiaries, are the institutions so the grants cannot be portable to other countries."*

*"The beneficiary of grants and fellowships should be linked to a Flemish University, most often through their supervisor. Grants are of course portable during brief to middle long stays abroad during the mandate, but cannot be completely transferred abroad."*

These findings were reinforced by the 2011 Technopolis *"Study in support of the ERA Framework Impact Assessment on gathering an overview and analysis on the way research and research systems are regulated in the EU Member States"*, which concluded that *"there is an almost universal view, revealed through our interviews and wider desk research, that as a general rule, public bodies are not allowed to grant funds to people and organisations outside their national jurisdictions. It may occur by exception."*<sup>11</sup> This study added that recent entrants to the European Union tend to have a lesser positive view to open up their scientific funding systems to policies that would permit national funding to be transferred to other countries or to non-residents, which can be interpreted as an understandable policy to potentiate the growth of their national scientific systems assuring that the usually scarce resources available for science are used to build-up the national knowledge base.

### *3.4 Examples of national schemes which allow for grant portability*

#### *Money follows Researcher (MfR) – the example of the D-A-CH organizations*

Since 2002, the DFG (German Research Foundation), the FWF (Austrian Science Fund) and the SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation) in the framework of their „D-A-CH“ co-operation, offer the possibility to transfer grants from one of the partner countries to another. In order to be eligible for transfer, the research project must be ongoing at the time the PI moves to the partner country.

Before moving, the PI has to seek the approval of the funding organization in charge. The funding organization checks whether the conditions for the successful continuation of the project are met at the new host institution. Once the funding organization has approved the transfer, the project can be relocated to the new host country. From then on, funds flow across borders.

Projects that were approved but that *have not yet begun* at the time the PI moves to another partner country, according to an initial regulation were financed across border for one year by the funding organization that approved the project. The rationale behind this regulation was that researchers should be able to continue their research without interruption while giving them time to apply for grants in the new host country.

This regulation has recently been replaced by the D-A-CH funding organizations by an enlarged use of the Lead Agency principle. Now, projects that have not yet begun at the time the PI moves to another partner country will be financed by the funding organization of the new host country. This funding organization trusts the review process and funding decision of the partner organization and accepts to fund the project in accordance with its own funding regulations. In these cases, cross-border money transfer is no longer necessary while the research can continue seamlessly.

<sup>11</sup> Section 9.2 Commonalities and differences across member states, p. 62

### *The Research Council of Norway and grant portability*

In Norway, even if there is not a specific programme for grant portability, the Research Council of Norway has adopted the general principle of grant portability. A key factor is that funding is provided based on a contract between the Research Council and the research performing organisations, which one could expect to be a disadvantage for portability. However, the focus on portability is often on the advantages for the individual principal investigator and the continuation of the research project. This rationale is linked to the added advantage in research collaboration and networks between research performing institutions that portability can bring.

If the principal investigator decides to relocate, that is expected to be a career move. It is considered an added advantage if: 1) the researcher can take a research grant with him/her; 2) the research project is not terminated (for the funding organization). Portability also involves the sending organisation, a key player, which options are: 1) to lose an excellent researcher, 2) potentially lose the funding, 3) continue the project with another principal investigator, 4) continue the project with the original principal investigator and strengthen a partnership, or 5) establish a new partnership with a foreign research performing organisation.

If the right circumstances are in place and one considers the sending institution as a key stakeholder, the portability of grants is possible and potentially also attractive for research performing organisations in the role of sending institution. In the Norwegian case, there are very few examples of portability with the result that simple and transparent routines are not in place. This implies that the concept of portability is not widely known and that each situation is handled “case by case”. Promoting portability is not easy on “case by case” situations, but ensures individual adaptation to each individual situation.

### *The NOW-Talent Scheme*

Directed at individual researchers at various stages of their careers, it gives talented, creative researchers the opportunity to conduct their own research independently, promoting talented researchers to enter and remain committed to the scientific profession. It includes three grants: *Veni* (for recent doctorates; kEUR 250, three years), *Vidi* (for experienced researchers; kEUR 800, 5 years) and *Vici* (for researchers of professorial quality; MEUR 1.5, 5 years). The programme is open for researchers from abroad but the research must be carried out at a research institute in the Netherlands. The *Veni* grant covers the salary costs of the PI and costs for research while the *Vidi* and *Vici* grant may cover the salary cost of the PI but is, for a large part, used for salary costs of additional personnel (PhD students and Postdoc) and research costs. In the case of mobility (leaving the Netherlands and continuing a scientific career in one of the Eurohorcs countries) the remainder of the grant may be transferred to the new institute. The laureate however must seek approval of NWO. Transfer of the remainder of the grant is more applicable for *Veni* laureates as the grant always covers the salary costs of the PI and no other personnel is involved. Our experience with transferring grants is limited to *Vidi* and *Vici* laureates, the PhD students and Postdocs that work on the project mostly stay in the Netherlands meaning that most of the grant is fixed. Usually an agreement is set-up in which the PI that leaves the Netherlands remains to be responsible for carrying out the research project and for guiding the PhD



students and Postdocs that are involved. The project may then be finalized successfully while the PI's mobility is not hindered. Each situation is handled "case by case".

Following these examples, it is reckoned that portability of grants is not a goal in itself. The objective cannot be to substantially widen the number of cases, but to agree on a practical set of principles and conditions to facilitate portability in case of mobility.

A key notion is that grant portability will avoid unnecessary disruptions of research projects in case the grant holder moves, thus enhancing knowledge production. Grant portability is essentially important to smoothen the transition from going from an institution in country A to another institution in country B.

Above all, grant portability should not be understood as an ex-ante to mobility but as an instrument that facilitates the continuation of a research project that could be disrupted because of cross country mobility. This clearly relates to understanding mobility as instrumental in furthering the career development of researchers, not the promotion of portability in itself.

#### **4. Cohesion policy considerations – potential brain drain**

Particular attention should be paid to the effect that the proposed measures will have on cohesion, carefully examining the different impacts that measures will have on different national or regional research systems.

Promoting access to research grants and facilitating occasional portability of grants cross-border may lead to additional mobility and some transfer of resources and thus contribute to the phenomenon of brain drain and concentration of research activities in certain already highly developed regions. Income differences may play a role, but the real - additional - impact of the two measures on mobility is at present unknown.

It seems reasonably clear that the adoption of an ERC type “maximalist” approach of grant portability would likely contribute to a further concentration of research resources in more mature and developed scientific systems and would likely contribute to phenomena of brain-drain from the less mature or developed scientific systems. Exemplary of this situation is the fact that 59% of advanced ERC grants and 61% of Starting ERC grants were awarded to only four European countries. In any case, the ERC grants as a key science policy instrument in Europe that should continue to be supported.

In this context, whereas the conditions which govern cross-border access to grants may be subject to non-discrimination stipulations in EU legislation, the decision on whether, to what extent and how a grant is transferred is entirely with the granting organisations.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The recommendations of this report are framed within the goal to make Europe a more attractive destination for top research talent from anywhere in the world. To this end, researchers must be able to easily access the funding they need to develop their research and their research careers in the EU, without restrictions based on their nationality

(including third country researchers) or residence. They need a strong research environment and infrastructure and good host locations and they must enjoy a high level of planning security without undue disruptions.

Framing the recommendations in this framework is relevant, as it is critical that any measures proposed should take into account the needs and justified interests of all stakeholders involved: researchers, funding organisations, host institutions and national/regional authorities.

The recommendation below build on the principles laid down in the EUROHORC's Letter of Intent, Transfer of Grants ("Money follows researcher"). See Annex 2.

### ***Access***

*Funding agencies are recommended to:*

- 1) Open their grant schemes to non-residents in order to attract research talent both from Europe and abroad with the aim to carry out research in the host country.<sup>12</sup> In other words, residence should not be a condition for submission.
- 2) Publish their procedures and criteria for any applicant
- 3) Publish their calls for individual grants also on EURAXESS.

### ***Portability***

*Funding agencies are recommended to:*

- 1) Work towards implementing general principles of portability between all ERA countries, as defined in Money Follows Researcher (see Annex 2).

Implementation may be gradual and incremental. Some grants may be portable between some countries and others not or not yet.

- 2) Publish their procedures and conditions for portability.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Follow-up***

*The Steering Group could recommend:*

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<sup>12</sup> Innovation Union commitment no 4 on ERA and 30 on international attractiveness

<sup>13</sup> Transfer conditions may include:

- Portability only allowed after a X months (vesting period required)
- Portability only allowed for a remaining period of minimum X months
- Agreement by the host institution to provide the working conditions for the research to take place
- Agreement on IPR issues
- Which of the components paid by the grants are portable (Salary of the grant holding PI, salary of the team members, overheads, equipment, consumables (including travel expenses))
- Commitment to continue and report the results of the project
- Mentoring and monitoring.

- 1) Identification of remaining legal barriers and their justification.
- 2) An annual mapping [via Science Europe] of the grant schemes allowing for portability of grants, the number of cases, number and category of researchers, countries of origin and destination, the volume of funding provided and at the concrete conditions imposed.

A periodic monitoring would allow stakeholders, policymakers and the research community at large to explore in-depth and with scientific basis the topic of access and grant portability and make an informed judgement about the number of fellowship and grant schemes that are accessible (or not) to non-national / non-resident researchers, and that allow (or not) the fellowship or grant to be moved to a different host institution once it has been awarded.

- 3) To consider both measures, (cross-border) access to grants and portability in conjunction with other measures proposed in the ERA framework that also address the free movement of researchers, in particular open recruitment and the provision of more tailored and harmonised information to mobile researchers. As was pointed out in the recent JRC-IPTS publication *"Developing the European Research Area: Improving Knowledge Flows via Researcher Mobility"*(Fernández-Zubieta and Guy, 2010):

*"Increased mobility and the greater interaction of research-related personnel are increasingly seen as routes to the creation of dynamic networks, improved scientific performance, improved knowledge and technology transfer, improved productivity and ultimately enhanced economic and social welfare".*

## Results of survey among Member States and Associated Countries

### ERA Steering Group Human Resources and mobility

The survey on Grant Access and Portability was sent in May of 2012 to the member and associated countries of the European Union that constitute the Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility and finalised in July. The results of the survey are based on the responses of 28 funding organizations and research programs funding directly by Ministries from 14 countries. These countries are: Ireland (Irish Research Council), Portugal (FCT), Israel (ISF, BSF, GIF, MOST, I-CORE, KAMIN, BARD, ICRF), Cyprus (Research Promotion Foundation), Netherlands (NWO), Switzerland (Swiss National Science Foundation), United Kingdom (RCUK), Romania (UEFISCDI), Belgium (BELSPO, Flanders government, FNRS), Finland (Academy of Finland, TEKES), Denmark (Danish Council for Independent Research, Danish Council for Strategic Research, Danish Council of Technology and Innovation), Latvia (Latvian Council of Science, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia), Austria (Austrian Science Fund, Austrian Academy of Sciences), and France (ANR).

In terms of access, three main findings can be observed:

1) ***Institution affiliation and residence within the country of the funding agency are important factors conditioning access to research grants to non-nationals.*** The former is considered as a much more important access condition than the latter since the great majority of the respondents answered that institution affiliation is a key condition both at grant submission and implementation stages (between 50% to 88% depending on the type of grant). The need for a non-national to apply and be awarded with the grant based on country residence is considered as a condition by slightly more than half of the funding agencies;

2) ***Language and nationality cannot be considered as barriers to access.*** The great majority of the funding agencies pointed out that the applications can be written in English language, the current *lingua franca* of science. All nationals can apply to research grants from all funding agencies, and only in very few cases nationality becomes an obstacle when it comes to the implementation of the grant;

3) ***Substantial differences concerning access to grants can be found by type of grants.*** Individual grants for example do not have to be primarily carried out in the country of the funding agency (only 35% of the respondents said that is a needed condition) while project grants (both single or with multiple PIs) are required to be primarily undertaken in the country of the funding agency. Other example is institutional affiliation: 50% of the individual grants can be submitted and 30% implemented even if the researcher is not affiliated with an institution of the country of the funding agency. However, only

13% of the research grants with a single PI can do so at the grant submission stage and 12% at the grant implementation stage.

	At the time of the grant submission	At the time of the grant implementation
<b><i>The researcher has to be a resident of your country</i></b>		
individual grants	42%	65%
project grants (single PI)	60%	60%
project grants (several PIs)	60%	60%
<b><i>The researcher has to be a national of your country</i></b>		
individual grants	0%	6%
project grants (single PI)	0%	4%
project grants (several PIs)	0%	4%
<b><i>The researcher needs to be affiliated to an institution in your country</i></b>		
individual grants	50%	70%
project grants (single PI)	87%	88%
<b><i>The leading researcher needs to be affiliated to an institution in your country</i></b>		
project grants (several PIs)	83%	85%
<b><i>Can the application for the grant be done in English?</i></b>		
individual grants	92%	
project grants (single PI)	88%	
project grants (several PIs)	88%	
<b><i>Can the application be submitted by a PI from a home country institution together with a co-applicant from another country?</i></b>		
individual grants	25%	
project grants (single PI)	60%	
project grants (several PIs)	64%	
<b><i>Must the research be carried out primarily in your country?</i></b>		
individual grants		35%
project grants (single PI)		85%
project grants (several PIs)		81%

In terms of portability, four main findings can be observed:

**1) Only few funding agencies allow grant portability.** 24% of the funding agencies and research programmes directly funded by the ministries allow individual grants and project grants with a single PI to be portable. This percentage decreases for project grants with several PIs (12%). Interestingly, the majority of those who indicated that grant portability is not allowed indicated that they not consider legal impediments as obstacles. Legal obstacles to grant portability were only pointed out by 26% of the funding agencies concerning individual grants, and 35% concerning both types of project grants.

**2) Of the grant portability components considered as portable, consumables, the salary of the PI, and the salary of the team members were referred as those that would be the most paid by the funding agencies in case of portability.** Still, only one-fourth to one-third of the funding agencies would continue to pay for these components, while these values vary substantially according to the types of grants. For example, 32% of the funding agencies would pay for the salary of the individual grant holder as the grant would become actively portable, but only 19% would pay for the salary of the project grant with a single PI, and 14% of a project grant with several PIs. Overheads and equipment can be considered as the less portable components of research grants,

since less than 20% of the funding agencies would consider paying in case of portability.

3) *The most relevant conditions for portability set by the funders are the commitment to continue to report the results of the project (including mentoring and monitoring), and the existence of an agreement by the host institution to provide the working conditions for the research to take place.* These conditions are particularly emphasized regarding individual grants and project grants with a single PI. Other potential conditions such as agreement on IPR issues, allowing portability only a determined number of months after the project has started, and from its end, were not considered as relevant as the previous ones.

<b><i>Do your main funding organizations allow their grants to be transferred to other countries?</i></b>	Responded affirmatively
individual grants	24%
project grants (single PI)	23%
project grants (several PIs)	12%
<b><i>If not, are there legal obstacles to grant portability?</i></b>	
individual grants	26%
project grants (single PI)	35%
project grants (several PIs)	35%
<b><i>Which of the components paid by the grants are portable:</i></b>	
<b><i>Salary of the grant holding PI</i></b>	
individual grants	32%
project grants (single PI)	19%
project grants (several PIs)	14%
<b><i>Salary of the team members</i></b>	
individual grants	22%
project grants (single PI)	26%
project grants (several PIs)	18%
<b><i>Overheads</i></b>	
individual grants	10%
project grants (single PI)	13%
project grants (several PIs)	5%
<b><i>Equipment</i></b>	
individual grants	16%
project grants (single PI)	18%
project grants (several PIs)	10%
<b><i>Consumables (including travel expenses)</i></b>	
individual grants	33%
project grants (single PI)	35%
project grants (several PIs)	23%
<b><i>Conditions for portability set by funder:</i></b>	
<b><i>Portability only allowed after a X months (vesting period required)</i></b>	
individual grants	11%
project grants (single PI)	5%
project grants (several PIs)	0%
<b><i>Portability only allowed for a remaining period of minimum X months</i></b>	
individual grants	0%
project grants (single PI)	10%
project grants (several PIs)	5%
<b><i>Agreement by the host institution to provide the working conditions for the research to take place</i></b>	
individual grants	30%
project grants (single PI)	29%
project grants (several PIs)	15%
<b><i>Agreement on IPR issues</i></b>	
individual grants	11%
project grants (single PI)	5%
project grants (several PIs)	5%

<i>Commitment to continue and report the results of the project. Mentoring and monitoring.</i>	
individual grants	30%
project grants (single PI)	29%
project grants (several PIs)	14%

4) Finally, from a more qualitatively perspective, ***the perceived potential benefits from grant portability are associated both with systemic (or holistic) and individual factors.*** The systemic factors identified relate to the encouragement of cross-border education, continuation of the research project with gains for the countries and institutions involved, and build-up of mobility and networking among researchers and institutions. The referred potentially beneficial individual factors derive from career development gains, further investment in skills, and a faster integration into a new science and technology system, that can contribute to a successful professional experience. On the other hand, ***the drawbacks of grant portability are associated above all to brain-drain and potential loss of the knowledge base,*** potential steep salary discrepancies between the sending and host institutions/countries, and to a very less extent, administrative concerns.

**EUROHORC's  
Letter of Intent  
Transfer of Grants  
("Money follows researcher")**



EUROHORCs\_MFR\_L  
etter\_of\_Intent\_Revi



### **Links to previously launched EU policy initiatives**

The topic of portability of grants has already been included in various EU policy initiatives in the past. For example, the European Charter for Researchers states under 'Value of mobility':

*"Employers and/or funders must recognise the value of geographical, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility as well as mobility between the public and private sector as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career. [...] This also requires that the necessary administrative instruments be put in place to allow the portability of both grants and social security provisions, in accordance with national legislation."*

The portability of grants was also included in the first axis of the European Partnership for Researchers (EPR)<sup>14</sup>. The Communication from 2008 points out that *"to date, almost all project funding is tied to an institution within the country of the funding organisation even if relocation would be beneficial for the results of the project"*

and proposes as a priority action:

*"Member States and Commission to allow portability of individual grants awarded by national funding agencies and relevant Community research programmes where this enables funders to better meet their research needs and researchers to better manage their careers."*

However, it is interesting to see that despite the high importance attested to the topic of portability of grants through this priority action, apparently no systematic study was carried out to properly assess the situation, the bottlenecks, the challenges for the different actors concerned, and the potential impacts of the proposed solution. On the other hand, the topic of (cross-border) access to grants seems not to have been addressed through concrete policy proposals in the past.

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<sup>14</sup> Better Careers and More Mobility: a European Partnership for Researchers COM(2008) 317 final

**WG 2: Portability of grants – [IU Commitment: 4 and 30]**

Introduction and rationale

The availability of competitive funding is an important precondition for stimulating high quality in research. International competition with a wider range of applicants is likely to lead to better proposals and excellence in performance, hence the attractiveness of opening up national competitions to non-nationals. Some national funding bodies have started to do so under certain conditions. Some even allow the grant receiver to move with the grant to another institution or country. Access to and portability of national grants were among the objectives of the EPR and could be part of the 2012 ERA framework proposal. A brief analysis of practices and trends could help to inform the debate in the SGHRM and beyond. Accordingly:

- Access (by non-nationals) to national grants would add an incentive to be mobile
- Allowing portability of grants would remove an obstacle to mobility

Concrete Deliverable(s): Assessment of and Opinion on the conditions under which access to and portability of grants could be substantially widened as compared to the present situation.

Focus/Goal is to identify the most effective policy approaches to gradually reach substantially wider access to and portability of grants.

Operational Objective,

1. Produce a typology of grants, based on several parameters, including accessibility and portability.
2. Develop first inventory of current practices and trends based on the above typology, including frequency of take up and impact on research performing organisations.
3. Advise on steps to take and conditions to be fulfilled to gradually arrive at a substantially wider access to and portability of grants.

Members<sup>15</sup> and Stakeholders Profile SGHRM delegates including those from countries with experience in organising access to and portability of national grants, Experts from funding bodies and their European associations, the ESF<sup>16</sup>, representatives from universities and other research performing organisations and their European associations, familiar with issues concerning staff applying for cross-border grants and portability.

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<sup>15</sup> In addition to SGHRM delegates who should be part of each WG

<sup>16</sup> Science Europe colleagues took part instead

<b>WG on Portability - Members</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Institution</b>
BARENREUTER Christophe	AT	Austrian Science Fund (FWF)
BEALES Rosie	UK	Research Careers and Diversity (RCUK)
BONDRE-BEIL Pria	DE	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)
CARLEY Stephen	IE	National RTI Programmes & Policy Office of Science, Technology & Innovation
CHRISTIANSEN Anne	DK	Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation
DEN HOLLANDER Nick	NL	The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)
HEGELUND Alan	DK	Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation
FUSAI Guillaume	FR	Chargé de Mission CEA Direction des relations internationales Direction déléguée aux affaires européennes Centre CEA de Saclay
HORTA Hugo	PT	Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research IN+ at Instituto Superior Técnico. Hugo Horta Delegate of Portugal in Steering Group and Chair Working Group on Portability
KUSTER Stephan	DE	Science Europe
MITTER Elisabeth	CH	Scientific Officer International Co-operation Swiss National Science Foundation
THORBJORN Gilberg	NO	Research Council Norway