

FP6 Marie Curie Research Training Networks (RTN): Practical Information for appointed researchers

1. ESR/ER individual contract with the host institution

For the European Commission, appointed researchers are considered as a third-party meaning that there is no direct contractual link between the researcher (ESR or ER) and the European Commission.

Under RTN, ESRs and ERs (see definition in *Reference 2*, p20) will be selected and appointed by the host institutions and offered either an employment contract or a fixed amount stipend. In both cases, a contract or a written agreement will be signed between the researcher and the host legal entity. The law applicable to the contract/agreement must be specified (usually the national one).

Within 20 days, the appointment will be communicated to the European Commission via a Declaration of Conformity signed by the Legal Representative of the host institution and the recruited researcher.

Normally, the appointment of ER will always be under employment contracts (unless duly justified and agreed by the European Commission). For ESR, each contractor should respect the agreement with the European Commission: the percentage of stipend is stipulated in the RTN contract with the consortium (table at the end of Annex I of the RTN contract). If 0%, only employment contracts are allowed and it cannot be modified without the prior approval of the European Commission.

In both cases, compulsory social security covered under the legislation in the country of appointment is mandatory.

The level of Marie Curie rates are intended to cover all compulsory deductions –for the employer and/or for the employee- under the national applicable legislation as well as the minimum social coverage (stipend).

Although ESRs and ERs are considered as a third-party for the European Commission, some minimum requirements are related to the RTN contract between the consortium and the European Commission:

- The nature of the researcher activity in the network should be in agreement with the RTN contract, especially with the work described in Annex I of the contract. A copy of this Annex I (specific for each project) should be given to the appointed researcher: it describes the contract details (including the list of participants) and objectives, the description of work (joint research/training project, management), the contract “deliverables” in terms of appointed ESR and ER person-months (including the percentage of stipend for each contractor), the distribution of the maximum Community contribution among the different categories of expenses.

- The host has additional obligations identified in the RTN contract (Annex III: in particular see article III.2.2 and article III.3 – *Reference 3*).

- The researcher individual contract or agreement with the host must specify at least some minimum arrangements: see article III.4 in the same Annex III of the RTN contract (see *Reference 3*).

- A Personal Career Development Plan must be established at the time of the ESR/ER appointment (for an appointment of at least 6 months – see *Reference 1*).

2. Before taking up an appointment in an institution member of a RTN

Before accepting any offer made by a host institution member of a RTN, it is essential that you carefully discuss your conditions of employment with the host: although there are minimum requirements in particular the fixed Marie Curie rates related to the EC funding, you will be recruited in accordance with the local conditions. Consequently, as any other future employee, you have to ask for detailed information on the work environment, right and duties, local regulations as well as national ones.

3. Administrative issues and requirements

Regarding national administrative issues (visa, permit of stay, health system, income tax etc.), some support can be found at different levels:

- The host administration shall provide the researcher with “reasonable assistance in all administrative procedures”.

- The pan-European Researchers' Mobility Portal (*Reference 5*) is the Commission's initiative targeted at researchers where they can find the following useful information and services:

- Links to research funding at national and international level.
- Advertisement of research organisations for job vacancies
- Researchers can post for free their CV directly on the Portal and self-tune their job search.
- Information about policies for human resources, administrative and legal issues for mobile researchers (the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, conditions of entry, social security and tax schemes, etc.)
- Access to help-desk function through ERA-MORE, the European Network of Mobility Centres, which provide personal assistance to researchers moving from one country to another.
- Access to the national Researcher's Mobility Portals.

- The FP6 national contact points (*Reference 7*)

- The Marie Curie Fellowship Association (*Reference 6*)

- Useful information can also be found in the "Frequently asked questions" document (*Reference 4*)

4. The RTN contract and the Community contribution

a- The RTN contract

The RTN contract between the European Commission and the consortium of host teams is constituted of 4 parts. The model is available at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/index_en.cfm?p=0_contracts#MCmodelcontract (you have to select the multicontractor version of the Marie Curie contracts)

- the core contract, specific to each project, specify in particular the list of the legal entities member of the consortium, the maximum Community contribution, the duration of the project, its start date and some essential provisions on reporting, payment modalities.

- the Annex I, specific to each project as well and only available via the consortium: it describes the contract details (including the list of participants) and objectives, the description of work (joint research/training project, management), the contract “deliverables” in terms of appointed ESR and ER person-months (including the percentage of stipend for each node), the distribution of the maximum Community contribution among the different categories of expenses.

- the Annex II: general conditions for all host-driven Marie Curie actions (multicontractor)

- the Annex III: specific provisions for all Marie Curie RTN including contractors obligations towards you and the financial provisions.

Annex II and III can be downloaded from the above web site.

The most relevant information for you is the Annex I and the Annex III. The Annex II is more relevant to host institutions but is interesting if you want to be involved in the management of the project e.g. Intellectual Property Rights.

b- The Community contribution

The financial provisions (definitions of the different categories of costs to the benefit of the appointed researchers, to the benefit of the contractors, Marie Curie rates etc.) are specified in the Annex III of the contract (*Reference 3*) and in the RTN Handbook (*Reference 2*).

From the RTN Handbook (chapter 6), each appointed researcher can calculate the amount to be spent by the host to his direct benefit.

For example, the expenses for an ESR appointed in France under an employment contract for 24 months, who is married or has charge of children, are:

Costs Categories

- A** = 24 x monthly living allowance x country coefficient = 24 x (30550/12) x 1.047
= 63971.70 Euro
- B** = 2x travel allowance = 2 x 750 (for example)
= 1500 Euro
- C** = 24 x mobility allowance x country coefficient = 24 x 800 x 1.047
= 20102.40 Euro
- D** = career exploratory allowance
= 2000 euro (one off)

Total for two years for the recruited ESR: around 87574 Euro.

On top for the Host Institution cost directly linked to the research work

- E** = contribution to the expenses of eligible researchers = maximum 24 x 400
= maximum 9600 euro.

5. References

1	RTN Management	http://cordis.europa.eu/mariecurie-actions/rtn/manage.htm
2	RTN Handbook	http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/publications_en.html
3	RTN Contract	http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/index_en.cfm?p=0_contracts#MCmodelcontract
4	RTN Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/faq_en.html
5	The researcher's Mobility Portal	http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/index_en.cfm
6	Marie Curie Fellowship Association	http://mcfa.eu
7	National Contact Points	http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/ncp_en.html