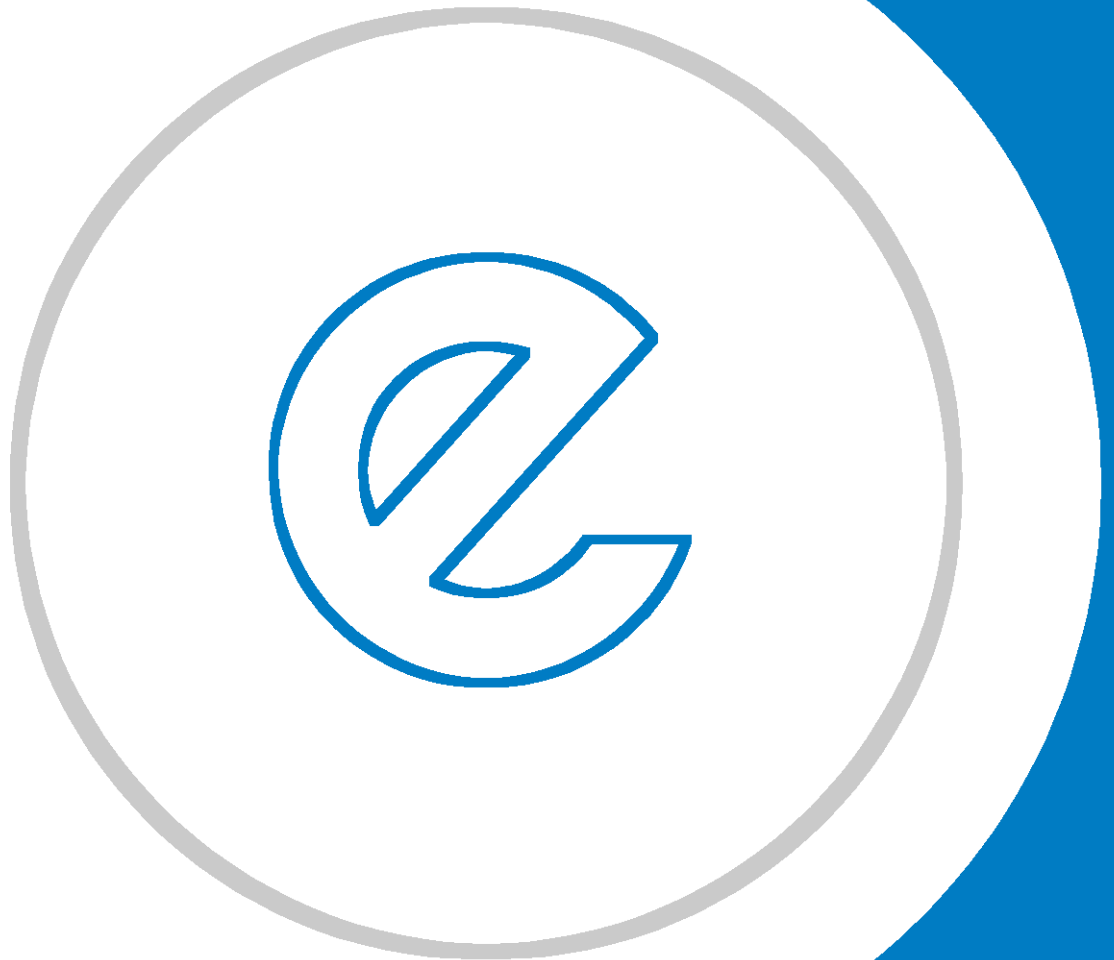


Recommendations for Implementing Interdisciplinary Mobility



Importance of Interdisciplinary Mobility

EU aims to be a global leader in research and development. The requirement of excellent interdisciplinary skills never faces doubts. Excellent innovation and solutions to societal challenges cannot be achieved without interdisciplinary endeavors.

The consensus of the importance of interdisciplinary skills and mobility becomes evident in several documents: *The State of the Innovation Union 2011* report¹, *The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*²; *Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union*³.

Interdisciplinary mobility is one of the simplest and best ways of sharing, learning and creating experiences of interdisciplinary research. It is often juxtaposed with other types of mobility, like cross-sectorial and geographical. However, interdisciplinary mobility receives much less attention than other types of mobility. Further, there is a clear lack of monitoring practices that seek to understand how researchers face challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinary mobility.

A proper monitoring of interdisciplinary mobility must be implemented. This would include a series of indicators and monitoring systems implemented at different levels.

While the limitations of current monitoring practices are evident from assessment of Marie Curie actions on skills, training and career development⁴, in the assessment interdisciplinary indicators are not specified.

¹European Commission, Report from the commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions, State of the Innovation Union 2011, Brussels, 2.12.2011., COM(2011) 849 final, P.11-12.

²European Commission, The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, Directorate-General for Research, Human resources and mobility (Marie Curie Actions), 2005.

³European Commission, Communication from The Commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions, Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative, Innovation Union, SEC(2010) 1161, Brussels, 6.10.2010., COM(2010) 546 final.

⁴European Commission, Commission staff working paper, Impact assessment, Accompanying the Communication from the Commission 'Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation': *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020); Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020); Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2014-2018) contributing to the Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (COM(2011) 808 final, SEC(2011) 1428 final)*, Brussels, 30.11.2011., SEC(2011) 1427 final.

Statements and Recommendations Regarding Interdisciplinary Mobility

- **The definition** of “interdisciplinary mobility”: mobility across research fields⁵ within the timeframe of one project.
- **Interdisciplinary mobility** is one activity of high importance for researchers to develop skills and learn new techniques which enable them to pursue excellent research.
- The **researcher** who aims for interdisciplinarity shouldn't be evaluated only on publications, especially during the first years when most of the time is spent in learning new techniques and developing skills.
- For quality assurance purposes, interdisciplinary mobility needs to be **monitored**.
- To monitor interdisciplinary mobility, **indicators** need to be developed. An agreement on monitoring measures needs to be reached through the involvement and discussion of relevant stakeholders.
- **More authors** in the interdisciplinary papers should be taken into account and it should be seen as a **positive skill**, in which a group of people from different disciplines are successfully brought together.
- The indicators should **trace** dynamics of a career in terms of (1) research area, (2) patents, (3) products, (4) specific topics or (5) methods associated with a researchers theme focused training.
- Interdisciplinary mobility is **measured** by:
 - (1) researcher’s bibliometric (impact factors, number of citations),
 - (2) content analysis of published articles,
 - (3) co-authors affiliations to different disciplines on specific article⁶,
 - (4) the composition of references in a publication,
 - (5) the conference proceedings publications,
 - (6) belonging to the more than one scientific research area,
 - (7) maintaining an interdisciplinary approach in researcher work (reflected by the nature of their collaborations),
 - (8) joint appointments in multiple departments,
 - (9) publishing of interdisciplinary papers,
 - (10) obtaining grants with interdisciplinary themes,
 - (11) having two or more supervisors from different disciplines,
 - (12) holding the interdisciplinary degree at bachelor, master and/or PhD level and
 - (13) conferences attended.
- The recommended evaluation measures should take place **at different levels** and should protect PhD candidates.

⁵ESF, *New Concepts of Researcher Mobility – a comprehensive approach including combined/part-time positions*, Science Policy Briefing, April 2013

⁶Inter-university and intra-university research brings together researchers from different disciplines within a single institution working on different aspects of a single discipline which may result in one article.

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