



Research Training Networks

**Evaluation, Negotiation, Contract, Training,
Networking, Reporting, Webpages**

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- ★ **Introduction**
- ★ **Overview of evaluation**
- ★ **Contract Preparation Forms and Eligible Costs**
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- ★ **Reporting and Payments**
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Introduction

“Improving Human Research Potential and the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base” (1280 Mio □) Framework Programme 5

- Supporting Training and Mobility of Researchers (858 Mio €)
 - * **Research Training Networks**, *Marie Curie Fellowships
- Enhancing Access to Research Infrastructures
- Promoting Scientific and Technological Excellence
- Key Action: Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base
- Support for the Development of Scientific and Technology Policies in Europe





Introduction

Primary objective of Research Training Networks is to promote trans-national training of young researchers, at pre- and postdoctoral level, within high quality international collaborative research projects.

Funds are mainly provided for:

- ➔ **international appointment of young researchers**
- ➔ **interactions and exchanges of all research staff (and technical staff) working on the project.**

It is the TOTAL number of person-months of training which is the most important deliverable of the contract.





EVALUATION





Evaluation

Call for Proposals

★ Publication	15 December 2000
★ Deadline	4 May 2001
★ Evaluation sessions	10-22 September 2001
★ Negotiations	November 2001 onwards
★ First contracts	January 2002 onwards





Evaluation

Call for Proposals - Evaluation

- ★ **7 disciplinary panels (PHY, CHE, LIF, ENG, MAT, ENV, ESH)**
- ★ **PHY Panel: 40 Members**
- ★ **570 eligible proposals received of which 140 in Physics**
- ★ **Initial evaluation: Each proposal sent to 3 experts(min.)**
- ★ **Panel Meeting:**
 - * **Discussion of initial evaluation results**
 - * **Panel Opinion**
- ★ **40 Physics proposals recommended to be funded**





Evaluation

Call for Proposals - Evaluation Criteria

- 1. Scientific merit of the collaborative research project /40**
- 2. Quality of the network partnership, organisation and management /30**
- 3. Quality and content of the network's training programme /30**

**Threshold for total of above primary criteria of 70/100 and
for Training of 23/30**

plus Secondary criteria (for proposals of equal merit)





NEGOTIATION





Contract Preparation Forms

Important elements to consider

- ★ **Young Researchers Salaries (Form A5.2)**
- ★ **Eligibility of Networking Costs (Form A5.2)**
- ★ **Overheads (Form A5.3)**
- ★ **Financial and Accounting Rules (Form A5.3)**
- ★ **Start Date and Recruitment Schedule (Form A5.2)**
- ★ **Yearly estimate of costs (Form A3)**





Contract Preparation Forms

Young Researcher Costs (Form A5.2)

★ Recommendation is to use, at least, local conditions.

★ Salaries should be competitive.

★ If desired, Marie-Curie rates may be used.

★ Other related allowable costs are:

➤ social charges and pension costs

➤ registration or tuition fees

➤ relocation costs (guideline 1000euro)

➤ travel costs (/9 months, guideline 750euro)

★ Contract Reference: Annex II, Article 18(1)

**At least 60% of total budget must be used for
these Personnel Costs**





Contract Preparation Forms

Costs linked to Networking: Travel and Subsistence

- ★ **Meetings with, and secondments (normally 3 months maximum) to, other participants only;**
- ★ **Conference participation (to represent project);**
(NOTE: Prior approval required if travel to/from outside Europe)
- ★ **Invitation of external experts to network meetings;**
- ★ **Interviewing young researchers for an appointment;**
- ★ **For young researchers, who have left the network, to take part in the Mid-Term Review meeting.**
- ★ **Contract reference: Annex II, Article 19(1).**





Contract Preparation Forms

Costs linked to Networking (cont.)

- ★ **Subcontracting (Annex II, Articles 6 and 19(2))**
Must be necessary for work (not for co-ordination)
Prior approval required if:
 - ☞ >20% participants' estimated budget or 50000euro;
 - ☞ with entity outside Member and Associated States.
- ★ **Consumables (Annex II, Article 19(3))**
Necessary to perform work described in contract.
- ★ **Computing (Annex II, Article 19(4))**
Use of computer services and media at disposal of participants (not to purchase PC).





Contract Preparation Forms

Costs linked to Networking (cont.)

- ★ **Protection of knowledge (Annex II, Articles 9, 10, 11, 19(5))**
Related to filing of industrial property right.
If relevant, recommend prior agreement between members.
- ★ **Durable Equipment (Annex II, Article 19(6))**
Only for participants in Less Favoured Region and where there is an ex-international post-doc researcher who is active in the project.





Contract Preparation Forms

Costs linked to Networking: Other Specific Costs

- ★ Organisation of network meetings;
- ★ International workshop, seminar and conference fees;
- ★ Exchanging information between participants (incl. Network webpages);
- ★ Joint publications;
- ★ User fees for access to external scientific research facilities;
- ★ Exchanging materials and reference products.
- ★ Contract Reference: Annex II, Article 19(7)





Contract Preparation Forms

Indirect Costs (Overheads)

- ★ **Administrative/Secretarial personnel;**
- ★ **Depreciation of buildings/equipment;**
- ★ **Water, Electricity Telecommunication costs;**
- ★ **Office supplies;**
- ★ **Postal charges;**
- ★ **etc.**

★ **Contract Reference: Annex II, Article 20**

A maximum of 20% of the total Personnel plus Networking (excluding subcontracting) costs can be charged to the contract per reporting period.





Contract Preparation Forms

Financial and Accounting Rules (Form A5.3)

- ★ Ideally, each participant should provide a contract number (between their institute and Commission).
- ★ If participant is PNP or PRC then Annex 2 of CPFs needs to be completed.
- ★ If Annex 2 already provided, give details.
- ★ Link of subcontractor(s) also needs to be completed.





Contract Preparation Forms

Start Date and Recruitment Schedule (Form A5.2)

- ★ **The Start Date is important in two respects:**
 - ☞ **it defines the planned recruitment schedule, and**
 - ☞ **consequently impacts on the yearly expenditure.**
- ★ **Networks typically take 6 to 12 months to recruit.**
- ★ **Experience suggests that most appointments occur at beginning of academic year.**
- ★ **Thus consider starting contract (a) 6 months before this or (b) at beginning of academic year.**
- ★ **Planned duration of appointments also a factor.**





Contract Preparation Forms

Start Date and Yearly Expenditure

- ★ **Consequent yearly expenditure is important since it can have an effect on periodic payments.**
- ★ **At some stage, Networks will run out of available funds until next periodic payment.**
- ★ **Delays in payment are likely.**
- ★ **Contract is based on COST REIMBURSEMENT MODEL, i.e. payments are made AFTER expenditure.**
- ★ **A proportion of the advance is also recovered plus if actual expenditure is different from estimated.**





Contract Preparation Forms

Yearly Expenditure

- ★ Advance payment typically 30% to 40% of total.
- ★ From TMR networks, expenditure and payments:

YEAR	EXPENDITURE (% of total)	PAYMENT (% of total)
1	11 ± 5	11 ± 5
2	24 ± 7	19 ± 7
3	29 ± 8	20 ± 8
4	28 ± 8	~35

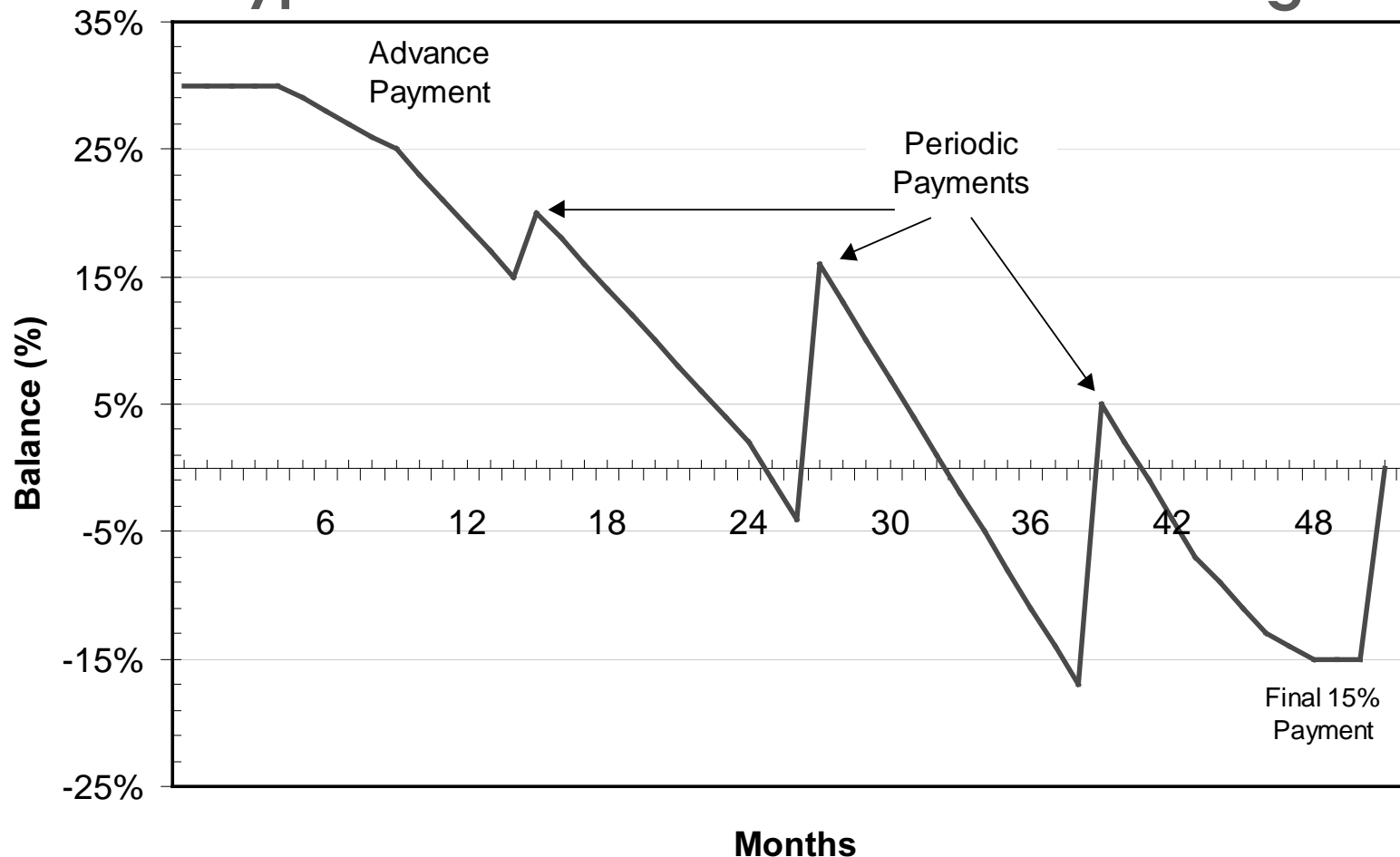
- ★ 15% retained until approval of Final Report.





Contract Preparation Forms

Typical Behaviour of the Network Budget





Annex I: Description of Work

General Principle

- ★ **Transfer of relevant parts of Proposal Description into a Programme of Work, which becomes Annex I of contract.**
- ★ **This should also incorporate any recommendations made by expert evaluators, particularly with regard to the Training programme.**
- ★ **Annex I then provides a reference from which progress of contract is monitored/ assessed.**
- ★ **Guidelines for preparation of Annex provided.**
- ★ **As with CPFs, Annex negotiated with relevant Scientific Officer.**





NETWORK

CONTRACT





Preparation of contract

- ★ **Recommended to send, with CPFs and Annex I, cover letter stating required Start Date plus explanations on any items raised during negotiation.**
- ★ **Copy of documents proving legal existence and authorisation to sign have also been requested.**
- ★ **Once CPFs and Annex I have been accepted, procedure moves onto next stage.**
- ★ **This involves preparation of contract, for which certain internal procedures need to be completed.**





Preparation of Contract (cont.)

- ★ **Two copies of contract are sent to Principal Contractor for signature by authorised person.**
- ★ **Upon return, signed by Commission and one copy returned to Principal Contractor.**
- ★ **Next step is to complete Membership Agreement between Principal Contractor and other Members.**
- ★ **Have 3 months to do this but advance not paid until copy provided to Commission.**
- ★ **Part F of Model Contract has Membership Agreement.**





Network Contract

General Format (HPRN-CT-year-00nnn)

- ★ **“Main Contract” including table “indicative breakdown of the estimated eligible costs”**
- ★ **Annex I - Description of Work (Work Programme)**
- ★ **Annex II - General Conditions**
- ★ **Membership Agreement (Part F)**





Network Contract

Definitions

★ Participants:

☞ Principal Contractor = Institution which signs the contract with the Commission

☞ Several Members = Institutions which sign an agreement with the Principal Contractor

★ Team: Participant (+ possibly scientists from other institutions working on the project, e.g. sub-contractors, associated members)





Network Contract

Requirements of Principal Contractor at commencement

- ★ **Actual date of commencement of work;**
- ★ **Scientific Network Co-ordinator and other scientists-in-charge;**
- ★ **Database Report within 2 months (plus two figures):**
 - **Network co-ordinator**
 - **Scientists in charge for each Member**
 - **Information on network (Objectives, Training**
 - **Network homepage**
- ★ **Copy of Membership Agreement (within 3 months).**





Network Contract

Other Principal Contractor Responsibilities

Through the Scientific Network Co-ordinator:

- ★ **Project Management;**
- ★ **Contacts with the Commission (questions, special requests, amendments, correspondence, etc.);**
- ★ **Reporting (yearly and mid-term);**
- ★ **Transfer of funds;**
- ★ **Inform the Commission of any changes.**
- ★ **Contract Reference: Annex II, Article 2**





TRAINING





Appointment of Young Researchers

Conditions (Annex II, Article 18(2))

- ★ **35 years or under at appointment (allowance for compulsory military or civil service or child care);**
- ★ **Pre-doc (not necessarily PhD) or post-doc;**
- ★ **Appointed within duration of contract to work on project or assist co-ordinator in its co-ordination;**
- ★ **National of Member or Associated States or resided in Community for at least 5 years immediately prior to appointment;**





Appointment of Young Researchers

Conditions (Annex II, Article 18(2)) cont.

- ★ **Not a national of country in which participant is based;**
- ★ **Not carried out their normal activities in country in which participant is based for >12 of previous 24 months.**
- ★ **For Third Country nationals, have not resided for >2 years in the last 5 immediately prior to appointment in the country in which participant is based.**

It is the Participants legal responsibility to ensure that eligibility conditions are met.





Appointment of Young Researchers

Associated States

- ★ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia;
- ★ Liechtenstein, Iceland, Israel, Norway.
- ★ Up-to-date information provided in Box 4 at:
<http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/management/particip/v-gfpbox4.htm>





Appointment of Young Researchers

Third Country States

For network participants based in Third Countries (e.g. Switzerland, USA)

- ★ **If contributing to overall person-months provided by network,**
- ★ **Then effort of young researchers who satisfy contract conditions only can be counted towards deliverable.**





Appointment of Young Researchers

Recruitment Methods

- ★ Through exchange between participants
- ★ Advertising at relevant international conferences
- ★ Through our webpages on CORDIS
- ★ Through networks ' webpages
- ★ Informing (using e-mail lists) colleagues
- ★ Send posters to relevant institutes





Appointment of Young Researchers

Recruitment Methods (cont.)

Other networks have successfully used (in no particular order):

★ **Physics World**

★ **New Scientist including <http://newscientistjobs.com>**

★ **Nature**

★ **Science**

★ **Physikalische Blatter**

★ **Europhysics News**

★ **TIPTOP @ <http://physicsweb.org/TIPTOP>**





Appointment of Young Researchers

Recruitment Methods (cont.)

- ★ Association Bernard Gregory @ <http://www.abg.asso.fr>
- ★ UK academic job site @ <http://www.jobs.ac.uk>
- ★ JOST @ <http://www1.infm.it/JOST/>

Other web-based vacancy announcements we are aware of, though no feedback as to their usefulness, are:

- ★ 'Monster' @ <http://www.monster.com>
- ★ ' Brassring ' @ <http://www.brassring.com/>
- ★ ' Totaljobs ' @ <http://www.totaljobs.com>
- ★ ' Stepstone ' @ <http://www.stepstone.com>





Appointment of Young Researchers

Appointment Conditions

- ★ **Appointed Young Researchers should be aware:**
 - ☞ **that they work in an EC funded network;**
 - ☞ **of their rights and duties regarding the contract;**
 - ☞ **of the appointment conditions before signature of the contract.**
- ★ **Of <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/networks/home.htm>**
- ★ **Helped in dealing with administrative matters. The “Useful Links” on our webpages may also help here.**





Training of Young Researchers

Example activities

- ★ **Discipline-related training: local and network-wide;**
- ★ **Secondments - increases network “cohesion”;**
- ★ **Help for integration in the scientific community;**
- ★ **Active collaborations with other network participants;**
- ★ **Additional skills (e.g. presentation skills, project management, language courses, meeting organisation);**
- ★ **Undertaking Teaching, Supervision, Tutorials;**





Training of Young Researchers

Example activities

- ★ **Presentation of achievements at international events (e.g. conferences, workshops);**
- ★ **Schools (Summer, Winter, ...)**
- ★ **Training in an industrial environment (if relevant);**
- ★ **Young researchers' networking (e.g. YR team, meetings);**
- ★ **Attendance at national training schools (e.g. CRAC, www.crac.org.uk in UK).**





Training of Young Researchers

Monitoring and Impact Assessment

Young researchers at the end of their appointment are requested to complete a confidential questionnaire with:

- ☞ Nationality, age, gender, discipline**
- ☞ Background, career plans, etc**
- ☞ Assessment of the time spent in the network and of training received**

Questionnaires should be submitted to the network co-ordinator in a sealed envelope at the end of the appointment and sent to the Commission with periodic reports.





NETWORKING





Network Organisation

Members (thru' Scientist-in-charge) responsibilities

- ★ **Manage their team and funds in agreement with the local administration;**
- ★ **Manage the project based on their defined role;**
- ★ **Implement local Training programme;**
- ★ **Take care of integration of young researchers in the local team, and in the network as a whole;**
- ★ **Inform local team of contractual obligations (Annex II, Article 2);**
- ★ **Inform network co-ordinator of any change / problem;**
- ★ **Provide network co-ordinator with reporting data.**





Network Organisation

Best Practice Suggestions

- ★ **Good Communication between participants essential (e.g. e-mail, videoconferencing);**
- ★ **Members should provide correct and on time required reporting data;**
- ★ **Have both scientific and administrative co-ordinator;**
- ★ **A network meeting, where all young researchers are invited, should be held at least once a year;**
- ★ **Steering Committee to oversee networks' progress including young researcher representative;**





Network Organisation

Best Practice Suggestions (cont.)

- ★ **Advisory Group of external experts to assess networks' progress;**
- ★ **Training Programme Co-ordinator;**
- ★ **Newsletter (electronic) with contributions from all members helps to create an identity for the network;**
- ★ **Acknowledge Community Funding in publications;**
- ★ **Local Mentors for young researchers;**
- ★ **Appointment of young researchers can be decentralised, but co-ordinator should always know the exact situation;**





Network Organisation

Best Practice Suggestions (cont.)

- ★ **Participation of females is actively encouraged;**
- ★ **If joint patents anticipated, generation of prior agreement advised;**
- ★ **A dynamic web page (incl. young researcher section) can be good “public outreach” and useful tool for the network (e.g. report preparation, on-line tutorials).**
- ★ **Others.... (suggestions always welcomed)**





REPORTING & PAYMENTS



IMPROVING HUMAN RESEARCH POTENTIAL
AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE BASE



Reporting

Documents/Guidelines

- ★ **Reporting Guidelines**
- ★ **Guidelines for the preparation of Cost Statements**
- ★ **Mid-Term Review Manual** (available in due course)
- ★ **Final Report guidelines** (available in due course)

**These documents, along with other relevant information,
are available at:**

<http://www.cordis.lu/improving/networks/home.htm>





Reporting

Requirements (Annex II, Article 4)

★ **Periodic Progress Reports including Cost Statements**

- ☞ **2 months (at the latest) after the end of the reporting period (starting from the Project Commencement Date)**

★ **Mid-Term Review**

- ☞ **Report - more detailed than an annual report**
- ☞ **Meeting with all scientists-in-charge, young researchers and Commission representative(s). Mid-point recommended.**

★ **Final Report**

- ☞ **Consolidated report and Statistical information**

To minimise delays in payments all required documentation should be submitted in one package as soon as possible after reporting period.





Reporting

Periodic Progress Reports

- ★ **Each Participant must submit Part E-1 Cost Statement signed by scientist-in-charge and Financial Officer;**
- ★ **Principal Contractor must also complete summary Cost Statement Forms (Parts E-2 and E-3);**
- ★ **Important to include in progress reports:**
 - ☞ **training provided (both locally and network-wide);**
 - ☞ **networking between participants;**
 - ☞ **additional benefits of the network;**
 - ☞ **joint publications plus single institute publications involving young researchers.**





Payments

★ Advance payment

☞ within 60 days from the date of receipt of the membership agreement

★ Periodic payment

☞ within 60 days from the date of approval of the periodic report and costs statements
(☹ incomplete report = delay!)

★ Final Payment

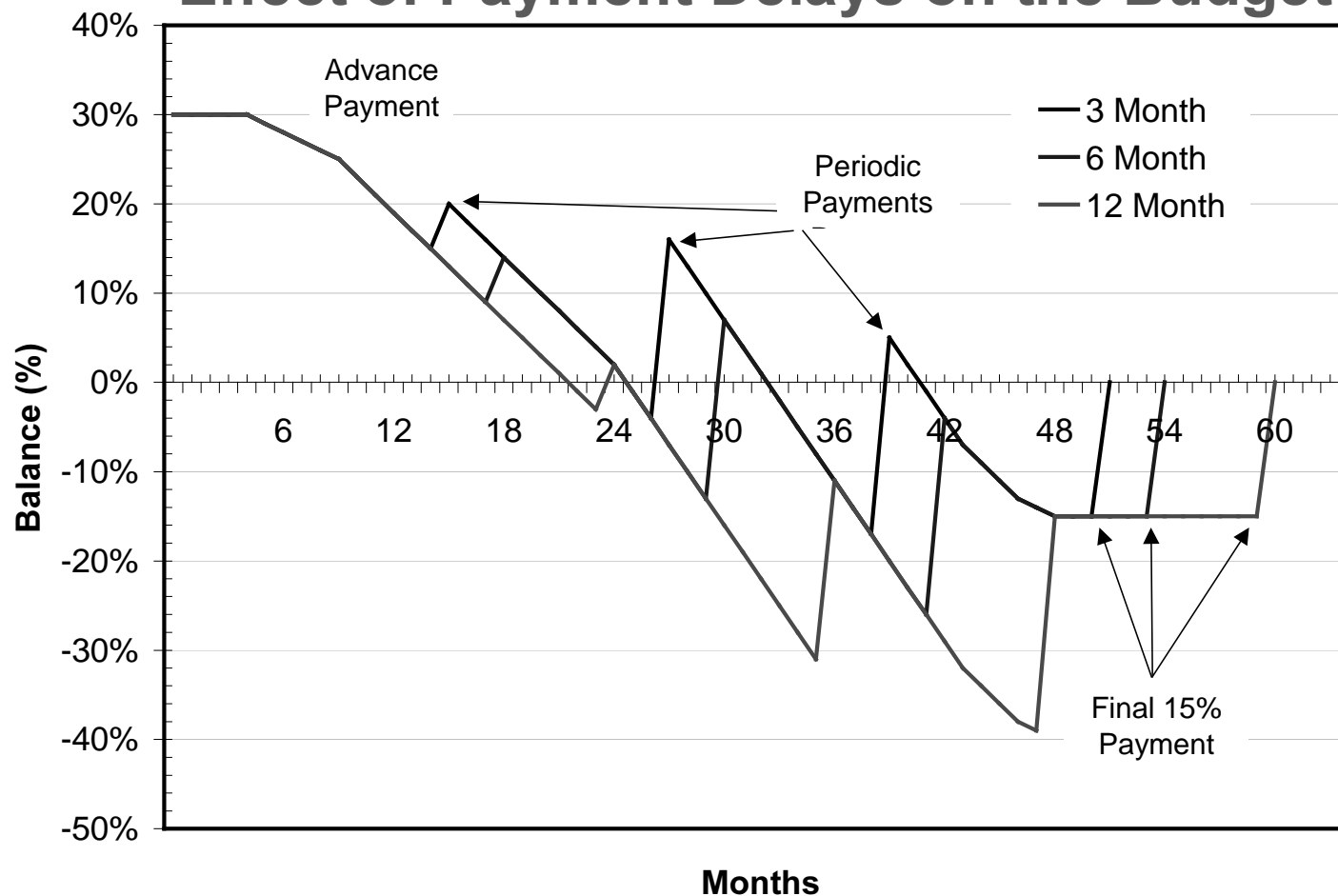
☞ within 60 days from the date of approval of the final report and costs statements





Payments

Effect of Payment Delays on the Budget





Payments

Recommendations

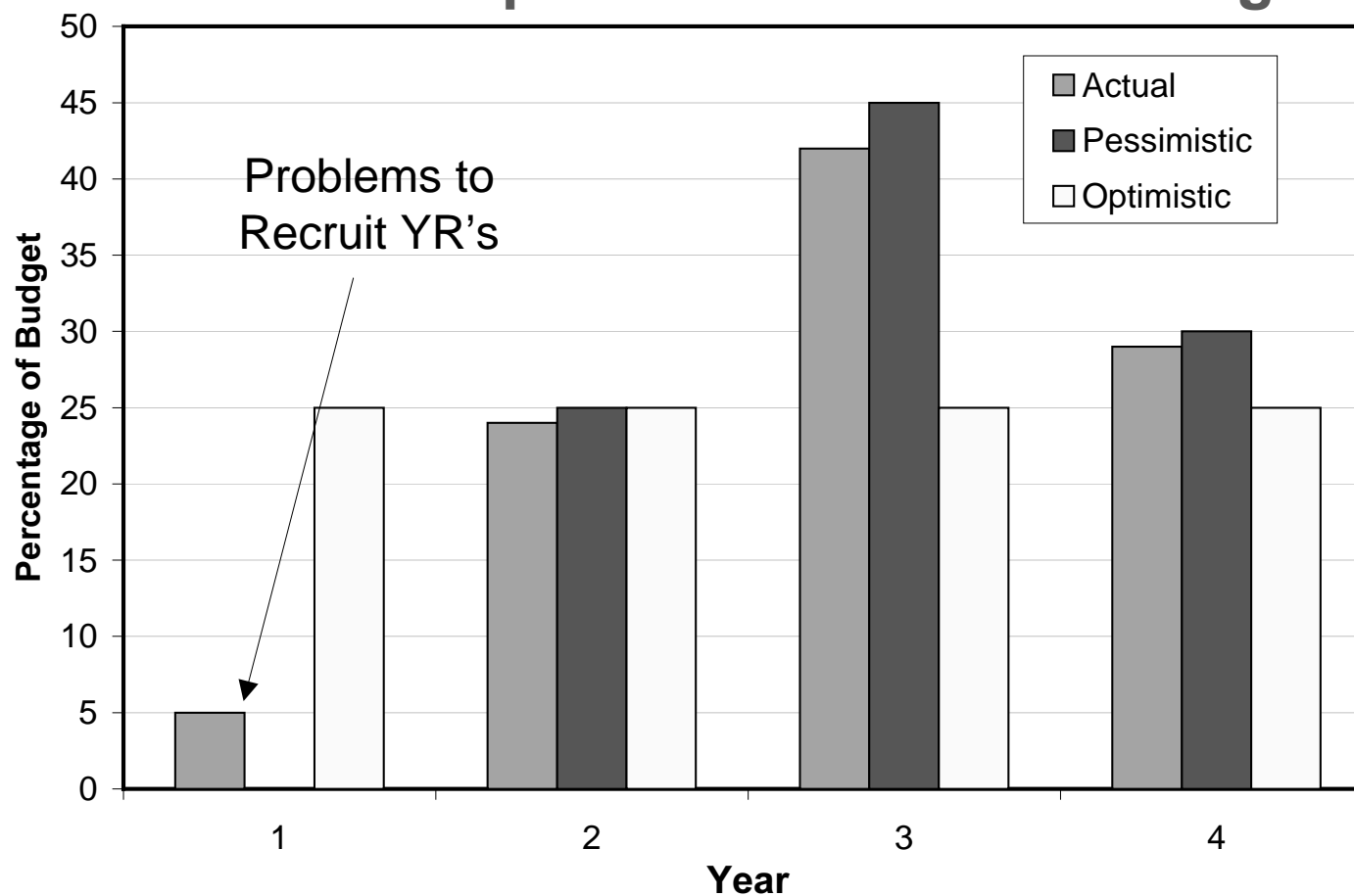
- ★ **Deviations from yearly financial plan (in CPF) should be explained.**
- ★ **It is impossible to manage the contract without advance funds from the participating institutions, e.g. at least 15% will be retained until the acceptance of the final report.**
- ★ **Costs Reimbursement only for costs incurred in the reporting period, not for future costs (e.g. planned persons-months for young researchers).**





Payments

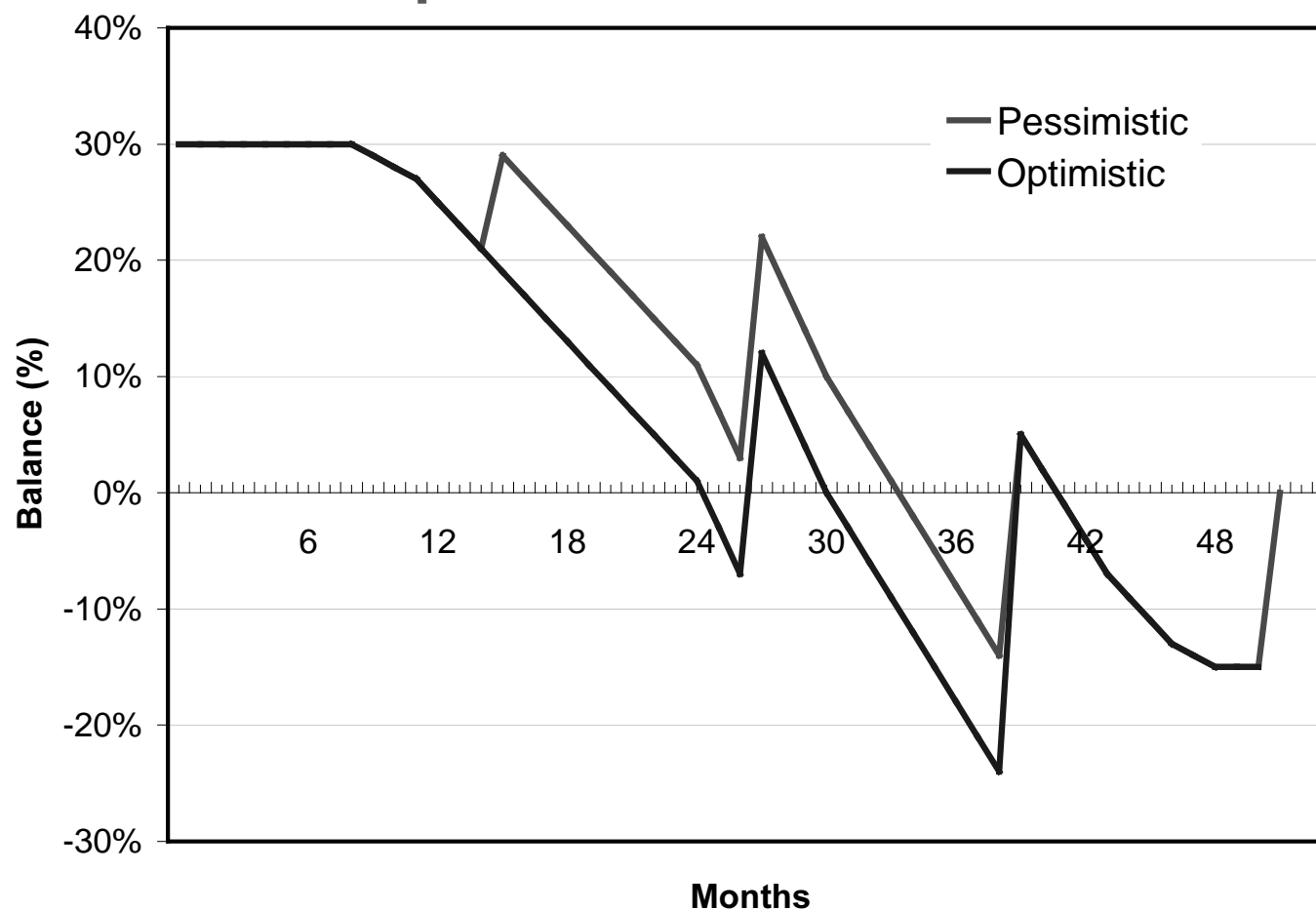
Effect of Optimistic CPF Forecasting





Payments

Effect of Opt-/Pess-imistic CPF Forecasting





WEBPAGES





CONCLUDING REMARKS





Essential reading

Annex II of Contract

- ★ **Eligible Costs: Articles 17, 18, 19, 20**
- ★ **Participants' Responsibilities: Article 2**
- ★ **The Community's financial contribution: Article 3**
- ★ **Project deliverables: Article 4**
- ★ **Membership agreement: Article 5**
- ★ **Subcontracts: Article 6**
- ★ **Redistribution of budget: Article 17.4**





What to do when you have a problem?

Alternatives are:

- ★ **Consult the contract;**
- ★ **Have a look on our Web Site:**
<http://www.cordis.lu/improving/networks/home.htm>;
- ★ **Contact your local administrative department;**
- ★ **Contact your responsible EC officers;**
- ★ **Contact your National Contact Point;**
- ★ **Contact the general E-mail Information point:**
☞ **improving@cec.eu.int.**





Concluding Remarks

- ★ **The success of the network is very much dependent on all participants (Co-ordinator, Scientists-in-charge, Young Researchers,).**
- ★ **Role of Commission's Scientific Officer is to monitor/advise/spread best practice.**
- ★ **New ideas/suggestions regarding appointment methods /training/ networking always welcomed.**
- ★ **Particular attention should be paid to amount of person-months being provided by network, since zero-cost extensions to contract are not encouraged.**
- ★ **GOOD LUCK!**





ADMINISTRATION

SESSION





Annual Reporting and Cost Statements

- ★ Please send all necessary documents in one package.
- ★ From experience, receiving Cost Statements from other members will take the longest time.
- ★ Ensure that all relevant entries are completed.
- ★ Forms (in EXCEL format) may be downloaded from:
<http://www.cordis.lu/improving/networks/preparation.htm>
- ★ For non-”Euroland” countries, exchange rate to euro given at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/inforeuro/en/index.htm>





Re-distribution of Funds (Annex II, Article 17.4)

- ★ **Subject to agreement of Principal Contractor, participants may transfer funds provided that:**
 - ☞ **Commission informed upon signing an agreement; and**
 - ☞ **amounts do not exceed 20% of receiving participants' indicative budget.**

- ★ **If > 20%, prior written approval of Commission required (contract amendment).**

Overall rules on the budget always apply





Contract Amendments

Main Types

- ★ **Scientist-in-charge moves to new institute.**
- ★ **Change in participant 's legal name.**
- ★ **>20% re-distribution of funds.**
- ★ **Zero-cost extension to duration of contract.**
- ★ **Withdrawal/addition of new participant.**

For all these, a formal amendment to the contract is required, which is initiated once relevant documents have been received through Principal Contractor.





Contract Amendments

Example: Scientist-in-charge moves to new institute

In order to start the procedure requires:

★ A letter from Principal Contractor with:

- ☞ reason for the move, confirming that this is the case and date at which change occurs;**
- ☞ network partners in agreement with change to contract;**
- ☞ there is a solution for any young researchers affected by the move; and**
- ☞ training and research will not be unduly affected and can be completed at new institution.**





Contract Amendments

Example: Scientist-in-charge moves to new institute (cont.)

- ★ **A signed letter from the old administration confirming it will no longer participate in the network and agrees to transfer of contract.**
- ★ **A signed letter from the new administration confirming that it agrees to participate in network and to take over all contractual responsibilities.**
- ★ **Both administrations should also state agreement to organise between themselves transfer of any funds.**
- ★ **New administration also needs to complete A5 CPFs.**
- ★ **New Membership Agreement needs to be signed.**

