

Annex I. Country Quota System for ECPGR Phase IX

1. Background and principles

1.1. Introduction

At its 13th meeting in Vienna, December 2012, the Steering Committee decided to maintain a country quota system to enable a fair use of the funds across countries to be spent for meetings and other activities. All the ECPGR member countries are expected to receive a direct benefit from the use of these funds. The SC requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft system, also giving an incentive to countries offering voluntary contributions, possibly in the form of “country quota”.

During the past two Phases, the country quota system consisted of a given and fixed “quota” (i.e. number of participants in meetings) that was assigned to each country on the basis of their contributing category (the larger the annual contribution, the higher the available quota). A number of quota units were reserved to the WG Chairs, who could invite one extra participant per meeting at their discretion, to ensure the presence of key experts, independently from their country of origin.

WG activities during Phase IX may consist of meetings and/or other activities (such as surveys, research, conservation actions, molecular analysis, etc.).

The number and type of activities is not known in advance, but they will be defined during the Phase, since allocation of funds for activities will be on the basis of a competitive scheme, whereby WGs will need to apply for funding.

The exact budget for activities is also not well known, since the expectation is that fund-raising and voluntary contributions will increase the budget during the course of the Phase. It should also be noted that an increased fraction of Phase IX budget, compared to Phase VIII, will be dedicated to EURISCO. The implementation of AEGIS by the Secretariat will also draw part of the resources. These portions of the budget dedicated to AEGIS and EURISCO should be considered to equally benefit all the countries.

The new mode of operation has introduced increased flexibility, compared to the past, i.e. the number and type of activities is not predefined, but it will depend on which proposals will be successful. Moreover, participation of experts of a given country in activities will be based on expertise and expression of commitment, rather than on the need to represent each country. At the same time, by maintaining a country quota system, the SC intends to guarantee that each country will have the opportunity to benefit from a certain level of participation in activities, either as an active involvement in the research or with the intention to build capacity. Therefore, the country quota system needs to strike a balance between contrasting requirements: on one hand the need for higher flexibility and competition (with the intention to obtain higher quality outputs), and on the other hand the need to insure a minimum level of participation to each country to ensure a Region-wide approach.

1.2. Principles and effects of a Country Quota System for Phase IX

After considering the pros and cons of various options, the Secretariat, in consultation with the ExCo, elaborated the proposal below which is considered an acceptable compromise between the contrasting needs expressed by the Steering Committee regarding the adoption of a country quota system within a new result-oriented mode of operation, aiming at flexibility, technical competence and efficiency.

The main principle of this proposal is that the country quota needs to be expressed in discrete units and it is the most practical to fix the value of one quota as corresponding to the average value of one night, including travel, spent in a meeting anywhere in Europe during Phase IX. Therefore, only the travel component (meetings) of the WG activities can be regulated by a country quota, while the other activities are carried out by the successful project partners, outside of the quota system. Consequently, at the start of the Phase, it is necessary to establish the proportion to be spent for two components of the WG activities budget, i.e. “meetings” and “other activities” (e.g. 75% and 25%).

The advantages of a system based on the above principles are the following:

- The accounting mechanism and monitoring of use of country quotas is simple and easy to display online in real time due to the already gathered experience with this system by the Secretariat.

- The cost of travel is equalized for all the countries (the cost of one night in a meeting anywhere is always one quota unit). In terms of the ECPGR budget, more expensive travels are compensated by less expensive ones. Each country is therefore given the same opportunities to attend meetings.
- Choice of partners and locations for other activities (other than meetings) is only based on expertise and technical convenience and is not influenced by the availability of quotas in the various countries.
- The guarantee for all the countries to receive a benefit from ECPGR is insured (country quota for meetings), although the participation must be based on clear commitment (expressions of interest). Other activities are open to full competition.

One identified disadvantage is that flexibility is reduced, in the sense that the proportion of funds to be spent in meetings vs. other activities throughout the Phase needs to be pre-defined (e.g. 75% vs. 25%).

2. Proposed country quota system

2.1. Splitting the budget in “Meetings” and “Other activities”

The ECPGR budget for activities is split in two components, i.e. “Meetings” and “Other activities”. The relative proportion of the two components is defined at the start of the Phase, e.g. as 75% (Meetings) vs. 25% (Other activities). This proportion needs to be applied to the total budget for WG activities and therefore respected at the end of the Phase, but it does not apply to every single activity. Each activity approved for funding by the Steering Committee can therefore be planned in principle with total flexibility regarding the proportion of funds to be dedicated to meetings or other activities. The Secretariat will monitor the respective thresholds of e.g. 75% and 25% of the total budget for WG activities that need not to be surpassed.

2.2. Country quota

A country quota is assigned to each country based on their category of annual contribution. Quota units can be used to receive reimbursement of “nights” spent for an ECPGR meeting anywhere in Europe, including travel. Two nights in a meeting would cost two quota units and so on. Countries are excluded from reimbursement of costs in meetings whenever their total assigned quota units have been used.

2.3. ExCo quota

A small percentage of the budget (around 6.5%, corresponding to the difference left after all the rounded-up quotas are assigned to categories) is dedicated to a reserve called “ExCo quota”. The use of this quota can be left at the discretion of the ExCo to facilitate attendance of relevant participants to specific meetings (this can be used for capacity building or other purpose).

2.4. Allocation of country quotas per each category

On the basis of the available budget for WG activities agreed at the start of Phase IX, the country quotas for Phase IX are given in Table 1. Should the budget increase during the Phase thanks to voluntary contributions and other raised funds, additional quota units would be assigned to countries, as soon as new contributions are obtained and according to the proposed proportions outlined in Table 1.

2.5. Incentives for voluntary contributions

In the case of voluntary contributions to the “common fund” for WG activities, an incentive is established through the following mechanism: a donor country doubles its proportion of country quota to be received as a result of the increased budget.

Example: A country from category E donates € 100 000. These are split into “meetings budget” (€ 75 000) and “other activities budget” (€ 25 000). The increased “meetings budget” is converted into an additional bonus of 166 quota units to be equally distributed among all the countries, except the donor country that would receive, as an incentive, twice the number of quotas of the other countries.

Table 1. Country Quotas Phase IX (2014-2018)

Contribution category	Annual contribution in Euro	Country	Country quotas (% of total available)	Quota Units*
A	2,750	Montenegro	1.5%	11
A	2,750	Macedonia FYR	1.5%	11
A	2,750	Albania	1.5%	11
A	2,750	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.5%	11
A	2,750	Azerbaijan	1.5%	11
B	3,500	Serbia	1.7%	13
B	3,500	Bulgaria	1.7%	13
B	3,500	Latvia	1.7%	13
B	3,500	Estonia	1.7%	13
B	3,500	Iceland	1.7%	13
B	3,500	Belarus	1.7%	13
B	3,500	Cyprus	1.7%	13
C	6,500	Lithuania	2.2%	17
C	6,500	Croatia	2.2%	17
C	6,500	Slovenia	2.2%	17
D	7,500	Slovakia	2.4%	18
D	7,500	Romania	2.4%	18
E	11,000	Hungary	2.5%	19
E	11,000	Czech Republic	2.5%	19
E	11,000	Israel	2.5%	19
F	12,000	Ireland	2.6%	20
F	12,000	Finland	2.6%	20
F	12,000	Turkey	2.6%	20
F	12,000	Greece	2.6%	20
F	12,000	Denmark	2.6%	20
G	12,500	Poland	2.8%	21
G	12,500	Austria	2.8%	21
G	12,500	Norway	2.8%	21
H	19,000	Sweden	3.0%	23
H	19,000	Belgium	3.0%	23
H	19,000	Switzerland	3.0%	23
I	20,000	Netherlands	3.2%	24
J	22,000	Spain	3.4%	26
K	52,000	Italy	4.5%	34
K	52,000	France	4.5%	34
K	52,000	United Kingdom	4.5%	34
K	52,000	Germany	4.5%	34
ExCo	-		6.5%	49
Total	510,250		100.00%	757
Total Phase IX	2,551,250			

* Number of ECPGR-funded travel nights available for each country

Phase IX budget elements used to calculate the available quotas

Total budget for Working Group activities during Phase IX	
Total budget for Working Group activities Phase IX	€ 283,809
Total net carry-over from Phase VIII	€ 217,361
Total funds for activities Phase IX	€ 501,170
Estimate for Doc&Info meeting May 2014	(€ 35,000)
Estimate for costs for transfer EURISCO to IPK	(€ 12,000)
Total funds available for activities during Phase IX	€ 454,170
Funds for meetings (75%) for country quotas	€ 340,628
Funds for other activities (25%)	€ 113,543

Calculations of Country Quotas	
Net amount available	€ 340,628
Value of one quota*	€ 450
Total number of quotas available during Phase IX	757

* Estimate average cost of one night in an ECPGR meeting anywhere in Europe (includes cost of travel, lodging, food, local transportation, meeting facilities, etc.)