

# A Path To Growth: Creating An Effective International Mobility Policy For Your Business



Developing and implementing an international mobility policy is intended to streamline the administrative process for international employee assignments and allow the company to take full advantage of these assignments. Such a policy guides and standardizes the process and conduct of international assignments to ensure a positive outcome for both the employee and the company.

## **General Guidelines for an International Mobility Policy**

***Objectives and Scope.*** An international mobility policy must be adapted to the company's business needs. The company must first identify the reasons for sending an employee abroad. The company would also benefit from consulting with employees to better understand their needs, both professional and personal, when working abroad.

***Eligibility and Selection.*** The policy should define the eligibility criteria for available assignments as well as the selection and assignment process. Transparency with regard to the requirements and process will help make these opportunities more appealing to employees and it will also promote the company's development goals.

***Nature of Assignments.*** The policy should identify the different types of assignments and describe their respective eligibility requirements. For example, the considerations for a short-term assignment to provide temporary support on a project are different from those of a long-term assignment for the purpose of opening a new branch abroad. Clearly defining the assignments is crucial, as the support and working conditions offered by the employer may vary depending on the nature of the assignment.

***Compensation.*** The policy should provide information on the applicable overall compensation structure. It may also provide for the payment of an expatriate allowance.<sup>1</sup> The terms offered by the company may also vary depending on the destination.

***Housing, Relocation and Family Support.*** The policy should indicate the extent to which the company will assist employees with housing and moving expenses, if any. For example, will the company want to acquire a building or rent an apartment to house employees? If an employee is responsible for arranging their own accommodations, will

they receive an allowance? Under what circumstances will the company provide assistance for the employee's accompanying family members, and to what extent?

**Insurance and Health Care.** Access to health care is often an important consideration for employees travelling abroad. Accordingly, the policy should specify whether the company will assist in providing health insurance coverage to the employee and their family in the host country.

**Personal Tax Matters.** Overseas assignments can have tax implications for employees. The policy could also provide tax filing assistance for employees.

## **Other Considerations Relevant to International Assignments**

**Legal Compliance and Immigration.** It is important to note that, depending on the circumstances, Québec and Canadian laws, such as labour laws and tax laws, may apply. The company should also verify if its activities are compliant with the host country's laws, including minimum labour standards, taxation, and immigration. It should be noted that the immigration process and time required to obtain a work permit are different in each country.

**Integration, Communication and Monitoring.** It is recommended that the company provide managers with tools to help employees integrate into their new work team. Regular communication between the employee, the manager, and a person responsible for international assignments should be encouraged to ensure the assignment is going smoothly. In addition, the company will be able to assess the effectiveness of the policy and make any necessary changes.

## **Conclusion**

A relevant international mobility policy is one that meets the specific needs of the company and its employees and is updated regularly to adapt to legislative changes, market trends and the company's situation.

## **Footnote**

1. An expatriate allowance is an allowance for living abroad that helps employees when the cost of living in the host country is higher than where they reside.

*The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.*

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