

Settling on the right location, the correct purchase of new and used laboratory equipment and utilising lab clearance organisations will all help ensure good financial management of a science investigation

Meeting your laboratory needs

AS the first wave of Horizon 2020 funded projects begin their investigations, it is important to have the right equipment in the correct location before starting research. Setting up a new laboratory can be a costly exercise, particularly on a limited research budget. Balancing staffing, tools and equipment and dissemination is a tricky affair, and it is therefore important to undertake these different requirements in the most effective and cost efficient way.

The location of your laboratory must be the first consideration. Choosing the correct site can help ensure the most expert and suitable scientists are hired and the right expertise sourced for the investigation. After receiving funding, the lead researcher may choose to set up their workshop in either an existing location or a new one. For many scientists, it may be appropriate to stay in their present locale due to existing professional or personal ties. However, when this is unsuitable, it is important to source expert advice and expertise in relocation. Moving to the best location possible and ensuring the safe travel of items can be pivotal steps to achieving research success.

Beginning a research project in another EU member state is now easier than ever with the development of the European Research Area. The ERA encourages the free movement of researchers, scientific knowledge and technology across the Union, stimulating the development of the knowledge economy. The ERA, set for completion by the end of 2014, will help strengthen scientific and technological bases, Europe's competitiveness and the capacity to tackle the grand challenges facing society.

Used or new?

After settling on the correct locale, it is important to source equipment in the most cost effective way possible. With often limited budgets, potentially sourcing used equipment can help bridge the gap between undertaking a good or excellent research project. New equipment is not often necessary for regular everyday items, and sourcing used materials,



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such as lab ovens, fume cabinets, microscopes, stirrers, water baths and heaters etc., allows funds to be diverted to more important equipment for the research being undertaken, such as big-ticket items. Such items may include gas chromatography, mass spectrometry or liquid chromatography. This balancing of costs allows a more effective spend of the research budget.

Funding can also be channelled towards other items that are vital to research efforts and projects, for example staffing and dissemination. By making the best use of money possible, there is greater potential for research success. Furthermore, lab clearance companies often offer a project service to locate the instruments you need at a fraction of the cost for purchasing new.

Once a project is finished, or prior to changing your research focus, it is important to recoup costs as best as possible. One way to do this is through the established lab clearance organisations that specialise in finding new homes for equipment you may see as redundant. By selling your own previously used equipment, the cash collected can be reinvested into future research projects, helping pour money into forthcoming pioneering scientific investigations. This process helps save money, benefits fellow researchers, can be helpful if relocating for the next scientific investigation and meets the European Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive for disposal of such equipment.

By implementing these three core strategies, good financial management can be realised in your research investigation.

HORIZON 2020

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