

# effective policy design

## tips for global mobility managers



Companies that are relocating employees globally face a constantly changing environment. Managers must address a variety of factors, which requires taking a holistic view of the process whether your organization is in need of a large-scale global policy re-design or a smaller-scale adjustment of only a few policy elements.

How do you get started?

## effective policy design: tips for global mobility managers

Carefully examining your company's strategic business objectives associated with global mobility is key, including determining organizational goals and employee demographics. Taking this broad overall view helps you truly support your organization's objectives by properly structuring the company's global program and identifying the various policies and approaches to be used, which can include both long- and short-term assignments and other temporary assignment types, as well as permanent transfers. These strategies will help you achieve a balance of employee satisfaction and organizational support. Most importantly, carefully targeted employee mobility benefits can often increase your cost efficiencies, reduce your compliance risk across the board, and support your globally mobile population.

### step #1: evaluate your policy development strategies

The process begins with a review of your global mobility program, as well as your company's talent management plan, to identify key strategic considerations. This exercise will help determine if your mobility strategy fits into your organization's strategic direction and supports its goals.

For example, you may want to consider these questions:

- Is your mobility program competitive enough to meet both your internal and external recruiting needs?
- Does your program ensure compliance in areas such as tax and immigration, minimizing risk to the organization?
- Does your program match your company's existing culture, mission, and vision? Is it headed in the same direction as the organization?
- Does the language in your current program promote inclusion and equitable treatment while embracing the diversity of your employees and relocation/assignment candidates?
- How much flexibility do you need? Does your program support a wide range of employee needs in a fluctuating global environment, while providing the flexibility to be administered in multiple countries and in differing circumstances?
- Does your program effectively address a competitive talent management strategy? Consider:
  - What role do global assignments play in overall employee career development?
  - Do we have an adequate candidate pool of qualified and diverse talent?
  - Are we satisfied that global assignments are successful?
  - Is the cost of an assignment justifiable?



## effective policy design: tips for global mobility managers

### step #2: understand why your organization moves employees

Once you've answered initial questions about your company's mobility and talent management goals and strategies, you'll begin to get a clear idea of what the global program structure needs to be. Next, you'll need to analyze your organization's current reasons for mobility to determine how your policies can best support them.

**Organizational Needs.** Considering the company's current and future business needs and mobility structure can help determine the type of policy used, the level of employee that needs to be sent, and the mix of policy components.

- The purpose or need for the relocation should be defined: in a well-designed program, this will impact the policy provided in a "purpose-driven" approach. Different needs indicate different policies. For example, long-term assignments are typically used for leadership development, and short-term for project works—but your company's specific strategies may dictate something else. Consider:
  - Strategic/Leadership
  - Management
  - Development of talent
  - Project-based
  - Knowledge/Culture transfer
  - Transfer of technical skills

- As you are developing your specific strategies, you may want to consider the level of employee to help you determine benefit levels. You may want to consider the following levels:
  - Executive level/"C" suite
  - Vice President
  - Director/Manager
  - Professional staff
- Your organization's current structure in terms of the administration of global programs can further refine consistency in your mobility program. Is your program:
  - Centralized?
  - Headquarters-based?
  - Regionalized?
  - Other?

**Organizational Culture.** Your organizational culture will help determine the balance between providing appropriate policy elements that support mobile talent and solely concentrating on reducing costs.

- What is your company's tolerance for compliance risk?
  - How conservative is your organization?
  - Do business units have autonomy and, if so, how much?
  - How will your organization react to exception requests?
- How cost-driven is the organization? For example, does your program address cost containment by establishing parameters around policy benefits, which will decrease exceptions? Have you reduced or eliminated any policy components?
- How focused is your organization on managing and retaining key talent?
  - What are you doing to choose the "right" candidate for the position?
  - What sort of inclusion training does the selection manager receive?

## effective policy design: tips for global mobility managers

- Which policy benefits provide support to the employee and family, and which benefits should be provided to minimize non-productivity or a failed assignment?
- Where is your organization on its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion journey?
- Do you have a mentor program in place (if relevant for the type of relocation/assignment)?
- When do you begin repatriation discussions?
- Is the employee's performance being monitored in relation to assignment goals?
- Do you have an adequate sense of ROI on assignments?
- Are you measuring assignment success—or even tracking retention rates after assignments?
- Do you have a strong line/staff/management link? Make sure the lines of communication are open with relevant areas of the business in the departure and destination locations.
  - What is management hearing about policy needs and effectiveness?
  - Is this feedback being taken into consideration in policy decisions?
  - Are the practices and standards of the destination location taken into consideration?
- Does your receiving organization have adequate inclusion training and education? Implementation and ongoing training/communications require a commitment from all stakeholders.
  - Are you ensuring that resources remain available to successfully support this effort?
  - Are you developing, implementing, and distributing needed documentation, including online and social media distribution?
  - Are you implementing continuous educational opportunities and leadership learning programs to grow management capabilities?

### step #3: decide what type of structure your program will use

At this point in the process, your organization can choose from a variety of overall policy structures that are typically used for international assignment or transfer programs—each with its own advantages and challenges. The structure you choose depends on the results of your organizational analysis and on your specific goals for your mobility program.



## effective policy design: tips for global mobility managers

### Examples of Global Program Structures

<b>Long-term Assignments</b>	Relocation from one country to another for the length of assignment—one to five years.
<b>Short-term Assignments</b>	Relocation from one country to another for the length of assignment—typically greater than three months and less than one year.
<b>Developmental Assignments</b>	An assignment—generally short term—with the major objective of broadening the experience of an employee and providing a career-development opportunity.
<b>Permanent Transfers</b>	A one-way relocation from one country to another for an indefinite period of time.
<b>Localization</b>	Integration of an employee into the compensation and benefits system of the host country, typically following a long-term assignment and continuing for an indefinite period of time.
<b>Temporary Assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Extended Business Travel:</b> An employee who does not relocate but travels regularly to an international location for an extended period of time.</li> <li>• <b>International Commuter:</b> An employee who works in the country/countries of assignment and commutes frequently to his/her home country.</li> <li>• <b>Rotational:</b> Series of sequential, short-term assignments for the purposes of training and development.</li> </ul>
<b>Specialized Assignments or Transfers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intra-country:</b> Relocation where the departure and destination locations are within the same country.</li> <li>• <b>Intra-regional:</b> Policies designed specifically for assignments between countries within a designated region (for example, within APAC), often with a reduced benefit objective.</li> </ul>

## effective policy design: tips for global mobility managers

### step #4: design your policy

When your organization has completed the previous steps, you should have a good grasp of your priorities, short- and long-term goals, the organizational culture that will drive decisions that affect cost and compliance risk, and the policy structures appropriate for your organization. This understanding will help you to set the specific direction of your policies and their various components.

For example, you might first think about how your organization would rank the importance of the three key elements of cost, employee satisfaction, and compliance risk as they relate to developing a global mobility strategy.

Then consider whether your ranking changes by job level or assignment/transfer purpose. For example, cost might be your highest ranked consideration in general, but would that change when you apply it to different scenarios within the organization? Understanding both your company's goals and culture will help you set the direction for your policies and programs.

Any policy decision your organization makes will have advantages and disadvantages. An experienced consulting team can help you through this process successfully. For more information on this process, as well as information about Cartus' consulting capabilities, please contact [consultingsolutions@cartus.com](mailto:consultingsolutions@cartus.com).