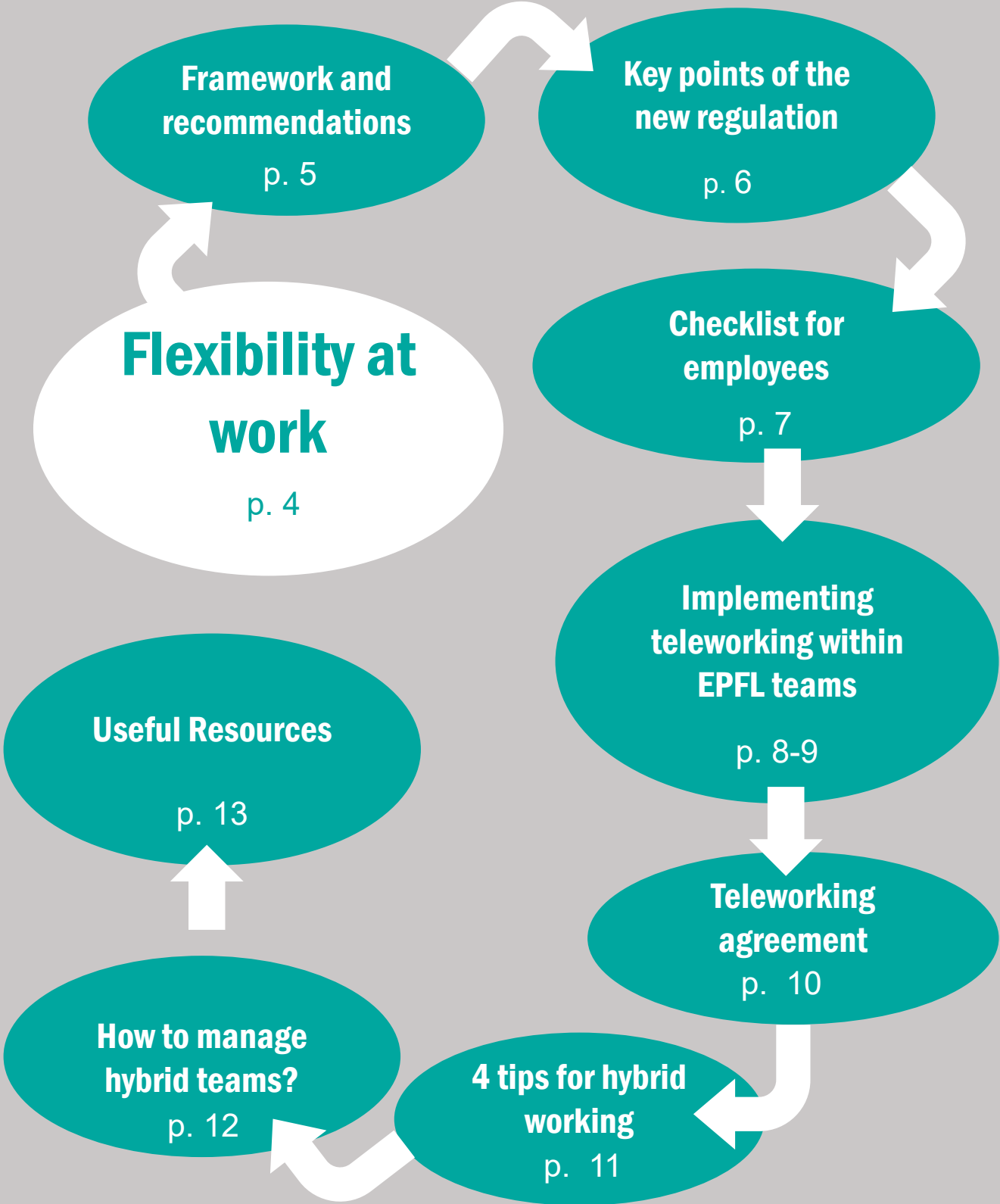# EPFL

Guide to Teleworking at EPFL

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Introduction

The objective of this guide is to support employees and line managers who wish to benefit from teleworking arrangements.

A message from the Human Resources Director

"

Over the past two years, our school has met many challenges and has been able to ensure the continuity of its missions while caring for the members of our community. It has been possible because of the contributions of each one of us. We want to capitalize on the lessons learned during this period by evolving our ways of working.

The project **"Future of Work @ EPFL"** intends to promote work-life balance, flexibility, inclusion, the engagement of our employees, and create a positive impact on our environment. This initiative includes a broad range of teleworking opportunities at EPFL.

This guide intends to help employees and managers become familiar with the new teleworking regulations. Over time, inputs and best practices shared by our community will enrich this guide and the proposed support measures.

We look forward to meeting you on campus.

"

Claudia Noth
On behalf of your HR team

Flexibly at work

The new teleworking regulation (**LEX 4.1.8**) aims to respond to the need for **greater flexibility** to promote a **better balance** between the private and professional lives of the staff members.

Employees who **can work remotely** without compromising the quality of their work can propose to their line manager to work **up to a maximum of 40%** per month away from the regular workplace provided by EPFL.

Framework and recommendations

The teleworking agreement is **initiated by the employee**. **The line manager decides, taking into account** the different activities of the employee and the team/unit, whether the request can be validated.

A discussion is encouraged to find the best possible options so that the employee who wishes to telework can do so while **the dynamics and collaboration within the team are assured**.

Key points of the new regulation

[Access the new regulation LEX 4.1.8](#)

- **Up to 40%** per person per month (for an employment rate of 100%), when the type of work allows it.

- The minimum presence on-site is **one day per week**.

- **Requires an agreement** between the line manager and the employee (both parties). Teleworking is neither a right nor an obligation.

- If the **teleworking is occasional** or for a limited period, a **verbal agreement** between both parties is sufficient

- If the teleworking is for an indefinite period, it will be subject to a signed agreement (via ServiceNow) between the two parties.

- The **completion** and **quality of tasks must be guaranteed** at all times during teleworking.

- Despite the authorized teleworking, on-site presence at EPFL may be requested by the line manager

- **Occasional** teleworking **from abroad** is allowed, for a maximum of two weeks per year, provided the employee has used his/her vacation time from previous years by the 30th of April of the current year.

- **Arbitration measures** are available in case of a refusal if the nature of the activity allows it.

Checklist for employees

This **checklist** intends to facilitate the reflection of EPFL employees on **the feasibility and conditions of teleworking**. It addresses the essential aspects to consider when teleworking based on the LEX Annex 4.1.8

Teleworking considerations	Yes	No	Unsure
I have a designated work area when I work remotely.			
Overall, my off-site working environment is comfortable.			
I have the necessary equipment (desk, chair, laptop computer, micro, webcam, etc.) to work remotely.			
I can access the EPFL network and job-related platforms & tools when working remotely.			
I know how to access the appropriate technical support if I need assistance.			
My role and activities are compatible with teleworking.			
I know what is expected of me by my line manager.			
I have regular discussions regarding work plans and deliverables with my line manager.			
When working remotely, I can easily and regularly communicate with my line manager.			
When working remotely, I can easily and regularly communicate with my team or colleagues.			
When working remotely, I have a good work-life balance.			

If you answered "Yes" to the majority of the above statements:

- Discuss with your line manager the possibility of teleworking and the different options available.
- Reflect with your line manager on a teleworking formula that works for you and the team.

Implementing teleworking within EPFL teams

As line managers work with their teams to determine the best working arrangements, these **three main elements** should be considered.

These questions allow line managers **to reflect on what is needed to** continue to meet the requirements and expectations of the role and of the team, **to have discussions with their staff** about their specific needs, and to establish a schedule and the resources needed for their staff.

Feasibility

Are work activities compatible with teleworking arrangements? Does the work require access to fixed equipment or specialized infrastructure that is not accessible remotely? Does the role require face-to-face customer (internal or external) interaction? Is teleworking a temporary or an ongoing arrangement?
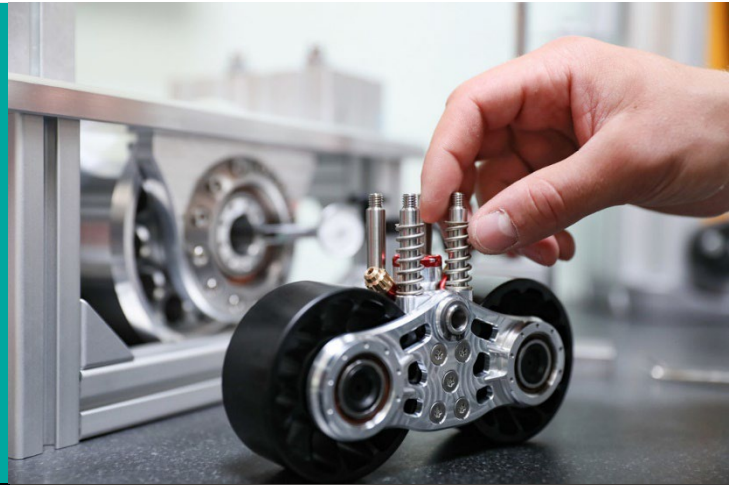
Productivity & Effectiveness

Where teleworking is possible, which work tasks can be done effectively off-site? Which work tasks are more effectively done on-site? Which technology platforms and online collaborative tools should I use to help my team work together effectively and build good relationships?

Sustainable collaboration

How are collaboration, teamwork, and relationship-building best facilitated in the case of flexible work arrangements? To what extent does a unit or employee need to collaborate with others? Should teams be in the office on the same days for in-person meetings and collaboration? Which meetings are best to hold in person? What is the best way to onboard new employees in the unit/department/team?

Checklist for the Managers

Teleworking arrangements work best when employees and managers communicate clearly about expectations. **The following questions** will help you establish a foundation for effective teamwork, continued productivity, and quality service to the EPFL community based on the LEX Annex 4.1.8

- ❑ What responsibilities/tasks cannot be done while working remotely?

- ❑ What responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Work together to agree on how you will communicate while working remotely.

- ❑ Often, employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Which tasks or special projects can be done more efficiently while working remotely?

- ❑ How is the work currently structured, and can it be structured differently to support teleworking?

- ❑ How much supervision or support does the role require?

- ❑ How autonomous is your team member in his or her work?

- ❑ To what extent has remote work impacted the employee's ability to collaborate with me, with the team, and to deliver the expected results?

- ❑ What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the teleworking arrangement is in place? What measures need to be put in place to ensure proper operation and service delivery? Which technology solutions can assist?

- ❑ What lessons did we learn from remote work in the past, and how can they inform the new work arrangements?
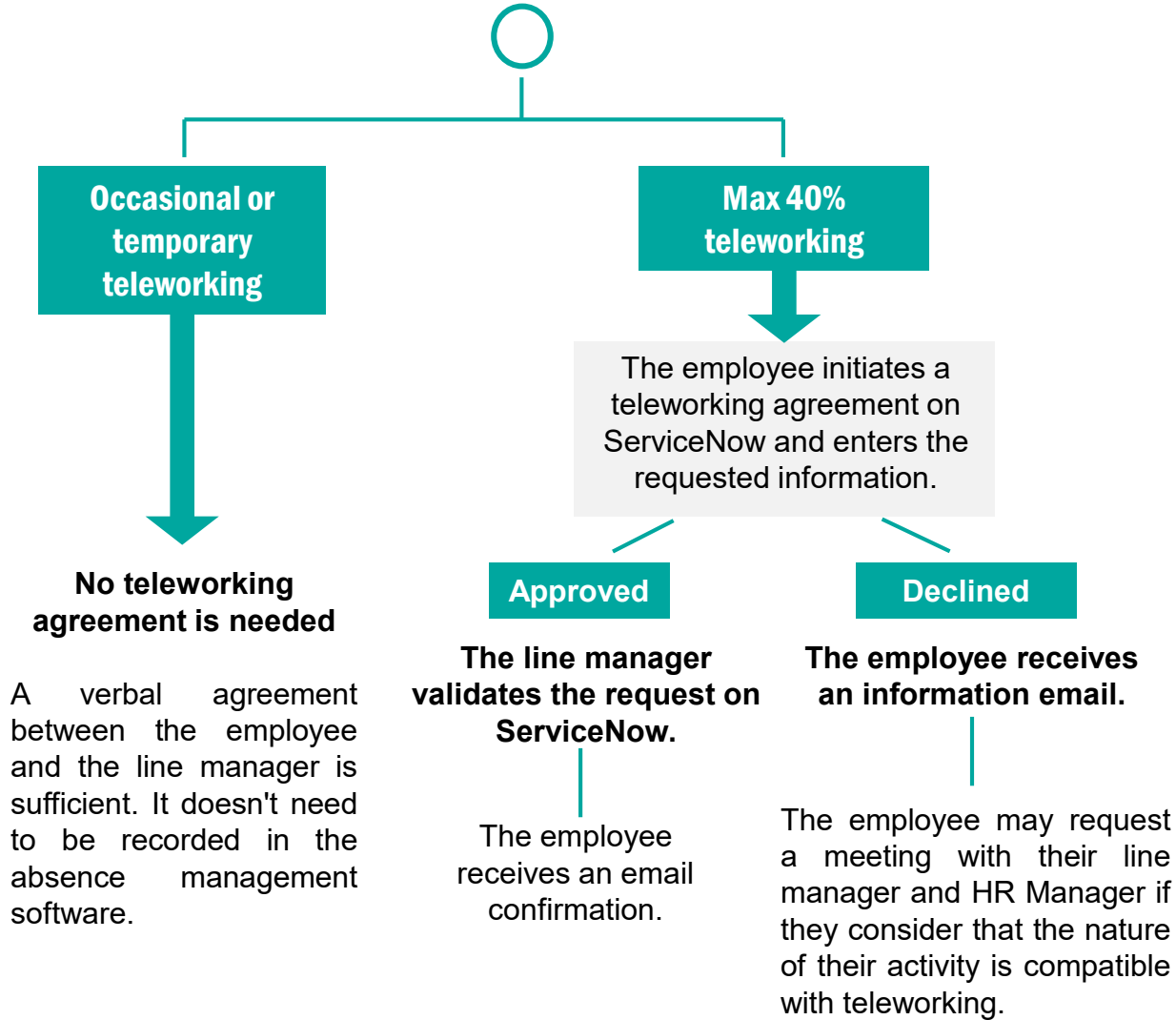
Teleworking agreement in ServiceNow

1 The employee reviews the regulations applicable to teleworking and commits to complying with them.

2 The employee and the line manager discuss and agree on the rate of telecommuting, align expectations, and organization.

Occasional or temporary teleworking

No teleworking agreement is needed

A verbal agreement between the employee and the line manager is sufficient. It doesn't need to be recorded in the absence management software.

Max 40% teleworking

The employee initiates a teleworking agreement on ServiceNow and enters the requested information.

Approved

The line manager validates the request on ServiceNow.

The employee receives an email confirmation.

Declined

The employee receives an information email.

The employee may request a meeting with their line manager and HR Manager if they consider that the nature of their activity is compatible with teleworking.

Note :
- Regular teleworking must be entered in the absence management software.
- The line manager may authorize exceptions to the maximum rate of 40% and the minimum of one day on-site per week, which then must be reflected in the teleworking agreement.

4 Tips for Hybrid Working

Make Office Time More Valuable

Some meetings such as team meetings, brainstorming, and 1 to 1 sessions are more efficient face to face. Physical meetings are indispensable for team spirit, motivation, and unity.

Be Reachable and Communicative

Discuss communication preferences with your team. When off-campus, what is the quickest way to get in touch with someone for something urgent? Zoom, jabber, email, mobile phone, text?

Being in touch with your coworkers beyond the deliverables and deadlines can also improve team spirit. Make use of the digital tools at your disposal.

Meeting Planning

Plan meetings for 50 or 55 minutes to give people time to get from one meeting to another, whether on foot or Zoom. Consider adjusting your default meeting end time settings in Outlook.

Scheduling meetings before 9 am, after 5 pm, or during lunch breaks is not generally recommended.

Workspace set up

If you're splitting your time between your home and the office, you should try to make your home set up just as good as your office one (or vice versa). Most importantly, make sure everything works properly.

How to manage hybrid teams?

Set clear priorities and goals.

When teleworking, it is imperative that employees have clear goals and that managers have **regular check-ins and conversations** about how they are doing against those goals.

Build trust and inclusion.

When you have people in the office or at a distance, ensure that everyone is engaged, included, and informed at all times. **Trust is a prerequisite**. Without it, teleworking cannot be effective

Encourage work-life balance and good work practices.

Our professional and personal lives are now more intertwined than ever. **Pay attention to your team** and watch for signs of fatigue. Talk to your team members and **help them prioritize their workload**, and encourage them to use vacation days when they need them.

Get regular feedback.

Discuss with the team their experience with teleworking to better understand **what is working well and what needs to be adjusted**.

Useful Resources

Teleworking: Learning Resources

go.epfl.ch/keeplearning

- **For all employees**
- What is hybrid working and why is it popular?
- Dealing with Zoom fatigue
- The stressors of hybrid working
- Rules for effective hybrid meetings
- Effective communication between hybrid workers

- **For Managers and Team Leaders**
- Rules for effective hybrid meetings
- Facilitate cohesion and collaboration in hybrid teams
- How to keep your hybrid team motivated
- Recruiting hybrid workers

- **Other available supporting resources**
- **Toolkit Self-care**
- **Toolkit Team-care**

Useful Links

- **Regulations Applicable to Teleworking LEX 4.1.8**

- **Annex-Regulations Applicable to Teleworking LEX 4.1.8**

- **FAQ: Application of the Teleworking Regulations LEX 4.1.8**

- **Teleworking Agreement in ServiceNow**

- **Absences management**

- **What you need to work remotely**

- **Ergonomics for remote work**