

Rules for reimbursement of expenses incurred by invitees invited by ECDC

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to lay down the rules for reimbursement of expenses that have been incurred by invitees who were invited by ECDC (the Centre) to a meeting/event/activity or similar.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities of the Centre where external invitees are invited by ECDC and reimbursement of expenses is anticipated.

3. Background/legal base

- Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 21 April 2004 (EC Founding Regulation)
- Internal Control Standard 8, Processes and Procedures
- ECDC's Financial Regulation adopted by the Management Board via written procedure on 19 December 2013
- Document MB30/13, ECDC's Financial Regulation and its Implementing Rules (consolidated version) (24 March 2014)

4. Description

Roles

Everyone involved in the process of organising a travel is under an obligation to act in good faith vis-à-vis the ECDC. In particular, they must take account of all the following factors when deciding on the arrangements for the travel:

- Optimum cost efficiency and the principle of sound financial management,
- The duty of care,
- Absence of conflict of interest,
- Upholding the ECDC's reputation,
- Respect for the dignity of the service,
- Respect for work-life balance.

The authorizing officer may delegate or authorize further sub-delegation of the power to authorise invitation of an invitee to staff of an appropriate level. Any such delegations or rules of sub-delegation shall be laid down in the internal rules adopted by ECDC.

The **invitee** may be anyone who is, at the request of the Centre, invited to a meeting/event/activity or similar, wherever the location of the meeting and provided that the Centre has explicitly indicated in the invitation its intention to reimburse expenses.

Travel expenses from the place of employment or place of residence to the place of the meeting shall be covered by ECDC for all such invitees, by the most appropriate means of transport given the distance involved.

The invitee suggests the practical arrangements for the travel via the travel request form (TRF) and submits the form to ECDC. ECDC forwards the TRF further to the authorised travel agency which manages the booking in accordance with this policy, and the booking is concluded directly between the invitee and the travel agency. Deviations in route or time may be requested where no additional cost to the Centre is involved and invitees may make their own travel arrangements but all such deviations are subject to approval by the Centre.

All booking and travel arrangement requests, requests to arrange own travel and deviation requests must reach the ECDC within the deadline specified in the invitation issued by the Centre.

A deviation from this policy may be authorised *ex-ante* by the responsible authorising officer (AO)/authorising officer by delegation (AOD) in exceptional cases and when duly justified.

In accordance with the applicable code of professional standards charter, each AO/AOD performs, in accordance with the Staff Regulations, the Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application, the tasks conferred upon them by the applicable legislative act or the delegation granted by the Appointing Authority and in accordance with the conditions laid down in the internal rules of ECDC.

The AOD becomes involved when the travel entails a cost for the budget. It is the AOD's responsibility to manage the revenue and expenditure for which they are accountable with due regard for the principles of sound financial management, legality and regularity of the transactions conducted. The AOD must decide on the political and administrative appropriateness of the invitation as well as on the corresponding expenditure. The AOD authorises the estimate of expenditure and takes responsibility for committing this expenditure

The Mission and Meetings Group of ECDC reimburses expenses authorised in accordance with this policy. It ensures that there is an invitation and an application for reimbursement, and that they are consistent with one another. It must alert the AOD to anything that might affect the sound management of appropriations, including the legality and regularity of the information entered in the statement of expenses, and ask him or her to confirm or reject payment. The Missions and Meetings Group may contact the invitee directly, for example if there are obvious mistakes. In the meantime, the Missions and Meetings Group may suspend payment.

The Missions and Meetings Group will systematically bring to the attention of the AOD any serious or repeated failure to comply with this policy.

If fraud is suspected, the Missions and Meetings Group will proceed in accordance with the IP on reporting of irregularities.

Any problem with the ECDC approved travel agency must be reported to the Missions and Meetings Group.

Expenses are reimbursed according to the following rules:

5. Travel

a. Air tickets:

- The Centre can issue pre-paid return tickets at most economical rate available at time of booking upon submission of the TRF. Itineraries will be based on the meeting schedule. Information about the booking method is specified in the invitation letter.
- If the invitee is authorised to book the air tickets him-/herself, the Centre will inform the invitee of the equivalent cost of an economy return airfare obtained from the Centre approved travel agency and the ticket purchased by the invitee will be reimbursed up to that price comparison.

b. Train ticket:

- First class return ticket is reimbursable when booked according to this policy.

c. Travel by car:

- If the location of the meeting, event or activity is at a place not accessible by public transport, or if the use of car is the most cost effective means of travel, use of car may be authorised. **A request to use a car must in that case be submitted to the Centre for approval within the deadline specified in the invitation issued by the Centre.**
- The car could be a:
 - rented car in the lowest category;
 - private car
- Reimbursement of journey by car will be granted at the rate of €0.28 per km. Car rental cost may be reimbursed if authorised in advance. No other costs will be taken into account (e.g. car parking, tolls).

6. Daily Subsistence Allowance

- To be eligible to receive the daily subsistence allowance (DSA) the invitee must be resident 100 km or more from the meeting/event venue.
- A standard amount (see Annex I) per day of attendance will be paid to cover meals, all local transportation and personal expenses. The number of DSAs will be calculated on the basis of the agenda and only one DSA per attended meeting day is payable.
- The DSA will be reduced by 15% for breakfast, 25% for lunch and 25% for dinner provided.

7. Airport transfers

- Airport transfers (public shuttle or train) may be reimbursed against presentation of receipts or tickets.
- If taxi is used for airport transfer, the invitee may apply for the reimbursement up to the rate of the public shuttle or train attaching relevant supporting documents (e.g. price information from a shuttle company website in addition to the taxi receipt).
- The AO/AOD may authorise full reimbursement of taxi costs in exceptional cases (e.g. lack of alternatives, security).

8. Accommodation

- The Centre books and pays the cost of the accommodation at hotels selected by the Centre directly. Information about the booking method is specified in the invitation letter.
- Own accommodation bookings may only be made when indicated by the Centre in the invitation letter. In such cases, the accommodation will be reimbursed against an invoice and up to a ceiling (see Annex 1) per night and in accordance with the meeting schedule. Should the Centre offer accommodation, then no reimbursement of the same will be made.
- If own accommodation has been specified as a possible option in the invitation letter, invitees are required to stay in facilities formally serving for that purpose. Evidence of payment (hotel bills or equivalent) must comply with local commercial tax legislation. For instance, hiring of private residential apartments will not be reimbursed.
- Accommodation is provided only to invitees who are resident 100 km or more from the meeting/event venue.
- Extra hotel expenses e.g. telephone charges, mini-bar, etc. should be settled by the invitee directly upon check-out.
- The Centre may reimburse additional accommodation due to flight cancellation (if not provided for by the airline) or under other exceptional circumstances duly justified by supporting documents.

9. Miscellaneous

- Invitees who need a visa to attend an ECDC meeting are responsible for applying for and obtaining it in accordance with the applicable visa application procedure.
- ECDC will, however, provide the invitee with an official invitation letter and necessary information on the travel arrangements.
- Visa fees will be reimbursed to the invitee upon submission of necessary supporting documents (e.g. receipt).

10. Submission of Reimbursement Application

A Reimbursement Application form must be properly filled-in, signed, scanned and sent to the Centre via email together with the following documents:

- Financial Identification and Legal Entities forms for first reimbursement application submitted to the Centre or if bank account details provided in previous document have changed.
- When not prepaid by the Centre, justification of the travel: an invoice showing the airfare and ticket class or a copy of the return air-ticket.
- When not prepaid by the Centre, justification of the accommodation: original hotel invoice clearly stating the name of the traveller, dates and sums due.

All reimbursements will be done through bank transfer.

The Reimbursement Application form together with the required documentation must be submitted within 90 calendar days counting from the last day of the meeting to:

reimbursements@ecdc.europa.eu

Reimbursement applications received after the deadline will not be reimbursed.

Annex 1:

Allowances and ceilings

The daily subsistence allowances and hotel ceilings set in the Staff Regulations of officials and the Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Union are those used in the application of the Rules for reimbursements of ECDC. Those rates are reviewed regularly by the European Commission.

The daily allowances and the ceilings applicable are those which were valid at the time of the signature of the invitation to a meeting/event.

Ceilings and allowances for EU countries:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R1611>

2008 Commission mission guide contain the ceilings and allowances for non-EU countries (select pdf, Annex I):

<https://www.euspa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/procurement/GSANP0712-Annex-VI-Mission-Rules.pdf>

The above links in this Annex are updated and approved by the Head of the Resource Management and Coordination Unit of the Centre whenever the Staff Regulations of officials and the Conditions of Employment of other servants of the European Union are updated as regards the daily subsistence allowances and hotel ceilings.

End.