

Travel Reimbursement Rules

November/2023

RULES FOR SUBMITTING TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS AND CLAIMING EXPENSES

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE PAYMENT, THE PARTICIPANT MUST:

- Choose the most economical means of transportation; make their transportation arrangements as early as possible upon receipt of the official invitation to the meeting.
- Not receive double funding, as it is not permitted. Therefore, the participants shall declare via e-COST when submitting their Online Travel Reimbursement Request (OTRR) that they will not receive a reimbursement or any allowance from a third party to support their attendance at the approved COST activity for which they are submitting a claim. In case a participant is partially funded by another source of funding, this amount shall be deducted from the participant's claim.

The COST Association reserves the right to contact any beneficiary of COST funds and / or their institution or any other relevant third party when double funding is suspected. Further, non-abidance by this rule may lead to rejection of costs or sanctions as per III - Level A - Breach of COST Rules and Principles.

In addition, participants may claim a lower amount of reimbursement than the entitled amount as per the rules described in A1-3.1.3 -Eligible expenses of the Annotated Rules.

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE PAYMENT, THE PARTICIPANT MUST:

- Have an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu> including up to date bank details.
- Be eligible to receive financial support.
- Have received an e-COST invitation to the meeting / training school and have accepted it **within 2 weeks** from receiving it.
- Sign the attendance list on each attended day.
- Submit via e-COST a completed Online Travel Reimbursement Request (OTRR) as soon as possible and not later than **15 calendar days** after the end of the event.
- Upload legible copies of all invoices / receipts and relevant supporting documents onto e-COST.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Daily Allowance (accommodation, meals, and short-distance transport expenses)

The reimbursement of incurred expenses for accommodation, meals, and short distance travel is paid as one lump-sum amount known as daily allowance.

No invoices for accommodation, meals, and short distance travel are therefore required unless otherwise explicitly requested in accordance with applicable law or regulation and the COST Annotated Rules.

The Daily Allowance rate (available at http://www.cost.eu/daily_allowance) is based on the country where the event takes place.

The Action MC may decide to reduce the daily allowance rate. In such case:

- The same daily allowance rate shall be afforded to all eligible participants attending a given event;
- For Training Schools only, the Action MC may choose to apply two different daily allowance rates, one rate for all Trainers and one rate for all Trainees;
- All participants shall be notified of the revised daily allowance rate before or upon receiving their formal invitations via e-COST.

The actual daily allowance is calculated against:

- The actual number of days of attendance to the event (as confirmed against the signature on the official attendance list for each day of the event); The participant may arrive on the day before the event commences and/or leave one day after the event finishes.
- The participant's travel start and end dates and hours. The participant shall provide other supporting documents (e.g. accommodation or meal invoices) attesting their travel dates so that the daily allowance can be correctly calculated, only in the cases when: (i) cannot provide proof of the travelling date and hours or (ii) does not submit long distance travel reimbursement request.

Recommendation:

- When two eligible participants share the same accommodation, whilst both participants are allowed to claim the daily allowance, they are invited to consider claiming the full daily allowance of only one of them and the other participant to claim 40% of the daily allowance.
- When an eligible participant's primary affiliation is in the city of the event, the participant is invited to claim only 40% of the daily allowance. This option can be selected when completing the Online Travel Reimbursement claim in e-COST.
- Participants are advised to book a refundable hotel room.

Long-distance travel (>101km) - train, ferry, bus, plane, or car

Long-distance travel is any travel equal to or above 101 km one way between the main transportation hub at the point of departure and the main transportation hub at the event venue and return.

See special provisions for transport by car below.

The incurred long-distance travel expenses are reimbursed on face-value including VAT, up to a maximum of **EUR 1500, cancellation insurance included.**

Transport to and from a main transportation hub (meaning an airport, harbour, main train or bus station) is covered by the daily allowance if the distance is less or equal to 100 km one way.

The Management Committee may decide to lower the maximum amount reimbursable for long-distance travel for all participants. This decision shall be communicated in advance and/or at least upon receipt of the e-COST invitation.

To be reimbursed the participants shall upload in e-COST relevant supporting documents which must clearly detail:

- The name of the service provider.
- The mode of transport taken.
- The full price paid for the ticket.
- The name of the passenger if applicable.
- The travel dates, departure, and arrival times (an invoice only showing the amount will not suffice).
- The type of extra charges claimed such as seat reservation, extra leg room, exit row seat, fast lane, priority boarding, sms priority boarding fees, luggage associated expenses, sustainable fuel surcharge, and the associated amount paid for, if applicable.

In case a participant attends two consecutive Action events (e.g. Meeting followed by a Training School, their long distance travel shall be claimed for only one of the events.

Specific conditions for Car travel expenses

The following specific conditions apply when claiming car travel expenses:

- Car travel is limited to a maximum distance of 2 000 km for the entire journey from any point of departure to the event venue and return;

- Car travel shall be reimbursed at EUR 0.35 per km based on the proof of distance in km from the point of departure and the event venue. An automatic distance calculator is provided by e-COST;
- If multiple participants travel together, only one person may claim the reimbursement of the number of km. Other eligible participants travelling in the same car are not eligible for the reimbursement of the car km.
- **Car travel equal or above 301 km one way from the point of departure to the meeting venue requires supporting documents (accommodation invoice and proof of payment)** which shall clearly detail:
 - The full price paid for the accommodation.
 - The name of the participant.
 - The hotel reservation dates, (departure and arrival). **An invoice or a reservation confirmation only showing the amount will not suffice.**
- For car travel below 301 km, the daily allowance and number of km deemed eligible will be reimbursed taking into account the participant signature on the event attendance list and the map attesting for the travelled distance available in e-COST.

Failure to provide the required supporting documents with the information mentioned above may lead to the rejection of the claim.

Recommendation:

- Participants are advised to contract a travel cancellation insurance for all their long-distance travel. Cancellation insurance is an eligible expense included in the long-distance travel expenses.

Other eligible travel expenses: Visa Expenses

Participants may claim visa expenses required to travel to the meeting venue as follows:

- May only claim the costs related to visa processing fees relevant to attending approved COST event(s).
- Attach supporting documents which shall include:
 - Receipt / stamp from the embassy / consulate issuing the visa
 - Amount paid for the visa and possible administrative costs.

NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The following expenses may never be claimed as travel expenses:

- Any expenses claimed on top of the daily allowance or long-distance travel such as: taxi or parking expenses, fuel costs, carbon tax, toll charges, car rental expenses linked to car travel, additional accommodation, or meals.
- Conference / registration fees.
- Lecture fees and honoraria.
- **Third party service fee for visa processing** (including form filling assistance, appointment bookings; visa application reception; information collection; data processing; transfer to the Embassy; reception and sorting of passports; express courier return; contact of applicants upon return of passports from the Embassy; handling telephone, online messages or email enquires of applicants by Call Centre; assistance Visa On Web, SMS costs, photograph cost or photocopies, postage expenses);
- Stand-alone medical or life insurance;
- Luggage insurance.
- Carbon offset fees. Nonetheless, COST Actions are encouraged to consider the environmental impact of their activities when making their plans and or look for other sources of funding for this expense.

- Fees, charges, and/or penalties linked to a participant changing or having to rebook travel tickets.
- Wi-Fi, telephone, internet, laundry, and mini-bar consumption expenses.
- Printing and postage expenses.
- Regional and / or national taxation fees; stamp duty expenses.
- Bank charges / fees on reimbursement made by the Grant Holder (or COST Association for centralised events).

DAILY ALLOWANCE

Daily allowance will be calculated against the attended days (as confirmed against participant's signature on the official attendance list for each day of the event that they attend), and the travel start and travel end dates and hours (as evidenced in the travel supporting documents).

The table hereunder describes how those criteria are taken into account in the calculation of the daily allowance:

Travel to the event:	
- travel starts before 11:59	Full allowance
- travel starts between 12:00 and 18:59	90% of Daily Allowance
- travel starts after 19:00	80% of Daily Allowance
Event days when participant does not travel:	
Each event day attended by the participant	Full DA rate
Travel from the event:	
- travel end before 11:59	20% of Daily Allowance
- travel ends between 12:00 and 18:59	30% of Daily Allowance
- travel ends after 19:00	40% of Daily Allowance
Arrival and departure on the same day of the event:	
For participants arriving and departing on the same day to the event, the calculation of their daily allowance depends on their travel time.	Between 20% and 40% of DA rate

Participants invited to a COST Action event can estimate the amount of daily allowance they could receive on e-COST by accepting the invitation and start completing the reimbursement claim.