



## SCIENTIFIC TRAVEL COSTS – REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

### Article 1. General principles and field of application

The School seeks to promote the development of culture, the progression of scientific knowledge and the preparation of Italian and international students for highly qualified scientific research and higher university education.

In coherence with these principles, the School promotes research and training activities, as well as initiatives aimed at encouraging staff and student mobility and the broadening of national and international contact networks.

The present regulations discipline, in accordance with the laws in force, the conditions for carrying out travel for professional reasons and the reimbursement procedure for authorized staff and students. The regulations are based on principles of efficiency, economic effectiveness and fairness of administrative action with the aim of minimizing public spending.

The professional trip must be consistent with the institutional aims of the School and the expenses incurred must respect the primary aim of cost-effectiveness; furthermore, they should be legitimate, reasonable and ethically correct.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed within the financial limits allocated specifically for this purpose in the Provisional Budget of the School.

### Article 2. Definitions

For the purposes of these regulations, the following definitions are given:

- a) "School", refers to the International School for Advanced Studies of Trieste (SISSA);
- b) "professional trip", refers to the activity carried out on behalf of the School and aimed at furthering its aims and institutional purposes. The activity is eligible for reimbursement if carried out at least 10 km away from the normal workplace and in a different municipality;
- c) "cost effectiveness", without prejudice to mandatory national rules, refers to the basic principle of overall cost reduction also taking into consideration the impact of associated labour costs, which must guide all economic decisions related to the trip. This principle is to be applied to unregulated situations or to those where no specific provision exists, as foreseen by these regulations or in the implementation guidelines.
- d) "reasonable and ethically correct" refers to the moral behaviour required in the organisation and performance of the trip which must adhere to the SISSA Code of Conduct, and moreover, the behaviour which has an economic impact on the trip must not only formally respect the reimbursement policy, but must also show an attitude of moderation and parsimony in the use of public resources;
- e) "normal workplace" refers to:



- i) the usual or permanent place of work or study based at SISSA (Trieste), or elsewhere if so defined by the employment contract or other agreement;
- ii) for claimants who are employees of other Universities, Public Administrations or private bodies or companies and who are part of externally funded projects managed by SISSA, the normal workplace is where they usually carry out their activity (it may also be Trieste for research projects conducted in SISSA);
- f) "duration of trip" refers to the period strictly necessary for carrying out the authorised activity away from the normal workplace, as detailed in article 4;
- g) "travel expenses" refer to the costs incurred for travelling to and from the trip destination;
- h) "standard journey" refers to a journey from/to the normal workplace to the trip destination within the period strictly necessary for completing the planned authorised activities;
- i) "actual costs reimbursement" refers to the reimbursement of the single costs related to the trip (listed under article 6 a), these are the real costs which were effectively borne to carry out the trip and for which supporting documentation must be provided;
- j) "flat-rate reimbursement" refers to a predefined forfait given to cover meals, accommodation and urban transport costs, as set out in article 6 b);
- k) "claimant" refers to the person who is entitled to carry out the trip in the interests of the School, pursuant to article 3 below;
- l) "Annex A" means the annex containing the expenditure limits which forms an integral part of this Policy.

### **Article 3. Claimants**

The following individuals may be authorised to carry out professional trips in the interest of the School:

- a) professors and researchers with permanent or temporary work contracts at SISSA;
- b) managers, administrative and technical staff with permanent or temporary work contracts at SISSA;
- c) SISSA PhD students, holders of research assignments (*assegni di ricerca*) or other fellowship awarded by SISSA;
- d) holders of employment contracts stipulated with the School, who are required to carry out activities in the interest of SISSA - which are not already remunerated by the contract;
- e) students enrolled in the specialization courses / Masters of the School;
- f) trainees within the limits of the agreements stipulated between the School and other public administrations or private bodies and companies;
- g) employees of other Universities, Public Administrations, private bodies or companies and who are part of externally funded projects managed by SISSA or who are eligible by means of agreements between SISSA and the above public/private bodies and companies;
- h) external members of the governing bodies of the SISSA as part of their mandate.

### **Article 4. Duration of the trip**

The calculation of the duration of the trip depends on the duration of the authorized activities: it should correspond to the time necessary to reach the destination, carry out the activity and to



return. The trip can start the day before the activities are planned to begin if they start too early to be able to travel to destination on the same day. The same applies for the return journey.

In exceptional cases the trip can be started up to 3 days before in order to arrive the day before the activities begin (permitted only for intercontinental journeys characterized by a high time-zone difference and/or with many aircraft changes). Within this period all eligible expenses are reimbursed.

Periods of interruptions to the trip may be foreseen before, during or after the authorised activities, only if previously approved by the head of the funds. Any expenses incurred during these periods cannot be reimbursed, with the exception of the outward or inbound travel expenses made after the strictly necessary period indicated above and without prejudice to the quoted travel expenses approved during the authorization phase.

The duration of the trip is declared by the claimant on the online form and refers to the departure/return time from/to the workplace or from another place as specified in Article n. 7. The length of the trip is a necessary parameter to determine:

- a) the amount due for the flat-rate reimbursement abroad;
- b) the amount due for meals.

Technical and administrative staff must refer to the Working Hours Regulations for the calculation of any hours worked which exceed their normal timetable.

The maximum duration of the trip for work performed in the same location in Italy is limited to 240 continuous days; reduced to 180 days for trips abroad.

#### **Article 5. Authorization to carry out a professional trip**

All eligible individuals, pursuant to article 3, must receive prior authorization before carrying out trips for work purposes.

The request for authorization must be completed online by the person concerned at least 7 working days before departure and must contain the necessary information to allow an adequate assessment of the regularity and the necessity of the trip and the appropriateness of the expenditure.

For insurance reasons, the request for authorization must be completed even if the related expenses are not borne by SISSA (so-called "zero cost" trip).

The aforementioned limit of 7 working days is reduced to 2 working days if the trips are carried out for the following reasons:

- a) tests on human subjects at specific hospitals with which SISSA has signed agreements;
- b) meetings with companies or other stakeholders in the sphere of the activities connected to SISSA's "3<sup>rd</sup> mission";



- c) institutional meetings upon request of the Director or Secretary General.

The request for authorization must contain the following elements:

- a) claimant's details;
- b) role/type of contract;
- c) place of departure/return (only if not Trieste);
- d) destination/s;
- e) dates and possible intervals;
- f) reasons for the activity;
- g) available funds;
- h) type of reimbursement: analytical or flat-rate (the latter only for trips abroad for claimants in article 3 a), b), c));
- i) estimate of the overall expense, including any costs prepaid by the School;
- j) requests for advance payments (only for claimants in article 3 a), b), c));
- k) communication of reimbursements from other organizations;
- l) private transport requests only if necessary (other than "ordinary means of transport");
- m) any additional information as requested online.

#### **Article 6. Types of reimbursement**

- a) Trips in Italy

The only kind of reimbursement applicable to trips carried out in Italy is the "actual costs" settlement. The authorised person whom incurred the expenses for travel, urban and suburban transport, board and lodging, or other costs pursuant to article 12 can claim reimbursement for personal expenses which are adequately documented as detailed in the following articles. The daily expenditure limits are set out in the Annex.

- b) Trips abroad

Trips abroad carried out by claimants in article 3 a), b), c) may be reimbursed as described above or by means of a flat-rate reimbursement, paid on a completed 24-hour basis. For periods of between 12 and 24 hours, half the flat-rate reimbursement is paid. The flat-rate settlement includes all meals, accommodation and urban transport, while travel expenses are reimbursable separately.

The expenditure limit for accommodation (if the actual costs reimbursement is chosen), is identical to that for trips in Italy, whereas meals are reimbursed according to the country specific limit set out in the Annex.

It is not possible to request a flat-rate reimbursement in the event that the accommodation or board is at the expense of public administrations or foreign bodies.

#### **Article 7. Travel expenses**



Travel expenses are reimbursed, for journeys from/to the normal workplace to the trip destination within the period strictly necessary for completing the authorised activities.

Whilst respecting the principle of safeguarding the cost-effectiveness of the trip, which must be demonstrated according to the procedures established by the School in the request for authorization, the following alternative journeys may however be reimbursed:

- a) direct journeys from the place of residence to the trip destination and vice-versa;
- b) journeys from other locations to the trip destination and vice-versa: permitted only for exceptional and motivated reasons;
- c) journeys to intermediate destinations and vice versa, in concomitance with a period of interruption to work activities: permitted only for exceptional and motivated reasons.

A non-standard journey may be authorized, even if not cost-effective, but the reimbursement will not exceed the estimated cost of the aforementioned "standard" journey.

In the absence of documentary proof of cost-effectiveness in the authorization phase, no reimbursement will be given for non-standard journeys.

#### **Article 8. Means of transport**

The modes of transport which can be used during a trip are divided into the following categories according to their authorization requirements:

- a) Ordinary means of public transport, that do not require specific authorization:
  - i) train
  - ii) aeroplane
  - iii) bus, coach or other means of transport with regular scheduled services (ship, tram, underground railway, etc.)
- b) Other means of transport, that must be authorized in advance:
  - i) taxi and shuttle bus e.g. "Science bus", "GoOpti", "Uber" and similar services
  - ii) SISSA's car
  - iii) private car
  - iv) rental car
  - v) car-sharing (e.g. bla-bla car).

The use of other means of transport must be expressly motivated and must meet at least one or more of the following conditions / criteria:

- a) cost-effectiveness (cheaper or equivalent cost as demonstrated in authorization request):
- b) with respect to the use of ordinary means



- i. ii) with respect to the overall cost of the mission in terms of savings in accommodation and / or meals;
- c) proven unavailability of ordinary means;
- d) destinations with scarce public transport services, or badly connected in relation to the duration of the journey or the number of changes necessary;
- e) particular needs related to health conditions certified by a doctor / health centre;
- f) particular needs related to the necessity to optimize time in relation to other work commitments;
- g) transport of materials or equipment which are essential for the planned activities, and which cannot be delivered (even for cost reasons), nor transported by ordinary means of transport;
- h) night journeys starting or ending from 22:00 to 6:00.

In case of force majeure circumstances (strikes, accidents, missed connections due to delays in public transport and such like) which can be documented, the use of other modes of transport can be authorized retrospectively.

#### **Article 9. Accommodation expenses**

Accommodation expenses are reimbursed within the period strictly necessary for the performance of the authorised activities.

The cost of accommodation refers to the use of a single room or a “double room for single use” (one occupant) as shown on the invoice issued.

Different choices to the above must be authorized ex ante upon presentation of documented cost effectiveness.

In the case of trips carried out in the municipality of the place of temporary or permanent residence, no accommodation costs will be reimbursed.

#### **Article 10. Expenses for meals and refreshments**

Meals and refreshments are reimbursed within the period strictly necessary for the performance of the authorised activities.

No allowance is given for trips lasting less than 4 hours. The daily expenditure for meals is reduced by 50% for trips lasting 4 to 8 hours.

As a general rule, the reimbursement of meals in the same municipality where the claimant lives temporarily or permanently resides, is not permitted when this coincides with the destination or with the starting point of the trip.

Receipts for meals issued in the municipality of the normal workplace cannot be reimbursed.

Food and drinks purchased from shops rather than from restaurants can be reimbursed up to the same daily limit indicated in the Annex.



In case of accommodation solutions, which provide meals as in one of the formulas described below, the remaining allowance for meals varies as follows:

- a) bed + breakfast: no reduction to the daily limit;
- b) half-board: the daily limit is reduced by 50%;
- c) full board: there are no further reimbursements for food.

These limits also apply if the person concerned does not actually use the meals provided at the hotel and are also applicable to meals offered by the organizers of conferences or other activities. In the event that the meal consumed at the hotel restaurant is not part of the aforementioned formulas, the expense is counted in the ordinary daily expenditure limit.

For meals included in quotas for conferences or other activities it is necessary to indicate the date of the meals if this is not visible on the documentation provided. The maximum daily reimbursement rate will be reduced according to the provisions of the above-mentioned hotel formulas.

#### **Article 11. Expenses incurred in foreign currency**

The official exchange rate of the Bank of Italy on the first day of the trip will be applied to any supporting documents submitted for reimbursement, expressed in foreign currency.

#### **Article 12. Other reimbursable expenses**

Upon presentation of regular proof of purchases, the following expenses are reimbursable directly related to the mission:

- d) registration fees for conferences, conferences and seminars abroad;
- e) car parking (if personal vehicle or rented vehicle has been authorised);
- f) motorway toll or vignette (if authorised as above);
- g) costs for consular visas and postage;
- h) tourist taxes reimbursable up to the expense limit of the overnight stay;
- i) stamp duty on VAT exempt documents;
- j) costs for mandatory vaccinations and pharmaceutical costs for prophylaxis;
- k) health insurance stipulated for the single mission to cover medical, pharmaceutical and hospital expenses incurred in non-EU countries;
- l) tips (leave the minimum quota possible and only when they are mandatory according to the customs of the country); to be reimbursed they must be evident in the receipt provided;
- m) telephone and internet connections for work related reasons;
- n) travel agency fees.

#### **Article 13. Non-reimbursable expenses**

The following are not considered reimbursable expenses:



- a) fines and penalties;
- b) extra hotel services (e.g. laundry, mini bar);
- c) luggage storage;
- d) credit card fees;
- e) airport check-in costs;
- f) costs for additional luggage, other than first checked-in luggage, subject to prior authorization;
- g) excess weight for luggage charges;
- h) expenses for social events outside meals;
- i) any other expenses not strictly related to the mission;
- j) registration fees for conferences, conferences and seminars in Italy.

Registration fees for conferences and seminars in Italy can only be reimbursed if it is not possible for the School to pay the organisers directly. If the registration fees include the cost of meals and accommodation, these must be mentioned in the invoice as additional expenses of the same type cannot be reimbursed. If it is not possible to obtain a detailed list of the expenses covered by the registration fees, the claimant should present a self-declaration with this information.

#### **Article 14. Documentation of expenses**

The claimant must state that s/he has not received any other form of reimbursement for the declared expenses. Expenses can only be reimbursed upon the presentation of original proofs of purchase showing the amount paid, the date, the recipient of the sum and the kind of expense. For expenses incurred in Italy, the documentation consists in invoices, fiscal receipts or other receipts when issued in accordance with the law.

The reimbursement of travel and transport costs is subject to the presentation of the original travel documents without exceptions.

For expenses incurred abroad, the documentation submitted must be valid in the country of issue and issued according to the rules and customs of the country itself.

In the case of receipts for more than one person (e.g. restaurant bill for 4 people), the reimbursement of the individual quota is permitted, even upon presentation of a photocopy, if the original supporting document is held in another person's expense claim at the School.

#### **Article 15. Advance payments**

Once the professional trip has been authorised, individuals referred to in Art. 3 a) b) c) may request an advance of 75% of the amount foreseen for the mission if paid with the actual cost reimbursement method, or 90% if eligible for the flat-rate reimbursement method.

As an alternative to the advance payment, it is possible to request a prepaid AIRPLUS card to cover travel and accommodation costs.





Those who receive an advance and subsequently are not able to carry out the trip, must return it by bank transfer within 15 days of the date on which the journey should have begun. If the School does not receive the sum, the amount will be duly deducted from the claimant's salary/fellowship.

#### **Article 16. Settlement of expenditure**

The settlement request must be completed on-line, printed and signed by the claimant and presented to the relevant administrative office within 45 days from the end of the trip.

For trips falling at the end of the year or over two accounting periods, with costs relevant to the previous years budget, the deadline for submitting the reimbursement request is 31<sup>st</sup> January of the following year.

The request must include all the elements necessary to ascertain the effective performance of the authorised activities:

- a) date, time and place of departure and arrival;
- b) the place(s) where the activities were carried out;
- c) list of reimbursable expenses and proofs of purchase;
- d) self-declaration that the expenses were made by the person on the trip for his/her exclusive benefit;
- e) self-declaration that the reimbursement of these expenses has not been, nor will be requested to another administration / body / company or a self-declaration specifying which expenses will be reimbursed by third parties;
- f) self-declaration or brief report of the activities which were the motive for the trip.

Any changes to what had been authorized prior to the trip must be adequately motivated and will be assessed by the Head of the Funds who has the faculty to authorize them in compliance with the rules and limits established for the ordinary procedures of this Policy.

The administrative office in charge of processing the claims will verify the settlement request form is complete, accurate and supported with detailed receipts as proof of purchase. The expenses will be reimbursed within 45 days from the receipt of the correct and complete claim form.

#### **Article 17. Increased PhD grant for periods abroad**

PhD students who benefit from the 50% increase of their grant for carrying out research abroad for periods longer than 30 days are entitled to claim the additional reimbursement of travel and visa expenses only.

#### **Article 18. Cancellation of authorized trips**



If authorized trips are not carried out, due to exceptional circumstances beyond one's control, expenses which are not refundable by the provider of the service will be reimbursed.

The following conditions are considered to be “exceptional circumstances”:

- a) failure to receive the required visa, if requested sufficiently in advance and in compliance with the normal procedures;
- b) personal illness documented by a medical certificate;
- c) serious family reasons for which the laws in force grant leave of absence;
- d) exceptional atmospheric, natural or socio-political events;
- e) strikes, break-downs and delays that block transport services or nullify the objective of the trip, duly documented;
- f) unexpected cancellation of the event which was the reason of the trip, duly documented;
- g) official changes to work schedule after the expenses have been incurred.

In the event that the trip had not yet incurred any expenses, but the School had made an advance payment; the individual must diligently repay it within 15 days from the date on which the trip should have started.

#### **Article 19. Users' Manuals**

The implementation procedures of this Policy are described in the Users' manuals issued by the Secretary General.

#### **Article 20. Transitory and final regulations**

This Policy and Annex A will enter into force from the date of the Directorial Decree in which they are announced.