



Agenda Item 15

Document SMB9-12

Approved: (Decision Ref: SMB/M9/DP7)

CGIAR System Management Board Travel Policy

Purpose: Present for SMB approval a travel policy for the SMB that is fit for purpose taking into account value for money and the travel needs of the Board members.

Document Category: This document may be shared without restriction.

Context

- Since July 2016 – the CGIAR System Organization has a travel policy that covers both the SMB and System Management Office
- That ‘travel policy’ is currently located in the internal staff ‘Personnel Policy Manual’
- It would be beneficial for SMB members to have access to a policy that is a clear document and more readily available
- Policy presented in the following slides has been updated to seek to better meet Board members’ needs tied to an overall goal of ensuring value for money in all that the System collectively does

Elements of SMB travel policy

1. Underlying Principles – as set out below

- a. Achieving overall value for money for the System Organization for travel by System Management Board members (what's the most efficient, effective, and best value taking into account the purpose of the travel).
- b. Operating consistently – transparent provisions available to Board members to apply as needed.

2. Provisions (described in following slides)

- a. Booking timetable
- b. Travel class and preferences
- c. Accommodation guidance
- d. Reimbursement of travel expenses
- e. Travel policy flexibilities

Policy Provisions – Booking policy

1. **Advance bookings** - Travel to be requested and finalized at least 21 calendar days in advance of commencement of official travel to maximize the opportunity to book the most cost-efficient travel option.
2. **Booking party** - Generally the System Management Office will make all flight arrangements to maximize use of favorable airline policies for not-for-profit entities. However, if the traveler wishes to purchase an air ticket themselves:
 - a. Before making the booking, the travel option should be clarified with the System Management Office to ascertain whether it is comparable in value for money compared to what the System Management Office could book;
 - b. If comparable, travelers should book the flight and then submit a claim for reimbursement of the air ticket in line with the provisions in this policy; or
 - c. If there is a major additional cost for a self-booked flight, the System Management Office's obligation is up to the value that the office could have booked.

Policy Provisions - Booking Fare Class

3. **Booking classes:** Applying value for money principles and subject to the flexibility provisions in this policy set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 below:
 - a. **Day flights/combined flight times of less than 7 hours that do not have a lengthy waiting period in an airport** should be booked in economy class on a 'lowest practical fare basis' (restricted fares whenever this is possible, and more flexibility when plans can evolve)
 - b. **Day flights/combined flight time of more than 7 hours or with 3+ hours connection in an airport or travel that includes an overnight flight segment of more than 3 hours** can be booked in business class (or at the traveler's agreement, Premium Economy where a Business Class flight cost would constitute a significant multiple of an equivalent Premium Class ticket, with similar routing) unless item c below applies.
 - c. **Private deviations:** If a journey for SMB business is interrupted by a stopover for a private deviation of more than 1 day, the combined flight times can no longer be combined to track the business class threshold.

Policy Provisions: Accommodation guidance

4. **Accommodation requirements for Board members attending SMB meetings:** Met through the accommodation option pre-selected by the System Management Office for the relevant meeting, at the System Organization's costs. A personal preference to choose alternate accommodation is possible, with the System Organization reimbursing up to the rate of the pre-selected venue.
5. **Other accommodation requirements for SMB related travel:** Board members are invited to obtain the prevailing 'accommodation cost guide' for the relevant city from smb-secretariat@cgiar.org and book accommodation largely in line with that guidance. A personal preference to stay in a significantly more expensive accommodation option is possible, with the System Organization reimbursing an amount largely in line with the System Organization's annual accommodation rates for the relevant city.
6. **Where the travel is to a CGIAR Partner event and accommodation options are pre-selected by the Partner,** if reimbursement of the SMB member is required, accommodation will be reimbursed in line with the CGIAR Partner's pre-agreed arrangements.

Policy provisions – Expense reimbursement

7. **Expenses incurred that are supported by official receipts** forms the basis of reimbursement of costs incurred for SMB related travel. Per-diem arrangements do not apply.
8. **Range of non-accommodation expenses covered:** Recognizing that Board members are traveling in the best interests of the CGIAR System, no ceilings are set for non-accommodation expenses. However, there is a shared responsibility for travelers to be prudent, ethical and cost-conscious with respect to business travel practices and matters that are claimed for reimbursement.
9. **Entertaining others on SMB official business:** As for paragraph 8, a standard of being prudent, ethical and cost conscious applies. If there is a perceived need to incur more than US\$ 50 per person for a small group for entertainment, this should be pre-consulted via smb-secretariat@cgiar.org
10. **Making an expense reimbursement claim:** Travelers must ensure that all requests for reimbursement (supported by official receipts) are approved within 21 calendar days of the return date noted in the trip request.

Policy provisions – Flexibilities

- 11. Business need flexibility agreed by SMB Chair:** It is recognized that the particular context of the travel that is planned may present a business case for a variation to this policy for a traveler or travel event. Such a request should be made in advance through the SMB Chair.

- 12. Medical condition:** The traveler is responsible for securing written documentation from a registered medical practitioner if an ongoing flexibility is required for travel and/or accommodation.