**THE EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME**

**FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2007-2013**

**MANAGING AUTHORITY GUIDANCE**

**ELIGIBILITY OF TRAVEL AND EXPENSES EXPENDITURE**

1. This guidance supplements DFP Guidance Note 5 (Northern Ireland Rules on the Eligibility of Expenditure, available [here)](http://www.eucompni.gov.uk/resources/guidance/dfp-guidance-note-5-eligibility-of-expenditure-last-updated-jun-2011) in relation to eligibility of travel and expense expenditure within the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme.

2. The common principle for the eligibility of travel and expense costs is that it covers extra expenses, necessarily incurred in carrying out project or programme business.

1. Organisations should ensure that all staff are fully aware of the need to exercise economy and efficiency in travel and expense costs. Authorising officers must satisfy themselves that that all travel and expense costs are essential to the effective progress of the funded activity.
2. When trips are deemed necessary particular attention should be given to the number of project representatives involved as well as the frequency and duration of visits. Consideration should be given to other means of communicating such as video-conferencing.
3. Venues for meetings should be selected carefully to minimise travel. Where there is a need to be at a location for two consecutive days a careful balance needs to be struck between the overall cost of two return journeys and the overnight expenses payable.
4. The mode of transport should be the most economical taking account of time, costs and expense.
5. Taxi fares may only be reimbursed where there is a justifiable reason which could include:

Journeys for which there is no other suitable method of public transport;

When heavy luggage has to be transported; or

Where the saving in staff time is important and outweighs the cost.

1. The cost of hiring a car may be considered eligible where the hire cost can be demonstrated to be value for money compared to other forms of available transport, (or where it is the only available or viable option). Hire car costs may only be reimbursed where the project has retained evidence supporting the decision to use a hire car which demonstrates the above conditions are satisfied.
2. In all instances, only travel and expense costs which are *capped* at Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) rates will be considered eligible. Organisations can choose to exceed these limits under their own policy but should be aware that only the amount up to the NICS ceiling will be eligible for funding under the EU Competitiveness Programme.
3. Meal and accommodation expenditure associated with travel costs are eligible for funding under the EU Competitiveness Programme against ***actual*** ***costs*** ***supported by invoices/receipts* and capped at the NICS subsistence rate**. Where a project is claiming for individual receipted items please note that alcohol is not eligible under NICS rules and is therefore ineligible within the Programme. Tips for meals are eligible up to 10% of the cost of eligible items.
4. Experience has shown that car parking and other low value costs associated with travel can be difficult to vouch as supporting documents are often not retained. Intermediate Bodies must ensure that the necessary supporting documentation is being securely retained by the project.
5. The mileage rates for business travel are:

| **Tax - Rates per business mile For years 2002-03 to 2010-11** |
| --- |
| **Type of vehicle** | **First 10,000 miles** | **Above 10,000** |
| Cars and vans | 40p | 25p  |
| Motorcycles | 24p | 24p |
| Cycles | 20p | 20p |

| **Tax - Rates per business mile for years from 2011-12** |
| --- |
| **Type of vehicle** | **First 10,000 miles** | **Above 10,000** |
| Cars and vans | 45p | 25p  |
| Motorcycles | 24p | 24p |
| Cycles | 20p | 20p |

1. The NICS subsistence policy is available [here.](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/9.13_subsistence_allowances.pdf)
2. For Northern Ireland and UK travel, the specific ceilings which apply are included in the policy at Annex 1.

15. The maximum rates allowable for overseas allowances are available

[here.](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/9.09_overseas_subsistence_allowances.pdf)

16. It is best practice to use a staff travel claim form which details travel undertaken, reasons for the journey (which must relate directly to the project), timings and the amount claimed. Supporting receipts, where appropriate, should be numbered and cross-referenced.

17. A template travel claim form is attached at Annex A as a guide for projects and it is recommended that projects adopt this form, if they do not have an existing travel expenses claim form. However, projects must as a minimum:

* maintain a record of all the travel details specified in paragraph 1.15 (in some auditable form);
* retain evidence that the expenses claimed have been approved in line with paragraph 1.17 below;
* be able to demonstrate through documents retained that the expenditure relates directly to the project and was actually incurred; and
* ensure that the travel claim is approved/authorised by an appropriate staff member. This will normally be the line manager, finance personnel or senior executive. Where the travel relates to a Chief Executive or Managing Director the claim should be authorised by the company accountant or other relevant personnel. In the case of sole traders the individually certified form will be considered adequate.

18. When approving a claim, authorising officers must ensure that:

1. the facts on the claim are correct and that any corrections are initialled;
2. expenses claimed were actually and necessarily incurred on official business in the most economical manner;
3. the amount claimed complies with the relevant NICS ceilings;
4. the claim is arithmetically correct;
5. the declaration is signed off by the claimant; and
6. the claim form once approved is passed directly for payment and should not be returned to the claimant.

19. In the case of small companies it may not be practical to implement a travel approval process (particularly where the travel claim relates, for example, to the owner). In these instances, the purpose of the visit may be demonstrated through minutes of meetings or by retaining conference literature or other related material.

**06 July 2013**

**Annex A**

Click on the link to download the European Regional Development Fund 2007-2013 travel and Expenses claim form

