



Volunteer Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy

1. Scope – who does this policy apply to

This policy applies to all volunteers in WOSM structures, including Committee members, at the global/world level that wish to be eligible for reimbursements of travel expenses. Such volunteers are referred to as “Travellers” for the purpose of this policy. WSB Staff regulations are covered through the OneWSB Travel Policy.

2. Purpose - why this Policy exist

- a. Responsible use of resources through advance planning and cost-effective choices when travelling to a volunteer obligated event.
- b. A shared understanding of the reimbursement process for all Travellers.
- c. A consistent, transparent, and fair approach to expense claims.
- d. To ensure the expenses incurred remain well within the approved operational budget.
- e. To promote responsible use of resources through advance planning and cost-effective choices.
- f. Compliance with internal and external audit requirements.

3. What Travel and Expenses are permitted

3.1 Volunteer Obligated Event

Only obligated events that are in the budget will qualify for reimbursement by World Scout Bureau (WSB). Prior to arranging any travel it is the responsibility of the Traveller to confirm with the WSB Staff Support that the Volunteer Obligated Event had been budgeted. The Volunteer Obligated Events are

- a. WSC Meetings for all WSC Members, within the approved annual budget.
- b. Such meetings as agreed by the Steering Committee where WSC representation is necessary, within the approved annual budget.
- c. For volunteers, such events, activities and meetings that are within the approved annual budget. Each expense (and the respective Budget Limit – see 3.2 below) will need to be confirmed in writing by the respective WSB Staff Support before being incurred.
- d. It is understood that for travel to be reimbursed under this policy, the Traveller’s schedule needs to allow them to **fully** discharge their duties during the Obligated Event. In such cases where the Traveller can only attend a part of the Event, consideration should be given to identify another individual who can fully discharge the required duties. In situations not sufficiently covered by this policy, the Secretary General (or their delegated WSB Staff Support) has final authority to authorise and approve volunteer travel expenses, within the WSB approved budget framework.

3.2 Budget Limit

WSB prepares yearly operational plans and the budget for all activities is defined at the beginning of financial year (and approved by the World Scout Committee). Travellers who require financial assistance from the WSB to participate in the Volunteer Obligated Events can only travel or be reimbursed within the respective budget limits as approved in the yearly operational plan. The respective staff member will do a quotation based on principles set out in this policy and the quotation will form the basis of the budget limit of the Volunteer Obligated Event (“Budget Limit”). Where possible, such Budget Limit will be communicated to the Traveller by the Staff Support approximately two (2) months prior to the Volunteer Obligated Event. Once the WSB has provided the Budget Limit, unless there is any issue raised for the quotation, the Budget Limit is fixed and may not be increased.

4. Procedures – How travel booking work

4.1 Transport

Flights

To be eligible for reimbursement, the Traveller and the Staff Support should confirm prior to booking of any travel if reimbursement is going to be needed. Otherwise, it is understood that all travel tickets are purchased by the WSB.

Flight travel expenses to and from home country to the city of the “Volunteer Obligated Event” at the most economical, reasonable options with minimal layovers during transit, is covered by this policy.

WSB, in consultation with the Traveller, will propose such a booking. The Traveller is also welcome to propose flight travel itineraries as long as such tickets are within the Budget Limit communicated by WSB. The WSB will then purchase the tickets. The Traveller may also book a flight themselves, taking into considerations below and within the Budget Limit. It is the Traveller’s responsibility to confirm the flight booking as soon as possible after receiving the Budget Limit and/or flight proposal. The Budget Limit will remain the same in the event that flight booking cannot be confirmed in time due to personal reasons.

- a. It is the responsibility of the Traveller to work with the WSB so that the flight tickets can be purchased no later than three (3) weeks prior to the “Volunteer Obligated Event”. If the Traveller has not made arrangements with the WSB three (3) weeks prior to the event, it is the responsibility of the Traveller to purchase the flight tickets at their own expense.
- b. The WSB covers the most cost-effective flight connection with a reputable air carrier. “Cost-effective” means the most economic economy class ticket available on a regular or low-cost carrier, where the layover in a transit airport is no longer than 4 hours for continental flights and no more than 6 hours intercontinental flights. “Reputable” means the WSB recommends wherever possible that Travellers travel on airliners with at least a 5/7 safety rating on airlineratings.com.
- c. If the layover is more than 4 hours a maximum of 50 USD will be granted to use for food or paid lounge access (max USD50 claim) or if the layover is more than 12 hours, then a hotel/capsule/lounge (max USD100 claim). Receipts are needed as proof.
- d. Business class (or premium economy class) flight tickets are never covered by WSB. Individuals may upgrade from economy to business class at their own expense, or use their personal accumulated frequent flyer points, if they wish. The WSB will only cover the cost up to the Budget Limit (assuming an economy class ticket is purchased).
- e. Benefits of the Frequent Flyers and Loyalty airline programmes remain with the Traveller. This, however, should not affect the choice of the most cost-effective carrier and ticket or become a reason to choose a company over another.
- f. If the flight ticket costs are covered by the Traveller, their National Scout Organization or any other entity/entities except the World Scout Bureau, the Traveller should handle all the costs and booking.
- g. With prior written agreement from the WSB the Traveller can purchase their flight ticket themselves. Reimbursement will be given up to the Budget Limit designated for that obligated event.
- h. If the Traveller is stopping over (enroute) for a non-obligated event or for personal reasons, it will be the responsibility of the Traveller to pay any difference in fare and travel cost.
- i. If the Traveller initiates a change to a confirmed flight booking for a personal reason, any resulting cost increases will be the responsibility of the Traveller, unless the change is made at the explicit request of the WSB. For the avoidance of doubt, if after such change, the Traveller cannot **fully** discharge their duty at the Volunteer Obligated Event, the Traveller shall discuss with the Staff Support and consider whether to proceed with attending the Volunteer Obligated Event.
- j. In all the above cases, the Traveller is obliged to provide the flight schedules to the WSB at least three weeks in advance of the meeting to help the host team making practical arrangements.

Train travel

If possible, the WSB also cover the most cost-effective train connection always remaining mindful of

budgetary constraints.

Sea / private car travel

If explicitly requested and required for the mission, travel by private car or sea can be approved.

Travel to/from home airport

Where available, public transport options should be used to get to/from home airports. When such options are not available or are impractical, Travellers may use taxi to/from home airports. In such cases, prior written agreement with the WSB is required on the budget limit for such transport. Such costs will be covered by this policy.

On site travel

Travellers should always consider the total cost and safety of transportation when selecting the means for ground transportation (public transportation, car, taxi etc.). Whenever convenient, safe, and regular public transport options are available to get to/from airports, hotels and meeting venues, Travellers are encouraged to use these. When such options are not available or are impractical, Travellers may use taxi to/from airports. In such cases, prior written agreement with the WSB is required on the budget limit for such transport. Typically the "Practical Note" issued by WSB prior to events will outline the recommend modes of on-site travel.

4.2 Visa fees

Visa cost fees are covered. However, it is the Traveller's responsibility to ensure they find out the local regulations and requirements to obtain a visa in a timely manner. If there is a need to travel to a different location to obtain a visa, such travel should be completed three weeks before the "Volunteer Obligated Event" to be eligible for reimbursement. Air travel for obtaining a visa will be reimbursed by the WSB subject to budget provision (to be confirmed by the respective WSB Staff Support) as long as the ticket is purchased by the WSB and is done well in advance of the "Volunteer Obligated Event".

4.3 Travel Insurance

In advance of the meeting, WSB will in line with this policy provide each Traveller with travel insurance. This insurance will typically cover the following:

- Theft or lost luggage
- Trip cancellation or flight delays
- Emergency medical support

4.4 Accommodation

- a. Only hotels recommended to all members of the WSB at the standard rate may be used. The WSB will decide accommodations for the Volunteer Obligated Events, taking into account the location, group booking discounts, overall costs and budgets and the needs of meeting facilities (if required).
- b. If a Traveller chooses to stay in another hotel than the recommended hotel, the full fare, including on-site travel to the meeting venue as applicable, is to be shouldered by the Traveller. This aims to increase the WSB's ability to negotiate group rates and reduce administrative and logistical workload.
- c. The WSB will in advance of a "Volunteer Obligated Event" communicate which nights and meals are covered. Any exceptions are to be shouldered by the Traveller, unless the WSB gives advance approval.
- d. Late checkouts are only available as a courtesy of the hotel and cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

4.5 Meals

Meals up to the following limits with receipts are covered if this is not included in the accommodation or "Volunteer Obligated Event":

- a. Breakfast - USD 10
- b. Lunch - USD 15
- c. Dinner - USD 25
- d. Only the Traveller's own meals are eligible for reimbursement. Meals for others will not be reimbursed.

- e. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.
- f. Airport meals will only be reimbursed if the layover exceeds 4 hours to a maximum of 50 USD (see 4.1.c).

4.6 What is not covered

Alcohol, minibar items, laundry expenses, entertainment expenses, local sim cards, payable hotel wifi, travel expenses for spouses or partners and any events or activities not noted in section 3.1.

5. Procedures – How expense claims work

5.1 Volunteer Expenses Claim Form

Enclosed in annex A to this policy is a “Volunteer Expenses Claim Form”. A completed “Volunteer Expenses Claim Form” needs to be submitted with all receipts within 20 days following the “Obligated Event”. The receipt has to be itemised (detailed) and credit card receipts showing only totals are not accepted. Scanned receipts are accepted.

5.2 Reimbursements

“Reimbursements” are provided to the Traveller according to this policy upon production of legible receipts and the submission of the completed “Volunteer Expenses Claim Form”. Reimbursements will be timely transferred to the bank account of the Traveller as per the bank data provided in the “Volunteer Expenses Claim Form”. The reimbursement will be done in US Dollars unless prior arrangements have been made. WSB will not be responsible for issues due to incorrect reimbursement arising from inaccurate or incomplete bank account details provided by the Traveller. Travellers should use WSB’s preferred currency converter website OANDA accessible via the following link <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter>. A receipt for the exchange rate charged from a bank or a money exchanger is also acceptable.

For any claims made by WSC members, to save bank costs:

- a. Claims need be made within 20 days of the conclusion of the Volunteer Obligated Event.
- b. All claims to be submitted to wsc.expense@scout.org.
- c. Expense claims that require a bank transfer need to be accumulated to \$200.
- d. Cash reimbursements under \$200 will be made at each WSC meeting. Please ensure your claim, if possible, is submitted before the WSB needs to travel to the meeting to ensure enough cash is in hand.
- e. The WSB will either settle the cash reimbursement at each WSC meeting or to roll over the claim until (i) it reaches \$200 bank transfer threshold or (ii) the next WSC meeting.

5.3 Important to Note

- a. Donations by a Traveller of part or all expenses are gratefully accepted. If requested a receipt will be issued for the amount of the gift.
- b. Expenses paid for or subsidised by the member’s own NSO or other agencies or organizations must not be claimed for reimbursement.
- c. Reimbursements will only be provided subject to submission of a fully completed ‘Volunteer Expenses Claim Form’ and substantiated with all receipts and necessary information, in accordance with this policy.
- d. This policy and the enclosed ‘Volunteer Expenses Claim Form’ serve as good practice for Regions and other volunteer structures to adapt and adopt.
- e. Exceptions to the above policy are possible only with written prior approvals from the authorised staff of the World Scout Bureau for the designated Volunteer Obligated Event.
- f. Where specific challenges exist within a home country’s banking regulations, reimbursements will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- g. The WSB will have final authority over this policy, given its accountability for the overall budget.

[See Annex A for the Volunteer Expense Claim form](#)

Approved by the World Scout Committee on 5 October 2025.

This version replaces Volunteer Expense Claim Policy as approved March 2017.