



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

FiTI Global Travel Policy

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FiTI International Secretariat

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Preamble

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) is a global multi-stakeholder partnership that strengthens transparency and collaboration in marine fisheries management. By making fisheries management more transparent and inclusive, the FiTI promotes informed public debates on fisheries policies and supports the long-term contribution of the sector to national economies and the well-being of citizens and businesses that depend on a healthy marine environment

As a global voluntary initiative which relies significantly on third-party funding, the FiTI has a responsibility to ensure that expenditures incurred in carrying out its mission are reasonable and justifiable, balancing the need to attend meetings/events with its commitment to a reasonable use of resources.

The purpose of this FiTI Global Travel Policy (further referred to as the “Policy”) is to describe the types of expenditures that are reimbursable by applicable travellers and to outline adequate instructions and procedures for those seeking reimbursement of their travel costs for FiTI-related travels.

While this Policy is intended to be comprehensive, it is impossible to anticipate every situation encountered by a traveller. The traveller is expected to apply this Policy on a conservative basis, consistent with normal living standards. In case where the Policy does not provide the necessary information, the traveller should exercise good judgment.

1. Applicability

The Policy applies to the following persons, in the following referred to as “travellers”, when seeking reimbursement for FiTI-related travels:

- FiTI Chair;
- Members of the FiTI International Board representing Small-Scale Fisheries as well as Civil Society from organisations with
 - a staff headcount¹ of fewer than 25, and
 - an annual income² not exceeding EUR 10 million.

In case funding support is available for all members of the FiTI International Board, this Policy applies to all other Members of the FiTI International Board as well.

¹ The staff headcount criterion covers full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal staff (e.g. employees, secondments, owner-managers). Staff headcount does not include apprentices or students, employees on maternity or parental leave and pro-bono partners or advisors.

² The annual income (also referred to as budget) is used for funding projects, operations, salaries and other overhead costs and typically constitutes membership dues, the sale of goods and services, grants, donations etc.

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- Employees, advisors and sub-contractors of the FiTI International Secretariat;
- Other individuals acting on behalf of the FiTI International Board or the FiTI International Secretariat.

For major FiTI events/meetings, such as FiTI International Conferences, separate travel policies may be provided.

2. Pre-approval of travel

According to the FiTI Global Code of Conduct, the FiTI is dedicated to use its resources in a cost-efficient and environmental-friendly way, while balancing the necessities to fulfil its mission. Before booking any travel, it is therefore essential that travellers consider video/teleconferencing options as a means of reducing costs and carbon emissions.

Reimbursement of travel costs is subject to the availability of funding. All applicable travellers seeking reimbursement must therefore obtain an approval prior to their travel as follows:

- Travel by members of the FiTI International Board must be approved by the FiTI Chair (this may also be delegated to the Executive Director of the FiTI International Secretariat);
- Travel by employees of the FiTI International Secretariat (except its Executive Director) as well as advisors and sub-contractors of the FiTI International Secretariat must be approved by the Director of the FiTI International Secretariat;
- Travel by other individuals acting on behalf of the FiTI International Board or the FiTI International Secretariat must be approved by the Executive Director of the FiTI International Secretariat;
- Travel by the Executive Director of the FiTI International Secretariat must be approved by the FiTI Chair.

Travellers seeking reimbursement may be requested to submit estimates for travel-related expenses prior to approval.

3. Travel expenses eligible for reimbursement

The FiTI appreciates efforts by travellers to seek the best fares possible and make use of public transportation whenever possible. All travel must be carried out via the most economical route. Furthermore, travellers must seek to combine FiTI-related travels with other travels.

The FiTI International Secretariat will reimburse only the following three expense categories, unless otherwise approved:

a) Travel (air, rail, car)

Travel arrangements for airfare and train tickets will be made by the FiTI International Secretariat. Only the actual expenses for airfare and train tickets will be reimbursed. Travellers should seek to depart from and return to the same location.

Airfares must be economy class tickets and train fares must be second/coach class tickets. The FiTI Chair has the option of business class airfares and first-class train tickets for long-distance travel.

Last minute airline or train cancellations reimbursements due to unforeseen natural or personal circumstances will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Travel by personal car must only be used in exceptional cases and requires prior approval by the FiTI International Secretariat. If travelling by car, the traveller will be reimbursed on a cents/km basis, as determined per country by the FiTI International Secretariat. Expenses for car rentals will not be reimbursed, unless otherwise approved.

b) Accommodation, meals and incidentals on a per diem basis

Per diems to cover accommodation, meals and incidentals expenses³ depend on the meeting/event destination of the travel and will be reimbursed based on internationally applied per diem rates⁴.

The daily per diem rate for FiTI-related travel of *less than 24 hours* is calculated as follows:

- If it involves a night away from the traveller's residence, a full day's per diem will be paid;
- If it does not involve a night away from the traveller's residence:
 - No per diem shall be paid for official FiTI-related travel of less than 10 hours;

³ The accommodation amount is intended to substantially cover the cost of lodging (single room) at adequate, suitable and moderately-priced facilities. The meals and incidentals expenses portion is intended to substantially cover the cost of meals and incidental travel expenses, such as in-country transportation (e.g. public transportation, taxis, car services), laundry and dry cleaning.

⁴ The FiTI is using the official per diem rates (so-called Daily Subsistence Allowance) from the United Nations system, as established by The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), <https://icsc.un.org/>.

- Forty per cent of the allowance shall be paid for FiTI-related travel of 10 hours or more.

The daily per diem rate for FiTI-related travel of *more than 24 hours* is calculated as follows:

- The full day's per diem rate is paid for the first day of arrival at the rate applicable to the location of arrival.
- For each successive period of 24 hours from midnight to midnight (measured by local times, ignoring time-zone differences), a full day's per diem rate is paid for those days where FiTI-related activities are conducted.
- No daily per diem rate is paid for the day on which the official business travel is concluded.
- The daily per diem rate must be reduced by the 'Accommodation' part for those days where no hotel is needed due to overnight (plane) travel.
- The rate applicable for each 24-hour period shall be that for the location at which the staff member spends the night.

In case of travels to multiple cities within one country, the values from the visited city with the lowest per diems rate (DSA) must be used (also for % distribution of hotel).

Travellers are expected to arrange their own accommodation in line with the per diem allowance.⁵ In the event that hotel reservations are arranged by the FiTI International Secretariat, travellers will be informed prior to the meeting/event. In case the FiTI International Secretariat makes hotel arrangements, yet travellers prefer to stay in a different hotel, the standard per diem rate will not be adjusted.

Dependent on the participants flight schedule additional night stays may be reimbursed, subject to approval by the FiTI International Secretariat.

Should travellers wish to extend their stay in the place of the venue, all hotel costs beyond the dates of the meeting will be at the expense of the traveller.

c) Transportation

Transportation costs to and from the traveller's home to the departing airport or train station as well as transportation costs to and from the traveller's FiTI-related destination and the arriving airport or train station will be reimburse. Only the actual expenses incurred will be reimbursed (e.g. public transportation or taxi receipts).

⁵ Please refer to room rates as a percentage of the subsistence allowance as promulgated by ICSC.

d) Visa costs and travel insurance

Visa processing fees and travel insurance cost and will be reimbursed in cases where it is necessary to attend a meeting/event. Only the actual expenses incurred will be reimbursed.

e) Other travel-related, eligible costs

- Telecommunications expenses (long distance/local calls) as well as internet access fees), if approved prior to travel;
- COVID-19 related travel expenses (e.g. testing costs) if necessary to enter the country.

The following expenses will not be reimbursed, unless otherwise agree upon prior to the travel:

- Service agency fees and other related expenses (e.g. photo service, travel to third country) for visa applications;
- Airline Ancillary Fees⁶;
- Lounge access with costs;
- Excess luggage charges or lost luggage and contents⁷;
- Laundry service;
- Credit card or banking fees;
- Souvenirs and personal gifts;
- Tips.

4. Reduction of per diems

In case expense items, as listed above under §3, are covered by the FiTI International Secretariat (e.g. central hotel booking, meals provided) or provided free of charge by other external sources (e.g. conference organiser), the daily the per diems rate must be reduced.

Example 1: the traveller attends a conference where the accomodation is fully paid by the conference organiser. In this case, the traveller is still allowed to receive a daily per diem

⁶ Any additional cost for booking a seat on board of a plane, upgrading to economy comfort, speedy boarding, in-flight entertainment, phone, or alcoholic beverages, is out of policy and will not be reimbursed.

⁷ Travellers should work directly with the airline carrier to recover damages.

rate, but no allowance will be provided for the hotel portion. The same applies in cases where the traveller stays with family or friends and therefore, no costs are incurred.

Example 2: the traveller invites an external counterpart to a meal (e.g. dinner). In this case, the traveller can reclaim the full amount of the dinner, but must reduce the daily per diem rate by one meal, in this case a dinner.

In the event that participants decide not to join a group-lunch and/or a group-dinner or other meals provided free of charge, these meals will not be reimbursed and must nevertheless be reduced from the per diems rate.

5. Reimbursement of travel

Travellers may request an advance on the expected travel expenses, subject to the availability of funding.

Within 30 days of completion of a trip, the traveller must submit their request by using the standardised FiTI Travel Reimbursement Form⁸ to in order to receive reimbursement of expenses. In case of travels covering multiple countries, one travel reimbursement form per country must be completed.

For a reimbursement request of expense categories a) and c), all receipts of expenses related to travel must be provided, including but not limited to:

- Original itemised receipts/tickets for train⁹;
- Original receipts of airline tickets issued by travel agents/airlines;
- Printouts of electronically issued receipts, including boarding pass;
- Other expense receipts, e.g. travel insurance or visa fees.

As accommodation, meals and incidentals (most notably transportation) are reimbursed on a per diem basis, they do not require a submission of receipts and/or other evidence.

The reimbursement request as well as all accompanying original documents must be sent as a PDF document to the FiTI International Secretariat at info@fiti.global. Original documents do not need to be sent via regular mail. However, all travellers must retain the original documents for 2 years after the submission of their reimbursement request.

Reimbursement of costs will take place within 30 days after receipt of the reimbursement claim, subject to the complete provision of supporting receipts.

⁸ The FiTI Travel Reimbursement Form can be requested from the FiTI International Secretariat.

⁹ The documents must clearly indicate the travel class, the time of travel and the amount paid.

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Reimbursement will be delivered either in cash (in particular to avoid high banking fees) or through wire transfer to the traveller's bank account¹⁰ in either US Dollars or EURO.

Travellers must deduct advances as well as reimbursements obtained from other sources (e.g. conference organisers) from their reimbursement claims.

¹⁰ All reimbursements of travel expenses will be made to one account only.

Change history

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.0	01 March 2018	Approval of FiTI Global Travel Policy by FiTI International Board during the 3 rd FiTI International Board meeting (Decision ID: BM-03_2018_D-05)
1.1	01 February 2020	Separation of public transportation from per diems rate; change of per diems rates from EU system to UN system; clarifications on travels covering multiple countries and/or multiple cities
1.2	31 October 2022	Clarification of transportation-related costs; deduction of 'accommodation costs' for overnight travels (e.g. via plane)