

Expenses & Travel Policy

Version history

Version	Date Adopted	Facilitator	Note
1.0			

Document controls

Action	Responsibility
Approval of document	Secretariat and Plenary
Implementation	Secretariat, Plenary, Staff and Supervisory Working Group, Members
Review	Secretariat
Date of next review	

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

This policy ensures that people carrying out approved duties on behalf of South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN) are not personally out of pocket for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in that role.

This policy sets out the principles, eligibility, allowable expenses, rates, approval requirements and claim procedures for travel and other expenses incurred on SDC PPN business.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to PPN Representatives, Secretariat members and authorised volunteers or facilitators who are carrying out approved PPN roles or duties.

Travel and expenses incurred by PPN staff while delivering the PPN work plan are PPN expenses. PPN staff are employed by the host organisation, Ace Enterprise Park, and staff expenses are processed through the host organisation's financial systems, in line with this policy, the Financial Controls Policy, public service norms and Revenue requirements.

2. Principles Governing Expenses and Travel

Expenses must be incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively for approved SDC PPN business.

Public transport, sustainable transport and car-pooling are the default travel options where reasonably available.

Alternative travel arrangements may be used where public or sustainable transport is not suitable due to accessibility needs, availability, location, time constraints or overall cost.

Expenses should represent value for money and be proportionate to the activity being undertaken.

Only actual costs incurred may be claimed. All claims are subject to review and audit.

3. Eligibility to Claim Expenses

Expenses may be claimed where the activity was approved in advance or where it is clearly required as part of an agreed PPN role, meeting schedule or work plan.

Individuals attending meetings, events or activities in a personal or organisational capacity, rather than on behalf of the PPN, are not eligible to claim expenses under this policy.

Where expenses can be covered by another organisation or funding source, claims should not be made to the PPN.

4. What Expenses May Be Claimed

SDC PPN will reimburse reasonable costs that arise directly from approved participation.

Allowable expenses may include travel costs, mileage, parking and tolls, approved accommodation and subsistence, approved training or event fees, and approved accessibility or participation supports.

The following costs are not reimbursable under this policy: childcare costs, loss of earnings or compensation for time spent, fines or penalties, personal expenses not directly related to PPN business, and costs incurred without approval where approval is required.

5. Travel Types and Transport Options

Public transport should be used where it is a reasonable and suitable option.

Private vehicles may be used where they are the most reasonable option, taking account of time, cost, accessibility and location.

Where private vehicles are used, mileage will be reimbursed at the applicable public service rates.

Car-pooling should be considered where feasible and appropriate.

6. Rates and Allowances

Travel and subsistence rates are aligned with public service and local authority rates.

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Current applicable rates are set out in Appendix 1 to this policy.

Rates may be updated from time to time to reflect changes to public service rates without requiring amendment of the main policy.

7. Approval and Pre-Approval of Expenses

Routine travel and meeting expenses arising from agreed roles or schedules do not require advance approval.

Travel outside of South Dublin County for PPN business must be agreed in advance.

Advance approval is required for non-routine or higher-cost expenses, including taxis, overnight accommodation, training or event fees, and accessibility or participation supports.

Approval should be sought from PPN staff before incurring such costs.

8. Claim Submission and Payment Process

Expense claims must be submitted on the official SDC PPN expense claim form.

Claims should be submitted on a quarterly basis.

All payments are made by electronic funds transfer through the PPN's financial systems.

Claims are processed in line with the Financial Controls Policy.

9. Receipts, Records and Audit

Receipts or supporting documentation must be provided for all expense claims.

Where a receipt is not reasonably available, a clear explanation must be provided with the claim.

All claims and supporting records are subject to review and audit. Expense claims and supporting documentation are retained in line with the SDC PPN Records Management Policy and applicable funding and audit requirements.

10. Time Limits and Cut-Offs

Expenses must be claimed within the calendar year in which they were incurred.

Claims submitted after year-end may not be processed due to audit and reporting requirements.

11. Processing, Payment and Responsibility

Expenses incurred under this policy are SDC PPN expenses.

Approved payments are processed through the host organisation's financial systems on behalf of the PPN.

The roles and responsibilities set out in the Financial Controls Policy apply to the approval and processing of expense claims.

12. Accessibility, Equality and Participation Supports

SDC PPN is committed to ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent participation in approved PPN activities.

Requests for accessibility and participation supports are subject to advance approval in line with the approval and oversight arrangements set out in this policy and the Financial Controls Policy.

Requests for such supports will be considered in a fair, proportionate and confidential manner.

13. Review, Amendments and Exceptional Circumstances

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate and compliant.

Amendments or urgent changes may be approved by the Secretariat and brought to the next Plenary for noting or ratification.

Exceptional circumstances not covered by this policy will be considered in line with the principles set out above.

Appendix 1. Travel and Subsistence Rates

Travel, mileage and subsistence rates are aligned with current public service and local authority rates, as updated from time to time.

Relevant Policies and Links

National PPN Guidance

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3b2b2-public-participation-networks-ppns-handbook/>

Public Service Travel and Subsistence Rates

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5f0b4-civil-service-subsistence-rates/>

Revenue guidance on reporting expenses and benefits

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/employing-people/becoming-an-employer-and-ongoing-obligations/err-jan-2024/information-you-need-to-report.aspx>