



TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Balkans Forward Foundation

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Travel and Reimbursement Policy is to ensure that travel undertaken on behalf of Balkans Forward Foundation (“the Foundation”) is necessary, reasonable, cost-effective, and properly authorised, and that related expenses are reimbursed in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner.

The Foundation aims to support effective work while maintaining responsible use of resources and compliance with financial, legal, and donor requirements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all travel and related expenses incurred by individuals acting on behalf of the Foundation, including staff, consultants, Board members, volunteers, and other authorised persons.

It applies regardless of funding source and covers domestic and international travel, accommodation, subsistence, local transport, and other related costs.

3. General Principles

Travel must be directly linked to the Foundation’s work and approved activities. It should be planned in advance, justified, and proportionate to the purpose and expected outcomes.

All travel-related expenses must be reasonable, necessary, and represent value for money. Lower-cost options should be used where appropriate, taking into account safety, time efficiency, and operational needs.

Personal convenience should not be prioritised over cost-efficiency without justification.

4. Approval of Travel

All travel must be approved in advance by the appropriate authorised person, typically the Executive Director.

The approval should confirm the purpose of travel, expected costs, source of funding, and alignment with project or organisational priorities.

Travel without prior approval may not be reimbursed unless justified and approved retrospectively in exceptional circumstances.

5. Booking and Travel Arrangements

Travel arrangements should be made in a cost-conscious and practical manner.

Flights, trains, and other transport should normally be booked in economy class unless justified otherwise.

Accommodation should be reasonably priced, safe, and appropriate for the location and duration of stay.

Where possible, bookings should be made in advance to secure better rates.

6. Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses include transportation, accommodation, meals, local transport, visa fees, travel insurance where required, and other necessary costs directly related to the approved travel.

Expenses must be directly linked to the purpose of travel and should not exceed reasonable limits.

Alcohol, personal entertainment, or unrelated personal costs are not reimbursable unless explicitly approved under exceptional circumstances.

7. Per Diem and Subsistence

Where applicable, the Foundation may apply per diem rates to cover meals and daily subsistence costs.

Per diems must be reasonable, consistent, and aligned with donor rules or internal guidelines.

If per diem is provided, separate reimbursement for the same costs should not be claimed.

8. Reimbursement Procedures

Reimbursement requests must be submitted within a reasonable timeframe after travel, typically within 30 days.

All claims must be supported by original receipts, invoices, or other appropriate documentation.

Claims must clearly indicate the purpose of travel, dates, and nature of expenses.

Incomplete or unsupported claims may be rejected or returned for clarification.

9. Advances

Where necessary, travel advances may be provided in advance of travel.

Any unused funds must be returned promptly after travel, and a full expense report must be submitted.

Failure to justify or reconcile advances may result in recovery of funds or restriction of future advances.

10. Use of Personal Funds and Extensions

Where personal travel is combined with official travel, only the costs directly related to the Foundation's activities will be covered.

Any personal extensions, upgrades, or additional costs must be borne by the individual unless explicitly approved.

Clear separation between personal and organisational expenses must be maintained.

11. Safety and Duty of Care

The Foundation prioritises the safety and wellbeing of individuals travelling on its behalf.

Travellers are expected to follow applicable safety guidance, comply with local laws, and act responsibly.

Travel to high-risk areas should be subject to additional review and approval.

12. Record-Keeping and Compliance

All travel-related documentation must be retained and recorded in accordance with the Foundation's financial and record-keeping policies.

Travel and reimbursement practices must comply with donor requirements, contractual obligations, and applicable laws.

13. Breach of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in non-reimbursement of expenses, recovery of funds, disciplinary measures, or other appropriate action depending on the seriousness of the breach.

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read together with the Financial Policy and Procedures, Procurement Policy, Anti-Corruption and Fraud Prevention Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, and any applicable donor rules.

15. Review of the Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect operational needs, donor requirements, and good governance practice.