

APC Travel Policy

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Table of Contents

1. Overview	1
2. Versions and updates of this document	2
2.1. Travel.....	2
2.2. Accommodation.....	2
2.3. Per diem.....	3
2.4. Visa fees.....	3
2.5. Travel insurance	4
2.5. Insurance for belongings.....	4
2.6. Miscellaneous expenses.....	4
2.7. Car travel.....	4
2.8. Car rental	4
2.9. Frequent flier mileage.....	4
3. What APC is not responsible for.....	4
3.1. Expenses that APC does not take responsibility for.....	4
3.2. Related personal travel.....	5
3.3. Travel companions.....	5
4. Reporting requirements and procedure for payment claims.....	5
4.1. Reimbursements.....	5
4.2. Requesting advanced payment.....	5
4.3. Method of payment.....	6
5. Trip report	6
6. Third-party reimbursements of travel expenses (applicable to APC staff only).....	6
7. Security and safety	6
7.1. Packing tips	6
7.2. Safety tips for the street.....	7
Appendix A: Per diem guidelines.....	8
Appendix B: Trip Report	9

1. Overview

This document records the policies and procedures of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) concerning travel expenses (for staff, board, member and other partners) incurred while conducting business on behalf of and for the benefit of APC.

APC requires staff and board members to travel away from home for APC work. APC also regularly organises face-to-face meetings and workshops attended by staff, members and others. Trips may be domestic and/or international. Anyone travelling on APC business is entitled to transportation, hotel accommodation and services, as needed, which meet reasonable and adequate standards for convenience, safety and comfort. Every traveller is expected to use discretion and good judgement regarding services charged to APC. As a non-profit organisation with budget constraints we encourage participants to share costs whenever possible.

The policies in this document apply to all people who are required for travel on APC business collectively referred to as "participants" in this document unless otherwise stated.

APC recognises that travel produces carbon emission which is detrimental to the environment. It is important to pre-recalculate the carbon emission of the different means of transportation vis-a-vis convenience and costs and factor these in deciding whether to travel by air, road or rail. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) travel helper¹ and How to Go Green: Carbon Offsets by Treehugger may be consulted².

2. Versions and updates of this document

This is a living document and will be regularly updated. If you notice that a travel policy is not addressed, or addressed inadequately, please bring it the attention of the finance manager. The procedure for updating will depend on the nature of the changes requested. Changes for clarification or procedure will be made by the finance manager in consultation with the executive director. Changes to policy will be made by the management team and executive director.

It is APC's policy to follow general international travel regulations and to ensure that all expenses are consistent with the responsible use of available resources.

2.1. Travel

Approval for travel (by plane, train, bus, etc) should be obtained in advance from the event focal point or logistics coordinator or APC executive director.

Travel should be carried out by the most economical and/or quickest route and bookings must be made well in advance in order to obtain the lowest price. Airfares must be economy class and train fares should be coach/second class. If the cheapest route requires additional stay-overs, reimbursement must also be approved in advance. Always take note of the terms and conditions of the travel ticket, check whether it is re-bookable with or without penalty charges and how long it is valid for.

Reimbursements for last minute airline cancellations and re-booking fees will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. APC will only pay for flight cancellation fees in cases where cancellation was necessary due to reasons beyond the traveler's control, such as cancellation of flight by airline, inability to secure a visa or illness. APC will require a medical certificate in cases of illness.

2.2. Accommodation

Reimbursements will be made for actual, reasonable accommodation costs if this has not been paid for directly by APC or other sources. APC will inform participants of required arrival and departure dates, and only *those* days will be covered by APC.

1 <http://travel.panda.org/en/>

2 <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/carbon-offset/index.html>

Participants at APC events are expected to share rooms. If you require a single room, you will need to cover the cost of the single supplement. The logistics coordinator can you inform you in advance of the cost to help you make your decision. Depending on the availability of funds, exceptions may apply to board members, staff who are in charge of an activity, resource persons and consultants.

In cases where participants are specifically asked to make their own arrangements for accommodation, you should choose hotels of moderate price and reasonable comfort and not deluxe or luxury hotels. Participants should use their discretion when selecting a location and hotel to stay, keeping their health and safety in mind.

Participants should make their reservations based on the advised arrival/departure dates. In cases of unavailability of suitable flights, the event focal point or logistics coordinator should be consulted. They will assess the situation and decide on a case-to-case basis on the way forward.

2.3. Per diem

Per diems are daily payments to cover the cost of meals and local transport. A per diem will be granted for accommodation, meals and travel only if this is not already paid for directly by APC or other sources. Payment requests should be made at least two weeks in advance of travel. A table of current per diem rates is available in Appendix A.

Special dietary requirements such as vegetarian, halal and food allergies are considered as long as APC is informed well in advance. If the venue cannot cater to a participant's dietary needs, other options may be explored, most commonly providing a per diem so that the participant can buy her or his own meals.

A travel per diem may be claimed for long haul flights and/or long lay-overs. The recommended rate is USD 10 to 15 for 3 to 4 hours, and USD 25 to 30 if the transit time is more than 4 hours. The per diem rate guideline will apply if the transit period is one or more days.

Normally, per diems do not require supporting documentation other than confirmed flight itineraries. But APC reserves the right to request receipts for claims on a case-by-case basis so keep all your receipts.

2.4. Visa fees

When visas are required to attend APC events the visa application fee will be reimbursed. If the embassy of event country has no presence in a participant's country, s/he can apply by courier or in person in the nearest country, depending on the embassy's policy. APC will pay for the courier fee or transportation costs of the participant to secure the visa. Please obtain approval in advance.

2.5. Travel insurance

All participants must ensure that they are covered by travel insurance when travelling on APC business. Travel insurance premiums will be reimbursed by APC. This should be the cheapest and coverage should start from the date of departure to date of arrival from/to city of origin. Where possible, air tickets should be purchased by credit card as this often includes free travel insurance.

2.5. Insurance for belongings

Participants must ensure that their personal computer, other equipment and valuable possessions are adequately insured while travelling. APC does **not** cover this insurance. APC will only pay insurance if the equipment belongs to APC and provided that proof of insurance is submitted.

2.6. Miscellaneous expenses

Actual, reasonable costs for miscellaneous and incidental travel-related expenses such as airport transfers, local transport parking fees, business-related photocopying and facsimiles and equipment rental will be reimbursed upon submission of receipts.

2.7. Car travel

Whenever a personal car is used for out-of-town travel further than 20 kilometers, reimbursement will be made at a cost per kilometer basis, in accordance with the rates set by local Automobile Associations. Tolls and parking fees will be reimbursed.

2.8. Car rental

The use of rental cars is allowed only if the nature of the trip or the location of events is such that the use of local transport is not practical or would be more expensive. Staff should rent economy class vehicles, and ensure that insurance is obtained. If a participant uses a rental car for personal use, and as a consequence, there are additional costs, these costs are the responsibility of the participant.

2.9. Frequent flier mileage

Participants are allowed to accumulate frequent flyer times for their personal account. Under no circumstances shall this influence ticketing, or be counter to APC's travel policies, or unduly impact APC in any way.

3. What APC is not responsible for

3.1. Expenses that APC does not take responsibility for

The list includes but is not limited to:

- personal long distance/local telephone calls and faxes
- personal internet access costs as APC provides connectivity for its meetings
- tips
- travel costs related to visa applications that have not been approved in advance

- personal local travel
- mini bar
- alcoholic beverages during meals
- single room supplements
- personal accommodation and meals before and/or after APC event
- laundry.

3.2. Related personal travel

Any personal expenses incurred during, before, or after official APC business is not the responsibility of APC. If the participant wishes to take a personal trip before or after the official APC business trip, then expenses associated with these trips are the responsibility of the participant.

Staff may combine vacation leave with a business trip, if it is approved in advance. APC will reimburse the employee for authorised travel expenses associated with the business portion of the trip. APC is not responsible for any costs associated with the vacation or personal days.

3.3. Travel companions

Any additional costs associated with an participant's traveling companion cannot be charged to APC and are the responsibility of the participant.

4. Reporting requirements and procedure for payment claims

Our standard procedure is that all participants cover their travel costs in advance and are reimbursed later.

4.1. Reimbursements

Reimbursements will be made only upon submission of supporting documentation (such as receipts and invoices) for all claims, except per diems. Participants (except staff) should use the APC form for payment claims and submit it together with documentation to the logistics coordinator or event focal point person at the event.

Complete bank details should be included. Careful documentation will ensure that APC can reimburse you within 10 working days of your request.

Staff should use APC's online payment request system to request payments which are then usually paid with your next monthly salary.

4.2. Requesting advanced payment

In exceptional circumstances when funds are required *in advance* of travel, a 'travel advance' can be requested on presentation of supporting documentation. If supporting documentation is not available, the documentation and an accurate report on actual expenses must be submitted **not later than three weeks** after the date of travel, together with a final request for payment if applicable.

Again in exceptional cases, if it is impossible for participants to cover their flight costs in advance, you can ask APC to book your ticket or to pay your local travel agency using a pro-forma invoice. You must then submit the original receipt to APC at the event.

APC staff may request the advance by sending a written request to his/her manager and APC finance detailing the costs and providing provisional supporting documents like pro-forma invoices or quotations.

4.3. Method of payment

Expense	Staff	Board	Participants and resource persons
1. Air fare and travel tax (pre-approved)	Claim with salary	Claim, wire	Claim, wire
2. Travel tax, if applicable	Claim with salary	Claim wire	Claim wire
3. Visa fee and visa-application-related costs	Claim with salary	Claim wire	Onsite
4. Airport departure or exit tax, terminal fee	Claim with salary	Claim wire	Onsite
5. Travel insurance	Claim with salary	Claim wire	Onsite
6. Airport transfers: own country - from house to airport and return	Claim with salary	Claim wire	Onsite
7. Airport transfers: event city - from airport to hotel and return	Claim with salary	Claim, wire or APC transport service	Claim, wire or APC transport service
8. Meals, travel and onsite per diems	Claim with salary	Onsite	Onsite
9. Laundry	Claim with salary	Not applicable	Not applicable

5. Trip report

A participant may be asked to prepare a short trip report - Annex B- for certain trips. The report must be submitted not more than ten days after completing a business trip.

6. Third-party reimbursements of travel expenses (applicable to APC staff only)

APC staff may be asked to participate in outside meetings, seminars, lectures or committees. These requests may include offers by a third party to pay travel costs (or portions therefore), registration fees or an honorarium.

Participation in outside meetings, seminars, lectures or committees must be approved by the Executive Director or if an official budgeted event has already been pre-approved by the ED the team manager will then give approval.

If it is deemed appropriate for an APC employee to participate as part of their official duties, then offers by a third party to reimburse APC for employee expenses may be accepted by APC. Any travel expenses not covered by a third party, will be covered by APC in accordance with APC travel policies and procedures.

APC employees may not accept honorariums, unless approved by the Executive Director and the honorarium that they are being paid for is for work done out of their normal day to day working responsibilities.

7. Security and safety

7.1. Packing tips

- Safety begins when you pack. Keep important items like travel documents, debit/credit cards, cell phones, laptops cameras and other electronic equipment with your carryon/hand bag and not in your checked luggage. These are items that you can't afford to lose or have stolen.
- If you're concerned about your carry on/hand luggage being too heavy, you could consider packing items like chargers and power adapters with your luggage.
- Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.
- Carry the minimum number of valuables.
- Leave important documents like your driver's license, social security card and birth certificate at home. There's no reason that you will need these items in foreign countries.
- Pack any medication you need with you in carry-on bag.
- To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.
- Have a bit of cash with you in a popular currency (eg US dollars or euros) but plan to use one or two major credit cards instead of cash. Cashpoint (or ATM) cards can be used in most countries to extract local currency. Keep your credit cards separate from each other. Then if your bag gets stolen you have a credit card you can still use for emergencies. Traveller's checks can be a good idea.
- Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport's information page to make replacement of your passport easier if it is lost or stolen. Make sure to pack this in a separate bag to where you carry your passport.
- Don't accept any item or luggage from anyone at the airport. If a friend asks a favour and requests you to carry something for her/him, request that the package be opened so that you can examine the contents. Make sure the items are not on the list of restrictions in the transit country or destination. It is you who will be held liable at customs.
- Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality.
- Always be on the lookout for your belongings

7.2. Safety tips for the street

- Use the same common sense travelling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimised. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places and festivals. Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.
- Try not to travel alone at night.
- Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Make use of the hotel safe to store any valuables. Ensure that you establish who else in the hotel has access to the safety deposit box if it is not a personalised safe.
- Preferably leave your passport in the safety deposit box at the hotel and rather carry a photocopy of your passport and visa on your person.
- If there is no safety deposit box, then lock your passport in your suitcase.
- Refrain from carrying large amounts of cash or numerous ATM and credit cards with you.
- If you have to carry large amounts of cash and credit cards, carry them in a variety of places rather than all in one wallet or pouch. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing. It is also a good idea to leave some cash and a credit card in a safe place in your hotel in case your valuables are lost or stolen.
- Ignore anyone who tries to distract you or get your attention while you're when using ATM s. If the distracter/s persists, cancel what you're doing, retrieve your ATM card and leave the place right away.
- Always carry the hotel's business card with you when you go out. Let your room-mate or colleague know where you're heading and what time you're expected to be back.

Appendix A: Per diem guidelines

The following per diem rates may be used as a guideline for some countries:

Place	Daily Rate (USD)
South and Southeast Asia	25
Africa, including South Africa	25-30
Central and Eastern Europe	30
USA (except New York), Canada, Australia, Korea	40-45
Latin America, Caribbean	30-40
Western Europe, New York, Japan	60
Geneva, Switzerland	70

Appendix B: Trip Report

Please fill in this report and submit to your event focal point not more than ten days after the trip ends. This is part of your obligation to APC as a participant. Thank you very much.

Name of Traveler:

Travel dates:

City and country visited:

Purpose:

Organisations visited/People contacted:

Proposed changes and/or Recommendations:

Other comments: