

1. Long Distance Travel Expenses/Local Travel Expenses classification

The new Vademecum implies that “Long Distance Travel Expenses” refer to travel from the country where a participant is residing (as registered on their e-COST profile) to where the approved COST meeting is being held, and back. This further implies that “Local Travel Expenses” are any expenses related to travelling between the following points:

- home to airport / train station;
- airport / train station to meeting venue / hotel;
- hotel to meeting venue;
- meeting venue to hotel;
- meeting venue / hotel to airport / train station;
- airport / train station back to home;

regardless the distance between these points, as long as they’re in the same country!

This was not the case before, since transportation expenses were classified as “Local Travel Expenses” only if the travel occurred inside a home/host city boundaries or between a home/host city and a nearby airport. If a participant had to change cities while traveling to airport or in the case that airport was far away from the participants home (>80 km), the travel was classified as “Long Distance Travel”. This is important since, now, it could happen more easily that you spent more than 25€ on “Local Transport Expenses” travelled by bus, train, metro and tram and that you will have to provide all Local Transport tickets to get the reimbursement.

Here is an example:

Participant has to travel from Birmingham (home) to Heathrow Airport to catch a plane to the country where a COST meeting takes place. Previously, the travel from Birmingham to Heathrow would be classified as “Long Distance Travel” since participant had to change cities to reach the plane (Birmingham -> London Heathrow, distance=180 km). According to the new rules, this will be simply classified as “Local Travel”.

Please also note that rules for bus, train, metro and tram expenses below 25€ have been strengthened in the case that a participant did not provide tickets/receipts. According to new rules, if you decide not to attach tickets/receipts, you will have to write detailed justification in the justification box.

Here is an example for Prague meeting.

Let’s say you’ve spent 12€ for travel between Prague Airport and your hotel and you did not provide any tickets. Then you have to write following justification in the justification box:

- Bus from Prague Airport to Prague city center = 8€
- Metro from hotel to venue = 4€

(These are just exemplary prices!)

2. Reimbursement rules for flight expenses

For the sake of budget savings, you are advised to use low-cost airlines whenever possible!
In the process of your reservation and payment of your flight tickets, please save all the documents and pages you encounter, as they might be useful in the process of reimbursement.

Here are some additional instructions that you need to follow, please read:

- Valid flight documentation (be it only one document or several documents) has to contain all of these elements that can be linked one to another:
- (e-)ticket, or at least (e-)ticket number;
- full itinerary and flight numbers;
- indication of economy class;
- proof that the ticket fare has been paid (either (e-)ticket with stated fare, or the receipt issued by the agency/airline, or a separate confirmation of payment issued by the agency/airline, or the statement on the booking confirmation that "the amount was paid/debited").

These items can be contained in a single document or in several separate documents (depending on your flight operator/agency). If in doubt, just upload everything in e-COST (no need for sending by post).

Additionally, we are adding the obligation to save/scan and upload all your boarding passes, as they contain (e-)ticket number, flight number, date and time.

Here are few examples of valid flight documentation:

- e-ticket, itinerary and receipt, all in a single document + boarding passes;
- booking confirmation showing necessary flight information, containing the statement that the payment has been made + boarding passes;
- booking confirmation showing necessary flight information + receipt or a confirmation of payment in a separate document + boarding passes;
- booking confirmation + e-ticket showing necessary flight information and ticket fare in a separate document + boarding passes;
- etc.

You don't need to bother and print your flight documentation. It is sufficient to upload it in e-COST system.

Please finalize and send your TRR form shortly after a meeting has ended (if possible, please don't wait for the official 30 days deadline). The COST practice is to reimburse all expenses collectively, **after ALL TRRs are properly processed**.

A final note: If you participate or have participated in another COST Action, you might notice some slight differences between reimbursement instructions. This is normal because each Action has a different Administrative Officer who overlooks and approves the administrative issues, and a different Grant Holder institution whose regulations also have to be followed. Our Grant Holder has reduced requirements to the minimum (no paper documentation needed other than the signed TRR, while some Actions require originals to be sent by post). If the policies change, you will be notified in due time.

Hope that these instructions will result in a faster reimbursement process.