



## Subsistence and Travelling Policy

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## 1. Preamble

This policy assumes a mutual trust between the Senqu Municipality, its Officials and Councillors. The Municipality expects to reimburse Officials and Councillors for all reasonable costs the Officials/Councillors may incur on behalf of the Municipality. The Officials/Councillors are expected to use good judgment in the expenditure of public funds, which he/she has been entrusted with.

These guidelines are not intended to address every aspect, exception or contingency that may arise in the course of Municipal travel. Accordingly, the basic standard that should always prevail is to exercise good judgment in the use of the municipality's resources and the provisions of the 2019 Regulations on Municipal Cost Containment and the Cost Containment Policy.

For travel purposes these guidelines are not necessarily directing Officials and Councillors to use public transport or indulge in substandard food. The meal allowances established in these guidelines allow the employee to eat in moderately priced restaurants.

Good judgment in areas of requesting, arranging and making trips, is the responsibility of Officials and Councillors. Thorough, advanced planning and confirmation before trips are committed, is the hallmark of good judgment and resource management.

Personal business should not be mixed with Official business if it will result in additional costs to the Municipality or lost time, or if it will harm the interests of the Municipality in any way.

## 2. Definitions

**“Employee”** means all employees designated to represent Senqu Municipality at an authorised meeting, training session, or conference.

**“Local travel”** means official travel performed within jurisdiction of the Senqu Municipality.

**“Non-Local travel”** means official travel outside the jurisdiction of Senqu Municipality.

## 3. Principles

This directive is to ensure that Municipal Officials, Councillors and Traditional Leaders adhere to procedures when arranging for travel, lodging and other expenses and that they are paid for reasonable expenses incurred for travelling, conferences, meetings and meals as a result of conducting authorised Municipal business. The policy facilitate that reasonable payment made by the Municipality are for actual and necessary expenses incurred for Municipal business.

An Employee's travel may be authorised for conducting Municipal business of local and non-local travel activities such as business meetings, conferences and training sessions. Payments for conference registrations, hotels, airfares, etc. may not be to Officials and Councillors but directly to the institutions and travel agencies. Officials, Councillors and Traditional Leaders will be paid for subsistence and travel related costs only.

The Municipal Manager will be the final arbiter of this policy, while the Corporate Services Director will be responsible for the interpretation of this policy. Each department will be expected to consult with the Corporate Services Director on any questions related to this policy.

An individual may not authorise or approve reimbursement for his/her own travel; the responsible Director/Manager in the department must approve claim forms. Section 57 managers will obtain authorisation from the Municipal Manager. The councillors will obtain authorisation from the Mayor / Speaker, who in turn obtains approval from the Municipal Manager or his delegate.

Such authorisation shall be authorised subject to availability of annual travel budget, and approval by the Municipal Manager. No travel may be undertaken if the funds are insufficient in the budget for such travel.

All staff will claim from the unit and or office where they are stationed and as per the approved mileage (please see Annexure A).

#### **4. General Expense**

##### **4.1 Public Transport**

Officials and Councillors that get a travelling allowance cannot claim for public transport when travelling locally. Officials and Councillors should arrange their own public transport. Alternatively, when public transport is arranged by the municipality, staff and Councillors should make use of the public transport as arranged. If Public transport is used it should be more economical (financial and time) for the municipality than the use of own private vehicle.

##### **4.2 Carpooling**

When travelling in private vehicles, Officials and Councillors should as far as practically possible (taking into consideration the risk tolerance levels associated with such travel) travel in groups in order to save cost. Directors should always apply the principles of effective, efficient and economical in terms of the MFMA with regards to carpooling.

##### **4.3 Rejection of Expenses**

The Departmental Director/Municipal Manager/Mayor or the delegated manager must reject a request for reimbursement, if in his opinion the expense was inconsistent with or in violation of the Municipal policies or the employee did not travel on Municipal business interest.

##### **4.4 Travel and Subsistence Arrangements and Claims**

The claimant is entitled to reimbursement for necessary and reasonable transportation expenses while on official Municipal travel. Officials and Councillors should schedule their trips to leave timeously and to arrive on time for the purpose of the activities.

#### 4.5 Application Process for Travel Approval

All official trips, local and non-local, shall be pre-authorised prior to travelling taking place in line with the provisions of the Cost Containment Policy. An Out of Office form must be attached to the application. Failure to obey this instruction may result in disciplinary action being taken by the responsible Director as well as the repudiation of subsequent travel and subsistence related claims linked to such trips.

Managers directly accountable to the Municipal Manager must receive travel approval from the Municipal Manager.

Official travel by the Councillors must be approved by the Mayor or Speaker.

Official travel by the Municipal Manager must be approved by the Mayor.

The Councillor/Official must attend the event or meeting as stated in the travel form. In the event that the travel must be cancelled, the Councillor/Official must make every effort to withdraw all pre-arranged registrations and bookings. Reasons must be submitted in writing to the relevant supervisor for non-attendance of the event. If the Municipality suffers financial costs as a result of failure to comply with this instruction, the Municipality may view this conduct as negligence, resulting in fruitless expenditure, and may take disciplinary action against the individual responsible and/or recover such costs from the individual responsible.

All travel expenses shall be paid on a reimbursement basis and shall be claimed and reimbursed in accordance with the allowance rates stipulated hereunder. Claims will be processed and paid twice a month, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Claimants should ensure that claims are submitted on time. All claims that are submitted on or before the last day of the month will be paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month and all claims submitted on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> will be paid with salaries on the 25<sup>th</sup> of that month. Claimants should ensure that they have a correct vote number on their claims.

All travel claims should be submitted within three months from the date of return from a trip. Claims submitted after three months will be forfeited unless authorised by the Municipal Manager.

All approvals shall be subject to available funds and as per either the approved applicable DPSA rates or Department of Transport rates or any other rate approved by the Municipal Manager.

#### 4.6 Travel Arrangements

Supply Chain Management Unit is responsible for making travel arrangements relating to air travel, accommodation and car hire after the application for accommodation form were received from the relevant Director/Municipal Manager. Changes to travel arrangements should also be done through the SCM unit.

The allowable amounts applicable to the claiming of subsistence allowances will be guided by the maximum fixed rates as published by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and the South African Revenue Services (SARS) during April each year.

The allowable amounts applicable to the claiming of travel related cost will be determined according to the rates as published by the Department of Transport as published on a monthly basis and in line with the applicable vehicle. All employees receiving a travel allowance or participating on the essential user car scheme can only claim on Sub scheme A rates. All other officials and Councillors can claim on the private rates as published.

A copy of the registration of the vehicle must be submitted to finance for the purpose of verification. If the vehicle is not registered in the name of the Councillor/Official, the vehicle may be called for inspection at any time. Only the registered vehicle may be used to claim.

#### **4.6.1 Transportation**

Transport costs include, but are not limited to airplane, train, bus and taxi fares, bridge tolls, parking and car rentals. Generally the most direct and commonly travel routes should be taken. Other routes may be authorised when official business require their use. If the Official or Councillor takes an indirect route or stops along the way for personal reasons, he/she will not be reimbursed for non-business expenses.

Selection of carrier, reservations and ticketing should be arranged as early as possible to obtain the greatest discount. Ground transport and nearby airports are preferred if the total fares are lower.

The Municipality is located in a rural area with limited or no public transport, shuttle services and / or rental vehicles. Officials and / or political office bearers are accordingly required to make use of their own vehicles or municipal fleet for travelling within the Province or to access the Bloemfontein and East London airports. No travelling by vehicle is permitted to any destination served by airlines from either Bloemfontein or East London without the prior approval of the accounting officer.

The Municipal Manager may only approve purchase of economy class tickets for officials and / or political office bearers where the flying time for the flights is five hours or less. For flights exceeding five hours, the Municipal Manager may purchase business class tickets for officials, political office bearers and persons reporting directly to the accounting officer. In the case of the Municipal Manager, the mayor may approve the purchase of economy class tickets where the flying time is five hours or less and business class tickets for flights exceeding five hours. Notwithstanding the above, the Municipal Manager or the mayor, in the case of the accounting officer, may approve the purchase of business class tickets for an official or political office bearer with a disability or a medically certified condition.

In all instances a report should be submitted to the relevant superior upon return from conferences and meetings attended.

Air travel shall be economy class with the exception of the Mayor, Speaker, and Municipal Manager who may use business class on Municipal business trips. Air travel should not be used if the destination is only two hours by ground transportation.

A private vehicle may be used in lieu of air travel if this option is better for the municipality, taking into consideration the additional time spent driving. Prior approval with the Director is

required before a private vehicle is used. Kilometres travelled must be documented by the traveller.

When using a private vehicle, the reimbursement for such travel will be calculated based on the Department of Transport Rates as determined from time to time. All travel claims shall be submitted reflecting the starting and the ending point at the appropriate workstation. Any fuel, damages, required service, or repairs to personal vehicles during the trip will be the individual's responsibility as these costs are included in the per kilometre cost reimbursement.

All employees receiving a travel allowance or participating on the essential user car scheme can only claim on Sub scheme A rates. All other officials and Councillors can claim on the private rates as published.

The Municipal vehicles may be used if available. If refuelling is necessary, the employee may request reimbursement for any fuel purchases. The employee is responsible to check the vehicle for safety and damages before travelling, using the standard checklist.

Rental vehicles, at the municipal expense, may be obtained when the Official or Councillor is on Municipal business and other modes of travel such as the municipal fleet, public transport or shuttle service are not available, too costly, or impractical. Prior approval by the Director is required before booking for rental vehicles are confirmed. Rental vehicles will be limited to a category B or an equivalent class and where a different class is required for a particular terrain or to cater for special needs of an official, the Directorate concerned must first seek approval from the Municipal Manager.

When more than one Councillor/Official are attending the same meeting or Conference and a vehicle is needed for municipal business, only one vehicle may be rented/used at municipal expense, except where reasons justifies otherwise. Car rental insurance should be included in the rental agreement. The employee is responsible to carefully examine the rented vehicle for existing damages and record/report these damages to the rental agency before leaving the parking area. Where a Councillor and official are attending the same event, the vehicle should be booked against the official.

#### **4.6.2 Lodging**

Supply Chain Management Unit is responsible for making arrangements relating to accommodation after the application for accommodation has been approved by the relevant Director/Municipal Manager. Changes to travel arrangements should also be done through the SCM unit.

Overnight accommodation may only be booked where the return trip exceeds 500 kilometres save as set out below. In the light of what is set out, the Municipal Manager may in cases where the above limitation is impractical approve overnight accommodation. The accounting officer may exercise the aforesaid discretion when:

- (a) attendance is required over a number of days;
- (b) there is a risk to the health and / or safety of the official or political office bearer;

- or  
(c) cost vs benefit considerations can warrant such expenditure

In such instances, the Director of the affected employee must submit a written request and motivation to the Municipal Manager.

Where an official chooses to make their own arrangements, the Municipality will refund the official on receipt of the invoice. This option must also only be done with the approval of the Director/ Municipal Manager. Claims that are submitted as a result of an official choosing this option will be processed and paid as per clause 4.5 above.

Reimbursement is allowable for lodging expenses associated with attendance at out-of-area conference or meeting. Overnight accommodation is limited to instances where the distance travelled by road exceeds 500 kilometre to and from the destination (return journey). Such overnight stay shall be pre-authorised by the relevant Director or Municipal Manager. The cost of accommodation shall be reimbursed or paid directly by the Municipality.

The Municipality shall only pay the cost for accommodation associated with the employee concerned (including taxes and parking) for as many nights as necessary. The accommodation should be economical but practical. It is preferable staying at a hotel recommended for the conference even if it may be slightly more expensive or have a higher star grading than others in the area.

The costs incurred for domestic accommodation and meals must be in accordance with the maximum allowable rates for domestic accommodation and meals as prescribed by the National Treasury, from time to time. The Municipal Manager may approve accommodation costs that exceed an amount as determined from time to time by the National Treasury during peak holiday periods; or when major local or international events are hosted in a particular geographical area that results in an abnormal increase in the number of local and/or international guests in that particular geographical area.

If rooms are not available, an alternative hotel in proximity to the location of the conference or meeting should be selected. Due care must be taken in making alternative arrangements. In general, the employee /official must stay at a reasonably priced accommodation available, consistent with the goals and purpose of the conference or meeting. The Director is duly authorised to check if good judgement was exercised in the selection of the lodge in question.

An employee or official may stay with a friend or relative instead of using accommodation booked by the Municipality. In such instances, the municipality will reimburse the employee at R1290 per night. This allowance must be pre-approved and can only be claimed if it would be more costly for the municipality to book alternative accommodation based on a recommendation from the supply chain unit. This allowance awarded in the case of private accommodation shall include meal expenses and no other subsistence claim will be allowed. Claims that are submitted as a result of an official choosing this option will be processed and paid as per clause 4.5 above.

Making early reservations for lodging is encouraged to take advantage of lower costs. If prior payment is required to hold a reservation, the employee may submit a check in request form and Finance may forward the payment to the hotel prior to the trip. The

employee is responsible to cancel the unused reservation; failure to do so may result in the employee being responsible for the charge unless circumstances requiring cancellation were reasonably beyond his/her control and subject to the approval of the Municipal Manager.

Despite the provisions above, the Mayor, the Speaker, and the Municipal Manager may stay in an executive room at a five (5) star graded hotel or lodging when on official municipal business. Directors and Councillors may stay in a standard room at a four (4) to five (5) star graded hotel/lodge. Officials may stay in a standard room at a (3) to (4) star graded hotel/lodge. If any official/Councillor stays in a Bed & Breakfast or self-catering accommodation, accommodation of 5 stars may be used. Any variation to the above must be approved by the relevant Director/Municipal Manager on good cause shown.

Officials acting in an assistance or protection capacity are allowed to stay in the same accommodation where their principles are staying to ensure operational effectiveness.

#### **4.6.3 Meals**

In the event that an employee is required to travel within Senqu's jurisdiction, the employee is not entitled to claim a subsistence allowance for travel less than 24 hours.

For non-local travel the rates as published by DPSSA during April each year will be applicable. If meals are included in registration fees, as stated in meetings and conference literature or meals are provided by the event and the claimant chooses to go elsewhere, appropriate deductions must be made from the meal allowance.

#### **4.6.4 Travel outside the Republic of South Africa**

For travel outside the Republic of South Africa, a daily allowance shall be paid in advance in rands to enable the Official to purchase the equivalent daily allowance in foreign currency. And which will be equivalent to the rates as published by SARS.

#### **4.6.5 Telephone Use for International Travel**

For international travel, Councillors and Officials are allowed to claim actual amounts for business calls made. Private calls up to a maximum of two calls per day which shall not exceed 10 minutes in duration per call, is allowed. Cost related to roaming will also be reimbursed.

#### **4.6.6 Parking**

All parking claims for reimbursement will only be considered when Councillors and Officials have produced a cash slip or receipt to that effect.

#### **4.6.7 Toll gate Fees**

All toll gate claims for reimbursement will only be considered when Councillors and Officials produce a cash slip or receipt to that effect.



#### 4.6.8 Non claimable Travel Expenses

The Municipality will not reimburse the claimant for personal expenses such as valet service, barbering, in –room service and movies, gratuities for porters and waiters, personal calls and alcoholic beverages.

Payment will be done for laundry if the Municipality requires the employee to extend their initial stay.

Spouses and guests are allowed to accompany the official or Councillor on Municipal travel and at conferences, seminars, and meetings when using public or private transportation, provided that no additional costs are incurred by the Municipality. Spouses and private guests are not allowed to accompany the Officials and/or Councillors in a Municipal vehicle unless they are guests of the Municipality on official business. Permission is required from the Director if the vehicle will be returned after working hours. Indemnity forms shall be signed before travelling is undertaken.

If the claimant is travelling on behalf of another public agency, eg SALGA, that agency is expected to handle all expenses, unless otherwise authorised by the EXCO. The Municipality is not responsible for any expenses, including advances and reimbursements. The exception to this rule being where the Official or Councillor serves in a committee of a public agency such as professional associations, which does not provide for travel expenses.

#### 4.6.9 Travel as Part of Delegation

If the Official /Councillor have been invited to attend an event as part of a delegation in any scope of government, he/she is able to claim Travel and Subsistence after the event has taken place in accordance with the allowable travel and subsistence rates as published by DPISA during April each year.

### 6. APPLICATION OF POLICY

This policy shall apply to all councillors, staff and traditional leaders of the Municipality and councillors. It will be effective as of 01 July 2024.

The policy shall not derogate from any rights which existing employees may have in terms of their conditions of service.

### 7. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

Date of Approval by Council:

Resolution Number:

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**T MAWONGA**  
**MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

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**DATE**

## TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE CLAIM FORM

**Note: This form must be completed with strict adherence to the current rates and specifications contained in the most current subsistence approved policy.**

Claimant: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee number: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of the trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Out of Office Batch No: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Reference No: \_\_\_\_\_

### A. Subsistence Claim

Departure date	From (Place)	Return Date	From (place)	Days	Tariff	Amount
					R	
					R	
					R	
					<b>Total</b>	

### B. Traveling Claim

#### Particulars of Private Vehicle

Odometer reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle registration Number \_\_\_\_\_

Engine Capacity: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	From (Place)	To (place)	Km's	Tariff	Amount
				R	
				R	
				R	
				R	
				R	
				<b>Total</b>	

Actual cost incurred	Function	Project	Item	Amount
S&T Domestic: Accommodation				
S&T Domestic: Air Transport				
S&T Domestic: Car Rental				
S&T Domestic: Daily Allow				
S&T Domestic: Incidental Cost				
S&T Domestic: Own Transport				
			<b>Total Claim</b>	

Initials of all parties.....

I declare that during the above-mentioned period I was away for Council business purposes and claimed the costs in terms of the Subsistence and Travelling Policy of Council.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Claimant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor/Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Mayor/Municipal Manager/Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Disclaimer

The claimant carries the responsibility of the contents of this claim. The final signatory approving the claim cannot be held responsible for the correctness of the claim and is hereby exonerated from any liability if a false claim/statement is made.

NOTES.

If you provide your own accommodation/dinner you may claim R1290.00 per night outside Senqu jurisdiction

Only a day trip - you may claim the R144.00 per day. (More than four hours not including Senqu jurisdiction)

All claims must be submitted with a copy of your out of office approval and the invitation or consent letter.

Tariff: Department of Transport tariff