



Subsistence and Travelling Policy

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1 Preamble

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.

“Transport costs” include, but are not limited to airplane, train, bus and taxi fares, bridge tolls, parking and car rentals

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The objective of the policy is to set out the basis for the payment of subsistence and travelling costs for officials, councillors and other stakeholders travelling on municipal business such as meetings/conference/seminar/workshop/training.
- 3.2 Traveling costs are being paid to refund councillors, officials and stakeholders for direct costs like taxi fares, petrol, parking, tollgates, etc.
- 3.3 Subsistence is also paid to cover costs like accommodation, out-of-town allowance, dinner etc.
- 3.4 These payments are paid on the return from the meeting/conference/seminar/workshop etc.
- 3.5 This directive is to ensure that municipal officials, councillors and other stakeholders adhere to procedures when arranging for travel, accommodation and other expenses.
- 3.6 It is further aimed at ensuring that officials, councillors and other stakeholders are paid for reasonable expenses incurred for travelling, conferences and meetings because of conducting authorised Municipal business.
- 3.7 The policy facilitates that reasonable payment is made by the municipality for actual and necessary expenses incurred for municipal business.

4. Application for Approval of Traveling

- 4.1 All official trips must be pre-authorised prior to travelling taking place in line with the provisions of the Cost Containment Policy.
- 4.2 An Out of Office form must be completed and approved **prior** to the trip being taken. The form must be accompanied by the supporting documents of the event being attended. 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.
- 4.3 Managers directly accountable to the Municipal Manager must receive travel approval from the Municipal Manager.
- 4.4 Official travel by the Councillors must be approved by the Mayor or Speaker.
- 4.5 Official travel by the Municipal Manager must be approved by the Mayor.
- 4.6 Official travel by the Managers must be approved by the Directors.
- 4.7 Official travel by officials below Managers must be approved by the Managers.
- 4.8 Such authorisation shall be given subject to availability of annual travel budget.
- 4.9 No travel may be undertaken if the funds are insufficient in the budget for such travel.

5. Payment of Travel Related Costs

- 5.1 The officials, councillors and stakeholders are entitled to reimbursement for necessary and reasonable transportation expenses while on official municipal travel.
- 5.2 All travel expenses shall be claimed and reimbursed in accordance with the allowance rates stipulated hereunder. Claims will be processed and paid twice a month, on the 15th and on the 25th.
- 5.3 All claims that are submitted on or before the last day of the month will be paid on the 15th of the following month and all claims submitted on or before the 15th will be paid with salaries on the 25th of that month. Claimants should ensure that claims are submitted on time.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Subsistence claims for the month of June of each year, are to be submitted by 10th of July, failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the claim.
- 5.6 Claimants should ensure that they have a correct vote number on their claims.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 All staff will claim from the unit and or office where they are stationed and as per the approved mileage (please see Annexure A).
- 5.9 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 monthly and in line with the applicable vehicle.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 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 copy of the registration must be submitted, and the vehicle may be called for inspection at any time. Only the registered vehicle may be used to claim.
- 5.12 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.

5.13 The following documents must be attached to the claim form for subsistence and travelling claim:

5.13.1 Copy of invitation and attendance register with clear description of venue for the event attended by the representative.

5.13.2 Copy of completed and approved trip authorization form with its annexure/s where applicable.

5.13.3 Claims for toll gates and parking fees must be accompanied by valid receipts.

6. Travel Arrangements

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

6.2 Officials and Councillors should schedule their trips to leave timeously and to arrive at their destinations on time.

6.3 Request for accommodation, air travel, car hire, venue hiring etc should be submitted to SCM unit at least **three working days** prior to the date of travel. Failure to submit the request timely may result in an incomplete booking or the booking might be completed but not in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

6.4 All the required relevant documentation with the necessary approvals and confirmations must be submitted to SCM together with the travel request before contacting the travel agent to initiate bookings.

6.5 Making early reservations for accommodation is encouraged to take advantage of lower costs.

6.6 Employees and councillors should obtain accommodation vouchers to confirm bookings before commencement of the trip.

7. Air Travel

7.1 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.

7.2 The Municipality is located in a rural area with limited or no public transport, shuttle services and / or rental vehicles. Officials/councillors are accordingly required to make use of their own vehicles or municipal fleet for travelling or to access the Bloemfontein and East London airports.

7.3 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 where the flying time is expected to exceed five hours.

- 7.4 Notwithstanding the above, the Municipal Manager, Speaker 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.
- 7.5 Air travel should not be used if the destination is only two hours by ground transportation.
- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 Prior approval with the relevant Director is required before a private vehicle is used. Kilometres travelled must be documented by the traveller.

8. Use of Private Vehicles

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 All travel claims shall be submitted reflecting the starting and the ending point at the appropriate workstation. The distance to which the reimbursement applies must be the distance between the municipality's offices and the location where the official business is to be transacted.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 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 to save cost.
- 8.5 Directors should always apply the principles of effective, efficient and economical in terms of the MFMA with regards to carpooling.
- 8.6 The municipal vehicles may be used if available, for qualifying officials. 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.
- 8.7 Officials who receive travelling allowance cannot claim for public transport when travelling within Senqu jurisdiction.
- 8.8 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.
- 8.9 Generally, the most direct and commonly travel routes should be taken unless otherwise authorised for other routes. 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.
- 8.10 When an official or councillor has used another mode of transport, such as public transport or car-pooling with other officials or councillors, it is not allowed to claim using private vehicle rates. Any employee or councillor in breach of this clause will be subject to disciplinary hearing.

- 8.11 Where an official/councillor chooses to use own accommodation, travel claim of the distance between their own accommodation and the venue is limited to 10 kilometres per trip per day.

9. Car Hire

- 9.1 Car hire may be obtained when the official or councillor is on municipal business and all other modes of travel such as the municipal fleet (for qualifying officials), public transport or shuttle service are not available, too costly, or impractical.
- 9.2 Prior approval is required before booking for car hire is confirmed, with written confirmation of unavailability, impracticality or excessive cost of other modes of transport.
- 9.3 Car hire will be limited to a category B or an equivalent class. 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.
- 9.4 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 justify otherwise.
- 9.5 Car rental insurance should be included in the rental agreement.
- 9.6 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.
- 9.7 Where a Councillor and official are attending the same event, the vehicle should be booked against the official.

10. Accommodation

- 10.1 Overnight accommodation may only be booked where the return trip exceeds 500 kilometers, except under the circumstances set out below.
- 10.2 The Municipal Manager may in cases where the above limitation is impractical approve overnight accommodation. The accounting officer may exercise the aforesaid discretion when:
- 10.2.1 attendance is required over a number of days;
 - 10.2.2 there is a risk to the health and / or safety of the official or political office bearer;
or
 - 10.2.3 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 for approval.

- 10.3 The Mayor, the Speaker, and the Municipal Manager may stay in an executive room at a five (5) star graded hotel/lodge when on official municipal business.

- 10.4 Directors and Councillors may stay in a standard room at a four (4) star graded hotel/lodge, subject to maximum allowable rates issued by National Treasury.
- 10.5 Officials below directors may stay in a standard room at a (3) star graded hotel/lodge, subject to maximum allowable rates issued by National Treasury.
- 10.6 If any official/councillor stays in a Bed & Breakfast or self-catering accommodation, accommodation of 5 stars may be used.
- 10.7 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.
- 10.8 It is preferable staying at a hotel recommended for the conference even if it may be slightly more expensive (limited to a maximum of 20%) or have a higher star grading than others in the area. This will be allowed only if there is no other suitable accommodation available within the radius of 10 kilometres from the conference venue.
- 10.9 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.
- 10.10 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/Municipal Manager is duly authorised to check if good judgement was exercised in the selection of the hotel in question.
- 10.11 Officials acting in an assistance or protection capacity are allowed to stay in the same accommodation where their principals are staying to ensure operational effectiveness.
- 10.12 Where an official chooses to make their own arrangements, the municipality will reimburse the employee at R1290.00 per night. This option must also only be done with the approval of the Director/ Municipal Manager. 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 amounts as determined from time to time by the National Treasury. This allowance awarded in the case of private accommodation shall include meal expenses and no other subsistence claim will be allowed.
- 10.13 Any variation to the above must be approved by the Municipal Manager on good cause shown.

11. Subsistence Allowance and Incidental Costs

- 11.1 In the event that an employee is required to travel within Senqu's jurisdiction, the employee/councillor is not entitled to claim a subsistence allowance
- 11.2 For travel outside the Senqu's jurisdiction, the employee/councillor is entitled to claim an out-of-town daily allowance of R144.00 per day spent out of town.
- 11.3 For international travel, the employee/councillor is entitled to claim in advance in rands, the equivalent daily allowance in foreign currency of the destination country. The daily rate to be paid should be the rates as published by SARS from time to time.
- 11.4 All parking and toll gate claims for reimbursement will only be considered if supported by a cash slip or receipt.

12. Non-Claimable Travel Expenses

- 12.1 All costs that are not included in the quotation/accommodation voucher shall be treated as private or personal expenses and therefore shall not form part of the municipal account.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 Payment will be done for laundry if the Municipality requires the employee to extend their initial stay.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 Permission is required from the Director if the vehicle will be returned after working hours. Indemnity forms shall be signed before travelling is undertaken when using municipal vehicle.
- 12.7 If the claimant is travelling on behalf of another public agency, eg SALGA, that agency is expected to handle all expenses including advances and reimbursements, unless otherwise authorised by the EXCO.

13. Cancellation and Amendment Procedures

13.1 Changes to confirmed travel arrangements

- 13.1.1 Changes to travel arrangements should be done in time through the SCM unit after all the necessary authorisations have been obtained.

13.2 Cancellation of confirmed travel arrangements

- 13.2.1 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 through the SCM unit. Reasons must be submitted in writing to the relevant supervisor for non-attendance of the event.
- 13.2.2 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.
- 13.2.3 The traveller must, where it is within his or her ability to, inform the SCM unit if he or she expects to be arriving later than the expected arrival time, to ensure that the reservation is not cancelled or a cancellation fee is incurred.
- 13.2.4 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.

14. Application of the policy

This policy shall apply to all councillors, staff, traditional leaders and other stakeholders of the Municipality. It will be effective as of 01 July 2025.

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

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

Any deviation from this policy will require official approval from the Municipal Manager in line with the Cost Containment Policy.

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

15. Approval of the policy

Date of Approval by Council:
Resolution Number:

T MAWONGA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

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	
					Total	

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	
				Total	

Initials of all parties.....

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				
			Total Claim	

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