

Interreg EUROPEAN UNION

North-West Europe

OPIN

European Regional Development Fund



OCEAN POWER INNOVATION NETWORK

Travel Support Guidelines for Applicants

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1 What is Travel Support?

Travel support is an amount, **up to €500 per trip and a total of €2,000 per SME** (including VAT) which can be reimbursed to an SME (small or medium-sized enterprise) which travels abroad either:

- To take part in an OPIN workshop or masterclass
- To take part in a Collaborative Innovation Group meeting or activity

With travel support, an SME can travel to another European country within the North West Europe programme area to attend an event or meet with (potential) partners in a Collaborative Innovation Group.

Please note that availability of travel support is limited.

2 Travel Support Evaluation and Selection

Travel support is only available to **SMEs from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Scottish Enterprise regional areas**, attending an OPIN workshop, masterclass or Collaborative Innovation Group meeting outside of their region. Travel must be approved in advance by the appropriate OPIN partner (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland or Scottish Enterprise). Evaluation and selection will be completed by the OPIN Steering Group once a month.

Evaluation of the travel support applications will be based on the eligibility of the applicant and the benefit to the applicant and the ocean energy sector generated by the applicant participation in the specified OPIN event. This benefit will be evaluated under the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the product being developed by the company and potential impact for the company and ocean energy sector.
2. The appropriateness of the representative attending the event.

The verdict of the evaluation cannot be appealed but if an application is rejected, the applicant will be informed of the reasons for this rejection.

Applicants will be notified of the decision shortly after the Steering Group meeting has taken place.

3 Travel Voucher Eligible Costs

Only costs incurred for a specific trip, approved by the relevant OPIN partner, will be considered eligible.

The following categories of cost are eligible:

- Public transport (air, rail, bus) in economy class or equivalent
- Accommodation costs (hotel, including breakfast if part of same invoice)
- Event registration costs

Expenses should be reasonable. For example, hotel costs are not expected to exceed €150 per night. Costs of subsistence (food and drinks) will not be covered. Daily allowances are ineligible.

4 Travel Voucher Application and Approval

Travel vouchers can be applied for at any time. Applications must be approved prior to travel, therefore applications must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to planned travel date.

A [Travel Support Application Form](#) should be submitted by email to OPIN@seai.ie. Forms must be completed in English.

The OPIN partner will decide whether a voucher should be awarded and provide the applicant with an email confirming approval of travel. The applicant must accept this offer by email, together with a signed [De minimis Self Declaration Form](#) and [SME Declaration Form](#).

Scanned copies of original documents should be submitted by email to OPIN@seai.ie. Irish applicants are required to send original documents by post,

so they can be retained for audit purpose, to the following address:

OPIN Project

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland,
3 Park Place
Hatch Street Upper,
Dublin 2,
Co. Dublin
D02 FX65,
Ireland

5 Travel Voucher Claims and Payment

Travel costs will be reimbursed on the submission and approval of a [Travel Claim Form](#).

Signed claim forms and copies of supporting information should be submitted by email to OPIN@seai.ie.

Supporting documentation should demonstrate value for money (if requested) and that travel has taken place and was reimbursed.

The following supporting documents should be submitted together with the Travel Claim Workbook (depending on type of expenditure):

- invoices/hotel bills;
- transport tickets/boarding passes;
- receipts;
- proof of payment/reimbursement to the employee of the SME (bank transfer details).

Copies of invoices and receipts / evidence of payment should be included. The Expense Claim will be assessed by the OPIN Partner from your region. Following the OPIN Partner evaluation, Eligible Travel Expenses will be reimbursed via bank transfer to the account of the relevant Participant.

The claim form includes a short description of the purpose of the travel and the benefits to the SME / CIG.

Reimbursement will be based on expenses incurred, thus receipts must be provided for each expense claimed. Expense claims without the appropriate backup and receipts will not be reimbursed by OPIN Partner.

Applicants are responsible for retaining original evidence – booking information, tickets, boarding passes, receipts, invoices etc. for audit purposes, until 31 December 2021.

6 Responsibilities of Claimants

The responsibility of claimants is to:

- Ensure that the travel / expense undertaken is approved in advance by the relevant OPIN partner;
- Submit, as soon as possible after the event, only valid expenses that have been incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily for the purpose of the meeting participation. Expense claims must be submitted within 3 months of the expense being incurred;
- Submit all relevant receipts / documentation with the claim;
- Ensure that the [Travel Support Claim Workbook](#) is completed with accurate information;
- Ensure that no claim in respect of the same period has been, or will be, made elsewhere. Participants are required to sign a declaration in relation to this with their expense claim.

7 General Principles

- The Participant is expected to exercise moderation in the choice of travel, hotel and other expenses.
- Only economy fares are eligible for air and rail travel
- Use of public transportation should be maximised;
- The expense to be incurred should be necessary;
- The expense incurred should represent best value for money;
- The Participant should ensure that the maximum lead time is given for all bookings as short notice may lead to non-availability or additional cost. Frequent flyer points should not be allowed to influence decisions taken in relation to the carriers used for official business.

8 Public Transportation

Public transportation (i.e. rail or bus, including buses run by private operators) should be availed of by the Participant wherever appropriate. Where public transportation is used, the most cost-effective ticket available should be purchased and should be furnished in support of the travel claim.

As a general rule, taxis should not be used for travel to or from an Airport if public or private coach services are available.

The Participant attending an OPIN event abroad should use public transportation to / from the airport to the hotel or meeting centre. Taxis may be used where there is a perceived risk to personal safety (e.g. when arriving / departing at unsociable hours), where there is a likelihood of missing a flight due to a delayed meeting, where it is not practical to use public transportation due, for example, to the location of the hotel or meeting room, or where an employee is carrying a significant amount of luggage.

9 Other Transportation

Only in exceptional cases can mode of transport other than public transportation be used. In such case, the Participants should contact the OPIN Partner for prior approval before making any arrangement and incurring any cost.

10 Taxis

Vouched taxi expenses incurred on business can be claimed through the usual expense claim process only where public transport is not available or its use would be inappropriate. Only the taxi fare and tolls are claimable (tips cannot be claimed).

11 Air Travel

Amendments to flights after bookings have been made.

If flight details are to be amended the proposer should first submit the proposed change to OPIN Partner for authorisation and provide an estimation of the

additional costs involved. This authorisation is required prior to any changes being arranged.

Class of travel

The mode of travel is economy class. Task Participants should endeavour to make travel arrangements sufficiently far in advance where possible to ensure access to the lowest possible fares.