

Travel

Fossil-fuelled transport is a major driver of climate change, with air travel and cars having a particularly harmful impact. Transport pollution also harms local health. However, it is not possible for Fern to work with partners without some degree of travel. Fern believes the climate crisis needs to be tackled with systemic change, not just individual action and to simply not travel could in many cases mean increasing power injustices.

The aim of this travel policy is therefore not to stop staff from travelling when it is essential to campaigns, but to reduce travel where it would be possible to do the work some other way (such as sending a partner already in the country or joining by video conference). It also aims to help us choose the lowest-impact option when travel is unavoidable. Because of the importance of taking such measures, this policy will be incorporated into the Fern induction process and highlighted to new staff.

Fern will keep track of the number of flights it pays for each year to monitor the amount of time spent in the air. If there is an increase in flights year on year, we will raise this as an issue at both MT and Board meetings.

Applicability

The policy is for use by everybody whose travel costs are subject to reimbursement by Fern, including Fern staff members and consultants. It should also be borne in mind when organising partner travel (such as partner lobby visits to Europe, or Fern-organised meetings involving partners coming from outside Europe).

The policy cannot cover all eventualities (such as emergencies, family reasons, time-collision of several important meetings). However, it is expected that people act responsibly and always aspire to the optimum environmental option in their travel decisions.

Reducing the need to travel

Before embarking on a journey, consider whether there is an alternative way to achieve the desired outcome (such as teleconferencing) with reduced or no travel. Fern's FAHRM team can advise on what technology is currently available. The aim is to ensure high-quality international calls, reducing the need to travel. Well-planned teleconferences can be just as productive as face-to-face meetings. We should also consider supporting partners to invest in teleconferencing software.

Modes of travel

Local travel

For local travel, travel by foot, cycle or local public transport is preferred. Journeys by car (or taxi in case of local travel only) can be made if:

- there are no realistic public transport alternatives
- for reasons of personal security
- because of disabilities affecting mobility
- for carrying materials / luggage which it is impracticable to transport by public transport
- in case of time-collision of several important meetings or if at least three people travel together
- in case of personal or unforeseen emergency

International travel

Fern staff travelling within Europe should use the train if the destination can be reached within 8 hours. Fern will cover all extra costs if staff choose to travel by train (including overnight trains). Fern staff may also choose to travel further by train if they feel comfortable doing so and if the journey does not disrupt their work output. Fern staff are expected to work where possible on train journeys. Most phones can now be used as a hot-spot to give access to the internet. FAHRM can advise on how to do this. Staff who travel regularly by train but cannot use their phone for internet access should discuss buying a dongle with FAHRM.

Staff members working in countries to which air travel is all but unavoidable (such as those in Africa, Asia or Latin America) should plan trips with environmental considerations in mind by:

- **Trying to take longer & fewer trips**, making the most of time spent in the country. Staff should ideally never fly to any location for less than 5 days. Staff should aim to take a maximum of one or two trips per country per year. Where they need to travel to more than one country in the same region, they should try to plan those trips at the same time, so as to avoid multiple separate return flights to the same region.
- **Prioritising direct flights** (as most CO₂ emissions from flying are produced during take-off and landing, so the number of legs in a flight makes a significant difference to its environmental impact). Direct flights should be prioritised even when they are more expensive, or when they mean travelling on a different day than the one preferred. Where direct flights are not available but it is possible to do a leg via train, staff should consider this option. For example flights from London-Cote d'Ivoire are always indirect via Paris, the trip should be booked as London-Paris via Eurostar, then Paris-Cote d'Ivoire via plane.
- **Planning travel strategically**, by combining meetings and events into one trip and considering the potential measurable outcomes of the meetings they are planning to attend and seeing if there is another way to achieve that outcome.

Trip Terms of References and providing justification of the need to fly

At least two weeks before a scheduled trip **OR BEFORE** buying travel tickets (especially important in the case of flying where prices rise closer to the date of travel), staff members must produce a detailed Terms of Reference which clearly states the purpose and aims of any trip. **As part of writing the TOR staff must also fill out the flight form (available in the House Rules folder) to justify any flights.** Elements to take into consideration are outlined above.

The TOR and flight form should be sent to the UK office administrator (or any member of the FAHRM team if the office administrator is not available), who will share it with the communications manager and a campaigner. If they have doubts about the need for the trip they will discuss it with the person proposing the flight. Ideally the staff member will get a response within 48 hours. It is the responsibility of the travelling staff member not to buy any flight tickets until the FAHRM team has given the go-ahead for the travel.

Reducing Fern's overall use of aeroplanes

At the end of each year, we will quantify CO₂ emissions from all flights taken during the year and paid for by Fern and compare them with CO₂ emissions from flights taken the previous year. We will present the findings to the MT and the Board. If our emissions are reducing, we will continue with the policy as it stands. If emissions have not reduced sufficiently, or have even increased, we will discuss with the Board and consider putting a cap on emissions through the implementation of a carbon budget per campaign team. However, such measures

will need to be considered in conjunction with the value and direct campaign outcomes we are getting out of each trip.