

# GBIF Travel Guidelines for Persons Invited to GBIF Events

This document gives general guidelines for arranging your travel and getting reimbursed when you have been invited to attend a GBIF event

These guidelines should be followed closely.

1. There are four types of travel for which GBIF may reimburse the costs incurred (airplane or train ticket, hotel costs, per diem). These are:
  - 1.1. Individuals who have been invited to attend specified GBIF training events.
  - 1.2. Individuals who have been invited to attend specific GBIF committee or subcommittee meetings in their personal capacity. Examples include the annual meeting of the Nodes Committee and of the Science Subcommittees.
  - 1.3. Developing-country representatives who have been invited to attend a Governing Board or other GBIF meeting and who will be paid from the GBIF Supplementary Fund.
  - 1.4. Individuals who have received a special invitation to, for example, visit the GBIF Secretariat, speak at a GBIF-sponsored symposium, etc.
2. In all cases, individuals will either have received a letter (or e-mail) of invitation, or a notification for a meeting from the GBIF Secretariat. All individuals must also submit electronically a GBIF travel authorization and agreement form, and have received an electronic confirmation of authorization back from the Secretariat in order to be eligible for reimbursement. The form is available on the GBIF website and can be downloaded here: <http://www.gbif.org/Support/travel/authorizationform>.
3. GBIF will pay per diem and hotel for invited participants to arrive on the day before the event and leave on the day following the event, if it is not convenient to start the return trip the same day as the training/meeting ends. Per diem will be calculated on the basis of the number of bed-nights.
4. If participants wish to extend their stays (for example, to include a Saturday evening) in order to get a cheaper airline ticket, GBIF will refund the extra hotel costs and per diem only if the total cost is cheaper than a travel arrangement limited to the duration of the event. Such longer stays require prior approval from GBIF and can only be covered if the participant can prove that the extra per diem and hotel costs were saved elsewhere, such as a cheaper flight fare.
5. GBIF follows the official per diem rates announced by the Danish State and followed by the University of Copenhagen. According to these rules, in 2007 GBIF can provide a maximum per diem of 429 DKK<sup>1</sup> per night. There are however lower rates

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<sup>1</sup> For exchange rates between DKK and other currencies see: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).

for some countries or localities. The actual rate to be used will be announced in the specific guidelines for an event.

6. If any meal is included in the hotel price or provided for free as part of the event, the per diem rate will be reduced by 15% for breakfast, 30% for lunch and 30% for dinner.
7. The Secretariat can not normally pay for vaccinations and travel insurance, and it advises participants to purchase their own travel insurance to cover sickness, loss of baggage, etc. If meetings are convened in a Schengen agreement area country (for more information on countries signed up to the Schengen agreement see: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/freetravel/frontiers/fsj\\_freetravel\\_schengen\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/freetravel/frontiers/fsj_freetravel_schengen_en.htm)), participants must ensure to have a valid travel health insurance for the period of traveling. Without a valid travel health insurance, travelers may be denied entry into the Schengen agreement area by the authorities.
8. Normally each participant will make his/her own hotel and travel reservations for a training event, meeting etc. and pay the hotel bill as usual. If the Secretariat is not providing a specific hotel for the event, participants will be informed beforehand on the maximum hotel cost per day that the Secretariat will refund. Any amount over the announced rate will not be refunded.
9. GBIF will only refund flight tickets at the level of economy class non-refundable fares (apex). If this is not available, for instance, because a weekend stay is not possible, cross-apex or similar should be considered. If more expensive tickets are used, the participant may receive only a partial refund.
10. If a participant wishes to combine the travel with other visits to other destinations, the Secretariat will have to be consulted as to the amount that the Secretariat can provide as a subsidy to the travel (typically the price of cheapest direct flight).
11. GBIF does not reimburse extra costs that arise later from changing the flight schedule on behalf of the participant.
12. If a participant has ordered a ticket but later for various reason wishes to cancel participation in the meeting, GBIF will not refund the tickets.
13. Only in case of documented sickness (i.e. certified by a physician) that prevents participation will the Secretariat refund the cost of the ticket.
14. GBIF will - dependent on the venue, size of the meeting etc. - either set a fixed lump-sum payment or will refund the cost of public transport or taxi between the participant's lodging and the airport, and between the airport and the venue hotel. Other transportation expenses while at the training event, meeting etc. will not be covered (i.e., these are in principle included in the per diem).
15. Instead of flying, travel by train or boat will be covered in 2nd class or similar. Instead of any of these, travel by passenger car may be covered at the rate of 3.30 DKK per km (2006 rate), but only if this is cheaper than other means of transportation, and if approved in advance by the Secretariat.
16. Reimbursement should be claimed within **one month, and no later than 3 months** after returning from the GBIF event. As stated in paragraph 2 above, all visitors, observers, delegates, committee members and other participants at GBIF meetings and events must sign a GBIF travel authorization and agreement form, and receive authorization from GBIF before making travel arrangements. Please note that **any claims submitted after three months after returning from the GBIF event will**

**not be reimbursed by GBIF.** When several people are traveling to the same event, GBIF will provide an Excel spreadsheet with the relevant per diem and other rates already entered. If no such spreadsheet is provided, then the reimbursement request form that is available from the GBIF web site should be used, filled out, printed, signed and posted via priority mail. The form can be found under: <http://www.gbif.org/Support/travel/VisitorTravelReimbursementForm2008.xlt>. The following items must be attached: a) Stub of the original flight ticket, b) stubs of boarding passes, c) original tickets or receipts for transportation between residence and airport and between airport and hotel (unless GBIF is providing a lump-sum payment for this amount), d) original hotel bill, e) copy of the letter of invitation and a copy of the electronic travel authorization confirmation from the Secretariat (see point 2 above).

17. If the home organization/university of the participant has paid for the travel expenses, and not the participant himself/herself personally, please contact the GBIF Secretariat for procedures on reimbursement.
18. In exceptional cases, when the trainee or participant is not able to cover the costs and be reimbursed later, GBIF may be able to issue flight tickets, pay the hotel bill, and hand over the per diem at the event. If this is the case, the traveler should send a separate, special e-mail to [gbif@gbif.org](mailto:gbif@gbif.org) to request this pre-payment at least 4 weeks in advance of the event, and provide adequate justification.
19. For **training events**, GBIF will normally refund costs for only one trainee per Voting or Associate Participant.
  - 19.1. The Head of Delegation or Node Manager should designate the person for the training, taking into account the prerequisites.
  - 19.2. The designated person should register on the web site (<http://www.gbif.org/Support/training/schedule>) at least 3 weeks in advance. Be aware of the time needed to process a visa application.
  - 19.3. If several sessions of a training event are offered in different parts of the world, trainees should in principle choose the event closest to their region or language, which results in the lowest cost/benefit ratio.
  - 19.4. After registering, the trainee will receive an invitation letter via email.