QNRF Travel Policy

July 2016
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1. Introduction

Purpose

This Policy establishes principles for determining travel, lodging, transportation and other travel related costs (together called “travel costs”) applicable to all Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) grants. The principles of this policy are designed to provide that QNRF bear its fair share of total travel costs, determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Supersession

The Policy supersedes all travel costs guidelines, procedures and terms of agreement previously applied by QNRF.

Applicability

All awardee institutions receiving QNRF grant funding shall be required to comply with the requirements set forth by this Policy.

Responsibilities

Each institution receiving QNRF grant funding, in the fulfilment of its obligations, should employ sound management practices. All travel costs shall be in accordance with this Policy, the QNRF approved budget and in compliance with the awardee institution travel policy.

Effective date.

The provisions of this Policy shall be effective July 1st, 2016.
2. Definitions

Awardee: A “Submitting Institution” awarded grant(s) from QNRF and is a party to the Master Research Funding Agreement.

Co-Funding: Funding in whole or in part, from more than one funding source for the same research project (other than QNRF, Qatar Foundation or the Awardee).

Collaborative Institution: Research Institution in or outside the State of Qatar collaborating with the Awardee in conducting the research proposal. Once awarded, it will be termed as Sub-Awardee.

Consultant: An experienced individual that is trained to advise the research team in order to help making the best possible choices during execution of the research project. A consultant generally offers only advice or proposes solutions to problems, but he/she does not act as key investigator such as designing, conducting, or reporting on research. A consultant cannot have any claim on intellectual property related to the project. A consultant requires little or no guidance in providing input.

Direct Cost: Expenses related directly to the performance of the project research activities. Direct cost includes the “Personnel” cost, the “Capital equipment, materials, consumables and supplies” cost, the “Travel” cost and the “Miscellaneous” cost.

Eligible Expense: Expenses incurred by the awardee institution while carrying out the research as outlined in the approved proposal that are covered by the funds obligated in a QNRF grant, and in accordance with the awardee institution’s policies and procedures.

Grant: Term used to describe the funding instrument used by QNRF for the execution of material support for the grant.

Indirect Cost: Institutional expenses that are not readily identified with a research project implementation, yet necessary for the general support of the project by the institution where it is being performed.

Key Investigator: Member of the research team involved in the scientific execution of the research project supported by QNRF. Key investigators comprise LPIs, Co-LPIs and PIs.

Lead Principal Investigator (LPI): The Principal Investigator who is identified in the proposal as the leader and manager of the research team members. For proposals with a single PI, he/she is, by default, considered as the Lead PI.

Miscellaneous: Refers to items of various types, forms and characteristics necessary for the implementation of the research project and are not categorized under equipment, travel or personnel.

Postdoctoral Scholar: An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path.

Principal Investigator: The person designated on the Research Proposal as the principal individual involved in the scientific execution of QNRF funded project.
**Procured Items**: Refers to capital equipment, material, consumables and supplies procured by the awardee institution which are necessary to carry out the project.

**Project Agreement**: Agreement governing a grant for a named Project specifying the project duration, budget breakdown, LPI, sub-awardee(s) and abstract.

**Q-GRANTS**: Web based solution that streamlines the full range of Grant management processes from submission of research proposals and pre-award phase to post award phase and Project completion.

**Research Team Members**: Individuals involved in the scientific execution of the awarded project, by devoting a specified effort during the Project Lifetime. Namely: key investigators, post-doctoral scholars, graduate and undergraduate students, research associates, research assistants, and lab technicians.

**Sub-contract**: An agreement between the awardee institution and any other institution inside or outside the State of Qatar that will participate in a project under a grant award made by QNRF.

**Sub-Awardee**: A research institution inside or outside the State of Qatar which is collaborating with the awardee institution; the sub-awardee conducts research under the awardee institution’s responsibility as described in the original research proposal.

**Submitting Institution**: A research institution registered inside the State of Qatar that has appropriate research resources specialized in area(s) within QNRS and responsible for submitting research proposals to QNRF. Once awarded, such an entity will be termed as the awardee institution.
3. QNRF Travel Costs Principles

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, accommodation, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees of the awarded institution (sub-awardee(s) included under the term “awardee institution”) who are in travel status on official business related to the project. Such costs are covered by the per diem for charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the institution’s sponsored activities.

Accommodation and subsistence

Costs incurred by employees and officers, excluding consultants, of the awarded institution for travel, including costs of accommodation, other subsistence, and incidental expenses, shall be considered reasonable and allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by the institution in its regular operations as the result of the institution’s written travel policy and in compliance with the per diem rates set by QNRF which are subject to changes annually. [See Appendices A and B]

Commercial Air Travel

Airfare costs in excess of the customary standard commercial airfare (economy/coach or equivalent), are unallowable except when it would result in additional costs that would offset the transportation savings.

The difference between economy airfare and a higher-class airfare is unallowable using QNRF funds. A train, bus or other surface carrier may be used in lieu of or as a supplement to air travel at the lowest rate by the transportation facility used. The awardee institution may use its own funds to pay the difference to a higher-class airfare. The allowance paid by the awardee institution to cover the difference between economy/coach and the highest-class airfare, if allowed by the awardee institution travel policy, is not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant. [See Appendices A and B]

Transportation costs

Costs incurred for freight, express, cartage, postage, and other transportation services relating either to goods purchased, in process, or delivered, related to the grant are allowable. When such costs can be readily identified with the items involved, they may be charged directly as transportation costs. Where identification with the materials received cannot be readily made, transportation cost may be charged to the appropriate awarded institution according to its institutional policy; the institution may request reimbursement from the grant, if the cost of transportation is reimbursable under the terms of the project agreement.
All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant. [See Appendices A and B]

Participation at Conferences

Participation at conferences and meetings shall be allowed only for cases in which the research team members will present scientific paper(s) or other research outcomes related to QNRF projects. Travel costs for attendance at one research conference per year is also allowed for PDRA post-doctoral scholars. All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant. [See Appendices A and B]

Certification of Charges

To assure that expenditures for a project are proper and in accordance with the project agreement and approved project budget, the annual and/or final fiscal reports requesting payment under the project agreement will include a certification, signed by an authorized official of the awardee institution, which reads as follows: "I certify that all expenditures reported (or payment requested) are for appropriate purposes and in accordance with the provisions of the application and award documents."
4. Appendix A: Allowable Costs

Allowable Costs

- Travel costs paid by a QNRF grant shall be not be covered by other sources.

- Airfares between Qatar and other destinations must be managed in accordance with this Policy and the approved budget by QNRF. This Policy applies to all employees and officers, excluding consultants, of the awarded institution (sub-awardee(s) included under the term “awardee institution”). All airfare paid or reimbursed using QNRF funds must be standard commercial airfare (economy/coach or equivalent).

- QNRF encourages its awardees to use Qatar Airways whenever possible and feasible.

- All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

- Travel per diem amount shall be in accordance with the approved budget by QNRF for a given awarded project. QNRF per diem rates are available on the RO Q-Grants dashboard via https://ro.qnrfsubmission.org/ – (Important Documents & Links). The awarded institutions are required to comply with the per diem established by this Policy which are subject to change.

- For Research Team members, excluding consultants, who specifically travel to and from Qatar to conduct QNRF funded research, the cost of travel (visa, tickets, accommodation and per diem or relevant personnel compensation) will be charged to the awardee institution. Visa fees, shipment of passports by mail or express mail, and inoculations are allowable when they are related to a specific project as a necessary condition of fulfilling the travel assignment and completing the research project. The awardee institution may request reimbursement from its sub-awardee(s).

- If the airfare(s) were not purchased by the awardee institution, the airfare costs may be reimbursed to the Research Team Member(s) that are the awardee institution’s employees and officers, in accordance with this Policy and the approved budget by QNRF after receiving an invoice/statement of the original airline ticket or e-ticket. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made by the Research Team Member(s). This provision applies to the sub-awardee institution’s employees and officers. All
travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

- Airfares between destinations other than Qatar must be standard commercial airfare (economy/coach or equivalent) and managed in accordance with this Policy and the approved budget by QNRF. This Policy applies to all employees and officers of the awarded institution (sub-awardee(s) included under the awardee institution). All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

- For Research Team members, excluding consultants, who travel between destinations other than Qatar to conduct QNRF awarded project(s), according with the research procedures, the travel costs (including visa, tickets, accommodation and per diem or relevant personnel compensation) will be charged to the relevant awardee institution. All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant. The awardee institution may request reimbursement from its-sub-awardee.

- Registration fees for conferences and meetings related to the project or to present QNRF supported project outcome(s) may be prepaid by the awardee institution in accordance with this Policy and the approved budget by QNRF. Business-related banquets or meals that are considered a (unpaid) part of the conference can also be paid along with the registration fees.

  If the conference fees were not prepaid, the awardee institution may reimburse these costs to the Research Team member(s), excluding consultants, in accordance with this Policy and the approved budget by QNRF. Original receipts/invoices to support the payment are required. If the conference does not provide receipts, a credit card slip/ statement or proof that the amount was paid shall be required.

  Registration fees paid directly by a Research Team member(s) will be reimbursed in accordance with the approved budget by QNRF after the conference is completed, and proof of attendance is provided. All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

- The cost of overnight accommodation (room rate and tax only) will be covered for all project-related travel. The awardee institution shall reimburse accommodation expenses for the standard business room rates at reasonably
priced hotels. Conference-site hotels will be reimbursed at the actual cost. All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

- Other expenses related to the project such as faxing, photocopies, business related internet charges (hotel, conference site and internet café), data ports, telephone calls and business related excess baggage costs incurred while travelling are covered by the grant. QNRF may request original itemized receipts during routine audits.

- Ground transportation (train, bus, car, taxi, rental vehicles, etc.), either inside or outside Qatar, shall be managed in accordance with this Policy and the approved per diem budget by QNRF and in compliance with the awardee institution travel policy. All travel costs for consultants must be paid by the awardee institution and are not reimbursable from the QNRF grant.

- Research Team members are expected to travel by standard class rail. Purchases of “open-ended” rail tickets are not allowed using QNRF funds.

- QNRF will request full reimbursement from the awardee institution for all the travel costs incurred by the awardee institution’s employees and officers (sub-awardee(s) included under the term “awardee institution”) from QNRF funds that are not allowable according to this Policy and the QNRF approved budget. QNRF reserves the right to implement other enforcement actions to preserve QNRF’s interest.
5. Appendix B: Non Allowable Costs

The following travel costs are not allowable under any of the QNRF funding programs:

- Airline club memberships and seat upgrades.

- First and Business Class Tickets.

- All arrangements regarding additional charges for missed flights, cancellation fees, and refunds pertinent to a QNRF approved travel are the sole responsibility of the awardee institution, and/or the Research Team Members.

- Private companies’ fees for visa processing when not required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment.

- QNRF does not cover costs for vacation time; if vacation is added to a business trip, the cost of airfare, ground transportation or accommodation must be clearly identified on the receipts.

- All travel costs for consultants;

- Personal entertainment expenses, including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view channels, in-theater movies, social activities, sightseeing tours, museums visits or fishing trips, etc.

- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel and health insurance.

- Additional costs for travel, accommodation, meals, or other expenses for spouses or other family members or dependents.

- Flowers, perishables, gifts.

- Evening wear rentals, laundry and dry-cleaning costs.

- Costs related to loss of or damage of personal luggage or other personal effects during travel.

- Expenses associated with the recruitment of research team members.

- Other expenses not directly related to the business travel.