



## R4HC-MENA Travel Policy

April 2019

### Purpose and Scope

Research for Health in Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa (R4HC-MENA) is a collaborative programme involving seven partner institutions across the United Kingdom and the Middle East: Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Subsequently, both domestic and international travel is regularly undertaken by R4HC-MENA members.

This policy has been developed in line with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) requirements, as stated within their standard [terms & conditions](#), and is informed by the [King's College London Travel Policy](#).

It is expected that all R4HC-MENA members travelling for R4HC-MENA related business and research will comply with this policy when organising travel and accommodation. Any non-compliant travel will not be funded from the R4HC-MENA programme grant and will be the responsibility of the person who has so travelled.

#### 1. R4HC-MENA Travel

Travel covered by R4HC-MENA is defined as specifically relating to R4HC-MENA business requirements and research. Travel covered, may include; taxis, public transport, rail, flights, accommodation, and meals. If you are unsure whether travel falls within the remit of the programme, you are advised to check *before travelling* with Bradley Robinson, R4HC-MENA Programme Manager.

- 2. Travel Authorisation:** All travel must be authorised by the appropriate budget holder/finance officer at the relevant partner institution who is responsible for managing R4HC-MENA funds in compliance with the relevant formal partner agreement. In respect of travel to be undertaken by the budget holder themselves, if required by local policy, expenditure should be authorised by their line manager. The budget holder / finance officer / line manager (as appropriate) must agree that the travel is necessary, and that the proposed arrangements are in line with the regulations appearing within this policy document. Any proposed travel arrangements that fall outside of the regulations defined within this policy document must be clearly agreed by Professor Richard Sullivan and/or Bradley Robinson.

- 3. Domestic<sup>1</sup> & International Travel:** The purpose of this section is to outline the principles that should be followed by members who travel domestically & internationally as part of R4HC-MENA business or research.

#### 3.1 Class of Travel

- 3.1.1** Travel by standard class (or equivalent e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> class) by train and economy/coach class by air for flights are the only acceptable classes of travel. First class (or equivalent) rail travel or any class of air travel other than economy class will usually not be allowed unless there are exceptional circumstances and it has been expressly permitted in

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<sup>1</sup> "Domestic" is defined as beginning and ending within defined national borders (e.g. *within* the UK) for the purpose of this policy.

advance by either Professor Richard Sullivan or Bradley Robinson. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Medical reasons, supported by appropriate documentation;
- Value for money taking into account opportunity costs and/or availability e.g. flights to ensure colleagues are able to attend a particular meeting / workshop to meet a defined business need;
- The genuine, agreed need to travel at short notice;
- The requirements for a defined class of travel specified by the sponsor of the trip (this should be supported by appropriate documentation);
- The requirement for flexibility in travel which is unavailable in an economy class ticket.

### **3.2 Arranging Travel**

**3.2.1** Tickets for all travel by land, sea or air should wherever possible be obtained via an approved travel provider in compliance with relevant procurement regulations at each partner institution. The travel provider must always be asked to quote the lowest possible fare.

**3.2.2** Determinations about best value for money will need to take account of opportunity costs such as booking flexibility and additional charges with regard to, for example, making date changes and/or cancelling travel in relation to accommodation costs or airfares.

**3.2.3** In exceptional circumstances, if a more cost-effective ticket or ticket with preferable conditions can be purchased with an alternative supplier or directly with the specific transport provider, and this can be evidenced, purchase of a ticket in this way is acceptable, subject to local regulations being complied with.

**3.2.4** R4HC-MENA will not normally meet any costs relating to the accompaniment of the spouse/partner/other family member of staff travelling on R4HC-MENA business.

## **4. Travel by Air**

**4.1** There is to be no airline preference unless there are serious safety concerns which are supported by air transport analysis.

**4.2** R4HC-MENA members are expected to book the lowest logical fare available. If there are other more expensive fares available, these can be booked but require a clearly evidence explanation of why the lowest fare was not booked.

## **5. Travel by rail**

**5.1** Tickets for all rail travel should be obtained via an approved travel provider and undertaken at second class or equivalent rates, unless permission for a higher class of travel has been exceptionally granted.

## **6. Travel by Road, including Taxis**

**6.1** R4HC-MENA members may claim reimbursement for the cost of taxi/private hire vehicle fares (of a standard nature) when undertaking R4HC-MENA business when it would not be reasonable to make the journey by public transport. Receipts must be provided.

**6.2** When circumstances dictate, it is acceptable for R4HC-MENA members to make use of an appropriately licensed car/driver hire and/or pay towards the cost of using a partner institution licensed and provided car/driver. This would be particularly the case when, for

example, issues of safety of researchers in the field can best be guaranteed by using transport of this kind.

- 6.3 Private vehicles should only be used when they provide the most economical or practical method of completing a journey.
- 6.4 Where a private vehicle is used claims may be made for mileage at the standard partner institution mileage rates.

## 7. Domestic and International Hotel Accommodation

- 7.1 R4HC-MENA members are expected to source the most cost-effective accommodation available, generally 3\*. However, this may not be practicable in some countries. It may also be the case that R4HC-MENA members are able to access preferential rates at 4\* or 5\* hotels within the UK and MENA region.
- 7.2 Given the nature of R4HC-MENA business and research, it may be most appropriate for a 4\* or 5\* rated hotel to be used (for example, to enable the whole group to meet formally and informally in one venue maximising the effectiveness of the time together). This must be formally approved in advance, noting the cost involved, by the appropriate budget holder.
- 7.3 R4HC-MENA members travelling to an established partner University should contact that university to determine the usual range of hotels for accommodation of visitors. See appendix for a guide on specific hotels in various countries.
- 7.4 Reimbursement rates: included within Appendix 1 are a number of indicative rates for hotels within the MENA region and the UK. All bookings for accommodation should be approximately within the range of rates outlined there.

## 8. Subsistence

- 8.1 Where overnight accommodation is required, reimbursement will only be made for the cost of the room; a reasonable evening meal; breakfast; lunch. Where meals are not taken in the hotel where you are staying, separate restaurant receipts must be obtained.
- 8.2 Per diem indicative rates – Although UKRI will only reimburse subsistence expenses **based on actual costs**, R4HC-MENA expects that all members will incur subsistence costs within a per diem range of £38 - £47 (US\$49 - \$60) per day. This does not include accommodation.

## 9. Travel Insurance

- 9.1 This section should be read in conjunction with section 13 'Risk Assessment'.
- 9.2 All R4HC-MENA members must obtain appropriate travel insurance covering, as a minimum, medical costs that may be incurred during their travel. It is the funder's expectation that appropriate travel insurance will be provided by a member's employing institution. Costs of obtaining independent travel insurance can therefore not be directly met from R4HC-MENA programme funds.
- 9.3 King's College London staff members travelling on the business of the College are provided with travel insurance by the College. This covers the usual risks associated with travel including medical emergencies that arise in the course of travel but is not a substitute for medical insurance for those living abroad for a period of time. It will not cover staff on unpaid leave, holidays or private consultancy. The certificate of travel insurance is available to staff from the intranet [here](#). You will be required to log the details of your itinerary to obtain the certificate. This should be completed for each trip undertaken.

- 9.4** In the event of an incident the following action should be taken: a) Contact the emergency assistance helpline from your travel insurance provider before incurring any substantial medical or other travel costs; b) Obtain invoices/receipts in relation to expenses incurred; c) Notify local Police within 24 hours of discovery in relation to loss of money, baggage, etc. d) Notify Bank/Credit Card Company in relation to loss of credit cards; e) Notify Carrier within 24 hours of discovery in relation to loss or damage in transit and obtain damage report; f) On return follow procedures with your insurance company or partner institution.

## 10. Visas

- 10.1** Where a visa is required to visit a country(s) for R4HC-MENA business or research purposes, the cost of this is covered by the programme. Obtain receipts or other appropriate confirmation of visa payment.
- 10.2** The process for managing letters of invitation and/or other official documentation required by R4HC-MENA members to facilitate the visa application process is managed by Kristen Meagher, R4HC-MENA Programme Coordinator. All queries and requirements should be addressed to Kristen in the first instance.

## 11. Health and Safety

- 11.1** The risks to be taken into account by our travellers are diverse in nature: risks linked to criminal activity, to terrorism, to political or civil disorder, to war situations, risks to health or risks from natural events.
- 11.2** Any individual proposing to travel abroad, whether alone or as part of a group, should give serious consideration to their own health and safety and the likely local conditions that they will encounter.
- 11.3** Overseas incidents that involve R4HC-MENA members including extortion, kidnap, arrest or detention, international terrorist attack, natural disaster, mass transit accident, riots/civil unrest and other emergency events, should be initially notified to your travel insurance company and partner institution Programme Manager.
- 11.4** Medical advice should be sought from travel health clinics about necessary vaccinations, immunisation, first aid requirements and health precautions for individual countries.
- 11.5** Information should also be obtained by any individual preparing to travel abroad on climatic extremes and if appropriate, relevant cultural information.
- 11.6** In addition, accommodation bookings should consider welfare concerns where possible; in developing countries, where standards of accommodation may be more basic, particular concern should be made to mitigate risk where possible or ensure a risk management process has been followed.
- 11.7** If you propose to travel to a country that the UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice against "all" travel or advises only "essential travel", consideration must be given to the risk of travel versus the benefit of the proposed activity. Advice should be sought from your partner institution and travel insurance company and a risk assessment undertaken.

## 12. Risk Assessments

- 12.1** Travel risks must be monitored at local level by each partner institution, in order to optimise the risk assessment process.
- 12.2** If required, R4HC-MENA members may use the King's College London [risk assessment](#) or a suitable alternative.

**12.3** Risk assessments should be reviewed upon arrival in country case they need modification in the light of the particular circumstances and the local conditions at the time.

### 13. Process

**13.1** Submit travel request and, if required, risk assessment through partner institution.

**13.2** Submit travel insurance request.

**13.3** Ensure updated contact details are registered with line manager.

**13.4** Know and understand emergency processes in case of any incidents.

### Appendix:

- i. UK Research and Innovation: The Research Councils require public funds to be deployed with due consideration to value for money across all activities.
  - a. All travel claims should evidence value for money as the primary consideration. Consequently, these should only include travel by standard class by train and economy class by air for flights. Any exception should be clearly justified and approved within the terms of the Research Organisation's policy.
- ii. Hotels and indicative rates
  - a. Jordan £90 - 130
    - i. Grand Hyatt (Amman): 5\*, £95/\$126
  - b. Turkey £40 - £100
    - i. Divan Hotel (Ankara): 4\*, €50/\$57/£44
  - c. Lebanon £90 – 130
    - i. Gefinor Hotel Beirut
  - d. Palestine £90 - 130
  - e. UK - £120 - 250
    - i. King's College London has specifically negotiated rates at a number of UK hotels.
    - ii. Strand Palace (London): 4\*, £150 - £250