

TRAVEL POLICY

Version 2.3

(April 2025)



PART A – DEFINITION OF THE SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

A.1. MISSION STATEMENT

OBREAL seeks to promote dialogue and synergies between the governmental, academic, and social sectors, taking into consideration the specific circumstances and heterogeneity of each region. OBREAL's goal is to create interregional bridges and cooperation, with a specific focus on enhancing development in the higher education and research sectors. We achieve this through interregional policy dialogue, knowledge production, collaborative multiregional and multilevel projects, and training and capacity building.

A.2. Travel Policy Overview

The association's fund expenditures must be directed towards achieving the objectives inherent to this mission, and expenses related to travel are no exception. The travel policy acknowledges and considers that fact that OBREAL is financed principally through external service contracts and project grants, and in this sense also must adhere to grant and service contract regulations of specific funders when it comes to travel in the context of the latter.

A.3. DEFINITION OF TRAVEL POLICY

Travel Policy refers to the set of guidelines and directions for the professional travel of employees, external staff and for other individuals invited by OBREAL. The term Travel encompasses transportation, accommodation, and other elements related to these displacements.

A.4. PURPOSE OF THE TRAVEL POLICY

The purpose of OBREAL's travel policy is to align the mobility of employees and external staff with these guidelines when travel is required for professional reasons and for other individuals invited by OBREAL. This is done while promoting equality, safety, and the well-being of travelers, in accordance with OBREAL's norms, control measures, economy, and procedures.

In accordance with OBREAL's environmental impact policy, the necessity of travel must always be assessed for approval and purchase. This includes:

- Before scheduling any travel, the traveler must assess the convenience and feasibility, if available, of substituting it with a virtual meeting using new information and communication technologies such as videoconferencing, webinars, telepresence, and other technological means. For events organized by other partners and organizations, the possibility of virtual participation in hybrid meetings must be assessed, and the value add of travel appropriately determined in accordance with the strategic and technical importance of the event or meeting.

A.5. INSTRUMENTS OF THE TRAVEL POLICY

Instruments of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- **Clear Communication:** Ensuring clear communication to travelers and all those involved in travel management about the options, rules, and exceptions.

- **Procedural Efficiency:** Rationalizing and streamlining procedures by the administration.
- **Training and Knowledge Updates:** Providing training and updating knowledge for all agents, especially administrative support staff.
- **Contract Management:** Proper management of travel agency contracts and other external elements involved in the travel process (e.g., payment methods, travel insurance).
- **Technology Adoption:** Adopting new sector technologies such as self-booking tools.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** Monitoring compliance with rules and procedures and respecting services and grant contracts as pertains to different funders and their regulations, where needed.

A.6. COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

Policy Review: This travel policy shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure continued relevance and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as well as sector standards and the mission and activities of OBREAL.

PART B – GENERAL CONDITIONS

B.1. TRAVEL INSURANCE

Adequate travel insurance coverage is essential to the OBREAL Travel Policy given the scope and diversity of travel and destinations. OBREAL ensures that all travel arranged through Bizaway and TravelPerk are covered by comprehensive travel insurance, associated with payments made using the Diners corporate credit card. Therefore, there is no need to ensure any travel-related risks that are already covered under this extensive policy. This assurance applies both to OBREAL employees and external individuals for whom OBREAL purchases flights.

B.2. CANCELLATIONS

The cancellation of any travel, flight, hotel reservation, or other contracted service must be promptly communicated to the travel agency to facilitate the appropriate cancellation process. The respective OBREAL events and travel manager must also be informed to monitor and ensure the corresponding refund, if applicable.

For OBREAL staff, cancellation must be communicated to the OBREAL Financial Director and justified accordingly.

For externals, an event logistical note and policy will be prepared for each event requiring travel, in accordance with external funding requirements and funding rules, which will stipulate cancellation or change policies and procedures for travel.

B.3. LOYALTY CARDS AND PERSONAL DISCOUNT BENEFITS

Travelers may personally benefit from the loyalty programs of airlines, train companies, and hotel chains. OBREAL will facilitate the acquisition of the corresponding bonuses. However, a more economical or suitable travel or accommodation option must not be subordinated to the acquisition of these or other personal benefits.

B.4. SELF-BOOKING OF TRAVEL (ONLY FOR OBREAL STAFF)

The self-booking computer tools significantly simplifies and shortens the procedures and deadlines for managing travel by making unnecessary, in many cases, the request for quotes from the agency and facilitating telecommunication between the traveler, manager, and agency.

These softwares are parameterized in accordance with the basic restrictions of this Travel Policy regarding the maximum price of hotels offered for each country and the exclusive availability of airplane tickets in economy class and informs travelers of the most economical options in each case.

The use of this tools, accessible from the bizaway.com/es and <https://app.travelperk.com> are compatible with the normal travel management procedure. Its use is voluntary for both travelers and administrative support personnel.

PART C – TRANSPORT: BOOKING PROCEDURES

C.1. BOOKING PROCEDURES

C.1.1 OBREAL STAFF

Tickets for air transport, trains, long-distance regular bus lines, ship tickets, and car rentals should generally be booked through OBREAL's designated travel agencies (Bizaway and TravelPerk). However, OBREAL staff are permitted to purchase tickets directly from official airline websites using the corporate credit card if they find a more economical option.

C.1.2 EXTERNALS

For external participants in OBREAL events, or for those events not organized by OBREAL where the association is responsible for booking flights and accommodation, the booking should be made by OBREAL's administrative staff in coordination with our contact person at the travel agency.

Alternatively, external participants may pay for their flights and accommodation and request reimbursement from OBREAL. All requests for such travel arrangements or reimbursements should be directed to OBREAL's administrative staff to ensure proper handling and compliance with our travel policies and specific project's reimbursement policies.

C.2. EXCEPTIONS TO AGENCY BOOKING

The requirement to book through the agency does not apply to transport for urgent and unforeseeable trips that arise during other trips, the processing of which has not been possible or reasonable through normal or extraordinary channels (agency emergency service). In such cases, a copy of the documentation justifying the exception must be kept in the file, and an invoice must be submitted as proof of the expense.

C.3. AIR TRAVEL: TICKET TYPES

C.3.1. TICKET CLASS

Tickets must be in economy class with discounted fares where feasible. The use of full-fare tickets, which are significantly more expensive due to their flexibility for changes and cancellations may be authorized for flights longer than 6 hours.

Requests for exceptions, linked to staff or externals with specific health requirements, for example, will be considered on an hoc basis, according to the justification provided and budget available for the travel/project/contract. Exceptions must be approved by the OBREAL Financial Director.

C.3.2. BOOKING LEAD TIME

Booking well in advance is crucial for obtaining optimal prices. It is important to note that ticket prices increase

significantly for bookings made less than 7 days in advance. It is recommended to book domestic trips more than 14 days in advance and international trips more than 30 days in advance.

C.3.3. FLEXIBILITY IN DATES AND TIMES

Flexibility in travel dates, times, and destination airports can result in cost savings of up to 50% on certain routes. Travelers should compare different options using the self-booking tool.

C.3.4. FLIGHT OPTIONS: FLIGHT AND ROUTE SELECTION

The choice of flight and specific routes among the available alternatives is the responsibility of the traveler and, if applicable, the travel authorizing authority (OBREAL's Financial Director), and must adhere to criteria of economy, proportionality, and efficiency in relation to the traveler's professional agenda and travel objectives. In particular, the traveler must assess conditions such as inconvenient flight schedules, long distances from the airport, extra expenses, airlines with poor user rights records, or arriving under poor conditions to fulfill the task assigned.

C.4. TAXIS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED EXPENSES

C.4.1. TAXI EXPENSES

Most airports and train stations have direct train or bus services to the city center at a special price. Some of them also have integrated metro stations as part of the metropolitan public transport service. It is recommended to use these types of transport before using taxis, where feasible and safe

If necessary, expenses for taxi travel to or from railway stations, bus stations, ports, and airports, as well as taxi, railway, or bus travel within the destination city related to the purpose of the trip, are also reimbursable. The usage of applications like Uber are acceptable and costs reimbursable. Staff and externals are encouraged to seek best fares and travel collectively with others attending the same event or meeting if possible. Receipts must be saved and provided as justification for reimbursement.

C.5. CAR RENTALS

C.5.1. JUSTIFICATION FOR CAR RENTALS

The use of car rentals is justified for reasons of economy and when there are no other efficient means of transport available.

C.5.2. RESERVATION AND PAYMENT

The travel agency will facilitate the reservation using vouchers valued for the rental amount and will require the driver to provide a credit card as a guarantee for any expenses not included in the rental.

C.5.3. DIRECT CONTRACTING WITH CAR RENTAL COMPANIES

Direct contracting with the car rental company is permissible when it can be proven that, under equal conditions, their offer is more economical than that of the travel agency.

C.5.4. INSURANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of travelers using this means of transport to contract appropriate specific insurances and/or verify that the agency has contracted them.

C.5.5. ASSOCIATED EXPENSES

In addition to the cost of the rental and insurance, associated expenses include the cost of fuel, parking fees, and tolls.

C.6. USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES

C.6.1. USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES

The use of private vehicles is considered when there are no collective and regular means of transport available or when these are inadequate. In this case, reimbursement is calculated based on kilometers traveled (currently €0.26 per kilometer), calculated using a verified internet source for the shortest distance between the usual workplace and the destination.

C.6.2. OTHER REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Other associated expenses such as highway tolls and parking fees may also be reimbursed, based on the route and documented justification. Occupants of the private vehicle must ensure that it is adequately insured.

PART D – ACCOMMODATION & SUBSISTENCE COSTS

D.1. ACCOMMODATION RESERVATIONS

D.1.1 OBREAL STAFF

Accommodation should generally be booked using the self-booking tool provided by Bizaway and TravePerk. The number of nights booked should correspond to the duration of the activity and its specific needs. If the self-booking tool does not offer the desired option or a better price can be obtained using the corporate credit card, the hotel can be booked directly.

D.1.2 EXTERNALS

For external participants in OBREAL events, or for those events not organized by OBREAL where the association is responsible for booking accommodation, the booking should be made by OBREAL's administrative staff in coordination with our contact person at the travel agency. Alternatively, external participants may pay for their accommodation and request reimbursement from OBREAL. All requests for such accommodation arrangements or reimbursements should be directed to OBREAL's administrative staff to ensure proper handling and compliance with our travel policies.

D.2. DOCUMENTATION

For all bookings the invoice must be presented as proof.

D.3. SUBSISTENCE COSTS

D.3.1. REIMBURSEMENT OF MEALS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT

Subsistence costs, including meals and local transport, will be reimbursed by OBREAL based in actual costs.

D.3.2. REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

Meals: Expenses for meals will be reimbursed up to a reasonable amount, considering the location and context of the travel.

Local Transport: Local transport costs, such as public transportation fares, taxi fares, and parking fees, will be reimbursed. Whenever possible, travelers are encouraged to use public transportation instead of taxis.

Travelers must adhere to the following procedure to ensure reimbursement:

Receipts/Invoices: Travelers must keep all original receipts for meals and local transport expenses incurred during the trip.

Reimbursement Form: Upon returning from the trip, travelers must complete the reimbursement form provided

by the association. This form should detail each expense and be accompanied by the corresponding receipts.

Submission: The completed reimbursement form and all attached receipts must be submitted to the association's finance department within 30 days of the trip's conclusion.

D.3.3. NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:

Alcoholic beverages

Personal expenses unrelated to the travel purpose

Any expense without a corresponding receipt

By following these guidelines, travelers can ensure that their subsistence costs are reimbursed promptly and accurately.