Travel Procurement Category – incorporating SRS considerations

What this category includes

Procurement in the travel category covers a wide range of goods and services, including:

- Air Travel (Int)
- Air Travel (UK)
- Vehicle hire
- Coaches/Buses (Not Hire)
- Train Travel
- Taxi
- Accommodation

Total category spend – £10.9M p.a.

Key issues

Key issues of travel category are carbon emissions, especially resulting from air travel and issues resulting from widespread use of single use items. Impacts from the materials (incl. quantities of conflict minerals) used in manufacturing process are currently unknown and need to be researched.

Climate change

Carbon emissions resulting from business travel are responsible for approx. 12% of University total reported emissions – almost 12,000 tCO_2e. 93% of that come from flights, internationally and domestically.

Emissions are expected to grow as the University realises it's internationalisation strategy.

Whilst international travel is integral to University's scientific collaboration, domestic travel's carbon impact could be reduced through a modal switch to trains. Travel impacts can be further reduced by increasing the use of videoconferencing, e.g. by improving facilities.

Accommodation in hotels tends to have a very large carbon footprint. More research of the market could help identify best practice in the sector.

Next steps

1. Promotion of more sustainable travel options – travel hierarchy. Continue to promote the Edinburgh – London Train deal for carbon reduction.
2. Expansion of the use of digital collaborative tools (e.g. videoconferencing) to avoid the need to travel.
3. Publication of sustainable travel advice.
4. Further promotion of sustainable commute methods: busses, bicycles and, for longer journeys, electric vehicles to staff and students.
5. Research into best sustainability practices in hotel sector and which brands are following them.
6. Increase the use of online booking via Key Travel system and the use of the travel ' app' for self-management and duty of care.

Materials and hazardous materials

In terms of **fuels** used, there is a preference for hybrid and electric vehicles, for short business travel and taxi services.

Issues relating to **materials and hazardous materials** used in manufacturing of vehicles are not well understood and require more research.

There are likely **conflict minerals** used in production of all vehicles, however the scale is currently unknown and needs to be researched.

Next steps

1. Research is required for better understanding of some of the issues: materials (incl. haz. materials and conflict minerals) used in manufacturing of vehicles, esp. airplanes,

Waste

Guests in hotels and passengers on some flights receive a significant number of **single use items**. Such items will usually be disposed of, if opened.

End of life disposal of vehicles is heavily legislated and as such it is not a major cause for concern.

> ### Next steps
> 1. Research into best sustainability practices and which companies are following them.

Biodiversity

Expansion of infrastructure may have a negative impact on biodiversity, however this is perceived to be too far away in the supply chain to be a priority.

Heritage

It was noted that many train stations are in **historic buildings**, therefore there is a positive impact on heritage.

Water

Accommodation in hotels contributes to the big **water footprint** of the sector.

> ### Next steps
> 1. Potentially provide guidance on being sustainable in travel destination - check with travel agent if some advice could be provided with booking.

Employment, skills and training

Travel itself has a positive impact on staff and student **development and mobility** – nationally and globally.

Many suppliers are local, creating **employment opportunities** locally. There might be opportunities for apprenticeships.

> ### Next steps
> 1. Explore further options for apprenticeships.

Health and wellbeing

There is currently a potential gap in procedures surrounding travel approval and not potentially not every student and or staff member has a business **travel insurance** when travelling. This causes a number of difficulties with duty of care and ensuring safety and wellbeing of staff and students when traveling.

Using own vehicles for business travel (**grey fleet**) requires special business insurance, which is not necessarily known by everyone. Driving in general may be stressful.

It was noted that more could be done to promote walking instead of taking taxis for short distances.

> ### Next steps
> 1. More could be done to promote walking instead of taking taxis for short distances.
> 2. Improve and simplify risk assessment and insurance procedures, especially for international travel.
> 3. Develop partnership on duty of care and devolvement of 'mobile messenger' tool via Key Travel

Communities

Airport expansions often have a significant impact on communities – Heathrow expansion was noted as an example.

Hotels and accommodation are often sources of **economic benefit** for communities and job creation.

Security and crime

There are risks of **money laundering** in industries with many low value cash exchanges – e.g. taxis.

Modern slavery is a big issue in the global accommodation sector, also in the UK.

Next steps

1. Further investigate money laundering risks, double check that all protocols are being followed
2. Investigate/research modern slavery risks in accommodation sector.

Next steps

1. More research is needed into working /contract conditions of taxi/similar schemes.

Fairly and ethically traded

Money laundering, modern slavery and conflict minerals issues are covered in previous sections.

The University has access to discounted academic and charity fares through its Travel Management Company, Key Travel.

Next steps

1. Promote the use of discounted academic and charity fares
2. Ley Travel to develop training workshops and online webinars in best practice to accessing 'Academic fares'

Equality

Availability of hire vehicles modified for **accessibility** for disabled users might be not good enough.

Next steps

1. Check availability of vehicle hire modified for accessibility.

Fair work

Some taxi companies and/or similar schemes might operate in a **pay to join model**.

There are reports of **potential labour issues** in new business models (like Uber).

Modern slavery in accommodation is a risk in Scotland as well, this is covered in previous sections.