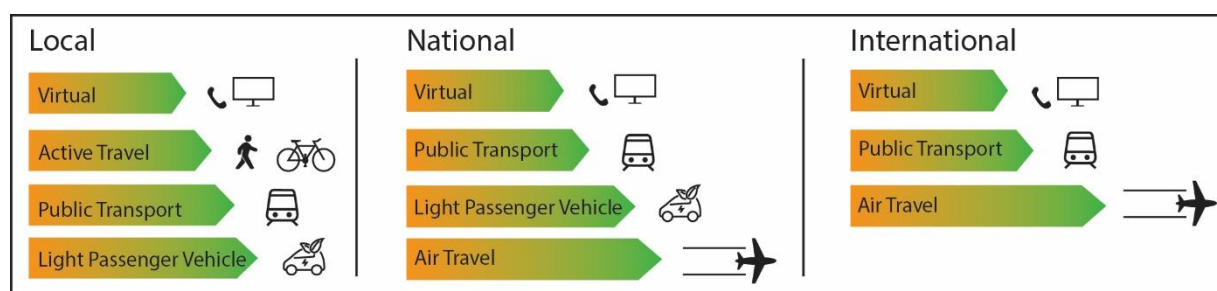


SFI Guidance for Sustainable Travel

Scope: This Guidance applies to all SFI Grant recipients and their team members and applicants to SFI for funding for the purposes of research¹. This Guidance does not apply to personal, physical travel outside of research-related activities, including that between a Researcher’s residence and place of work.

The Guidance: All travel-related² experiences are considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a Researcher. As such, SFI recognises the value of geographical, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual³ mobility, as well as mobility between the public and private sector, as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage of a Researcher’s career. However, it is the moral responsibility of every individual and organisation to recognise the impact of travel-related carbon emissions on the environment. As such, in line with the principle of Pollution Prevention and Control and the “do no significant harm” principle⁴, SFI has an ethical responsibility to ensure its Researchers⁵ consider their carbon footprint relating to travel. This guidance should be considered as standard practice for all SFI-funded Researchers. In instances where overlapping local or institutional travel policies exist, preference should be given to options with the lowest carbon impact.

Sustainable travel hierarchy: Wherever possible, consideration should be given to a travel hierarchy of carbon emissions as illustrated below:



Hierarchy of preferable modes of transportation for local, national, and international travel.

¹ Henceforth referred to as “SFI Researchers”.

² For the purposes of this guidance, “travel” is synonymous with “mobility” and refers to both physical and virtual means of mobility.

³ Remote communication over electronic networks.

⁴ Underpinned in [Regulation \(EU\) 2020/852](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment.

⁵ SFI Grant recipients and their team members, as well as Grant applicants.



Virtual/phone

Researchers are encouraged to consider virtual or telephonic alternatives to all in-person gatherings⁶.



Active Travel

Provided adequate infrastructure is in place, Researchers are encouraged to take active travel options, including walking, and cycling within local settings both nationally and internationally. In instances where active travel is not feasible, other options on the travel hierarchy may be considered.



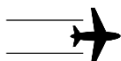
Public transportation

SFI recognises that adequate public transportation services or infrastructure may not always be available, however, where possible, Researchers are encouraged to consider public transportation options⁷, with cross-country rail services superseding air travel where available.



Light passenger vehicles

In the absence of the aforementioned transportation options, light passenger vehicles⁸ (Including taxi services) may be considered, however, preference should always be given to electric vehicles whenever available and/or feasible⁹. Furthermore, where available, car sharing options are encouraged.



Air Travel

When travelling via air, SFI Researchers are encouraged to consider their ability to influence the carbon efficiency of a flight. For example, carbon emissions can be reduced by travelling light and choosing to fly economy class rather than business class¹⁰ and, wherever possible, choosing direct flights rather than shorter multi-stop flights.

Unconventional Vehicles

SFI recognises that for certain disciplines, such as agriculture, Earth, and marine science, the use of higher powered, unconventional vehicles¹¹ (Including, but not limited to, 4x4's and heavy-duty vehicles) may be necessary for research-related activities¹².

⁶ Including, but not limited to, conferences, workshops, engagement and/or academic collaborations.

⁷ Including buses, trams, ferry, and rail services.

⁸ Vehicles with an engine capacity less than 1500cc, such as motorbikes, scooters, and small passenger cars.

⁹ Locations with minimal charging infrastructure would be recognised as unfeasible.

¹⁰ SFI does not recognise business class travel as an allowable cost under the Grant Budget Policy.

¹¹ Vehicles exceeding an engine capacity of 1501 cc, and would include any carbon emission-intensive vehicle that would not ordinarily be driven for the purposes of research travel.

¹² Including, but not limited to, research sample collection.

SFI Guidance for Sustainable Travel

Additional Information: if there are any queries relating to the interpretation of this guidance please contact researchpolicy@sfi.ie