



15 September 2013

VISA AND TRAVEL NOTE

In preparation for the upcoming Eleventh Policy Board meeting which will be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 8 to 11 December 2013, the UN-REDD Secretariat invites and urges PB participating member countries and observers to begin their visa application process as early as possible.

Most countries require a visa to enter Switzerland. Please visit the Swiss Federal Office for Immigration (Administration) for the complete [list of countries](#) requiring a visa. It is a requirement that all visa applicants make an appointment with the Swiss Embassy/Consulate in his/her country of residence and present him/herself in person to submit visa application forms and register his/her biometric data (10 fingerprints and facial image). This data remains in the Visa Information System (VIS) for a period of 5 years. A document in various languages explaining the implementation of the VIS system, registration of biometric data can be found on the following web link:

http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/einfuehrung_vis.html

Processing time needed to obtain a visa differs from country to country. Please also note that countries whose flights may have to make a stop over in a Schengen state before entering Switzerland are subject to further consultation by the Schengen States before the visa is issued. In such cases, the time to obtain the Schengen visa can take up to 2 months.

In order to avoid delay in the issuance of a visa, as well as the timely issuance of air tickets and DSA of sponsored participants, PB11 members and observers requiring visa assistance are requested to [register online by 4 October](#). After this date, there is no guarantee that the Swiss/Schengen visa can be issued.

For members and observers who do not require visa assistance, [online registration](#) can be completed through 31 October 2013.

For those requiring a visa, once we receive your online registration, we will prepare a letter/Note to the Swiss Permanent Mission in Geneva indicating your participation at the UN-REDD Programme's Eleventh Policy Board Meeting. You will receive a copy of the letter, which you have to present when applying for the Swiss visa in your country and completing the biometrics procedure. The Swiss Permanent Mission in Geneva will process the visa and send the authorization to the issuing Embassy/Consulate. You will be advised accordingly when the visa is approved. This means that you will have to go to the Swiss Embassy/Consulate twice; once for applying and completing the biometrics, and then second time when the visa is to be stamped on your passport.

In the event a participant lives in a country where there is no Swiss Embassy, consulate general or consulate, he/she has to apply for his/her visa in the nearest country where there is a Swiss Embassy. The same procedure above is followed (register online, letter to Permanent Mission will be sent, etc.)

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at policyboard@unredd.org.

NEW UN TRAVEL GUIDELINES: FOR INFORMATION OF SPONSORED PARTICIPANTS

In accordance with the United Nations Secretariat-wide instructions **ST/AI/2013/3** issued on 12 August 2013 on official travel, your attention is drawn to some new guidelines, in particular relating to processing time and deadline for meeting participants' travel.

UN travel procedures require participants to confirm attendance, obtain an IMIS index number before the travel request is raised, and then certified and approved by UNEP Travel Unit. The UN REDD Secretariat therefore ensures that invitation letters clearly indicate deadlines for confirmation/ registration and are sent out well in advance of the meeting to allow for sufficient time to process travel. Participants are advised that late confirmation may result in the need to self-purchase an air ticket for the meeting (and claim reimbursement after the meeting which may take up to 1 month processing time).

The new guidelines indicate that travel should be finalized 19 calendar days in advance of travel for all UN sponsored travellers. **For PB 11, this means that travel of sponsored participants must be organized and submitted to the Secretariat on or before 12 November 2013.** As soon as you [register online](#), Rosa Andolfato, the focal person for travel in the Secretariat will contact you to finalize your travel.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at: policyboard@unredd.org

SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS FOR PB11 PARTICIPANTS	
Register online	As soon as possible, not later than 4 October 2013
Go to the Swiss Embassy in your country for biometrics (finger-printing). This has to be done prior to receiving Swiss visa authorization from the UNREDD Secretariat.	
<u>For UN-REDD sponsored participants</u> , ticket booking will be arranged with our official travel agency as in previous practice. Once you register online, Rosa Andolfato, the focal point for Travel in the Secretariat will contact you to assist in finalizing your travel.	Completed before 12 November 2013