

## CHAPTER 27

### UK MET. OFFICE POLICY ON VISITS TO AND FROM OTHER NATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

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## CHAPTER 27

### UK MET. OFFICE POLICY ON VISITS TO AND FROM OTHER NATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

#### 27.1 Introduction

This document sets out our policy concerning visits to and from other National Met. Services (NMSs), recognising that the majority of these visits will be undertaken free of charge; but identifying those categories of visits where charges may become relevant. It is intended primarily for internal guidance but may also be provided to staff at other NMSs who wish or need to know our policy on this matter.

#### 27.2 General Principles

The Met. Office remains committed to dialogue with other NMSs around the world for numerous reasons of mutual interest. It recognizes the clear benefits that flow where that dialogue comes through visits and meetings. At the same time, normal considerations as well as budgetary pressures on ourselves and others, mean that care must be exercised to ensure that visits and meetings are productive and of minimum duration to achieve well-defined and identified objectives. Traditional scientific and technical exchanges will continue largely as before, but some categories of visit now involve consideration of payment. These categories are essentially where either the demand on our resources is significant (typically in excess of two man-days) and/or where there is little or no mutual advantage but largely a one-way transfer of information and expertise.

#### 27.3 Visits to the UK Met. Office

General liaison and courtesy visits by WMO Permanent Representatives, Directors and senior staff of other NMSs wishing to update themselves on our activities, to brief us on their own activities, and/or to discuss policy issues of common interest, with a duration of 1 or 2 days, will not attract any charge. Such liaison and dialogue is essential to the well-being of world meteorology and every effort is normally made to accommodate such visits, which generally take an hour or two of several different staff members' time. During such visits there would not normally be in-depth discussion on any one topic, nor provision of detailed information on commercially sensitive matters.

Equally no charges will be raised for the numerous visits and meetings relating to exchange of more-detailed scientific or technological information at the technical level, where there is expectation of mutual benefit and/or where reciprocal visits will be accepted which will be beneficial to The Met. Office, where the duration is 2 days or less. Longer technical visits and even secondments will still be free of charges where the Met. Office 'sponsor' department can document to the satisfaction of his Director that there will be a tangible Met. Office benefit exceeding the cost of the visit (in terms of staff time) and/or that a reciprocal arrangement of at least equal value has been put in place and agreed inside The Met. Office and with the other NMS. Otherwise such longer visits should incur a charge for the visiting NMS.

A third category of visits which incur no charge are those visits specifically to explore specific commercial joint venture arrangements, MOUs and commercial collaboration agreements between The Met. Office and other NMSs, since there is an expectation of an agreement being concluded which will yield commercial returns. Such an expectation must be considered when agreeing the visit. These visits will normally only be 1-2 days duration.

With the exception of the above, all NMS visits and any possible longer-term secondments to the commercial areas of the Office will normally involve payment being made by the visiting NMS unless the visit is ½ day or less and is more of a superficial/general liaison meeting.

Such visits are usually from NMSs wishing to learn from Met. Office experience in commercial met. service provision so that they can develop their own services back home. The Met. Office is pleased to assist with this — and indeed also offers a range of commercial consultancy and training services with the same underlying objective — but considers it proper that such assistance is paid for at commercial consulting rates. Effort deployed in this way must be accounted for, and should, in theory, yield comparable returns to that which would apply if deployed on other commercial tasks. Normally, the visiting NMS will obtain potential commercial benefits from our advice which far outweigh the cost — as several NMSs have testified.

Note that any particular visit can be of a 'mixed' variety — part free and part commercial. A typical example is where a senior member pays a courtesy visit, perhaps of 3 days, but within that there is a day of detailed discussions about some aspect of commercial application in which joint venture is inappropriate. In these circumstances, it is very correct to treat two days as a free courtesy visit; but charge for the third day.

## 27.4 Responsibilities

Following the transfer of the function from the old I&E Branch, HD(M) has the responsibility for handling all general courtesy and liaison visits, where resource effort is regarded as an Office overhead; but not for technical visits where resource effort is regarded as a Divisional overhead. HD(M) is also responsible for those visits with a commercial dimension, and he also has responsibility for setting levels of charges, where appropriate, for visits.

Visits by UK Met. Office staff to other NMSs

## 27.5 Visits by UK Met. Office staff to other NMSs

**27.5.1 Initiative by The Met. Office** Met. Office staff visiting other NMSs to obtain and/or exchange information should display the behaviour we expect of others and seek to minimize the duration of visits and any disruption caused. Most NMSs do not currently have any mechanism for charging for visits or offering consultancy services, but there are exceptions and the practice may spread in future years. As a general rule we should expect others may apply the kind of arrangements we have instituted ourselves, and we should therefore be prepared to pay consultancy rates for any longer-duration visits or those with a commercial dimension where The Met. Office will be the net beneficiary from the visit. Approval for payment out of our consultancy budgets will need to be obtained in the normal way, and in such situations the anticipated benefits should be carefully considered before expenditure is committed.

**27.5.2 Initiative by other NMSs** Where Met. Office staff are invited to visit another NMS to provide information, or in effect to deliver a consultancy or training service, we should normally negotiate the charges which apply on normal contractual terms, if this is seen as a one-way transfer rather than a genuinely reciprocal arrangement as above. Where possible, all such quotations should be discussed with the Marketing Director before issue; and he should always be sent a copy of such quotations.

Where the requesting NMS is unable to support the costs; but the invitation results from a WMO, or similar, initiative and where the invitation specifically meets an objective within the current Met. Office International plan, the invitation may be accepted subject to:

- marginal costs being accepted by somebody (e.g. WMO)
- resource effort being allocated to, and seen as part of, our International commitment.
- the action being approved by the appropriate manager within PIE Branch (currently David Griggs).

## 27.6 Review

**27.6.1** This policy will be reviewed after 12 months to assess effectiveness, taking account of comments from other NMSs.