

Questions & Answers | Creating Fleet Policy.

Webinar November 13, 2019

Q. What are the key takeaways from this webinar?

1. Having a fleet policy give you a stronger position towards donors. It gives you the space to donors to state the standards of your organisation. Donors won't ask you to go against your organizational policy. You lose your argument when you try to make case by case exceptions with them.
2. Donors want to ensure that your organisation is able to deliver the programme that will be funded by the donor. That is what they want to see in your fleet management approach and your fleet policy.
3. Do not operate based on assumptions about donor guidelines. Always discuss with donors in case of doubt.
4. Be clear on the objectives you want to realise with your fleet policy. Link them to the organizational objectives
5. Work together with all stakeholders in developing and reviewing your fleet policy. Stakeholders might be drivers, fleet managers, logistics, HR, finance, procurement, Health & Safety
6. Benchmark your fleet policy with other organisations. Learn from each other in developing the best fleet policy.
7. A fleet policy is only effective if it is practically applicable and geared towards the right target group. A fleet policy can be divided in different documents, like a fleet management manual and a driver handbook

Q: What is the difference between a policy and procedures?

A. Policies are the principles, rules, and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organisation to reach its long-term goals. Procedures, on the other hand, are the specific methods employed to turn policies into action in the organization's day-to-day operations

Q: Is it the responsibility of the organisation to install vehicle tracking devices and should it be added in fleet policy.

A. It is not the responsibility of the organisation to install tracking devices. In your fleet policy you can describe that your organisation aims to protect staff, drivers and the communities in which you operate from injury and property loss. This can be worked out in a procedure that you want to use tracking devices to get the information that enables you to continuously improves safe driving. Tracking devices can be a very useful tool if your organisation is ready to work with it. That means: you have a clear fleet strategy, you have clear fleet management objectives, you know what the purpose of the tracking devices is, you know what information you want to get out of using the tracking devices, you have a good plan to implement it in an way that you engage drivers and staff that will work with the output of the tracking devices.

Q: Is there a specific or commonly used template for benchmarking?

A. There is not a template. Important examples of topics to discuss/compare with other organisations: what are your objectives of your fleet policy? Who do you identify as stakeholders? What documents do you use as part of your fleet policy framework? Did you ever have discussions with donors about your policy? How did you implement your fleet policy? How do you review your fleet policy?

Q: Can speed limits be included in fleet policies or is it not important to donors?

A. Good to understand that the fleet policy is not written for donors. It is written to reach the goals of the organisation. It helps to show the donors what your objectives are and how you stick to that to reach your objectives. It is also in the donors benefit if your policy contributes to an elimination of road traffic crashes. Road safety is definitely a topic that can and should be included in the fleet policy. You describe that your objective is to run your operation in the safest way without any crashes (e.g. Our policy aims to protect staff, drivers and the communities in which we operate from injury and property loss) Speed limits is a translation of that policy.

Q: Some donors do not accept leasing or depreciation costs. So, a general fleet policy will not be applicable in all cases. Is it still a policy?

A. We do know that donors are very reluctant to fund procurement of vehicles. That does not mean that they do not accept depreciation costs. They accept depreciation costs for the duration of the programme. We also know that many organisations think that donors do not accept depreciation costs, even in cases where donors do not have any limitations for allocating depreciation costs. Donors want to ensure that the organisation they fund is able to deliver the programme. If transport is needed in a programme, Total Cost of Ownership (that includes depreciation) is needed in the budget to deliver the programme. We advise to always discuss it with donors and not assume they will not accept it.

If you have examples of donors who do not accept depreciation, we would love to hear. We will set up a discussion with these donors.

Leasing is more complicated. Donors are not in favour of leasing as the ownership of the vehicles is not with the donor or the organisation. In most cases they will not accept this. But as with depreciation, always discuss with donors and do not assume they will not accept it. This is only related to leasing. Renting is in most cases accepted if there is a good reason for it.

Q: What is the disposal method to be adopted at disposing donor funded fleets when due for replacement/disposal organisation policy or donor policy?

A. It is important to have a very clear description of your disposal method in your fleet policy. In your proposal you state that your fleet policy relates to all vehicles operated by the organisation. In case the donors want to change that, they have to discuss that with you. Donors will not ask you to go

against your own policy. In case the donor has strong requirements related to disposal in their funding regulations, it is good to discuss it and ask to use your own policy.

Q: Do you have examples of donor requirements in terms of maintenance plan?

A. Donors do not have detailed requirements. They want to see that you have a plan to maintain your vehicles. This plan should give the donor enough confidence that the vehicles you use will be kept operational to support the programme. Below you will find an example of the guidelines of USAID/OFDA related to maintenance

5. If you plan to purchase fleet vehicle(s) including cars, trucks, scooters, motorcycles, boats, and aircraft or generators with USAID/OFDA funds or request USAID/OFDA funds to rent or maintain a vehicle fleet:
 - a. You must submit a management plan that includes service/maintenance of USAID/OFDA funded-vehicles and generators, or of rented vehicles and generators, if your organization is responsible for maintaining them.
 - b. You must submit your current fleet management policy that is applicable in the country of operation.

Q: What about a fleet safety policy?

A. Fleet safety is very important for every organisation. Road traffic accidents is the number one killer of aid workers. And in road traffic crashes, the number of local people losing their lives is even 7-10 times higher than the number of aid workers who do not survive crashes. So fleet safety is important enough to have its own policy. It is not necessary. It can also be embedded in the fleet policy. When you want to have an even stronger focus on fleet safety, a separate fleet safety policy might be effective.

Q: What are the key areas that a fleet policy should cover?

A. The areas needed depend on the objectives of the organisation. At least the following areas should be covered: who is entitled to use vehicles of the organisation, when can vehicles be used, what requirements/conditions should drivers fulfil to be able to drive the vehicle, what vehicles can be chosen, fleet/road safety, environmental impact of vehicles, responsibilities of drivers and organisation, alternatives to own vehicles.

Q: Can donor requirement affect the procurement processes in fleet procurement? Some USS based donor agencies might prefer funding American made vehicles.

A. It is important to have a clear statement about your choice of vehicles. The way you do that is based on the support needed in your programmes. It is the donor's interest that your programmes are successful. In case they want to influence your choice of vehicles, they will understand that it can negatively impact your programmes (delay due to inability to get the vehicles into the country, programme disruption due to inability to maintain or repair the vehicles). Donors will be pragmatic as well and look for the best solution to support your programmes. In this case always discuss with a donor and explain why your policy is also the best for the donor.

Q: Our drivers are very reckless mostly when there's no expat in the vehicle. We're in emergency Ebola in DRC, all employees have one Month contract, do you think it could be the impact? Because they're experienced drivers!

A. Temporarily contracts can definitely have a negative impact on driver behavior. The organisation does not engage for a longer time with the drivers, so the drivers will not engage with the organisation. An organisation might not put much effort in the drivers, as they are short term hired, so the drivers will not be aware of what is expected from them or are not very willing to adhere to the expectations as they can be dismissed every month.

Q: Where can I find the link to the Knowledge Platform?

A. <https://knowledge.fleetforum.org>

Q: Where can I find the link to the other webinars?

A. <https://knowledge.fleetforum.org/knowledge-base/articles/training>

Q. Where can I find the agenda for the upcoming webinars?

A. <https://www.fleetforum.org/webinars> (will be updated with 2020 dates soon)