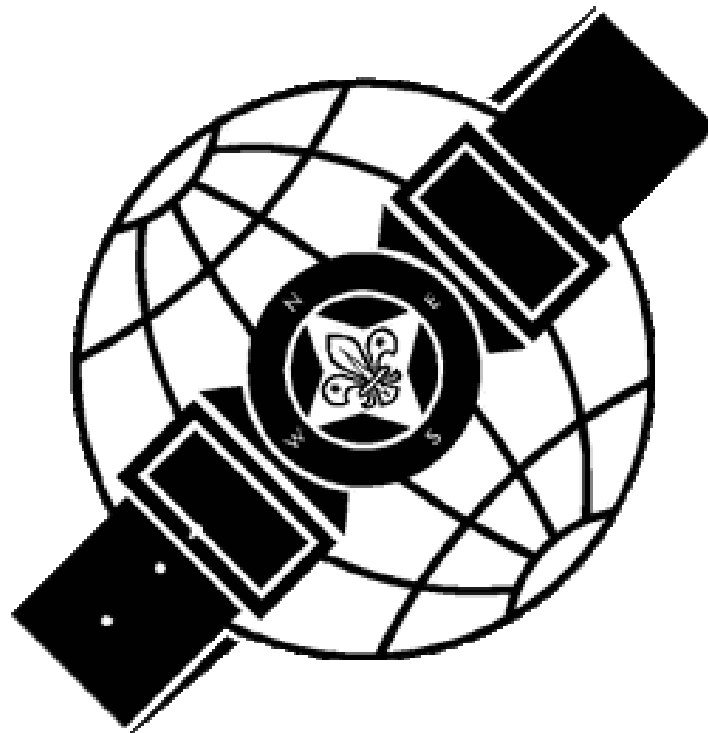




**SCOUTS**<sup>®</sup>  
Nibnu Dinja Ahjar

# **Explorer Belt Award Guidelines**



## **Introduction**

The Explorer Belt is a challenge of a lifetime like no other. It is a chance to take part in a 10-day expedition that brings a real understanding of a different country, its culture and way of life by travelling through that country, working as part of a small team to complete a series of projects and, most importantly, by meeting local people. It is an experience and an achievement that young people will remember for the rest of their lives.

For over-18s, the expedition can be undertaken by a team travelling independently, or as part of a larger contingent of teams visiting the country as an organised expedition. It can be undertaken using a variety of modes of travel, for example, on foot, by bicycle, by canoe, or on horseback.

## **Planning the Journey**

Planning for any expedition abroad takes time. You need to ensure that teams have considered their outline plans at least 7 months in advance. If your crew has been considering completing this award they need to inform GSL then contact the Assistant Rover Commissioner and have a meeting to discuss how this award works.

## **Picking a team**

An Explorer Belt team is made up of a minimum of 4 members, it is good practice to have no more than 7 in a team.

In the Explorer Belt team there are roles that the scouters need to appoint:

- Leader
- Route Coordinator
- Travel Coordinator
- Accommodation coordinator
- Finance
- First aid & risk assessment
- Menu
- PRO

## Choosing the location

Many factors will affect the choice of country. In an organised expedition, support teams will normally have been appointed to run an expedition in a specific country or area, or will have chosen the expedition area themselves. Areas chosen should be suitable for several teams of young people to explore without constantly meeting each other.

For self-led expeditions, you should start by encouraging the young people to select a country of interest to them, which can be visited in the time they have available and is within their financial scope. At this stage, they will need to draw up a budget and investigate various travel options.

When the location has been decided this needs to be approved by the Assistant Rover Commissioner, keep RC and GSL updated by sending an email discussing the Explorer belt Team plus the Roles and location you have decided.

The participants can then collect as much background information as possible on the country and select an appropriate subject for their **aim**. Alternatively, they may already have determined to investigate a specific subject, and this may indicate their choice of country. The Aim selected should not be too specialised – it should enable them to conduct a meaningful study on the strength of chance contact with ordinary people. And try to learn some of their basic language skills!!

## Planning the route

The choice of location will naturally influence the route the teams choose. Expeditions should not take place in remote, hazardous terrain since the projects need to involve contact with local communities. Thus, a 10-day high mountain traverse would not be appropriate. It may not be possible for the young people to plan their route in detail prior to departure due to map availability. However a rough outline of where they plan to go and visit should be provided. The route must provide a test of the team's skill and initiative while enabling them to make a study of their selected major project.

Providing 'in-country' support enables you to add to the challenge by not informing teams of their drop-off points until the day before the departure on

expedition. Obtain local maps to work efficient, this also allows the teams to get an understanding of the scale and type of map being used. If doing this, the support team should identify a specific geographical area that they can support and can define areas that are ‘out of bounds’ for safety reasons.

The route should include at **least 6 to 7 hours of travel** by foot, horse, canoe, or cycle every day. The use of public transport as part of the traveling time is not acceptable where opportunities to meet people would otherwise be missed.

**Travel days do not count with the 10-day journey.**

## **The Explorer belt projects requirements**

You will be doing two types of Explorer Belt projects. There are one Major Project and ten Minor Projects. The Major Project is developed by you and approved by the Leader Team. It should take you between 10 and 15 hours to complete with these hours spread over the 10 days of your expedition.

The other type of projects you'll be carrying out are ten Minor Projects. These are set by the Lead team. **You will need to plan 5 Minor Projects appropriate for your aim during the trip, the ARC will be giving another 5 tasks a day before departure to complete.**

We're expecting that you'll develop a set of ideas for your Major Project and Minor Projects and that you'll bring these along to your Explorer Belt training. At the training, we'll ask you to use your ideas to develop your Major Project Outline. The aim can be the Major Project subject to be done during the whole experience.

### **Top Tips for Developing Your Major Project:**

- Think small
- Think Interesting
- Ask for help
- Leave yourself plenty of time to develop your project

## Safety and Risk Assessment

When travelling abroad it is important to consider safety at all times. As with all activities in Scouting, Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) must be adhered to. For this reason it is important to follow the correct procedures and submit forms (**Health forms, contact the embassy for any relevant safeties and precautions**) to the relevant people for approval in plenty of time before the expedition. The independent nature of the Explorer Belt expedition can introduce many risks, but good preparation can ensure that the teams have a safe and fun experience.

Separate risk assessments should be carried out for each day of the journey and effectively communicated to all those involved. When completing the risk assessment there is the need to consider several factors. Potential hazards should be identified that the team may encounter during the expedition and they should decide how these can be addressed in order to minimise the risk. An example could be selecting the appropriate footwear for the terrain and climate they will encounter during their expedition.

## Budgeting and Finance

It's important to go through the budget with the team to make sure that it is realistic and includes everything. The participants must have a contingency plan and ultimately know how they are going to fund the trip.

There are many different factors that will affect the cost of the expedition:

- Travel costs: which method of travel is available, how long it will take, and how much it will cost at the time teams wish to travel. Not only do they need to transport themselves but they will have equipment as well. It is worth encouraging them to compare lots of different methods of travel if these are available and comparing the time it will take against how much it will cost
- Daily expedition budget: what is the team's daily budget going to be? Find out how much food and water is going to cost before you go so that you can advise the team of a realistic daily budget. Don't forget that at

times they may have to rely on local campsites, so it is important that they plan for this

- The team should also aim to have a contingency fund of about 10% on top of the total budget in case of emergencies or unexpected price increases

Possible additional costs to consider include:

- Passport, any visas that may be needed, vaccinations, and insurance
- During the expedition it may be necessary for the teams to use public transport at times. This needs to be taken into account when planning their daily budget
- Additional accommodation and living costs: some people choose to spend time in the country before their expedition to acclimatise and get their bearings. The first day could be spent getting used to the country and the teams may also appreciate a day or two at the end of the expedition to relax and reflect on the past 10 days

## **Equipment list**

Individuals may not own some of the items needed for an expedition, but a local Scout Group or County may have them. You could advise the young people to create a list of everything they need for the 10 days (an example list is given in the participant's resource) and then work out where they are going to obtain all the equipment.

You also need to make sure that they have appropriate clothing and equipment for the mode of travel and the climate.

The teams will be carrying everything they need for the whole 10 days so it is important that:

- They remember to bring everything they need
- It is of a standard that can survive the 10 days
- They can still pick their rucksack up once it is full.

The team will largely be living off the food of the country being visited, but they should also be prepared to take some dehydrated expedition food as a reserve. Also, check which fuels are readily available for their cooking equipment in their chosen country.

Personal items:

- Obtain passport
- Obtain visas if necessary
- Obtain European Health Insurance card E111
- Arrange Travel insurance if needed
- Necessary inoculations
- Need a valid first aid course certificate before departure

# Checklist of items to give GSL & ARC

## 6 months before departure

	Application form
	The team
	The Roles in the Team
	The Location and places that will be visited
	How many days in each town/village/city
	The Aim of the Trip
	Budget
	Modes of travel
	T-shirt and badge design

If all has been checked and approved move on by purchasing flight tickets!

## 3 months before departure

	Flight number and photocopy of the boarding pass of each individual
	Photocopy of every individual's passport
	Route cards for every day of journey
	Your Major Project
	5 Minor projects chosen by the team
	All official modes of travel booked
	Accommodations booked
	Equipment list
	Menu
	Activities (parks museums etc)

Start making a file with everything!

## 1 month before departure

	File needs detailed
	Day by day time of arrival of places to be visited
	Tickets/ confirmation emails of all booked buses, trains, accommodation
	Risk assessments
	Map of each day's route
	Personal and general equipment list
	Budgeting excel sheet

Make sure you have an in-touch system with GSL & ARC! Enjoy 😊



# Assessment

After all your hard work planning this award and making amazing memories, you get to share it with your scout group!

For the assessment, you will work on a presentation to present to your Assistant Rover Commissioner and Group Scout Leader:

- Each rover needs to explain their role and what they have done
- What challenges you came across as a team and how you came across them as a team,
- Lessons you have learned on this trip
- What would you do differently
- Finally talk about the strengths you had as a group

Use a lot of pictures and visuals!!

Apart from just a presentation, each participant needs to give a written report about their personal experience.