



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

GOVTRIP USE AND MONITORING BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR— BUREAU OF RECLAMATION



**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Memorandum

SEP 09 2013

To: Michael L. Connor
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation

From: Kimberly Elmore *Kimberly Elmore*
Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

Subject: Final Audit Report – GovTrip Use and Monitoring by the U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Reclamation
Report No. WR-IN-BOR-0004-2013

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) spends approximately \$250 million a year through GovTrip on travel, with the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) accounting for about \$20 million of these funds.

This report is part of our DOI-wide audit of GovTrip and related travel processes and procedures. Although the contract for a new system is scheduled to replace GovTrip in November 2013, we found several significant issues specific to USBR that warrant your attention under the current GovTrip travel system. We plan to issue an audit report to the Department that will focus on DOI's planned acquisition and use of a new travel management system.

We initiated an audit of DOI's GovTrip use and monitoring based on limitations in GovTrip that we discovered during a prior evaluation, including DOI's and its bureaus' inability to freely access travel system reports from GovTrip and the uncertainty of the reliability of the data in those reports.¹ We determined that the risks presented by these limitations were significant enough to warrant further review.

The objective of our audit was to assess DOI's implementation, use, and monitoring of GovTrip as a part of the overall travel system. Specifically, we assessed DOI's ability to reconcile its various systems to determine whether data and dollars spent are fair and accurate. The audit scope encompassed fiscal years 2009 and 2010 and included testing of more than 700 travel vouchers and 300 charge card statements across DOI's bureaus. We also interviewed more than 100 DOI and bureau personnel involved in the travel process, including approving officials, intermediate reviewers, and bureau travel leads.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our

¹ "U.S. Department of the Interior's Video Teleconferencing Usage," WR-EV-MOA-0004-2010. December 2011.

findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We are attaching further detail as to the objective, scope, methodology, and testing performed during this audit (see Attachment 1).

Background

Since August 2007, DOI has used GovTrip under a task order from the General Services Administration's (GSA) master contract with Northrop Grumman for E-Gov Travel Services (ETS). GSA's master contract establishes GovTrip's general requirements, and DOI's task order lays out other specific requirements. GSA's master contract is set to expire in November 2013, at which time DOI expects a new system to take the place of GovTrip under a new GSA contract (ETS-2).

GSA has selected a single vendor for ETS-2, though the system implementation process is behind schedule. The bid process was initially delayed by legal challenges from one of the bidding companies, and a current protest of the award is delaying the process even further. ETS-2's general requirements include more internal control points and reporting capabilities, but much about ETS-2's specific requirements and controls is still unknown. The unknown and untested components of the new contract and travel system present both an opportunity and a responsibility to assess how well USBR uses the current system and to determine ways in which it can improve prior to the transition to ETS-2.

Both GovTrip and the pending ETS-2 system have the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) as part of their foundation, which provides the regulatory framework for the approval, processing, and payment of travel costs within the Federal Government. The GovTrip system has worked in concert with these regulations to facilitate travel planning and payment, as will the pending ETS-2.

Issues Found During Travel Voucher Testing

We randomly selected 92 USBR vouchers and their related authorizations from fiscal years 2009 and 2010. The total amount paid from these vouchers was about \$111,000, which included almost \$50,000 paid directly to travelers. We found the following areas of concern:

Missing Documentation and Errors in Expenses

The FTR requires that receipts be provided for all expenses greater than \$75, as well as all receipts for lodging expenses, regardless of dollar amount (FTR § 301-52.4). We found nine vouchers that did not have the required supporting documentation for all travel expenses, all for lodging or airfare charges, often the two highest value expenses on vouchers. For example, one trip included the cost of a temporary apartment rental as lodging. No documentation, however, was provided supporting the cost of the lodging. The total trip cost was almost \$6,000, and the traveler was reimbursed for almost \$5,000.

We also found 14 vouchers that either did not include all of the expenses that were listed in the travelers' receipts or the amounts shown on the receipts did not match those claimed on the voucher. For example, 6 of the 14 vouchers had receipts attached that showed lodging costs

different than what was claimed in the voucher, including 1 where the hotel receipt listed a different traveler's name than who was filing the voucher. Another voucher included no airfare charges, even though airfare charges were listed on the authorization and receipts were attached to the voucher. Four other vouchers included receipts for expenses, such as hotel and rental car, that were not claimed in the voucher.

In addition, we found a traveler who opted to fly into an airport that was over 250 miles from the traveler's temporary duty station (TDY) without any justification or documented authorization. Three vouchers showed the traveler filing for and receiving reimbursement for lodging charges that are required to be paid for with a Government charge card unless an exemption has been issued (DOI Integrated Charge Card Program Policy Manual § 2.3). Two of these vouchers were processed allowing the reimbursable lodging even though no hotel receipts were attached to the voucher. For one of these vouchers, the trip purpose description stated that it was an "approved trip home," but the traveler was still reimbursed for lodging costs without any explanation as to why the traveler would require external lodging accommodations when the traveler was home. We also found a voucher for a trip that appeared to have been canceled, but when we tried to verify, we could not find any associated documentation or receipts to prove it had been canceled.

FTR § 301-50.3 and § 301-50.5 require that the approved electronic travel system, GovTrip, be used to book all travel arrangements unless an exception has been granted, and that if such an exception has not been granted, the traveler is liable for any extra costs and may be subject to disciplinary action. One traveler claimed the cost for a rental car booked outside GovTrip but included no supporting justification as to why this action was taken or what approval was given to do so. Without additional detail, it is impossible to tell if the Government was protected under a Government rental agreement or if the price paid was appropriate.

In all of these examples, travelers and associated approving officials requested or approved travel documents with inappropriate travel allowances or failed to document the justification for variances from normal or reasonable travel allowances. Whenever travelers request approval for travel plans, the plans must meet the FTR requirements. Further, when submitting vouchers for travel, travelers are required to abide by the FTR rules and approvers must affirm that the vouchers they are approving meet these requirements. In each of these examples, neither the traveler nor the approver met these requirements of due diligence.

Incidents of Overpaid or Improper Per Diem

Our testing revealed that a USBR employee was reimbursed in excess of allowable per diem without supporting justification. We found that the employee was able to make weekly trips to and from the same TDY for 18 months without the required reduction in per diem to 55 percent (Financial Administration Memorandum Number 94-037 II.G.1) by creating individual authorizations and vouchers for each weekly trip and may have been overpaid by as much as \$10,000. We since were informed that this travel continued and that other USBR employees may also be avoiding reductions in per diem for long-term travel in a similar manner. Not only does this improperly avoid the required per diem reductions, but if no legitimate justification can be provided for this travel irregularity, then Internal Revenue Service Income Tax Reimbursement

Allowance requirements may also have been violated for any travel exceeding 1 year (DOI Travel Policy § 301-11.4).

In another voucher, we found Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) interns receiving per diem allowances while at their permanent duty stations. At the same time one intern was receiving this improper per diem allowance, the intern also was allowed to collect reimbursement for expenses while on TDY status. The other intern was able to file a voucher claiming per diem twice, both as a per diem entitlement and as a miscellaneous expense. The voucher totaled over \$460 and the intern was reimbursed almost \$450.

Authorizations Created After Trip Date

Of the 92 authorizations selected for testing, 21 authorizations were created or approved after the trip departure date. Although the FTR does permit this practice, FTR § 301-2.1 states:

...Generally you must have written or electronic authorization prior to incurring any travel expense. If it is not practicable or possible to obtain such authorization prior to travel, your agency may approve a specific authorization for reimbursement of travel expenses after travel is completed.

Of the authorizations tested, 23 percent failed to meet the general authorization requirement and there is no evidence that they met the “not practicable or possible” standard stated above for the exemption. Further, the practice of creating or approving an authorization after trip departure could contribute to an internal control breakdown if approvers feel pressured to authorize already incurred travel expenses due to the financial impacts that would otherwise fall to the employee who would be responsible for all travel costs.

Auto-Approval

GovTrip includes features that allow travel authorizations to be created without managerial review or approval. Autobooking is one approach that allows travelers to arrange travel without supervisory approval. Another approach is T-entering, a method by which an arranger makes travel arrangements, creates travel documents, and signs the documents on behalf of the traveler. Both features result in travel that has been created and booked without the benefit of managerial or traveler review and approval.

We found 38 authorizations that used one of GovTrip’s auto-approval features. Of the 38 auto-approved authorizations, 35 did not have a hand-signed paper authorization attached to the voucher as required by DOI travel policy (E-Gov Travel FAQs). Auto-approval was developed when all travel arrangements used a paper-based system and was intended to streamline travel arrangements for routine mission travel and for cases of emergency travel. Because travelers now arrange travel electronically, and supervisors approve it electronically, the need for auto-approval is greatly limited. We found in our interviews with travel supervisors, however, that many employees are still authorized to use auto-approval for all travel, even though much of it is routine and known about weeks or months in advance. Because employees are authorized to auto-approve their own travel, the internal control safeguard inherent in obtaining supervisory

approval for the use of staff time and travel funds before the trip begins is being circumvented, increasing the potential for fraud, waste, or mismanagement to go undetected.

Mode of Transportation Not Documented

Of the 92 vouchers selected for testing, 13 did not indicate the mode of transportation used to travel to the TDY location. Based on the proximity of the TDY location to the traveler's duty station or the lack of personally-owned vehicle (POV) mileage claimed, these travelers likely used a Government-owned vehicle (GOV), a POV, or traveled with another person. This missing information results in data that are unreliable for determining the true cost of travel and the frequency or validity of GOV use for fleet management purposes. In addition, supervisors cannot make a determination whether the mode of transportation for travel is advantageous to the Government.

Issues Found During Charge Card Statement Testing

During our audit of the travel process, we learned that the only internal control mechanism used to ensure the validity of travel charges was the required supervisory review of charge card statements. When supervisors do not adhere to this internal control, it increases the risk of management not detecting incorrect or improper charges since there are no other procedures in place to ensure that supervisors are adequately reviewing and approving both travel vouchers and charge card statements. Our tests of charge card statements covered only a fraction of all USBR travel card statements. Unfortunately, in our selection of 50 charge card statements across several USBR office locations, we found lax supervisory reviews that presented significant internal control risk:

Missing Signatures

Three of the 50 statements tested, 6 percent, did not have the required signatures of both the supervisor and traveler. DOI policy requires supervisors to review statements and include the signatures of both the supervisor and the traveler on the statement to show that all charges have been verified as appropriate and allowable travel expenditures (DOI Integrated Charge Card Program Policy Manual § 2.9.3).

Unexplained Transactions

Of the 50 statements tested, we found 12 statements with expenses that were not reported in GovTrip or did not match the expenses reported in GovTrip.² For example, 10 of the statements listed charges for hotels or rental cars that did not match what the traveler claimed in the voucher. Even though the discrepancies on these statements were relatively small in monetary value, the fact that these issues are present indicates that supervisors are not adequately verifying travel charges or ensuring the appropriateness of the expenditures.

With almost 25 percent of statements in our sample reflecting some sort of discrepancy, this issue is both a significant internal control weakness and breakdown, not only because it

² Due to restricted data access issues, we are unable to provide the total monetary impact of these discrepancies.

results in inaccurate accounting and an inability to rely on GovTrip-generated reports for effective management, but because it is impossible for supervisors to reconcile expenses on card holder's statements with GovTrip vouchers to verify that those expenses were related to an approved trip. DOI Integrated Charge Card Program Policy Manual § 2.9.2 states that travelers are required to "[i]nclude a concise, detailed description for each line item...or attach the travel voucher" on their charge card statements to ensure that all transactions are legitimate. All of these questioned expenses appeared on charge card statements with the signatures of both the traveler and the supervisor, which demonstrates that supervisors are not adequately verifying that the travel charges are legitimate, further reducing the intended effectiveness of this key internal control.

Conclusion and Recommendations

ETS-2 implementation is scheduled to begin in a few months and USBR has an opportunity to improve travel management practices while still under the current GovTrip system and through the transition. Improving internal controls now will help strengthen overall travel management controls when USBR fully transitions to the new travel system.

1. USBR should require supervisors to—
 - a. verify that vouchers contain supporting documentation as required by the FTR and accurately reflect costs incurred during travel;
 - b. verify that vouchers contain adequate justification for per diem claims, or reduce per diem for travel over 30 days, in accordance with applicable travel regulations and policies;
 - c. ensure travel authorizations are created and approved prior to travel with the only exception being bona fide emergency travel;
 - d. verify that use of a POV is advantageous to the Government and clearly justified in the travel authorization;
 - e. ensure that use of a GOV is consistently documented in the travel authorization and voucher;
 - f. verify and approve all charges on charge card statements; and
 - g. ensure that both the traveler and supervisor sign and date charge card statements.

Agency Response: In its June 25, 2013 response, USBR did not concur and stated that it believed that the majority of the exceptions we identified were inaccurate and the number of exceptions that were accurate did not justify the broad scope of Recommendation 1. Further, USBR noted that it has an existing policy to reconcile travel vouchers with traveler's charge card statements. USBR did not identify any actions to be taken to address the recommendation (see Attachment 2).

OIG Reply: USBR stated that all 38 of the auto-approval exceptions mentioned in the report properly had unlimited or limited open travel authorizations. The report, however, did not state that the 38 travelers were not approved for travel under these blanket authorizations, but that these approvals were not documented in GovTrip, the official travel system. The report identified that 35 vouchers did not include the signed authorization as required by DOI policy. Our report lists the high percentage of the

authorizations tested that used this outdated method of blanket authorizations and suggests that this tool is no longer necessary in the age of electronic travel arranging. This also calls into question the level of management oversight over USBR travel.

The additional information that USBR provided to support its response did not change the results of our audit. We consider Recommendation 1 unresolved.

2. USBR should make changes to correct existing deficiencies, including—
 - a. creating and implementing policy limiting the use of auto-approval by employees to legitimate emergency travel; and
 - b. creating and implementing policy requiring supervisors to reconcile charge card statements with travel vouchers.

Agency Response: In its response, USBR did not concur with our recommendation and stated that it believed that the majority of the exceptions identified in the report were inaccurate. Further, USBR noted that it has an existing policy to reconcile travel vouchers with traveler's charge card statements. USBR did not identify any actions to be taken to address the recommendation (see Attachment 2).

OIG Reply: The additional information that USBR provided to support its response did not change the results of our audit. Regarding the USBR policy to reconcile charge card statements to vouchers, our analysis revealed that this policy is not being adequately followed. We consider Recommendation 2 unresolved.

Overall, USBR's response neither addressed nor provided specific actions to correct the identified deficiencies. We request that USBR reconsider our recommendations and provide a response within 30 days, as specified in Attachment 3.

The legislation creating the Office of Inspector General requires that we report to Congress semiannually on all reports issued, actions taken to implement our recommendations, and recommendations that have not been implemented.

If you have any questions or need more specific information about this report's findings, please contact me at 202-208-5592 or Michael P. Colombo, Western Regional Manager, at 916-978-5653.

Attachments (3)

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

We conducted this performance audit from November 2010 through April 2012 in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

We also determined whether USBR had designed and implemented a system of internal controls or travel management controls to provide reasonable assurance that travel vouchers were accurate and supported; per diem payments were appropriate and allowable; authorizations were created and approved prior to travel; and charge card statements were verified, approved, and signed by the traveler and supervisor. We found weaknesses in USBR's travel management controls. These weaknesses and recommended corrective actions are discussed in this report and if implemented, the recommendations should improve USBR's travel management controls.

Objective

Our objective was to assess DOI's implementation, use, and monitoring of GovTrip as a part of the overall travel system. Specifically, we evaluated DOI's ability to reconcile its various systems to determine whether data and dollars spent are fair and accurate. We also performed testing to ensure that any existing internal controls were sufficient to reasonably minimize risk of fraud and errors.

Scope

This was a DOI-wide audit of GovTrip and the related travel system. Our testing included travel vouchers with travel departures starting in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 along with charge card statements related to those travel vouchers. In conducting our audit, we visited USBR offices in —

- Albuquerque, NM;
- Denver, CO; and
- Sacramento, CA.

Our review of the system included both a performance audit of the current ETS contract (GovTrip, with a contract period from August 2007 to November 2013) and a review of the future ETS-2 contract language (contract implementation planned for November 2013). We also assessed DOI's integrated charge card program as it relates to travel expenditures.

During the performance of our audit testing, delays in obtaining access to information and concerns related to timely reporting necessitated a reduction in the sample size and testing of both vouchers and charge card statements. We took steps, however, to allocate the reduction in testing across bureaus, preserving the integrity of our random and judgmental voucher and charge card statement samples.

Methodology

The GovTrip contractor, Northrop Grumman, pulled the voucher testing data from archived databases, as we were informed that this would be the most accurate and complete way to establish the voucher universe by bureau and agency. From this universe, vouchers were statistically sampled using a stratified methodology, and the associated authorizations were also examined. Once the testing sample was selected, we performed testing of travel vouchers and authorizations using the live GovTrip environment. Use of the live GovTrip system environment for document examination was required since the travel program has no “read only” audit feature and no alternative data repository is available to DOI.

Given that our testing was limited to the live data environment, we were not able to perform “through the system” testing of the software. Thus, we did not perform tests of the GovTrip system and software itself. Rather, we structured interview questions of key DOI personnel to ascertain the security of the system and the viability of the input data.

The National Business Center, Charge Card Support Center (NBC) provided us with the charge card data. NBC extracted the charge card data from PaymentNet, DOI’s gateway to integrated charge card program data, which is operated by the contractor JPMorgan Chase. We did not perform a reliability assessment or any system tests for this data since, like GovTrip, this is a contractor-developed system, so our testing was limited to structured interview questions of key DOI personnel to ascertain the security of the system and the viability of the input data. Once the testing sample was selected, we performed tests in the field to ascertain the accuracy and reliability of reconciliation efforts between the GovTrip voucher and related charge card transactions.

Use of Computer-Processed Data

We used the GovTrip and Integrated Charge Card databases to identify travel vouchers and charge card transactions for travel departures starting in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. We did not perform reliability assessments of the quality of the data because this was outside the scope of our review. Data from these systems were used for document and transaction selection, and then reviewed using the electronic and hardcopy records available through DOI. Therefore, the computer-processed data did not affect the performance of our audit steps.



United States Department of the Interior

Attachment 2

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

84-27400
ADM-8.00

MEMORANDUM

To: Office of Inspector General
Attn: Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

Through: Anne J. Castle *Anne J. Castle* JUN 25 2013
Assistant Secretary – Water and Science

From: Michael L. Connor *MLC* JUN 21 2013
Commissioner

Subject: The Bureau of Reclamation's Response to the Office of Inspector General's (OIG)
Draft Audit Report, *GovTrip Use and Monitoring by the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation*, Report No. WR-IN-BOR-0004-2013

The OIG in its May 1, 2013, draft audit report, *GovTrip Use and Monitoring by the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation*, requested that Reclamation inform the OIG of actions taken or planned to address the recommendations, as well as target dates and titles of the officials responsible for implementation.

The samples used in the development of the subject draft audit report for both travel vouchers and charge cards were from fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Reclamation reviewed the exceptions noted by the OIG in the audit report and found that many of the exceptions noted were incorrect. For example, 38 of the 38 exceptions noted for auto approval were incorrect because they were correctly approved by management prior to any travel arrangements being made. Refer to the attached information for specific details. While some of the exceptions noted by the OIG were accurate, the limited numbers of valid exceptions compared with the larger numbers of inaccurate exceptions do not justify the broad scope of Recommendation 1.

After November 2013, Reclamation will be using ETS-2 instead of GovTrip in conjunction with our deployment of the Department's Financial and Business Management System. Reclamation is committed to continuing its pursuit of strengthening its travel management internal controls.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Elizabeth Cordova-Harrison, Director, Management Services Office, at 303-445-2783.

Attachment

The Bureau of Reclamation's Response to the
Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Audit Report
GovTrip Use and Monitoring by the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation
Report No. WR-IN-BOR-0004-2013

June 2013

General Comments:

The timeliness and quality of the draft audit report is a concern to Reclamation.

Recommendation 1: USBR should require supervisors to—

- verify that vouchers contain supporting documentation as required by the FTR and accurately reflect costs incurred during travel;
- verify that vouchers contain adequate justification for per diem claims, or reduce per diem for travel over 30 days, in accordance with applicable travel regulations and policies;
- ensure travel authorizations are created and approved prior to travel with the only exception being bona fide emergency travel;
- verify that use of a POV is advantageous to the Government and clearly justified in the travel authorization;
- ensure that use of a GOV is consistently documented in the travel authorization and voucher;
- verify and approve all charges on charge card statements; and
- ensure that both the traveler and supervisor sign and date charge card statements.

Reclamation's Response: Non-concur. Reclamation reviewed the exceptions noted by the OIG during the audit and believes that the majority of the exceptions identified were inaccurate as outlined in the attached. While some of the exceptions were accurate, the limited numbers of valid exceptions compared with the larger numbers of inaccurate exceptions do not justify the broad scope of Recommendation 1.

Please note that Reclamation found the following number of exceptions identified in the OIG audit report to be incorrect in the following categories: Auto Approval (38 out of 38); Overpaid/Improper Per Diem (3 out of 3); Errors in Expenses (8 out of 14) and Missing Documentation (2 out of 9).

All 38 of the Auto Approval exceptions identified in the audit have unlimited or limited open travel authorizations, approved by Reclamation management. Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) 300-3.1 allows an employee to travel for any official purpose without further authorization, if authorized under an approved Unlimited Open or Limited Open authorization.

Reclamation adheres to the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) promulgated by the General Services Administration (GSA). The FTR implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense.

Reclamation has an existing Reclamation Manual Charge Card Policy that requires supervisors to reconcile charge card statements with travel vouchers (ADM 06-03 Charge Card Management).

Recommendation 2: USBR should make changes to correct existing deficiencies, including—

- creating and implementing policy limiting the use of auto-approval by employees to legitimate emergency travel; and
- creating and implementing policy requiring supervisors to reconcile charge card statements with travel vouchers.

Reclamation's Response: Non-concur. Reclamation reviewed the exceptions noted by the OIG during the audit and believes that the majority of the exceptions identified were inaccurate as outlined in the attached.

Reclamation adheres to the FTR promulgated by the GSA. The FTR implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense.

Reclamation has an existing Reclamation Manual Charge Card Policy that requires supervisors to reconcile charge card statements with travel vouchers (ADM 06-03 Charge Card Management).

Status of Recommendations

Recommendations	Status	Action Required
1	Unresolved	Provide a response within 30 days indicating concurrence or nonconcurrence. If concurrence is indicated, provide the target date and title of the official responsible for implementation.
2	Unresolved	Provide a response within 30 days indicating concurrence or nonconcurrence. If concurrence is indicated, provide the target date and title of the official responsible for implementation.

Report Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement



Fraud, waste, and mismanagement in Government concern everyone: Office of Inspector General staff, departmental employees, and the general public. We actively solicit allegations of any inefficient and wasteful practices, fraud, and mismanagement related to departmental or Insular Area programs and operations. You can report allegations to us in several ways.



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