



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

GovTRIP Use and Monitoring by the U.S. Department of the Interior— Fish and Wildlife Service



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

MAY 21 2013

Memorandum

To: Daniel M. Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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 – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Report No. WR-IN-FWS-0012-2012

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) spends approximately \$250 million a year through GovTrip on travel, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) accounting for about \$45 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 FWS that warrant your attention under the current GovTrip travel system. We plan to issue an audit report to the Deputy Secretary 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

¹ "U.S. Department of the Interior's Video Teleconferencing Usage," WR-EV-MOA-004-2010. December 2011.

audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our 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 FWS 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 when it is in place.

Issues Found During Travel Voucher Testing

We randomly selected 97 FWS vouchers and their related authorizations from fiscal years 2009 and 2010. The total amount paid from these vouchers was almost \$340,000, which included about \$90,000 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 13 vouchers that did not have the required supporting documentation for all travel expenses. These expenses were almost all for hotel and airfare, often the two highest value expenses on vouchers.

In addition, FTR § 301-10.4 requires the most advantageous and expeditious method of transportation to be used. In general, the FTR deems a common carrier to be the most expeditious. One voucher, however, showed the use of the traveler's personal vehicle (POV) without any support for this decision. Another voucher showed that the traveler rented a car for \$50 per day, but drove the car only enough to use about 3.6 gallons of fuel. A third voucher

included expenses for both a rental car and extensive use of a taxi. The traveler listed his justification for using the taxi as not having any parking at the place of work but did not explain why the traveler continued to incur costs for a rental car that sat unused for most of the trip.

We also found 18 vouchers that either did not include all the expenses that were listed in the travelers' receipts or the amounts shown on the receipts did not match those on the voucher. For example, one voucher had the airfare accounted for both under the per diem costs and as an expense. Another voucher included hotel costs under both the expenses and as a per diem, a condominium rental in addition to the hotel, and 1 month of lodging for \$3,000 entered in the expenses twice. Even if the travelers were not reimbursed for these incorrect entries, the actual cost for both of these trips had been substantially overstated for reporting and monitoring purposes. We found two vouchers claiming a combined mileage of almost 200 miles for the drive to and from the airport, but a quick Internet search showed the actual combined distance claimed should have been around 75 miles. We found six vouchers with hotel charges over the standard per diem amount without adequate authorization or justification, including one voucher that included an authorization for the hotel to cost 150 percent of standard per diem rates, but the hotel receipt showed a cost to the Government of 200 percent of standard per diem rates. Two vouchers included receipts showing travel locations that were not listed or approved on the authorization, and three other vouchers reimbursed the traveler for per diem that was not properly justified. Another traveler included a receipt for airfare, but the departure date did not match the start date for the trip.

Supervisors are not adequately reviewing the travel documents and are allowing far too many authorizations and vouchers to be processed with errors, including improper charges that should never be allowed. We found a voucher with alcohol and deodorant on the hotel receipt and another voucher with a charge for cable television for a traveler on an extended detail. One approving official signed his employee's voucher with the following note: "Very complicated TA. Actual details unknown to me. I have been advised to approve and see what happens. Disclaimer/I am not saying legally that this voucher is accurate."

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, they 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.

Missing Vouchers and Profiles

Of the 97 vouchers selected for testing from the Northrup Grumman inventory of agency vouchers for the 2-year testing period, we could access and fully audit 73 vouchers through the GovTrip production system available to DOI. Of the 24 vouchers we could not review, we were able to confirm that they were not available because the associated user profiles had been removed from the system.

While we were attempting to determine why so many documents were not available for review, the DOI travel lead informed us that the likely cause of document unavailability was related to the deletion of user profiles from the production system. Because no audit trail exists in the creation, use, or deletion of user profiles in GovTrip, this statement could not be verified, nor could changes in user profiles during the period under review be evaluated.

Vouchers created in GovTrip are not stored in any other system, and if they cannot be retrieved from GovTrip, they cannot be retrieved at all, thus review of the document is not possible. In addition, even though historical travel data can be obtained directly from the GovTrip contractor, Northrop Grumman, we found in interviews with FWS and DOI personnel that managers do not routinely request reports, and the contractor officials expressed hesitancy to provide what they deemed to be additional services or ad hoc reports.

In addition, the inability to look up historical travel documents limits FWS's ability to effectively track and manage expended travel funds. For example, FWS elects to perform a 10-15 percent random sample audit of vouchers on a cyclical basis. It is impossible, however, to select or review vouchers attached to deleted profiles for FWS's 10-15 percent random sample audit, increasing the potential for fraud, waste, or mismanagement to go undetected. GovTrip is the single repository of detailed travel arrangements, documents, and approvals. Although payment for travel related expenses is performed in agency financial systems, those systems will record only the payments, not the supporting details behind them. Further, because GovTrip is designed as a paperless electronic system, any gap in the GovTrip database results in a loss of accountability for an agency. Responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the travel database has been, is, and will remain with the agency and DOI.

Authorizations Created after Trip Date

Of the 73 authorizations selected for testing, 19 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, 26 percent failed to meet the general authorization requirement, but 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 responsible for all travel costs incurred.

Flagged Vouchers without Appropriate Justification

It is not unusual for vouchers to be flagged by GovTrip's automatic auditing system, indicating a potential problem or error in the voucher. Of the 73 vouchers we selected for testing,

20 had insufficient justifications submitted and approved for flagged items. In many cases, travelers simply restated the flagged issue without explanation. For example, a voucher with several flags had explanations for many of the exceptions stating, "Approved." Another voucher showed that the traveler had a rental car and also made extensive use of taxi trips, stating in the justification that there was no parking at the place of work but lacking an explanation for the continued expense of the rental car for the duration of the trip. These explanations do not adequately justify the flagged exceptions and supervisors routinely stamp these documents approved.

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 being created and booked without the benefit of managerial or traveler review and approval. We found 48 authorizations that used one of GovTrip's auto-approval features. 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 interviews with travel supervisors and in our testing of travel vouchers that auto-approval is being used for travel other than emergency trips. Because employees are authorized to auto-approve their own 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, thus increasing the potential for fraud, waste, or mismanagement to go undetected.

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 FWS travel card statements. Unfortunately, in our selection of 50 charge card statements across several FWS office locations, we found lax supervisory reviews that contributed to issues with over one third of the statements reviewed. This presents significant internal control risk:

Missing Signatures

Nine of the 50 statements tested, almost 20 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 supervisor and traveler on the statement to show that all charges have been verified as appropriate and allowable travel expenditures.

Unexplained Transactions

Of the 50 statements tested, we found 18 statements with expenses that were not reported in GovTrip or did not match the expenses reported in GovTrip, with questioned costs totaling more than \$13,000.² One statement showed airfare that exceeded the GovTrip voucher amounts by almost \$300, another listed an airfare charge over \$2,300 that was not included on the related voucher, and a third statement showed that hotel taxes itemized on a voucher were not charged to the traveler. We also traced hotel charges from one traveler's charge card statement to a voucher that had never been approved, and no receipts had been attached to the voucher as support. Yet another traveler had numerous cash advances and meals amounting to over \$800 charged to his government card for a trip to Hawaii, but no airfare or hotel charges were evident for the trip. Further, of the 18 statements with questioned expenses, 11 were from travelers who did not have a profile in GovTrip and 1 from a traveler who cited a voucher that could not be found in GovTrip.

With 36 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 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 cardholders' statements with GovTrip vouchers to verify that those expenses were related to an approved trip. DOI Integrated Charge Card Program Policy Manual, sec. 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. Several of these questionable expenses appeared on charge card statements with the signatures of both the traveler and the supervisor, which demonstrates that supervisors are not adequately documenting the verification of travel charges back to source documents, further reducing the intended effectiveness of this key internal control.

Missing Traveler Profiles

Of the 50 charge card statements tested, 11 did not have associated traveler profiles in GovTrip. Without profiles, it is impossible to reconcile and verify travel charges incurred by these travelers. Like the user profiles that we found missing when attempting to test travel vouchers, the inability to match the expenses on the charge card statements against the approved expenses within the GovTrip system creates an inherent weakness and inability to effectively manage travel expenses. Missing profiles also precludes managers from detecting and preventing improper charges.

² Due to restricted data access issues, this figure is significantly understated and thus does not represent the total impact of questioned costs.

Improper Management Policy

During our audit, we found that FWS management had issued a May 27, 2010 memorandum to its employees allowing the use of third-party travel booking Web sites (e.g., Expedia, Travelocity, etc.) in cases where it can be shown there is a cost benefit to the Government. The FTR, however, does not allow the use of third-party vendors (FTR § 301-50.3). In addition, DOI policy states that it is a mandatory user of the General Services Administration's (GSA) city-pair contract, and travelers must book travel using contract fares through GovTrip. We are not certain whether this memo is being followed at local levels, but we are concerned about the potential for employees to directly violate the FTR and DOI policy.

Inadequate Management Practice

In addition to the routine supervisory review of vouchers done by FWS approving officials, the National Business Center (NBC) performs a post-payment audit on a sample of 10 to 15 percent of all FWS vouchers. According to FWS, travel officials at NBC are also responsible for providing customer support to FWS, including reporting any errors they find to FWS travel officials. NBC claimed, however, that they are responsible for contacting FWS employees whose vouchers show errors to request a faxed amendment to their voucher but are not responsible for any follow-up beyond this step. One regional Federal agency travel administrator informed us that while NBC is supposed to initiate contact to follow up on problems in vouchers, NBC had not provided the administrator with any information that would allow follow up on any unresolved actions. This uncertainty in the definition of NBC's role creates a lack of accountability for correcting errors and issues found on travel vouchers, leaving open the possibility for unchecked wasteful spending.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Because ETS-2 is still several months from coming online, FWS has an opportunity to improve travel management practices under the current GovTrip system and through the transition. Improving internal controls now will help strengthen overall travel management controls when FWS fully transitions to the new travel system.

1. FWS should require supervisors to—
 - a. verify that vouchers contain supporting documentation as required by the FTR and accurately reflect costs incurred during travel;
 - b. ensure travel authorizations are created and approved prior to travel with the only exception being bona fide emergency travel;
 - c. review vouchers thoroughly and address any unresolved flagged items;
 - d. verify and approve all charges on charge card statements; and
 - e. ensure that both the traveler and supervisor sign and date charge card statements.

Agency Response: In its March 13, 2013 response, FWS concurs with the recommendation and plans to issue a reminder to employees and approving officials of the travel and charge card policies. FWS stated in its response the belief that the existing

FWS audit reviews were sufficiently catching the types of errors identified in this report (see Attachment 2).

OIG Reply: We consider the recommendation resolved but not implemented. The recognition, and general concurrence, by FWS of the seriousness of the issues identified within this report indicates its commitment to address the weaknesses that exist in its internal controls. Further, we appreciate the efforts that FWS has already made to improve the administration and management of its travel process and encourage the continuation of such efforts.

In regards to the adequacy of FWS's audit review process, given the major gaps in understanding of who performs what role in the oversight process under the current testing arrangement that FWS has with Interior's Business Center (formerly National Business Center), we are unable to determine the sufficiency of FWS's audit review process. Until such roles are clarified, and the appropriate follow-ups on identified errors are consistently handled, the identification of errors can only be minimally successful as an internal control.

In addition, we recognize that no sample-based review process can be expected to catch all errors and that some of the issues presented in our report may not individually appear so egregious that action seems necessary. We caution, however, against FWS misinterpreting what may appear to be a small fiscal or managerial impact based on our limited testing. We tested less than 1 percent of FWS's more than 99,000 vouchers for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 and questioned costs in about 28 percent of the vouchers tested. When applied to the 2-year voucher population, this represents potential questioned costs in approximately 27,500 vouchers. Further, we found various errors in over 85 percent of the vouchers tested, which represents the potential for errors in over 85,000 vouchers for fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Regardless of the amount of the errors, the combined impact is of significant concern, and the identification of problems in such a high percentage of the vouchers indicates that the existing internal controls are not adequate.

The recommendation will be referred to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (PMB) for implementation tracking. We request that FWS provide PMB with the responsible official and target dates for recommendation implementation (see Attachment 3).

2. FWS should make changes to correct existing deficiencies, including—
 - a. working with the bureau travel leads to ensure that profiles of existing and past employees are not deleted from the system;
 - b. creating policy limiting the use of auto-approval by employees to legitimate emergency travel;
 - c. creating policy requiring supervisors to reconcile charge card statements with travel vouchers;

- d. rescinding the May 27, 2010 memorandum permitting use of third-party travel vendors; and
- f. clarifying the responsibility of FWS and/or NBC to follow up on errors found in post-payment voucher audits.

Agency Response: In its response, FWS stated that it generally concurred with the recommendation to correct the deficiencies as stated and offered more specific responses to each part of the recommendation (see Attachment 2).

OIG Reply: We consider this recommendation resolved but not implemented. Regarding recommendation 2.a, FWS requested a listing of the missing profiles mentioned in this report, which we will provide to the deputy financial manager. Regarding recommendation 2.b, we will wait to determine if DOI establishes a uniform policy on auto-approval as recommended in the report to the Deputy Secretary.

To help FWS implement this recommendation and improve its existing internal controls for its audit review process, we also encourage FWS to track error rates, types, severity, office location of travelers, and any other helpful information to develop a better understanding of common errors. Consistently tracking this information over time should help FWS reduce and better manage the issues we found during our audit. The recommendation will be referred to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (PMB) for implementation tracking. We request that FWS provide PMB with the responsible official and target dates for recommendation implementation (see 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.

No response to this report is required. If you have any questions or need more specific information about this report's findings, please contact me at 202-208-5592.

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 FWS had designed and implemented a system of internal controls or travel management controls to provide reasonable assurance that travel vouchers were accurate and supported; 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 FWS's travel management controls. These weaknesses and recommended corrective actions are discussed in this report, and if implemented, the recommendations should improve FWS's travel management controls.

Objective

Our objective was to assess the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) 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 FWS offices in—

- Albuquerque, NM;
- Newark, CA;
- Vancouver, WA;
- Atlanta, GA;
- Arlington, VA; and
- Portland, OR.

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 J.P. Morgan 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

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

MAR 13 2013



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/DFM/053977

Memorandum

To: Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

From: Deputy Director

Rowan W. Gould

Subject: Draft Audit Report - GovTrip Use and Monitoring by the U.S. Department of the Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service. Report No. WR-IN-FWS-0012-2012

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the above report and generally concurs with findings and recommendations. In response to the specific recommendations, the Service has the following comments:

Recommendation 1.

FWS should require supervisors to:

- *verify that vouchers contain supporting documentation as required by the FTR and accurately reflect costs incurred during travel;*
- *ensure travel authorizations are created and approved prior to travel with the only exception being bona fide emergency travel;*
- *review vouchers thoroughly and address any unresolved flagged items;*
- *verify and approve all charges on charge card statements; and*
- *ensure that both the traveler and supervisor sign and date charge card statements.*

The Service has identified through its own internal review of travel vouchers that improvement in supervisory review is needed and concurs with the recommendation. The Service has developed tools for the supervisor, such as the supervisory travel voucher checklist, to assist in the travel voucher review. The Service will issue a reminder to employees and approving officials of the travel and charge card policies.

Regarding the specific findings found in the review of the travel vouchers, the Service believes many of the errors found were administrative in nature and did not represent an increased financial risk to the Service. The Service has established internal controls to mitigate the risk by performing the following:

- 1) Since GovTrip was implemented in 2008, the Service has maintained an audit review process that will review 100 percent of travel vouchers in excess of \$1,000 of travel voucher reimbursement and a 10 percent random sample of vouchers under \$1,000 reimbursement. While this process will not catch all errors, the Service identifies many

of the errors cited in the report and pursues corrective action from the traveler.

- 2) The Service relies on the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) to provide travel expenses to managers and for external reporting which reduces the reliance on the GovTrip's reporting and the effect of administrative errors. GovTrip's reporting capability has been shown to be inadequate for management needs. Also, centrally billed expenses reported in GovTrip are not linked to FBMS further providing timing errors between the financial data in GovTrip and FBMS.
- 3) The Service performs a variety of charge card exception reviews that look for unauthorized charges such as third party booking, improper merchant category codes, and expenses incurred on the card with no travel taken.

Recommendation 2.

FWS should make changes to correct existing deficiencies, including:

- *working with the bureau travel leads to ensure that profiles of existing and past employees are not deleted from the system;*
- *creating policy limiting the use of auto-approval by employees to legitimate emergency travel;*
- *creating policy requiring supervisors to reconcile charge card statements with travel vouchers;*
- *rescinding the May 27, 2010 memorandum permitting use of third-party travel vendors; and*
- *clarifying the responsibility of FWS and/or NBC to follow up on errors found in postpayment voucher audits.*

The Service generally concurs with the recommendation to correct the deficiencies as stated and remind the Regional GovTrip travel administrators of Service and Departmental travel policies. For each specific recommendation, the Service has the following response:

- 1) The Service's Temporary Duty Handbook, *A Guide to the TDY Process* Section 2.5 provides detailed instructions on deactivating a GovTrip profile and not deleting the profile. This Service procedure became effective soon after GovTrip was implemented, therefore, reporting 24 of the 97 travel vouchers as deleted out of GovTrip is rather puzzling. Further, in the OIG's review of charge card expenses and reconciling the expenses to GovTrip, 11 out of 50 travelers could not be found in GovTrip. To confirm the significance of the problem, the Service requests that the OIG provide the travelers' names to the Chief, Division of Financial Management (DFM). The DFM Chief will verify that the 35 traveler profiles were deleted and provide guidance, as necessary, to the Regional Offices of the Service's required procedures concerning GovTrip profiles.
- 2) The Service believes the policy limiting the use of auto-approve for travel reservations is best established at the Departmental level. Therefore, the Service will defer any policy on the use of the GovTrip auto-approve feature until the Department issues its official policy with ETS-2.

Since Service employees travel between many cities where no GSA city pair fare exists, the Service primarily used auto-approve to ensure travelers could ticket their airline reservations using lower priced restricted fares. Airlines generally require the lower priced restricted airfares to be ticketed within 24 hours from the time of the reservation. If the traveler does not have auto-approve in GovTrip and the approving official does not approve the travel authorization within 24 hours, then the fare reserved in GovTrip is automatically canceled and lost. The Service believes the savings from restricted fares over refundable fares is significant. By taking away the auto-approve feature for only emergency travel, the Service believes travel costs will increase significantly.

- 3) The Service concurs with the recommendation that supervisors reconcile the traveler's charge card statement with the travel voucher. The Service will issue a reminder of the Department and Service policies on the supervisory review of their employee's charge card statement.
- 4) The Department issued Financial Management Memorandum (FMM) 2012-01, Guidance on the Use of GovTrip and SATO dated October 11, 2011 that superseded the Service's policy dated May 27, 2010. The Service distributed this policy throughout its Headquarters and Regional Offices. Further, the Service will remind travelers with the transition to the ETS-2 provider and new Travel Management Company (TMC) about the requirements of the FTR.
- 5) The Service concurs with the recommendation and will work with the Regional Offices in clarifying their role and the Interior Business Center's (IBC) role in following up on errors found on the post-payment audits.

If you have any questions concerning these comments, please contact Mr. Paul Rauch, Acting Assistant Director – Business Management and Operations at (703) 358-1822. Technical questions can be addressed to Mr. George Keller, Chief, Division of Financial Management, at (703) 358-1742.

Status of Recommendations

Recommendations	Status	Action Required
I. a, b, c, d, e	Resolved but not implemented	The recommendation will be referred to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget for tracking of implementation.
2.a, b, c, e	Resolved but not implemented	The recommendation will be referred to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget for tracking of implementation.
2.d	Resolved and implemented	No action necessary.

Report Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement



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Office of Inspector General
Mail Stop 4428 MIB
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Washington, DC 20240