



AUG 1 | 2003

GSA Office of Governmentwide Policy

MEMORANDUM FOR UMEKI GRAY THORNE
PROGRAM ANALYST
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT POLICY (MTT)

FROM: RODNEY P. LANTIER, DIRECTOR *Rodney P. Lantier*
REGULATORY AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PUBLICATIONS
DIVISION (MVA)

SUBJECT: FTR Case 2003-303, Federal Travel Regulation; eTravel Service
(eTS)

Attached are comments received on the subject FAR case published at 68 FR 38661;
June 30, 2003. The comment closing date was July 30, 2003.

<u>Response Number</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>Comment Date</u>	<u>Commenter</u>
2003-303-1	07/08/03	07/08/03	Mark Avey
2003-303-2	07/24/03	07/24/03	Howard Globerman
2003-303-3	07/28/03	07/28/03	Wanda Palmer
2003-303-4	07/29/03	07/29/03	Paul Bardos
2003-303-5	07/30/03	07/30/03	Bill Howard
2003-303-6	07/30/03	07/30/03	Sterling Ross
2003-303-7	07/30/03	07/30/03	Ralph Bucksell
2002-303-8	07/30/03	07/20/03	Roger Waldron
2003-303-9	07/30/03	07/30/03	Angel E. Ray
2003-303-10	07/30/03	07/30/03	Robert Cluck
2003-303-11	07/30/03	07/30/03	Jesse Funches
2003-303-12	07/31/03	07/31/03	Valerie Lindsey

Attachments

U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405-0002
www.gsa.gov

2003-303-1



"Mark Avey"
<mavey@asmr.com>
07/08/2003 10:38 AM

To: "FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov" <FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov>
cc:
Subject: eTravel

Is the GSA program for eTravel going to replace the Defense Travel System (DTS)?

2003-303-2



"Globerman, Howard
(DPP-20)"
<Howard.Globerman@
rspa.dot.gov>

To: "FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov" <FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov>
cc:
Subject: Comments on Proposed Regulation -- FTR 2003-303

07/24/2003 04:11 PM

--Sec. 301-50.6: Revise or clarify that there are regulations, contract provisions, and limits on the travel arrangements that both the traveler (I and you) and the TMS provider must comply with when making accommodations for common carrier, lodging, and car rental.

--Also place 50.6 ahead of section 301-50.5.

--Sec. 301-52.3 -- Will the first sentence of this section apply to infrequent government employee travelers, government employees traveling for an agency/bureau other than their employing agency, and invitational travelers?? Setting up profiles, etc. for these travelers in an electronic system may be costly, timely, or very difficult based on system parameters and data requirements.

2003-303-3



Wanda Palmer

07/28/2003 04:47 PM

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc:
Subject: FTR Case 2003-303

Submitted questions:

1. How will GSA incorporate small commissions/agencies in the e-Travel Program?
2. How will international travel be handled?
4. Will training be provided on the program's applications?



"Bardos, Paul"
<pbardos@usitc.gov>
07/29/2003 03:04 PM

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc:
Subject: FTR Case 2003-303

2003-303-4

This is a comment on behalf of the U.S. International Trade Commission on the General Services Administration's notice of proposed rulemaking published at 68 Fed. Reg. 38661 (June 30, 2003), FTR Case 2003-303. The notice includes a proposed section 301-50.4 that would permit the head of an agency or his/her designee(s) to grant individual waivers from the required use of a Travel Management Service or the eTravel Service on a case-by-case basis. The proposed section also would provide that: "Waivers must be limited to security reasons, necessity of disability accommodations or special needs in accordance with Part 301-13 of this chapter, or invitational travel." Proposed section 301-73.102 contains essentially the same provision.

We believe that an agency head should have flexibility in determining when a traveler should be exempted from using the travel system. We foresee a number of situations, not included in the quoted language, in which a waiver might be advisable because a traveler may need to make special arrangements. For example, an agency traveler may be part of a delegation for which another agency or organization is making lodging arrangements. Also, we believe that travelers should be allowed to contact hotels directly in areas of limited lodging availability. The notice of proposed rulemaking suggests that agency heads would not have the authority to allow a traveler to make arrangements in those ways. In addition to the situations we foresee, moreover, we believe that additional, unforeseen, situations will arise that may require a waiver. We recognize that the proposed rules would provide for GSA to grant additional waivers, but are concerned that the process involved would preclude granting a waiver to a traveler in an emergency when time is limited. For agencies like the International Trade Commission, whose employees do a great deal of foreign travel, it would be impractical to seek GSA waiver approval on a frequent basis for the many unforeseen circumstances that are likely to arise. Accordingly, we urge GSA to remove the quoted limitation and allow agency heads the flexibility to determine when a waiver is appropriate.

If this suggestion is not adopted, we request in the alternative that GSA add to the list of exceptions the situations described above involving delegations and areas of limited lodging availability. In that regard, we note that proposed section 301-50.6 recognizes the need to provide exceptions, for situations such as conference and foreign lodging, to the requirement to use the Federal Premier Lodging Program (FPLP). We understand that agencies currently can use the State Department's Conference Services to find lodging in foreign areas with limited hotel availability. We suggest that the exceptions to the FPLP generally would also be good grounds to grant a waiver under proposed section 301-50.4. If that is already the intent of the proposed rule, we suggest clarifying the point.

Paul R. Bardos
Assistant General Counsel
for Administration
U.S. International Trade Commission
Tel. 202-205-3102

2003-303-5



Howard.Bill@epamail.e
pa.gov

07/30/2003 02:33 PM

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc: McNeil.Juliette@epamail.epa.gov, McAllister.Lorna@epamail.epa.gov,
Cluck.Robert@epamail.epa.gov, fant.sheila@epamail.epa.gov
Subject: Federal Travel Regulation Proposed Rule on eTravel Service (eTS),
FTR Case 2003-303

In accordance to the guidelines outlined in Federal Register dated June 30, 2003, attached are the Environmental Protection Agency's comments on proposed rule, FTR Case 2003-303. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please feel free to call me at (202) 564-4933 if you have any questions.

(See attached file: FTR comment letter.wpd) (See attached file: FTR



Comments on eTS Proposed Rule.wpd) FTR comment letter.wp



FTR Comments on eTS Proposed Rule:

2003-303-5

July 30, 2003

General Services Administration
Regulatory Secretariat (MVA)
1800 F Street, NW
Room 4035
ATTN: Laurie Duarte
Washington, DC 20405

Ms. Duarte:

Environmental Protection Agency would like to thank you for this opportunity to comment on Federal Travel Regulation proposed rule on eTravel Service (eTS). We have reviewed the proposed rule and our comments are attached.

If you have any questions, please me on (202) 564-4917 or my staff, Sheila Fant on (202) 564-4947.

Sincerely,

/s/

Robert Cluck
Chief, Financial Policies, Procedures and
Compliance Branch

Attachment

2003-303-5

**COMMENTS ON GSA PROPOSED RULE
Federal Travel Regulation; eTravel Service (eTS)**

- **§301-50.3.** This section states that the employee must use the eTravel service when it becomes available in the employee's agency. Because agencies may phase in the eTravel service to different organizational components, the requirement should be that the employee must use the eTravel service when the employee's agency makes that service available to the employee.
- **§301-52.3.** This section states that the employee must use eTS to file travel claims "[a]s soon as your agency migrates to the eTS, and no later than September 30, 2006." Holding an employee accountable for using the eTS no later than September 30, 2006, is unreasonable; the agency alone should be responsible for making eTS available by a certain date. Further, "migrates" is not very specific. The requirement should be stated as mentioned in the previous comment.
- **§301-70.1(d).** The words "once you migrate to eTS, and no later than September 30, 2006, unless . . ." should be revised to be consistent with section 301-73.100, namely to state "once you have fully implemented eTS across your agency, unless . . ."
- **§301-73.2(e).** This section requires agencies to ensure that any agency-contracted travel agent services outside the eTS complement and support the eTS in an efficient and cost effective manner. How would an agency determine that the support is "efficient" and "cost-effective" other than through normal contracting procedures, under which agencies seek lowest costs that meet agency needs?
- **§301-73.100.** To correctly plan budget allocations and personnel resources to support deployment of eTS, the requirement to use the eTravel Services should change from ... no later than September 30, 2006 to December 31, 2007 and changemigration to the eTS no later than December 31, 2004 to December 31, 2005.
- **Note to §301-73.100.** It's not clear what "(if applicable)" is intended to mean. Our understanding is that the eTS is "end to end," and therefore would provide reservations and fulfillment services. It's also not clear what is intended by "(accommodating FedTrip through September 30, 2004, . . .)."
- **§301-73.101(c).** This section directs agencies to allocate budget and personnel resources to support eTS implementation. Budgetary and personnel allocations should not be part of the FTR. This rule should establish goals or targets for implementing eTS, but not direct agencies on budgetary or personnel matters.

2003-303-6



"Ross, Sterling"
<Sterling.Ross@hq.doe.gov>

07/30/2003 03:19 PM

To: "FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov" <FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov>
cc: "Juelich, Norbert" <Norbert.Juelich@hq.doe.gov>, "Ballantine, Rossana" <Rossana.Ballantine@hq.doe.gov>
Subject: FTR Case 2003-303

We have reviewed the referenced FTR pertaining to E-Travel and have no comments.

Sterling Ross, Team Leader
Travel and General Fiscal Policy
Office of Financial Policy
Department of Energy
202-586-8662

2003-303-7



"Ralph A Bucksell"
<BucksellR@gao.gov>

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc: jim.harte@gsa.gov
Subject: FTR Case 2003-303

07/30/2003 03:13 PM

Comments:

Background:

Section A:

Has two contradictory statements. It states that "the eTS will replace Executive branch agencies' current..." and "this proposed regulations will require all agencies subject to the Federal Travel Regulations...".

As noted in my earlier inquiry, a number of agencies who are not executive agencies are subject to the FTR. The background section could be easily corrected to read "require all executive branch agencies subject to...".

Section B:

- Please define "an in-house system". The proposed regulation seems to imply that it is a commercial method of arranging travel.

- Would GSA wish to expand the definition of TMS enough so that in the future GSA/government agencies could have the flexibility to move to a system that might not require the intervention of a travel agency.

Section 301-73.102

I would suggest wording that states that: "The ETS replaces the TMS only for the Executive branch agencies", or state that "The Department of Defense and other non-executive branch agencies are not presently subject to this requirement."

Section 301-50.4

There are other situations in which agencies may wish to not use the TMS or the ETS (e.g., air fare and other arrangements are included in a package deal, the agency is conducting an investigation, emergency travel, etc...). The regulation needs to provide some flexibility because if it does not, agencies will ignore the regulation. Agencies need enough flexibility to operate without being micromanaged by FTR regulations meant to encourage use of the new system. Agencies want this kind of system. A way around this problem is to require agencies to report other exceptions, other than those listed to GSA in an annual report. Let the agencies know that this will allow the other exceptions to be noted and included in an expanded list of exceptions. This would allow agencies flexibly and encourage responsible decision making. GSA could then discuss with agencies exceptions that did not meet the "daylight" test. Agencies generally try to be responsible but are caught in a bind when the regulations do not provide them options for dealing with problems.

Section 301-50.6

(3) (b) Lodging accommodations. Our employees have found that they can stay at a PLP lodging facilities at a greatly reduced fee if they do not

2003-3037

identify themselves as federal travelers. Rooms can be obtained at rates as low as \$89 in DC which is significantly below the government rate.

(3) (C) Car rental accommodations. The regulation needs to include a discussion of what travelers do when they travel to a location that does not have a rental car company participating in the MTMC program. There is not provision to allow employees to be reimbursed for insurance costs in these circumstances. This opens the employee and the government to a great deal of potential liability. Help.

Section 301-73.1(e)

The biennial travel surveys questions should be issued prior to the fiscal year in which the survey is to be conducted.

Section 301-73.102

My comment here is the same as my comment for 301-50.4

There are other situations in which agencies may wish to not use the TMS or the ETS (e.g., air fare and other arrangements are included in a package deal, the agency is conducting an investigation, emergency travel, etc...). The regulation needs to provide some flexibility because if it does not, agencies will ignore the regulation. Agencies need enough flexibility to operate without being micromanaged by FTR regulations meant to encourage use of the new system. Agencies want this kind of system. A way around this problem is to require agencies to report other exceptions, other than those listed to GSA in an annual report. Let the agencies know that this will allow the other exceptions to be noted and included in an expanded list of exceptions. This would allow agencies flexibly and encourage responsible decision making. GSA could then discuss with agencies exceptions that did not meet the "daylight" test. Agencies generally try to be responsible but are caught in a bind when the regulations do not provide them options for dealing with problems.

Section 301-73.103

GSA might want to consider granting waivers for a certain period of time rather than denying them to agencies. This may be needed to allow agencies the time to budget for the new services. It will also allow the new systems time to mature into tools all the agencies might see as being absolutely necessary.

301-73.105

- (a) (2) - please note that there are still difficulties in booking rooms under the PLP program with hotels;

301-73.105 (a)

- Agencies would need to be able to provide the information required by the FTR's standard data elements and the biennial travel surveys in addition to the items named.

2003-303-7

Ralph A. Bucksell
202-512-4216
Bucksellr@gao.gov

2003-303-8



Roger D. Waldron
07/30/2003 01:38 PM

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc: Rebecca A. Koses/FBG/CO/GSA/GOV@GSA, Jeffrey A. Koses/FXC/CO/GSA/GOV@GSA
Subject: FTRCase 2003-303 - due today

The following comments are FSS's comments on the proposed regulations.

1. There are several sections (e.g., "Supplementary Information", paragraph A, §300-3.1, etc.) that states that "The eTS will replace Executive Branch agencies' current Travel Management System." This direction clearly conflicts with other portions of the regulation which are intended to permit agencies with choices in obtaining travel agent services (i.e., travel management centers and commercial traffic offices) outside of the eTS. This misinformation could clearly confuse and create uncertainty among agencies thereby negatively impacting their missions. This section needs to be rephased to more accurately explain the strategic goals of eTS. In addition, this language could create contractual liabilities for the government if all agencies have not moved to the system by the dates established in the regulation. By regulation we are creating a requirements contract as a mandatory source and the government will be exposed to potential legal liability.

For example, while §300-3.1 defines what a Travel Management System is, and in its definition, includes travel agent services (i.e., travel management centers and commercial travel offices), §301-50.3, clearly states "The eTS replaces the TMS for Executive Branch agencies no later than September 30, 2006."

Without a change in the language, it will be construed that as of September 30, 2006, agencies must use the eTS, and ONLY the eTS, including eTS' travel agent services. This was clearly not the intent of the language. The regulation was intended to continue to provide agencies with a choice in which travel agent provides it with service.

This contradictory language also appears in 301-73.1, subparagraph (f) and may be elsewhere in the document.

2. §300-3.1, What do the following terms mean?

Relative to subparagraph (1)(iv), professional Federal travel manager development program should be removed from this section and discussed instead under subparagraph (2), policy direction of OGP. As the contract management and administration office, FSS would not be responsible for such a development program. Rather, professionalization of the workforce should be a governmentwide policy issue, much like OGP has taken the lead in professionalizing the acquisition workforce.

3. In 301-73.100, language we had originally proposed (as well as coordinated with the PMO) has been dropped off - the original language was as follows:

You have the option to use contracted travel agent service(s) of your choice (through eTS or other contract vehicles). You have the responsibility for ensuring agency-contracted travel agent services complements and supports the eTS in an efficient and cost effective manner.

It is important for the regulation to point out that if agencies use contracted travel agent services(s) of their choice, that the services complements and supports eTS. Perhaps we should even call out GSA's Travel Services Solution by name since it is specifically designed to complement the eTS.

2003-303-9



Angel.Ray@do.treas.gov
07/30/2003 08:18 AM

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc: david.EPSTEIN@do.treas.gov, Stuart.Levy@do.treas.gov,
James.Lingebach@do.treas.gov
Subject: Proposed Rule Comments/Questions: FTR Case 2003-303

Following are comments/questions from Treasury:

Financial Management Service (FMS) Bureau

GSA should identify and publish the costs they plan to charge agencies/bureaus for this new program immediately. The agencies/bureau cannot establish this new program without funding. Agencies need this cost information to prepare the appropriate requests for funding from their respective agency/bureau senior officials.

Headquarters

1. What will the eTravel Office PMO do if any agency does not have the funds to migrate to eTS?
2. Do all bureaus within an agency have to begin migration to eTravel for an agency to receive credit for beginning migration?
3. Agencies may incur expenses to end or modify contracts with TMCs in order to migrate to eTravel. Will the eTravel Office PMO subsidize or account for these costs?
4. Will GSA publish eTS metrics and baseline costs per transaction so that agencies have a benchmark to determine if it would be impractical from cost perspective to migrate to eTS?

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Angel E. Ray
Treasury Travel Program Coordinator
(202) 622-0078
fax (202) 622-2318
angel.ray@do.treas.gov

2003-303-10

July 30, 2003

General Services Administration
Regulatory Secretariat (MVA)
1800 F Street, NW
Room 4035
ATTN: Laurie Duarte
Washington, DC 20405

Ms. Duarte:

Environmental Protection Agency would like to thank you for this opportunity to comment on Federal Travel Regulation proposed rule on eTravel Service (eTS). We have reviewed the proposed rule and our comments are attached.

If you have any questions, please me on (202) 564-4917 or my staff, Sheila Fant on (202) 564-4947.

Sincerely,

/s/

Robert Cluck
Chief, Financial Policies, Procedures and
Compliance Branch

Attachment

2003-303-10

**COMMENTS ON GSA PROPOSED RULE
Federal Travel Regulation; eTravel Service (eTS)**

- **§301-50.3.** This section states that the employee must use the eTravel service when it becomes available in the employee's agency. Because agencies may phase in the eTravel service to different organizational components, the requirement should be that the employee must use the eTravel service when the employee's agency makes that service available to the employee.
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CHIEF FINANCIAL
OFFICER

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 30, 2003

2003-303-11

General Services Administration
Regulatory Secretariat (MVA)
ATTN: Laurie Duarte
1800 F Street, NW, Room 4035
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Ms. Duarte:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed rule for eTravel Service, FTR Case 2003-303. The proposed rule would require all Federal agencies to: 1) migrate to a new eTravel Service for all travel management processes including travel claims and reservation and fulfillment services by September, 2006; and 2) allocate the budget and personnel resources necessary to support eTravel Services implementation, training, and use data exchange.

We strongly believe that it is premature to establish these specific requirements by rule prior to selecting a vendor(s) to provide the eTravel Service, fully testing its associated travel system, and estimating the cost required to participate and the expected benefits to be achieved. Additionally, GSA should consider whether or not sufficient agency and contractor resources will be available to implement the government-wide requirement to use eTravel Service in such a short time-period.

The NRC recommends that GSA delay establishing implementation dates for the eTravel Service until a contract has been awarded, the vendor's system has been fully tested to meet the contract requirements, and reasonable cost and benefit estimates have been made.

If you have any questions, please contact John Walker, of my staff, at 301-415-6259.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse L. Funches".

Jesse L. Funches
Chief Financial Officer

cc: Chief Financial Officers
of the CFOC

2003-303-12.



"Valerie Lindsey"
<valerielindsey@ibwc.
state.gov>

To: FTRCase.2003-303@gsa.gov
cc:
Subject: Question

07/31/2003 10:09 AM

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am the accounting officer for the International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section, in El Paso, TX. We are a relatively small agency under State Dept. My question is basic - should we be developing our own e-Travel System (which is probably not feasible) or wait until GSA awards the contract and be prepared to move to that system when it is ready?

Currently we have a contract with Sun Travel.
I can be reached at 915-832-4143. Thank you for your time.

Valerie