

**ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS**

*Bulletin*

**Title:** GovTrip Transition

**Number:** 08-301

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**Originating Office:** Travel and Relocation Services Branch  
Financial Management Division, AFM/ARS

**Distribution:** All REE Employees

This bulletin provides policy and procedures for the transition from the NFC TRVL system to GovTrip for planning, ticketing, authorizing and paying reimbursable expenses for temporary duty travel

## **1. Authority**

41 CFR, Chapter 301-50

5 U.S.C. 5707

40 U.S.C. 121(c)

## **2. Background**

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is implementing GovTrip, the Department's selected software that meets the requirements of the President's e-Government Initiative for travel. GovTrip is a web-based travel management tool that streamlines and consolidates USDA travel operations into a simplified, end-to-end travel management service. GovTrip combines various USDA and National Finance Center (NFC) systems and processes.

GovTrip provides the capability for:

- On-line common carrier ticketing, hotel reservations, and car rental services;
- Preparing travel authorizations that automatically incorporate the costs for ticketing, lodging, and car rental reservations;
- Providing a detailed itinerary and cost estimate that also calculates estimated authorized per diem in accordance with Federal Travel Regulations (FTR);
- Electronic approval routing and online signature;
- Ticket fulfillment services upon approval of the authorization;
- Electronic preparation, routing, approval, and payment of official travel claims;
- Paying the travel card vendor directly for certain expenses on the traveler's card;
- Interfacing payment and accounting data with the agency accounting and obligation system; and
- Reporting and data exchange for reports required under the FTR.

The Research, Education and Economic (REE) agencies will migrate to GovTrip on March 10, 2008. This bulletin provides policy and procedures on the transition to GovTrip.

## **3. Immediate Actions**

The following are immediate actions that travel offices and travel arrangers need to take to prepare for the transition to GovTrip:

- Travel offices/travel arrangers must ensure that all documents that meet the criteria described in Section 4.(b.) are entered into the current NFC TRVL system and released by Tuesday, March 4, 2008.
- All employees should be familiar with the procedures for any emergency travel during the transition weekend of March 8 and 9, 2008 (see Section 4.(c.)).
- The Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) travel arrangers and approvers who will be given immediate access to GovTrip must complete the offered training. Contact Kim McGregor on 301-504-1458 for assistance in enrolling. For the Economic Research Service

(ERS), where employees will be given immediate access, contact Audrey Farley on 202-694-5462 for information on training.

- Travel arrangers and approvers (ARS, CSREES, and NASS) and employees (ERS) who wish to have access to GovTrip must complete an AD-1143, *Corporate Systems Access Request Form*. The form is discussed in Section 4.(e.).
- Any manager or supervisor who wishes to delegate the authority to electronically sign authorizations and vouchers in GovTrip to an assistant must do so in writing (see Section 4.(f.)).
- No employee may make travel reservations through EDS FedTraveler unless instructed by their travel office, and the travel office must ensure that a released authorization is in TRVL and released by March 4, 2008.
- Starting March 10, 2008, REE agencies must obtain reservations through GovTrip, either online or through their call in center. **NO TICKETS MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH EDS FEDTRAVELER after March 9, 2008.**
- The call-in number for GovTrip reservations will be available shortly before the cut over date. USDA is not releasing the new call-in number at the time of this bulletin.

## 4. Transition Policy and Procedures

**(a.) Required Use:** The use of GovTrip is mandated by the FTR, Section 301-50.3. Beginning March 10, 2008, all new authorizations and their related vouchers must be created and paid through the GovTrip System.

**(b.) TRVL Cutoff:** Access to TRVL to create *new* authorizations will cease on Friday, March 7, 2008. Any authorization not created and released by this date must be re-entered into GovTrip. To avoid problems with authorizations missing this cut off, REE offices are required to create and release all needed authorizations in TRVL by March 4, 2008. Use the following procedures for creating and releasing authorizations in TRVL.

### For domestic temporary duty travel:

- For travel between the date of this bulletin and March 10, 2008, enter the travel authorization in the TRVL program and release by March 4, 2008. Order tickets through EDS FedTraveler and have tickets released by March 10. Travelers may request the immediate ticketing of reservations through March 10, since they may request ticketing up to 15 days prior to travel without further approval.
- For travel between March 10 and 24, 2008, enter the authorization in the NFC TRVL system and release the authorization by March 4, 2008. Order tickets through EDS FedTraveler and request immediate ticketing through:
  - ERS - LaShawn Williams, lashawnw@ers.usda.gov, 202-694-5105
  - NASS - Barbara Nelson, Barbara\_Nelson@nass.usda.gov, 202-720-4913
  - CSREES - Jeanette Powers, jeanette.powers@ars.usda.gov, 202-720-8505
  - ARS - Janelle McClintock, janelle.mcclintock@ars.usda.gov, 301-504-1311

- For all travel after March 24, authorizations must be entered through GovTrip unless there is a strong justification for the travel to be processed in TRVL and a ticket issued immediately.

For international travel:

- International travel through April 30, 2008, may be entered into TRVL by March 4, 2008, and released. Tickets for such authorizations must be ordered through EDS FedTraveler and an immediate ticketing request must be made to the agency representatives listed above.
- Foreign travel after April 30, 2008, for which a strong justification for early ticketing exists, may be requested through the agency representatives listed above. For such travel, an authorization must be entered into TRVL and released by March 4, 2008, tickets ordered through EDS FedTraveler and an immediate ticketing request made to the above listed agency contacts. Strong justification for early ticketing includes:
  - Travel to remote international locations to which flights are infrequent (less than daily) and where obtaining seating is difficult.
  - Travel to locations where special events are being held making advance reservations necessary, for example, travel to China during and immediately before the Summer 2008 Olympics.

Authorizations in TRVL that have been approved and released prior to the March 7, 2008, cut off will be available for vouchering in TRVL. Access to TRVL to create a new authorization will cease on March 7, 2008. Any authorization in a “pending” or “held” status at that time will be canceled and a new authorization must be created in GovTrip.

**(c.) Emergency Travel During the Cut-over Weekend:** For any emergency travel during the weekend of March 8 and 9, 2008, travelers must contact EDS FedTraveler directly to obtain tickets. Tickets will be issued upon confirmation of an USDA representative on call that weekend. Authorizations for emergency travel during the cut over weekend of March 8 and 9, 2008, cannot be entered into the NFC TRVL system. On March 10, 2008, the authorization must be created in GovTrip, and the cost for these tickets will be entered directly as “other transportation costs.”

- The emergency EDS FedTraveler call number for the weekend of March 8 and 9, 2008, is 866-876-8020. Travelers should expect to be asked several questions on the need for this travel and may be contacted by the USDA emergency travel representative to confirm the emergency travel.

**(d.) GovTrip Access:** GovTrip is an obligating system. Authorizations, with the exception of open and limited open authorizations, will obligate funds when the authorization is approved. Initial use of GovTrip will be limited to travel arrangers and approvers for ARS, NASS, and CSREES. Employee access to GovTrip will be evaluated after the initial implementation period. ERS will allow employee access upon

implementation.

**(e.) AD-1143:** Users of GovTrip must receive the appropriate training and must complete an AD-1143, *Corporate Systems Access Request Form*, which specifies their level of access to GovTrip. Employees must use the version of the AD-1143 modified for GovTrip access. This form is found at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/doc/AD1143.doc> until it can be loaded onto eForms. The AD-1143 must be signed by the employee and their immediate supervisor. Each REE agency has designated a point of contact to collect completed AD-1143s. You may contact the points of contact listed in 4.(b.) if you are unsure of where to deliver the completed form.

**(f.) Delegation of Authority to Access GovTrip:** Managers and supervisor may choose not to use the GovTrip electronic signature capability and may delegate the authority to access GovTrip on their behalf to approve a document to an administrative assistant or another assistant. This delegation must be made formally by a letter to be maintained in their office files for audit purposes. (see Attachment 1) The person to whom the access is delegated must have GovTrip training and complete an AD-1143. When this authority is delegated, the appropriate GovTrip Federal Agency Travel Administrator (FATA) must be notified to modify the routing list.

When a manager or supervisor elects to delegate the electronic signature authority, all authorizations and vouchers for which they are responsible must be printed, signed by the manager or supervisor and electronically attached the applicable document using the electronic upload feature in GovTrip. A copy of the signed document(s) must be attached to the electronic GovTrip file.

**(g.) GovTrip Fees:** GovTrip fees will automatically be added to authorizations and vouchers. The current GovTrip fees are:

|   | <b>On-line Booking</b><br>(domestic or international travel) | <b>Call-in Booking</b><br>(domestic travel) | <b>Call-in Booking</b><br>(international travel) |
|---|--|---|--|
| TMC Fee   | \$4.60   | \$27.75                                     | \$36.25  |
| Voucher Processing Fee <sup>1</sup>   | \$13.50  | \$13.50                                     | \$13.50  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$18.10</b>   | <b>\$41.25</b>                              | <b>\$49.75</b>                                   |
| <sup>1</sup> Voucher processing costs were previously financed by ARS as Departmental Greenbook assessments. Under GovTrip, voucher travel costs will be incorporated into each travel claim. There will be no voucher processing fee for canceled authorizations. For canceled reservations, however, a TMC charge will apply if tickets have been issued. |  |   |  |

Please note that certain situations (using non-interactive carriers such as Southwest or jetBlue) will trigger two TMC fees, but only one voucher processing fee. Adding a

“message to agent” in the GovTrip system will trigger a call-in fee since the agent must manually access the record to address any questions. GovTrip clearly indicates this on the message to agent field with a “pop-up” warning when information is entered into the “message to agent” field.

**(h.) Foreign Travel:** Foreign travel will now have a Departmental review. Authorizations for international travel will automatically route to representatives at the Passport Office of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) for review and approval. FAS will ensure that a properly prepared AD-121, *Passport Request*, has been submitted for the trip and any passport and/or visa application has also been submitted and is complete. Because GovTrip will only issue tickets when all reviews and approvals are complete, it is most important that travelers submit their international travel documents to their travel offices so that FAS may receive them at least 30 business days prior to departure.

**(i.) Special Approvals:** Any special approvals or waivers that require a letter from the manager, supervisor, agency Office of the Chief Financial Officer, agency administrator, REE undersecretary, or Department Chief Financial Officer must be attached electronically to the GovTrip document for the applicable travel. These approvals include, but are not limited to:

- Approval of actual subsistence for conferences (ARS);
- Waivers of the requirement to use a government credit card to pay for transportation expense;
- Approval to use premium-class travel;
- Ethics review to accept donations of travel expenses, and
- Approval of foreign travel by the person delegated to approve such travel in REE Policy and Procedures 115, *Administrative Delegation of Authority*. Please note that this approval is not the same as the FAS review of foreign travel discussed in Section 4.(h.).

**(j.) Open and Limited Open Authorizations:** Open and limited open authorizations (the current Types A, B, and N in TRVL) will be open for vouchering in TRVL. If you are uncertain if you have an open or limited open authorization, check with your travel office for guidance.

All trips which are ticketed prior to the March 7, 2008, cut off may be vouchered in TRVL. New open and open limited authorizations must be entered in GovTrip on March 10, 2008, and after. All travel ticketed after March 7, 2008, must be vouchered against the new open and open limited authorizations in GovTrip.

USDA requires that all open and open limited authorizations be issued on a quarterly basis, with the quarters as: October 1 to December 31, January 1 to March 31, April 1 to June 30, and July 1 to September 30, of each fiscal year. To avoid creating an open or limited open travel authorization for the period of March 8 through

March 31, 2008, travelers on these types of authorizations should use trip-by-trip authorizations for this short period and enter a new quarterly open or limited open authorization on April 1, 2008.

**(k.) Reimbursements in GovTrip:** GovTrip has many advantages, but the current GovTrip to FFIS interface only supports the use of the employee's salary address (bank account for EFT deposits) for travel payments. Employees will no longer be able to specify a separate address or bank account for travel reimbursements. Employees will be notified of travel voucher reimbursement through email. Travel reimbursement information will no longer post to the NFC Employee Personal Page.

**(l.) Split Disbursements:** GovTrip offers split disbursements for the payment of government travel card expenses. GovTrip will automatically schedule a payment directly to the travel card vendor for common carrier tickets, rental car, and lodging. The lodging amount will be paid based on the approved amount of lodging on the authorization. Any expenses in excess of the approved lodging amount or miscellaneous expenses charged to a traveler's individually-billed travel card will appear on the employee's bill and must be paid in accordance with REE travel card policy.

**(m.) Receipt Requirements:**

The GovTrip system is the system of record for all documents related to temporary duty travel that are entered in the software.

- All documents related to temporary duty travel for authorizations in the NFC TRVL system must be kept on file in the traveler's administrative office for six years and three months from the travel dates. Files should include the printed, signed authorization, the printed, signed voucher and receipts to support the expenses on the voucher.
- For all authorizations and vouchers created in GovTrip, electronic signature will automatically attach to the document. Travel itineraries will also attach to the document. Any receipts that support the expenditures must be attached to the document using the scanned or faxed upload feature. Any letters that support special travel circumstances (see Section 4.(i.)) should also be scanned or faxed into the upload feature. There is no need to maintain separate paper travel files. Receipts may be returned to the traveler after the scanned or faxed upload. Travelers may choose to maintain such receipts.

**(n.) Local Travel and Relocation Authorizations:** Local travel authorizations (Type L) and relocation authorizations are not affected by this transition. Local travel will continue to be authorized and vouchered using the NFC TRVL system, as will relocation authorizations. Travel for house hunting trips and enroute travel will be addressed in a separate bulletin which will be issued prior to March 10.

## 5. Assistance

For assistance during the GovTrip implementation, training or other needs, please contact the following REE agency FATAs:

NASS:

|                 |  |              |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Barbara Nelson  | <a href="mailto:Barbara_Nelson@nass.usda.gov">Barbara_Nelson@nass.usda.gov</a>   | 202-720-4913 |
| Norma Yates,    | <a href="mailto:Norma_Yates@nass.usda.gov">Norma_Yates@nass.usda.gov</a>         | 202-720-4333 |
| Joan Cooper     | <a href="mailto:Joan_Cooper@nass.usda.gov">Joan_Cooper@nass.usda.gov</a>         | 407-648-6013 |
| Angie Hill      | <a href="mailto:Angie_Hill@nass.usda.gov">Angie_Hill@nass.usda.gov</a>           | 202-720-4008 |
| Kimberly Lowery | <a href="mailto:Kimberly_Lowery@nass.usda.gov">Kimberly_Lowery@nass.usda.gov</a> | 614-728-2100 |
| Rosemary Randel | <a href="mailto:Rosemary_Randel@nass.usda.gov">Rosemary_Randel@nass.usda.gov</a> | 785-233-2230 |
| Gail Spain      | <a href="mailto:Gail_Spain@nass.usda.gov">Gail_Spain@nass.usda.gov</a>           | 360-902-1940 |

ERS:

|                  |  |              |
|------------------|--|--------------|
| Audrey Farley    | <a href="mailto:afarley@ers.usda.gov">afarley@ers.usda.gov</a>   | 202-694-5462 |
| LaShawn Williams | <a href="mailto:lashawnw@ers.usda.gov">lashawnw@ers.usda.gov</a> | 202-694-5105 |
| Kimberly Wood    | <a href="mailto:kwood@ers.usda.gov">kwood@ers.usda.gov</a>       | 202-694-5181 |

CSREES:

|                     |  |              |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Jeanette Powers     | <a href="mailto:jeanette.powers@ars.usda.gov">jeanette.powers@ars.usda.gov</a>       | 202-720-8505 |
| Linda Geddie-Abney  | <a href="mailto:linda.geddie-abney@ars.usda.gov">linda.geddie-abney@ars.usda.gov</a> | 202-720-3536 |
| Betty Lou Gilliland | <a href="mailto:bgilliland@csrees.usda.gov">bgilliland@csrees.usda.gov</a>           | 202-720-5506 |

ARS:

AFM:

|                    |  |              |
|--------------------|--|--------------|
| Diane Eggert       | <a href="mailto:diane.eggert@ars.usda.gov">diane.eggert@ars.usda.gov</a>             | 301-504-1260 |
| Janelle McClintock | <a href="mailto:janelle.mcclintock@ars.usda.gov">janelle.mcclintock@ars.usda.gov</a> | 301-504-1311 |

Beltsville Area:

|                |  |              |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| Nancy Gatdula  | <a href="mailto:nancy.gatdula@ars.usda.gov">nancy.gatdula@ars.usda.gov</a>   | 301-504-6106 |
| Nichella Simms | <a href="mailto:nichella.simms@ars.usda.gov">nichella.simms@ars.usda.gov</a> | 301-504-5664 |

North Atlantic Area:

|                |  |              |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| Joyce Hamilton | <a href="mailto:joyce.hamilton@ars.usda.gov">joyce.hamilton@ars.usda.gov</a> | 215-233-6689 |
| Darleen Nelson | <a href="mailto:darleen.nelson@ars.usda.gov">darleen.nelson@ars.usda.gov</a> | 207-581-3266 |

South Atlantic Area:

|                 |  |              |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Valjean Farmer  | <a href="mailto:valjean.farmer@ars.usda.gov">valjean.farmer@ars.usda.gov</a>     | 706-546-3492 |
| Phyllis Johnson | <a href="mailto:phyllis.johnson1@ars.usda.gov">phyllis.johnson1@ars.usda.gov</a> | 706-546-3192 |
| Joanne Goings   | <a href="mailto:joanne.goings@ars.usda.gov">joanne.goings@ars.usda.gov</a>       | 706-546-3326 |

Midwest Area:

|             |  |              |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| Kit Mernick | <a href="mailto:kit.mernick@mwa.ars.usda.gov">kit.mernick@mwa.ars.usda.gov</a> | 309-681-6628 |
| Joann Volk  | <a href="mailto:joann.volk@ars.usda.gov">joann.volk@ars.usda.gov</a>           | 309-681-6629 |

Midsouth Area:



|               |  |              |
|---------------|--|--------------|
| Cack Norquist | <a href="mailto:msa.travel@ars.usda.gov">msa.travel@ars.usda.gov</a> | 662-686-5384 |
| Dianne Morris | <a href="mailto:msa.travel@ars.usda.gov">msa.travel@ars.usda.gov</a> | 662-686-5396 |

Northern Plains Area:

|                 |  |              |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Linda Sundstrom | <a href="mailto:linda.sundstrom@ars.usda.gov">linda.sundstrom@ars.usda.gov</a> | 970-492-7026 |
| Kendra McGehee  | <a href="mailto:Kendra.McGehee@ars.usda.gov">Kendra.McGehee@ars.usda.gov</a>   | 970-492-7025 |
| Michael Wiggett | <a href="mailto:michael.wiggett@ars.usda.gov">michael.wiggett@ars.usda.gov</a> | 970-492-7001 |

Southern Plains Area:

|                 |  |              |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Freida Williams | <a href="mailto:freida.williams@ars.usda.gov">freida.williams@ars.usda.gov</a> | 979-260-9493 |
| Patti Toth      | <a href="mailto:patti.toth@ars.usda.gov">patti.toth@ars.usda.gov</a>           | 979-260-9492 |
| Brenda Whitwell | <a href="mailto:brenda.whitwell@ars.usda.gov">brenda.whitwell@ars.usda.gov</a> | 979-260-9494 |
| Barbara Crane   | <a href="mailto:barbara.crane@ars.usda.gov">barbara.crane@ars.usda.gov</a>     | 979-260-9495 |

Pacific West Area:

|                     |  |              |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Lisa Jackson-Beitia | <a href="mailto:lisa.jacksonbeitia@ars.usda.gov">lisa.jacksonbeitia@ars.usda.gov</a> | 510-559-6010 |
| Sharon Haag         | <a href="mailto:sharon.haag@ars.usda.gov">sharon.haag@ars.usda.gov</a>               | 510-559-6011 |
| Phil Dailey         | <a href="mailto:phil.dailey@ars.usda.gov">phil.dailey@ars.usda.gov</a>               | 541-738-4007 |
| Joyce Daniels       | <a href="mailto:joyce.daniels@ars.usda.gov">joyce.daniels@ars.usda.gov</a>           | 510-559-6007 |
| Janet, Tsukahira    | <a href="mailto:janet.tsukahira@ars.usda.gov">janet.tsukahira@ars.usda.gov</a>       | 510-559-6108 |

## 6. Questions

Questions on this bulletin may be addressed to Diane Eggert, Chief, Travel and Relocation Services, on 301-504-1260.

/s/

Steve Helmrich  
Director  
Financial Management Division

### Attachment 1

[Print on letterhead]

I delegate to \_\_\_\_\_ the authority to access GovTrip on my behalf to approve:

\_\_\_\_ Travel Authorizations

\_\_\_\_ Travel Vouchers

Before approving any of the above documents in GovTrip, the person delegated this authority must provide a paper copy of the document that exactly duplicates the authorization or voucher and obtain my signature. The signed documents must be uploaded into GovTrip and attached to the electronic documents.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature – Delegator)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

I have read and understand the delegation of authority to access GovTrip on behalf of

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature – Delegatee)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)