

has considered these comments and modified section 301–73.102 to broaden the circumstances under which an agency head may approve exceptions on an individual case-by-case basis. GSA has also modified section 301–73.104 to broaden circumstances under which GSA may grant an exception to a Department (or component thereof) or an Independent agency.

General Comments

eTravel Service (eTS) and Travel Management Service. One agency commented that the statement “eTS will replace Executive agencies’ current Travel Management System” clearly conflicts with other portions of the regulation that are intended to give agencies choices in obtaining travel agent services (*i.e.*, Government-contracted TMCs) outside of the eTS, while another agency stated that if the definition of a TMS were expanded, agencies would have flexibility to move to a system that might not require the intervention of a travel agency. GSA’s response is that an agency may choose to incorporate a non eTS-provided TMC into eTS or use the eTS provided TMC services. However, the intent of eTS is not to replace an agency’s Government-contracted TMC, but to deliver a unified, simplified service that delivers a cost effective travel experience, supports excellent travel management, and results in superior customer satisfaction. The eTS contractors must accommodate agency-contracted TMCs. GSA has revised the notes to sections 301–73.100 and 301–73.106 to better reflect this intent.

Adoption/Delay of Implementation. One agency asked if their agency should develop its own eTS or wait for the Governmentwide eTS. GSA’s response is that use of the Governmentwide eTS is a requirement for all agencies subject to the FTR, with the exception of the Department of Defense and the Government of the District of Columbia. GSA has cautioned agencies against investing in new systems that will be agency-specific and non-transferable to the Governmentwide eTS.

One agency stated that GSA should change the agency’s full deployment date of eTS from September 30, 2006 to December 31, 2007, and implementation from December 31, 2004 to December 31, 2005, while another agency stated that the required use of eTS should be delayed, or waivers granted, until eTS is tested and costs are known and benefits are shown. GSA’s response is that migrating to eTS will improve internal efficiency and effectiveness throughout the Federal Government. In support of the President’s Management Agenda for

fiscal year 2002, representatives from twenty-seven agencies serving on the QuickSilver Task Force identified web-based travel management services as a high impact initiative. These benefits have been validated through business case analysis published under OMB 300/Exhibit 53 which outlines the funding for each agency to use for migration and full deployment to eTS. This information may be obtained through your agency’s Chief Information Officer. Delayed migration to the eTS would unnecessarily delay cost savings and service benefits to agencies; for that reason, GSA is committed to its scheduled migration/full deployment dates.

eTS and DTS. One individual asked if the eTS will replace the DTS. GSA’s response is no. Although the eTS is available for use by the Department of Defense (DOD), DOD has developed the DTS for its use.

Small Agencies/(eTS and International Travel/Training on eTS). One agency asked how eTS will incorporate small commissions/agencies, handle international travel, and if training will be provided on the program’s application. The eTS will support all agencies, large and small. As a commercially hosted service, eTS is well-positioned to serve small agencies with a minimum investment and no IT overhead. If a small commission/agency receives travel management services (electronic authorizations and/or vouchers) from a larger cross-servicing agency, GSA recommends the small agency to work with the large agency to understand the large agency’s plan and timeline for migrating to eTS. A small agency may determine there is value in continuing a relationship with the servicing agency, or it may migrate to eTS independently of the large agency.

Processing international travel through the eTS will be the same as processing domestic travel. Travelers will have access to an online booking engine with the ability to view and book international reservations (air, hotel, rental, car, etc.) without calling a travel agent. The eTS also includes traditional travel agency services should a traveler require the assistance of a travel agent for more complex international (or domestic) trips. (**Note:** An agency may continue to use its own TMC in conjunction with eTS, or it may use the TMC provided by its eTS vendor.)

The eTS vendors are required to provide training on the standard migration services. Additionally, each vendor may provide supplemental training services at the agency’s option.

Migration to eTS. One agency asked what GSA means by the term

“migration.” GSA defines “migration” as when an agency is actively moving from its current travel management service to the eTS. Migration begins when an agency submits its migration plan to the eTravel PMO and ends when an agency has fully deployed the eTS.

One agency stated that it would submit its migration plan and schedule within three months, once the eTS vendors are selected and they know what steps need to be taken. As long as this agency submits its migration plan and schedule to the eTravel PMO no later than March 31, 2004, it will be in compliance with this regulation. Migration plans are the roadmap for agencies to migrate to eTS. The migration plan represents tasks and key decisions each agency must map out in order to make an informed and intelligent decision regarding its eTS migration.

One agency asked whether all bureaus within an agency have to begin migration to eTS for an agency to receive credit for beginning migration. GSA’s response is yes. An agency’s migration to the eTS begins when it submits to the eTravel PMO the agency’s plan to migrate all bureaus/activities to eTS. Agencies are strongly encouraged to submit a task order that will include the handling of all activities under its organization (*i.e.*, a task order signed by the designated authority at a Department (for cabinet-level agencies) or the head of an Independent Agency that will apply to all its sub-organizations under its Department or Independent agency).

One agency asked what the eTS PMO will do if an agency does not have funds to migrate to the eTS. The eTS PMO has been working with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Federal financial officers to identify funds for migration to the eTS during fiscal year 2004/2005 budget cycles. The OMB has indicated that its resource management officers are working with agencies to allocate funding for all E-Government Initiatives launched in support of the President’s Management Agenda published in FY 2002. The note in section 301–73.101 of this regulation provides guidance to agencies on the importance of allocating budgets and establishing personnel resources to support the migration to eTS.

Funds. One agency stated that agencies may incur expenses to end or modify contracts with TMCs in order to migrate to eTS. That agency asked if the eTS PMO will subsidize or account for such costs. GSA’s response is, expenses incurred as a result of contractual actions related to orders for travel management services are the