



# At a Glance

*Catalyst for Improving the Environment*

## Why We Did This Review

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted preliminary research to evaluate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) management controls over the GovTrip approval and authorization process.

## Background

EPA travel and delegation policies allow EPA Office Directors, Laboratory Directors, and their equivalents to approve their own travel authorizations and travel payment vouchers. GovTrip is the single EPA travel management system for scheduling, approving, and auditing travel authorizations and travel payments. The General Services Administration is the federal manager for GovTrip and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) manages GovTrip for EPA.

**For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.**

**To view the full report, click on the following link:**  
[www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100309-10-P-0078.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100309-10-P-0078.pdf)

## ***EPA Travel Program Lacks Necessary Controls***

### **What We Found**

The EPA travel program, which comprises EPA policies and GovTrip, lacks necessary control procedures to assure all travel authorizations were necessary and in the best interest of the government. Additionally, some travelers may approve their own travel without mandatory independent review of travel authorizations prior to travel. As a result, EPA is unnecessarily vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse in its travel programs.

Our preliminary review covered 949 travel documents extracted from the Financial Data Warehouse covering the period September 2008 to April 2009. Our review of these documents disclosed 199 incidents where travel appeared to be self-approved by persons below the intended responsibilities of "Office Director" (or equivalent). EPA's travel policy states that self-approved travel is not permitted below the level of Office Directors, Laboratory Directors, and their equivalents (presumably Senior Executive Service and Excepted Service personnel). The employees associated with the 199 travel records we analyzed ranged in grade from GS-12 to GS/GM-15. We will review these records during our field work phase for potential violations of the Agency's travel policy.

OCFO personnel stated that the data we used from the Financial Data Warehouse were unreliable; however, OCFO urges use of this data in support of Agency financial transactions and thus the Agency's financial statements. We intend to assess the reliability of the GovTrip data in the Financial Data Warehouse as part of our review.

Poor internal controls also allow personnel to change the routing chain for travel approval without notifying their supervisor of record. EPA travel policy requires personnel to route travel requests to officials with the authority to authorize their travel. However, personnel can circumvent this requirement by requesting a routing change to the Agency's GovTrip helpdesk, or by making the change electronically through the GovTrip system. Consequently, through collusion or compromise of an approving official's account, an individual could use government funds for unauthorized or personal travel.

This interim report is for information only and does not represent any final conclusions or recommendations by the OIG. However, given the potential significance of the areas of vulnerabilities identified, we are providing our preliminary findings for information purposes.