



ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM No. 79 REV. 5

**SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRAVEL IN THE GENERAL
SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES**

CONSIDERING,

That Administrative Memorandum No. 79 was issued on January 16, 1997 to provide instructions for Official Travel from Headquarters; and,

That Administrative Memorandum No. 79 requires periodic revision to reflect flexibility in the rules governing travel and to expand the new automated Travel Expense Claim ("TEC") system on behalf of the General Secretariat to various types of official, group and statutory travel,

THE DECISION:

1. To issue "Instructions for Travel in the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States," attached hereto as Annex A, which would enter into effect on the date of this Administrative Memorandum; and
2. To revoke as of the date of this Administrative Memorandum any and all provisions contained in prior administrative issuances of the General Secretariat that are inconsistent with the Policies and Procedures attached hereto.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gerald C. Anderson".

Gerald C. Anderson
Secretary for Administration and Finance

ANNEX A

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRAVEL IN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

A. Travel Authority

1. Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules governs official and statutory travel by staff and their dependents.
2. Official travel is travel taken on behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States ("GS/OAS"), and is managed by the corresponding GS/OAS dependency ("Requesting Area").
3. Statutory travel is official travel for purposes of recruitment, repatriation, transfers, home leave, and education grant travel, and is managed by the Department of Human Resources ("DHR").
4. Executive Secretaries and Secretaries, Department and Office Directors, and Section Chiefs ("supervisors") must ensure that adequate budget authorization is available to finance any and all types of travel requests.
5. Supervisors shall produce quarterly *Official Travel Plan* reports. Each report should spell out the official travel planned, its justification in terms of the aims of the Organization, the approximate cost, the individuals involved, and the expected results. It shall be presented to the Office of the Secretary General for consideration and approval at least one month before the quarter in question begins. (See section E, below, regarding Reporting.)
6. All travel must be authorized in advance and in writing. In order for a staff member to travel on official business or a staff member and his/her dependents to travel for statutory purposes, a requisition must be created and must be approved by the appropriate authorizing official in the Requesting Area. The purchase order encumbers the funds authorized for the travel.
7. Only the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General may approve their own *Official Travel Plans*. All other *Official Travel Plans* must be approved by the staff member's supervisor who must be at or above the level of Department/Office Director. Travel plans for executive and assistant secretaries, directors, and advisors to the Secretary General, shall be approved by their immediate supervisors, the Chief of Staff or upon delegation of such authority from the Secretary General.

8. All travel expenditures should in principle be budgeted and planned for in advance. However, a traveler may incur unanticipated expenses while on a planned official trip. Such additional expenses may be claimed in the automated TEC filed for the trip, provided that the expenses are incurred within the estimated travel dates and up to thirty (30) days after the original estimated return date. No additional requisitions shall be created to cover these expenses. If the additional expenses are incurred more than thirty (30) days after the original estimated return date, then the additional expenses will be considered retroactive. In those cases, authorization must be obtained from the Director of the Department of Procurement and a separate requisition will be required. Travelers may not retroactively add legs or travel segments to purchase orders that have already been approved. Such additional legs or segments of airfare require travelers to submit a separate requisition, which will not be considered retroactive as long as it is submitted within 48-hours of the ticket purchase.
9. All travel advance requisitions shall be created using the OAS designated travel solution, including those that do not include per diem and /or terminal expense lines in order to allow for the creation of the automated TEC.
10. During the official travel period, travelers must obtain prior approval by their supervisors to use annual leave for: (a) personal travel to be taken immediately before or after the official travel; and (b) planned home leave travel. Any itinerary changes that depart from the planned official travel require approval in advance and in writing from the traveler's supervisor. In those instances where official and personal travel is combined, the traveler must present the original business-only itinerary to confirm that the new combined travel does not exceed the cost of the business-only travel. If there is a price difference, the traveler is personally responsible for any additional expenses. Additionally, each traveler shall be responsible for obtaining prior approval for any annual leave taken in connection with travel and reporting it in the TEC system.
11. OAS official travel financed by outside organizations and at no cost to the GS/OAS should also be included in the *Official Travel Plan* or authorized by the Office of the Secretary General. A copy of the travel authorization should be sent to the Department of Procurement ("PROC") prior to the travel taking place to ensure that the traveler will be covered by the GS/OAS's group travel insurance policy.
12. A staff member or non-staff member traveling on official business may be entitled to or otherwise receive GS/OAS standard per-diem and terminal expense rates in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules, including the provision for reduced travel subsistence allowance. If the rate for GS/OAS official travel financed by an outside organization is below the GS/OAS standard per-diem rate, the staff member is entitled to receive the difference between GS/OAS travel rate and the rate offered by the outside organization. The amount that GS/OAS and the outside organization will pay for an official travel should be the result of an agreement with the outside organization and should be properly documented. In

the event that a different rate or a special rate applies for per diem, each traveler will be required to attach or upload in the TEC system the written justification for the different or special rate of per diem.

13. Before departing from Headquarters, all travelers on official travel shall inform the corresponding Office of the GS/OAS in the Member State (the “GS/OAS Office”) to which they will travel. All travelers shall also notify that GS/OAS Office upon arrival to the country. If the GS/OAS Office is not on the traveler's itinerary, an email notification will suffice unless the Member State does not have a GS/OAS office, in which case a registration is not required.

13.1 Also, travelers shall always communicate to the Permanent Mission of the Government of the relevant Member State with regards to all official travel. This communication shall include the reason for the travel, a description of activities, the names of the travelers, the dates of travel, and shall be directed to the highest ranking official of the Permanent Mission. (See the Chief of Staff Memorandum dated 7/11/2012 dealing with “Communications to Permanent Missions relating to Official Travel” and Administrative Memorandum 65. This guidance can be found at www.oas.org/legal/spanish/OtrosInstrumentosAdm/CSSG071112.pdf and www.oas.org/legal/english/admmem/admmem65.htm .)

14. Scope: For the purpose of this revision, the automated Travel Expense Claim (TEC) system is intended to be used for the following types of travel: official travel, home leave travel, General Assembly and other group travel. Also for the purpose of this revision and due to existing restrictions, TECs would not be required for Staff for the following employment types: Special Observer Contract, Local Professional, TSP Temporary Support Personnel and Associate.

B. Administrative and Financial Procedures

1. Air Fares and Travel Reservations

- a. For all official travel (including travel for the OAS General Assembly and other group travel), the Requesting Area will be responsible for making the travel reservations through the PROC Travel Section, or with the appropriate travel supplier authorized by the GS/OAS. Once the fare cost is determined, the Requesting Area is required to prepare the requisition and purchase order in the name of the approved authorized travel supplier for the air fare and fees associated with the fare purchase. Except in unusual circumstances justified in writing, the purchase order must be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the travel date. Tickets will not be issued without the required approved purchase order reference number.
- b. Special considerations for the OAS General Assembly and other group travel: PROC is responsible for negotiating round-trip air fare costs to the Member State where the event will take place. All reservations are made based on the travel options provided to the traveler by the PROC Travel Section through

the Department of Conferences and Meetings Management (“DCMM”). Any changes to the negotiated travel fare reservations must be made in coordination and with the authorization from the PROC and the Requesting Area. The PROC Travel Section will provide DCMM with the travel ticket costs for the creation of a requisition and a purchase order in the name of the travel supplier to be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the travel date. Tickets will not be issued without the required approved purchase order reference number. Payment for airline tickets will be made upon receipt of the invoice from the travel supplier.

- c. The DHR is responsible for authorizing all statutory travel and for preparing the requisitions authorizing the statutory travel to be taken. The GS/OAS official travel supplier or the PROC Travel Section will provide the DHR with the actual ticket cost for the creation of a requisition and a purchase order to the travel supplier to be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the travel date. The traveler is responsible for making his/her travel reservations through the PROC Travel Section or with the appropriate travel supplier authorized by GS/OAS. Tickets will not be issued without the required approved purchase order reference number. Payment for airline tickets will be made upon receipt of the invoice from the travel supplier.

2. Travel Advances For Per diem and Terminal Expenses

In order to issue a travel advance, a requisition must be created to allow PROC to create and approve the corresponding purchase order using the OASES purchasing module. The advance purchase order would be considered the “Original PO.” The requisition for the advance should be entered using the OAS designated travel software and should include lines for per diem and terminal expenses, if applicable. It should also be prepared at the same time that the requisition line for the air fare is prepared, and must contain the following travel expense information: (i) The entire itinerary for the travel including dates and destinations; (ii) For travel with multiple segments with consecutive dates (no gap between destinations) one requisition must be created; if there are date gaps between travel segments, one requisition must be created for each segment (these are considered separate TECs); and (iii) The applicable per-diem rates, terminal expenses, and any foreseen miscellaneous travel expenses and statutory travel expenses. In situations where travelers justify additional expenses not covered by the Original P.O. but incurred by the traveler, the traveler must include these expenses in the TEC and an “Automated PO” will be created by the TEC system upon submission of the TEC. Additional expenses must be entered in the same TEC; new requisitions should not be entered to cover additional expenses.

a. General Assembly and Group Travel

- i. In the case of the OAS General Assembly and other group travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from airports, baggage fees, and departure taxes) should be paid to travelers by the

Department of Financial and Administrative Management Services (“DFAMS”) one week before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the traveler’s account at a financial institution on record.

- ii. The DCMM will create a requisition to pay the travel supplier issuing the tickets, and separate requisition lines to pay the travelers for the per-diem, terminal expenses and any other applicable travel expenses, including estimated fees associated with the ticket purchase and for any penalty charges for subsequent changes to the confirmed ticketed fare.

b. Statutory Travel

- i. In the case of statutory travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from the airports) should be paid to travelers by the DFAMS fifteen (15) days before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the staff member's account at a financial institution on record.
- ii. The DHR will create a requisition to pay the travel agency issuing the tickets and to pay the travelers for per-diem, terminal expenses and any applicable statutory expenses, including estimated fees associated with the ticket purchase and for any penalty charges for subsequent changes to the confirmed ticketed fare. The requisition lines for per diem and terminal expenses must be prepared at the same time that the requisition line for the air fare is prepared, and must contain the following travel expense information: (i) The entire itinerary for the travel including dates and destinations; and (ii) The applicable per-diem rates, terminal expenses, and any foreseen miscellaneous travel expenses and statutory travel expenses.

c. Official Travel

- i. In the case of official travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from the airports, baggage fees, and departure taxes) should be paid to travelers by the DFAMS one week before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the staff member's account at a financial institution on record. Any subsequent changes or charges to approved travel recorded against the “Original PO” that cannot be processed after the travel is completed through the TEC system, such as adding a new leg of travel to another country, will require a new requisition that must be obligated through the purchase order process.
- ii. The Requesting Area must create and approve a requisition to pay the traveler for all applicable travel advance expenses, including estimated fees paid by the traveler associated with the ticket purchase and for any

penalty charges for subsequent changes to the confirmed ticketed fare. Note that in almost all circumstances, the requisition line(s) to pay for ticket purchase are issued in the name of the travel supplier.

d. For all applicable Travel

The Automated TEC System allows registering and claiming additional expenses generating a new PO upon AMS/Administrative Personnel and Director's approval. This new PO is the "Automated PO" referred to above in section B.2. Industry standard fees for luggage and penalty fees must be fully documented, uploaded and or attached to the TEC. If said fees and penalties are added after travel, the area's TEC approver shall be responsible for approving the additional payment and a new Purchase Order will be automatically created. No new requisitions shall be created for the adjustments.

3. From approved travel requisitions, PROC will create and approve purchase orders and the DFAMS will manage an automated process to generate the invoices for payment of travel advances to the travelers. The TEC system will automatically generate the TEC record based on the "Original PO". The automated TEC will be created on the estimated return date as recorded in the advance requisition for the "Original PO". The traveler will receive an automated notice informing them of the creation of a new TEC record and that the completion of such record is required.
4. For the travel advance PO made for a traveler, the DFAMS automatically creates an invoice and generates a payment to be deposited in the traveler's account in a financial institution on his/her supplier record. For all travel, the DFAMS will pay for the airline tickets portion upon receipt of the invoice from the travel supplier.
5. After the PROC Travel Section or travel supplier has completed the travel arrangements, the traveler will be issued e-tickets. Under certain circumstances, the airfare can be paid to the traveler when the traveler must be reimbursed for additional travel he/she incurs as a result of direct orders received in writing from a supervisor, or other circumstances approved in writing by the Director of Procurement. In all circumstances, PROC must approve payment of air fare to the traveler instead of payment directly to an air carrier.
6. The traveler must pick-up and sign for the OAS Official Travel Document (Passport) at the DHR.
7. For home leave travel, the final approval for the TEC record should be registered into the system by the DHR for cases of travel financed by the Regular Fund, and by AMS/Administrative Personnel for travel financed with other type of funds.
8. All travelers returning from travel are required to complete and process all approvals in the automated TEC generated by the Automated TEC System within

thirty (30) days of their estimated return travel date as recorded on the "Original PO". However, TECs for Home Leave travel that require the final approval from DHR shall be completed and submitted within twenty (20) days after the TEC creation date. The TEC should include, as applicable, the following:

- For official travel, General Assembly and other group travel:

- a. Traveler's validation of information uploaded from the "Original PO" into the TEC system;
- b. Receipts (scanned and uploaded) for all expenses related to travel for which additional reimbursement is required;
- c. Scanned and uploaded boarding passes of each leg of the trip or the stamped passport pages with the entry in the country and traveler identification page; written justification for any exceptions/concessions; higher rates of per diem, additional airfare, first-class accommodations, etc.; and for travel with higher per diem, in addition to the justification with SAF authorization, the receipt for hotel expenses shall be added in the "Other Documentation" tab.
- d. Any other supporting documents.

- For home leave travel:

- a. Scanned and uploaded boarding passes of each leg of the trip for staff member and traveling dependents or the stamped passport pages with the entry in the country and traveler identification page;
- b. Any other supporting documents.

9. WHEN ACTUAL TRAVEL EXPENSE CLAIM EQUALS TO TRAVEL ADVANCE PAID: Should the TEC amount equal the amount of the travel advance purchase order, the traveler shall complete the information and upload boarding passes and any other required documentation. The AMS/Administrative Personnel reviews and approves the TEC and the TEC is automatically closed.
10. WHEN TEC RECONCILIATION PROCESS RESULTS IN REFUND TO THE GS/OAS: Should the TEC reconciliation indicate that the travel advance in the "Original PO" paid was more than the actual travel expenses included by the traveler, the traveler shall complete the TEC information and upload boarding passes and other required documentation to determine that the traveler owes a refund to the GS/OAS and shall reimburse the GS/OAS. Upon traveler's submission of the TEC, the system notifies the traveler about the settlement/refund amount and informs that it will be automatically deducted from his/her salary in the next end of the month payroll cycle. The AMS/Administrative Personnel reviews and approves the TEC. The TEC will be closed when DFAMS credits the payroll deduction to the original charged account/project and award.

11. **WHEN TRAVEL ADVANCE WAS PAID AND TRIP IS CANCELLED:** If the travel was cancelled or did not take place and the travel advance PO was paid to the traveler, the traveler must immediately refund the full amount of the travel advance to the GS/OAS no later than three days after TEC creation date by means of personal or cashier's check. TEC record will still be generated and the traveler must also record the cancellation in the TEC system no later than three business days after the TEC creation. The traveler shall upload a scanned copy of the refund check to the TEC record and send the check to DFAMS. If traveler fails to promptly reimburse the travel advance for cancelled travel and the TEC becomes delinquent, the traveler's payroll or any funds owed to the traveler will be withheld. The TEC will be closed when DFAMS receives the traveler's reimbursement check and credits the refunded amount to the original charged account/project and award.
 - a. **SPECIAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO POSTPONEMENT OR CHANGE OF TRAVEL DATES FOR HOME LEAVE PURPOSES:** once tickets are issued travel dates changes may occur at the expense of the staff member. In addition, Staff Rule 106.4 (k) states that "*A staff member who has received an advance of funds for home leave must return the funds to the General Secretariat if it is necessary to postpone the trip for more than 30 days.*"
12. **WHEN TEC RECONCILIATION PROCESS RESULTS IN REIMBURSEMENT TO THE TRAVELER:** Should the TEC reconciliation indicate that the travel advance in the "Original PO" paid was less than the actual travel expenses incurred by the traveler, the traveler shall complete the TEC and document the expenditures by uploading scanned copies of boarding passes and other required documents to support the additional expenses. The AMS/Administrative Personnel then reviews documentation uploaded from the traveler, and identifies the account or project/award for the new expenditures. The Director then approves the TEC record if warranted. Director's approval is not required if reimbursement due to traveler is less than 15% of the Original PO amount, up to a maximum of \$1,000. Upon the Director's approval a new PO to cover the reimbursement to the traveler is generated automatically (the "Automated PO"). The TEC will be closed when DFAMS generates the invoices for the Automated POs to reimburse additional expenses and payment is issued to the traveler. The payment will be deposited in the traveler's account in the traveler's financial institution of record.
13. TECs not finalized within thirty (30) days from the TEC creation date will be considered in DELINQUENT status. A TEC is finalized when it is completed; submitted and all required approvals are processed. The traveler will receive several automated notifications from the TEC System on the delinquency status and the traveler's payroll or any funds owing to the traveler will be withheld.
14. All automated TECS must be reviewed and approved by the Administrative Offices/AMS responsible for the execution of the funds of the GS/OAS

dependency and/or Chapter that paid for the travel. The Administrative Officers/AMS performs the review of travel documentation, the approval of the travel expense claimed, and if required, the creation of the automated PO when travelers incur unplanned expenses and require additional payment. The creation of the automated PO shall be carried out by the Administrative Personnel who has requisition approver responsibility in OASES. However, in those cases where the creation of the automated PO is carried out by an administrative officer with preparer responsibility in OASES, and to whom the exception to approve TECs was granted by written e-mail authorization from the department's director, such authorization must be uploaded into those TECS that require approval of additional funds. This attachment is required since the system generates an automated PO to reserve funds and reimburse the traveler (reference Bulletin SAF 169-12 dated November 12, 2012).

15. Penalty charges caused by changes in travel plans made for personal reasons must be paid to the travel supplier directly by the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the OAS.

C. Travel Document Retention

All automated TECs will be retained in the TEC System for periodic auditing purposes and are considered official documents for retention of documents requirement purposes; therefore, for the automated TECs, the traveler does not have to maintain hard copy records after the TEC has been closed.

For TECs in Form 7 (Paper TECs) and originals of the supporting documentation, according to the Records Management Manual (Fifth Edition 2000) OEA/Ser.D/1.7 pages 42 & 60, travel documents shall be retained by the employee, as they may be required for auditing for 6 years;

D. TEC Review for Separation.

When staff is separating from the Organization, a TEC review is conducted and the employee must ensure that the mandatory TECs for trips since August 2010 (when TEC submission thru the OASES ticket system was initiated) for up to 6 years have been submitted and reviewed.

TECs prior to implementation of the TEC System (November 2012) must have been submitted in the Form 7 through OASES tickets and the employee should provide copies of the TECs or the numbers of the OASES Customer Service Ticket in which the TECs were submitted for review.

Automated TECs must all be approved, and the verification will be done by DFAMS in the TEC System.

NOTE: Staff Members who separate from service and who cannot substantiate their travel expenses as required shall reimburse the General Secretariat through deductions from any remuneration that may be owed to the Staff Member upon separation from service. Please also see section F regarding accountability.

E. Reporting

1. Supervisors who authorize travel should submit to the Office of the Secretary General, a quarterly *Report on Official Travel* that summarizes all travel carried out during the three months prior to the report. The report should be submitted by the 15th day of the following month. This document should specify the reason and cost of each travel, the staff members involved, and the accomplishments achieved on the official travel. This document should also report on the class of official travel carried out during the quarter, i.e. first, business, and economy class for tickets purchased by GS/OAS.
2. Unplanned travel shall be identified separately in the *Report on Official Travel* and will be justified in terms of its contribution to fulfilling the goals of the Organization.
3. Both the *Official Travel Plan* and the *Report on Official Travel* should cover only travel related to the official activities of the area in question. Statutory travel, OAS General Assembly, and other group travel should not be included in these documents.

F. Accountability

The Automated TEC System places the responsibility for reviewing and approving Travel Expense Claims in the technical area.

Nevertheless, all travelers shall be responsible for the representations made with regard to travel, and by submitting the TEC, warrant as a condition of continued employment that the statements made therein are, to the best of their knowledge, the truth.

Nothing in this memorandum shall impede any of the internal or external auditing necessities of the OAS and its General Secretariat.