

The Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-NEW

Foreign Travel Proposal

June 2008

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

Laws and Regulations

- 22 CFR 51.3
- Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.131
- USDA Regulation DM 2300-1
- U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM), Volume 2 - General - 116.1-6

Forest Service is seeking approval to collect information from private citizens (not Federal employees) traveling to foreign countries on behalf of the Agency. The collection of this information is necessary to facilitate timely issuance of foreign travel authorizations, including the release, issuance, and/or renewal of official United States government passports; issuance of necessary visas; and country clearance. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) International Programs Travel Section uses FS-6500-1 (Foreign Travel Proposal) to collect the information.

This ongoing collection does not have an OMB number. The discovery of this information collection occurred during a routine business review of form FS-6500-1 (Foreign Travel Proposal). The Forest Service contacted the staff sponsor of the form and took immediate action to bring this collection into compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Federal Travel Regulations - part 301-10 covers transportation expenses for those whose air travel is financed by U.S. Government funds. USDA Departmental regulation, DM 2300-1, is the primary source of USDA policy on managing temporary duty travel for private citizens (not Federal employees) traveling to foreign countries on behalf of the Forest Service.

According to 2 FAM 116.1-6(b) all Department of State and agencies with a .mil or .gov e-mail address, as well as ndu.edu, frb.org, or si.org, must send country clearance requests through the Department of State's eCountry Clearance (eCC) program (<https://ecc.state.gov/security/EccLogin.aspx>). All classified clearance requests are still sent by cable.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

- a. What information will be collected - reported or recorded? (If there**

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are pieces of information that are especially burdensome in the collection, a specific explanation should be provided.)

Information collected includes the traveler's destination, purpose of trip, and dates of travel. Also collected are name, address, contact telephone numbers, passport information, security clearance, as well as contacts at each destination and hotel information. Federal government employees provide date and place of birth or social security number; non-US government employees do not have to provide their date and place of birth or social security number.

- b. From whom will the information be collected? If there are different respondent categories (e.g., loan applicant versus a bank versus an appraiser), each should be described along with the type of collection activity that applies.**

The information is collected from non-Federally employed individuals who are traveling outside the United States on behalf or at the request of the Forest Service.

- c. What will this information be used for - provide ALL uses? Timely preparation of foreign travel document such as passports, visas and country clearances.**

Use of the information provided by the traveler (or their designee) depends upon circumstances. Name, place of birth, and passport information is sent to each trip destination's United States embassy via a country clearance cable and is necessary to obtain the embassy's approval for the trip. Security clearance is necessary to allow the traveler entry to specific areas within United States embassies abroad. The embassies use the destination information for contact purposes.

- d. How will the information be collected (e.g., forms, non-forms, electronically, face-to-face, over the phone, over the Internet)? Does the respondent have multiple options for providing the information? If so, what are they?**

The information is collected on form FS-6500-1, Foreign Travel Proposal. This form can be filled out electronically or on hardcopy. Information is also obtained over the telephone or via e-mail messages.

- e. How frequently will the information be collected?**

The information is collected for each trip taken, on average one time per year.

- f. Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government?**

This information is shared with the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service; US State Department; foreign embassies in Washington, DC; and United States embassies in all destination countries.

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g. If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time?

This ongoing collection does not have an OMB number. Requirements are based on State Department requirements.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

By offering respondents numerous methods of reply, the Agency is taking advantage of currently available technology. The form FS-6500-1 is available electronically or hardcopy. Respondents can use the telephone to share the information with the Forest Service International Programs Travel Section.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The Forest Service does not have another method of collecting this information. This is a one-of-a-kind collection and required information is not obtainable by other methods.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Form FS-6500-1 is completed by Federal employees and individuals not employed by the Federal government, traveling outside the United States at the request of the Forest Service. The form is not long and completion is not burdensome.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Without this information, the Forest Service cannot provide travel coordination support to international programs or other countries requesting the Agency's assistance. In addition, the information is necessary to approve an individual's request to travel on behalf of the Agency. The information gathered allows the Forest Service to meet State Department requirements.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;

Information must be collected with each trip because the International Programs Travel Office does not retain this information. Note that the Federal Register Notice dated December 31, 2007, contained an error. The

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Notice stated, "The International Programs Travel Section does maintain files beyond the end of each trip." The Notice should have read, "The International Programs Travel Section does not maintain files beyond the end of each trip."

- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

The response time is totally dependent on the time frame of the travel. For example if the travel begins within 30 days, receipt of the form must occur in advance of the departure date.

- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are additional special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

A Federal Register Notice for the 60-day comment period was published in Volume 72, page 74266, on December 31, 2007. One comment was received from B. Sachau; it was not relevant to this information collection request.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain

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their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

Proponent sent e-mails to several individuals seeking comments on this information collection. The following responses were received:

- Melissa Othman/NONFS/USDAFS (mothman@fs.fed.us), dialogue@netptc.net

“I think the form is easy to understand. I have made a couple of comments on the instruction page (typos and clarifying language), so use as you see fit. My additions are in bold italics.

“Instructions Part I

1. Location: You may want to add a few words to clarify this further since some folks may be non-USFS. I would suggest the following: ‘Please select Region/Station *that you are affiliated with* from the drop down menu’
4. Should read ‘Enter all countries where you will be working’ (delete ‘in’)
7. Should read ‘Be accurate, visas and country clearances are based on this information.’

“Part II

3. Should read ‘Miscellaneous expenses - Amount respondent needs to cover *for* approved expenses not covered under M&IE’
5. You may want to clarify if this includes salary

“Part III

1. ‘manor’ should be ‘*manner*’

Otherwise, looks good and is easy to read.

Melissa”

- Michael Olwyler, dialogue@netptc.net

“I have one comments [sic] on the FS-6500-1 form you asked me to review. It is...

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"The signatures - it would be good to indicate who these must be, so the line might look like this:

'PART IV - SIGNATURE - Your Direct Supervisor; Forest Supervisor; Regional Forester' OR "PART IV - SIGNATURE - your three succeeding supervisors in the chain of command'

"Otherwise, once one is familiar with how the system works, it goes quite well and the form is pretty understandable."

Forest Service Response: "Thank you for responding. Would love to implement that suggestion, but all the regions and stations have a different chain of command when it comes to signing off on these forms. We do keep trying."

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than re-enumeration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gifts are made to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Executive Order 9397 authorizes the collection and use of Social Security Numbers and Public Law 107-71 authorizes the collection and use of Passport Numbers. Collection and use are covered under Privacy Act System of Records USDA/OP-1 (Personnel and Payroll System of USDA Employees) and are consistent with the provisions of 5 USC 552a (Privacy Act of 1974). USDA/OP-1 also covers information collected from volunteers.

The collected information is kept in a secure location and destroyed once the trip has concluded.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No questions of a sensitive nature are included in this information collection.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form.**

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- a) Description of the collection activity**
- b) Corresponding form number (if applicable)**
- c) Number of respondents**
- d) Number of responses annually per respondent,**
- e) Total annual responses (columns c x d)**
- f) Estimated hours per response**
- g) Total annual burden hours (columns e x f)**

Table 1: Estimated Annual Burden Hours

(a) Description of the Collection Activity	(b) Form Number	(c) Number of Respondents	(d) Number of responses annually per Respondent	(e) Total annual responses (c x d)	(f) Estimate of Burden Hours per response	(g) Total Annual Burden Hours (e x f)
Collection of information required to complete Foreign Travel Proposal	FS-6500-1	25	1	25	15 minutes	6.25 hours

- **Record keeping burden should be addressed separately and should include columns for:**
 - a) Description of record keeping activity:** None
 - b) Number of record keepers:** None
 - c) Annual hours per record keeper:** None
 - d) Total annual record keeping hours (columns b x c):** Zero
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

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Table 2: Estimated Cost to Respondents

(a) Description of the Collection Activity	(b) Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents (Hours)	(c)* Estimated Average Income per Hour	(d) Estimated Cost to Respondents
Collecting of information required to complete Foreign Travel Proposal	6.5 hours	\$31.08	\$202

Most non-federally employed travelers traveling on behalf of the Forest Service are post-secondary academics¹ and scientists². Based on information from the Bureau of Labor, the average annually salary for university faculty members in 2006-2007 was \$73, 207; and for soil and plant scientists in 2006 was \$56,080. The average hourly salary calculated as follows:

$$\$73,207 + \$56,080 = \$129,287$$

$$\$129,287 \div 2 = \$64,643.5$$

$$\$64,643.5 \div 52 \text{ weeks} = \$1,243 \text{ per week}$$

$$\$1,243 \text{ per week} \div 40 \text{ hours per week} = \$31.08 \text{ per hour}$$

$$\$31.08 \text{ per hour} \times 6.5 \text{ hours} = \$202$$

¹ <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos066.htm>

² <http://www.bls.gov/oco/reprints/ocor003.pdf> (page 5)

- 13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.**

There are no capital operation and maintenance costs.

- 14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

The response to this question covers the actual costs the agency will incur as a result of implementing the information collection. The estimate should cover the entire life cycle of the collection and include costs, if applicable, for:

Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, storing forms

Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection

Employee travel costs

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Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information

Employee labor and materials for collecting the information

Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information

The estimated annualized cost to the Federal government calculated as follows:

- The FS-6500-1 distribution, collection, and processing is done by an international travel specialist, who is paid at the GS-12 level. The hourly salary for a GS-12/step 5 employee in the Washington DC area is \$37.89 per hour. Cumulatively, the estimated time for completion of these tasks is 30 minutes per form.
 - o $\$37.89/\text{hour} \times 1.3 \text{ cost to govt.} = \$49.26/\text{hourly cost to the government}$
 - o $\$49.26/\text{hour} \times .5 \text{ hour/form} = \$24.63/\text{form} \times 25 \text{ forms processed annually} \approx \$616 \text{ annual cost to the government}$
- Various management officials' review and approve the FS-6500-1. The pay levels for these officials range from GS-14/step 5 or GS-15/step 5, to a member of the Senior Executive Service. To determine the average hourly rate, the average of a GS-14/step 5 (\$53.24/hour) was added to the average of a GS-15/step 5 (\$62.62/hour) and the total was divided by 2, then added to the average Senior Executive Service hourly salary (\$68.91) and divided by 2. The final cost to the Federal government per hour was determined by multiplying the final average hourly salary by 1.3. Estimates are that it takes a management official (on average) 10 minutes to review and approve each FS-6500-1:
 - o $\$53.24/\text{hour} + \$62.62/\text{hour} = 115.86/\text{hour} \div 2 = \$57.93/\text{hour}$
 - o $\$57.93/\text{hour} + \$68.91/\text{hour} = \$126.84/\text{hour} \div 2 = \$63.42/\text{hour}$
 - o $\$63.42/\text{hour} \times 1.3 \text{ cost to govt.} = \$82.45/\text{hourly cost to the government}$
 - o $\$82.45/\text{hour} \times .167/\text{hour per form} = \$13.70/\text{form} \times 25 \text{ forms processed annually} \approx \$344 \text{ annual cost to the government}$
- Total cost to the Federal Government for this information collection was calculated as follows:
 - o Annual Cost - Distribution, collection, processing FS-6500-1: \$616
 - o Annual Cost - Review and approval of FS-6500-1: \$344
 - o $\$616 + \$344 = \$960$

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Table 3 - Estimated Annualized cost to the Federal Government

ACTION ITEM	PERSONNEL	GS LEVEL	HOURLY RATE*	HOURS	SALARY
Distribution, collection, processing FS-6500-1	International Travel Specialist	GS-12/5	\$49.26	12.5	\$616
Review and approval of FS-6500-1	Management Official	Varies	\$82.45	4.167	\$344
Total Cost to the Federal Government for this Information Collection	---	---	---	---	\$960

- Taken from: <http://www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/index.asp>, Cost to Government calculated at hourly wage multiplied by 1.3

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of OMB form 83-I.

This is a new information collection.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

Results will not be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

Agency plans on displaying expiration date on form FS-6500-1.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."

No exceptions needed.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.