Working from Abroad Tracking Tool

October - 2021

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A RES Forum member organisation are working on a (post-pandemic) working from abroad (WFA) policy with an expected go live date in January 2022. The roll-out should be accompanied by the implementation of an approval / tracking tool, either from an external vendor or internally built. The tool decision is being challenged by their stakeholders ("Do we really need it..?"). In order to support their conversations going forward they would like to understand if other companies track their WFA workforce, which tool they use and the main reasons for tracking their WFA population. Of interest to them for this survey are WFA programs that support individual need cases, i.e. WFA is not triggered by a business need (e.g. assignment, relocation), but an employee's personal request (e.g. to work from Spain for 2 weeks).

Survey Start Date: 2021-10-29

Survey End Date: 2021-11-05

No. of respondents: 25

Participated Companies:

- abrdn Plc
- adidas
- Arup
- Bae Systems
- BCG
- BCLP Law
- Disney
- Equinix
- EY
- guestsu@ebrd.com
- Hapag-Lloyd AG
- Hopin
- IBM
- Inter IKEA Group
- Jaguar Land Rover
- Micron Technology Inc
- RELEX Solutions
- RFE/RL Inc.
- Santen Pharmaceutical Asia Pte. Ltd.
- SAP SE
- Shopify
- sorensturuptoft@bytedance.com
- T. Rowe Price
- Vopak

Question 1:
 Does your company offer a Working from Abroad (WFA) program outside of a classic mobility program (assignments, relocations) or intends to implement one in the upcoming months?

19/25 (76%) - True

6/25 (24%) - False

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Question 2:
 Do you use a tool for WFA approval and/or tracking purposes?

16/25 (64%) - True

9/25 (36%) - False

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Question 3:
 If you use a tool, is the tool from an external provider or an internal tool? Which tool / provider?

3/25 (12%) - Tool from an external provider
14/25 (56%) - Internal tool
8/25 (32%) - Please add which tool / provider

Further Comments

1) Don\'t use a tool

2) We do not use a tool for approval

3) Email request/approval. Emails go HR Business Partners.

4) We leverage Pinpoint (by Equus). We have a year\'s experience with it. While designed for business traveler compliance, it helps us track the WFA population, monitor return dates, do a quick assessment of tax, social security and PW requirements, and store individual documentation. I would be happy to have a conversation about what works well/less well re using the tool

5) Do not use a tool

6) Equus Pinpoint

7) we use air table - ticketing request

8) Answer on question 2 was \"false\" - only excel for tracking so far.

9) Staff seeking to work away from their contractual location must request approval. The seniority of the approval is dependent upon the length of time that the staff member is requesting to be abroad.

10) Plain old excel sheet.

11) Manual spreadsheet tracking!

12) We aggressive communicate that working outside an individual\'s country of employment is against company policy and can have significant consequences as a violation of firm code of ethics.

13) No tool, but this is a mandatory question.

14) Currently manually tracking via excel sheets but trying to make the case for a better system, also to cover IBT compliance risk assessment/tracking

15) We currently use a Sharepoint site database but are looking for an off the shelf solution (e.g. Topia or something similar from one of the Big Four).

16) Internal - HRIS - Workday

17) We will be implemented the EY STBV tool as well as putting our own tracking and auditing in place for assignments/extended business travel abroad

18) Manual process - form shared with employees for completion & signature

19) Still too early to comment, as discussing about the approach and supporting technology

20) We are working on a WFA policy which limits time spent abroad to 30 days. We think this is an acceptable risk threshold. Employees must avoid doing certain activity to protect against corporate tax issues. We therefore don\'t anticipate time spent WFA to trigger any compliance issues

(employees must have the right to work overseas). We don\'t anticipate reviewing each application - the only approval required will be from the manager

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Question 4:
 What are your main reasons for tracking your WFA workforce?

14/20 (70%) - Individual Tax
17/20 (85%) - Corporate Tax
9/20 (45%) - Labor Llaw
17/20 (85%) - Social Security
3/20 (15%) - Data Privacy
7/20 (35%) - Other (please add)

Further Comments

1) To clarify - we did allow a limited WFA during the pandemics, but discontinued it from September 2021 on for (the above) compliance reasons. At first we did not put limits on it. Then, the employees had to combine their WFA with the same amount of vacation, e.g. two weeks of working abroad + two weeks of vacation abroad.

2) Immigration

3) Safety and Security (Emergency assistance)

4) Regulatory/licensing, immigration.

5) duty of care and employee welfare.

6) immigration

7) increase in governance surrounding global travel post covid has meant that travel has come under the wings of GM. The tool allows us to have a compliant oversight of who is travelling where and for how long

8) Immigration, local country\'s home office/mobile working policy

9) We will review export controls for certain individuals dealing with higher risk data.

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