




OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

August 7, 2013

Memorandum

To: Eric Eisenstein
Division Chief, Internal Control and Audit Follow-up
Office of Financial Management

From: Michael P. Colombo 
Western Regional Manager for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

Subject: Verification Review of Recommendations for the Evaluation Report, "Evaluation of Office of Insular Affairs' Program Management" (WR-EV-OIA-0007-2008, May 2010)
Report No. WR-VS-OIA-0020-2013

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed a verification review of the three recommendations presented in the subject evaluation report. Our objective was to determine whether the recommendations were implemented by the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) as reported to the Office of Financial Management (PFM), Office of Policy, Management and Budget (PMB). PFM reported to OIG when OIA had addressed and provided supporting documentation for each of the three recommendations in the subject report. As a result, the evaluation report effectively closed February 29, 2012. Based on our verification, we consider all three recommendations implemented.

Background

Our May 2010 evaluation report, "Evaluation of Office of Insular Affairs' Program Management," contained three recommendations relating to OIA's effectiveness in assisting the Insular Areas: the four U.S. territories and three independent countries freely associated with the United States.

In a memorandum dated June 30, 2010, OIA concurred with all findings and recommendations in the final report. OIA also provided a list of the recommendations, along with the associated actions that it had completed, begun, or planned. Based on this response, we considered all three recommendations resolved but not implemented. On July 14, 2010, we referred the recommendations to PMB for implementation tracking.

In memoranda dated September 20, 2010; September 30, 2011; and February 29, 2012, PFM reported that OIA had implemented all recommendations. PFM closed the evaluation report.

Scope and Methodology

The scope of this review was limited to determining whether OIA took action to implement the recommendations. To accomplish our objective, we reviewed the supporting documentation that OIA officials provided and discussed actions taken related to each of the three recommendations.

We did not perform any site visits or conduct fieldwork to determine whether OIA corrected the underlying deficiencies that we initially identified. As a result, this review was not conducted in accordance with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States or the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

Results of Review

OIA has satisfactorily implemented all three of OIG's recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Evaluate OIA's staff utilization and location and clarify their duties in order to most effectively accomplish OIA's mission.

In response to the recommendation, OIA completed a survey of its employees to help identify areas for improvement. OIA division directors and division employees met one-on-one to review current position descriptions and update them as necessary. In addition, OIA developed a workforce plan in response to a recommendation made by the Government Accountability Office in its March 2010 report, "U.S. Insular Areas: Opportunities Exist to Improve Interior's Grant Oversight and Reduce the Potential for Mismanagement." Based on our review of the available documentation and discussion with the OIA accountability policy specialist, we conclude that Recommendation 1 has been resolved and implemented.

Recommendation 2: Consider the strategies proposed in the [Senior Executive Service (SES)] candidates report for improved coordination with other Federal agencies to increase Federal responsiveness to the needs of the territories.

OIA reviewed the SES report and found that the report oversimplified the activities necessary to develop policies specific to the insular areas and the actions of targeting and pooling Federal resources. Despite this finding regarding the general approach of the report, OIA concluded that the strategies proposed in the SES report mirror the ongoing activities of OIA and other Federal agencies. After reviewing the available documentation and speaking with the OIA accountability policy specialist, we determined that OIA considered the strategies in the SES report and continues to coordinate with other agencies. We conclude that Recommendation 2 has been resolved and implemented.

Recommendation 3: Revise OIA's performance goals and measures to correspond with OIA's current mission.

OIA contracted with the International Institute, Graduate School in May 2008 to develop performance measures. The Graduate School completed a report in October 2010 that identified performance measures in seven categories. OIA selected several measures from the report that it believed better correspond with OIA's mission. These updated performance goals and measures were included in OIA's fiscal year 2012 budget justification and in DOI's "Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2012-2016." Based on our review of the available documentation, we conclude that Recommendation 3 has been resolved and implemented.

Conclusion

We informed the OIA accountability policy specialist of the results of this review via email on July 24, 2013. OIA concurred with the report findings.

cc: Nikolao Pula, Director, Office of Insular Affairs
Nancy Thomas, DOI/GAO Liaison, Office of Financial Management
Marina Tinitali, Liaison Officer, Office of Insular Affairs