



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JAN 14 2011

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** OIG Report, "EPA's Office of Research and Development Performance Measures Need Improvement," (Report No. 10-P-0176), August 4, 2010

**TO:** Paul Anastas  
Assistant Administrator for Research and Development

Thank you for your recent response to the above report. We appreciate the additional information provided by the Office of Research and Development (ORD) in the revised corrective action plans for Recommendations 2-2, 2-6, and 2-7. As shown in the attached OIG Action Plan Analysis, we accept the revised corrective action plans for Recommendations 2-2, 2-6, and 2-7. We previously closed Recommendations 2-1, 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5 when we issued the final report. All of the report's recommendations are now closed. Additional discussion of these points is in the attached OIG Action Plan Analysis.

We appreciate your commitment to address the OIG report recommendations. In accordance with OIG policy, we will periodically follow up to determine how well the Agency's ongoing and planned actions have addressed the recommendations. If you or your staff have any questions regarding this memo, please have your staff contact Wade Najjum, Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation at (202) 566-0827, Rick Beusse at (919) 541-5747, or John Bishop at (919) 541-1028.

Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.

Attachment

cc: Lek Kadeli, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Management, ORD  
Kevin Teichman, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science, ORD  
Amy Battaglia, Director, Office of Resources Management and Administration, ORD  
Randall Wentsel, National Program Director, Land Research Program, ORD  
Deborah Heckman, Acting Staff Chief, Resource Management Support Staff, ORD  
Jorge Rangel, ORD Audit Follow-up Coordinator  
Norman Adkins, ORD Audit Follow-up Coordinator  
Wade Najjum, Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation, OIG  
Elizabeth Grossman, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation, OIG  
Rick Beusse, Director for Program Evaluation - Air & Research Issues, OIG  
John Bishop, Project Manager, Office of Program Evaluation, OIG

OIG Recommendation	Agency Action(s) Taken, Ongoing, or Planned	OIG Analysis	Status
<p>2-1 Develop one or more measures linked to the short-term outcomes identified in the LRP MYP.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD agreed to develop procedures, which the Land Research Program (LRP) National Program Director (NPD) and laboratory line management will follow, to produce one or more measures linked to the short-term outcomes. ORD also responded that it will publish a report on recent outcomes of the LRP. Subsequent to ORD's response to the draft report, we requested and received clarification from ORD that it will develop short-term outcome measures for LRP by January 2011.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> ORD agreed to develop short-term outcome measures for LRP by January 2011.</p>	<p>We accept ORD's planned actions and the timeline for completion of the recommendation.</p>	<p>Recommendation closed when final report issued (08/4/10).</p>
<p>2-2 Augment the LRP's citation analysis measures (PART Measures 1 and 2) with measures that are meaningful to ORD program managers, and that are linked specifically to the LRP's goals and objectives.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD will develop measures that are meaningful to ORD's program managers. ORD is working with program managers to develop meaningful measures that assess progress in responding to ORD's goals and objectives.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> Planned completion date of September 30, 2011.</p>	<p>We accept ORD's ongoing and planned actions and the timeline for completion.</p>	<p>Propose closing the Recommendation</p>
<p>2-3 Develop an implementation plan for the LRP client survey to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the universe of LRP clients,</li> <li>- Randomly select an appropriate target population,</li> <li>- Conduct a representative survey of LRP clients, and</li> <li>- Obtain a statistically valid response rate.</li> </ul> <p>If ORD decides not to use the client survey tool, then ORD should develop a reliable alternative mechanism for collecting customer feedback along with an implementation plan for the alternative mechanism.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD stated that it will develop a plan for obtaining LRP partner feedback.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> Planned completion date of February 2011.</p>	<p>We accept ORD's planned actions and the timeline for completion of the recommendation.</p>	<p>Recommendation closed when final report issued (08/4/10).</p>

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<p>2-4 Provide BOSC with the following performance measurement data prior to full program reviews: (1) the results of the most recent client survey (or its alternative mechanism for collecting client feedback), (2) data sufficient to assess LRP's progress towards achieving program goals and outcomes, and (3) other data needed to support each of BOSC's peer review charge questions.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD will provide the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) with the information listed (results of the most recent client survey or alternative; data on LRP's progress in achieving program goals and outcomes; and data to support each peer review charge question) to inform future BOSC reviews as appropriate for each new research program review. Subsequent to ORD's response to the draft report, we requested and received clarification from ORD that it will provide performance information to BOSC prior to the research program reviews.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> ORD will provide BOSC with the information listed in the recommendation as appropriate for each new research program review.</p>	<p>We accept ORD's planned actions and the timeline for completion of the recommendation.</p>	<p>Recommendation closed when final report issued (08/4/10).</p>
<p>2-5 Require that BOSC program review reports include an explicit discussion of the reliability and suitability of the performance data that ORD provided to BOSC for each charge question and factor considered.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD will revise the BOSC Program Review Report Guidance document by June 2011 to include this recommendation (an explicit discussion of the reliability and suitability of the performance data for each charge question and factor considered).</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> Planned completion date of June 2011.</p>	<p>We accept ORD's planned actions and the timeline for completion of the recommendation.</p>	<p>Recommendation closed when final report issued (08/4/10).</p>
<p>2-6 Revise ORD's guidance to BOSC for LTG ratings to ensure that all aspects of the summary assessment charge questions are clearly linked to the qualitative ratings definitions.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD is currently examining how to improve the BOSC program evaluation process. ORD will review the Long-Term Goal (LTG) rating guidance provided to the BOSC and, to the extent appropriate, will more clearly link charge questions to the qualitative rating definitions.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> Planned completion date of August 31, 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal discussions will be held with the ORD National Program Directors (NPDs), the Office of Science Policy (OSP), the Office of Resource Management and Accountability (ORMA), and the Immediate Office of the Assistant Administrator (IOAA) to discuss the BOSC review process, including the LTG ratings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dates for discussions: January 2011 - October 2011.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discussions will be held with the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) and the Office of Management and Budget</li> </ul>	<p>We accept ORD's planned actions and the timeline for completion of the recommendation.</p>	<p>Propose closing the Recommendation</p>

OIG Recommendation	Agency Action(s) Taken, Ongoing, or Planned	OIG Analysis	Status
	(OMB). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dates for discussions: June 2011 – June 2012.</li> <li>● BOSC guidance on LTG rating tools will be revised:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Date for completion August 31, 2012.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
2-7 Supplement the current general LTG ratings definitions with program-specific milestones, and benchmarks for success, that are linked to elements in the LTG ratings definitions.	<p><u>Proposed Corrective Action:</u> ORD, in reviewing the BOSC process, will supplement the current LTG rating definitions to the extent appropriate, with guidance that includes milestones and benchmarks for success.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> Planned completion date of August 31, 2012.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> Planned completion date of August 31, 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Internal discussions will be held with the ORD National Program Directors (NPDs), the Office of Science Policy (OSP), the Office of Resource Management and Accountability (ORMA), and the Immediate Office of the Assistant Administrator (IOAA) to discuss the BOSC review process, including the LTG ratings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dates for discussions: January 2011 - October 2011.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Discussions will be held with the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dates for discussions: June 2011 – June 2012.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● BOSC guidance on LTG rating tools will be revised:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Date for completion August 31, 2012.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	We accept ORD's planned actions and the timeline for completion of the recommendation.	Propose closing the Recommendation