At a Glance

EPA Needs to Improve Its Information Technology Audit Follow-Up Processes

What We Found

The EPA's audit follow-up oversight for offices reviewed did not ensure that agreed-to corrective actions were fully implemented, carried out timely, accurately recorded or managed effectively in the agency's Management Audit Tracking System (MATS). In addition, corrective actions were not always verified even though the corrective actions were recorded as completed in MATS. The high rate of unreliable data in MATS and a lack of management follow-through to verify that corrective actions address weaknesses raise significant doubts and questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the EPA's information security program.

> **The EPA's goals to provide its workforce and the public with accurate information about human health and environmental risks—and set a secure foundation for informed decision-making—are undermined when the agency does not timely correct deficiencies weakening the integrity of its computer network.**

Recommendations and Corrective Actions

We recommend that the Chief Information Officer, Office of Environmental Information, develop and implement formal processes to strengthen internal controls for monitoring and completing corrective actions on all open audits, and maintain documentation to support corrective actions taken. Additionally, we recommend that a workforce study be conducted to determine the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the duties of the Audit Follow-Up Coordinator, and appropriately staff the position. We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management implement formal processes to reinforce requirements that action officials comply with intended audit management practices. We recommend that the Chief Financial Officer implement a strategy to ensure personnel understand their audit follow-up responsibilities.

The EPA agreed with Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, and suggested an alternative corrective action for Recommendation 1. We believe the alternative recommendation would address our concerns and the agency provided a date when it would complete the corrective action. The EPA completed corrective actions for Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7. Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 are open with corrective actions pending.