



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

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 26, 2019

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Project Notification:  
Hotline: EPA Office of Mission Support Controls for Carrying Out Its Responsibility to  
Develop and Coordinate an Agencywide Quality System  
Project No. OA&E-FY19-0329

**FROM:** Patrick Gilbride, Director /s/  
Environmental Research Programs Directorate  
Office of Audit and Evaluation

**TO:** Donna Vizian, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Office of Mission Support

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin an audit on the EPA's quality system overseen by the Office of Mission Support (OMS). This project is a result of hotline complaints.

The OIG's objective is to determine whether the OMS has controls in place to carry out its responsibility in developing and coordinating the mandatory agencywide quality system. The quality system provides the framework for planning, implementing, documenting and assessing work performed by the agency; and for carrying out required quality assurance and quality control activities. Each EPA program and regional office develops and implements its own individual system in support of the EPA quality system, and OMS has oversight responsibility for the agencywide quality system.

The OIG plans to conduct work at EPA headquarters (OMS Office of Enterprise Information Programs). We may also survey and/or interview quality system contacts in program and regional offices. Applicable generally accepted government auditing standards will be used in conducting our project. The anticipated benefits of this project include: (a) providing an objective analysis of the OMS's management of the quality system; (b) identifying any improvements to the EPA's quality system; and (c) avoiding potential costs and negative impacts to human health and the environment that can be caused by lack of adequate quality assurance.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to schedule a kickoff meeting and discuss our objective and the purpose of our project. We would also be particularly interested in any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any of your questions about the project process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the course of the project. Throughout the project, we will provide updates on a regular basis, as agreed upon at the kickoff meeting.

Before or at the kickoff meeting, please provide the following information:

1. In the August 8, 2019, Fiscal Year 2019 Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act Assurance Letter, the OMS provided a statement of assurance and included Attachment 1 indicating that internal controls are designed/implemented, and all operate effectively. Please provide the OMS's assessment supporting Attachment 1, such as a description of the OMS's testing to ensure effective operations.
2. Per EPA's Quality Policy ([CIO 2106](#)):
  - a. The most recent annual agency-wide Quality Progress Review.
  - b. The most recent Management Action Plan.
  - c. Documentation of the established process to facilitate cross-agency notification of issues or problems with products or services that may adversely impact agency operations.
  - d. Documents noting any quality-related issues or problems for products or services covered by CIO 2106 that may adversely impact other agency operations or organization that have been reported in the past 5 years.
3. Per the [December 2014 Memorandum \("Request for Quality Assurance Annual Report and Work Plan"\)](#), EPA organizations that conduct environmental operations are to submit their Quality Assurance Annual Report and Work Plan (QAARWP) to the quality staff. Please provide a description of what quality staff does with QAARWPs, as well as copies of each organization's QAARWPs for the past 2 fiscal years (2018 and 2019).
4. Per Section 7.5 of CIO 2105-P-02.0, *EPA QA Field Activities Procedure*, "quality staff conducts Quality System Assessments (QSAs) of EPA organizations to evaluate their conformance with the agency's quality policies and procedures. ... Quality staff will document the results of this evaluation in the EPA organization's QSA Final Report." Please provide copies of each organization's most recent final report, as well as any overall/summary report OMS quality staff may have prepared.
5. The final report, [Evaluating the Effectiveness of the EPA Quality System](#), conducted in November 2014 by Industrial Economics Inc. for the EPA's Office of Policy and Office of Environmental Information, included six recommendations. Please provide information on the implementation of recommendations from that report.
6. Please provide information on the Quality Assurance Enterprise Management System, including what it will encompass/track and the expected effective date of the system. Please provide read access to the OIG team: Erin Barnes-Weaver, Jenny Drzewiecki, Fred Light and Alicia Buchanan.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. We will request that you resolve the situation if an agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested records to the OIG or otherwise fails to cooperate with the OIG. We may report unresolved access matters to the Administrator and include the incident in the *Semiannual Report to Congress*.

I will supervise the project, and the Project Manager will be Erin Barnes-Weaver. Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (303) 312-6969 or [gilbride.patrick@epa.gov](mailto:gilbride.patrick@epa.gov), or Erin Barnes-Weaver at (302) 312-6871 or [barnes-weaver.erin@epa.gov](mailto:barnes-weaver.erin@epa.gov).

cc: Henry Darwin, Acting Deputy Administrator  
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