



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

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

November 13, 2012

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Audit of EPA's Quality Assurance Project Plans
Assignment Number OA-FY13-0071

FROM: *Melissa Heist /s/*
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

TO: Malcolm D. Jackson
Assistant Administrator
Office of Environmental Information

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) plans to begin preliminary research on EPA's use of Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs). EPA's Quality System requires all organizations to develop and operate management structures and processes to ensure that data used in EPA decisions are of the type and quality needed for their intended use. QAPPs are an integral part of the fundamental principles and practices that form the foundation of EPA's Quality System. EPA requires that all environmental data collected, produced, and used in decision making and disseminated externally be supported by an approved QAPP.

During preliminary research, we plan to determine whether EPA has an effective process for preparing and following QAPPs to ensure sound data is collected, produced, used, and disseminated. Specifically we plan to determine whether EPA has controls in place to ensure QAPPs are properly prepared, reviewed, and followed.

We plan to conduct work primarily within the Office of Environmental Information (OEI). To expedite the review, we request that you provide the following information to us by November 20, 2012:

1. A description of any database or system used to track and monitor QAPPs.
2. The total number of QAPPs for ongoing projects (both internal and external to EPA), by program office.
3. An electronic copy of procedures OEI uses to review and approve QAPPs.
4. An electronic copy of any procedures to determine when a QAPP is not required, for example emergency situations (threats to human health).
5. Budget dollars and number of full-time equivalent positions allocated for the last three years to OEI's Quality Staff.

6. Names of primary QA officials in each of EPA's program offices and regions.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objectives and the purpose of the preliminary research phase of our project. We would also be particularly interested in any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any questions you may have about the audit process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the course of the project.

Patrick Gilbride is the Director for Risk Assessment and Program Performance Audits and can be reached at (303) 312-6969 or gilbride.patrick@epa.gov. Randy Holthaus is the Project Manager for this assignment and can be reached at (214) 665-6620 or holthaus.randy@epa.gov. Please do not hesitate to contact either them or me at (202) 566-0899 or heist.melissa@epa.gov if you or your staff has any questions.

cc: Monica Jones, Acting Director, Quality Staff, OEI
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