



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

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

February 22, 2022

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Response to Planned Corrective Actions for Office of Inspector General
Report No. 21-P-0265, *EPA Needs to Strengthen Oversight of Its Travel Program
Authorization and Voucher Approval Processes*, issued September 30, 2021

FROM: Sean W. O'Donnell

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sean W O'Donnell", is placed over the printed name.

TO: Faisal Amin, Chief Financial Officer

Thank you for your December 13, 2021 memorandum, which outlines the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's planned corrective actions and estimated milestone dates for the three unresolved recommendations—Recommendations 1, 3, and 4—issued in the subject Office of Inspector General report. Recommendation 2 was previously resolved. Based on the information provided in your memorandum, as well as in a subsequent meeting held on January 5, 2022, and in additional correspondence sent to us on January 21, 24, and 27, 2022, we agree that the planned corrective actions meet the intent of Recommendations 1, 3, and 4.

- Recommendation 1 stated that the chief financial officer should “ensure that individuals do not bypass justifications for travel policy deviations and documentation requirements” in two ways: (a) by “assessing the feasibility of modifying Concur to restrict individuals from bypassing authorization justifications or required voucher receipts and (b) by “reemphasizing, through training or other methods, the requirement for justifications and documentation.” Recommendation 1.b. was resolved upon issuance of the subject OIG report. For Recommendation 1.a., the Agency stated in its December 13, 2021 memorandum that addressing the recommendation was not feasible. On January 21, 2022, however, the Agency sent an addendum to its December 13, 2021 memorandum with a corrective actions. Specifically, the addendum referenced monthly quality assurance reviews performed by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, which use reports available in Concur to identify activities that deviate from policy, including a lack of proper authorizations, justifications, or travel voucher receipts. Starting in January 2022, these monthly quality assurance reviews would include assessing whether additional reports available in Concur would be beneficial for future quality assurance reviews. This corrective action would be initiated by January 31, 2022 and ongoing at the beginning of each month thereafter. We agree that these planned corrective actions satisfy the recommendation. We now consider Recommendation 1 resolved with corrective actions pending.
- Recommendation 3 stated that the chief financial officer should “increase the rate of capturing deviations found in this audit by identifying monitoring reports in the travel system that can assist with targeted-deviation monitoring efforts and use the system-monitoring reports for oversight.” The Agency provided a sufficient planned corrective action for this recommendation in its

December 13, 2021 memorandum, which stated that the EPA's travel team will review Concur reports for late voucher submissions, returned documents, outstanding travel advances, overpayments, and high-dollar and premium-class travel, as well as pull together a list of reports to be used for the monthly quality assurance reviews. The costs of any activities that deviate from policy that are identified in these reviews will be billed to the traveler. Further, as mentioned in relation to Recommendation 1.a., the Agency's January 21, 2022 addendum said that starting in January 2022, these monthly quality assurance reviews will include assessing whether new reports made available in Concur would be beneficial for future quality assurance reviews. These corrective actions would be completed by January 31, 2022. We agree that these planned corrective actions satisfy the recommendation. We now consider Recommendation 3 resolved with corrective actions pending.

- Recommendation 4 stated that the chief financial officer should "issue addendums to the Resource Management Directive System 2550B travel policy or equivalent" to require (a) "approvers to estimate and compare the total cost of temporary change of station versus extended temporary duty travel and authorize the one that is most advantageous for the Agency, cost and other factors considered" and (b) "the travel card cancellation and closeout process to occur within a predetermined number of days." The Agency stated in its December 13, 2021 memorandum that the Office of the Chief Financial Officer will issue either an addendum or an update to Resource Management Directive System 2550B to explicitly require that the travel card cancellation and closeout process occur within 30 days of an employee's departure from the Agency. This corrective action would be completed by September 30, 2022. We agree that these planned corrective actions satisfy the recommendation. We now consider Recommendation 4 resolved with corrective actions pending.

All recommendations for the subject report are now considered resolved. You should track implementation of EPA corrective actions in the Agency's audit tracking system until all actions are completed.

We will post this memorandum on our public website at www.epa.gov/oig.

cc: David Bloom, Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Carol Terris, Associate Chief Financial Officer
Andrew LeBlanc, Agency Follow-Up Coordinator
José Kercado, Backup Agency Follow-Up Coordinator
Jeanne Conklin, Controller
Meshell Jones-Peeler, Deputy Controller
Richard Gray, Associate Deputy Controller
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