



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

**OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

March 6, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Margaret M. Doane
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Dr. Brett M. Baker */RA/*
Assistant Inspector General for Audits

SUBJECT: STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS: AUDIT OF U.S.
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S PROCESS
FOR DEVELOPING AND COORDINATING RESEARCH
ACTIVITIES (OIG-19-A-06)

REFERENCE: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REGULATORY
RESEARCH, MEMORANDUM DATED JANUARY 16, 2020

Attached is the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) analysis and status of recommendations as discussed in the agency's response dated January 16, 2020. Based on this response, recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4 are open and resolved. Please provide an updated status of the resolved recommendations by July 15, 2020.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at (301) 415-5915, or Michael Blair, Team Leader, at (301) 415-8399.

Attachment: As stated

cc: C. Haney, OEDO
D. Jackson, OEDO
J. Quichocho, OEDO
S. Miotla, OEDO
EDO_ACS Distribution
RidsEDOMailsCenter Resource
OIG Liaison Resource

Audit Report

AUDIT OF U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING AND COORDINATING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

(OIG-19-A-06)

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Involve the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) and requesting office senior managers earlier in the work request development process to ensure work requests are properly understood, resourced, and achievable before they are formally submitted to RES.

Agency Response Dated
January 16, 2020:

In calendar year 2019, the RES staff led six program reviews with senior office management to enhance coordination and communication on planned research activities. Senior managers gained an increased awareness of ongoing work and plans for future activities. The program review meetings facilitate alignment between RES and the program offices on the priority, strategic outcomes, schedule, and proposed budgets for research activities. RES completed four of these program reviews in November and December 2019, informing senior office management of anticipated resource needs in support of the FY2022 budget formulation process. Resources for the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards are aligned through division-level interactions as research activities are a small portion of both office's budgets.

The staff plans to revise RES Office Instruction PRM-001, "Process for Responding to Work Requests: Informal Assistance Requests, Feasibility Study Requests, Research Assistance Requests, User Need Requests, and Research Plans," to update communication roles and responsibilities to support program reviews and budget formulation.

Target Completion Date: March 31, 2020

OIG Analysis:

The proposed actions meet the intent of the recommendation. OIG will close the recommendation after NRC provides documentation that verifies staff have involved the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) and requesting office senior managers earlier in the work request development process to ensure work requests are properly understood, resourced, and achievable before they are formally submitted to RES.

Audit Report

**AUDIT OF U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S PROCESS FOR
DEVELOPING AND COORDINATING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

(OIG-19-A-06)

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 1(cont.):

Status: Open: Resolved.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING AND COORDINATING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

(OIG-19-A-06)

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 2: Implement a standard template for RES staff to use when preparing acceptance memorandum or email responses to all work request types.

Agency Response Dated
January 16, 2020:

The staff has developed a standard template form for all work request types that includes standardized information that documents key information on the scope of the work request, the schedule, the deliverables, and the estimated resources.

The revised concurrence process allows acceptance of research scope in a single package. The standardized form is being placed into the NRC form library as NRC Form 843, Research Work Request.

The staff plans procedure updates to RES Office Instruction PRM-001, "Process for Responding to Work Requests: Informal Assistance Requests, Feasibility Study Requests, Research Assistance Requests, User Need Requests, and Research Plans," to reflect the use of the enclosure standard form and efficiencies in the concurrence process.

Target Completion Date: March 31, 2020

OIG Analysis: The proposed actions meet the intent of the recommendation. OIG will close the recommendation after verifying that NRC has implemented a standard template for RES staff to use when preparing acceptance memorandum or email responses to all work request types.

Status: Open: Resolved.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING AND COORDINATING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

(OIG-19-A-06)

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 3: Implement a single agencywide tracking system with the capabilities needed to effectively and efficiently keep the agency aware of research activities.

Agency Response Dated
January 16, 2020:

The NRC staff has begun developing a management dashboard to improve adherence to the existing requirements and to provide visibility to managers and staff to support performance reporting and monitoring. The staff has continued the practice of conducting division and branch-level counterpart meetings on status of work requests to discuss milestones and research deliverables. Furthermore, as discussed in Recommendation 1, the staff discusses research priorities at the office-level through the program reviews to support agencywide awareness of activities.

The staff continues to assess if changes to our internal procedures are needed.

Target Completion Date: June 30, 2020

OIG Analysis: The proposed actions meet the intent of the recommendation. OIG will close the recommendation after verifying that RES has implemented a single agencywide tracking system with the capabilities needed to effectively and efficiently keep the agency aware of research activities.

Status: Open: Resolved.

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(OIG-19-A-06)

Status of Recommendations

<u>Recommendation 4:</u>	Develop and implement a process for obtaining and using feedback from requesting offices. The process should include, but not be limited to, guidance on obtaining feedback during interim project milestones, creating access controls, and delineating roles and responsibilities.
Agency Response Dated January 16, 2020:	<p>The staff has established a new survey site that provides access control of survey results. Write access to the results data is limited to the OCIO administrator. For FY2019, 30 surveys on research products were received using the ticketing process. The staff plans procedure updates to RES Office Instruction PRM-001, "Process for Responding to Work Requests: Informal Assistance Requests, Feasibility Study Requests, Research Assistance Requests, User Need Requests, and Research Plans," to reflect roles and responsibilities for the ticketing process and guidance on responsibilities for obtaining and using feedback on interim project milestones and other research work products.</p> <p>Target Completion Date: March 31, 2020</p>
OIG Analysis:	The proposed actions meet the intent of the recommendation. OIG will close the recommendation after verifying NRC has developed and implemented a process for obtaining and using feedback from requesting offices. The process should include, but not be limited to, guidance on obtaining feedback during interim project milestones, creating access controls, and delineating roles and responsibilities.
Status:	Open: Resolved.