

Inspection and Evaluation Committee

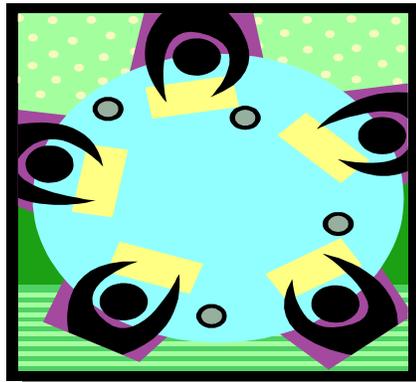
President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency

December 2002

Inspection and Evaluation Committee Members

JOHNNIE FRAZIER
Commerce, Chair
CHRISTINE BOESZ
NSF
CLARK KENT ERVIN
State
GLENN FINE
Justice
RICHARD GRIFFIN
VA
GORDON HEDDELL
Labor
GEORGE OPFER
FEMA
JANET REHNQUIST
HHS
STEPHEN SMITH
FCA

I&E COMMITTEE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 6, 2002



The Inspection and Evaluation Committee met at the Department of Veteran Affairs. Chair Johnnie Frazier welcomed the members and thanked Richard Griffin, Veterans Affairs IG, for hosting the Committee.

Johnnie reported that he had met with other IGs either to discuss establishing I&E units or to cover issues involving their ongoing I&E program. He encouraged all Committee members to pursue IG community outreach activities and assist IGs who wish to form or expand an I&E unit. Also, he mentioned that he had received an inquiry from the District of Columbia's IG, Charles Maddox, requesting assistance in designing and/or conducting a peer review of his I&E unit. Richard Griffin said he would share the VA's quality standards for inspections with Maddox.

NEW COMMITTEE/ROUNDTABLE PROJECTS

The Committee and Roundtable discussed the need to identify 2-3 new projects for the coming year. IG members should submit ideas that deal with cross-cutting issues, address in-house OIG needs or problems, reflect results of IG efforts, and/or provide visibility for the PCIE/IG community. Project ideas should be sent to Debbie Holmes (Dholmes@oig.doc.gov).

There was a general consensus that the Roundtable should move ahead with plans to update the survey of I&E units, last done in 1999 by the Health and Human Services OIG. That office has agreed to assist with this year's update. The survey will contain information about new units as well as the resources and areas of work of all the I&E units.

The Committee will also consider some previously submitted project ideas. These include the following:

- the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services System
- security clearances
- effective OIG recruiting
- small business contracting by federal agencies
- government-wide cleaning/maintenance costs
- agency implementation of the Freedom of Information Act

I&E Committee Meetings

are held quarterly and rotate among IG members.



Next Roundtable Meeting:
February 6, 2003; meeting will be hosted by NASA OIG, Robert Cobb.

Johnnie Frazier suggested developing a project that incorporates lessons learned from overseas reviews and inspections, such as those completed by State, Commerce, AID, Agriculture, and other foreign affairs agencies' OIGs. He also offered interagency agreements as an area for review because these instruments receive limited oversight by agency managers and typically involve substantial federal dollars. He noted that his office found that the Commerce Department is exchanging more than \$1 billion via interagency agreements and that such transactions had little oversight and were sometimes used to circumvent federal procurement or financial assistance regulations.

Richard Griffin suggested a project to review federal benefits received by individuals who live outside the United States or by felons. He noted that the VA OIG found many cases of continued issuance of veteran benefits after the death of the beneficiary. It also identified fugitive felons receiving federal benefits to which they were not entitled.

Jill Gross, Chair of the I&E Roundtable, suggested physical security and emergency preparedness as project areas as well as a review of how federal agencies handle biological materials at government facilities. In response, Al Schweitzer, VA

AIG, noted that an interagency task force is already studying this area; a report will be issued in early 2003.

Clark Kent Ervin mentioned that his office is working on homeland security and the visa issuance process. Johnnie Frazier mentioned that State's review might fit in well with some of the visa and access concerns of Commerce, USDA, Defense, and other agencies.

Rick Skinner, FEMA Deputy IG, suggested that the Committee consider projects that relate to the President's Management Agenda.

Stephen Smith proposed a directory of IG reports, such as the one GAO maintains for its reports. Johnnie said he would discuss this with the PCIE Chair.

Project Updates

Travel Card Guide. Labor OIG, the lead on this project, sent a draft of this document to the Committee chair December 3. It will be shared with Committee members. The guide contains information from five OIGs that have conducted travel card program reviews and will cover common problems as well as best practices, and highlight the need to put employees on notice and document problems.

Open Discussion

Peer Reviews. There was a discussion on the merits of I&E peer reviews within the OIG community. Some believe that the Committee and the PCIE should embrace this concept. Others did not feel peer reviews of I&E units would be an efficient use of OIG resources, adding that many offices perform in-house reviews. Moreover, the work of the various I&E units is different and specialized, thereby complicating an outside review.



Training. The I&E Committee has been working with Danny Athanasaw, Director of the IG Auditor Training Institute, to develop additional courses that address the needs of the I&E community. An updated course schedule can be found at www.igati.org.

Johnnie Frazier also noted that some of the best experts in the field are agency staff and suggested that these experts could be an additional training resource.

Paul Price, Justice OIG, asked whether anyone had explored online training. Justice is currently looking at this as a training resource.

I&E Web Site. The IGINet web site (www.ignet.gov/pande/iande.html) now includes I&E Committee newsletters and a listing of Roundtable members.

Clark Kent Ervin invited Committee members to look at State OIG's site, revamped to better share information with the public, Congress, and others in government.

For more information about any item in this newsletter, contact Debbie Holmes at 202-482-2600 (Dholmes@oig.doc.gov) or Jill Gross at 202-482-2754 (Jgross@oig.doc.gov)