



Office of Inspector General

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Evaluation of the CPSC's Implementation of the Federal Data Strategy

April 16, 2021

Report 21-A-05

Vision Statement

We are agents of positive change striving for continuous improvements in our agency's management and program operations, as well as within the Office of Inspector General.

Statement of Principles

We will:

Work with the Commission and the Congress to improve program management.

Maximize the positive impact and ensure the independence and objectivity of our audits, investigations, and other reviews.

Use our investigations and other reviews to increase government integrity and recommend improved systems to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

Be innovative, question existing procedures, and suggest improvements.

Build relationships with program managers based on a shared commitment to improving program operations and effectiveness.

Strive to continually improve the quality and usefulness of our products.

Work together to address government-wide issues.



April 16, 2021

TO: Robert S. Adler, Acting Chairman
Elliot F. Kaye, Commissioner
Dana Baiocco, Commissioner
Peter A. Feldman, Commissioner

FROM: Christopher W. Dentel, Inspector General 

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the CPSC's Implementation of the Federal Data Strategy

This report evaluates the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) progress in implementing the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Federal Data Strategy (FDS). The FDS is a government wide multi-year strategy developed to establish processes, build capacity, and align existing efforts to leverage data as a strategic asset. Achieving the goals set forth in the FDS 2020 Action Plan and subsequent FDS action plans will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency, facilitate oversight, promote transparency, and are a necessary first step in the CPSC's adoption of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies. The Office of Inspector General retained the services of Williams Adley & Company – DC LLP (Williams Adley), an independent public accounting firm, to assess the CPSC's implementation of OMB Memorandum 19-18 and the FDS 2020 Action Plan. This evaluation was performed in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (CIGIE QSIE).

Williams Adley determined that the CPSC completed all of the required actions, as well as a number of the encouraged actions, outlined in the FDS 2020 Action Plan. Williams Adley made four recommendations to aid the CPSC in its continued efforts to mature its data management program and to ensure the CPSC's success delivering data-based results for the American people.

In connection with our contract, we reviewed Williams Adley's report and related documentation and inquired of its representatives. Our review was not intended to enable us to express, and we do not express, an opinion on the matters contained in the report. Williams Adley is responsible for the attached report. However, our review disclosed no instances where Williams Adley did not comply, in all material respects, with CIGIE's QSIE.

In the next 30 calendar days, in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-50, the CPSC is required to provide me with management's Corrective Action Plan describing the specific actions they anticipate taking to implement each recommendation. Should you have any questions, please contact me.



April 16, 2021

Federal Data Strategy Evaluation Executive Summary

<p>Objective</p> <p>The objective of this evaluation was to determine U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) progress in meeting the requirements established by Federal Data Strategy (FDS) and outlined in the FDS 2020 Action Plan issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2020.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>The FDS 2020 Action Plan was published in December of 2019 and was designed to establish a foundation for the implementation of the FDS over the next decade. The FDS 2020 Action Plan identifies the initial actions agencies need to perform to establish processes, build capacity, and align existing efforts to leverage data as a strategic asset.</p> <p>The FDS 2020 Action Plan established four required "Agency Actions" with milestones and due dates that all federal agencies must implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitute a Diverse Data Governance Body • Assess Data and Related Infrastructure Maturity • Identify Priority Data Assets for Agency Open Data Plans • Publish and Update Data Inventories <p>In addition to the required tasks described in the FDS 2020 Action Plan, there are many actions that small agencies are encouraged to perform.</p>	<p>Results</p> <p>Williams, Adley, & Co.-DC LLP determined that the CPSC has completed the required FDS 2020 Agency Actions. This was accomplished in part by forming a Data Governance Board, selecting an operational maturity assessment, and identifying priority open data sets.</p> <p>The CPSC also completed many of the encouraged FDS 2020 Agency Actions including documenting the data governance board's authority, completing the operational maturity assessment, and contracting with the General Services Administration to develop a comprehensive data strategy and roadmap.</p> <p>The CPSC also proactively established many aspects of its data management program. For example, the CPSC completed many of the actions above well before the required timelines and drafted an Open Data Plan before guidance was published.</p> <p>According to management, the CPSC is in the process of establishing specific roles to support data management such as data owners and data stewards, data quality management processes, as well as continuing the implementation of its data strategy and roadmap.</p>
<p>The report addresses:</p> <p>CPSC cross-cutting priority: <i>Data Collection and Analysis</i></p> <p>Office of Inspector General Management Challenge #2: <i>Enterprise Risk Management</i></p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Management concurred with the four recommendations made in this report. When implemented, these recommendations will improve the agency's ability to leverage data as an asset and business resource.</p>

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Abbreviations and Short Titles

CDO	Chief Data Officer
CoE	Center of Excellence
CIGIE	Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency
CPSC	U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
DMWG	Data Management Working Group
FDS	Federal Data Strategy
GSA	General Services Administration
IRB	Investment Review Board
OPEN	Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMB M-19-18	<i>Federal Data Strategy - A Framework for Consistency</i>
QSIE	Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations
Williams Adley	Williams, Adley, & Co. DC LLP

Objective

The objective of this evaluation was to determine the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) progress in meeting the requirements established by the Federal Data Strategy (FDS) and outlined in the FDS 2020 Action Plan issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2020.

Background and Criteria

The CPSC's mission is to keep consumers safe. Collection, management, and analysis of high-quality data are essential to achieving the CPSC's strategic goals and fulfilling the agency's mission.

Congress and the administration recognized the need for data of sufficient quality to determine whether programs are achieving their intended results and to set priorities for national objectives. Therefore, they have taken several steps to establish data governance at federal agencies. A strong data governance framework is essential for data quality. Data governance is the framework or structure for ensuring that an agency's data assets are transparent, accessible, and of sufficient quality to support its mission, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations, and provide useful information to the public.

The FDS, presented in final form in OMB Memorandum M-19-18, *Federal Data Strategy - A Framework for Consistency* (OMB M-19-18), describes a ten-year vision for how the federal government will accelerate the use of data to deliver on mission, serve the public, and steward resources - while protecting security, privacy, and confidentiality. The annual action plans will identify priority actions for a given year and incrementally build on progress from year to year. The production of annual action plans allows the implementation of the strategy to adapt and adjust to new laws, requirements, and priorities that will impact agencies' capacity to leverage data as a strategic asset. Future annual action plans will build on the 2020 Action Plan to further develop a coordinated approach to federal data stewardship.

Federal Data Strategy

In March 2018, the President's Management Agenda laid out a new Cross Agency Priority Goal: *Leveraging Data as a Strategic Asset* to develop and implement a comprehensive FDS. Based on this initiative, with input from the full spectrum of government and non-government stakeholders, the first government-wide data

strategy has been developed, along with the FDS 2020 Action Plan¹ for implementation.

The FDS was first published in June 2019. The FDS is comprised of three components to guide federal data management and uses a mission statement, 10 principles that serve as guidelines for the overall strategy, and a set of 40 practices to guide agencies on how to leverage the value of federal and federally-sponsored data.

The mission statement, principles, and practices are presented in final form in OMB M-19-18, and additional detail regarding their development can be found at strategy.data.gov. The FDS provides a common set of data principles and best practices for implementing data innovations that drive more value for the public. The annual action plans identify and prioritize practice-related steps for a given year, along with targeted timeframes and responsible entities.

Required FDS 2020 Agency Actions

The FDS 2020 Action Plan was designed to establish a solid foundation that will support implementation of the FDS over the next decade. Specifically, the plan identifies initial actions for agencies that are essential for establishing processes, building capacity, and aligning existing efforts to better leverage data as a strategic asset. Accordingly, the FDS 2020 Action Plan established a total of six initial “Agency Actions.” Of those six agency actions, four actions² were required to be implemented by the CPSC:

- Agency Action #2: Constitute a Diverse Data Governance Body
- Agency Action #3: Assess Data and Related Infrastructure Maturity
- Agency Action #5: Identify Priority Data Assets for Agency Open Data Plans
- Agency Action #6: Publish and Update Data Inventories

The above agency actions each had associated milestones and related due dates. For example, the Agency Action #2 had a milestone of “Publish agency data governance materials (membership, charter, meeting cadence) on [agency].gov/data web page by January 31, 2020.” Other detailed agency actions and milestones can be found on strategy.data.gov.

¹ President’s Management Agenda, “Federal Data Strategy 2020 Action Plan,” last updated May 14, 2020, <https://strategy.data.gov/action-plan/>.

² Agency Actions #1 and #4 are required for Chief Financial Officer Act agencies only. The CPSC is not a Chief Financial Officer Act agency.

OPEN Government Data Act

The Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act was passed on November 15, 2019. The act provides a government-wide mandate for federal agencies to publish all their information as open data – using standardized, non-proprietary formats.

Findings

Overall, based on this evaluation, Williams, Adley, & Co.-DC LLP (Williams Adley) determined that the CPSC has completed the agency actions required by the FDS 2020 action plan. Further, the CPSC has completed a number of the agency actions that were encouraged by the FDS 2020 Action Plan. Williams Adley found that the CPSC has taken positive steps toward establishing its data management program with a focus on data use rather than just on compliance with the FDS.

The sections below describe what actions the CPSC has completed to meet the FDS 2020 Action Plan requirements, what the CPSC has done to complete the encouraged steps described in the FDS 2020 Action Plan, and the progress the CPSC continues to make towards current and future FDS Action Plan requirements and encouraged actions. Finally, Williams Adley recommends steps for the CPSC to further mature its data management program.

Status of FDS 2020 Action Plan Required Actions

The CPSC has met all FDS requirements for the in-scope agency actions. Specifically, the CPSC has completed the following required agency actions and related milestones:

Agency Action #2: Constitute a Diverse Data Governance Body

Milestone	Target Date	Completion Date	Required or Encouraged
Publish agency data governance materials (membership, charter, meeting cadence) on [agency].gov/data web page	January 31, 2020	September 30, 2019	Required

The then Acting CPSC Chairman established the Data Management Working Group (DMWG) as part of a formally published charter in September 2019. The DMWG reports directly to the CPSC's Investment Review Board (IRB).

The charter tasks the DMWG with the responsibility to provide governance to the CPSC's data management program. The DMWG is headed by the CPSC Chief Information Officer who also acts as the CPSC's Chief Data Officer (CDO). The

CPSC CDO is an active participant in the Federal CDO Council.³ Further, the CPSC CDO also sits on the CPSC IRB, the agency-wide governance board overseeing information technology investments that reports directly to the CPSC's Executive Director. The DMWG includes representation from across CPSC operations, including from members of all key mission areas and is supported by the enterprise architect.

The DMWG meets regularly to discuss progress in implementing its planned actions. The DMWG has been meeting on a regular basis since its inception in 2017 and revised its charter in September 2019 to incorporate minor updates and authorization by the agency head to meet the requirements of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act. Through the DMWG, the CPSC establishes actions, identifies priorities, and monitors the progress of building its data management program.

A review of DMWG meeting minutes showed that the meetings reflect the CPSC priorities the DMWG identified and is tracking. These priorities are related to implementing data governance protocols and technical data management technology to aid in the function and use of data within the CPSC.

Agency Action #3: Assess Data and Related Infrastructure Maturity

Milestone	Target Date	Completion Date	Required or Encouraged
Select an operational maturity assessment model for data and data infrastructure	July 31, 2020	May 31, 2018	Required

The CPSC selected the Gartner Assessment Model for its data and data infrastructure operational maturity assessment in May 2018 prior to the FDS 2020 Action Plan being published.

³ See the following link for information related to the Federal CDO Council: <https://www.cdo.gov>

Agency Action #5: Identify Priority Data Assets for Agency Open Data Plans

Milestone	Target Date	Completion Date	Required or Encouraged
Publish an Open Data Plan for sharing priority agency data assets, developed with stakeholder engagement, including data assets that support COVID-19 response* and Artificial Intelligence Research & Development (see Action 6)	After OMB Open Data Plan Guidance is issued; Annually on Agency [Information Resources Management] IRM Strategic Plan schedule	N/A	Required
Execute a process to evaluate and improve the timeliness, completeness, consistency, accuracy, usefulness, and availability of open Government data assets	December 31, 2020	February 13, 2020	Required

* Due to government-wide focus on COVID-19 response activities, the FDS team has extended this target date.

The FDS required agencies to identify their priority open data sets by December 2020 and the CPSC did so by September 2020 even though OMB has not established a timeframe for the completion and publication of agency Open Data Plans.

The CPSC, with the assistance of the General Services Administration (GSA) Information Technology Modernization Center of Excellence (CoE), evaluated its data management program and identified areas to streamline and improve the usefulness of its enterprise data. The data strategy and roadmap were finalized in February 2020.

Status of FDS 2020 Action Plan Encouraged Actions

The CPSC has met a number of the FDS encouraged milestones in addition to the FDS 2020 Action Plan required actions. Specifically, the CPSC has completed the following encouraged actions:

Agency Action #2: Constitute a Diverse Data Governance Board

Milestone	Target Date	Completion Date	Required or Encouraged
Document how the [Data Governance Board] DBG receives its authority	September 30, 2020	September 30, 2019	Encouraged
Put in place a data strategy or road map	1 activity per quarter, any order, encouraged of all agencies	February 13, 2020	Encouraged

As mentioned earlier, the DMWG received its authority from the CPSC's Acting Chairman. The DMWG charter outlines the working group's reporting responsibilities and how motions for requests for significant investments are made and approved. The IRB provides executive oversight for agency Information Technology (IT) investments through the selection, control, and evaluation of the CPSC IT portfolio. The IRB makes recommendations to the Executive Director regarding the IT investment portfolio to ensure that IT investments meet the CPSC's strategic and business objectives and investment risks are mitigated throughout the investment lifecycle.

The CPSC, in coordination with the GSA CoE, also developed a data strategy and road map based on the Gartner Data/Analytics Maturity Models in February 2020.

This data strategy and roadmap describes the current state of the CPSC business and systems architecture and proposes a method to move to the CPSC's target state. The data strategy and roadmap also describe automating data collection, analysis, and processing as one of the CPSC's challenges which will be foundational to preparing data for use in artificial intelligence.

This agency action also requires the CPSC to begin enterprise-wide data governance activities such as capital planning for enterprise data assets and infrastructure, emerging priority data governance areas such as preparing data for use in artificial intelligence and (1) an agency data strategy or road map or (2) a master data management program by November 2020.

Agency Action #3: Assess Data and Related Infrastructure Maturity

Milestone	Target Date	Completion Date	Required or Encouraged
Conduct and document the outcome of the initial data maturity assessment	September 30, 2020	May 31, 2018	Encouraged

The CPSC's self-assessment using the Gartner Maturity Model, completed in May 2018, indicated that the data maturity program was in its infancy and outlined best practice recommendations in the areas of vision, strategy, metrics, governance, organizational structure, data life cycle, and infrastructure. This assessment has the potential to aid the CPSC in its efforts to prioritize future projects/project milestones and mature its data management program.

Additional CPSC Actions Taken

In addition to completing all of the FDS 2020 Action Plan requirements and a number of the FDS 2020 Action Plan encouraged actions, the CPSC has taken the following additional actions to mature its data management processes.

For example, one of the original priorities established by the DMWG was completing the CPSC data strategy and roadmap. This priority resulted in the CPSC partnering with the GSA CoE to build out those documents. As mentioned above, this partnership culminated in the delivery of a strategy in February 2020. This strategy detailed not only a current state assessment and a target state proposal, but also an Enterprise-wide Data and Analytics Strategy and an Enterprise-wide Data and Analytics Strategy Implementation Plan. This demonstrates that the CPSC understands the value an effective data management program can provide. The CPSC plans to take advantage of the FDS initiative to support its mission through the use of data analytics and preparing data for use in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning.

In addition, in support of the FDS 2020 Action Plan Agency Action #6, the CPSC drafted an Open Data Plan which defined the CPSC's objectives related to sharing its current priority open data sets and detailed the purpose of those selected data sets the CPSC chose to publish on [CPSC.gov](https://cpsc.gov) and data.gov. This plan was drafted even though, as of March 2021, OMB had not published the guidance required to support that tasker or the milestone target date associated with this FDS 2020 Action Plan requirement. This was possible because the CPSC had already

identified priority open data sets and published those data sets on [CPSC.gov](https://cpsc.gov) and data.gov. The early drafting of the Open Data Plan, demonstrates not only the CPSC's commitment to maturing its data management program but also allows the agency to act more nimbly and begin working immediately towards documented goals rather than waiting for OMB to publish final guidance on this requirement. Management understands that its Open Data Plan may need to be updated to reflect the final OMB guidance.

Next Steps

The CPSC must continue to prioritize meeting FDS requirements when building its data management program. The CPSC should also focus its efforts on ensuring data is managed across the agency rather than in silos. This will permit the agency to take full advantage of the potential benefits the data may provide. Also, management should ensure that all points of the data lifecycle are considered when moving forward, from data creation to data destruction. In order to achieve this, the CPSC must have a cultural buy-in, a defined data quality approach, and dedicated resources in key data roles.

Data Management Program Project Plan and Timeline

The CPSC data strategy and road map assessment provides an implementation plan the agency can use as guidance while building and establishing its data management program. Our review of this assessment revealed that the proposed timeline for implementing the CPSC data management program is ambitious. For example, the plan included four separate phases with a total duration of about six years. However, the FDS acknowledges that a complete data management program could take up to 10 years.⁴ For example, the completion of the first phase, the "Preliminary" Phase, was to be done within six months of the plan's initiation in February 2020 pending OMB's publication of supporting guidance. However, this phase had six separate project tasks and, based on our assessment, does not take into account that the CPSC has competing mission priorities.

Data Quality Plan

The CPSC has not developed and implemented a Data Quality Plan. However, the CPSC has identified data quality issues including a lack of system enforced edit

⁴ According to the FDS 2020 Action Plan, "The FDS, presented in final form in OMB M-19-18, Federal Data Strategy - A Framework for Consistency, describes a ten-year vision for how the Federal Government will accelerate the use of data to deliver on mission, serve the public, and steward resources—while protecting security, privacy, and confidentiality." Obtained at <https://strategy.data.gov/action-plan/#looking-forward>, on March 29, 2021.

and validation routines, content reviews, and establishing well-defined data dictionaries. Therefore, although a Data Quality Plan was not required for the CPSC, a completed plan is necessary for the CPSC to establish an effective and mature data management program. Without a detailed Data Quality Plan that establishes strict data quality standards related to the collection and maintenance of collected data, the value and effectiveness of the data management program will be limited. If data quality is not ensured, the data used may not be accurate, complete, or timely. And without quality data, the CPSC may be using incorrect data to make strategic decisions.

Identify, Dedicate, and Define Resources and Roles

The assessment completed by the GSA CoE focused on the importance of staffing and resourcing data management programs to achieve maturity and effectiveness. According to the CPSC CDO, the CPSC data management initiative is supported by the DMWG; however, there are limited resources dedicated to implementing the program. The data management tasks are performed primarily as collateral duties by the CDO and enterprise architect, as well as a few part-time data analysts from the mission areas. These staffing levels may not prove sufficient if the CPSC wants to continue to mature its program.

In order to mature its data management program further, the CPSC will require additional dedicated staff. The CPSC should perform a staffing assessment to identify the key roles required to support the CPSC data management program and determine the additional staffing and training requirements. Key roles the CPSC should consider defining as part of this assessment include data owners and data stewards, and the positions the CPSC should consider filling include data scientists, data architects, and data analysts.

Conclusion

The CPSC has completed all required actions in the FDS 2020 Action Plan. Further, the CPSC completed a number of the encouraged actions in the FDS 2020 Action Plan, many ahead of schedule. Going forward, the CPSC should establish a data strategy implementation project plan, develop a Data Quality Plan, identify and dedicate resources to data management. The CPSC can improve its ability to achieve its mission goals by implementing an effective data management program. It is critical that the CPSC data management program continue to receive attention from CPSC leadership. Accordingly, the following four recommendations related to the above topics will aid the CPSC in maturing its data management program.

Recommendations

We recommend that the CPSC:

1. Establish a data strategy implementation project plan with milestones that consider mission priorities and current and expected staffing levels to track the progress of the data management program maturation against the current Data and Analytics Strategy Implementation Plan.
2. Develop and implement a Data Quality Plan that supports the collection and maintenance of data related to identified key CPSC open data sets.
3. Identify and assign responsibilities to all of the resources who have data governance roles and responsibilities. These resources should include, at a minimum, data owners and data stewards, and those resources should be trained on their responsibilities.
4. Dedicate resources to the data management program based on a needs assessment, which should be revisited as the FDS action plans are published. Supplementary resources to consider adding may include data architects, data scientists, data analysts, and training resources.

Appendix A: Scope and Methodology

Scope

The scope of the examination is October 1, 2019, to December 30, 2020, implementation of the requirements published by the FDS 2020 Action Plan, as amended.

Methodology

Williams Adley performed this evaluation from December 2020 through April 2021 and conducted this evaluation in accordance with Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations. Those standards require that Williams Adley obtain sufficient evidence to provide a reasonable basis for their findings and conclusions based on their objectives.

To perform this evaluation, Williams Adley interviewed CPSC key personnel and reviewed supporting documentation to determine the status of the CPSC implementation of FDS requirements.

Assessment, testing, and analysis were performed in accordance with guidance from the following:

- Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation
- OPEN Government Data Act
- OMB Circular No. A-11, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*
- OMB Circular No. A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control*
- OMB Circular No. A-130, *Managing Information as a Strategic Resource*, Appendix III
- OMB M-19-18 and OMB M-20-16, *Federal Agency Operational Alignment to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus COVID-19*
- President's Management Agenda Cross-Agency Priority Goal, *Leveraging Data as a Strategic Asset*
- FDS 2020 Action Plan

Williams Adley provided a draft report to the management on April 9, 2021, and an exit conference was held on April 13, 2021, to discuss the results of the evaluation.

Appendix B: Management Response

Management concurred with the conclusions of the report.



UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
4330 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA, MD 20814

Memorandum
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARY T. BOYLE

Date: April 14, 2021

TO : Christopher Dentel
Inspector General

FROM : Mary T. Boyle
Executive Director

SUBJECT : Management Response to Report on the Federal Data Strategy (FDS)
Evaluation of the CPSC

Mary Boyle

Digitally signed by Mary
Boyle
Date: 2021.04.14
10:11:11 -0400

In response to the *Federal Data Strategy (FDS) Evaluation of the CPSC*, Management concurs with the findings and recommendations in the report. Management appreciates the auditors' identification of agency efforts and ongoing commitment to improving data and analytics as important elements for agency mission success. CPSC's approach focuses on practical benefits, learning through targeted pilots and proof of concept, and sharing information on most effective practices across the Federal community.

CONTACT US

If you want to confidentially report or discuss any instance of fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, or mismanagement involving CPSC's programs and operations, please contact the CPSC Office of Inspector General.



Call:

301-504-7906
1-866-230-6229



On-line complaint form:

Click [here](#) for complaint form.
Click [here](#) for CPSC OIG Website.



Write:

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