



Audit of the Environment and Natural Resources
Division's Information Security Program Pursuant
to the Federal Information Security Modernization
Act of 2014, Fiscal Year 2022



AUDIT DIVISION

23-050

MARCH 2023



COMMENTARY AND SUMMARY

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Objectives

The objectives of this audit were to determine: (1) whether the Environment and Natural Resources Division's (ENRD) overall information security program and practices were consistent with the requirements of the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA); (2) examine areas and vulnerabilities specified within the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform Letter (Congressional Letter) related to the facilitation of telework during the coronavirus pandemic; and (3) complete the Department of Homeland Security fiscal year 2022 Cyberscope reporting metrics.

Results in Brief

The audit identified weaknesses in six of the nine domain areas and two of the eight Congressional Letter Areas that need to be strengthened to ensure that ENRD's information systems and data are adequately protected.

Recommendations

This audit provides six recommendations for improving ENRD's information security program.

To ensure ENRD was immediately aware of the findings identified during this audit, the auditors presented the findings to ENRD management prior to the issuance of this report. ENRD management concurred with the identified weaknesses.

Public Release

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is publicly releasing this Commentary and Summary of the report rather than the full report itself because Inspectors General are required by FISMA to take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of information that, if disclosed, may adversely affect information security. Such protections shall be commensurate with the risk.

Audit Approach

Cotton & Company Assurance and Advisory, LLC (Cotton) conducted this performance audit of ENRD's information security program under the direction of the DOJ OIG and in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reporting requirements. The OIG reviewed Cotton's report and related documentation for compliance with GAGAS. The OIG's review was not intended to enable the OIG to make a conclusion about the effectiveness of ENRD's information security controls. Cotton is responsible for the attached auditors' report dated February 24, 2023, and the conclusions expressed in the report. The OIG's review disclosed no instances where Cotton did not comply, in all material respects, with GAGAS and OMB reporting requirements.

Background

FISMA was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2014. FISMA assigns responsibilities to federal agencies, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and OMB to strengthen federal information system security. This includes directing NIST to develop standards and guidelines for ensuring the effectiveness of information security controls over information systems that support federal agencies' operations and assets, and requiring the head of each agency to implement policies and procedures to cost-effectively reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Annually, agency Inspectors General are required to either perform an independent evaluation or contract an independent external auditor to perform an evaluation of the agency's information security program and practices to ensure the effectiveness of the program and practices. Each evaluation must include: (1) testing the effectiveness of information security policies, procedures, and practices of a representative subset of the agency's information systems; (2) an assessment (based on the results of the testing) of compliance with FISMA; and (3) separate representations, as appropriate, regarding information security related to national security systems.