



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

During an Office of Inspector General review of a hotline complaint, we evaluated the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's progress in implementing certain requirements of its agencywide *Scientific Integrity Policy*. In March 2009, the President issued a memorandum to the heads of all executive departments and agencies for taking action to guarantee scientific integrity throughout the executive branch. In the memorandum, the President instructed each agency to implement rules and procedures for ensuring the integrity of the scientific process within their agency. The EPA enacted its *Scientific Integrity Policy* in February 2012. The policy provides a framework intended to ensure scientific integrity throughout the EPA, and describes the role of an agencywide committee of scientific integrity officials to implement this policy.

This report addresses the following EPA Goal or Cross-Cutting Strategy:

- *Advancing science, research, and technological innovation.*

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Affairs at (202) 566-2391.

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2013/20130828-13-P-0364.pdf

Quick Reaction Report: EPA Must Take Steps to Implement Requirements of Its Scientific Integrity Policy

What We Found

Although an agencywide training program is required by the agency's *Scientific Integrity Policy*, the EPA has not developed or implemented a program to instruct the EPA's employees on the requirements and standards of scientific integrity. In addition, the EPA has not generated and made publicly available an annual report on the status of scientific integrity within the agency as required by the policy. The policy makes the EPA's Scientific Integrity Committee responsible for implementing these requirements. As a result of the committee's lack of progress in implementing these requirements, the EPA is less equipped to:

- Provide leadership for the agency on scientific integrity.
- Promote agency compliance with the *Scientific Integrity Policy*.
- Keep the agency's senior leadership informed on and involved with the agencywide status of scientific integrity.
- Detect violations of scientific integrity.

What We Recommend and Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the EPA's Deputy Administrator direct the Scientific Integrity Committee to (1) develop and implement agencywide training on the *Scientific Integrity Policy* in a manner that will minimize further delay in the EPA's adherence to policy requirements, (2) complete and issue an annual report on the status of scientific integrity in the agency before its first formal review of the policy, and (3) provide the Deputy Administrator with a written plan describing the action plan and milestones for implementing and completing the training and issuing the annual report.

We met with the EPA's current interim scientific integrity official in July 2013 to discuss the findings and recommendations in our draft quick reaction report. In response to our draft quick reaction report the EPA's interim scientific integrity official included corrective actions with planned completion dates, or a statement that actions were complete, in response to all three OIG recommendations. The corrective actions meet the intent of our recommendations. Recommendations 1 and 2 are resolved with corrective actions underway. Recommendation 3 is completed and closed. No additional agency response to this report is required.