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Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

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Office of Audits

November 2020

# **Information Report: U.S. Agency for Global Media 2020 Charge Card Risk Assessment**

INFORMATION REPORT

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## Summary of Review

The Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012,<sup>1</sup> as implemented by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-13-21,<sup>2</sup> requires the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to conduct annual risk assessments of agency purchase and travel card programs to identify and analyze risks of illegal, improper, or erroneous purchases and payments for use in determining the scope, frequency, and number of periodic audits of these programs.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, to assess risk associated with the purchase card program at the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM),<sup>4</sup> OIG reviewed USAGM's FY 2019 purchase card data and concluded that the risk of illegal, improper, or erroneous use in the USAGM purchase card program is "very low." This conclusion is based on USAGM's purchase card program size, internal controls, training, previous audits, and OIG Office of Investigations (INV) observations.

Because OIG concluded that risk to the purchase card program is "very low," OIG is not recommending that an audit of USAGM's purchase card program be included in OIG's FY 2022–FY 2023 work plan. However, OIG encourages USAGM officials to continue prudent oversight of the purchase card program and ensure that internal controls intended to safeguard taxpayer funds are fully implemented and followed by USAGM purchase card holders.

## OBJECTIVE

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OIG conducted this risk assessment to establish the risk of illegal, improper, and erroneous use of USAGM's purchase card program and recommend the scope, frequency, and number of audits that should be conducted on the basis of the aforementioned risk assessment.

## BACKGROUND

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The Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012, as implemented by OMB Memorandum M-13-21,<sup>5</sup> requires OIG to conduct annual periodic risk assessments of agency purchase and travel card programs to identify and analyze risks of illegal, improper, or erroneous purchases for use in determining the scope, frequency, and number of periodic audits of these programs.<sup>6</sup> In addition, OMB Memorandum M-13-21 outlines OIG risk

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<sup>1</sup> Pub. L. No. 112-194 (October 5, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> OMB Memorandum M-13-21, "Implementation of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012" (September 6, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Pub. L. No. 112-194, at Sec. 2 § 1909(d)(1) and Sec. 3(h)(3).

<sup>4</sup> On August 22, 2018, the Broadcasting Board of Governors changed its name to the United States Agency for Global Media.

<sup>5</sup> OMB Memorandum M-13-21, "Implementation of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012" (September 6, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Pub. L. No. 112-194, at Sec. 2 § 1909(d)(1) and Sec. 3(h)(3).

assessment requirements, as well as additional required internal controls for agency charge card programs. Furthermore, OMB issued guidance<sup>7</sup> that prescribes policies and procedures regarding how agencies should maintain internal controls to reduce the risk of fraud, waste, and error in Government charge card programs.<sup>8</sup>

The 2020 risk assessment of USAGM's purchase card program, which covers FY 2019 spending data, is the seventh risk assessment of USAGM's charge card programs conducted by OIG.<sup>9</sup> USAGM officials reported that in FY 2019, 58 active purchase card holders made purchases totaling approximately \$4.4 million.

The purpose of this information report is to promptly report the results of the risk assessment and prompt timely implementation of management practices that will result in the sound stewardship of U.S. taxpayer dollars. See Appendix A for additional details of the purpose, scope, and methodology of the risk assessment.

## RESULTS

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### Criteria Ratings

According to documentation and information provided by USAGM officials, OIG determined that USAGM's generally complied with required internal controls for the purchase card program. Overall, 81 percent (64 of 79) of the internal controls assessed complied with established criteria,<sup>10</sup> including 81 percent (35 of 43) compliance with internal controls specific to purchase cards. The majority (81 percent) of internal controls are categorized as low risk, a result of the revised OMB guidance. Because most internal controls assessed complied with established criteria, OIG assigned USAGM a rating of "low" for the internal control criterion.

The availability of training and the incorporation of training in USAGM policy was rated as "low" risk because USAGM officials provided detailed documentation and policies regarding the required training for purchase card program participants.

OIG performed its most recent audit of the USAGM purchase card program in 2005 (report issued in August 2006),<sup>11</sup> and all the associated recommendations offered in that report have been implemented and closed. In addition, USAGM completed an internal review of its

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<sup>7</sup> OMB Circular A-123, "Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control" (July 15, 2016), Appendix B, "Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs" (January 15, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> On August 27, 2019, OMB revised OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, "A Risk Management Framework for Government Charge Card Programs."

<sup>9</sup> OMB M-13-21, "Inspector General Risk Assessments and Audits," Footnote 6, states that annual review is required only for travel card programs with prior year spending of more than \$10 million. For 2020, OIG evaluated only USAGM's purchase card program because the travel card program had less than \$10 million in spending, which is below the threshold requiring an assessment.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A: Purpose, Scope, and Methodology of this report for details of criteria used.

<sup>11</sup> OIG, *Review of the Broadcasting Board of Governors Purchase Card Program* (AUD/IB-06-15, August 2006).

purchase card program and published the results in 2015. Therefore, OIG assigned a “medium” risk rating for the criterion relating to previous audits.

Furthermore, INV forensic auditors have not identified any significant systemic issues related to USAGM’s purchase card data, which resulted in a “low” rating for the INV observation criterion. The individual criteria ratings and overall combined rating are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Risk Rating by Criterion**

Criterion	2019 Rating
Internal Controls	Low
Training	Low
Previous Audits	Medium
INV Observation	Low
<b>Combined</b>	<b>Low*</b>

\* Individual criteria ratings were assigned numeric values, and the total was averaged to identify an overall rating. Criteria rated as “low” risk were assigned a numeric value of 1; criteria rated as “medium” risk were assigned a numeric value of 2; and criteria rated as “high” risk were assigned a numeric value of 3.

**Source:** Generated by OIG from its analysis of purchase card program information and documentation.

## Impact and Likelihood Factor

USAGM officials reported that 58 active purchase card holders made purchases totaling approximately \$4.4 million in FY 2019. Because the dollar value of total purchases made was between \$1 million and \$10 million and the number of USAGM purchase card holders was fewer than 250, the overall impact and likelihood factor resulted in a “low” rating, as shown in Table 2.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2: Impact and Likelihood Factor**

		Rating
Impact	\$4.4 million	Medium
Likelihood	58 cardholders	Low
<b>Impact and Likelihood Factor</b>		<b>Low</b>

**Source:** Generated by OIG from its analysis of purchase card program information and documentation.

## Risk Assessment

OIG determined that the risk of illegal, improper, or erroneous use in the USAGM purchase card program is “very low.” Because OIG concluded that risk to the purchase card program is “very low,” OIG is not recommending an audit of USAGM’s purchase card program be included in OIG’s FY 2022–FY 2023 work plan. As such, OIG encourages USAGM officials to continue

<sup>12</sup> Refer to Appendix A: Purpose, Scope, and Methodology, Tables A.1 and A.2, for OIG’s methodology in determining the Impact and Likelihood Factor.

prudent oversight of the purchase card program and ensure that internal controls intended to safeguard taxpayer funds are fully implemented and followed by USAGM purchase card holders.

## APPENDIX A: PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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The Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed this risk assessment from September to October 2020. The objective of this assessment was to establish the risk of illegal, improper, and erroneous use of the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) purchase card program and recommend the scope, frequency, and number of audits that should be conducted on the basis of the aforementioned risk assessment. To perform the risk assessment, OIG considered USAGM's purchase card program size, internal controls, training, previous audits, and OIG Office of Investigations (INV) observations. OIG conducted the risk assessment using industry standard principles for risk management.<sup>1</sup>

This risk assessment was not an audit and was not conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. The results of the risk assessment should not be interpreted to conclude that purchase card programs with lower risk are free of illegal, improper, or erroneous use or internal control deficiencies. Conversely, a higher risk program may not necessarily signify illegal, improper, or erroneous use, only that conditions are conducive to those activities. Regardless of the risk assessment results, if the purchase card program were to be audited, an audit team might identify such issues through independent testing of purchase card data. For example, a purchase card program may be found to be "very low risk" on the basis of documentation and other information provided by agency officials, the number of cardholders, and the total amount of purchase card expenditures. However, an audit of that purchase card program may determine that the internal controls outlined in an agency's policy are not being implemented appropriately and that illegal, improper, or erroneous activity is occurring. The risk assessment was designed to identify the programs in which the OIG Office of Audits should focus its limited resources.

### Assessment Criteria

To conduct the risk assessment, OIG reviewed FY 2019 purchase card data and documentation as well as information provided by USAGM officials.<sup>2</sup> OIG assessed the purchase card program on the basis of four criteria:<sup>3</sup> internal controls, training, previous audits, and INV observations. OIG assigned a rating of "low," "medium," or "high" to identify the risk associated with each factor.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, "Enterprise Risk Management – Integrated Framework Executive Summary" (September 2004), and Deloitte & Touche, LLP, "Risk Assessment in Practice" (October 2012).

<sup>2</sup> In performing this risk assessment, OIG used purchase card data reported by USAGM without independently verifying the data for accuracy and completeness. USAGM reported that purchase card holders made purchases totaling approximately \$4.4 million in FY 2019.

<sup>3</sup> OMB M-13-21, "Reports of Purchase Card Violations," states that agencies that spend more than \$10 million annually using purchase cards are required to submit annual "violation reports." Because USAGM did not have more than \$10 million in purchases, it did not prepare a violation report. Therefore, OIG did not consider this factor during the USAGM purchase card program risk assessment.

<sup>4</sup> OIG team members used professional judgment to determine compliance with requirements in assessing risk ratings for each factor.

### ***Internal Controls***

OIG used criteria identified in Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012<sup>5</sup> and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-123, Appendix B<sup>6</sup> to assess internal controls associated with USAGM's purchase card program. OIG assessed the purchase card program for 36 general internal controls and 43 internal controls specific to purchase card programs (a total of 79 internal controls assessed). For example, a general control would apply to both purchase card and travel card programs, such as the OMB Circular A-123 requirement that agencies perform periodic reviews of spending and transaction limits to ensure appropriateness.<sup>7</sup> Purchase card specific controls apply only to purchase card programs, such as the requirement that agencies have policies in place to ensure that each cardholder is assigned an approving official with authority to approve or disapprove transactions.<sup>8</sup> OIG assigned a rating of "low," "medium," or "high" on the basis of documented compliance with required internal controls. Specifically, OIG assigned a "low" rating to programs with a high percentage (above 75 percent) of compliant internal controls. OIG assigned a "medium" rating to programs with neither a high percentage of compliant internal controls nor a high percentage of noncompliant internal controls. OIG assigned a "high" rating to programs with a high percentage (above 50 percent) of noncompliant internal controls.

### ***Training***

OIG assigned USAGM's purchase card program a rating of "low," "medium," or "high" based on the availability of training and incorporation of training in its policy for the program. OIG assigned a "low" rating when training was available and incorporated into policies. OIG assigned a "medium" rating when training was available but not incorporated into policies, or when training was not available but was incorporated into policies. OIG assigned a "high" rating if training was not available and was not incorporated into the organization's policies.

### ***Previous Audits***

To assess USAGM's purchase card program, OIG reviewed the results of previous audits as well as the implementation status of associated recommendations. OIG assigned a "low" rating when a program had been audited in the last 10 years and recommendations had been implemented. OIG assigned a "medium" rating for programs that had also been audited in the last 10 years, but for which recommendations had not been fully implemented. OIG assigned a "high" rating for a program that had not been audited within 10 years. The ratings were

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<sup>5</sup> Pub. L. No. 112-194, Sec. 2 § 1909(a)(1)-(13), § 1909(c)(1) and (3)(A) and (B), and § 1909 (d)(1)-(3).

<sup>6</sup> OMB Circular A-123, "Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control" (July 15, 2016), Appendix B, "Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs" (January 15, 2009), Appendix B §§ 2.3, 3.1, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8, 12.2, and Attachment 5, "Best Practices in Managing Government Charge Card Programs."

<sup>7</sup> OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, Attachment 5, "Best Practices in Managing Government Charge Card Programs."

<sup>8</sup> Pub. L. No. 112-194, Sec. 2 § 1909(a)(2).

mitigated if the program provided documentation of meaningful internal reviews (conducted by the agency).

### **INV Observations**

OIG assigned ratings of “low, “medium,” or “high” for USAGM’s purchase card program on the basis of guidance from INV forensic auditors. Office of Audits personnel met with INV personnel to gain an understanding of the data mining<sup>9</sup> efforts being used to review USAGM purchase card transactions. INV provided information on the results of its data mining analyses and interviews with USAGM officials responsible for the purchase card program.

### **Impact and Likelihood**

Impact refers to the extent to which a risk event might affect USAGM, and likelihood represents the possibility that a given event might occur. OIG assigned an impact rating of “low,” “medium,” or “high” on the basis of the dollars spent in the USAGM purchase card program and assigned a likelihood rating of “low,” “medium,” or “high” on the basis of the number of cardholders in the USAGM purchase card program. The rating criteria are shown in Table A.1.

**Table A.1: Impact and Likelihood Ratings**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>
<b>Low</b>	Less than \$1 million	Fewer than 250 cardholders
<b>Medium</b>	\$1 million to \$10 million	250 to 500 cardholders
<b>High</b>	More than \$10 million	More than 500 cardholders

**Source:** Generated by OIG from the review of multiple sources, including industry standard principles for risk management.

Using the information obtained in Table A.1, OIG plotted the impact and likelihood ratings on a chart known as a “heat map,” which depicts the intersections of the ratings, to determine a rating for the impact and likelihood factor. The heat map is shown in Table A.2. OIG used this single impact and likelihood combined “factor” in the final overall risk assessment (Table A.3) for the USAGM purchase card program.

**Table A.2: Impact and Likelihood Factor Heat Map Table**

		<b>Factor</b>		
		Higher	Medium	High
<b>Impact Rating</b>	Higher	Medium	High	Very High
	Medium	Low	Medium	High
	Lower	Very Low	Low	Medium
		Lower	Medium	Higher
		<b>Likelihood Rating</b>		

**Source:** Generated by OIG from a review of industry standard principles for risk management.

<sup>9</sup> Data mining is the practice of searching through large amounts of computerized data to find useful patterns or trends.

## Final Risk Assessment

OIG plotted the combined individual criteria rating found in Table A.1 along with the combined impact and likelihood factor found in Table A.2 to determine the final risk assessment rating for USAGM’s purchase card program. Specifically, OIG used the final risk assessment heat map shown in Table A.3 to arrive at the overall risk assessment rating.

**Table A.3: Final Risk Assessment Heat Map Table**

		Final Rating		
		Very High	High	Very High
<b>Impact and Likelihood Factor</b>	<b>High</b>	Medium	High	Very High
	<b>Medium</b>	Low	Medium	High
	<b>Low</b>	Very Low	Low	Medium
	<b>Very Low</b>	Very Low	Low	Medium
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
		<b>Combined Criteria Rating</b>		

**Source:** Generated by OIG from a review of industry standard principles for risk management.

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