



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

AUD-FM-IB-20-10

What Was Audited

In accordance with the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) established standards for agencies' spending data to be displayed on USASpending.gov. As part of quarterly submissions, Agency Senior Accountable Officials (SAO) certify data files (DATA Act Files A, B, C, D1, D2).

Acting on behalf of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), Williams, Adley & Company-DC, LLP (Williams Adley), an external audit firm, conducted this audit to assess (1) the completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and quality of the first quarter of FY 2019 financial and award data submitted by the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) for publication on USASpending.gov and (2) USAGM's implementation and use of the Government-wide financial data standards established by OMB and Treasury.

What OIG Recommends

On the basis of this audit, OIG made four recommendations that are intended to improve USAGM's DATA Act submissions. In addition, three recommendations from the FY 2017 DATA Act report remain open, pending further action, as described in Appendix F. On the basis of USAGM's response to a draft of this report, OIG considers two recommendations closed and two recommendations resolved, pending further action. A synopsis of USAGM's response to the recommendations offered and OIG's reply follow each recommendation in the Audit Results section of this report. USAGM's response to a draft of this report is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix G.

December 2019

OFFICE OF AUDITS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Audit of the U.S. Agency for Global Media's FY 2019 Implementation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2019

What Was Found

Williams Adley determined that USAGM's DATA Act Files A and C were both complete at the summary level for the first quarter of FY 2019. The submission of DATA Act File B was not complete because of invalid Budget Object Classification codes, program activity names, and program activity codes. In addition, Williams Adley found that the DATA Act Files were submitted timely based on the timeline established by Treasury. Furthermore, Williams Adley reconciled DATA Act Files A and B and did not identify any significant variances between DATA Act Files A, B, and C. However, during the testing of certified transactions, Williams Adley identified exceptions related to completeness, accuracy, and timeliness.

Notwithstanding the identified deficiencies, on the basis of DATA Act audit guidance, Williams Adley considered the quality of USAGM's submission of data to be "higher" (the best quality level) because the highest projected error rate was less than 20 percent.

Williams Adley identified several control issues that led to the deficiencies. For example, according to USAGM officials, one reason that records at the transaction level were not entered in a timely manner was that Contract Specialists were able to bypass certain steps in the accounting system. Another reason for the delay was that Contract Specialists were not always aware of contract awards that required approval in the accounting system. Furthermore, Williams Adley concluded that USAGM's Data Quality Plan (DQP) needs improvement to become more useful. For example, USAGM's current DQP does not provide the information necessary to identify risks or address them. Although USAGM data were considered to be in the best category, more attention would allow for additional improvements to data quality.

Williams Adley evaluated USAGM's implementation and use of the Government-wide financial data standards for spending information. Although Williams Adley concluded that USAGM fully implemented financial data standards, it was not fully using those data standards as defined by OMB and Treasury.