



U.S. Embassy Muscat, Oman

## October 2020

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

On August 10, 2020, the Department took actions in response to recommendations from OIG’s 2019 report *Audit of Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Process To Identify and Apply Best Practices and Lessons Learned to Future Construction Projects*. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations issued a bulletin to remind construction executives, project directors, and project managers about the importance of consistent and accurate reporting. In addition, the Office of Acquisitions Management directed its contracting officers to (a) fully address all cost and time impacts associated with changes to the scope of work as required by the Foreign Affairs Handbook and (b) consistently include a contractor release statement as prescribed by the Federal Acquisition Regulation to avoid exposing the Department to increased financial risk.

In response to a recommendation from the 2017 report *Inspection of the Bureau of Consular Affairs Office of Consular Systems and Technology*, the Bureau of Consular Affairs provided documentation on September 10, 2020, that showed its review of unliquidated obligations that resulted in \$18,398,025 being put to better use.

### SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

**Embassy Installed Solar- and Wind-Powered Repeater to Address Service Disruptions for Emergency Radio System**  
(*Inspection of Embassy Windhoek, Namibia, ISP-I-20-32*)

This September 2020 report notes that Embassy Windhoek’s Information Management staff installed a solar - and wind-powered repeater for their ultra-high frequency radio emergency and evacuation (E&E) system to avoid recurrent service disruptions due to frequent power outages. Before installing the repeater, the embassy had relied on the local electricity power supply, which was inconsistent and made the repeater unusable. By making this update, the embassy had access to uninterrupted E&E radio communication and saved \$18,000 in electricity bills. Furthermore, this project advanced the Department’s Greening Diplomacy Initiative.

**Annual Section Goals Used to Assess ICS Implementation**  
(*Inspection of Embassy Prague, Czech Republic, ISP-I-20-28*)

This September 2020 report highlights an innovative approach by the Ambassador to bring the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) to the forefront for embassy employees and to measure progress in implementing its objectives.

### RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of September 30, 2020

<b>673*</b> Open Recommendations	<b>43*</b> Recommendations Closed During September
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\* Classified recommendations are not included in these totals because of delays in preparing classified materials due to OIG’s effort to maximize telework and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the beginning of each calendar year, all sections set at least three annual goals, directly tied to Embassy Prague’s overall ICS objectives. The embassy then reviewed each section’s accomplishments to assess ICS implementation results. This process encouraged collaboration between agencies and sections and helped identify potential duplication of efforts. The Ambassador held quarterly goal review sessions with all the sections and monthly meetings with the section heads. Additionally, he held end-of-year meetings with all sections to evaluate their success in meeting their goals and discuss lessons learned. The Ambassador also hosted a lunch for all sections that met their goals for the year.

**Smart Orientation for New Desk Officers**  
(*Inspection of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, ISP-I-20-15*)

This September 2020 report calls attention to actions initiated by the Office of Western European Affairs in 2018. An innovative and ambitious orientation program for new desk officers was created in response to the heavy workload and annual turnover of the office. The Western European office is Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs’ (EUR) largest geographical office, with 22 staff members responsible for 15 countries in Western Europe. In addition, in part due to the heavy travel of the President and the Secretary of State to Western Europe, the office accounted for 27 percent of all briefing papers EUR produced from July 2018 to July 2019. The orientation program included a half-day seminar with

speakers from other EUR offices, including the Front Office. The Office of Western European Affairs presented an overview of the bureau's culture and various tips. In addition, each officer received a detailed handbook covering everything from clearances to updating the EUR SharePoint site. New desk officers credited the program with easing the transition and onboarding process. The EUR Office of European Union and Regional Affairs was invited to join the program, and the Office of Nordic, Baltic, and Arctic Affairs asked to join the program to provide the same onboarding training to their new staff.

## NEW WORK STARTED

- Audit of the Bureau of Global Talent Management, Office of Talent Management, Fulfillment of Service Level Agreement Requirements
- Review of the *Audit of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Selection and Management of Contract Oversight Personnel in Iraq*
- Review of Department of State Preparations to Return Employees and Contractors to Federal Offices During the Global Coronavirus Pandemic
- Audit of the Department of State Compliance with Requirements Relating to Undefined Contract Actions
- Audit of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Process To Verify Purchased Protective Personnel Equipment Complies With Performance Standards and Contractual Requirements
- Audit of the Use of Noncompetitive Contracts in Support of Overseas Contingency Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq

## REPORTS ISSUED

- *Lead Inspector General for East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations I Quarterly Report to the United States Congress I April 1, 2020 - June 30, 2020 (September 1, 2020)*
- *Audit of Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Process To Identify and Apply Best Practices and Lessons Learned to Future Construction Projects (AUD-MERO-20-39)*
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Dhaka, Bangladesh (ISP-S-20-17)\**

- *Inspection of Embassy Prague, Czech Republic (ISP-I-20-28)*
- *Classified Inspection of Embassy Windhoek, Namibia (ISP-S-20-32)\**
- *Management Assistance Report: Deficiencies in Overseas Records Management (ISP-20-25)*
- *Information Report: Systemic Weaknesses Related to the Administration and Oversight of Department of State Contracts and Federal Assistance From FY 2017 to FY 2019 (AUD-CGI-20-44)*
- *Audit of Department of State Compliance With the Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (AUD-MERO-20-41)*
- *Audit of Department of State Foreign Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreements in Somalia (AUD-MERO-20-45)*
- *Audit of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Process To Execute Construction Closeout Procedures for Selected Capital Construction Projects (AUD-CGI-20-43)*
- *Inspection of Embassy Windhoek, Namibia (ISP-S-20-32)*
- *Management Assistance Report: U.S. Agency for Global Media Network Warning Banner (ESP-20-05)*
- *Review of the Selection Process for the International Women of Courage Award (ESP-20-04)*
- *Inspection of Embassy Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (ISP-S-20-18)*
- *Management Assistance Report: Additional Guidance Needed to Improve the Oversight and Management of Locally Employed Staff Serving at Remote Missions (AUD-MERO-20-40)*
- *Audit of Food Services Under the Afghanistan Life Support Services Contract (AUD-MERO-20-46)*
- *Inspection of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (ISP-I-20-15)*
- *Evaluation of the Department's Handling of Sexual Harassment Reports (ESP-20-06)*
- *Work Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2022 (OIG-ERM-20-01)*
- *Audit of the Department of State Bureau of African Affairs Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program (AUD-MERO-20-42)*

\*Report is classified or Sensitive But Unclassified



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