

UNCLASSIFIED



Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-03

Office of Inspections

December 2024

Inspection of Embassy Berlin and Constituent Posts, Germany

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-03

What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Mission Germany. The inspection included Embassy Berlin and Consulates General Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 26 recommendations: 24 to Embassy Berlin and 2 to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. In its comments on the draft report, the Department concurred with all 26 recommendations. OIG considers all 26 recommendations resolved. The Department's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The Department's formal responses are reprinted in their entirety in Appendix B.

December 2024

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

Inspection of Embassy Berlin and Constituent Posts, Germany

What OIG Found

- Mission Germany's leadership team generally modeled the Department of State's leadership principles, and the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission emphasized diversity and inclusion.
- The mission's Political and Economic Sections advanced Integrated Country Strategy and Department priorities.
- Mission Germany's Public Diplomacy Sections supported the Integrated Country Strategy goals and integrated public diplomacy efforts throughout the embassy and five constituent posts.
- Mission Germany's Consular Sections, despite increased demand, had one of the lowest nonimmigrant visa wait times compared to other U.S. embassy consular sections in neighboring countries.
- The mission had consular issues related to visa adjudications, line of sight, the lack of protective coverings for applicants, and the microphone system.
- Embassy Berlin and Consulate General Frankfurt had multiple unresolved safety, fire protection, and facilities problems.
- Mission Germany had management issues related to facilities management, general services, financial management, and human resources programs.
- The mission had information management issues related to the server rooms, local information technology configuration control board, records management, diplomatic notes, network cabling, telephone rooms, non-enterprise networks, and information systems management.

CONTENTS

CONTEXT	1
OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	2
Effects of Russia’s War Against Ukraine on Mission Germany	3
Aging and Inadequate Mission Facilities	3
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION	4
Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct	4
Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives	5
Adherence to Internal Controls.....	6
Security and Emergency Planning	7
Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility	7
Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals	8
Executive Direction at Constituent Posts	8
POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	9
Political and Economic Sections	9
Public Diplomacy	10
Consular Operations.....	11
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	14
Facility Management.....	15
General Services	19
Financial Management.....	23
Human Resources.....	24
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	25
RECOMMENDATIONS	30
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS	37
APPENDX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY.....	38
APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES	39
ABBREVIATIONS	49

CONTEXT



Figure 1: Map of Germany (Source: CIA World Factbook).

The United States and Germany have a strong bilateral relationship. The political, economic, cultural, and security relationships, critical to shared prosperity and continued stability, are based on extensive ties and close coordination. The United States and Germany share global foreign policy interests such as strengthening security and defense, supporting Ukraine, managing the transition to clean energy, and diversifying supply chains. They also collaborate in several

intergovernmental fora, including the Group of 7 (G7),¹ the Group of 20 (G20),² the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe,³ and the United Nations.

In 2023, U.S. bilateral trade in goods and services with Germany totaled \$236.4 billion (\$159.7 billion in imports and \$76.7 billion in exports), making Germany the United States' fifth largest trade partner. Collectively, the European Union member states are the largest U.S. trading partners. Germany is Europe's largest economy.

Germany also hosts a large U.S. military community of approximately 38,000 active-duty military personnel, 40,000 military family members, and 10,000 Department of Defense civilians. An estimated 148,200 U.S. citizens reside in Germany, and 3 million Americans visit Germany annually. More than 45 million Americans of German ancestry live in the United States.

In addition, Germany is the second-largest contributor of security assistance to Ukraine after the United States and has provided \$23.7 billion in bilateral assistance to Ukraine since Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, including humanitarian assistance, funding for lethal and non-lethal military equipment, and aid for Ukraine's reconstruction.

Mission Germany's top three strategic objectives, as outlined in the FY 2022 Integrated Country Strategy (ICS), are to:

¹ The Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental political and economic forum consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

² The Group of 20 (G20) is an intergovernmental forum comprising 19 sovereign countries, the European Union, and the African Union. It works to address major issues related to the global economy, such as climate change mitigation, international financial stability, and sustainable development.

³ The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is a regional security-oriented intergovernmental organization comprising member states in Europe, North America, and Asia.

- Revitalize the U.S.-German alliance and reaffirm our shared values.
- Collaborate on global challenges and defend an open, sustainable, rules-based world.
- Increase U.S. prosperity and make globalization work for the middle class.

Mission Germany is the largest mission in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. The mission consists of Embassy Berlin and five consulates general: Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich. Mission Germany has a total of 763 authorized U.S. direct-hire positions. Of these positions, 577 are Department of State (Department) U.S. direct-hire positions. The remaining 186 U.S. direct-hire positions are filled by other U.S. government agencies represented at the mission, including the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The mission also has 812 authorized locally employed (LE) staff and 110 eligible family member employee positions.

Consulate General Frankfurt is the fourth largest U.S. diplomatic post worldwide and is larger than Embassy Berlin. In addition to its normal bilateral functions, Consulate General Frankfurt serves as the regional and logistical hub for multiple Department entities and other agencies. Consulate General Frankfurt has a total staffing complement of 1,001 of the mission's 1,685 authorized positions: 536 U.S. direct hires, 393 LE staff, and 72 eligible family member positions. Of these authorized positions, the bilateral consulate general represents 15 percent, the regional hub⁴ 43 percent, the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS)⁵ staff 22 percent, and other agencies 20 percent.

OIG evaluated Mission Germany's policy implementation, resource management, and management controls consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.⁶ A related classified inspection report discusses the mission's security program, issues affecting the safety of mission personnel and facilities, political and economic reporting, and certain aspects of the information management program.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

OIG assessed there were two significant areas that impacted Mission Germany's operating environment. As described below, these were the effects of, and the mission's response to, Russia's war against Ukraine and the mission's outdated and inadequate facilities.

⁴ The Department's regional staffing included employees from multiple Department entities including the Bureaus of Administration, European and Eurasian Affairs, Diplomatic Security, Consular Affairs, and Overseas Buildings Operations, and the Department's Office of Inspector General.

⁵ The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services, or ICASS, is the principal means by which U.S. government agencies share the cost of common administrative support services at most diplomatic and consular posts overseas. Through the ICASS working capital fund, service providers recover the cost of delivering administrative support services to other agencies at overseas missions.

⁶ See Appendix A.

Effects of Russia's War Against Ukraine on Mission Germany

Russia's war against Ukraine affected operations in Mission Germany in several ways. The mission:

- Supported a significant increase in the number of official visitors due to the war and other activities such as the G7 without an increase in staff. For example, the total number of visitors for Embassy Berlin and Consulates General Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Leipzig increased from 1,775 visitors in 2021, to 5,715 visitors in 2022, and to 7,879 visitors in 2023.⁷ Consulate General Munich also received approximately 2,200 visitors⁸ for the G7 meeting held in Bavaria in 2022 and the annual Munich Security Conference held in Munich in 2023 and approximately 1,230 visitors for the 2024 security conference.
- Managed an increase in nonimmigrant visa (NIVs) applications over pre-war numbers from both Ukrainian and Russian nationals. In 2022, Mission Germany's consular sections processed 3,606 Russian NIVs and 3,683 Ukrainian NIVs, and in 2023, 4,414 Russian NIVs and 3,543 Ukrainian NIVs, whereas in 2021, prior to Russia's war against Ukraine, the mission's consular sections processed 882 Russian NIVs and 154 Ukrainian NIVs.
- Managed \$2,363,334 from Ukraine supplemental funding in FYs 2022 to 2024 to pay the mission's increased and unfunded utility costs due to inflation resulting from the war.
- Dispatched Embassy Berlin's Management Officer to assist with the shutdown of and relocation of Embassy Kyiv's operations to Poland, at the beginning of the war, and to re-establish management operations at Embassy Kyiv in summer 2022.
- Dispatched mission consular staff to locations near the border of Ukraine to assist with the evacuations of U.S. citizens.
- Hosted 18 LE staff from Embassy Kyiv for 1 year.
- In July 2024, began to host Embassy Kyiv's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs staff at Embassy Berlin.

Aging and Inadequate Mission Facilities

Several of Mission Germany's U.S. government-owned facilities were outdated, including the Clay Annex in Berlin, built in 1938; the consulate office building and Marine Security Guard Residence in Frankfurt, built in 1939; the 400-apartment housing compound in Frankfurt, built in 1959; and the consulate office building in Munich, built in 1951. These facilities had long-standing maintenance issues such as sagging and leaking roofs, foundation problems, plumbing and electrical deficiencies, and non-compliant fire and safety systems. For further discussion, see the Facility Management section of this report.

⁷ Official visitors included congressional and staff delegations and high-level visits by the Secretary of the Treasury, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and others.

⁸ Consulate Munich tracks visitors on a May to April time frame instead of a calendar or fiscal year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed leadership based on interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of embassy meetings and activities during the on-site inspection.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The Ambassador arrived in Germany in February 2022. A non-career ambassador, she is an academic, a political scientist, and served previously as the president of an American university. She also served as an advisor during a previous administration. Before her arrival, Mission Germany had been without an ambassador for more than 20 months, during which time the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) served as Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. (Chargé).

The DCM, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived at the mission in June 2021. He served as Chargé until February 2022. Previously, he was the Director of European Union and Regional Affairs, Economic Minister Counselor in Berlin, and DCM in Yerevan, Armenia.

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM generally led Mission Germany consistent with the Department's leadership and management principles in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b⁹, notably: in communicating U.S. policy; in planning, executing, and evaluating strategic goals; and in advocating U.S. values in the mission and through public engagement activities.

In interviews, mission staff consistently told OIG that the Ambassador established clear expectations for personal and professional conduct. They cited the core concepts she articulated on arrival at the embassy. Staff told OIG that her remarks at a mission-wide town hall meeting laid the foundation for an ethical workplace, and staff credited the Front Office with a consistent emphasis on these values.¹⁰ Mission staff frequently described the Ambassador as a leader focused and engaged on strategic international issues such as Russia's war against Ukraine and the regional and global threats to democracy. Mission staff described the DCM as approachable, kind, and knowledgeable about German affairs. OIG noted that both the Ambassador and the DCM addressed performance and conduct deficiencies in the mission through appropriate counseling and action. Both also hosted community events at their residences for embassy personnel.

OIG concluded that the Ambassador and the DCM communicated and coordinated with all mission elements through regular meetings. The Front Office held weekly country team meetings with section heads and agency heads represented at the mission. The Ambassador and the DCM held a joint biweekly meeting of core leadership staff. Section heads and agency

⁹ The Department's leadership and management principles outlined in 3 FAM 1214b include (1) model integrity, (2) plan strategically, (3) be decisive and take responsibility, (4) communicate, (5) learn and innovate constantly, (6) be self-aware, (7) collaborate, (8) value and develop people, (9) manage conflict, and (10) foster resilience.

¹⁰ The Ambassador established the principles of "Supporting our Staff, Advancing our Alliances, Innovating Inclusively, and Defending Democracy," and "Dignity, Respect, Empathy, Accountability, and Mentoring" to guide the mission staff's interpersonal conduct and policy effort, commonly referred to by the acronym, SAID and DREAM.

heads had both regular meetings with the DCM and access to the Front Office on an ad hoc basis. The DCM also led issue-specific interagency meetings with embassy staff.¹¹

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

Mission Germany's FY 2022 ICS received Department approval in May 2022. Embassy section chiefs, the heads of other agencies, and the five principal officers at the consulates general told OIG that they participated in the ICS process and understood and supported its goals. The Ambassador reviewed ICS progress at expanded quarterly Country Team meetings attended by senior staff and principal officers, in accordance with 18 FAM 301.2-4(D)c. Reporting plans and official travel were also linked to ICS goals.

Mission staff described the Ambassador's leadership of the large mission team as engaged and effective. During the inspection, OIG observed discussions at a mission-wide quarterly Country Team meeting, with the Ambassador actively encouraging input and an exchange of views among senior staff. An OIG review of the Ambassador's and the DCM's calendars indicated consistent and ongoing meetings with a range of German officials, the media, and representatives from the private sector and German civil society, in accordance with 2 FAM 113.1 guidance.

OIG found that the Ambassador advanced U.S. interests and values through political and public diplomacy advocacy on two prominent foreign policy issues during her tenure: Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the rise of global political extremism and terrorism, including the Hamas attacks on Israel in October 2023.

Ambassador Led Mission in Coordination with German Government in Response to Russia's War Against Ukraine.

On her arrival in Germany, the Ambassador immediately joined the U.S. representation at the Munich Security Conference,¹² led by the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and other Cabinet members. Resurgent Russian aggression was a dominant theme of the conference. Following the onset of Russia's war against Ukraine, Mission Germany worked with the German government on actions and policies to respond to the economic, military, and humanitarian dimensions of the war. Through the Ambassador's coordination of political diplomacy with senior levels of the German government, involving many mission elements, the United States and Germany increased their economic participation and trade and strengthened their security and defense cooperation. Coordinated efforts by the embassy and the Departments of Commerce and Energy resulted in new American liquefied natural gas exports to Germany.

¹¹ The DCM led the embassy's Law Enforcement Working Group, and Cyber Working Group. He met monthly with representatives from the Foreign Commercial Service, the Defense Department Liaison office, the Community Liaison Office, and Medical Services. The DCM oversaw the embassy mentoring program, which included mid-level officers.

¹² The Munich Security Conference is a meeting on international security policy held annually in Munich, Germany, and attended by representatives from governmental, non-governmental, and private sector organizations as well as by private individuals.

Through a vigorous public advocacy program between March 2022 and September 2023, the Ambassador held 408 in-person public events and conducted more than 40 different media interviews with print and broadcast outlets throughout Germany, reaching audiences in the tens of millions.

Ambassador's Public Outreach Encouraged German Youth to Promote Democracy, Stand Against Intolerance

In addressing the challenge to democracy posed by the rise of political extremism, the Ambassador initiated a series of speeches, meetings, and public events with government, civil society, and traditional and new media to advance the importance of defending against new and ongoing challenges to democracy in Europe and beyond. For example, in September 2023, the Ambassador conceived a public advocacy campaign to involve German audiences in an open discussion about making their voices heard in response to intolerance and rising global hate. The embassy launched the campaign, "Stand Up, Speak Out" in November 2023, which continued for months, including during the inspection. In the campaign, the Ambassador asked transatlantic youth to consider their role and power in democratic societies in combatting antisemitism, extremism, and all forms of hatred. Additionally, the campaign encouraged participants to create original content for social media to highlight their efforts to "stand up and speak out for democracy."

Adherence to Internal Controls

The Front Office prepared the FY 2023 Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance in accordance with Department guidance in 2 FAM 022.7, 2 FAM 024d, and cable 23 STATE 560,¹³ which instructs overseas posts to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management controls and to submit an annual statement of assurance. OIG examined the embassy's supporting documentation for the Statement of Assurance, which reviewed each section's internal controls, as required, and identified two reportable conditions and two future potential risks.¹⁴ Although the Statement of Assurance affirmed that the embassy complied with requirements related to routine safety and health assessments, occupational safety and health certifications, and motor vehicle safety, OIG found internal controls weaknesses in these areas. Additionally, as discussed later in this report, OIG found internal control issues in political and economic reporting, public diplomacy grants management, consular management, human resources, financial management, general services management, facility management, and information management.

¹³ Cable 23 STATE 560, "Your Role and Responsibilities for Management Controls and Oversight over Post Operations," January 4, 2023.

¹⁴ The two reportable conditions were a U.S. government-owned Frankfurt consulate office building and a U.S. government-owned Frankfurt housing compound that both lacked secondary egress. The two potential future risks were a lack of both a safe haven and safe area space and electrical hazards at the Frankfurt consulate office building.

Security and Emergency Planning

The Front Office's leadership of the security and emergency preparedness programs was consistent with the Department's guidelines in 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-762a. The Front Office held regular meetings¹⁵ with the Regional Security Officer to review security programs, with ad hoc meetings as necessary. The embassy updated its emergency action plan in June 2024 and posted links to the plan and 11 security directives signed by the Ambassador on its intranet site. Responses to OIG's questionnaires showed that most U.S. direct-hire and LE staff members knew where to find the emergency action plan, were familiar with its contents, and understood what to do in case of an emergency. In addition, the memorandum detailing the division of security responsibilities between the embassy and the regional combatant commander was updated in August 2024. Finally, the Front Office participated in emergency and radio check drills, including crisis management exercises held in March 2023 and December 2023. The companion classified inspection report contains additional discussion of the mission's security program.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM supported Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) practices consistent with 2 FAM 1511.1a, 2 FAM 1515c, and the Secretary's guidance in cable 21 STATE 60514.¹⁶ The mission's EEO team included three EEO counselors and seven LE staff EEO liaisons. In March 2024, the Department's Office of Civil Rights conducted mandatory EEO training, in English and German, for all mission staff. Additionally, the mission created a training module for new LE staff, eligible family members, and interns to introduce them to EEO and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) principles at the beginning of their employment.

Mission staff commented favorably on the support of the Ambassador and DCM for DEIA principles. Staff consistently told OIG that the Front Office promoted DEIA principles internally and externally. The embassy and the consulates general in Frankfurt and Munich established DEIA councils. A DEIA representative participated in the embassy's weekly Country Team meetings. The Berlin DEIA Council served in an advisory role encouraging the embassy's Political, Economic, and Public Diplomacy Sections to incorporate DEIA principles in their work and events. The embassy also partnered with the German Bundestag¹⁷ on an event series for members of the German parliament with minority backgrounds to talk about their journey to elected office in an exchange with embassy officials on DEIA issues. Consulate General

¹⁵ The DCM met with the Regional Security Officer biweekly, and the Ambassador met with the Regional Security Officer monthly.

¹⁶ Cable 21 STATE 60514, "Policy Statements on Diversity and Inclusion and Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment," June 11, 2021.

¹⁷ The Bundestag is the German federal parliament. It is the only federal representative body that is directly elected by the German people.

Frankfurt's Leadership Lab¹⁸ created a network of change agents to champion DEIA values and respect for human rights.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

OIG determined Mission Germany maintained active, structured professional development programs for 80 first- and second- tour (FAST) employees located at Embassy Berlin, Consulate General Frankfurt, and Consulate General Munich,¹⁹ as required by 3 FAM 2713b. The DCM, as part of his biannual visits to the consulates general, met with FAST employees in Frankfurt and Munich. In OIG's survey, employees generally were satisfied with their respective FAST programs. However, a small number of employees reported dissatisfaction. In such cases, they cited the lack of a structured mission-wide program and the fact that the FAST programs were generally geared toward Department Foreign Service generalists.^{20,21}

Executive Direction at Constituent Posts

The principal officers at the consulates general told OIG that the Front Office communicated with them regularly through videoconferencing and conference calls. The Front Office held biweekly calls with the five principal officers, and the DCM held a separate virtual meeting with each principal officer. The Front Office also held quarterly in-person country team meetings that included the principal officers from the consulates general. The Ambassador and DCM visited all consulates general and their consular districts multiple times each year for events and activities.

OIG found the principal officers at each consulate general embodied the Department's leadership guidelines in 3 FAM 1214b and in 2 FAM 113.9(1).²² Staff at the five consulates general told OIG the principal officers created a positive leadership climate, modeled openness, and demonstrated concern for their well-being. For example, staff cited the principal officers' support for their professional development, EEO, and diversity and inclusion activities. Staff at

¹⁸ The Public Diplomacy Section developed the Leadership Lab as an 8-month program for U.S. and German participants to draw strength from each other's unique disciplines and identities, building leadership skills, expand professional networks, and advance the U.S.-Germany transatlantic relationship after the program concludes.

¹⁹ Mission Germany had three FAST programs. The Embassy Berlin FAST program had 8 employees; Consulate General Frankfurt had 67 employees; and Consulate General Munich had 5 employees. The DCM oversaw the FAST program in Berlin, and the principal officers oversaw the programs in Frankfurt and Munich.

²⁰ Consulate General Frankfurt's FAST group included Foreign Service generalists, specialists, and other employees from the Department's bilateral and regional platforms such as diplomatic couriers and staff from other agencies.

²¹ Foreign Service officers who join the Department as generalists choose a career track, which will determine the type of work performed for most of their careers. Foreign Service specialists are professionals with specialized expertise and experience needed to meet Foreign Service responsibilities for areas including medical, management, and security.

²² Department guidance in 2 FAM 113.9(1) states that, under the supervision and guidance of the chief of mission, principal officers direct, coordinate, and supervise post resources. The five constituent posts in Germany varied in terms of the Department's authorized U.S. direct-hire staffing. Consulate General Frankfurt had 536 authorized U.S. direct-hire staff members, including the principal officer; Consulate General Munich, 36; Consulate General Hamburg, 7; and Consulates General Dusseldorf and Leipzig, 3 each.

the consulates general also told OIG the principal officers were accessible and set clear priorities.

OIG's review of the principal officers' schedules showed meetings and activities with a spectrum of German governmental and non-governmental officials, consistent with Department guidance in 2 FAM 113.9(2) and (3). OIG found that the principal officers used these contacts to engage on U.S. policy objectives, including security, energy, supply chain management, trade, and diversity and inclusion. For example, the principal officer at Consulate General Hamburg assisted embassy officials with Germany's energy diversification and transformation, facilitating new opportunities for U.S. companies to provide liquid natural gas to Germany. The principal officers at Consulates General Dusseldorf and Hamburg also met with industry and provincial leaders to advance renewable energies such as wind and hydrogen.

Additionally, the embassy and principal officer at Consulate General Dusseldorf established the first partnership with the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, "The NRW-USA Year 2023-2024," to acknowledge, strengthen, and celebrate the diplomatic, cultural, economic, and educational ties between North Rhine-Westphalia and the United States.²³ All principal officers met with government, industry, military, and civil society leaders to advance U.S. policy interests such as countering foreign malign influence, countering misinformation about the United States, fostering trade and security, and promoting DEIA principles.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Mission Germany's policy and program implementation through a review of the advocacy and analysis work of the Political, Economic, and Public Diplomacy Sections, the U.S. citizen and visa services provided by the Consular Section, and the embassy's grants management. OIG found the mission generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. However, OIG made recommendations to address issues in the Political, Economic, Public Diplomacy, and Consular Sections as discussed below. OIG also made one policy implementation recommendation in the classified inspection report.

Political and Economic Sections

OIG reviewed Mission Germany's Political and Economic Sections, including the political and economic work performed at the five consulates general. OIG reviewed leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting and advocacy, Leahy vetting,²⁴ commercial promotion, end-use monitoring, and grants management functions.

²³ The first German settlement in the United States came from North Rhine-Westphalia in 1683. More than 1,700 U.S. companies have a presence in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. There are also 33 sister cities, 98 school partnerships, and 290 university partnerships between North Rhine-Westphalia and the United States.

²⁴ The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the United States from furnishing certain assistance to a unit of a foreign security force if the Department has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. See 22 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). Leahy vetting is the process of determining whether the Department has credible information that units or individuals proposed to benefit from certain assistance have committed a gross violation of human rights. The

Through interviews with Department officials and interagency partners, OIG determined that both sections regularly engaged with Department policy offices and collaborated with other agencies. OIG also concluded that the mission's reporting and advocacy work supported ICS and Department goals. Washington interlocutors commended the embassy's responsiveness to inquiries and requests for updates on information. They cited the Political Section for its policy engagement on a range of issues: political-military matters such as Germany's reaction to Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine; antisemitism; migration; countering violent extremism; the Holocaust; and Germany's external relations with third countries. They recognized the Economic Section for financial reporting; sanctions and export control liaison, including with respect to Russia's war against Ukraine; tracking significant third-country investments; nonproliferation; and technology developments. Washington interlocutors praised the five consulates general for engagement on the sub-national level and for reporting on domestic politics as well as third-country commercial activities. In addition, they cited Consulate General Frankfurt for economic reporting on the European Central Bank and large private financial institutions.

OIG reviewed 476 reporting cables sent by the embassy and the consulates general from September 2023 through February 2024 and found the reporting to be relevant to mission strategic objectives and responsive to Department taskings, with coverage across a range of pertinent issues. OIG estimated that more than one-third of Embassy Berlin's unclassified reporting contained input from the consulates general. Mission personnel reported that cooperation on joint reports among the consulates general and the embassy functioned well. Although recipients generally complimented the quality of the reporting, some recipients noted that it did not sufficiently cover one topic category. The companion classified inspection report addresses this issue.

During the inspection, the Political Section updated a grant as required by the Federal Assistance Directive (FAD).²⁵

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning and reporting, resource and knowledge management, American Spaces, federal assistance awards, education and cultural programs, and media engagement. OIG determined the section supported the mission's ICS goals, and public diplomacy efforts were integrated throughout the embassy and at the five consulates general. Public diplomacy outreach included: programs to train Ukrainian women entrepreneurs, counter Russian disinformation, support Ukraine, and promote diversity and inclusion; speaker, grant, and cultural programs; and media engagement. Additionally, the Department's Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources of the Office of the Under Secretary for

Department helps implement a similar law applicable to "amounts made available to the Department of Defense" for assistance to foreign security forces. See 10 U.S.C. § 362.

²⁵ FAD, Version 7.0, Chapter 2, Sections I and P.

Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs commended the section for its strategic planning efforts and for aligning the mission's public diplomacy plans with policy priorities.²⁶

Overall, OIG found Mission Germany's public diplomacy activities generally met Department standards and guidance, except for two items discussed below.

OIG reviewed 20 grant and cooperative agreement files²⁷ with a total value of \$841,269 and found that funds were used for their intended purpose. However, OIG determined 19 files lacked documentation of one or more of the following: evidence of competition, a merit review, monitoring, or final evaluation for closeout.²⁸ During the inspection, the Public Diplomacy Section made substantial progress to address the grant file deficiencies, updating many grants files with the missing documentation.²⁹ Therefore, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

OIG also found that, in FYs 2023 and 2024, Public Diplomacy Section staff provided translation and interpretation services for official meetings that did not have a public diplomacy component, contrary to Department standards.^{30,31} During the inspection, the section implemented a standard operating procedure that required reimbursement from the requesting office to the Public Diplomacy Section for non-public diplomacy related services. Therefore, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Mission Germany's consular operations, including U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, and fraud prevention programs at the embassy and two consulates general in Frankfurt and Munich.³²

In FY 2023, applications from third-country nationals made up 53 percent of Mission Germany's NIV workload. Despite a 32 percent visa workload increase between FY 2019 and FY 2023, Mission Germany had one of the lowest NIV wait times of U.S. embassies in the region. With the assistance of temporary personnel, Consulate General Frankfurt processed immigrant visas

²⁶ Cable 24 STATE 25586, "FY2024 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan (PDIP) Process Kudos," March 12, 2024.

²⁷ OIG reviewed a selection of 20 grants out of a universe of 434 grants totaling \$4,071,234, with a performance period start date from January 1, 2022, to March 25, 2024. The sample included 10 grants and cooperative agreements from Embassy Berlin, 5 from Consulate General Frankfurt, 2 from Consulate General Munich, 2 from Consulate Leipzig, and 1 from Consulate General Hamburg. Grant amounts ranged from \$10,891 to \$249,993.

²⁸ The FAD establishes internal guidance, policies, and procedures for all domestic and overseas grant-making bureaus, offices, and posts administering federal financial assistance and is updated annually by the Bureau of Administration, Office of the Procurement Executive. Grants reviewed by OIG were subject to FAD, Version 6.0, effective October 8, 2021, through October 2, 2022; and FAD, Version 7.0, effective October 3, 2022, through April 30, 2024.

²⁹ FAD, Version 7.0, Chapter 2, Section I.

³⁰ Staff told OIG that approximately 5 percent of mission requests for translator and interpreter services did not have a public diplomacy component.

³¹ According to 10 FAH-1 H-021g(4), "PD funds may only be used for authorized public diplomacy purposes."

³² Consulates General Dusseldorf, Hamburg, and Leipzig did not provide consular services.

for Ukrainians and adjudicated Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans. Frankfurt also provided immigrant visa services to residents of five other European countries³³ in addition to Germany. The volume of services for U.S. citizens was generally consistent with pre-pandemic levels, except for Frankfurt's processing of renunciations of citizenship. This work increased by more than 200 percent in FY 2023 compared to FY 2022 as Frankfurt worked to reduce a backlog of cases.

OIG found the mission's consular sections employed innovative solutions to improve their operations. For example, they developed eight data analytical reporting tools to view and evaluate section productivity, replacing older consular workload reports that were time-consuming to prepare. Consular sections worldwide can repurpose the pre-built reports for their own use to view and evaluate productivity. In addition, Consulates General Frankfurt and Munich developed correspondence navigators that dynamically answers common questions and efficiently routes inquiries to the appropriate consular staff for response. Use of the navigators reduced email traffic by 50 percent and saved an estimated 10,400 hours in staff time per year. Embassy Berlin created programs using AutoHotkey³⁴ that allowed staff to rapidly preload NIV case information into consular systems prior to applicant interviews.

During the inspection, the mission's consular sections corrected two issues identified by OIG:

- Consulate General Frankfurt's Consular Section completed annual evaluations of Mission Germany's four panel physician clinics, as required by 9 FAM 302.2-3(E)(3)(f)(2) and 9 FAM 302.2-3(E)(3)c.³⁵
- Consulate General Munich scheduled installation of a new water fountain in the consular waiting room compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as required by cable 23 STATE 118710.³⁶

OIG also found that consular officers at Consulate General Munich did not have line of sight over passport and visa production areas, as set out in 7 FAH-1 H-282(2)(g) and 7 FAH-1 H-664.1(b). Consular managers told OIG that this deficiency will be corrected by a consular renovation project scheduled for FY 2024. Except for the issues discussed below, OIG found consular programs generally complied with guidance in 7 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies.

Consulate General Frankfurt's Consular Section Did Not Conduct Nonimmigrant Adjudication Review in a Timely Manner

OIG found that Consulate General Frankfurt consular managers did not conduct timely adjudication reviews of NIV cases as required in 9 FAM 403.12-1d. Based on an analysis of visa

³³ These countries are the Netherlands, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Cyprus.

³⁴ AutoHotKey is a scripting language for Windows that allows users to automate repetitive tasks, create custom keyboard shortcuts, and perform various system automation tasks.

³⁵ Mission Germany had 11 panel physicians located at four different venues.

³⁶ Cable 23 STATE 118710, "FY 2024 Overseas Consular Financial Guidance," November 2, 2023.

adjudication reviews from December 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024, reviewing officers did not complete their reviews within the mandatory timeframe for review, as established in 9 FAM 403.12-1d. A consular manager told OIG that recent increases in workload and lack of communication among them made them less diligent in ensuring timeliness of adjudication reviews. Regular reviews of visa adjudications are an important management tool to maintain the highest professional standards of adjudications and ensure uniform and correct application of Department standards.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Berlin should conduct timely nonimmigrant visa adjudication reviews in accordance with Department Standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Consulate General Frankfurt's Consular Officers Lacked Line of Sight Over Cashier Booths

The location of the visa and U.S. citizen services cashier booths made it impossible for officers to monitor cashiers' activities without standing directly in front of the booths. According to 7 FAH-1 H-282(2)(i), consular sections should have a cashier booth that allows line-of-sight supervision, and 7 FAH-1 H-281e states that an effective line of sight allows officers and supervisors to easily monitor operations by enabling cleared American supervisors to physically observe work areas. The lack of line of sight increases the risk of malfeasance.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Berlin should comply with Department standards for line-of-sight supervision of the cashier booths at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Consulate General Munich Lacked Protective Covering for Consular Applicants

The entrance to the consular access area, where nonimmigrant visa applicants lined up awaiting processing, did not provide adequate protection from the elements. According to 7 FAH-1 H-281a, an effective consular section needs to provide a dignified, secure, accessible, adequate, efficient, comfortable, and attractive accommodation for both visitors and staff. Consular lines and waiting areas are both potential public relations opportunities and security challenges, and every effort should be made to accommodate the public as efficiently, safely, and pleasantly as possible. Consular managers informed OIG they had raised this issue in the past with consulate general management but received no response. Failure to provide protective covering for visa and passport applicants at the entrance leaves them exposed to inclement weather.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should provide Consulate General Munich's consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with OBO)

Embassy Berlin's Consular Section Lacked a Functioning Microphone System

The microphone system installed in Embassy Berlin's Consular Section during a 2021 consular renovation was inoperable. According to consular staff, the embassy's Facility Management Section was unable to identify compatible headsets for the system. According to 7 FAH-1 H-281a, an effective consular section needs to provide a secure, accessible, adequate, and

efficient accommodation for visitors and staff. In addition, 7 FAH-1 H-463 specifies that periodic maintenance should include checking and maintaining the consular microphone system and promptly requesting and tracking needed repairs. Furthermore, according to guidance provided on the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs internal website, "a good microphone system is essential to any consular operation." Poor or unreliable sound quality diminishes the effectiveness of interviews and reduces productivity.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Berlin should replace the existing consular microphone system with a functioning system. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Mission Germany's internal control systems in facility management, general services, financial management, and human resources. During the inspection, Mission Germany corrected 11 issues identified by OIG. Specifically, Mission Germany:

- Updated the mission-wide motor vehicle policy (14 FAM 435.1a).
- Updated the mission-wide furniture and appliance pool³⁷ policy (6 FAH-5 H-512.2-2b).
- Implemented a plan to address the misclassification of furniture and appliance pool assets in the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS)³⁸ (6 FAH-5 H-514.1d(3)).
- Validated or de-obligated more than \$3 million in unliquidated obligations that had no activity in more than a year (4 FAM 225d).
- Reduced the number of rejected financial transactions in the Department's financial system (4 FAM 251.7).
- Updated the list of confined spaces and entry permit requirements (Confined Space Program Procedures, 29 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) 1910.146).
- Calibrated Consulate General Munich's fuel pump (Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, Section 3.3b).
- Added three non-residential structures to Consulate General Munich's real property inventory (15 FAM 141.1a).
- Required that Pouch Control Officers complete mandatory training (14 FAM 728.1a).
- Procured a secured entry system and examination room soundproofing for the embassy's Clay Annex Health Unit clinic (45 C.F.R), Subtitle A, Subchapter C, Part 164.306).
- Ceased the sale of duty-free tobacco to LE staff (6 FAM 543).

³⁷ A furniture and appliance pool program includes the purchase, replacement, refurbishment, maintenance, inventory control, warehousing, pick-up and delivery, and eventual disposal of residential furniture, furnishings, appliances, and equipment.

³⁸ The Integrated Logistics Management System is a unified web-based information system designed to integrate the Department's supply chain by improving processing in areas such as purchasing, procurement, warehousing, transportation, receiving, property management, personal effects, and diplomatic pouch and mail. It is the only Department-approved system for property management accountability and consists of several modules.

OIG found that the mission's Management Sections in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich generally implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance, apart from those described below. Mission staff attributed most deficiencies to inadequate staffing levels and competing priorities due to the complexity and size of the mission as described in the Context section above.

Facility Management

Four U.S. direct-hire Facility Managers, 9 EFMs, and 129 LE staff managed a real property portfolio of 416 U.S. government-owned³⁹ and 71 capital lease properties.⁴⁰ As stated earlier, several of these properties were aging, including the Clay Annex in Berlin; the consulate office building, a 400-apartment housing compound, and a Marine Security Guard Residence in Frankfurt; and the consulate office building in Munich. Mission staff told OIG that Facility Management staff were fully occupied keeping up with the maintenance, repair, and replacement of aging building systems, in addition to serving as project managers for more than \$40 million of Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) projects. In addition, these workload issues led to vulnerabilities in the safety, health, and environmental management program, the fire protection program, and building infrastructure.

During consultations, OBO staff told OIG that they will issue a "Facility Analysis" report in September 2024 to inform OBO's planning for the facilities in Frankfurt. In the interim, OBO and mission staff said they would coordinate their efforts, along with the Bureau of Administration's Office of Acquisitions Management, Regional Procurement Support Office staff in Frankfurt, to try to address some issues incrementally. The mission's facilities issues are discussed in greater detail below.

Embassy Berlin Had Multiple Unresolved Fire Protection and Facilities Issues

OIG found Embassy Berlin had several unresolved safety, fire protection, and facilities problems. Specifically, OIG found that:

- The utility building of the embassy's Clay Annex, where high-voltage city power was brought into the annex, had multiple structural issues. First, the building's roof was sagging. As a temporary measure, embassy Facility Management staff installed support poles to keep the roof from collapsing. Second, the building suffered from water infiltration issues, which required the ground to be graded away from the building so that water would not funnel toward the structure. OIG observed evidence of flooding and water damage on the building's floors and walls. Additionally, in an adjacent building, the power line was located immediately beneath an aging hot water line, which represented a safety hazard. Mission staff had brought these issues to OBO's

³⁹ U.S. government-owned properties included the embassy office building, annex office buildings, consulate general office buildings, Chief of Mission Residence, principal officer residencies, residential units, and other properties.

⁴⁰ Capital leases are similar to purchases of real property because the entire lease is budgeted in advance. These leases require prior Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations approval.

attention; however, at the time of the inspection, OBO had not developed a scope of work to address the identified issues. According to 1 FAM 287.4(7), OBO manages roofs, exterior waterproofing, and power systems for posts abroad.

- The backup generator of the embassy's Clay Annex was not large enough to power the entire facility in case of an emergency. The building load exceeded the generator's rated capacity. Facility Management staff told OIG the generator was rated at 280 kilowatts and could only supply power to limited parts of the annex in an outage. Staff explained that most offices in the annex and the Marine Security Guard Residence would not have power in an emergency. Staff said they had informed OBO of the issue verbally, but it was unclear when OBO would address the problem. They did not provide OIG any written communication informing OBO of it. According to 15 FAM 676.1-1a, OBO is responsible for ensuring that generators are adequate to supply backup power in case of an emergency.
- The embassy's Clay Annex had uneven floors with variances between 0.25 and 2 inches at the doorways of approximately 200 rooms, which represented a tripping hazard. This issue, also identified during the 2022 OBO safety, health, and environmental management assessment, remained unresolved, contrary to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standard 1910.22(d).
- The fire suppression sprinkler system on the third floor of the embassy's chancery building was inoperative due to a leak. A test valve located on the same floor was also leaking. According to 15 FAM 841a, missions are responsible for monitoring fire protection systems to ensure they are operational.
- The fire alarm system at the embassy's Curtius Annex was inoperative. Guidance in 15 FAM 841a-b states that missions are responsible for monitoring fire systems to ensure they are operational and maintaining or replacing locally installed systems as required.
- There was a fall hazard on the chancery roof, contrary to OSHA Standards 1910.28(a)(1), and (b)(1)(i).

Facility Management staff told OIG that they did not have sufficient personnel and resources to address these building issues. Staff also told OIG that their focus was on performing building maintenance and upkeep. Unaddressed maintenance and upkeep of key building systems could affect the functionality of these facilities, as well as the safety of staff.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Embassy Berlin. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

Consulate General Frankfurt Had Multiple Unresolved Facilities Issues

OIG found that Consulate General Frankfurt had multiple unresolved facilities issues. Specifically, OIG found that:

- The roof above parts of the consulate general office building leaked. Facility Management staff told OIG these roofing issues caused water damage in walls and basement areas and that one area of the basement had flooded at least twice. Facility

Management staff told OIG they informed OBO of the problem and provided a vendor proposal and estimate for repairs, which according to consulate general staff, OBO denied for unspecified technical reasons. Guidance in 1 FAM 287.4(6) and (7) states that OBO is responsible for assessing mission facilities to determine maintenance, repair, funding, and execution requirements. According to the same guidance, OBO manages roof waterproofing for missions abroad.

- The entire consulate office building lacked waterproofing around the foundation. OIG observed significant water damage in basement areas. Facility Management staff told OIG that they made OBO aware of the issue in 2022; however, OBO had no plan to address this issue. In accordance with 1 FAM 287.4(4), (6), and (7), OBO provides support to missions for the maintenance and repairs necessary to restore or retain functionality of facilities abroad. This support specifically includes managing waterproofing for missions abroad.
- The consulate office building had problems with rusted and deteriorating plumbing and sewer lines. Some of the plumbing dated from the 1930s. Facility Management staff had to replace the pipes in parts of the building. Staff raised this issue with OBO, but OBO did not identify an overall solution. According to 15 FAM 635.1-1a(1), OBO is responsible for the sustainment, restoration, and modernization of plumbing systems.
- An electrical issue caused breakers to trip regularly, which posed a concern for the secure warehouse and could potentially impact other electrical systems. In 2022 and 2023, several OBO and Facility Management staff examined the issue, which required consulate general staff to procure a contract for load testing before they could replace the equipment. However, at the time of the inspection load testing had not been done. According to 15 FAM 635.1-1a(1), OBO is responsible to the sustainment, restoration, and modernization of electrical systems.
- The consulate general had an electrical arc flash hazard.⁴¹ In 2018, OBO initiated a project to address this issue; however, the project was put on hold in December 2023 due to contractual issues. At the time of the inspection, the project had yet to resume, and neither OBO nor the mission could provide a timeline for completion. According to 1 FAM 287.4(7), OBO is responsible for managing power systems at missions abroad. Guidance issued by the National Fire Protection Association in NFPA 70E, Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace, outlines electrical safety standards related to arc flash hazards, and 15 FAM 957.7a-b states that missions must implement these standards.

Facility Management staff told OIG that they did not have sufficient staff to prepare scopes of work for some projects, to perform routine maintenance, and to serve as project managers, limiting their ability to address these issues. For example, Facility Management staff estimated nearly half of their staff also had project management duties. Staff also stated that, in some instances, OBO had been informed about needed projects but had yet to provide assistance

⁴¹ An electrical arc flash is an unintended blast of electricity hot enough to vaporize metal or spray molten shrapnel throughout the immediate vicinity, and could result in severe injuries, burns, or death. According to documentation provided by the mission to OIG, the arc flash hazard was first identified in 2011 during an annual inspection commissioned by OBO. The hazard was then verified by an OBO third-party contractor in 2015.

with scopes of work, contracting assistance, or project management. OIG noted that OBO must prioritize a limited budget across many embassies worldwide. Finally, staff stated that the growth of non-Department agencies and of regional staff, along with the provision of maintenance services to the large contingent of offices in Frankfurt increased the demand for residential and workplace maintenance services. Unaddressed maintenance and upkeep of key building systems could affect the functionality of these facilities, as well as the safety of staff.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Comply with Department Standards

The mission's fire protection program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the mission did not perform hydrostatic testing and services of fire extinguishers at the required intervals. A total of 504 of 1,550 (33 percent) of the mission's fire extinguishers were past due by one year or more for hydrostatic testing,⁴² contrary to standards in 15 FAM 843e and OSHA 29 C.F.R. 1910.157(e)(4). Additionally, Facility Management staff told OIG they were unable to locate 60 to 70 fire extinguishers, contrary to accountability requirements in 15 FAM 813.6b. Facility Management staff told OIG that inadequate staffing and competing priorities had delayed their ability to address these issues. Staff also told OIG they recommended to OBO that a local contractor test and service the fire extinguishers and were awaiting OBO's response. Malfunctioning or poorly serviced fire protection systems and equipment limits the mission's ability to protect itself against fires and increases the risk of injury and property damage.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with OBO)

Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program Did Not Fully Comply with Department Standards

OIG found that Mission Germany's safety, health, and environmental management program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically:

- Several mission facilities lacked ground fault circuit interrupters⁴³ in locations such as bathrooms. This issue was identified during a 2022 OBO safety, health, and environmental management assessment but had not been addressed at the time of the

⁴² Consulate General Frankfurt alone had 486 of its 872 fire extinguishers past due for testing. Most were installed at the consulate general's residences.

⁴³ A ground fault circuit interrupter is a type of circuit breaker that trips off electricity in less than a tenth of a second when it senses a change in the flow of electricity that could indicate a potential shock hazard. Ground fault circuit interrupters are generally installed where electrical circuits may accidentally come into contact with water.

inspection. Department standards in 15 FAM 312.6-2a(3) and 15 FAM 971.2(3), mandate the installation of ground fault circuit interrupters in bathrooms, kitchens (where the outlets are installed to serve the countertop surface areas), outdoors, and in other areas stipulated by OBO.

- Three of the mission's six Post Occupational Safety and Health Officers (POSHO), and six of the mission's eight assistant POSHOs, lacked required training in accordance with 15 FAM 965b and f, and 15 FAM 962e.
- Embassy Berlin had completed POSHO certifications⁴⁴ for only 33 percent of its nonresidential properties. Consulates General Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich had completed none of the required certifications for their respective nonresidential properties. According to 15 FAM 971.2, no employee may occupy a U.S. government-held nonresidential property unless the POSHO certifies that safety requirements are met.

Facility Management staff told OIG that inadequate staffing made it difficult to address these issues. Failure to adhere to all safety, health, and environmental management standards increases the risk of injury or loss of life to staff and visitors.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Berlin should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

General Services

Contracting Officer's Representative Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Mission Germany's Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found that:

- Ten of the 26 staff serving as CORs lacked required COR certifications (14 FAH-2 H-143.1a, g, h, and j).
- Four of the 26 CORs oversaw contracts above their qualifications and authority (14 FAH-2 H-113c(3)).⁴⁵
- Nineteen of the 26 CORs were missing COR designation letters for 38 of 68 contracts requiring them (14 FAH-2 H-143.2). Designation letters instruct CORs on their duties and any restrictions on their activities.

⁴⁴ According to 15 FAM 971b and c, the POSHO or their designated, qualified representative, must inspect all properties and applicable units for safety, health, and environmental hazards, and certify in the POSHO Certification Application that those hazards have been effectively controlled or eliminated prior to occupancy. The POSHO must complete all certifications in the POSHO Certification Application, which is the OBO system of record.

⁴⁵ According to 14 FAH-2 H-113c(3), contracts above \$5 million require oversight by a Level III certified COR. Mission Germany had five contracts exceeding this amount that were overseen by Level II CORs.

- Seven of the 26 CORs were missing or had expired COR training (14 FAH-2 H-143.1), and seven had not completed required annual ethics training (13 FAM 301.2-3a, 11 FAM 622a(2)(a)).
- Nine of the 26 CORs could not provide documentation that they had submitted the required OGE-450 annual financial disclosure statement (11 FAM 611.4(3)).
- Only 14 of 79 required annual contractor performance assessment reports were done in CPARS.gov, the federal system of record for contractor's performance assessments (14 FAH-2 H-572a, c, and d, and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 42.1502(a) and (b)).
- None of the mission's CORs maintained COR files in ILMS' COR e-Filing module, as required (14 FAH-2 H-142b(16)(b)).

Additionally, mission procurement staff could not provide OIG with complete and accurate lists of all active contracts and the contracting officers and CORs responsible for overseeing them. The absence of such lists meant that no one tracked COR qualifications or changes in CORs (FAR 4.802(d)). Sections were not informing procurement staff or contracting officers when they changed CORs. According to Department standards, new CORs cannot be designated without the approval of the contracting officer (Department of State Acquisition Regulation 642.270(a) and 14 FAH-2 H-143a).

Mission procurement staff told OIG they were unaware of the requirement to track all mission contracts, or CORs and their training and qualifications. Staff said sections did not inform them or the contracting officers when they changed COR assignments. Regarding not using CPARS.gov and ILMS as required, procurement staff told OIG those systems were difficult to use, and some employees did not have access to them. Instead, staff preferred to use their own shared drive for filing contract and COR documentation. A non-compliant COR program increases the risk of contract mismanagement and the failure to complete required annual performance assessments.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Berlin should bring its contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department and federal requirements. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Mission Did Not Systematically Require Vendors to Register in the System for Award Management

OIG found Mission Germany did not systematically require vendors to register in the System for Award Management (SAM).⁴⁶ According to FAR 52.204-7(b), an offeror is required to be registered in SAM when submitting an offer or quotations and shall continue to be registered until the time of award, during performance, and through final payment of any contract, basic agreement, basic ordering agreement, or blanket purchasing agreement resulting from the

⁴⁶ The System for Award Management is the primary government repository for prospective Federal awardee and Federal awardee information and the centralized government system for certain contracting, grants, and other assistance-related processes. Information includes the identification of parties excluded from receiving Federal contracts.

solicitation. Mission management staff told OIG the SAM registration requirement was not enforced because most local vendors considered the registration process burdensome. As a result, mission management staff were concerned that vendors would not respond to solicitations, which could limit the mission's ability to procure the goods and services it needed. At the time of the inspection, the embassy's Contracting Officer had taken steps to begin enforcing the SAM registration requirement; however, it was unclear if and how the requirement would be enforced mission-wide. Failure to require vendors to register in SAM hinders the mission's ability to identify offerors who may have been excluded from receiving federal contracts.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Berlin should enforce the requirement for vendors to register in the System for Award Management. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Mission Did Not Close Out Procurement Files Within Required Timeframes

The mission did not close out procurement files in ILMS within the required timeframes. Specifically, the mission did not close out 2,350 procurement files from FY 2015 to FY 2023. In addition, another 6,658 procurement files could not be closed out until procurement staff and financial management staff completed all required steps. Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b⁴⁷ states that contracts under simplified acquisitions procedures should be closed out immediately after the contracting officer receives evidence of receipt of property and final payment. Management staff told OIG this issue occurred because their heavy workload limited the amount of time available to perform contract closeout processes. Failure to close out procurement files within the required timeframe increases the risk of inaccuracies in procurement records and of internal control issues in procurement operations.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Berlin should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Embassy Berlin Did Not Manage Expendable Property as Required

Embassy Berlin did not manage its expendable property⁴⁸ in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found that the embassy did not track all facility management expendable property in ILMS. According to 14 FAM 414.2-1a(2), ILMS is the Department's approved system of record for office supplies and materials and supplies such as those used for facility management. Management Section staff told OIG this situation occurred because of staff's unfamiliarity with requirements and inconsistent receiving procedures. Failure to account for all expendable property in the Department's approved system of record increases the risk of mismanagement and theft of mission property.

⁴⁷ Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b also cites 48 C.F.R. § 4.804-1.

⁴⁸ Expendable property is property which, when put in use, is consumed, loses its identity, or becomes an integral part of another item of property. Examples are office supplies, automobile tires, and machine parts.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Berlin should use the Integrated Logistics Management System to account for all expendable property in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Embassy's Receiving Procedures Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Berlin's receiving procedures did not fully comply with Department standards. For example, on March 4, 2024, the embassy received two shipping containers with furniture and appliance pool assets. Because the embassy's warehouse was full, the shipment was delivered to a commercial facility for temporary storage, and the embassy's receiving clerk did not receive the assets in ILMS until after they were delivered to the embassy's warehouse on May 10, 2024. In addition, the embassy did not affix barcode labels to the assets or the packing boxes and did not create property records for the assets in ILMS until receiving them at the embassy's warehouse. Guidance in 14 FAM 413.1b states that the receiving clerk must inspect promptly⁴⁹ all property delivered as to quantity, quality, and condition, and ensure that the property is in accordance with the terms and specifications of the acquisition document. According to guidance in 14 FAH-1 H-312.8-1a, all property must be marked to indicated agency ownership as soon as possible after receipt and acceptance; and the receiving clerk should apply a barcode label to any property and create the initial asset record in ILMS. Management staff told OIG this situation occurred because the assets had to be stored at a commercial facility with insufficient space for staff to process and receive all the assets. Failure to follow Department receiving standards increases the risk of inaccuracies to property records, theft, and mismanagement.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Berlin should bring its receiving procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Mission Did Not Comply With Department Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

Mission Germany did not fully comply with the Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards. OIG reviewed motor vehicle safety data maintained in ILMS for the mission's 598 staff authorized to operate U.S. government-owned motor vehicles (chauffeurs and incidental drivers) and found that:

- Twenty incidental drivers held expired medical clearances, contrary to guidance in 14 FAM 433.4c. Additionally, the mission did not report medical clearance information for another 48 incidental drivers, as required by 14 FAM 433.4e.
- Twenty-five incidental drivers held expired driver's safety training certifications, contrary to 14 FAM 433.5a. Additionally, the mission did not maintain records on driver's safety training information for another 44 incidental drivers, as required by 14 FAM 433.5e.

⁴⁹ Additional guidance found in 14 FAH-1 H-312i states that all incoming shipments must be processed within 7 calendar days.

Management staff told OIG this situation occurred because of competing priorities and potential recordkeeping clerical errors. Failure to enforce Department motor vehicle safety standards increases the risk of injury to drivers and the public, as well as damage to U.S. government property.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Berlin should comply with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for incidental drivers under chief of mission authority. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Mission Did Not Account for All Costs of Its Motor Vehicle Fleet

The mission did not account for all the costs of its motor vehicle fleet. Specifically, OIG found that Embassy Berlin and Consulates General Frankfurt and Munich did not account for the electricity used to charge their electrical and hybrid vehicles. Guidance in 14 FAM 437.1a states that fuel records must be kept in the Department's Fleet Management Information System⁵⁰ for all official vehicles. According to 14 FAM 431.4, fuel is the energy source needed to power vehicles and includes electricity. Management staff told OIG this situation occurred because the mission did not have metered charging stations, nor did they use the Department's Bureau of Administration's Electric Vehicle Use Estimator to calculate the cost of electricity. Failure to accurately track motor vehicle fleet costs could result in motor pool customers being undercharged for the services they receive.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Berlin should account for all motor vehicle fleet costs in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Financial Management

Only Three of Eighteen Diplomatic Technology Positions Programmed to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

OIG found that ICASS funded only 3 of the mission's 18 Diplomatic Technology (DT) U.S. direct-hire positions even though the section provided support to other agencies. The Department paid for the remaining 15 positions, even though the mission estimated that at least 2 of those 15 positions allocated more than 50 percent of their time to ICASS services. According to 6 FAH-5 H-013.2, an operating principle of the ICASS system is that agencies pay their share of mission administrative costs based on usage. Additionally, 6 FAH-5 H-341.9⁵¹ states that ICASS should include salaries and benefits of all U.S. direct-hire and LE staff who allocate time to the respective cost centers, overhead costs associated with those staff members, and equipment required to provide services. According to 6 FAH-5 H-341.4-3, Note 1, at overseas missions with multiple U.S. direct-hire DT officers and specialists, the Department pays for the first position, while the second one is always paid through ICASS. Where there are more than two such

⁵⁰ The Fleet Management Information System is the Department's enterprise system for the management of all fleet operations, a module within ILMS, which captures key operational data on vehicle dispatch, maintenance, and fuel.

⁵¹ See 6 FAH-5 H-341.9-1(B), 6 FAH-5 H-341.9-2(B), and 6 FAH-5 H-341.9-3(B).

employees, the mission determines an appropriate mix of Department-funded and ICASS-funded positions. The mission's failure to reprogram additional DT positions to ICASS meant the Department subsidizes most of the costs for DT services to other agencies. OIG estimated the Department could recover funds of up to \$243,993 over 3 years, per position, by converting additional positions to ICASS.⁵²

Recommendation 16: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Budget and Planning, the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, and European and Eurasian Affairs, should reprogram additional Department-funded diplomatic technology positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of up to \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with BP, CGFS, and EUR)

Human Resources

Local Compensation Plan Did Not Comply With German Labor Law

The mission's local compensation plan⁵³ for LE staff did not comply with German labor law. For example, the mission needed to update several provisions related to leave entitlement, including annual leave and home care leave, to bring its local compensation into full compliance with German labor law. Standards in 3 FAM 7224.2-1a require that LE staff programs conform as closely as feasible to local law and prevailing practice but must be based on and administered in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations. Human resources staff told OIG they did not revise the local compensation plan due to inadequate staffing, workload issues, and competing priorities. Without an updated local compensation plan, LE staff may not receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and the mission may not be compliant with local labor law.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the mission's local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with GTM)

Locally Employed Staff Handbook Was Outdated

Mission Germany had not updated its LE staff handbook since April 2016. OIG found that the handbook contained inaccurate information. For example, the handbook stated that LE staff received annual within-grade salary increases. This was an inaccurate statement because the mission implemented a merit-based compensation system in 2015. Department standards in 3 FAM 7155a require each overseas mission to develop and maintain an LE staff handbook that documents LE staff employment policies and procedures, as well as LE staff responsibilities and

⁵² Relying on Department-provided figures, OIG estimated the Department could annually recover \$81,331 per position, using the worldwide average cost of an ICASS U.S. direct-hire position of \$268,419 and the worldwide average percentage of time U.S. direct-hire DT staff support other agencies of 30.3 percent ($\$268,419 \times .303 = \$81,331$). Because Mission Germany is a 3-year tour, the total funds put to better use is calculated as $3 \times \$81,331$ for a total of \$243,993 per position reprogrammed to ICASS.

⁵³ A local compensation plan forms the legal basis for all salary, bonus, and other payments to LE staff members under guidelines in 3 FAM 7521.

expected conduct. According to human resources staff, other work commitments prevented them from updating the LE staff handbook. Absent an updated handbook with accurate policies and procedures, LE staff may not be fully aware of their benefits, and the risk of litigation may increase for the Department.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Berlin should update the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Mission Germany's computer network operations, information systems and administration of mobile computing devices, mail and pouch services, cyber security practices, records management, and telephone and emergency communications systems. OIG also identified three internal control issues, which the mission started correcting or corrected during the inspection. Specifically, the mission:

- Corrected the Active Directory⁵⁴ naming conventions, removed or updated stale accounts, and reviewed and updated excessive access permissions on both OpenNet and ClassNet (12 FAH-10 H-110).
- Installed an emergency high frequency radio base station at the Embassy Berlin Alternate Command Center (12 FAH-1 H-261e(3)).
- Started removing non-enterprise network⁵⁵ (NEN) end-of-life equipment (5 FAM 653).
- Corrected some IT infrastructure cable runs at the annexes (5 FAH-9 H-423.1).

OIG determined Mission Germany's DT programs and services generally met the embassy's day-to-day computing and communications needs in accordance with Department standards and guidance, except for the issues described below, and in the companion classified report.

Consulate General Frankfurt Operated a Duplicative Virtual Server System

OIG found that Consulate General Frankfurt operated and maintained its own virtual server system and storage network on OpenNet, at a cost of more than \$100,000 annually, instead of leveraging the Department-provided Enterprise Converged Platform⁵⁶ virtual server system. Department standard 5 FAM 915.2a(5) requires that IT procurements not duplicate already available IT resources or other cost-effective alternatives. In addition, Department standard 5 FAM 121.2b(7)a, requires DT officers to operate DT systems "effectively and efficiently." Although DT personnel were aware of the need to transition OpenNet operations to the Enterprise Converged Platform, they had not done so. Running duplicate information systems can lead to wasted funds and inefficient use of system administrators' time. Fully transitioning

⁵⁴ The Department uses Active Directory, a Microsoft technology, to manage users, computers, and other devices on its networks, and assign permissions to access Department resources.

⁵⁵ A non-enterprise network is a Department-procured and locally managed computing environment used by a specific entity to meet their mission requirements that cannot be achieved using an enterprise managed solution.

⁵⁶ The Enterprise Converged Platform is the Department hardware and software infrastructure that supports embassy and consulate back-office computing.

to the Department's Enterprise Converged Platform will allow the consulate general to put up to \$100,000 annually to better use by reducing duplicative IT resources.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Berlin should transition Consulate General Frankfurt's OpenNet operations to the Department-provided Enterprise Converged Platform and put up to \$100,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Multiple Server Room Emergency Power-Off Switches Did Not Meet Department Standards

OIG found that multiple server room emergency power-off switches did not meet Department standards. For example, the server rooms at Embassy Berlin's Clay Annex and at Consulate General Munich did not have any emergency power-off switches. The power-off switches in Embassy Berlin's chancery and at Consulate General Frankfurt were improperly located outside of the server room. Guidance in 12 FAH-10 H272.8-1(2) requires emergency power-off switches to be located inside the server room next to the egress door. DT staff told OIG they were unaware of this requirement. Without operational emergency power-off switches to rapidly disconnect power during emergency situations, employee safety could be at risk.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Berlin should comply with Department standards concerning server room emergency power-off switches. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Local Information Technology Configuration Control Board Did Not Fulfill its Responsibilities

OIG found that Mission Germany did not fully perform its local IT configuration control board⁵⁷ responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. Guidance in 5 FAM 115.6-2 and 5 FAM 862.1 requires local configuration control boards to ensure the hardware installed on a network will not adversely affect existing local IT infrastructure under a mission's control. Mission Germany did not maintain records for network configurations, equipment approval and lifecycle tracking, and network design changes to assist with the management of hardware installations. For example, DT staff were unaware that unapproved network switches were installed on the Consulate General Munich NEN and obsolete network switches were widely installed in Embassy Berlin's buildings. DT staff told OIG they were unaware of Department local configuration control board requirements. Without accurate review, testing, and inventory of IT assets, Mission Germany is at risk of inadequate IT security controls to protect its information and networks.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Berlin should perform its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

⁵⁷ An IT Local Configuration Control Board conducts change control and change management at the local level on IT products and systems that are within the operational control of a post.

Records Management Program Did Not Comply with Department Standards

Mission Germany's records management program did not comply with Department standards for records lifecycle processes, specifically for records retirement and oversight. OIG found that Embassy Berlin and the five consulates general did not retire their paper and electronic records in accordance with foreign records disposition schedules, as required by 5 FAM 451b. The mission did take steps in 2023 to bring the records management program into compliance. The Department's Records and Archives Management Division's Overseas Records Branch sent staff to train mission personnel and establish a knowledge management policy. However, the training and policy creation did not result in records disposition and retirement compliance. OIG found that these issues occurred primarily because the mission's records management program did not assign responsibilities to an individual in each office to manage records management operations and liaise with the post records coordinator, as required by 5 FAM 418.9b(4)a. OIG issued a management assistance report in 2022 that highlighted issues with the Department's records retirement process.⁵⁸ Without a records management program that follows Department requirements for records retirement and oversight, the mission is vulnerable to inefficient information retrieval and loss of critical documentation.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Berlin should assign responsibility for records management, including liaison with the post records coordinator and retiring records, to an individual in each of the mission's offices, and bring the records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

The Embassy Did Not Upload All Diplomatic Notes Into the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset

Embassy Berlin did not consistently upload diplomatic notes into the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMARTsystem).⁵⁹ From January 1, 2023, to April 23, 2024, the embassy uploaded 17 out of 1177 diplomatic notes it prepared into SMART and one diplomatic note it received. Embassy personnel told OIG that the actual number of incoming diplomatic notes received was higher than that recorded in SMART. According to 5 FAH-1 H-611e, preparers and recipients are responsible for ensuring a record copy of all diplomatic notes, both outgoing and incoming, are filed in SMART. Not all staff were aware of the requirement to upload the notes, which was not included in the embassy's standard operating procedures. During the inspection, after OIG informed staff of the requirement, the embassy uploaded 1,347 diplomatic notes into SMART from 2024 and previous years, issued administrative notices reminding staff of the requirement, and announced a plan to adopt a Department electronic tool to automate the filing of diplomatic notes. Additionally, the embassy implemented new

⁵⁸ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: The Department of State's Records Retirement Process* (ISP-22-20, June 2022).

⁵⁹ SMART is the Department's cable and record email application. SMART enables users to send and receive organizational authority messages and other messages with long term value using Microsoft Outlook on the Department's Sensitive But Unclassified and classified networks. These messages are stored and searchable in the SMART Archive.

procedures on June 3, 2024, to address this deficiency. Failure to systematically upload the notes could create gaps in the historical record of the embassy's official correspondence.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Berlin should upload all diplomatic notes it prepares and receives to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Cabling Infrastructure Did Not Meet Department Standards

Mission Germany's network cabling infrastructure did not meet Department standards. Specifically, the server rooms and switch closets at Embassy Berlin, the Clay Annex, and Consulate General Munich lacked adequate cable management. OIG found that the cabling prevented the installation of new equipment in the designated network racks and resulted in new equipment being placed on shelves near the rack. OIG also found many switch enclosures with unsecured doors because the cabling exceeded the racks' capacity or the cabling ran from one enclosure to an adjacent enclosure, which prevented the doors from closing. Guidance in 5 FAH-9 H-423.1(3) requires clear views of switch indicators and that access to ports is sufficient for unrestricted cable management. DT staff members identified this issue prior to the inspection but were unable to correct all issues before the inspection's conclusion. Unmanaged network and telephone cabling prevents network racks from being used to secure and ground network devices, prevents doors from closing, and prevents quick infrastructure troubleshooting.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Berlin should correct the network cabling infrastructure issues at Embassy Berlin, Clay Annex, and Consulate General Munich to comply with Department standards concerning switch cable management. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Environmental Protection Controls in Server and Telephone System Rooms Did Not Comply with Department Standards

Mission Germany did not have environmental protection controls installed in all its server and telephone system rooms at Consulates General Frankfurt and Dusseldorf. OIG found that the server room at Consulate General Dusseldorf and one of the telephone system rooms at Consulate General Frankfurt did not have air conditioning and humidity gauges installed, as required by 12 FAH-10 H-272.12-1. Consulate General Dusseldorf personnel responsible for managing the consulate's server room were not aware of the air conditioning and humidity gauge requirement. The telephone system room in Consulate General Frankfurt was in a controlled access area, and DT personnel responsible for managing the telephone system room did not install the required air conditioning and humidity gauges because they could not find gauges approved for controlled access areas. The absence of air conditioning and humidity gauges in server rooms and telephone system rooms increases the risk of critical information systems becoming unavailable due to hardware overheating or water damage from excess moisture.

Recommendation 25: Embassy Berlin should install required air conditioning and humidity gauges in Consulates General Dusseldorf and Frankfurt server and telephone system rooms in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Mission Germany Non-Enterprise Networks Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Mission Germany operated and maintained several separate NENs, but not all the NENs were configured in accordance with Department standards. OIG reviews found that the NENs at Embassy Berlin and the NEN at Consulate General Munich did not provide a unique account and password for each user, as required by 12 FAH-10 H-112.1-2d. Additionally, OIG found that the NENs at Embassy Berlin operated network switches that were no longer supported by the manufacturer, and the NEN at Consulate General Munich operated network switches not approved by the Department. Finally, neither the NENs at Embassy Berlin nor the NEN at Consulate General Munich were monitored by system administrators and information systems security officers, as required by 12 FAH-10 H-312.5-2 and 3, because they were not configured in a way that allowed for continuous monitoring. Embassy Berlin and Consulate General Munich personnel responsible for managing and monitoring the NENs told OIG that the mission was planning to replace the NENs with the Department's Enterprise Wi-Fi network and therefore did not invest the time or money to bring the existing NENs into compliance, but the timeline for completing the transition to the Enterprise Wi-Fi network was unclear. The use of generic accounts, unsupported equipment, and the failure to continuously monitor government networks creates network vulnerabilities and increases the risk that the networks will be used inappropriately.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Berlin should configure the mission's non-enterprise networks to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to Embassy Berlin and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. The Department's complete responses can be found in Appendix B. The Department also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Berlin should conduct timely nonimmigrant visa adjudication reviews in accordance with Department Standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that timely nonimmigrant visa adjudication reviews were conducted in accordance with Department Standards.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Berlin should comply with Department standards for line-of-sight supervision of the cashier booths at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that line-of-sight supervision of the cashier booths at Consulate General Frankfurt complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should provide Consulate General Munich's consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin provided Consulate General Munich's consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Berlin should replace the existing consular microphone system with a functioning system. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the existing consular microphone system was replaced with a functioning system.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Embassy Berlin. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 13, 2024, response, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations implemented a plan to address identified facilities issues at Embassy Berlin.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 13, 2024, response, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations implemented a plan to address identified facilities issues at Consulate General Frankfurt.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin brought its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Berlin should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin's safety, health, and environmental management program complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Berlin should bring its contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department and federal requirements. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Embassy Berlin's contracting officer's representative program complied with Department and federal requirements.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Berlin should enforce the requirement for vendors to register in the System for Award Management. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin enforced the requirement for vendors to register in the System for Award Management.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Berlin should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin closed out procurement files in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Berlin should use the Integrated Logistics Management System to account for all expendable property in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin used the Integrated Logistics Management System to account for all expendable property in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Berlin should bring its receiving procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin's receiving procedures complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Berlin should comply with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for incidental drivers under chief of mission authority. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin has complied with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for incidental drivers under chief of mission authority.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Berlin should account for all motor vehicle fleet costs in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin accounted for all motor vehicle fleet costs in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Budget and Planning, the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, and European and Eurasian Affairs, should reprogram additional Department-funded diplomatic technology positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of up to \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with BP, CGFS, and EUR)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin reprogrammed additional

Department-funded diplomatic technology positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of up to \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the mission's local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with GTM)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin updated the mission's local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Berlin should update the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the locally employed staff handbook was updated in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Berlin should transition Consulate General Frankfurt's OpenNet operations to the Department-provided Enterprise Converged Platform and put up to \$100,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin transitioned Consulate General Frankfurt's OpenNet operations to the Department-provided Enterprise Converged Platform and put up to \$100,000 to better use.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Berlin should comply with Department standards concerning server room emergency power-off switches. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin's server room emergency power-off switches comply with Department standards.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Berlin should perform its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin performed its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Berlin should assign responsibility for records management, including liaison with the post records coordinator and retiring records, to an individual in each of the mission's offices, and bring the records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin assigned responsibility for records management, including liaison with the post records coordinator and retiring records, to an individual in each of the mission's offices, and brought the records management program into compliance with Department standards.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Berlin should upload all diplomatic notes it prepares and receives to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin uploaded all diplomatic notes it prepared and received to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Berlin should correct the network cabling infrastructure issues at Embassy Berlin, Clay Annex, and Consulate General Munich to comply with Department standards concerning switch cable management. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin corrected the network cabling infrastructure issues at Embassy Berlin, Clay Annex, and Consulate General Munich in compliance with Department standards.

Recommendation 25: Embassy Berlin should install required air conditioning and humidity gauges in Consulates General Dusseldorf and Frankfurt server and telephone system rooms in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin installed the required air conditioning and humidity gauges in Consulates General Dusseldorf and Frankfurt server and telephone system rooms in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Berlin should configure the mission's non-enterprise networks to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: In its November 15, 2024, response, Embassy Berlin concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Berlin configured the mission's non-enterprise networks to with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Amy Gutmann	3/2022
Deputy Chief of Mission	Woodward Clark Price	6/2021
Constituent Post(s):		
Dusseldorf	Pauline Kao	8/2021
Frankfurt	Norman Thatcher Scharp	8/2021
Hamburg	Jason Chue	7/2022
Munich	Timothy Liston	7/2021
Leipzig	John Crosby	6/2023
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	David Brizzee	7/2023
Economic	Stephen Anderson	7/2022
Management	Matthew Smith	8/2021
Political	Ian Campbell	3/2023
Public Affairs	Robert Greenan	9/2022
Regional Security	Peter Dinoia	8/2022
Other Agency Representatives:		
Department of Defense	Col. Scott Maxwell	8/2021
Federal Bureau of Investigation Legal Attaché	Michael Fregeau	6/2023
Foreign Agriculture Service	Nicolas Rubio	8/2023
Department of Homeland Security	David Dolan	3/2021
U.S. Agency for International Development	Alisa Cameron	9/2022
U.S. Commercial Service	William Czajkowski	7/2021

Source: Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Berlin.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from March 18, 2024, to July 30, 2024, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved and U.S. interests are accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy; and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; and whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

Methodology

OIG used a risk-based approach to prepare for this inspection. OIG conducted portions of the inspection remotely and relied on audio- and video-conferencing tools in addition to in-person interviews with Department and other personnel. OIG also reviewed pertinent records; circulated surveys and compiled the results; and discussed the substance of this report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the inspection. OIG used professional judgment and analyzed physical, documentary, and testimonial evidence to develop its findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

U.S. Embassy Berlin

November 15, 2024

UNCLASSIFIED

THRU: EUR-IO Assistant Secretary

TO: OIG – Arne Baker, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: U.S. Embassy Berlin - Charge d’Affaires a.i. Alan Meltzer

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – U.S. Mission Germany

U.S. Embassy Berlin has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

The point of contact for this memorandum is Charge d’Affaires a.i. Alan Meltzer.

OIG Recommendation 1: Embassy Berlin should conduct timely nonimmigrant visa adjudication reviews in accordance with Department Standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. The Frankfurt NIV Chief (or the designated backup) will review adjudications daily with the Frankfurt Visa Chief reviewing daily the NIV Chief’s adjudications. The Frankfurt consular section chief will monitor twice weekly to ensure all adjudications have been reviewed.

OIG Recommendation 2: Embassy Berlin should comply with Department standards for line-of-sight supervision of the cashier booths at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. Consular has acquired the cameras and is coordinating with Management sections to install them in FY 2025.

OIG Recommendation 3: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should provide Consulate General Munich’s consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. Post will review the requirements and standards set forth by the Department and will support and collaborate with OBO in their actions to address these items.

OIG Recommendation 4: Embassy Berlin should replace the existing consular microphone system with a functioning system. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. Facility Manager is currently working with OBO on the development of requirements for a FY25 project to replace the system which will be subject to OBO review, approval, and funding.

OIG Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Embassy Berlin. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. Post will support and collaborate with OBO in their actions to address these items.

OIG Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin in coordination with Consulate Frankfurt concurs with this recommendation. The Mission will support and collaborate with OBO in their actions to address these items.

OIG Recommendation 7: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. The Mission is working with OBO to ensure we are fully compliant with the Department's fire protection standards.

OIG Recommendation 8: Embassy Berlin should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. Facility Managers are working on the installation of appropriate ground fault circuit interrupters missing in government owned properties and coordinating with GSO and Management for requirements in leased properties. Five of the six POSHOs and five of the seven POSHO assistants in the Mission have received the training required. POSHOs and FMs at each post in the Mission are working on the evaluation and completion of certifications for nonresidential properties and will request OBO support and funding as needed to close out pending deficiencies that are holding back the completion of these certifications.

OIG Recommendation 9: Embassy Berlin should bring its contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department and federal requirements. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation and has taken steps to correct this. For instance, Post has established new procedures to increase oversight of CORs and GSO has identified training programs for all CORs related to documentation and correspondence with contractors. The establishment of a MS Teams page allows all the Procurement Section to have increased visibility on COR oversight.

OIG Recommendation 10: Embassy Berlin should enforce the requirement for vendors to register in the System for Award Management. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. Post has already established a standard operating procedure for the use of SAM when required. We have been using SAM for these procurement actions since June 2024. We note, however, that it has been challenging to convince German businesses to take the time and provide the documents necessary for registration. Several companies have indicated they are not interested in taking the time or sharing this information to complete SAM registration, which limits the amount of competition we receive for our solicitations. While Berlin is now compliant, we support efforts to exempt overseas contracting from this requirement in order to maintain a competitive pool of bidders, and keep costs down, and save taxpayer funds.

OIG Recommendation 11: Embassy Berlin should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. GSO Procurement acknowledges and recognizes the need to address the identified backlog. As the backlog spans several years, we will hire a temporary employee to manage the administrative burden of closing e-files across the mission. Post appreciates OIG's acknowledgement during the inspection that close-out of procurement actions is a worldwide problem for the Department and due in large part to the inadequacy of Department-mandated procurement software.

OIG Recommendation 12: Embassy Berlin should use the Integrated Logistics Management System to account for all expendable property in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. Management has identified additional training needs and better management controls to implement accounting for expendable property.

OIG Recommendation 13: Embassy Berlin should bring its receiving procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation and is now compliant. Post continues to remove excess items that are past their lifecycle date from the warehouse to make room for future shipments of Furniture and Appliance Pool (FAP) items. Post has also instructed the Dispatch Agency to stagger future shipments to ensure space is available in the warehouse prior to delivery.

OIG Recommendation 14: Embassy Berlin should comply with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for incidental drivers under chief of mission authority. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. At this time, all Motor Pool drivers and incidental drivers from the Department of State comply with the established medical and training guidelines. Expiration dates are tracked both in FMIS and on a standalone SharePoint spreadsheet (which sends reminder email to incidental drivers that their training or medical clearance renewal dates are approaching). At any given time, there will be drivers in FMIS with expired certification dates; this can occur for any of the following reasons: drivers have not renewed their certifications and are no longer authorized to drive a GOV; or the driver has left Post, but the record has not yet been archived. Post will put in place measures to more routinely review these records to remove people no longer driving government vehicles. Motor Pool verifies that incidental drivers have current certifications prior to checking out a vehicle. For those offices that control access to their own vehicles, Motor Pool notifies the supervisor if a driver's certifications have lapsed to inform them that they are not authorized to drive until the certifications are updated; that said, there is a potential gap in our enforcement with these offices, since we do not control the keys.

OIG Recommendation 15: Embassy Berlin should account for all motor vehicle fleet costs in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. Post has purchased an attachment for their EV charging stations that monitors electricity usage. Post will implement the Department's Bureau of Administration's Electric Vehicle Use Estimator to calculate the cost of electricity.

OIG Recommendation 16: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureaus of Budget and Planning, the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, and European and Eurasian Affairs, should reprogram additional Department-funded diplomatic technology positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of up to \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with BP, CGFS, and EUR)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. Post completed a preliminary analysis of positions and identified five positions for reprogramming – two positions in Berlin and three positions in Frankfurt. These changes were discussed with Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Due to financial impact on customer agencies, Mission Germany proposes to reprogram two positions in the FY2026 budget and three positions in the FY2027

budget. This process will begin during the summer of 2025 with ICASS Council review followed by FY2025 target setting with the bureau. Bureau of Budget and Planning along with the Controller and Global Financial Services will be consulted as needed throughout the process.

OIG Recommendation 17: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the mission's local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin, in coordination with GTM)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. The HR Office in Berlin will coordinate with the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Office of Overseas Employment to update the outdated areas of the Mission's Local Compensation Plan topic by topic. The Office of Overseas Employment was informed of this effort.

OIG Recommendation 18: Embassy Berlin should update the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation. The HR Offices in Berlin and Frankfurt have developed a plan to update the locally employed staff handbook. The first draft was completed on October 25, 2024, now pending Mission HROs' review and further discussions on certain specific topics.

OIG Recommendation 19: Embassy Berlin should transition Consulate General Frankfurt's OpenNet operations to the Department-provided Enterprise Converged Platform (ECP) and put up to \$100,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation and has initiated the migration of all OpenNet operations to the Department-provided Enterprise Converged Platform. Once the migration is successfully completed, DT Frankfurt will initiate action with Washington Engineers on a decommission plan for the legacy servers.

OIG Recommendation 20: Embassy Berlin should comply with Department standards concerning server room emergency power-off switches. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. Facility Manager responsible for each post in the Mission is evaluating conditions and developing plans. In addition to installation or relocation of switches, these projects will require extensive electrical work to ensure the switches operate as required by OBO standards. Once feasibility is confirmed FM will seek OBO approvals and funding to implement these modifications to the electrical system in these facilities. Installation will be coordinated with DT due to required equipment shutdowns.

OIG Recommendation 21: Embassy Berlin should perform its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. The Cyber Diplomatic Technology Officer (CDTO) chairs the Mission Local Change Control Board (LCCB) and is updating the Mission Germany LCCB charter to comply with all applicable Department standards.

OIG Recommendation 22: Embassy Berlin should assign responsibility for records management, including liaison with the post records coordinator and retiring records, to an individual in each of the mission's offices, and bring the records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. DT Mission Germany has created a listing of records managers responsible for retiring records in each mission office. DT will continue to work with these records managers to ensure they have created a file management plan for their office and have file management training.

OIG Recommendation 23: Embassy Berlin should upload all diplomatic notes it prepares and receives to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation and is now in compliance with Department Standards. Post implemented the Application Development Group (ADG) DipNotes application in June 2024. This manager automatically archives dip notes per Department standards. Post also implemented a new procedure in June 2024 in which all inbound diplomatic notes are sent first to the Embassy's Protocol/Correspondence Unit, where they are scanned into the DipNotes app and recorded in the SMART system.

OIG Recommendation 24: Embassy Berlin should correct the network cabling infrastructure issues at Embassy Berlin, Clay Annex, and Consulate General Munich to comply with Department standards concerning switch cable management. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation and has partnered with the Regional Diplomatic Technology (RDT) office in Frankfurt to correct network cabling in Munich. DT Berlin is in the process of correcting cabling in the Chancery and Clay Annex.

OIG Recommendation 25: Embassy Berlin should install required air conditioning and humidity gauges in Consulates General Dusseldorf and Frankfurt server and telephone system rooms in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with this recommendation and has addressed this with sensors in the Düsseldorf server room and sensors in the majority of Frankfurt server rooms, demarcation rooms and switch closets. Note: Network switches provide temperature monitoring capabilities and Wi-Fi switches are monitored continuously by the Enterprise WiFi group in Washington, DC. Solutions are being initiated for the PBX room.

Post	Room	Room Function	Temperature Sensor	Humidity Sensor	Water Rope Sensor
Dusseldorf	1000	Server Room	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frankfurt	DB13	Alternate Demark	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frankfurt	G107/G109	Server Room	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frankfurt	G111	Tenant agency server farm	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frankfurt	H114	Switch closet	Yes	Yes	No
Frankfurt	H114	PBX Room	No	No	Yes
Frankfurt	H116	Demark	Yes	Yes	Yes

OIG Recommendation 26: Embassy Berlin should configure the mission's Non-Enterprise networks (NEN) to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Berlin)

Management Response: Embassy Berlin concurs with the recommendation. DT Germany is continuing its efforts to eliminate NEN endpoints, consolidate NEN circuits, and update NEN infrastructure, as funds are available, to meet Department standards. In the interim, DT is leveraging Department tools to monitor activity on the NEN using Cisco Umbrella and will expand monitoring by deploying Qualis to further monitor NEN devices and provide a more accurate inventory of devices and giving the Mission CDTO greater insight into NEN activities.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

UNCLASSIFIED

November 13, 2024

TO: OIG – Arne Baker, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: OBO/COMP – Elizabeth A.S. Slaughter \s\

SUBJECT: Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) Response to Draft
 OIG Report - Inspection of Embassy Berlin and Constituent Posts,
 Germany

OBO has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Embassy Berlin. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

OBO response, November 2024: OBO concurs with this recommendation. Below is a summary of the OIG’s identified facility issues and the Department’s next steps in bold.

- The utility building of the embassy’s Clay Annex, where high-voltage city power was brought into the annex, had multiple structural issues.
An OBO team visited post in February 2024 and subsequently prepared a Statement of Work (SOW). OBO approved funding in March 2024 and the Department expects to award a contract by the end of December 2024.
- The backup generator of the embassy’s Clay Annex was not large enough to power the entire facility in case of an emergency.
OBO will increase the back-up power capacity to address this issue, subject to OBO worldwide project prioritization and funding availability.

- The embassy's Clay Annex had uneven floors with variances between 0.25 and 2 inches at the doorways of approximately 200 rooms, which represented a tripping hazard. This issue, also identified during the 2022 OBO safety, health, and environmental management assessment, remained unresolved, contrary to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standard 1910.22(d).
OBO and post are coordinating. Post will submit a SOW and cost estimate for OBO Minor Construction and Improvement (MCI) funding. This project is subject to OBO worldwide project prioritization and funding availability.
- The fire suppression sprinkler system on the third floor of the embassy's chancery building was inoperative due to a leak. A test valve located on the same floor was also leaking.
The fire sprinkler system and test valve were repaired in August 2024. All systems are functioning properly.
- The fire alarm system at the embassy's Curtius Annex was inoperative.
OBO has engaged with Post and Post is aware that it is responsible for procuring and managing the replacement of this system. This is an off-compound system that can be maintained by a qualified and licensed local service company. Once post obtains a local contractor's proposal, OBO's Office of Fire Protection (OBO/OPS/FIRE) will review drawings and submittal for adequate coverage and installation, as well as research the proposed type of system to ensure it meets intent of U.S. codes. Also, OBO/OPS/FIRE can offer other technical reviews throughout the project and will travel to post to witness final testing and commissioning, if requested.
- There was a fall hazard on the chancery roof, contrary to OSHA Standards.
OBO will work with post to resolve this issue.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Berlin, should implement a plan to address identified facilities issues at Consulate General Frankfurt. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Berlin)

OBO Response, November 2024: OBO concurs with this recommendation. Below is a summary of the facility issues at Consulate General (CG) Frankfurt identified by OIG and OBO response in bold letters.

- The roof above parts of the consulate general office building leaked.
OBO staff traveled to post in February 2024 and repaired the roof leaks. OBO is determining next steps and timeline for a roof replacement.
- The entire consulate office building lacked waterproofing around the foundation.
OBO's Office of Facility Management (OBO/OPS/FAC) will contact post to address waterproofing the consulate foundation as needed.
- The consulate office building has problems with rusted and deteriorating plumbing and sewer lines.
OBO/OPS/FAC will contact post to address the deteriorating plumbing and sewer line issues as needed.
- An electrical issue causes the breakers to trip regularly.
OBO is conducting a load study and expects completion by the end of December 2024. Once complete, OBO will determine next steps to replace the breakers.
- The consulate general has an electrical arc flash hazard.
OBO expects to address this issue in an upcoming project.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.F.R	Code of Federal Regulations
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
DT	Diplomatic Technology
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAD	Federal Assistance Directive
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FAST	First- and Second- Tour
G20	Group of 20
G7	Group of 7
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
LE	Locally Employed
NEN	Non-Enterprise Network
NIV	Nonimmigrant Visa
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
POSHO	Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer
SAM	System for Award Management
SMART	State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset

UNCLASSIFIED



HELP FIGHT

FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

1-800-409-9926

www.stateoig.gov/HOTLINE

If you fear reprisal, contact the
OIG Whistleblower Coordinator to learn more about your rights.

WPEAOmbuds@stateoig.gov

UNCLASSIFIED