

**Management Alert –
Inadequate FEMA Progress
in Addressing Open
Recommendations from
our 2015 Report, “FEMA
Faces Challenges in
Managing Information
Technology” (OIG-16-10)**





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

February 26, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable William B. Long
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency

FROM: John V. Kelly 
Acting Inspector General

SUBJECT: *Management Alert – Inadequate FEMA Progress
in Addressing Open Recommendations from our
2015 Report, “FEMA Faces Challenges in
Managing Information Technology” (OIG-16-10)*

In November 2015, we reported that the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) information technology (IT) management approach did not adequately address technology planning, governance, and system support challenges to effectively support its mission. We issued five recommendations to the FEMA Chief Information Officer (CIO) aimed at improving the agency’s management of IT.¹ Specifically, we recommended the CIO finalize key planning documents related to IT modernization; execute against those planning documents; fully implement an IT governance board; improve integration and functionality of existing systems; and implement agency-wide acquisition, development, and operation and maintenance standards.

Since the publication of our report, FEMA has provided six compliance updates on its steps to address our five report recommendations. However, we have closed only recommendation 3 based on FEMA’s implementation of an IT governance board charter. Congressional interest, as well as our analysis of the compliance updates, indicated a need for further review to determine the adequacy of FEMA’s efforts to resolve our open recommendations.

As such, we began a formal verification review in December 2017. The FEMA CIO assured us at our entrance conference that he had included in the Deputy CIO’s fiscal year 2018 performance plan a requirement to complete corrective actions to address our November 2015 report recommendations. However, CIO Office officials we subsequently

¹ *FEMA Faces Challenges in Managing Information Technology*, OIG-16-10, November 20, 2015



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interviewed said that, given competing priorities, the CIO had removed the funding and staff resources they needed to effectively address the report recommendations.

We subsequently found during our January and February 2018 fieldwork that FEMA has made limited progress in improving its IT management. Many of the issues we reported based on our prior audits in 2005, 2011, and 2015 remain unchanged, with adverse impact on day-to-day operations and mission readiness. Especially disconcerting, our recent work revealed that the justification that FEMA provided to support our closing recommendation 3 was misleading, as governance board procedures had not truly met the intent of the recommendation.

Given these deficiencies, we are suspending our verification review and will initiate a more comprehensive audit of FEMA's IT management approach. We expect that this new audit will assist FEMA in resolving its longstanding IT issues, which can hamper disaster response efforts. Having reliable and efficient IT systems and infrastructure is critical to support increased disaster relief efforts in the wake of the 2017 hurricane season. Per FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund Monthly Report, as of December 31, 2017, the Congress had appropriated over \$24 billion for such efforts.

Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Sondra F. McCauley, Assistant Inspector General for Information Technology Audits, at (202) 254-4041.

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Attention: Hotline
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Washington, DC 20528-0305