



**SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR IRAQ
RECONSTRUCTION**

2012 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT

March 2011 – March 2012

March 1, 2012

BACKGROUND

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) is mandated with the oversight responsibility of the use, and potential misuse, of all obligations, expenditures, and revenues associated with reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in Iraq. SIGIR conducts comprehensive audits, inspections and investigations and provides advice and recommendations on policies to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness via quarterly and semi-annual reports directly to the U.S. Congress and the Secretaries of State and Defense.

SIGIR is a very small agency with a staff of less than 100. Almost all of SIGIR's work products are made available to the public on its Website, www.sigir.mil. The Agency typically receives less than 20 FOIA requests a year.

I. Steps Taken to Ensure the Presumption of Openness

Describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA.

- 1. Did your agency hold an agency FOIA conference, or otherwise conduct training during this reporting period?*

SIGIR receives less than 20 FOIA requests a year and most employees have no role in responding to them. Therefore no formal training was conducted. However, the FOIA Policy was disseminated to all hands via the agency's intranet for general awareness.

- 2. Did your FOIA professionals attend any FOIA training, such as that provided by the Department of Justice?*

The agency does not have any fulltime FOIA professionals. The Chief FOIA Officer (who performs this work as an additional duty) attended FOIA training at the Graduate School in January 2011.

- 3. Did your agency make any discretionary releases of otherwise exempt information?*

Yes.

- 4. What exemptions would have covered the information that was released as a matter of discretion?*

5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(5), deliberative process privilege, attorney work-product.

- 5. How does your agency review records to determine whether discretionary releases are possible?*

The Chief FOIA Officer reviews all recommendations for exemptions in consultation with the General Counsel to determine if discretionary release is possible.

- 6. Describe any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied.*

Given the very small number of FOIA requests received by the agency the approach described in 5. is

felt to be adequate.

7. *Did your agency have an increase in the number of responses where records were released in full?*

The number of responses where records were released in full was the same in FY2011 as in FY2010. In each year there were five responses where records were released in full. It should be noted that the total number of FOIA requests decreased from year to year (from 16 to 14) and the number of requests for which SIGIR had no responsive records increased year to year from 0 to 5, leaving little opportunity to increase the number of full grants.

8. *Did your agency have an increase in the number of responses where records were released in part?*

No. It should be noted that the total number of FOIA requests decreased from year to year (from 16 to 14) and the number of requests for which SIGIR had no responsive records increased year to year from 0 to 5, leaving little opportunity to increase the number of partial grants.

II. Steps Taken to Ensure that the Agency's System for Responding to FOIA Requests is Effective and Efficient

Note: The agency has a staff of approximately 90 people. There are no fulltime FOIA professionals. The role of Chief FOIA Officer is an additional duty, performed part time, (approximately 6% Full Time Equivalent).

1. *Do FOIA professionals within your agency have sufficient IT support?*

The Chief FOIA Officer receives full support from the IT Department.

2. *Is there regular interaction between the agency FOIA professionals and the Chief FOIA Officer?*

The Chief FOIA Officer is the only FOIA professional in the agency.

3. *Do FOIA professionals work with the agency's Open Government Team.*

The Chief FOIA Officer works directly with the General Counsel who monitors compliance with Open Government Directives.

4. *Describe the steps the agency has taken to assess whether adequate staffing is being devoted to responding to FOIA requests.*

The Chief FOIA Officer reports directly to the deputy of the agency who monitors program performance.

5. *Describe any other steps your agency has undertaken to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively.*

A customized FOIA Tracking System is housed on a shared drive to facilitate tracking the timeliness of responses. The FOIA Webpage was redesigned in February 2012 to provide clearer instructions and easier access for making FOIA requests.

III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) makes proactive disclosures to the maximum extent possible providing the public with information on its operations and activities. In furtherance of this goal, SIGIR makes all audit and inspection reports, quarterly and semi-annual reports, lessons learned papers and congressional testimonies available on its public Website, www.sigir.mil.

Describe here the steps the agency has taken to increase the amount of material that is available on your agency website, including providing examples of proactive disclosures that have been made during the past reporting period (March 2011 to March 2012).

1. *Has your agency added new material to the agency website since last year?*

Yes.

2. *Provide examples of the records, datasets, videos, etc., that have been posted this past year.*

The following material was added to the public Website during the reporting period: April 2011 Quarterly Report; July 2011 Quarterly and Semiannual Report; October 2011 Quarterly Report; January 2012 Quarterly and Semiannual Report; Lessons in Inspection of U.S.-funded Stabilization and Reconstruction Projects; 19 audit reports; four Congressional testimonies and three quarterly video messages from the Inspector General.

3. *What system do you have in place to routinely identify records that are appropriate for posting?*

As a matter of policy all of SIGIR's audit reports, lessons learned papers, and reports to Congress are proactively released.

4. *Beyond posting new material, is your agency taking steps to make the information more useful to the public, especially to the community of individuals who regularly access your agency's website, such as soliciting feedback on the content and presentation of the posted material, improving search capabilities, providing explanatory material, etc.?*

In April 2011 the agency added a quarterly video message from the agency head highlighting key findings reported to the Congress.

5. *Describe any other steps taken to increase proactive disclosures at your agency.*

SIGIR posts Arabic translations of its quarterly and semiannual reports to Congress.

IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

1. *Can FOIA requests be made electronically to your agency?*

Yes.

2. *If your agency processes requests on a decentralized basis, do all components of your agency receive requests electronically?*

The agency does not process requests on a decentralized basis.

3. *Can a FOIA requester track the status of his/her request electronically?*

No.

4. *If not, is your agency taking steps to establish this capability?*

No. With less than 20 FOIA requests received annually the expense of developing this capability is not justified. Requesters can determine the status of their request by telephoning or emailing the Chief FOIA officer.

5. *Beyond using technology to redact documents, is your agency taking steps to utilize more advanced technology to facilitate overall FOIA efficiency, such as improving record search capabilities, utilizing document sharing platforms for consultations and referrals, or employing software that can sort and de-duplicate documents?*

No. With less than 20 FOIA requests received annually the expense of developing this capability is not justified.

6. *If so, describe the technological improvements being made.*

N/A

V. Steps Taken to Reduce Backlogs and Increase Responsiveness

1. *Referring to Section VII.A of your agency's Annual FOIA Report, entitled "FOIA Requests – Response Time for All Processed Request"*

a. *Does your agency utilize a separate track for simple requests?*

No

b. *If so, for your agency overall, for Fiscal Year 2011, was the average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer?*

N/A

- c. *If your agency does not track simple requests separately, was the average number of days to process non-expedited requests twenty working days or fewer?*

Yes

2. *Referring to Sections XII.D.(2) and XII.E.(2) of your agency's Annual FOIA Report, entitled "Comparison of Numbers of Requests/Appeals from Previous and Current Annual Report – Backlogged Requests/Appeals"*

- a. *If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2011, did that backlog decrease as compared with Fiscal Year 2010?*

N/A. There was no backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2011.

- b. *If your agency had a backlog of administrative appeals in Fiscal Year 2011, did that backlog decrease as compared to Fiscal Year 2010?*

N/A. There was no backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2011.

- c. *In Fiscal Year 2011, did your agency close the ten oldest requests that were pending as of the end of Fiscal Year 2010?*

N/A. There were no requests pending at the close of Fiscal Year 2011.

- d. *In Fiscal Year 2011, did your agency close the ten oldest administrative appeals that were pending as of the end of Fiscal Year 2010?*

N/A. There were no administrative appeals pending at the close of Fiscal Year 2011.

3. *If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, describe why that has occurred. In doing so, answer the following questions then include any additional explanation*

N/A

4. *Describe the steps your agency is taking to reduce any backlogs and to improve timeliness in responding to requests and administrative appeals.*

SIGIR has no FOIA response backlogs. The Chief FOIA Officer monitors the FOIA caseload and the processing of requests and reports progress to SIGIR's General Counsel and Deputy Inspector General. SIGIR has adequate FOIA staffing and IT support to process its caseload in a timely manner.

VI. Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"

1. *Did your agency invoke a statutory exclusion during Fiscal Year 2011?*

No.

2. *If so, what is the total number of times exclusions were invoked?*

N/A