Government Accountability and Transparency Board

A meeting of the Government Accountability and Transparency Board (GAT Board) was held at the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board (Recovery Board) Office in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, November 19, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. and continued until 11:10 a.m.

ATTENDEES:

Board Members:

Richard Ginman, Chairman and Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, U.S. Department of Defense
David Lebryk, Fiscal Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury
Daniel Levinson, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
David Mader, Controller, Office of Management and Budget
Calvin Scovel, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Transportation
Kathleen S. Tighe, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Education

Agency Staff:

Gary Barlet, Chief Information Officer, U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General
Ross Bezark, Executive Director, GAT Board and Recovery Board
Kay Daly, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Nancy Gunderson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Grants and Acquisition Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Christina Ho, Executive Director of Data Transparency, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury
Carrie Hug, Director of Accountability, Recovery Board
Karen Lee, Chief of Management Controls and Assistance Branch, Office of Management and Budget
Keith Maddox, Special Assistant, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General
Karen Pica, Management Analyst, Office of Management and Budget
Scott C. Stewart, Director, Application Development and Chief Technology Officer, U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General
LeAntha Sumpter, Deputy Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Program Development and Implementation, U.S. Department of Defense
Cynthia Williams, GAT Board Secretary, Recovery Board

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ginman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and by unanimous vote, the members present approved the minutes of the October 29, 2014, meeting.

The members briefly discussed key activities since the last GAT Board meeting. Ms. Sumpter informed the members that the final rule involving the uniform procurement identifier was published in the Federal Register on November 13, 2014. Mr. Ginman and Ms. Sumpter also briefly discussed the Federal Acquisition Regulation Case requiring government wide use of

contract line item numbers and the benefits from the implementation of this rule. Ms. Sumpter remarked that the case appears to be on the fast-track for approval.

Mr. Barlet then began the scheduled Data Analytics Working Group (working group) briefing.[1] He provided the members with an update on the joint Offices of Inspectors General (OIG) Data Analytics and Technical Services virtual platform (DANTES). He explained that the purpose of the site, which launched on June 16, 2014, was to provide a virtual platform for sharing services, data analytic tools, information, and talent resources across the OIG community. Mr. Barlet commented that the site includes a search engine, a balance of custom and commercial off-the-shelf tools, and the ability for users to add content. Mr. Barlet described the five distinct content areas of the site. These include sections for forensic services, data analytics, library resources, professional development centers, and talent services. He remarked that each content area was sponsored and managed by one or more of the OIGs involved in the collaborative effort. A listing of the content sponsors was provided in Mr. Barlet's presentation.

Mr. Barlet briefly discussed the site's information technology architecture, noting that DANTES utilizes Amazon's Govcloud services. He commented that full migration to Amazon's Govcloud web services would be completed soon and was expected to raise the compliance level with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) from low to moderate. In response to questions concerning compliance with the Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD12), Mr. Barlet commented that the system engineers were working to attain HSPD12 compliance.

Mr. Barlet informed the members that since the initial launch, the number of users and information contained on the site continued to grow. He reported that users from 66 Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) were currently registered on the site and that more than 1,790 content items had been loaded on the site since October 31. These items included over 300 databases or data sources, 107 forensic service entries, 87 analytics tool descriptions, and semi-annual reports for many OIGs for the past five years. In addition to raising the FISMA compliance level, Mr. Barlet described other ongoing and planned activities. These included meeting with the original OIG contributors to map out site enhancements for version 2.0; adding the DANTES link to other federal sites such as GSA.gov and MAX.gov; initiating discussions on the best approach for expanding the use of OIG services and data through this platform; establishing a governance process to incorporate feedback from across the OIG community; and working with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) to deconflict issues that might exist with similarly planned projects.

Mr. Ginman questioned whether the databases contained on the DANTES platform would adhere to the proposal for the inclusion of a unique entity identifier. Ms. Tighe discussed the approach taken by CIGIE to recommend the adoption of the proposal as a best practice. She commented that as follow-on to the initial discussion, she would address the issue at an upcoming CIGIE Information Technology Committee meeting. Ms. Tighe also informed the members the CIGIE community had recently approved a feasibility study to determine if specific data elements from open-source information could be shared across the OIG community. She commented that the inclusion of a unique identifier would be necessary to perform the study.

[1] Upon approval, the Data Analytics Working Group briefing will become an official part of the meeting minutes and available on Recovery.gov.

Mr. Ginman then questioned the feasibility of sharing OIG contract fraud and risk models with agency program managers to help identify high-risk entities before federal funds were awarded. Mr. Ginman recalled an exercise that involved the manual review of hundreds of findings from the Department of Defense (DoD) OIG reports to create business rules that would help identify high-risk activities as the transactions occurred.[2] He commented that federal resources could have been saved if the DoD OIG had been able to share its risk identification tools. Ms. Tighe acknowledged the potential benefits from collaborative efforts but explained that government auditing standards issued by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) place restrictions on what information and tools auditors are able to share with agencies. She informed the members that the GAO had been asked to address these issues and on-going discussions are planned.

Mr. Barlet then responded to member inquiries regarding several specifics of the DANTES information technology architecture, its search engines, as well as the possibility of transferring DANTES to the MAX.gov, a potential platform for other similar OIG data analytics systems. This concluded the working group briefing.

Mr. Ginman informed the members, that at the direction of Nani Coloretti, Mr. Lebryk had been designated as the principal Department of Treasury (Treasury) representative for the GAT Board. Mr. Ginman then asked Mr. Lebryk and Mr. Mader to share the joint Treasury/Office of Management and Budget (OMB) vision for implementation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act). Mr. Mader provided the members with a summary of the roles and responsibilities of various communities across the federal government as outlined in the DATA Act. He discussed the challenges of making all federal spending data transparent as required by the legislation. Mr. Mader commented that both OMB and Treasury recognize that the key to successful DATA Act implementation is stakeholder involvement. He discussed efforts underway to bring federal stakeholders, industry groups, and government groups together to share ideas and information.

Mr. Lebryk informed the members that Treasury has embraced its new responsibility to lead the government-wide implementation of the DATA Act in partnership with OMB. He added that the value proposition afforded by DATA Act implementation also resonates with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) community and other federal stakeholders.

Mr. Lebryk discussed the components of the DATA Act governance and implementation structure established by OMB and Treasury. He remarked that the governance structure consisted of an Executive Steering Committee and was supported by an Interagency Advisory Committee (IAC). He further noted that the IAC was comprised of representatives from across the federal government, to include representatives from CFO, Chief Information Officer, procurement, financial assistance, budget, performance, and technology policy offices. Mr. Mader commented that the members of the IAC represented their respective councils as well as played a key role in updating their agencies and obtaining buy-in to implement guidance resulting from the DATA Act.

Mr. Lebryk described the activities underway within the five DATA Act implementation workstreams and the corresponding working groups for each of the major requirements in the DATA Act. These five workstreams concentrated on the following:

[2] These business rules were ultimately included in DoD's Purchase Card On-Line System (PCOLS), http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/pdi/eb/pcols.html

1. Establishing common data definition standards;
2. Designing and implementing data exchange standards;
3. Designing and implementing a blueprint or roadmap between data elements;
4. Conducting a pilot to reduce administrative burden; and
5. Expanding Treasury's data analytics capacity.

Mr. Lebryk and Mr. Mader reported that activities under each of the workstreams have been launched and significant progress has been made. Mr. Mader added that several challenges and critical path items exist that will require resolution before the DATA Act could be fully implemented. Mr. Lebryk noted that Treasury's public GitHub page is being used to ensure full transparency of all of the implementation efforts.

Mr. Lebryk briefly discussed the efforts to enhance USASpending.gov and recognized the valuable assistance provided by the Recovery Board. Ms. Ho commented that Treasury leveraged both the Recovery.gov features and key Recovery Board personnel to improve the look and feel of USASpending.gov. She also reported that initial feedback on the enhancements had been positive.

Mr. Mader informed the members of the December 3, 2014, hearing on the implementation of the DATA Act before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. He remarked that copies of the official statements from his and Mr. Lebryk's testimony would be made available to the members.

The members then engaged in a discussion of the future of the GAT Board. After a lengthy conversation, the members agreed to revisit the issue of the GAT Board's role after the comprehensive briefing on the DATA Act implementation plan scheduled for January and additional due diligence is performed.

The members briefly discussed the components of the 2014 section of the GAT Board's annual report. Mr. Ginman asked the working group principals to provide their accomplishments for inclusion in the report by December 15, 2014. Comments on other relevant 2014 items were also requested by December 15.

The next GAT Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2015.

Cynthia Williams
Secretary

DANTES

A Shared Platform Provided By The Offices of Inspectors General

www.dantesportal.org

Purpose

The Data Analytics and Technical Expert Services (DANTES) site is intended to provide a virtual platform where services, data analytics tools, information, and talent resources can be shared across the Inspector General community.

Site was launched on July 16, 2014.

DANTES Features

The platform features several distinct sections for storing and sharing information:

- ***Forensic Services*** – A listing of specialized technical services maintained by OIGs across the community.
- ***Data Analytics*** – A listing of databases used by OIGs as well as descriptions of an assortment of analytics tools used to support audits and investigations.
- ***Library*** - A resource library containing news articles, reports, documents, and templates contributed by site users.
- ***Professional Development Centers*** – Communities of practice for sharing best practices and hold discussions within a number of professional areas.
- ***Talent Services*** – A listing of contracting resources and consultants that offer services relevant to audits and investigations.

Menu Bar

Search

Rotating Feature

Hosted By

Content

Clicking on the rotating image, or using the menu bar to drill into the site, will bring you to the content.

Content Assignments

Forensic Services:

- Steve A Linick (DoS IG)

Data Analytics:

- John Roth (DHS IG) – Analytic Displays
- Richard J. Griffin (VA IG) – Analytic Tools
- David C. Williams (USPS IG) – Databases

Library:

- Allison Lerner (NSF IG) – Semi Annual Reports / Websites
- Michael E. Horowitz (DoJ IG) – Reports / Testimonies and Samples

Professional Development Centers:

- Robert Erickson (GSA IG)

Talent Services –

- Deborah Jeffrey (CNCS IG)

Data Analytics

Expanded Menus

Current Features

- Comprehensive listing of databases or data sources used by auditors and investigators
- Descriptions of a variety of custom and commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) tools with points of contact identified
- Robust search features to help locate information quickly
- Ability for any user to add content

Status of Deployment

- Users from 66 OIGs are registered on the site
- More than 1,790 content items loaded as of October 31, including:
  - 300+ databases or data sources
  - 107 forensic services entries
  - 87 analytics tool descriptions
  - Semi-annual reports from most OIGs for the past 5 years

On-Going and the Future

- Increase site capabilities to support more robust data sharing and live analytics tools
  - Meeting with original IG contributors to map out 2.0
  - Adding link to GSA site which is aggregating OIG info

- Begin discussing how OIGs can provide services and data with Departments using this platform (when fully functional)

On-Going and the Future (cont)

- Complete migration to Amazon's GOV cloud
  - Increase security to FISMA "Moderate" (currently FISMA compliant at the "Low" level)
- Establish a Governance process to incorporate feedback from more in the OIG community
- Working with Kathy Tighe to deconflict this platform with another CIGIE initiative
  - Data Analytics Working Group site

Questions?