

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Program Evaluations

The Department considers outside evaluations to be an important part of the strategic planning process. We have found that outside evaluations play an important role in determining what performance goals and measures best reflect how the Department accomplishes its mission.

- OIG prepares annual audit plans for those areas that are subject to audit or inspection. The Department's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will have an opportunity to review the draft plan.
- NOAA programs are peer reviewed, either internally or outside the agency by, for example, NAS, NSF, NRC, or NOAA's SAB. Constituent input is an important part of the evaluation process and is solicited regularly through constituent workshops. Moreover, reviews often occur by opposing parties' scientists in the court system, as in the case of NOAA fisheries, when fisheries management decisions are litigated.
- The NIST laboratories are reviewed annually by the NRC. NRC performs a comprehensive evaluation of the technical merit and quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the laboratory program. Their findings are published in a report generally available in October; the most recent report is available at:
http://www7.nationalacademies.org/NIST/NIST_reports.html
- The NIST extramural programs are reviewed several times per year by their individual review boards with each advisory summarizing their observations and recommendations in a written report. In addition, VCAT evaluates programmatic and management policies for the entire organization on a quarterly basis. Additional information about VCAT, including its most recent annual report is available at: *<http://www.nist.gov/director/vcat/index.htm>*. OMB reviews BEA as part of the budget process.
- BEA was included in the new OMB PART assessment on which BEA scored the second highest rating. BEA has an expert Advisory Committee that reviews BEA programs twice a year. BEA conducts both an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey to evaluate programs and services to users and an annual Organizational Assessment Survey through OPM to evaluate employee quality of work life and organizational needs. As part of BEA's strategic planning process, senior staff annually review and update the 5-year strategic plan, which is then made available to staff and users for their comments and evaluations. BEA also takes part in a number of independent IT evaluations.
- BIS was evaluated in the following reports: *Nonproliferation: Strategy Needed to Strengthen Multilateral Export Control Regimes*, GAO-03-43; *Improvements Are Needed to Better Enforce Dual-Use Export Control Laws*, IPE-15155; *Stronger Management Controls are Needed for BIS's Export Enforcement Firearms Program*, IPE-15155-1; *Interagency Review of Federal Enforcement Efforts*, D-2003-069.

- ITA developed an internal strategic plan covering fiscal years 2002 through 2006 that helps define strategic direction and outline an agenda for the next five years. It is ITA's roadmap to become a leader in providing customer-focused, responsibly managed federal government export promotion, trade agreements compliance, trade agreement negotiations, and the elimination of unfair trade practices. ITA plans to conduct program evaluations to ensure effective monitoring of mission accomplishments. This process begins in FY 2003 with the PART and USFCS programs. Presently, ITA is reviewing current programs and operations contributing to the ITA mission accomplishments and cooperating with OIG, GAO, and other federal organizations to develop an evaluation schedule.
- Census is currently undergoing the OMB PART assessment for four of its programs, including the Decennial Census. Ten advisory committees review programs and advise the Census Bureau through public meetings held twice each year. NAS has ongoing panels examining programs such as the Decennial Census, the ACS, poverty estimate, and population projections.