



Audit of the Environment and Natural Resources
Division's Justice Consolidated Office Network
Pursuant to the Federal Information Security
Modernization Act of 2014,
Fiscal Year 2022



AUDIT DIVISION

23-051

MARCH 2023



COMMENTARY AND SUMMARY

Audit of the Environment and Natural Resources Division's Justice Consolidated Office Network Pursuant to the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014, Fiscal Year 2022

Objectives

The objectives of this audit were to determine whether the Environment and Natural Resources Division's (ENRD) Justice Consolidated Office Network (JCON) system security program and practices were consistent with the requirements of the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA). In addition, the audit was designed to perform a vulnerability assessment of the JCON and evaluate selected system controls.

Results in Brief

The audit identified weaknesses in five control areas that need to be strengthened to ensure that ENRD's JCON and data are adequately protected. In addition, we identified control findings in six of the nine domain areas and two of the eight Congressional Letter Areas of ENRD's Information Security Program. Those findings and subsequent recommendations are reported in the Audit of the ENRD's Information Security Program Pursuant to the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014, Fiscal Year 2022.

Recommendations

This audit provides seven recommendations for improving ENRD's JCON.

To ensure ENRD was immediately aware of the findings identified during this audit, the auditors presented the findings to ENRD management prior to the issuance of this report. ENRD management concurred with the identified weaknesses.

Public Release

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is publicly releasing this Commentary and Summary of the report rather than the full report itself because Inspectors General are required by FISMA to take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of information that, if disclosed, may adversely affect information security. Such protections shall be commensurate with the risk.

Audit Approach

Cotton & Company Assurance and Advisory, LLC (Cotton) conducted this performance audit of ENRD's JCON under the direction of the DOJ OIG and in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reporting requirements. The OIG reviewed Cotton's report and related documentation for compliance with GAGAS. The OIG's review was not intended to enable the OIG to make a conclusion about the effectiveness of ENRD's information security controls. Cotton is responsible for the attached auditors' report dated February 24, 2023, and the conclusions expressed in the report. The OIG's review disclosed no instances where Cotton did not comply, in all material respects, with GAGAS and OMB reporting requirements.

Background

FISMA was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2014. FISMA assigns responsibilities to federal agencies, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and OMB to strengthen federal information system security. This includes directing NIST to develop standards and guidelines for ensuring the effectiveness of information security controls over information systems that support federal agencies' operations and assets and requiring the head of each agency to implement policies and procedures to cost-effectively reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Annually, agency Inspectors General are required to either perform an independent evaluation or contract an independent external auditor to perform an evaluation of the agency's information security program and practices to ensure the effectiveness of the program and practices. Each evaluation must include: (1) testing the effectiveness of information security policies, procedures, and practices of a representative subset of the agency's information systems; (2) an assessment (based on the results of the testing) of compliance with FISMA; and (3) separate representations, as appropriate, regarding information security related to national security systems.