



Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration Office of Audit

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO SUCCESSFULLY PLAN AND DELIVER THE NEW TAXPAYER ADVOCATE SERVICE INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Issued on September 30, 2014

Highlights

Highlights of Report Number: 2014-20-071 to the Internal Revenue Service Chief Technology Officer and the National Taxpayer Advocate.

IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

The Taxpayer Advocate Service's (TAS) mission is to help taxpayers resolve problems with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The current automated tools that TAS employees rely on are obsolete, and the multiple technology platforms in place are costly and ineffective. Successful development and implementation of the planned Taxpayer Advocate Service Information System (TASIS) would enable the National Taxpayer Advocate and the estimated 1,000 Case Advocates to better address taxpayer's needs on a range of requests for assistance. Initial functionality for the TASIS includes improved capabilities for managing and documenting case advocacy activities that support taxpayer requests for TAS assistance.

WHY TIGTA DID THE AUDIT

The overall audit objective was to determine if the IRS is adequately mitigating systems development risks for the TASIS project to achieve business and information technology goals.

WHAT TIGTA FOUND

Following persistent delays and concerns with the initial TASIS Project, the IRS began redirecting the development effort in January 2014. Specifically, the IRS initiated a process called a Customer Technical Review to help validate whether the current approach for the TASIS could provide necessary functionality as designed and to meet the December 2014 deployment milestone. However, development activities for the TASIS Project are currently on hold and funding issues and unforeseen problems with the new system are being evaluated. TIGTA identified the following areas that needed improvements:

- Requirements management practices were not sufficient to successfully develop the TASIS.
- Risk management controls were not followed to manage TASIS systems development risks.
- Critical roles and responsibilities were not established or clearly communicated.
- System requirements have not yet been sufficiently verified.

WHAT TIGTA RECOMMENDED

TIGTA made five recommendations to the IRS Chief Technology Officer and the National Taxpayer Advocate. In management's response to the report, the IRS agreed with four of our recommendations and plans to implement corrective actions.

The IRS disagreed with our recommendation to verify Entellitrak[®] functionality is sufficient to meet requirements and ensure that TAS business needs will be met with the planned system. TIGTA maintains that the IRS needs to consider a more complete set of system requirements for TASIS case management functions to map to Entellitrak as part of its ongoing project management processes.

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full IRS response, go to:

<http://www.treas.gov/tigta/auditreports/2014reports/201420071fr.pdf>.