

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Office of Inspector General**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



May 9, 2008

TO: Associate Administrator for Aeronautics Research

FROM: Assistant Inspector General for Auditing

SUBJECT: Addendum to Final Memorandum on the Review of the National Aviation Operations Monitoring Service (Report No. IG-08-014, March 31, 2008)

We requested additional management comments in response to the subject final memorandum because we modified Recommendation 2.b in consideration of management's comments on a draft of the memorandum. We received additional comments on April 30, 2008 (see the Enclosure) that are responsive and, therefore, the recommendation is resolved and closed. Following is a summary of management's comments on Recommendation 2.b and our evaluation of the comments.

### ***Recommendation 2.b***

In a February 19, 2008, draft of the subject final memorandum, we recommended that the Associate Administrator for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD) post on NASA's public Web site a detailed report published by National Aviation Operations Monitoring Service (NAOMS) Project management that includes an analysis of the NAOMS research, including findings and conclusions gained from the survey data.

NASA management stated in its March 24, 2008, response to the draft memorandum that ARMD did not intend to publish a detailed report for the following reasons:

- Due to the lack of technical publications since the inception of the NAOMS Project, there is little confidence that a thorough and accurate report can be produced.
- There is diminishing value in the NAOMS data for assessing the state of the current aviation safety environment.

Additionally, the Associate Administrator questioned the relevance of analyzing NAOMS data that is several years old, considering that new ways to collect and analyze aviation operational data had been put in place since NAOMS data was last collected. The Associate Administrator stated that the most important work related to NAOMS is to better understand the validity of the survey methodology. Consequently, ARMD initiated a contract with the National Research Council (NRC) to conduct an independent assessment of the NAOMS methodology.

We considered the Associate Administrator's comments partially responsive. The intent of our recommendation was to bring closure to the NAOMS Project in accordance with NASA policy,<sup>1</sup> which states that the "Project Lead should ensure publication of at least one peer-reviewed technical paper or the posting of a final report external to NASA to ensure wide dissemination of technical information." In consideration of management's comments, we revised the recommendation to be contingent on NRC validation of the NAOMS survey methodology.

NASA management submitted additional comments on April 30, 2008, stating:

Although ARMD maintains its original position concerning this recommendation, we recognize the OIG desire to bring closure to the NAOMS Project with a final NAOMS report that includes analysis of the NAOMS research and survey data. ARMD believes that ongoing efforts by the National Research Council (NRC) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) will satisfy this last recommendation.

Additionally, the Associate Administrator stated that ARMD resources would be better spent on research enabling the Next Generation Air Transportation System instead of duplicating NRC and GAO work.

On February 4, 2008, the House Committee on Science and Technology requested that GAO "use the unredacted set of data collected by the NAOMS project and promptly provide the Committee with an appropriate analysis of this data and verification of the survey methodology."<sup>2</sup> GAO's analysis of the data should result in a report comparable to that which we recommended be published by NAOMS Project management. Although we believe there is inherent value in the publication of research by the people who conducted that research, we agree with the Associate Administrator that duplication of effort is an inefficient application of limited resources in light of other mission priorities. Therefore, we consider the recommendation resolved and closed.

We appreciate the courtesies extended the audit staff during the review. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Mr. Raymond Tolomeo, Science and Aeronautics Research Director, Office of Audits, at 202-358-7227.

signed

Evelyn R. Klemstine

Enclosure

cc: Chief, Safety and Mission Assurance

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<sup>1</sup> Draft NASA Procedural Requirements 7120.8, "NASA Research and Technology Program and Project Management Requirements."

<sup>2</sup> The Committee's letter of request to GAO, accessed on May 6, 2008, is available over the Internet at [http://democrats.science.house.gov/Media/File/AdminLetters/bg\\_dl\\_mu\\_bm\\_jc\\_toGAO\\_NASA\\_airsurvey\\_02.04.08.pdf](http://democrats.science.house.gov/Media/File/AdminLetters/bg_dl_mu_bm_jc_toGAO_NASA_airsurvey_02.04.08.pdf).

## Management's Additional Comments

National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



30 April 2008

Reply to Attn of: Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate

TO: Assistant Inspector General for Auditing  
FROM: Associate Administrator for Aeronautics Research  
SUBJECT: Response to Final Memorandum on the Review of the National Aviation Operation Monitoring Service (Report No. IG-08-014; Assignment No. S-08-004-00) dated March 31, 2008

The Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD) has reviewed the final report from the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on the National Aviation Operating Monitoring Service Project and has provided the following additional comments as requested by the report.

OIG concurrence with ARMD's responses to the first two recommendations (1 and 2.a.) indicates there is agreement between the OIG and ARMD on many aspects of NAOMS. With regards to the third and final recommendation (2.b.) which states:

*"If the NRC study validates the NAOMS survey methodology, we recommend that the Associate Administrator for Aeronautics Research release and post on NASA' public web site a detailed report published by NAOMS Project management that includes an analysis of the NAOMS research and finding and conclusions gained from the survey data."*

Additional developments have influenced ARMD's response to this recommendation. Although ARMD maintains its original position concerning this recommendation, we recognize the OIG desire to bring closure to the NAOMS Project with a final NAOMS report that includes analysis of the NAOMS research and survey data. ARMD believes that ongoing efforts by the National Research Council (NRC) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) will satisfy this last recommendation.

The NRC has been tasked by ARMD to convene a committee under their Aeronautics and Space Engineering Board to conduct an independent assessment of the NAOMS methodology. The NRC is currently in the process of forming a committee of experts to perform the assessment and is tentatively scheduled to complete their assessment by the spring of 2009. Their final report will satisfy the desire for a report on the NAOMS research.

At the request of the House Committee on Science and Technology, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is conducting an independent analysis of the NAOMS Project which includes an assessment of the NAOMS methodology and an analysis of the survey data. The GAO will be given access to the entire NAOMS survey database in its unredacted form and will therefore be able to perform a thorough analysis of the data. Their final report will satisfy

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the desire for a report on the NAOMS research and also the desire for a report that includes analysis of the NAOMS survey data.

With both the NRC and GAO performing an independent analysis of the NAOMS Project, NASA resources would be better spent on conducting research toward enabling the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) instead of duplicating the work of both of these organizations. In addition, if the NAOMS methodology proves to be valid, the best use of NASA resources at this time would be finding ways to integrate the NAOMS methodology into existing safety monitoring systems rather than analyzing data that is several years old.

ARMD appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OIG report. Please contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jaiwon Shin  
Associate Administrator for  
Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate