



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**Fiscal Years 2024–2028**

**Office of the  
Inspector General**

**U.S. Nuclear  
Regulatory  
Commission**

**Defense Nuclear  
Facilities Safety  
Board**



# A MESSAGE FROM THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

On behalf of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), it is my pleasure to present this Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2028. This plan describes the OIG’s strategic direction, including our mission, vision, goals, strategies, actions, and importantly, the performance measures we will use to hold our managers and staff accountable for the plan’s execution and achievements.



This updated Strategic Plan emphasizes a sustained commitment to helping both the NRC and the DNFSB address the major issues and challenges they face. It also creates shared accountability for the OIG regarding the goals we expect to achieve and the strategies we will use to do so. As part of this commitment, we used an outcome based framework that links strategy to measurement. We will revisit this Strategic Plan periodically during fiscal years 2024–2028 to determine whether emerging NRC and/or DNFSB challenges and issues warrant an update to this plan prior to the next strategic planning cycle. This new plan also includes an OIG human capital goal intended to support the continued high-performance of the OIG’s staff. As the NRC’s and DNFSB’s challenges and issues continue to evolve, this plan will be adjusted as needed to be relevant, timely, and responsive. In addition, this plan will provide structure, priorities, and alignment for the OIG Annual Plan and budget submission, and form the basis for personal accountability by all OIG managers and staff.

To develop this plan, the OIG sought input from internal and external stakeholders concerning their highest priorities and expectations for the OIG’s future work and challenges. The OIG also used this input to help identify obstacles that could impede, and assets that support the OIG’s fulfillment of its mission to *provide independent, objective audit, evaluations, and investigative oversight of the operations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, to promote integrity, economy, and efficiency.*

Our core values—Integrity, Credibility, Independence, and Objectivity—guide us and we are dedicated to promoting the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of NRC and DNFSB programs and operations. Together with the collaborative efforts between my staff and those of the NRC and the DNFSB, I look forward to implementing this plan. I thank them for their dedication, and I look forward to continued cooperation as we work together to ensure the integrity and efficiency of agency operations.

*Robert J. Feitel*

Robert J. Feitel  
Inspector General

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## MISSION

Provide independent, objective audits, evaluations, and investigative oversight of the operations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, to promote integrity, economy, and efficiency.

## VISION

Optimize nuclear safety, security, and corporate support oversight through audits, evaluations, and investigations.

## OIG CORE VALUES

Integrity  
Credibility  
Independence  
Objectivity

## Goals for the NRC



### ***Safety***

Strengthen the NRC's efforts to protect public health and safety, and the environment.



### ***Security***

Strengthen the NRC's efforts to address evolving security threats.



### ***Corporate Support***

Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the NRC manages and exercises stewardship over its resources.

## Goals for the DNFSB



### ***Safety***

Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to oversee the safe operation of Department of Energy defense nuclear facilities.



### ***Security***

Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to address evolving security threats.



### ***Corporate Support***

Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the DNFSB manages and exercises stewardship over its resources.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
DNFSB	Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
DOE	Department of Energy
FY	Fiscal Year
IAM	Issue Area Monitor
IG	Inspector General
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OPM	Office of Personnel Management

# **PART I:**

## **U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**



## SECTION I: MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS

### *The NRC OIG Mission*

The NRC began operations in 1975 as an independent agency within the executive branch responsible for regulating the various commercial and institutional uses of nuclear materials. The agency succeeded the Atomic Energy Commission, which previously developed and regulated nuclear activities. The NRC's mission is to license and regulate the nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment.

The American people expect excellence and accountability from their government. Toward that end, the U.S. Congress passed the Inspector General (IG) Act in 1978 to ensure integrity and efficiency within the federal government and its programs. The NRC's OIG was established as a statutory entity on April 15, 1989, in accordance with the 1988 amendment to the IG Act.

As specified under the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, federal strategic planning documents are restricted to goals, objectives, and strategies within the scope of an organization's mission. The information in this plan has been reviewed to ensure that it falls under the NRC OIG's mission to:

**Provide independent, objective audits, evaluations, and investigative oversight of the operations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to promote integrity, economy, and efficiency.**

The OIG has the legislative mandate to conduct audits, evaluations, investigations, inquiries, and other reviews of NRC programs and operations. The OIG also reviews existing and proposed legislation, regulations, and directives and provides comments, as appropriate, regarding any significant concern. This oversight responsibility promotes economy, effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability within the agency; strengthens compliance with laws and regulations; and, assists in detecting and preventing fraud, waste, and mismanagement in NRC programs and operations.

The OIG regularly informs NRC and DNFSB leadership and members of Congress about the agency's most critical risks and vulnerabilities, recommends corrective actions, and monitors NRC and DNFSB progress in implementing those actions.

### *The NRC OIG Vision*

The FY 2024–2028 OIG strategic planning process emphasizes clear outcome goals that support and align with the agency's mission and for which the OIG managers and staff can be held accountable. The OIG managers and staff conducted situational and strategic assessments to support the development of clear and measurable strategies aimed at addressing the NRC's most critical and pressing challenges.

As part of this effort, the OIG also analyzed its latest assessment of the NRC's most serious management and performance challenges, recent work completed by the OIG's audit and investigative units, the NRC's draft strategic framework for FYs 2024–2028, and the NRC's high-level budget guidance for FY 2024. This process resulted in the OIG Strategic Plan, which features three strategic goals that align with the NRC's revised mission and vision. Our revised vision is to:

**Optimize nuclear safety, security, and corporate support oversight through audits, evaluations, and investigations.**

This statement advances the OIG's responsibility to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.

In pursuit of this strategic vision, the OIG will update the strategies and actions it identified that pertain to mission-critical areas as needed. Our strategic planning process is dynamic and does not end with the publication of this document. Current issues as well as revisions of laws, procedures, and agency priorities require attention to varying conditions, operating environments, and other technical, financial, and organizational changes. Auditors and investigators will play a major role in informing further refinements. By focusing on the most serious challenges that pose the greatest potential risk to safety and security, the OIG will use this strategic document to guide its work, deploy resources, and reemphasize OIG accountability for positive change.



## *The OIG's NRC-Specific Strategic Goals*

The OIG's three NRC-specific strategic goals<sup>1</sup> are individual and distinct; together, they allow the OIG to assess its success in fulfilling its vision. The OIG's strategic goals for the NRC are—

***Strategic Goal 1: Safety—Strengthen the NRC's efforts to protect public health and safety, and the environment.***

***Strategic Goal 2: Security—Strengthen the NRC's efforts to address evolving security threats.***

***Strategic Goal 3: Corporate Support—Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the NRC manages and exercises stewardship over its resources.***

To ensure that each OIG audit, evaluation, and investigation aligns with these goals, program areas selected for OIG review are only included in the Annual Plan after being evaluated in light of the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, each OIG audit, evaluation, and investigation is also linked with one or more of the most serious management and performance challenges identified by the OIG as facing the agency and detailed in Section 3 of Parts I and II, Situational Assessment.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to these three NRC-specific strategic goals, the OIG also has a human capital goal intended to support and sustain a workforce that is effective. Part III of this document describes this human capital goal and related strategies and actions.

## **SECTION II: BACKGROUND**

### *The Role of Inspectors General*

Inspectors General have substantial independence and authority to perform their role without interference from the agencies they oversee. The role and authority of IGs has been specified by law and includes:

- Conducting audits and investigations of agency programs;
- Timely access to all agency records, reports, audits, reviews, documents, open recommendations, or other materials;
- Issuing subpoenas for all necessary information, data, reports, and other documentary evidence;
- Independent personnel authority to select, appoint, and employ their own staffs to include subject matter experts as required;
- Independent budget authority;
- Independent contracting authority; and,
- Requesting assistance from other federal, state, and local government agencies.

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended through the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2016, conveys the responsibilities and independence of Offices of Inspectors General in their role to improve the federal government's efficiency and effectiveness; prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in federal agencies; and, keep agency heads, Congress, and the public fully and currently informed of their findings. Nevertheless, the success hinges on its ability to effectively communicate with staff and facilitate positive change within the agency. Without the ability to clearly communicate and facilitate change, the OIG would be unable to achieve its desired outcomes or vision.

To perform their duties, OIGs employ auditors, management analysts, engineers, criminal investigators, investigative analysts, legal counsel, and support personnel. OIGs also use specialized firms and private sector contractors to provide technical expertise as needed.

### *Audit Program*

The NRC OIG Audit Program focuses on management and financial operations; economy and efficiency with which an organization, program, or function is managed; and, whether the program achieves intended results. Auditors assess the degree to which an organization complies with laws, regulations, and internal policies in carrying out programs. They also test program effectiveness and the accuracy and reliability of financial statements.

The overall objective of an audit is to identify ways to enhance agency operations and promote greater economy and efficiency. Audits comprise four phases:

- **Survey:** An initial phase of the audit process is used to gather information on the agency's organization, programs, activities, and functions. An assessment of vulnerable areas determines whether further review is needed;
- **Fieldwork:** Auditors gather detailed information to develop findings and support conclusions and recommendations;
- **Reporting:** Auditors present the information, findings, conclusions, and recommendations that are supported by the evidence gathered during the survey and fieldwork phases. They hold exit conferences with management officials to obtain their views on issues in the draft audit report and present those comments in the published audit report, as appropriate. The published audit reports include formal written comments in their entirety as an appendix; and,
- **Resolution:** Positive change results from the resolution process when management takes action to improve operations based on the recommendations in the published audit report. Management actions are monitored until final action is taken on all recommendations. When management and the OIG cannot agree on the actions needed to correct a problem identified in an audit report, the issue can be taken to the NRC or DNFSB Chair for resolution.

Each October, the OIG issues an Annual Plan that summarizes the audits planned for the coming fiscal year. Unanticipated high-priority issues may arise that generate audits not listed in the Annual Plan. OIG audit staff continually monitor specific issue areas to strengthen the OIG's internal coordination and overall planning process. Under the OIG Issue Area Monitor (IAM) program, staff designated as IAMs are assigned responsibility for keeping abreast of major agency programs and activities. The broad IAM areas address nuclear reactors, nuclear materials, nuclear waste, international programs, security, information management, financial management, and administrative programs.

## *Investigation Program*

The OIG's responsibility for detecting and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse within the NRC and the DNFSB includes investigating possible violations of criminal statutes relating to agency programs and activities, investigating misconduct by employees and contractors, coordinating with the U.S. Department of Justice on OIG-related criminal and civil matters, and coordinating investigations and other OIG initiatives with federal, state, and local investigative agencies, and other OIGs.

Investigations may be initiated as a result of allegations or referrals from private citizens; licensee employees; government employees; Congress; other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies; OIG audits; the OIG Hotline; and, OIG initiatives directed at areas bearing a high potential for fraud, waste, and abuse.

Because the NRC's mission is to protect the health and safety of the public, the OIG's Investigative Program directs much of its resources and attention to investigating allegations of NRC staff conduct that could adversely impact matters related to health and safety. These investigations may address allegations of:

- Misconduct by high-ranking NRC officials and other NRC officials, such as managers and inspectors, whose positions directly impact public health and safety;
- Failure by NRC management to ensure that health and safety matters are appropriately addressed;
- Failure by the NRC to provide sufficient information to the public and to openly seek and consider the public's input during the regulatory process;
- Conflicts of interest involving NRC employees, contractors, and licensees, including such matters as promises of future employment for favorable regulatory treatment, and the acceptance of gratuities; and,
- Fraud in the NRC's procurement programs involving contractors violating government contracting laws and rules.

The OIG has also implemented a series of proactive initiatives designed to identify specific high-risk areas that are most vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse. A primary focus is electronic-related fraud in the business environment. The OIG is committed to improving the security of this constantly changing electronic business environment by investigating unauthorized intrusions and computer-related fraud, and by conducting computer forensic examinations. Other proactive initiatives focus on determining instances of procurement fraud, theft of property, government credit card abuse, and fraud in federal programs.

## *The NRC Operating Environment*

The NRC's mission is to license and regulate the nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to protect public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment. The agency also has a role in enhancing nuclear safety and security throughout the world. The NRC's regulatory mission covers three main areas:

- **Reactors**—Commercial reactors that generate electricity, and research and test reactors used for research, testing, and training;
- **Materials**—Use of nuclear materials in medical, industrial, and academic settings, and facilities that produce nuclear fuel; and,
- **Waste**—Transportation, storage, and disposal of nuclear materials and waste, and decommissioning of nuclear facilities from service.

Under its responsibility to protect public health and safety, the NRC has the following main regulatory functions:

- Establish standards and regulations;
- Issue licenses, certificates, and permits;
- Ensure compliance with established standards and regulations; and,
- Conduct research, adjudication, and risk and performance assessments to support regulatory decisions.

These regulatory functions include regulating nuclear power plants, fuel cycle facilities, and other civilian uses of radioactive materials. Civilian uses include nuclear medicine programs at hospitals, academic activities at educational institutions, research, and such industrial applications as gauges and testing equipment.

The NRC maintains a current website and a public document room at its headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC; has four regional offices located throughout the United States; and, operates a technical training center located in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The agency holds public hearings and public meetings in local areas and at NRC offices, and engages in discussions with individuals and organizations.

The agency carries out its mission through various licensing, inspection, research, and enforcement programs. The NRC-licensed nuclear reactors generate about 19 percent, or about 807 billion kilowatt-hours, of the nation's gross electricity. Currently the NRC regulates 93 commercial nuclear power reactors—62 pressurized-water reactors and 31 boiling-water reactors—which operate in 28 states at 55 sites.

The NRC also regulates 81 independent spent fuel storage installations, 31 licensed research and test reactors operating in 21 states, 9 fuel cycle facilities, 3 uranium recovery sites, and approximately 2,200 licenses issued for research, medical, industrial, government, and academic uses of nuclear material.

The NRC also oversees 25 nuclear reactors in various stages of decommissioning. In addition, 39 states, referred to as Agreement States, administer approximately 16,000 licenses, through agreements with the NRC under which they regulate byproduct materials, source materials, and certain quantities of special nuclear materials in their respective states.

The OIG audit and investigative oversight responsibilities are derived from the agency's wide array of programs, functions, and support activities established to accomplish the NRC's mission.

## SECTION III: SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### *Strategic Challenges Facing the NRC*

As a federal agency directly exposed to changing domestic and international business, security, and environmental factors, the NRC and, derivatively, the OIG, face a rapidly adapting operating environment. For that reason, a thorough and adaptive “situational assessment” of the agency’s operating environment is a critical requirement for a meaningful NRC OIG Strategic Plan, and formed a core piece of the OIG’s strategic planning process.

Since the last OIG Strategic Plan was published, the landscape in which the NRC operates has changed. In October 2022, the OIG developed and described each of the NRC’s challenges<sup>2</sup> for FY 2023. The NRC leadership noted its own assessment of the key challenges facing the agency in its input to the OIG for management challenges. We have considered this input and independently identified the following 10 clear, specific, and actionable challenges that require the NRC’s continued attention:

- **Challenge 1:** Ensuring safety while transforming into a modern, risk-informed regulator;
- **Challenge 2:** Oversight of the decommissioning process and the management of decommissioning trust funds;
- **Challenge 3:** Strengthening the NRC’s readiness to respond to future mission-affecting disruptions;
- **Challenge 4:** Advancing readiness to license and regulate new technologies in reactor design, fuels, and plant controls, and maintaining the integrity of the associated intellectual property;
- **Challenge 5:** Ensuring the effective acquisition, management, and protection of information technology and data;
- **Challenge 6:** Implementing strategic workforce planning during transformation and industry change;
- **Challenge 7:** Overseeing materials, waste, and the National Materials Program;
- **Challenge 8:** Managing financial and acquisitions operations to enhance transparency and fiscal prudence;
- **Challenge 9:** Reinforcing the NRC’s readiness to address cyber threats to critical national infrastructure sectors impacting the NRC’s public health and safety mission and/or NRC licensees; and,
- **Challenge 10:** Maintaining public outreach to continue strengthening the agency’s regulatory process.

<sup>2</sup> Challenges do not necessarily equate to problems; rather, they should be considered areas of continuing important focus for NRC management and staff.

The OIG's characterization of these challenges as significant was based on audit and investigative work conducted by OIG staff along with the OIG's continuous effort to monitor issues and trends affecting the NRC as they emerge and evolve.

Through the OIG's IAM program, OIG staff monitor agency performance with regard to these management challenges. These challenges, in conjunction with the OIG's strategic goals, serve as an important basis for deciding which audits, evaluations, and investigations to conduct each fiscal year.

As part of the OIG's strategic planning process, the OIG grouped the challenges into three categories: (1) Safety Challenges; (2) Security Challenges; and, (3) Corporate Support Challenges. The following constitutes the OIG's situational assessment of these challenges. OIG staff identified the issues described in each category as posing significant risks for the NRC in that failure to address them adequately would impair the agency's ability to accomplish its mission. This assessment serves as the basis for the OIG's FY 2024–2028 strategies and actions as described in the next section.

### *Safety Challenges*

#### ***Transforming into a Modern, Risk-Informed Regulator***

The NRC faces challenges with regard to the increased emphasis on risk-informed regulation. These challenges necessitate guidance changes, as well as efforts to raise staff awareness of these changes and ensure regulatory consistency. The NRC must also engage external stakeholders to ensure transparency of resulting changes to its licensing and oversight processes.

#### ***Decommissioning***

The NRC faces challenges with regard to the increased number of nuclear facilities ceasing operation and management of decommissioning trust funds. As such, the agency must deal with an ever-increasing amount of work associated with sites undergoing decommissioning.

#### ***Readiness***

The NRC faces a challenge to strengthen its readiness to respond to future mission-affecting disruptions.

#### ***National Materials Program Oversight***

The NRC faces challenges involving sustained, high-level coordination between the NRC and the 39 Agreement States to ensure a consistent understanding and implementation of regulations associated with the oversight of radioactive materials, in addition to the NRC's ability to effectively oversee the continued increase in high-level radioactive waste.



### ***Radiological Waste***

The NRC faces challenges associated with the storage and management of high- and low-level radiological waste.

### ***Industrial, Medical, and Academic***

The NRC faces challenges ensuring the oversight of nuclear materials in evolving industrial, medical, and academic applications.

### ***Security Challenges***

#### ***Emergency Preparedness and Incident Response***

The NRC's role in supporting emergency preparedness and incident response within the nuclear industry and state and local governments is critical in light of the worldwide terrorist threat, natural disasters, and growing populations around nuclear power plants.

#### ***Evolving Threats to Licensees***

The NRC continues to face challenges in ensuring the public is protected from improper use of nuclear materials and technology. Thus, the NRC must maintain a comprehensive assessment of threats and effectively integrate security considerations into its regulatory process. This includes cybersecurity challenges.

#### ***Information Technology and Cyber Security***

The increasing complexity of information technology and industrial control systems throughout the nation's critical infrastructure makes it imperative to strengthen preparedness to counter any emerging cyber threats in the NRC's areas of responsibility.

#### ***Regulation of New Technologies***

The NRC faces challenges in adapting existing licensing processes and capabilities, creating new ones, and protecting proprietary information against industrial espionage or other efforts by adversaries to compromise this information. The technical complexity of these initiatives, combined with their experimental nature, has challenged the NRC to adapt its regulatory processes to accommodate new technologies in an efficient and effective manner. As new reactor and fuel technologies are reviewed and licensed, it is critical that the NRC, as well as its federal partners, vendors, and applicants, protect the proprietary information entrusted to them.

## *Corporate Support Challenges*

### ***Information Management***

The NRC faces a challenge related to keeping its workforce equipped with the modern tools, technologies, skills, and knowledge necessary to meet current and future mission needs.

### ***Workforce Planning***

The NRC faces the challenges of fulfilling the agency mission with mandates on limiting corporate costs and further reductions in staff. These challenges make it clear that effective workforce planning is even more important in an innovative industry.

### ***Financial and Acquisitions Operations***

The NRC faces challenges related to financial and acquisition management processes, and monitoring contracting actions in accordance with regulations.

### ***NRC's Security Threats***

The NRC must protect its infrastructure and ensure its facilities, computers, data, staff, and competencies are adequately protected against threats while providing for continuity of operations.

### ***NRC's Readiness to Address Cyber Threats***

The NRC faces challenges related to identifying, managing, and protecting its numerous operating systems, applications, and devices. Cybersecurity presents unique challenges to critical infrastructure protection because information technology and industrial control systems are highly complex and dynamic, technologically diverse, and often geographically dispersed. This complexity increases the difficulty in identifying, managing, and protecting the numerous operating systems, applications, and devices involved. Presently, the NRC does not conduct cybersecurity inspections at nuclear fuel cycle facilities.

# GOAL 1: SAFETY

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***Strengthen the NRC's  
efforts to protect  
public health and safety,  
and the environment***

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## GOAL 1 STRATEGIES FOR THE NRC

1.1 Identify risk areas associated with the NRC's oversight of operating and new nuclear facilities, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

1.2 Identify risk areas facing the NRC's oversight of nuclear materials, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

1.3 Identify risk areas associated with the NRC's oversight of high-level and low-level waste, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

1.4 Identify risk areas facing the NRC's oversight of nuclear materials used for medical purposes that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

# GOAL 1: SAFETY

## *Strengthen the NRC's efforts to protect public health and safety, and the environment*

The NRC performs critical functions to ensure the safe and secure use of radioactive materials in the United States and to protect both the public and radiation workers from radiation hazards that could result from the use of radioactive materials. The NRC provides licensing and oversight activities for 93 commercial nuclear power reactors; research, test, and training reactors; radioactive materials used in medicine, academia, and industry; and, nuclear waste.

The NRC is responsible for maintaining an established regulatory framework for the safe and secure use of civilian nuclear reactors, including commercial nuclear power plants as well as research, test, and training reactors. The NRC's regulatory oversight responsibilities in the reactor arena include developing policy and rulemaking, licensing and inspecting reactors, licensing reactor operators, and enforcing regulations. The agency is also facing the increased number of plants that are ceasing operation and undergoing decommissioning. The NRC is also responsible for regulatory oversight of the safe and secure use of nuclear materials; medical, industrial, and academic applications; uranium recovery activities; and, for the storage and disposal of high-level and low-level radioactive waste. The NRC is authorized to grant licenses for the possession and use of radioactive materials and establish regulations to govern the possession and use of those materials.

Upon a state's request, the NRC may enter into an agreement to relinquish its authority to the state to regulate certain radioactive materials and limited quantities of special nuclear material. The state must demonstrate that its regulatory program is adequate to protect public health and safety and that it is compatible with the NRC's programs. The states that enter into agreements assuming this regulatory authority from the NRC are called Agreement States. The number of Agreement States continues to increase.

The NRC regulates high-level radioactive waste generated from commercial nuclear power reactors. High-level radioactive waste consists of either spent used reactor fuel accepted for disposal, or waste material remaining after spent fuel is reprocessed. Because of its highly radioactive fission properties, high-level radioactive waste must be handled and stored with care. Because radioactive waste becomes harmless only through decay which can take hundreds of thousands of years for high-level waste, the material must be stored, and ultimately disposed of. The NRC must oversee regulatory issues in a timely manner and must be able to capture and transfer knowledge learned through experience. In an ever-evolving and resource-constrained climate, it is of paramount importance that the agency implements its programs as effectively and efficiently as possible.

**Strategy 1.1:** Identify risk areas associated with the NRC's oversight of operating and new nuclear facilities, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's licensing and certification activities for operating and new reactors and new technologies;
- The NRC's inspection activities;
- The NRC's activities for promoting a strong internal/external safety culture;
- The NRC's research activities;
- The NRC's activities related to oversight of aging, obsolete, and decommissioning nuclear facilities;
- The NRC's ability to timely identify and effectively respond to emerging technical and regulatory issues;
- The NRC's actions to integrate operating experience and lessons-learned into regulatory activities;
- The NRC's oversight of supply chain vulnerabilities to include the prevention of counterfeit, fraudulent, and suspect items entering the supply chain;
- The NRC's efforts to address stakeholder and staff safety concerns (including those expressed as non-concurrences and Differing Professional Opinions) related to the NRC's oversight of nuclear facilities; and,
- The internal/external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to the NRC's oversight of nuclear facilities.

**Strategy 1.2:** Identify risk areas facing the NRC's oversight of nuclear materials, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's implementation of programs for tracking nuclear materials;
- The NRC's regulatory activities with Agreement States;
- The NRC's licensing and certification activities;
- The NRC's inspection activities;

- The NRC’s activities for promoting a strong internal/external safety culture;
- The NRC’s research activities;
- The NRC’s risk management of aging, obsolete, and decommissioning nuclear facilities;
- The NRC’s ability to timely identify and effectively respond to emerging technical and regulatory issues;
- The NRC’s actions to integrate operating experience and lessons-learned into regulatory activities; and,
- The NRC’s efforts to address stakeholder and staff safety concerns, including those expressed as non-concurrences and differing professional opinions, and allegations related to the NRC’s oversight of nuclear materials.

**Strategy 1.3:** Identify risk areas associated with the NRC’s oversight of high-level and low-level waste, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC’s regulatory activities involving any interim and/or permanent high-level radioactive waste repositories;
- The NRC’s licensing and certification activities;
- The NRC’s inspection activities;
- The NRC’s activities for promoting a strong internal/external safety culture;
- The NRC’s research activities;
- The NRC’s ability to timely identify and effectively respond to emerging technical and regulatory issues;
- The NRC’s actions to integrate operating experience and lessons-learned into regulatory activities;
- The NRC’s efforts to address stakeholder and staff safety concerns, including those expressed as non-concurrences and differing professional opinions, related to the NRC’s oversight of high-level and low-level waste; and,
- Internal and external stakeholders’ concerns and allegations related to the NRC’s oversight of high-level and low-level waste.

**Strategy 1.4:** Identify risk areas facing the NRC's oversight of nuclear materials used for medical purposes that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's ability to timely identify and effectively respond to emerging technical and regulatory issues and rulemaking;
- The NRC's implementation of programs for tracking nuclear materials for medical purposes;
- The NRC's regulatory activities with Agreement States;
- The NRC's licensing and certification activities;
- The NRC's inspection activities;
- The NRC's activities for promoting a strong internal/external safety culture;
- The NRC's research activities;
- The NRC's actions to integrate operating experience and lessons-learned into regulatory activities; and,
- The NRC's efforts to address stakeholder and staff safety concerns, including those expressed as non-concurrences and differing professional opinions, and allegations related to the NRC's oversight of nuclear materials used for medical purposes.

## GOAL 2: SECURITY

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***Strengthen the NRC's  
efforts to address  
evolving security threats***

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2.1 Identify risks involved in securing operating, new, and decommissioning nuclear reactors, fuel cycle facilities, and materials, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

2.2 Identify risks in emergency preparedness and incident response, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

2.3 Identify risks in international security activities, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.



## GOAL 2: SECURITY

### *Strengthen the NRC's efforts to address evolving security threats*

The NRC must ensure that nuclear power and materials licensees take adequate measures to protect their facilities against radiological sabotage. The NRC faces the challenge of adapting to dynamic threats while maintaining stable security oversight commensurate with the agency's mission to be a fair and impartial regulator. The NRC has well-established inspection programs for evaluating the physical, cyber, and personnel security activities of nuclear power and materials licensees.

The NRC must respond to a cyber threat environment where adversaries' tactics and capabilities rapidly evolve. Cyber security also entails oversight challenges related to the mix

of digital and analog systems at NRC licensees. For example, digital equipment upgrades could impact licensee operations and security.

The NRC plays a critical role in overseeing and supporting the emergency preparedness and incident response capabilities of its licensees. This oversight includes the integration of licensee plans with government agencies in light of natural disasters and terrorist threats.

The NRC supports international interests in both the safe and secure use of nuclear material and technology and nuclear non-proliferation. This includes improving controls on the import and export of nuclear materials and equipment, and exercising the NRC's international oversight commitments.

**Strategy 2.1:** Identify risks involved in securing operating, new, and decommissioning nuclear reactors, fuel cycle facilities, and materials, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

- 
- The NRC's oversight of the security of nuclear reactors, decommissioning reactors, fuel cycle facilities, materials, and waste facilities;
  - The NRC's responses to an evolving threat environment;
  - The NRC's coordination with other agencies;
  - The NRC's efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive cyber security program for nuclear power plants and fuel cycle facilities;
  - The NRC's oversight of licensee security responsibilities;
  - The NRC's oversight on issues related to radiological sabotage and theft or diversion of materials; and,

- The NRC's efforts to address external stakeholder and staff concerns and allegations related to the securing of nuclear reactors, fuel cycle facilities, and materials, including but not limited to those expressed as non-concurrences, differing professional opinions, and 2.206 petitions.

**Strategy 2.2:** Identify risks in emergency preparedness and incident response, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's management of emergency preparedness guidelines, regulations, and programs;
- The NRC's management of coordination with licensees and with federal, state, and local governments;
- The NRC's addressing and responding to emergencies and nuclear incidents; and,
- The NRC's efforts to address external stakeholder and staff security concerns and allegations related to emergency preparedness and incident response, including those expressed as non-concurrences, differing professional opinions, and 2.206 petitions.

**Strategy 2.3:** Identify risks in international security activities, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's international activities, (i.e., material control and accountability, incident response, non-proliferation, and the import and export of nuclear materials); and,
- The NRC's efforts to address external stakeholder and staff security concerns and allegations related to international security activities, including those expressed as non-concurrences, differing professional opinions, and 2.206 petitions.

## GOAL 3: CORPORATE SUPPORT

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***Increase the economy,  
efficiency, and  
effectiveness with which  
the NRC manages and  
exercises stewardship  
over its resources***

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### GOAL 3 STRATEGIES FOR THE NRC

3.1 Identify areas of corporate support risk within the NRC, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

3.2 Identify infrastructure risks (e.g., physical, personnel and cyber security), and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

## GOAL 3: CORPORATE SUPPORT

*Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the NRC manages and exercises stewardship over its resources*

The NRC faces significant challenges to efficiently, effectively, and economically manage its corporate resources within the parameters of its budget. The NRC must continue to provide infrastructure and support to accomplish its regulatory mission while responding to continuous scrutiny of budgetary levels, evolving regulatory requirements, changing industry and market conditions, and the continuously developing security threat environment.

Addressing limitations upon agency budgetary and financial resources and the resulting impact on organizational staffing, human capital, information management and internal financial oversight will require continuing, well considered processes of adaptation throughout the next strategic planning period. The NRC must continue to maintain its capability to effectively use its financial resources and to manage other factors that are largely budget-dependent. Such factors include reductions in long-tenured staffing, which requires

knowledge preservation and transfer; the effective deployment of limited resources to meet changes in regulatory requirements; efficient adaptation to changes in industry conditions; and, the need for continued improvement in information technology capabilities.

Further, the NRC must protect its infrastructure and take the necessary steps to ensure that its staff, facilities, information, and information technology assets are adequately protected against insider and external threats while maintaining operations. The NRC faces the challenge of balancing transparency with information security.

The OIG will continue to target corporate management risk areas for audits and investigations to fulfill its statutory responsibilities to evaluate the agency's financial management, and will work with the NRC to identify and improve areas of weaknesses, particularly in areas subjected to budgetary pressures.

**Strategy 3.1:** Identify areas of corporate support risks within the NRC, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's management of human capital, to include training and development programs, knowledge management, and recruiting and retention activities;
- The NRC's response to complaints or incidents related to a chilled work environment;
- The NRC's financial management practices to include development and collection of fees, grant awards, and budget processes;
- The fair presentation of the NRC's financial statements;
- The NRC's development, implementation, and lifecycle management of information technology tools and systems;
- Internal/external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to human capital, procurement, financial management, and information technology;
- The NRC's management of administrative functions, such as training, procurement, property, and facilities;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the NRC's management of changes caused by internal and external factors;
- The NRC's activities and their effectiveness in fostering an environment where corporate management issues can be raised without fear of retaliation;
- The NRC's efforts to address stakeholder and staff corporate management concerns, including those expressed as non-concurrences and differing professional opinions, related to human capital, procurement, and information technology; and,
- The NRC's readiness and response to future pandemics and other long-term disruption.

**Strategy 3.2:** Identify infrastructure risks (e.g., physical, personnel and cyber security), and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to NRC program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The NRC's management of threats to its facilities, personnel, and information systems;
- The NRC's implementation of physical, personnel, and cyber security controls and procedures;
- The NRC's management of controls on transparency and information security;
- The NRC's efforts to address stakeholder and staff security concerns, including those expressed as non-concurrences and differing professional opinions, related to the maintenance of a secure infrastructure and the balance of transparency and information security;
- Internal/external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to the maintenance of a secure infrastructure and the balance of transparency and information security; and,
- Participation in federal task forces and working groups to assess or mitigate risk to NRC corporate program operations.

## PART II:

# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD



## SECTION I: MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS

### *The DNFSB OIG Mission*

Congress created the DNFSB as an independent agency within the executive branch to identify the nature and consequences of potential threats to public health and safety involving the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) defense nuclear facilities, to elevate such issues to the highest levels of authority, and to inform the public. The DNFSB is the only independent technical oversight body for the nation's defense nuclear facilities. The DNFSB is composed of experts in the field of nuclear safety with demonstrated competence and knowledge relevant to its independent investigative and oversight functions. Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, the NRC Inspector General was authorized to exercise the same authorities for the DNFSB as for the NRC.

As specified under the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, federal strategic planning documents are restricted to goals, objectives, and strategies within the scope of the organization's mission. The information in this plan has been reviewed to ensure that it falls under the OIG's mission to:

**Provide independent, objective audits, evaluations, and investigative oversight of the operations of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, to promote integrity, economy, and efficiency.**

### *The DNFSB OIG Vision*

The OIG's FY 2024–2028 strategic planning process emphasized clear outcome goals that support and align with the DNFSB's mission, and for which OIG managers and staff can be held accountable. OIG managers and staff conducted situational and strategic assessments to support the development of clear and measurable strategies aimed at addressing the DNFSB's most critical and pressing challenges. This process resulted in the OIG's revised vision statement:

**Optimize nuclear safety, security, and corporate support oversight through audits, evaluations, and investigations.**

This statement advances the OIG's responsibility to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.



## *The DNFSB OIG Strategic Goals*

As part of this effort, the OIG also analyzed its latest assessment of the DNFSB's most serious management and performance challenges, recent work completed by the OIG's audit and investigative units, and the DNFSB's mission and strategic goals. This process resulted in an OIG Strategic Plan for the DNFSB featuring three strategic goals. The OIG's three DNFSB strategic goals allow the OIG to assess its success in fulfilling its vision:

***Strategic Goal 1: Safety—Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to oversee the safe operation of the Department of Energy's defense nuclear facilities.***

***Strategic Goal 2: Security—Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to address evolving security threats.***

***Strategic Goal 3: Corporate Support—Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the DNFSB manages and exercises stewardship over its resources.***

To ensure that each OIG audit, evaluation, and investigation aligns with these goals, program areas selected for audit and evaluation are only included in the Annual Plan after being evaluated in light of the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, each OIG audit, evaluation, and investigation is linked with one or more of the most serious management and performance challenges identified by the OIG as facing the agency.

## SECTION II: BACKGROUND

### *The Role of the IG*

Inspectors General have substantial independence and authority to perform their role without interference from the agencies they oversee. The role of IGs has been specified by law and includes:

- Conducting audits and investigations of agency programs;
- Timely access to all agency records, reports, audits, reviews, documents, open recommendations, or other materials;
- Issuing subpoenas for all necessary information, data, reports, and other documentary evidence;
- Independent personnel authority to select, appoint, and employ their own staff to include subject-matter experts as required;
- Independent budget authority;
- Independent contracting authority; and,
- Requesting assistance from other federal, state, and local government agencies.

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended through the IG Empowerment Act of 2016, conveys the responsibilities and independence of Offices of Inspectors General in their role to improve the federal government's efficiency and effectiveness; prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in federal agencies; and, keep agency heads, Congress, and the public fully and currently informed of the findings of IG work. Nevertheless, the OIG's success hinges on its ability to effectively communicate with DNFSB staff and facilitate positive change within the agency. Without the ability to clearly communicate and facilitate change, the OIG would be unable to achieve its outcomes or vision.

To perform its duties, the OIG employs auditors, management analysts, engineers, criminal investigators, investigative analysts, legal counsel, and support personnel. The OIG also uses specialized firms and private sector contractors to provide technical expertise as needed.

### *Audits*

The OIG conducts performance, financial, and contract audits and evaluations to fulfill its audit mission. Performance audits focus on the DNFSB's administrative and program operations and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency with which managerial responsibilities are carried out, and whether the programs achieve intended results. Financial audits provide an audit opinion on the DNFSB's financial statements and evaluate financial programs. In addition, the audit staff prepares evaluation reports that present the OIG perspectives or information on specific topics.

## *Investigations*

The OIG conducts investigations relating to the integrity of the DNFSB's programs and operations to fulfill its investigative mission. Most OIG investigations focus on allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse and violations of law or misconduct by DNFSB employees and contractors.

## *The DNFSB Operating Environment*

Congress established the Board in September 1988 in response to growing concerns about the level of health and safety protection that the DOE was providing the public and workers at defense nuclear facilities. In so doing, Congress sought to provide the general public with added assurance that the DOE's defense nuclear facilities were being safely designed, constructed, operated, and decommissioned.

The Board is composed of five respected experts in the field of nuclear safety with demonstrated competence and knowledge relevant to its independent investigative and oversight functions. In its FY 2022 congressional budget request, the Board proposed a funding level of \$41,000,000 and 120 full-time equivalents to carry out its mission in FY 2023. This request reflects a return to the agency's FY 2022 appropriation level of \$31,000,000. The DNFSB is continuing its effort to hire up from the current staff of 115 to the congressionally-mandated staffing floor of 120 in FY 2023.

The OIG audit and investigative oversight responsibilities are derived from the agency's wide array of programs, functions, and support activities established to accomplish the DNFSB's mission.

## SECTION III: SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### *Strategic Challenges Facing the DNFSB*

In October 2022, the OIG developed and described each of the DNFSB's challenges for FY 2023. We have considered this input and independently identified the following five clear, specific, and actionable challenges that require the DNFSB's continued attention:

**Challenge 1:** Leading a healthy and sustainable organizational culture and climate;

**Challenge 2:** Ensuring the safe and effective acquisition and management of mission-specific infrastructure, including cyber, physical and personnel security, and data;

**Challenge 3:** Continuing a systematic safety focus in the DNFSB's technical oversight and reviews;

**Challenge 4:** Strengthening the DNFSB's readiness to respond to future mission-affecting disruptions; and,

**Challenge 5:** Managing the DNFSB's efforts to elevate its visibility, credibility, and influence, and to assess and improve its relationship with the DOE and external stakeholders.

The OIG's characterization of these challenges as significant was based on OIG audit and investigative work with the OIG's continuous effort to monitor issues and trends faced by the DNFSB as they emerge and evolve.

As part of its strategic planning process, the OIG grouped the challenges into three categories: (1) Safety Challenges, (2) Security Challenges, and (3) Corporate Support Challenges. OIG staff identified the issues described within each category as posing significant risks for the DNFSB such that failure to address them adequately will impair the agency's ability to accomplish its mission. This assessment serves as the basis for the OIG's FY 2024–2028 DNFSB strategies and actions.

### *Safety Challenges*

#### ***Emerging Technical Issues***

The DNFSB faces challenges identifying and evaluating emerging technical issues at a variety of complex DOE defense nuclear facilities.

#### **Technical Oversight and Reviews**

The DNFSB's technical program faces challenges ensuring that operations are

conducted in a manner that is accountable and transparent; maintaining open and effective communication with the DOE; and, ensuring that internal controls are fully understood and implemented.

### ***Readiness***

The DNFSB faces a challenge to strengthen its readiness to respond to future mission-affecting disruptions.

### ***Construction***

The DNFSB faces challenges in its processes for the review of design and specifications for construction of new and modified DOE defense nuclear facilities.

### ***Decommissioning***

The DNFSB faces challenges in its oversight of the volume of work at DOE sites undergoing decommissioning.

### ***Security Challenges***

#### ***Security Threats***

The DNFSB must protect its infrastructure and ensure its facilities, computers, data, staff, and competencies are adequately protected against emerging threats while providing for continuity of operations.

#### ***Balancing Transparency and Information Security***

The DNFSB faces a challenge to balance the public's need for information with the need to protect information that has a potential to impact the security of DOE defense nuclear facilities.

### ***Corporate Support Challenges***

#### ***Culture and Climate***

The DNFSB faces significant challenges affecting its work culture and climate. Over the past several years, the DNFSB's high employee turnover, inadequate succession planning, major reorganizations, and internal communication issues were further compounded by issues involving a lack of collegiality among the Board members themselves. These challenges negatively affected trust and employee engagement throughout the agency.

#### ***Organizational Relationship with the DOE***

The DNFSB faces significant challenges in managing the agency's efforts to elevate its visibility and influence and to assess and improve its relationship with the DOE. The need for continued cooperation from the DOE is extremely important in light of the DNFSB's mission and the controversy surrounding DOE Order 140.1, and the agency's rejections of two DNFSB recommendations in FY 2020.

- 1.1 Identify risk areas associated with the DNFSB's oversight of DOE defense nuclear facilities, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improved DNFSB performance and communications.

## GOAL 1: SAFETY

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***Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to oversee the safe operation of DOE defense nuclear facilities***

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# GOAL 1: SAFETY

*Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to oversee  
the safe operation of  
DOE defense nuclear facilities.*

**Strategy 1.1:** Identify risk areas associated with the DNFSB's oversight of DOE defense nuclear facilities, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improved DNFSB performance and communications.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The DNFSB's work plan development process;
- The DNFSB's process for reviewing designs for construction and modifications;
- The DNFSB's process for reviewing decommissioning progress;
- The DNFSB's process for balancing the assessment for emergent issues versus planned work;
- The DNFSB's process for maintaining staff technical skill sets;
- The DNFSB's conduct of self-assessment (to include mission effectiveness and communication with the DOE) and process improvement;
- The DNFSB's automated work and issue tracking capabilities;
- Internal/external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to the DNFSB's oversight of DOE defense nuclear facilities;
- The DNFSB's development of effective and efficient procedures for safety oversight activities; and,
- The DNFSB's improvement of safety oversight programs through its identification of best practices from other federal agencies.

## GOAL 2: SECURITY

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***Strengthen the DNFSB's  
efforts to address  
evolving security threats***

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2.1 Identify risks in maintaining secure facility, personnel, and cyber security infrastructure, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improvements in DNFSB programs and operations.

2.2 Identify risks in balancing transparency and information security, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improvements in DNFSB programs and operations.



## GOAL 2: SECURITY

*Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to address evolving security threats.*

**Strategy 2.1:** *Identify risks in maintaining secure facility, personnel, and cyber security infrastructure, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improvements in DNFSB programs and operations.*

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The DNFSB's management of threats to its facility, personnel, and information systems;
- The DNFSB's implementation of facility, personnel, and cyber security controls and procedures;
- Internal and external cyber breaches of the DNFSB's infrastructure;
- Physical and personnel security, including insider threat mitigation or economic espionage; and,
- Internal and external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to the security of the DNFSB's infrastructure.

**Strategy 2.2:** *Identify risks in balancing transparency and information security requirements, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improvements in DNFSB programs and operations.*

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The DNFSB's management of controls on transparency and information security requirements;
- Information security violations; and,
- Internal/external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to the balance of transparency and information security requirements.

## GOAL 3: CORPORATE SUPPORT

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***Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the DNFSB manages and exercises stewardship over its resources***

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### GOAL 3 STRATEGIES FOR THE DNFSB

3.1 Identify areas of corporate support risk within the DNFSB, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to improvements in DNFSB programs and operations.

3.2 Identify best practices from other federal entities that could be applied to improve DNFSB programs and operations.

## GOAL 3: CORPORATE SUPPORT

*Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the DNFSB manages and exercises stewardship over its resources*

**Strategy 3.1:** Identify areas of corporate support risk within the DNFSB, and conduct audits and/or investigations that lead to DNFSB program and operational improvements.

**Action:** *Conduct audits/evaluations and/or investigations in the following areas:*

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- The DNFSB's management of human capital to include training and development programs, knowledge management, and recruiting and retention activities;
- The DNFSB's management of administrative functions and financial activities to include congressional requirements;
- The DNFSB's development, implementation, and lifecycle management of information technology tools and systems;
- The DNFSB's management of change through its implementation of best practices (to include training, project management, lessons learned, knowledge management, and process improvement);
- The adequacy of DNFSB's response to complaints or incidents related to a chilled work environment;
- Implementation of processes at the DNFSB to encourage an environment where technical or non-technical issues can be raised without fear of retaliation; and,
- Internal/external stakeholders' concerns and allegations related to human capital, reasonable accommodation, telework agreements, procurement, financial management, and information technology.

# PART III:

## OIG HUMAN CAPITAL GOAL



## SECTION I: BACKGROUND

### *The NRC OIG Mission*

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued 5 C.F.R. Part 250, Personnel Management in Agencies, effective April 11, 2017, to align human capital management practices to broader agency strategic planning activities, and better align human capital activities with an agency's mission and strategic goals. The OPM envisioned this would enable agency leadership to better leverage the workforce to achieve results. Based on the direction in 5 C.F.R Part 250, and recognizing the potential benefits of a strategic human capital goal, the OIG developed a goal, strategies, and actions that focus specifically on maintaining and supporting excellence in the OIG's workforce. Unlike the OIG's other strategic goals, the human capital goal is not specific to the NRC or the DNFSB, but rather is applicable to the entire OIG staff regardless of job function or agency focus.

## SECTION II: GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

### *Strategic OIG Human Capital Goal*

***Maintain support for a workforce that is skilled, collaborative, and engaged in high-impact audit, investigative, and other activities for the Office of the Inspector General.***

**Strategy 1.1:** Provide continual learning and professional development opportunities.

**Action:** *Require each staff member to prepare an individual training and development plan to be reviewed and approved by his or her supervisor that describes skills needed and the corresponding training and developmental activities identified to meet the employee's career goal and support work assignments.*

**Strategy 1.2:** Increase collaboration and knowledge sharing across the OIG.

#### **Actions:**

- (a) *Require each staff member to prepare an individual training and development plan to be reviewed and approved by his or her supervisor that describes skills needed and the corresponding training and developmental activities identified to meet the employee's career goal and support work assignments; and,*
- (b) *Seek opportunities for audits and investigations staff to support each other in ongoing work.*

**Strategy 1.3:** Ensure prioritization of critical work activities and appropriate alignment with available resources.

**Action:** *Assign resources to maximize timely completion of high-impact activities.*

**Strategy 1.4:** Support staff efforts to optimize work-life balance.

**Action:** *Integrate work activities with opportunities to telework.*

**PART IV:**

**ASSESSMENT OF GOAL  
ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE  
NRC AND THE DNFSB**

## **SECTION I: HOW THE OIG MEASURES ITS PERFORMANCE**

### *Implementing and Measuring OIG Work for Results*

Following guidance provided through the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (GPRMA) of 2010, the OIG continually monitors and assesses the results of its own work to improve both agency performance and the OIG's responsiveness to the most serious risks facing the agencies. Importantly, this performance management strategy affords the agencies the opportunity to correct or mitigate identified risks and vulnerabilities before they become critical.

In general, the OIG measures its performance by assessing whether most of its work results in:

- A high impact on improving the NRC's and the DNFSB's safety, security, and corporate management programs;
- Results in audit recommendations agreed to by the NRC and the DNFSB;
- Final agency action regarding OIG audit recommendations;
- Action taken by the NRC and the DNFSB in response to issued OIG investigative reports;
- Referral of closed investigations with criminal or civil aspects to prosecutorial/administrative authorities for action;
- Closed investigations concluded with a judicial, civil, or administrative action being taken, or the issuance of a clearance memorandum; and,
- Timely completion.

In addition, the OIG has introduced an internally focused human capital goal intended to support the contributions of a talented and motivated workforce. The OIG will measure fulfillment of this goal by assessing the percentage of employees with approved training or development plans and the percentage of employees who fulfill their plans, the percentage of audits and investigations that involve collaboration between the two entities, and the percentage of OIG employee Federal Employment Viewpoint Surveys that reflect a positive work-life balance.

The OIG's strategies for achieving its strategic goals and measures for assessing performance are outcome-based. All the OIG's strategies were crafted with accompanying performance measures to track execution and there will be a regular focus on these measures as outlined in the GPRMA. The OIG performance measures are listed in the Strategic Plan Appendix.

As part of the process for refining strategies and measures, staff members designated as Issue Area Monitors (IAM) are assigned responsibility for keeping informed about major agency programs and activities. The broad IAM areas address nuclear reactors, nuclear materials, nuclear waste, information management, security, financial and administrative programs, human resources, and international programs.

The audit planning process, which is informed by the OIG Strategic Plan and NRC's/ DNFSB's management and performance challenges, yields the most productive and highest priority audit assignments. The OIG's priority for conducting audits is based on:

- High risk agency areas;
- Mandatory legislative requirements;
- Emphasis by the President, Congress, NRC/DNFSB Chair, or other NRC Commissioners/DNFSB Board Members;
- A program's susceptibility to fraud, manipulation, or other irregularities;
- Dollar magnitude or resources involved in the proposed audit area;
- Newness, changed conditions, or sensitivity of an organization, program, function, or activity;
- Prior audit experience, including the adequacy of internal controls; and,
- Availability of audit resources.

OIG investigation strategies and initiatives add value to agency programs and operations by identifying and investigating allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse leading to criminal, civil, and administrative penalties and recoveries by focusing on results. The OIG has designed specific performance targets that aim to maximize effectiveness. Additionally, the OIG investigates allegations of irregularities or abuses in NRC and DNFSB programs and operations with special emphasis on those NRC and DNFSB activities that impact public health and safety. It is the OIG's goal that outcomes from these investigations will result in the long-term elimination of subsequent similar issues.



## **SECTION II: EXTERNAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT**

External factors are the potential obstacles to achieving goals that are outside of the OIG's influence. The last several years have seen an increase in environmental, political, business, and governmentwide factors that have a potential for delaying or disrupting both the NRC/DNFSB and the OIG from accomplishing their goals. For the OIG in particular, unforeseen incidents and issues sometimes give rise to new and unplanned work. For example, as a result of external allegations or requests over the past several years, the OIG conducted unplanned audits and high priority investigations. While the OIG prioritizes these requests as necessary, such unanticipated demands may take precedence over the goals and strategies presented in this Strategic Plan. However, it is the OIG's intent to minimize work that delays or disrupts achievement of the strategies and goals described in this plan.

Potential external factors foreseen for the OIG's work at the NRC and the DNFSB during FY 2024–2028 include:

- Unplanned statutory mandates;
- Changes in operating environments;
- Financial restrictions or reductions;
- New or unforeseen health pandemics;
- New or unforeseen natural disasters;
- Unpredicted security or terrorist incidents;
- New technological advances; and,
- International and domestic issues or events.

## **SECTION III: PROGRAM EVALUATIONS**

Program evaluations were not used to update this Strategic Plan. Rather, the IG Act, as amended, requires the periodic independent review of all audit and investigative programs within OIGs.

Accordingly, the OIG audit program undergoes an independent peer review conducted by a similar-sized federal OIG every 3 years to ensure that internal quality controls are in place and operating, and to determine whether established audit standards policies and procedures are being followed. Likewise, the OIG investigative program is subject to independent reviews. These reviews are also conducted by a similar-sized federal OIG every 3 years to determine whether adequate internal safeguards and management procedures exist to ensure that the

OIG's law enforcement powers are properly exercised. Both the audit and investigative programs continue to receive favorable reviews by these independent evaluators.

To provide additional assurances beyond the independent peer reviews, the OIG assigns internal staff to review its audit program annually and retains independent consultants to review the investigative program in peer review interim years to ensure that the programs are operating in accordance with applicable standards, safeguards, and procedures.

## **APPENDIX: PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR THE NRC, THE DNFSB, AND THE OIG HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIC GOALS**

### *NRC Strategic Goal 1: Safety*

*Strengthen the NRC's effort to protect public health and safety, and the environment.*

- Percentage of OIG audit products and activities that cause the agency to take corrective action to improve agency safety programs; ratify adherence to agency policies, procedures, or requirements; or, identify real dollar savings or reduced regulatory burden (i.e., high impact);
- Percentage of audit recommendations agreed to by the agency;
- Percentage of final agency actions taken within 2 years on audit recommendations;
- Percentage of OIG investigative products and activities that identify opportunities for improvements to agency safety programs; ratify adherence to policies/procedures; or confirm or disprove allegations of wrongdoing (e.g., high impact);
- Percentage of agency actions taken in response to investigative reports;
- Percentage of cases completed within 18 months;
- Percentage of closed investigations referred to the Department of Justice (DOJ) or other relevant authorities; and,
- Percentage of closed investigations resulting in indictments, convictions, civil suits or settlements, judgments, administrative actions, monetary results, or IG clearance letters.

### *NRC Strategic Goal 2: Security*

*Strengthen the NRC's effort to address evolving security threats.*

- Percentage of OIG audit products and activities that cause the agency to take corrective action to improve agency security programs; ratify adherence to agency policies, procedures, or requirements; or, identify real dollar savings or reduced regulatory burden (high impact);
- Percentage of audit recommendations agreed to by the agency;
- Percentage of final agency actions taken within 2 years on audit recommendations;

- Percentage of OIG investigative products and activities that identify opportunities for improvements to agency security programs; ratify adherence to policies/procedures; or, confirm or disprove allegations of wrongdoing (e.g., high impact);
- Percentage of agency actions taken in response to investigative reports;
- Percentage of cases completed within 18 months;
- Percentage of closed investigations referred to the DOJ or other relevant authorities; and,
- Percentage of closed investigations resulting in indictments, convictions, civil suits or settlements, judgments, administrative actions, monetary results, or IG clearance letters.

### *NRC Strategic Goal 3: Corporate Support*

*Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the NRC manages and exercises stewardship over its resources.*

- Percentage of OIG audit products and activities that cause the agency to take corrective action to improve agency corporate management programs; ratify adherence to agency policies, procedures, or requirements; or, identify real dollar savings or reduced regulatory burden (i.e., high impact);
- Percentage of audit recommendations agreed to by the agency;
- Percentage of final agency actions taken within 2 years on audit recommendations;
- Percentage of OIG investigative products and activities that identify opportunities for improvements to agency corporate management programs; ratify adherence to policies/procedures; or, confirm or disprove allegations of wrongdoing (e.g., high impact);
- Percentage of agency actions taken in response to investigative reports;
- Percentage of cases completed within 18 months;
- Percentage of closed investigations referred to the DOJ or other relevant authorities; and,
- Percentage of closed investigations resulting in indictments, convictions, civil suits or settlements, judgments, administrative actions, monetary results, or IG clearance letters.

### *DNFSB Strategic Goal 1: Safety*

*Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to oversee the safe operation of the DOE's defense nuclear facilities.*

### *DNFSB Strategic Goal 2: Security*

*Strengthen the DNFSB's efforts to address evolving security threats.*

### *DNFSB Strategic Goal 3: Corporate Support*

*Increase the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the DNFSB manages and exercises stewardship over its resources.*

- Percentage of OIG audit products and activities that cause the agency to take corrective action to improve agency safety, security, or corporate management programs; ratify adherence to agency policies, procedures, or requirements; or, identify real dollar savings or reduced regulatory burden (i.e., high impact);
- Percentage of audit recommendations agreed to by the agency;
- Percentage of final agency actions taken within 2 years on audit recommendations;
- Percentage of OIG investigative products and activities that identify opportunities for improvements to agency safety, security, or corporate management programs; ratify adherence to policies/procedures; or, confirm or disprove allegations of wrongdoing (e.g., high impact);
- Percentage of agency actions taken in response to investigative reports; and,
- Percentage of cases completed within 18 months.

### *OIG Human Capital Strategic Goal*

*Maintain support for a workforce that is skilled, collaborative, and engaged in high-impact audit, investigative, and other activities for the Office of the Inspector General.<sup>3</sup>*

- Percentage of employees with approved individual training/development plans;
- Percentage of audits and investigations that involve collaboration between the two entities; and,
- Percentage of OIG employee Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey responses that reflect a positive work-life balance.

<sup>3</sup> No additional measures are proposed to assess high-impact activities or alignment of work with resources as indicators are already reflected in safety, security, and corporate support measures.



**Office of the Inspector General  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2024-2028**

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After hours, please leave a message**