



OFFICE OF
**INSPECTOR
GENERAL**
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

HIGHLIGHTS

August 8, 2012

Benchmarking Sustainability Contracting Practices

Report Number CA-MA-12-002

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Postal Service's Supply Management organization has defined its sustainability goals in the *Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan*. The Postal Service states that its mission is to build socially responsible and sustainable supply chains and defines its community and environmental responsibility as focusing on green, sustainable, and lean supply chains. To accomplish this mission, Supply Management will focus on refining policies, practices, and contract requirements to include sustainable attributes and business practices.

Our objective was to identify best practices from other *Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)*-exempt federal agencies to improve the Postal Service's supply management purchasing policies and processes related to sustainability.

WHAT THE OIG FOUND:

The Postal Service is generally comparable with other FAR-exempt agencies in enhancing its sustainability efforts for contracting policies and practices. The Postal Service has established procurement policies addressing sustainability and has proactively set performance goals related to sustainability. The agencies we benchmarked are at various levels of incorporating sustainability in their supply management process. The

Postal Service is making strides to achieve its goal of incorporating sustainability efforts and improvements to its purchasing processes. We identified some innovative sustainability practices at other agencies related to achieving sustainability goals, policies and clauses, and training that the Postal Service should consider as it moves forward in achieving its supply management sustainability goals.

WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:

We recommended that management, as part of their continued sustainability efforts, develop sustainability contract clauses and use, as guidance, those clauses provided by benchmarked agencies that are consistent with the Postal Service's sustainability goals. Training should be provided to contracting officials and relevant business partners, once the clauses are implemented.