

IG Eagle Look

You Can Improve Acquisition Processes At No Cost to Your Program

COL. ANTHONY R. JOHNSON, U.S. AIR FORCE
RETHA A. SHERIDAN • MELISSA C. STRATTON

Should you get excited about an Inspector General (IG) Eagle Look? Yes! An IG Eagle Look allows you the opportunity to influence future Air Force policies and processes. Formerly known as a Management Review, an Eagle Look is a fact-based management review, conducted by trained inspectors who evaluate Air Force-wide processes and provide senior Air Force leaders recommendations for improvement.

What is AFIA All About?

When we arrived at the Air Force Inspection Agency, Acquisition Inspection Directorate, Kirtland AFB, N.M. — one of us last year, and the other two about nine years ago — each of us initially knew little about the organization. And certainly not enough to feel confident in our understanding of what AFIA is, what AFIA does, and how AFIA accomplishes its mission. Now that we have come to understand AFIA's role and its importance to the Air Force acquisition community, we believe that sharing that knowledge is not only an opportunity but an imperative.

In this article, we focus on AFIA's organizational mission, a description of associated acquisition assessment processes, and AFIA's overall role in promoting acquisition reform and all it embodies throughout the Air Force.

Inspections and Eagle Looks

The mission of The Inspector General is to independently assess the readiness, discipline, and efficiency of the Air Force.

Our mission at AFIA is to provide Air Force leaders with independent and objective assessments to improve Air Force operations and support (Figure 1). AFIA is the *only* IG organization chartered to provide Air Force-wide systemic reviews of policies and processes. For process owners and stakeholders, we address issues requested by senior Air Force leaders. To ensure our reviews remain objective, factual, and professional, we aggressively pursue three basic tenets highlighted by The Inspector General:

- **Identity** — Ensure our customers know who we are and how we operate.
- **Credibility** — Ensure we base our conclusions and recommendations on factual information and sound analysis.
- **Relevancy** — Ensure the subjects we review are significant to the Air Force.

The Acquisition Inspection Directorate's mission is to provide independent assessments (Eagle Looks) of acquisition and sustainment processes for senior Air Force acquisition leaders. As such, AFIA conducts reviews throughout the world for a variety of customers, covering a broad range of issues



Johnson is the Chief, Systems Inspection, Headquarters, Air Force Inspection Agency, Acquisition Inspection Directorate (AFIA/AI), Kirtland AFB, N.M. He is a graduate of PMC 92-2, DSMC. *Sheridan* is the Administrative Officer and *Stratton* the Editorial Assistant, AFIA/AI.

across the total acquisition life cycle (from requirements through sustainment to disposal).

A typical acquisition Eagle Look will take about four and a half months from the time we begin studying a subject until we outbrief senior Air Force leadership with our results. We conduct our Eagle Looks on a two-cycle schedule, usually accomplishing three per cycle or six per year.

Topic Selection

Topics originate from a variety of sources. The Inspector General and AFIA solicit topics through Air Force-wide topic calls during August and February. Although anyone can submit topics at anytime, The Inspector General can also direct topics. (The AFIA Web site at <http://www-afia.saia.af.mil> includes a description of the format [shown on this page] and instructions on how to submit a topic for consideration.) After validation, topics are presented to senior Air Force leaders in January and July, who prioritize and forward them to The Inspector General for approval. Topics remaining from their meetings that were not reviewed during inspection cycles, as well as any new topics received, are then reprioritized at the next meeting.

AFIA compares and deconflicts its topics with representatives of several organizations. Though not all-inclusive, a typical list follows:

- Air Force Audit Agency
- Air Force Logistics Management Agency
- Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command Inspector General
- Army Materiel Command
- Defense Logistics Agency
- Department of Defense Inspector General
- General Accounting Office
- Other Service Inspector General organizations and audit agencies.

Scope

The first step of the Eagle Look process begins by discussing the topic with stakeholders and process owners (Figure 2). This establishes the focus or scope of

FORMAT FOR EAGLE LOOK TOPIC PROPOSAL

TOPIC TITLE
Title, process, or program to be assessed.

PURPOSE
State specific result that the effort should address, what question(s) does the process/program owner want answered?

BACKGROUND
Give a brief history of the issue and Air Force leaderships' interest in AFIA conducting this review. Include the results of initial research (if any), other staff work, and any metrics or other indicators that help describe the background and frame the issue. If this issue has been previously assessed by AFIA, Air Force Audit Agency, the General Accounting Office, or any other agency, please identify the agency and the date.

SCOPE
The parameters of the area to be assessed.

FOCUS
Where should the review focus its look?

Breadth
Describe the breadth of the problem in terms of how far across the Air Force the topic applies. To what depth should the review go? Is the topic DoD-wide or major command-specific? Is it cross functional or functionally specific? Please be specific.

Methodology
Is there a specific methodology recommended for gathering topic information?
Are there any specific boundaries that apply to the conduct of the review?

RATIONALE

Significance
Describe the seriousness of the problem or the size of the issue. If possible, quantify it in dollars, personnel, manhours, percentages, etc. Again, please be specific.

Timing
State when you need the final report and the associated rationale.

POINT OF CONTACT
Provide action officer's name, office symbol, DSN, and E-mail address.

FIGURE 1. **Where AFIA "Fits" in the Inspector General (IG) System**

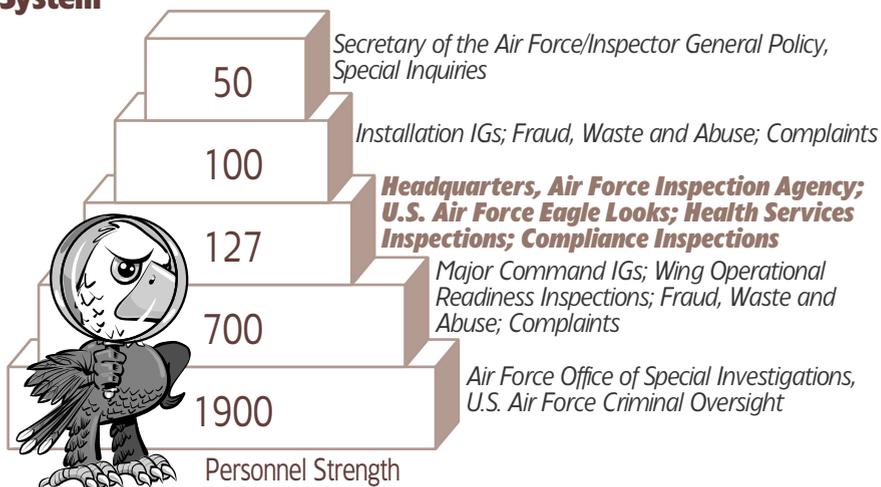
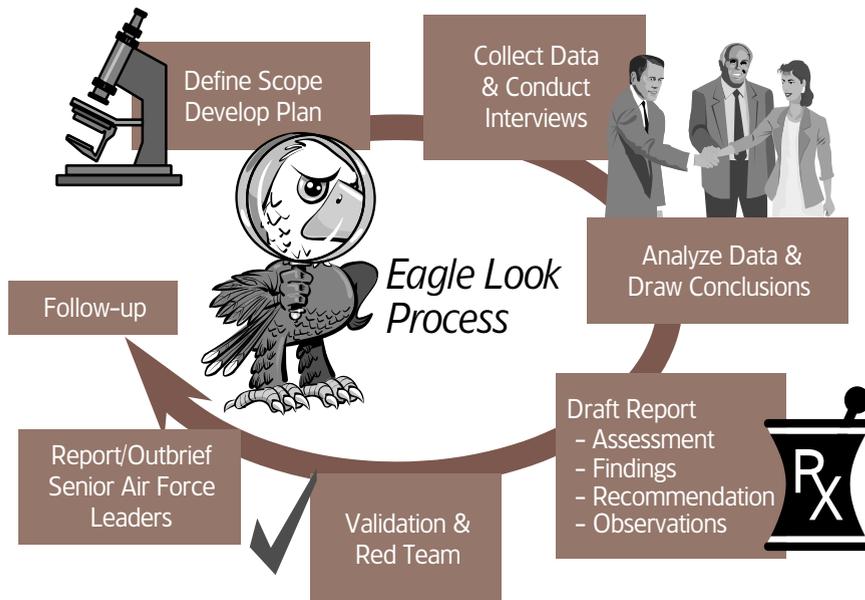


FIGURE 2. **Eagle Look Process**



the review and determines how the team will conduct their data gathering. Determining the scope also entails initial discussions on what type of follow-up activities would be appropriate for the review. Discussions on follow-up continue throughout the review and are finalized with stakeholder concurrence at the end of the review.

Collect and Analyze Data

Our goal is to obtain facts as well as candid opinions on the process under review, while minimizing the amount of time that we ask of an organization. For that reason, we generally do not distribute questions before our visits to avoid staffed responses and minimize advance preparations. We give people an opportunity to express *their* ideas on how to remove barriers, improve processes, and better perform their jobs. (Note that information referenced in an Eagle Look report is not attributed to a specific person, program or agency. We typically report, "Five of 13 organizations interviewed said ..." rather than, "Captain Smith from XX Wing at Anywhere AFB said." This complements our policy of nonattribution and provides all interviewees anonymity. Specific individuals, programs, or organizations are only mentioned if we believe their activities qualify as a best practice other organizations may want to consider emulating.)

After we collect and analyze the data, we write the draft report. Interviewees and a select group of subject matter experts, referred to as the "Red Team," representing the process owner(s) validate the report. Once we brief senior leadership and publish the report, the Eagle Look process is considered complete. AFIA periodically follows up with process owners on the status of actions to address the Findings and Recommendations in the Eagle Look report.

Impact of recent Eagle Looks includes changes to doctrine and policy; additional training and education opportunities; and increased efficiencies to standard practices. Some of the newly released *Lightning Bolts 99* are attributable to AFIA reviews. The recommendations derived from these reviews were the result of personnel, at all levels, influencing future Air Force and, sometimes, Department of Defense processes and policies

What Have We Been Doing Lately?

We recently reviewed such acquisition initiatives as:

- Chief Information Officer Function
- Program Management Administration Funding
- Common Avionics System Management

- Human Systems Integration in Air Force Acquisition
- Test and Evaluation Software-Intensive Systems
- Contractor Support and Essential Services During Wartime and Operational Contingencies
- Commercial Aircraft Industry Best Practices
- Commercial and Non-Developmental Item Aircraft
- Acquisition Reform
- Lean Logistics
- Integrated Weapon System Management
- Aging Weapon Systems
- Operations and Support Cost Estimating

We can assess areas for improvement and share best practices, at *no cost* to your program. The goal is to build a consensus with the stakeholders to implement useful, actionable recommendations. Moreover, we offer a timely, concise, objective, and independent assessment of Air Force-level systemic processes. So again, to answer the question "Should you get excited about an IG Eagle Look?" *Of course!*

Editor's Note: For a complete listing and synopsis of AFIA/AI's assessments since 1995, visit their Web site at <http://www-afia.saia.af.mil>. The authors welcome questions or comments. Call, write, or send an E-mail to:

Col. Anthony R. Johnson, U.S. Air Force, Chief, Systems Inspection
(505) 846-1727;
johnsona@kafb.saia.af.mil

Retha A. Sheridan
Administrative Officer
(505) 846-1681;
sheridar@kafb.saia.af.mil

Melissa C. Stratton
Editorial Assistant
(505) 846-1672;
strattom@kafb.saia.af.mil

Mailing address:
HQ AFIA/AI
9700 G AVENUE SE, SUITE 380
KIRTLAND AFB NM 87117-5670