



Memorandum

Date: October 1, 2020

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | Review of FAA's NAS Voice System |
Project No. 20A3005A000
Federal Aviation Administration

From: Matthew E. Hampton 
Assistant Inspector General for Aviation Audits

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation, Federal Aviation Administration

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is modernizing its National Airspace System (NAS) through its Next Generation Air Transportation System. Included in this modernization effort is a plan to replace analog voice switches¹ with digital technology. These changes will allow greater flexibility in maintaining communication continuity in the event of a system failure at an air traffic control facility and facilitate integration of unmanned aircraft systems into the NAS. In 2014, FAA extended a contract valued at \$294 million for the NAS Voice System (NVS) program to achieve these changes.² However, in December 2018, FAA terminated the NVS contract, and the Agency is currently developing a new voice communication program—the Voice Communication System (VCS)

Because of FAA's termination of this contract, the ranking members of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Aviation have asked us to assess certain issues related to NVS and VCS. Accordingly, we are initiating this audit. Our audit objectives will be to assess (1) NVS program costs, expected benefits, and FAA's reasons for the contract termination, and (2) the information on NVS development that the program provided to FAA management and Congress. The request also asks us to review FAA's development of VCS. We will address VCS in a separate audit.

We plan to begin the audit this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our audit work at FAA

¹ These voice switches are used for communication among air traffic controllers at air traffic control facilities and between controllers and aircraft.

² In 2012, FAA awarded an initial contract for NVS totaling \$63 million and then extended the contract in 2014 for an additional \$231 million.

Headquarters and the William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic City, NJ. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-1987, or Jaydeep Borwankar, Program Director, at 202-493-0970.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE