

- Improving the reporting to the American public on how the Department spends their tax dollars is a priority goal for the Department. The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act) requires agency financial and payment information to be reported to the public using USASpending.gov in accordance with Government-wide financial data standards. As required under the Act, on April 30, 2017, the Department made its first submission of the requisite data files on Department spending for the second quarter of FY 2017 to the DATA Act Broker.
- The Department disagrees with OIG's assertion that the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) set its fees based on inaccurate data and should remit to the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) unobligated balances that exceed the carry forward threshold and could be put to better use for FY 2017.
 - Consular fees were established in accordance with statutory and regulatory authorities and, therefore, there is no requirement to remit the funds to the Treasury. Furthermore, it is unclear what legal authority the Department would rely on to return fees to the Treasury, which Congress has explicitly authorized the Department to retain until expended.
 - Consular fee setting is a multi-year process subject to changes in rulemaking, which is why consular fees are typically updated no more than every two years. Non-Immigrant Visa (NIV) demand is difficult to forecast in out-years because the global economy is unpredictable and NIV demand cannot be controlled by CA. The fees were set using a cost model from 2012 and the expenditures were expended in 2014.
- In FY 2017, the Department continued efforts to improve the reliability, accessibility, and standardization of foreign assistance data.
 - Starting with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), CGFS and INL worked together to develop and implement the Regional Financial Management System (RFMS) – INL bilateral processing model. This new process accounts and reports all bilateral agreement project funded activity from the project bulk obligation through to expenditures. As part of this upgrade, INL bilateral related procurement transactions automatically integrate the commitment and obligation transactions into RFMS, thereby improving the accuracy of data and eliminating the duplicate entry of thousands of transactions. In addition, INL has established new data structures within the Department's Global Financial Management System that provides new reporting capabilities for tracking and reporting on INL regional program funds by country and project. Building on these new reporting capabilities, CGFS and INL have partnered to implement other reporting improvements leveraging the Global Business Intelligence platform providing the ability to explore, visualize, and report on post-specific INL data.
 - CGFS has also partnered with Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F) to implement an extract on foreign assistance spending that corresponds with the data dictionary developed by the Foreign Assistance Data Review working group. This will be a multi-phased effort to provide F, and ultimately the taxpayer via public reporting such as ForeignAssistance.gov, with accurate foreign assistance spending totals, and supporting details on procurements, interagency agreements, grants, and contributions. The first extract is scheduled for February 2018 for data for the first quarter of FY 2018.