



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Pollution Prevention (P2) Program was rated moderately effective by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Fiscal Year 2006, receiving the third highest rating awarded to EPA programs using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). We sought to verify the accuracy of P2 Program data provided for the PART assessment and determine what actions have been taken to address the recommendations in the PART program improvement plan.

Background

The Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 established policy for controlling industrial pollution at its source. EPA uses the P2 Program to facilitate adoption of source reduction techniques by businesses, EPA, and other federal agencies. EPA uses the P2 Program to accomplish this. PART is a diagnostic tool designed to assess the management and performance of federal programs.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2009/20090128-09-P-0088.pdf

Measuring and Reporting Performance Results for the Pollution Prevention Program Need Improvement

What We Found

The P2 Program's data provided in response to the OMB PART assessment generally addressed the PART questions and supported the moderately effective rating received. However, we noted several weaknesses:

- The P2 Program's Fiscal Year 2006 PART performance measures were not designed to report on the program's impacts to human health and the environment. P2 Program managers believed that reductions in discharges and emissions of pollutants represent the best measures that can be supported by data obtainable on a program-wide basis and acknowledge that additional outcome measures are needed to assess impacts on human health and the environment associated with hazardous materials reductions.
- The P2 Program's verification and validation procedures did not ensure the accuracy of performance data. P2 program managers had no assurance that performance results data obtained from voluntary partnerships with industry and other organizations were accurate. The Program's Fiscal Year 2006 performance results were not reported consistently and contain inaccuracies. Strengthening data controls would provide P2 managers with improved program performance data.
- While the P2 Program has completed several interim PART follow-up actions, some of its actions to address its program improvement plan have been slow. In addition, the plan did not address all deficiencies identified in the PART assessment.

What We Recommend

We recommend that EPA continue efforts to develop performance indicators that measure impacts on human health and the environment; require the development of a P2 Division Quality Assurance Project Plan for data collection and reporting; and develop a program improvement plan to address all deficiencies identified in the PART assessment. EPA concurred with our recommendations and has developed reasonable completion dates for each recommendation.