



At a Glance

Why We Did This Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General conducted this audit to determine whether the Border 2020: U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program (Border 2020 Program) management controls are sufficient to verify that program activities are completed, are linked to the accomplishment of program objectives, and demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's environmental and public health goals and objectives.

The Border 2020 Program is an eight-year binational effort between the United States and Mexico designed to "protect the environment and public health in the U.S.-Mexico Border region." The Border 2020 Program aims to improve environmental conditions in underserved communities and sensitive populations by fulfilling its five goals and associated objectives. The program's objectives and goals are implemented by the environmental authorities of the United States and Mexico.

This report addresses the following:

- *Operating efficiently and effectively.*
- *Partnering with states and other stakeholders.*

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List of [OIG reports](#).

Management Controls Needed to Verify and Report Border 2020 Program Accomplishments

What We Found

The EPA's implementation of the Border 2020 Program management controls is not sufficient to verify that the EPA Border 2020 Program activities are completed, are linked to the accomplishment of program objectives, and demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's environmental and public health goals and objectives. Although a varied set of documents has been developed to share the contributions of individual projects to Border 2020 Program goals and objectives, we found that essential documentation on Border 2020 Program activities was frequently unreliable.

Border 2020 Program successes in improving environmental conditions and public health cannot be fully known or documented without stronger management controls.

According to the EPA, Border 2020 Program reports should provide information on the status and trends of environmental quality in the U.S.-Mexico border region using the EPA-determined output-based indicators. However, we found that the most recent indicator report was developed in 2016 and was only published as an interim report. The Border 2020 Program is not planning to create any additional reports on environmental quality at the border because it lacks sufficient resources.

The EPA's Strategic Plan and the Border 2020 Program Communications Strategy emphasize sharing information about Border 2020 Program-funded products, such as reports, studies, videos, and other tools, or environmental outcomes with its external stakeholders and the public. Sharing these products help track the program's actions and accomplishments. We found that the EPA has not shared many of these products and results from program-funded projects; thus, the status of the Border 2020 Program's activities is neither transparent nor accessible.

Without sufficient management controls for the Border 2020 Program, the EPA cannot verify whether the program is achieving its intended purpose to protect the human health and environment as it relates to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the EPA establish and implement management controls to (1) increase the reliability of action plans by standardizing the format and to determine how and when Policy Forums action plans will be developed; (2) develop performance measures; (3) share subgrantee fact sheets; and (4) provide stakeholder and public access to funded products such as studies, reports, and videos. The Agency agreed with our recommendations and provided acceptable corrective actions.