



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

The objective of this evaluation was to determine how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ensures that environmental and human health goals are achieved through partnerships with international entities. We focused on (1) the statutory authority by which the EPA awards international grants, (2) anticipated environmental outcomes of foreign grants, and (3) tools in place to manage outcomes and measures for grants. We focused on activities of the EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA), which awards grants to support international activities.

This report addresses the following EPA Themes:

- *Addressing climate change and improving air quality.*
- *Taking action on toxics and chemical safety.*
- *Working toward a sustainable future.*

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

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2013/20130909-13-P-0386.pdf

EPA's International Program Office Needs Improved Strategic Planning Guidance

What We Found

The EPA has the statutory authority to conduct international activities and has several tools in place to help ensure that its partnerships with international entities achieve environmental and human health goals. However, the EPA's OITA needs additional strategic planning guidance to better manage anticipated environmental outcomes of foreign grants.

The EPA has the legal authority to award international and foreign grants under: (1) specific international grant authorities, and (2) research and demonstration authorities that are supplemented by the National Environmental Policy Act. Further, the EPA uses a combination of grants management tools, such as the Integrated Grants Management System and project officers, to help manage outcomes and measures.

Although OITA collects environmental outcome/output information, OITA has not incorporated the information into a comprehensive strategic planning document. Also, the allocation of resources for planned activities is not described within OITA's current strategic planning documents. OITA's strategic planning guidance needs to be updated to provide greater accountability and justification for the international activities and grants that OITA manages. This would help assure that OITA's grants align with the EPA's goals of advancing public health and environmental improvement and that EPA resources are properly allocated.

Recommendations and Planned Corrective Actions

We recommend that the assistant administrator for OITA develop strategic planning guidance to document how OITA links its achieved outcomes for international and foreign grant activities to its strategic plan goals, the process used by OITA to allocate resources for its international and foreign grant activities, and how OITA's international and foreign grant activities align with the EPA's overall goals.

The agency concurred with our findings and recommendation. The agency provided corrective actions and an estimated completion date that meet the intent of the recommendation. The recommendation is resolved and open with corrective actions ongoing. No further response to this report is required.