



# At a Glance

## Why We Did This Project

We conducted this audit to accomplish two objectives:

- Identify the controls put in place by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use during the fiscal year 2017 Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards (PGCCA) to prevent the use of unverified, self-reported results for agency reporting purposes.
- Assess the EPA's actions to address recommendations in Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report No. [15-P-0279](#), *EPA's Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards Program Lacks Adequate Support and Transparency and Should Be Assessed for Continuation*, issued September 2015.

The PGCCA Program is sponsored by the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention to promote the environmental and economic benefits of developing and using green chemistry by recognizing industry innovations.

### This report addresses the following:

- *Operating efficiently and effectively.*

Send all inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or visit [www.epa.gov/oig](http://www.epa.gov/oig).

Listing of [OIG reports](#).

## ***EPA Completed OIG Recommendations for the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards Program but Lacks Controls over Use of Unverified Results***

### What We Found

In 2015, we reported that award results submitted to the EPA's Pollution Prevention Program from PGCCA recipients were not adequately supported or transparent. Specifically, we found that PGCCA results were self-reported by award recipients, were not verified or validated by the agency, and were included as metrics in agency reports detailing the Pollution Prevention Program's performance and goals.

**The EPA discontinued the use of unverified PGCCA results in agency performance metrics, but a lack of documented controls presents risk that these data may be used in the future.**

The OIG's 2015 report contained nine recommendations. During this current audit, we verified that the EPA completed the agreed-upon corrective actions for seven of these recommendations. The remaining two recommendations were not considered in this current audit; the EPA completed one before we issued our 2015 report, and the EPA and OIG later agreed that the other recommendation was not applicable.

By completing these outstanding recommendations, the EPA discontinued the use of unverified PGCCA results in its Pollution Prevention Program performance metrics, developed a program logic model that communicates how PGCCA contribute to Pollution Prevention Program goals, and established internal metrics that track program outputs and provide future direction for the PGCCA Program. However, we found that the EPA lacked documented internal controls to prevent the use of PGCCA results in agency performance metrics. Without documented controls, there is a risk that unverified PGCCA results could be used as part of future agency metrics (for example, if and when new staff become involved with the PGCCA Program).

We also found that the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention disagreed with the OIG about the requirements regarding supporting documentation for completed corrective actions.

### Recommendation and Planned Agency Corrective Action

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention establish and document internal controls to prevent the use of PGCCA results in Pollution Prevention Program performance metrics. The EPA agreed with our recommendation and provided an acceptable planned corrective action and completion date.