



At a Glance

What Are Management Challenges?

According to the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRA stands for Government Performance and Results Act), “major management challenges”—hereafter referred to as *top management challenges*—are programs or management functions within or across agencies that have greater vulnerability to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, and where a failure to perform well could seriously affect the ability of an agency or the federal government to achieve its mission or goals.

Per the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000, each fiscal year the Office of Inspector General identifies top management challenges for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In each of our audit and evaluation reports, we will note in the “At a Glance” page, as well as on the first page of the report, which management challenges the report addresses, if applicable.

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List of [OIG reports](#).

EPA’s FYs 2020–2021 Top Management Challenges

What We Found

Identifying and resolving top management challenges is essential to the EPA’s protection of human health and the environment.

The EPA faces significant challenges in accomplishing its mission in FYs 2020 and 2021, and perhaps beyond. The challenges that we previously identified in the FY 2019 management challenges report (Report No. [19-N-0235](#), issued July 15, 2019) remain, but new circumstances have created additional challenges that may prevent the Agency from fulfilling its responsibilities and meeting its goals. Our work, the work of the U.S. Government Accountability Office, and Agency documents and statements point to eight categories of challenges:

- 1. Maintaining Operations During Pandemic and Natural Disaster Responses.** The EPA needs to maintain human health and environmental protections, business operations, and employee safety during the coronavirus pandemic and future natural disasters.
- 2. Complying with Key Internal Control Requirements.** The EPA faces the following overarching challenges in implementing and operating internal controls that establish and maintain an effective work environment:
 - a. Developing **internal control risk assessments**.
 - b. Ensuring **quality data**.
 - c. Creating effective operational **policies and procedures**.
- 3. Overseeing States, Territories, and Tribes Responsible for Implementing EPA Programs.** The EPA faces a challenge in improving its oversight of and the results received from state, territory, and tribal environmental programs.
- 4. Improving Workforce/Workload Analyses to Accomplish EPA’s Mission Efficiently and Effectively.** The EPA needs ongoing and comprehensive workload analyses to adequately respond to and prepare for future staffing gaps and shortages in essential positions.
- 5. Enhancing Information Technology Security to Combat Cyberthreats.** Without enhanced information technology security, the EPA remains vulnerable to existing and emerging cyberthreats.
- 6. Communicating Risks to Allow the Public to Make Informed Decisions About Its Health and the Environment.** The EPA needs to provide individuals and communities with sufficient information to make informed decisions to protect their health and the environment.
- 7. Fulfilling Mandated Reporting Requirements.** The EPA must meet its congressionally mandated report requirements.
- 8. Integrating and Leading Environmental Justice Across the Agency and Government.** The EPA needs to enhance its consideration of environmental justice across programs and regions and provide leadership in this area.