



At a Glance

Why We Did This Evaluation

We conducted this evaluation to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's laboratory consolidation efforts in Athens, Georgia; Corvallis, Oregon; and Ann Arbor, Michigan, are within cost and on schedule.

Based on its March 2015 *Synthesis Report of the US EPA Laboratory Enterprise Evaluation*, the EPA concluded that it could realize approximately \$409 million in avoided costs and savings over 30 years. The Synthesis Report included actions and options regarding which laboratory facilities to consolidate or co-locate. As the Agency's central planner and coordinator, the Office of Mission Support's Real Property Services Division is responsible for the oversight of laboratory consolidation efforts.

This evaluation addresses the following:

- *Operating efficiently and effectively.*

This evaluation addresses a top EPA **management challenge**:

- *Complying with key internal control requirements (data quality).*

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List of [OIG reports](#).

EPA Needs to Improve Its Planning and Management of Laboratory Consolidation Efforts

What We Found

The EPA needs to improve how it plans and manages its laboratory consolidation efforts. For the three projects we reviewed, we found that the Office of Mission Support did not:

- Develop a master plan to guide the Ann Arbor laboratory consolidation effort. As of February 2020, the Agency had expended over \$2 million for this project without having a master plan.
- Document key decisions related to laboratory consolidation activities.

As a result, the Agency did not have documentation explaining why projects were delayed or why it incurred over \$8 million in cost overruns for the Corvallis and Athens laboratory consolidation efforts.

The development and implementation of procedures and detailed requirements for managing laboratory consolidation efforts would reduce the risk of excessive cost overruns and delays. Better management of the projects could also help the EPA meet its goal of reducing the number of leases and cost of facility management, which would allow the Agency to direct resources to core environmental work.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the assistant administrator for Mission Support develop and implement procedures that include detailed requirements for planning and managing laboratory consolidation efforts. These requirements should address developing master plans and program requirements, tracking and updating cost and schedule estimates, and maintaining decisional documentation.

The EPA agreed with our recommendation. The recommendation is resolved with corrective action pending,

Without improved management controls, the EPA risks continued cost overruns and delays in its laboratory consolidation efforts. Overruns and delays will reduce the Agency's potential avoided costs and savings of approximately \$409 million over 30 years.