



At a Glance

Why We Did This Evaluation

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Inspector General conducted this evaluation to determine whether management controls within the EPA's Special Local Needs registration program effectively promote the EPA's goals of risk reduction and pollution prevention, as stated in its strategic plan. The EPA's SLN program—which is managed by the Office of Pesticide Programs, or OPP—allows states to register pesticides to address existing or imminent pest problems within a state for which an appropriate federally registered pesticide product is not available. Most SLN registrations are issued for pesticide products that the EPA has registered but that are unapproved for a specific crop or use. The EPA reviews SLN applications to determine whether they are protective of human health and the environment.

This evaluation addresses the following:

- *Ensuring the safety of chemicals.*

This evaluation addresses top EPA management challenges:

- *Complying with key internal control requirements (policies and procedures).*
- *Overseeing states implementing EPA programs.*

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EPA Is at Risk of Not Achieving Special Local Needs Program Goals for Pesticides

What We Found

The SLN program lacks three components that would improve its effectiveness: a comprehensive system of management controls to achieve the Agency's goals of risk reduction and pollution prevention, a publicly accessible database, and a method of effective communication with program stakeholders. For example, without a public SLN database, stakeholders cannot access relevant information for their states, and states cannot use examples from other states to make better decisions about when to grant an SLN registration.

Without a sufficient management-control system and other improvements, the SLN program will not effectively promote risk reduction and pollution prevention.

Specifically, we found that the OPP has not developed performance measures that would demonstrate the progress or effectiveness of the SLN program and the OPP does not collect data to demonstrate the risk reduction and pollution prevention results of the program. In addition, the OPP does not have standard operating procedures in place to oversee the implementation of the program. An SLN registration is effective as soon as the state approves the application unless the EPA disapproves it. Without a consistent and effective application review process, human health and the environment may be at risk. Further, we determined that the OPP needs detailed guidance to assist states in developing consistent SLN registration applications.

We also found that the OPP does not have an SLN database that would allow state stakeholders to review the approved SLN registrations and labels of other states while those stakeholders prepare their own applications. Finally, we found that the OPP does not consistently communicate to its stakeholders.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the assistant administrator for Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention develop management controls for reviewing SLN registrations; improve guidance to states for SLN registration submissions; make an SLN database available to the public that includes registration date, duration, and individual state SLN labels; develop performance measures and collect data to demonstrate risk-reduction and pollution-prevention outcomes; and inform states of the availability of presubmission consultative services.

The Agency agreed with our recommendations and provided acceptable corrective actions and estimated completion dates. The recommendations are resolved with corrective actions pending.