

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-13-661](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

According to DOD, corrosion can significantly affect the cost of equipment maintenance and expected service life of equipment. Corrosion affects military readiness by taking critical systems out of action and creating safety hazards. GAO was asked to review DOD's military-equipment corrosion-prevention and mitigation projects. In this report, GAO addressed the extent to which DOD has (1) ensured the submission of required reports for equipment-related corrosion projects; (2) collected the information needed to determine whether benefits and other measures have been achieved from equipment-related corrosion projects; (3) tracked the status of equipment-related corrosion projects; and (4) identified, shared, and incorporated lessons learned from equipment-related corrosion projects into future planning to prevent or mitigate corrosion. To conduct this work, GAO reviewed DOD policies and plans and met with DOD corrosion officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends four actions to improve the oversight of DOD's corrosion-prevention and control program. DOD concurred with two recommendations, partially concurred with one, and did not concur with one. DOD plans to develop a database to collect data and lessons learned on corrosion projects and to revise guidance on how to report the ROI for discontinued projects. DOD did not agree that guidance should be revised to ensure military departments consistently report projects' benefits. GAO maintains that this recommendation is warranted for project oversight.

View [GAO-13-661](#). For more information, contact Zina Merritt at (202) 512-5257 or [merrittz@gao.gov](mailto:merrittz@gao.gov).

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## DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

### DOD Should Enhance Oversight of Equipment-Related Corrosion Projects

## What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) has invested more than \$63 million in 88 projects in fiscal years 2005 through 2010 to demonstrate new technology or methods addressing equipment-related corrosion. DOD's Office of Corrosion Policy and Oversight (Corrosion Office) has collected a majority of required final and follow-on reports on the results of equipment-related corrosion projects and is taking steps to obtain outstanding reports. As of May 2013, GAO found project managers had submitted final reports for 55 of the 88 projects (about 63 percent) funded in fiscal years 2005 through 2010 and submitted follow-on reports for 27 of the 41 projects (about 66 percent) funded from 2005 through 2007.

DOD requires the military departments to collect and report to the Corrosion Office key information from equipment-related corrosion projects about new technologies or methods; however, DOD does not have complete information about the benefits of all projects. GAO found that the military departments inconsistently reported measures of achievement other than the return on investment (ROI), such as when outcomes prompted changes to military equipment specifications. Further, the military departments did not always collect required information needed to recompute the estimated ROI and were unable to determine whether projects had achieved their estimated ROI. Corrosion Office officials plan to revise guidance on how project managers should be reassessing the ROI. Without specific guidance to require that follow-on reports include details of measures of achievement other than ROI, the Corrosion Office will be missing the opportunity to know whether equipment-related corrosion projects have achieved outcomes to prevent corrosion.

DOD has taken steps to improve oversight of its equipment-related corrosion projects, such as revising its *DOD Corrosion Prevention and Mitigation Strategic Plan* to provide additional guidance on reporting requirements. However, DOD does not have a comprehensive overview of the status of all equipment-related corrosion projects. While the reports provide the status for each project, GAO found that the Corrosion Office does not consolidate information to monitor the status of all these projects, such as if a project has not transitioned to service use or has been discontinued. Further, GAO found that project managers vary in how they reported the ROI for discontinued projects. Without a mechanism to consolidate projects' status to facilitate monitoring and guidance for reporting ROIs for discontinued projects, the Corrosion Office and the military departments may not have timely information of whether the corrosion projects produced proven methods and products to prevent the corrosion of military equipment.

DOD has identified and incorporated lessons learned from equipment-related corrosion projects and shared some lessons with the corrosion community; however, DOD has no centralized and secure database or other source to share lessons from all project reports, including those with sensitive information. While DOD has begun to develop a database that would contain lessons learned on all projects, development is in the early stages, and DOD is unsure when it will be completed. Until a comprehensive, centralized, and secure database is developed that includes lessons learned from all completed projects, officials from DOD's corrosion community will not have full and complete information on lessons learned, including proven methods or products to prevent or mitigate corrosion of military equipment.