

Why GAO Did This Study

GAO has designated DOD's Support Infrastructure Management as a high-risk area in part due to challenges DOD faces in reducing excess infrastructure. DOD manages a global real property portfolio of over 557,000 facilities DOD estimates to be valued at about \$828 billion as of September 30, 2012. In September 2011, GAO found that DOD was limited in its ability to reduce excess inventory because OSD did not maintain accurate and complete data on the utilization of its facilities in its Real Property Assets Database.

House Report 113-102 mandated GAO to review DOD efforts to improve these data. This report examines the extent to which OSD has (1) improved the completeness and accuracy of facility-utilization data in its Real Property Assets Database and the military departments' use of data to identify consolidation opportunities, and (2) a strategic plan to manage DOD's real property efficiently and to facilitate the identification of unutilized and underutilized facilities. GAO analyzed OSD's real property data from fiscal years 2010 through 2013, visited 11 active DOD installations from the four services to reflect those with high numbers of buildings, and interviewed officials. While not generalizable, the interviews provided perspectives about facility utilization.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that OSD establish a strategic plan to identify unutilized and underutilized facilities. In written comments on a draft of the report, DOD concurred with the recommendation.

View [GAO-14-538](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov

DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE

DOD Needs to Improve Its Efforts to Identify Unutilized and Underutilized Facilities

What GAO Found

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has made some improvements, but OSD's utilization data continue to be incomplete and inaccurate; and data limitations affect the military departments' use of their databases to identify consolidation opportunities. GAO's analysis found that the percentage of total real property assets with a reported utilization rate in OSD's Real Property Assets Database increased from 46 to 53 percent over the past 4 fiscal years. OSD made some improvements in addressing inaccuracies in the utilization rates in its real property records, such as correcting records for those facilities reported with a utilization rate greater than 100 percent. The military departments use databases to a certain degree to identify opportunities to consolidate facilities, but primarily only in response to specific events, such as requests for space. Officials at all 11 installations GAO visited stated that inaccurate and incomplete data in the departments' databases limited opportunities to identify these opportunities. In September 2011, GAO recommended that the Department of Defense (DOD) develop and implement a methodology for calculating and recording utilization data, and modify processes to update and verify the accuracy of reported data. OSD partially concurred because it stated that it had some actions already underway to address the recommendation. However, at that time, OSD did not specify what actions it had undertaken. Moreover, the recommendation has not yet been fully implemented. Fully implementing GAO's recommendation would help provide reasonable assurance that the utilization data are complete and accurate and better position the department to use the databases to identify consolidation opportunities.

OSD does not have a strategic plan, with goals and metrics, to manage DOD's real property efficiently and facilitate identifying opportunities for consolidating unutilized or underutilized facilities. According to a DOD directive, it is DOD policy that DOD real property shall be managed to promote the most efficient and economic use of DOD real property assets, and in the most economical manner consistent with defense requirements. However, OSD officials stated that there is currently no OSD strategic plan to manage DOD's real property nor established department-wide goals, strategies to achieve the goals, or metrics to gauge progress for how it intends to manage its real property in the most efficient manner. Such goals could focus on correcting inaccurate and incomplete facility utilization data to provide better visibility on the status of facilities and to identify opportunities for consolidating unutilized or underutilized facilities and reducing operations and maintenance costs. GAO's prior work has shown that organizations need sound strategic planning to identify and achieve long-range goals and objectives. Without a strategic plan, it will be difficult for OSD to effectively manage its facilities and utilize them efficiently.