Why GAO Did This Study

This report provides GAO’s annual snapshot of how well NASA is planning and executing its major acquisition projects. In March 2015, GAO found that projects continued a general positive trend of limiting cost and schedule growth, maturing technologies, and stabilizing designs, but that NASA faced several challenges that could affect its ability to effectively manage its portfolio.

The explanatory statement of the House Committee on Appropriations accompanying the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 included a provision for GAO to prepare project status reports on selected large-scale NASA programs, projects, and activities. This is GAO’s eighth annual assessment of NASA’s major projects. This report describes (1) the cost and schedule performance of NASA’s portfolio of major projects, (2) the maturity of technologies and stability of project designs at key milestones, and (3) NASA’s progress in implementing initiatives to manage acquisition risk and potential challenges for project management and oversight. This report also includes assessments of NASA’s 18 major projects, each with a life-cycle cost of over $250 million. To conduct its review, GAO analyzed cost, schedule, technology maturity, design stability, and other data; reviewed monthly project status reports; and interviewed NASA officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this report, but in prior reports has made recommendations that NASA has not yet fully addressed. NASA generally agreed with GAO’s findings.

View GAO-16-309SP. For more information, contact Cristina Chaplain at (202) 512-4841 or chaplainc@gao.gov.