

Highlights of [GAO-12-619](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

According to DOD, the U.S. military's dependence on liquid fuel in countries like Afghanistan creates an enormous logistics burden that exposes forces to enemy attack and diverts operational resources from other mission areas to support delivery of this critical resource. In 2011, DOD consumed almost 5 billion gallons of fuel in military operations worldwide, at a cost of approximately \$17.3 billion. GAO was asked to (1) assess DOD's approach for fuel demand management, including at forward-deployed locations in Afghanistan, (2) determine the extent to which DOD has initiatives to promote fuel efficiency at forward-deployed locations in Afghanistan and efforts to coordinate and collaborate on such initiatives, and (3) assess efforts to measure the results of its fuel demand management initiatives and establish a baseline measure of fuel consumption in Afghanistan. To conduct this review, GAO analyzed DOD and service guidance and strategies related to fuel demand management and fuel demand management initiatives, visited locations in Afghanistan, and met with DOD officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD finalize and implement a systematic approach that includes establishing a mechanism to identify and track fuel demand management initiatives that have been fielded, or are in the research and development phase. DOD partially concurred with GAO's recommendation, citing ongoing efforts to identify and track initiatives. Until fully implemented, GAO is unable to assess whether these efforts fully address the recommendation.

View [GAO-12-619](#). For more information, contact Zina Merritt at (202) 512-5257 or [merrittz@gao.gov](mailto:merrittz@gao.gov).

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## DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

### Steps Taken to Better Manage Fuel Demand but Additional Information Sharing Mechanisms Are Needed

## What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) has taken steps to establish an approach for managing DOD's overall fuel demand, but is still developing comprehensive guidance to address fuel demand management, including at forward-deployed locations in countries such as Afghanistan. In 2009, GAO reported that DOD lacked (1) visibility and accountability for achieving fuel reduction, (2) incentives and a viable funding mechanism to invest in the implementation of fuel demand reduction projects, and (3) guidance and policies that addressed fuel demand at forward-deployed locations. In response to GAO recommendations, DOD has taken steps since 2009 to increase its visibility and accountability for fuel demand management at forward-deployed locations, including those located in Afghanistan. In addition, with an increased focus on fuel demand management, DOD has also provided funding and incentives to implement fuel demand management projects. Further, DOD has issued some guidance on fuel demand management at forward-deployed locations since 2009 and is developing more comprehensive guidance on how DOD will incorporate energy efficiency considerations into operations, planning, and training decisions for current military operations in Afghanistan and for future military operations. DOD's 2012 *Operational Energy Strategy Implementation Plan* acknowledges the need for additional comprehensive guidance and directs the Joint Staff and military departments to report, by the end of fiscal year 2012, on how operational energy considerations will be reflected in policy, doctrine, and professional military education. The Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 requires DOD to report to Congress annually on its progress in implementing its operational energy strategy. DOD has yet to submit its first report.

Multiple DOD organizations are developing initiatives to decrease fuel demand at forward-deployed locations, including in Afghanistan, and the department has worked to facilitate some coordination and collaboration among the services on fuel demand management efforts. However, it is still developing an approach to systematically identify and track all of the fuel demand management initiatives that have been fielded, or are in the research and development phase throughout DOD. GAO's prior work found that utilizing a mechanism such as a database can help organizations enhance their visibility and oversight of DOD programs. Until DOD finalizes its approach to systematically identify and track fuel demand management initiatives, it may be limited in its ability to foster collaboration, achieve efficiencies, and avoid unintended duplication or overlap of activities.

DOD has started to measure the results of some of the fuel demand management initiatives used in Afghanistan, but is still in the process of collecting and assessing comprehensive baseline data needed to measure current fuel consumption at forward-deployed locations. The Army and Marine Corps have begun collecting data on the amount of fuel consumed by their current assets in Afghanistan. Recognizing the need for additional information, DOD's 2012 *Implementation Plan* has tasked the services with developing and refining their fuel consumption baselines by mid-2012 and DOD has provided funding for this purpose. Once collected, these data should enhance DOD's planning, programming, and operational decisions and help DOD assess progress toward meeting its operational energy goals.