

Highlights of [GAO-06-574T](#), testimony before the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, Committee on Science, House of Representatives

**Why GAO Did This Study**

The health of our nation’s air transportation system is critical to our citizens and economy. However, the current approach to managing air transportation is becoming increasingly inefficient and operationally obsolete. In 2003, Congress created the Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) to coordinate the federal and nonfederal stakeholders necessary to plan and implement a transition from the current air transportation system to the “next generation air transportation system” (NGATS). JPDO, although housed within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), has seven partner agencies: the Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Defense, and Homeland Security; FAA; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. This testimony provides preliminary results from GAO’s ongoing study of the status of JPDO’s efforts. GAO provides information on (1) the extent to which JPDO is facilitating the federal interagency collaboration and aligning the human and financial resources needed to plan and implement the NGATS, (2) the actions taken by JPDO to adequately involve stakeholders in the planning process, and (3) the extent to which JPDO is conducting the technical planning needed to develop the NGATS.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-574T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-574T).

To view the full product, click on the link above. For more information, contact Dr. Gerald L. Dillingham, at (202) 512-2834 or [dillingham@gao.gov](mailto:dillingham@gao.gov).

**NEXT GENERATION AIR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

**Preliminary Analysis of the Joint Planning and Development Office’s Planning, Progress, and Challenges**

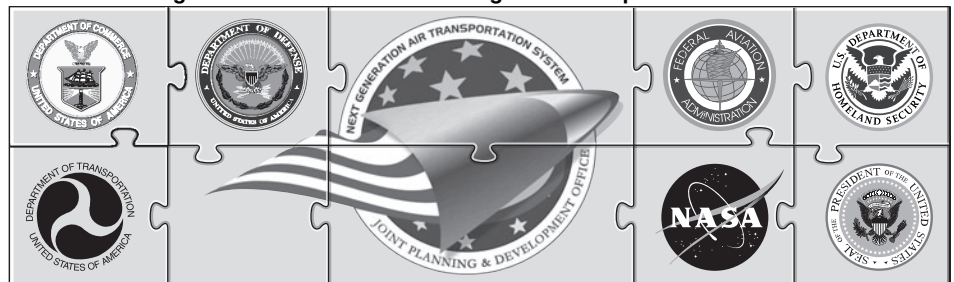
**What GAO Found**

JPDO is implementing a number of practices that GAO’s work has shown facilitates collaboration among federal agencies, but faces a challenge in sustaining this collaboration over the longer term. These practices include defining and articulating a common outcome, establishing mutually reinforcing or joint strategies to achieve that outcome, and identifying and addressing needs by leveraging resources among partner agencies. However, JPDO faces a challenge in leveraging resources because it is fundamentally a planning and coordinating body that lacks authority over the key human and financial resources needed to continue developing plans and system requirements for the NGATS. To its credit, JPDO is working with its partner agencies to align their fiscal year 2008 budget requests to support NGATS and is working with the Office of Management and Budget to develop a budget review process that easily identifies partner agencies’ NGATS-related programs.

JPDO has involved federal and nonfederal stakeholders throughout its organization. Federal stakeholders from the partner agencies work with JPDO throughout multiple levels of the organization. The NGATS Institute has been established as the mechanism for involving nonfederal stakeholders. The Institute has obtained participation from industry and other nonfederal stakeholders and has assigned them to work with JPDO. However, JPDO has experienced difficulties with soliciting the participation of current air traffic controllers, who will play a key role in the NGATS. Additionally, JPDO could face a challenge in sustaining nonfederal stakeholders’ participation in an effort where tangible benefits may not be realized until several years in the future.

JPDO is using an iterative technical planning process that appears to be reasonable in light of the NGATS’ complexity. The process includes iterative modeling—a technique that mathematically represents the NGATS’ system performance parameters, demand, and economic factors—to narrow the range of potential options. This fall, JPDO plans to have an initial version of its enterprise architecture—a blueprint to guide NGATS development—and will refine the architecture as the NGATS effort moves forward.

**Seven Partner Agencies Form the Joint Planning and Development Office**



Source: GAO.