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# MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF GAO

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE PLAN 2000-2002





# GAO'S MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its Constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

## CORE VALUES

### ACCOUNTABILITY

describes the nature of GAO's work. GAO helps the Congress oversee federal programs and operations to ensure accountability to the American people. GAO's evaluators, auditors, lawyers, economists, public policy analysts, information technology specialists, and other multidisciplinary professionals seek to enhance the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and credibility of the federal government both in fact and in the eyes of the American people. GAO accomplishes its mission through a variety of activities, including financial audits, program reviews, investigations, legal support, and program analyses.

### INTEGRITY

describes the high standards that GAO sets for itself in the conduct of its work. GAO takes a professional, objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, nonideological, fair, and balanced approach to all of its activities. Integrity is the foundation of reputation, and GAO's approach to its work ensures both.

### RELIABILITY

describes GAO's goal for how its work is viewed by the Congress and the American public. GAO produces high-quality reports, testimony, briefings, legal opinions, and other products and services that are timely, accurate, useful, clear, and candid.

## FOREWORD

In fulfilling its mission, GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and activities; and provides analyses, options, recommendations and other assistance to help the Congress make effective oversight, policy, and funding decisions. In this context, GAO works to continuously improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the federal government for the benefit of the American people through the conduct of financial audits, program reviews and evaluations, analyses, legal opinions, investigations and other services. Most of this work is based on original data collection and analysis.

To ensure that GAO, in serving the Congress, targets the right issues, provides balanced perspectives, and develops practical recommendations, GAO regularly consults with the Congress and maintains relationships with a variety of federal, state, academic, and professional organizations. Throughout, GAO's core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability are guiding principles. In addition, GAO complies with all applicable standards in the conduct of its work.

In keeping with its mission and responsibilities, GAO has a strategic plan that includes four strategic goals and 21 related strategic objectives. To ensure that GAO's resources are directed to achieving its goals, a separate strategic plan underlies each of the objectives under strategic goals 1-3. This plan supports the 4th strategic goal—to maximize the value of GAO by being a model organization for the federal government. Because of the need to take an integrated approach, this plan addresses all five objectives for achieving goal 4—cultivate and foster effective congressional and agency relations, implement a model strategic and annual planning and reporting process, align human capital policies and practices to support GAO's mission, develop efficient and responsive business processes, and build an integrated and reliable information technology infrastructure.

The pages that follow include a discussion of each objective; describe the performance goals GAO will use to support the objectives; identify the significance of the performance goals; and show the key efforts, potential outcomes, and contacts for each performance goal.

The full set of GAO's strategic planning, performance, and accountability documents include the: (1) *Strategic Plan Executive Summary*; (2) *Strategic Plan, 2000-2005*; (3) individual strategic objective plans; (4) strategic plan framework document; (5) *Accountability Report* for fiscal year 1999; and (6) *Performance Plan Fiscal Year 2001*.

All of these documents, as well as other GAO reports and documents, may be obtained electronically on our website, [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov). If you have questions or desire information related to this plan, please contact me at (202) 512-5500 or [walkerd@gao.gov](mailto:walkerd@gao.gov) or Gene L. Dodaro, Chief Operating Officer, at (202) 512-5600 or [dodarog@gao.gov](mailto:dodarog@gao.gov) or the contact persons listed on the following pages.

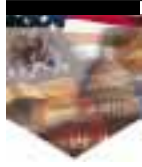
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.M. Walker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David M. Walker  
COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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BEING A MODEL ORGANIZATION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT*

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# SERVING THE CONGRESS GAO'S STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK



## MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its Constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

## GOALS

PROVIDE TIMELY, QUALITY SERVICE TO THE CONGRESS AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



TO ADDRESS CURRENT AND EMERGING CHALLENGES TO THE WELL-BEING AND FINANCIAL SECURITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUPPORT THE TRANSITION



TO RESPOND TO CHANGING SECURITY THREATS AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE

MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF GAO



BY BEING A MODEL ORGANIZATION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



TO A MORE RESULTS-ORIENTED AND ACCOUNTABLE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

## THEMES

Demographics      Globalization      Quality of Life      Security      Technology  
Government Performance and Accountability

## OBJECTIVES

Health care needs and financing  
Retirement income security  
Social safety net  
Education/workforce issues  
Effective system of justice  
Community investment  
Natural resources use and environmental protection  
Physical infrastructure

Diffuse security threats  
Military capabilities and readiness  
Advancement of U.S. interests  
Global market forces

Fiscal position of the government  
Government financing and accountability  
Governmentwide management reforms  
Economy, efficiency, and effectiveness improvements in federal agencies

Client relations  
Strategic and annual planning  
Human capital  
Core business and supporting processes  
Information technology services

## CORE VALUES

Accountability      Integrity      Reliability

MAXIMIZE THE  
VALUE OF GAO



BY BEING A  
MODEL ORGANIZATION  
FOR THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

**CLIENT RELATIONS**

Strategic and annual planning  
Human capital  
Core business and  
supporting processes  
Information technology services

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## *Cultivate and Foster Effective Congressional and Agency Relations*

Faced with addressing the myriad complex and sensitive issues that confront the nation, the Congress increasingly relies on GAO for information and analyses to inform its policy decisions and to improve federal government operations. With demand for GAO's resources exceeding their availability, we must work with our congressional clients to help them understand how to effectively use our services, determine what their most critical interests are, and ensure that we understand how best to meet their needs. We also need to continue to strengthen our working relationships with the agencies, who are our stakeholders.

This section of the plan includes three multiyear performance goals to support the objective of cultivating and fostering effective client relations.

### *Performance Goals*

- Strengthen Communications With Our Congressional Clients
- Implement Clearly Defined, Consistently Applied, Well Documented, and Transparent Policies and Protocols for Working With the Congress and Agencies
- Improve Internal Processes to Help GAO's Senior Executives and Staff Better Serve the Congress



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## *Strengthen Communications With Our Congressional Clients*

### *Significance*

GAO's senior executives and staff have always communicated with our congressional clients in planning and performing the work we do at their request. Historically, we consulted with congressional leaders and staff when we developed our long-term strategic planning documents. However, effective communications with our clients is critical, and improvements can be made, including more systematic communication methods and measurements to help us better understand our clients' needs and how well we are meeting them. Such communication will increase our ability to respond more quickly and efficiently, within the boundaries of our resources and in accordance with our core values.



### *Key Efforts*

Outreach by the Comptroller General, with each new Congress, to the Senate and House leadership; Committee Chairs; Ranking Minority Members; and Members of committees responsible for GAO's oversight and appropriations

Meet annually with committee leaders and their key staff to discuss ongoing work and emerging issues that may influence future requests

Outreach by the Office of Congressional Relations to provide information to freshman Members of each new Congress regarding GAO's mission and how to use our services

Work with the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service to provide Members and congressional staff with an ongoing series of informational seminars and other services

Develop and implement a process for receiving and responding to client feedback

### *Potential Outcomes*

Better understanding of congressional interests and priorities

Increased awareness of emerging issues from our clients' perspective

Increased awareness by new Members and their staff of how GAO can help them

Increased awareness by congressional Members and their staff of the different services that the congressional support agencies can provide, particularly in the area of oversight

Increased understanding of congressional perspectives on GAO, our products, and our services, to ensure that we meet the needs of our primary clients and avoid expectation gaps





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## *Implement Clearly Defined, Consistently Applied, Well Documented, and Transparent Policies and Protocols for Working With the Congress and Agencies*

### *Significance*

We recognize that a reputation built on GAO's core values and professional standards is necessary to ensure that our work is respected and used effectively by the Congress. Maintaining our reputation is critical to the success of our mission. To foster these standards and ensure fairness, we have developed—in consultation with the Congress—a set of protocols to guide our approach to the work we do for the Congress. The protocols are designed to provide clearly defined, consistently applied, well documented, and transparent policies and procedures on how we set our priorities and do our work and to ensure that all of GAO's products and services are consistent with our core values. Similar protocols are needed and will be developed to better guide our interactions with the executive branch agencies, our stakeholders.



### *Key Efforts*

Train GAO staff on the purpose and use of the congressional protocols and reinforce existing policies

Discuss the agreed-upon protocols with our congressional clients and pilot, reassess, and refine them as appropriate for the next session of the Congress

Use the finalized protocols to guide all interactions with our congressional clients, set our work priorities, and guide engagement execution

Develop and implement protocols to guide interactions with executive branch agencies

### *Potential Outcomes*

Increased equitable and transparent treatment of congressional clients

Increased congressional understanding of how GAO responds to requests for audits, evaluations, and testimony

Increased congressional understanding of how GAO works and allocates its resources

More consistent responses to congressional requests

Improved allocation of GAO's resources

Improved working relationships with executive branch agencies

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CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Helen H. Hsing, Director, Office of Congressional Relations, (202) 512-3804, [hsingh@gao.gov](mailto:hsingh@gao.gov); Richard L. Hembra, Chief Quality Officer, (202) 512-6802, [hembrar@gao.gov](mailto:hembrar@gao.gov)



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## *Improve Internal Processes to Help GAO's Senior Executives and Staff Better Serve the Congress*

### *Significance*

It is increasingly important that we be able to serve congressional clients more quickly and efficiently. We have a number of internal processes to aid our senior executives and staff in working with our congressional clients (e.g., training and the tracking of legislative mandates). These processes need to be reevaluated to ensure that they help to continuously improve our ability to meet our congressional clients' needs and to make sure we are meeting our staff's needs. Increasing our understanding of congressional processes, providing current information on committee agendas, floor activities, hearings, and the like and improving how we track legislation and congressional correspondence will help us serve the Congress better.



### *Key Efforts*

Provide training for appropriate GAO staff on the congressional schedule and congressional processes, including appropriations, budget, authorization, and oversight and on the Congress's organization, including leadership, committees, caucuses, and conferences

Train selected GAO staff for assignments as detailees to the Congress and provide related support

Expand the tracking of potential and actual legislative mandates, including requirements directed by statute, conference reports, and committee reports

### *Potential Outcomes*

Increased understanding by staff on how the Congress works and how to meet its needs

Increased satisfaction by committees with the service provided by the detailees

Better understanding of clients' needs and priorities

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MAXIMIZE THE  
VALUE OF GAO



BY BEING A  
MODEL ORGANIZATION  
FOR THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Client relations

**STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL  
PLANNING**

Human capital

Core business and  
supporting processes

Information technology services

## *Implement a Model Strategic and Annual Planning and Reporting Process*

Central to our ability to successfully carry out GAO's mission are well thought-out and rigorously implemented strategic and annual planning processes that guide the agency's actions and stand as a model under the Government Performance and Results Act. GAO's planning system includes an overall strategic plan and more detailed strategic objective plans that will be updated every two years. In addition, we have an annual performance plan and an annual accountability report. Together, these documents will help us better serve the Congress by identifying and focusing our work on the most important current and emerging national issues while demonstrating the results of our efforts using meaningful and well-understood measures. The strategic and annual planning processes are the foundation of GAO's management. All of our activities and processes will be anchored to fulfilling the goals and objectives contained in the strategic plan, which are driven by input received from and the most important needs of our clients in the Congress.

This section of the plan identifies three multiyear performance goals to support our objective of implementing a model strategic and annual planning process.

### *Performance Goals*

- Use a Strategic Planning Process That Meets the Intent of the Government Performance and Results Act
- Develop a Performance Tracking System and Publish Annual Performance Plans and Reports
- Realign Organizational Structure and Resources to the Strategic Goals and Objectives



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## *Use a Strategic Planning Process That Meets the Intent of the Government Performance and Results Act*

### *Significance*

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, one of the cornerstones of efforts to reform the federal government, stands as the primary legislative framework through which federal agencies are required to set strategic goals, measure performance, and report on the degree to which their goals are met. Although GAO is not subject to the requirements of the act, we are committed to achieving its intent and believe strongly in its basic purpose. A good strategic planning process (1) involves stakeholders; (2) assesses the internal and external environments; (3) aligns activities, core processes, and resources to support mission-related outcomes; and (4) uses meaningful and well-understood measures to determine if goals and objectives are being met. Since strategic planning works best if the future environment in which the nation's programs and policies need to function is better understood, we need to monitor major global and national trends to determine the extent of their potential impacts on the nation's programs.

We must stay continuously in tune with the interests of the House and the Senate in order to effectively and efficiently serve the Congress. Their needs may change with the changes in membership every 2 years following the elections. Consequently, we plan to update our strategic plan after consulting with each new Congress (i.e., in January of odd calendar years).



### *Key Efforts*

Develop a strategic planning process that focuses our work on the most important national issues facing the Congress

Prepare a strategic plan for fiscal years 2000 to 2005 and update it every 2 years

Provide detailed 3-year strategic plans for each of our strategic objectives and update them every 2 years

Develop and implement a process that will identify, monitor, analyze, and update global and national trends

### *Potential Outcomes*

Shared understanding with the Congress on goals, objectives, and strategies

Increased ability of GAO to focus on the most important global and national issues facing the Congress and the American people

More comprehensive, up-to-date data on major national and global trends

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CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Richard L. Hembra, Chief Quality Officer, (202) 512-6802, [hembrar@gao.gov](mailto:hembrar@gao.gov)



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## *Develop a Performance Tracking System and Publish Annual Performance Plans and Reports*

### *Significance*

Annual performance plans and performance reports provide a direct linkage between the strategic goals outlined in an agency's strategic plan and what managers and staff do day to day. Our performance plan will contain the annual performance goals we will use to gauge progress toward accomplishing our strategic goals and identify the performance measures we will use to measure progress. The performance report will provide specific information on the measures and gauge progress and results for the previous fiscal year. We have produced an accountability report for fiscal year 2000 that includes information on our performance, as agencies are required to do by the Government Performance and Results Act. It also includes information required by the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act, the Federal Management Reform Act, and other financial management statutes. The accountability report is an integrated, comprehensive report on what and how GAO is doing.



### *Key Efforts*

Assess current measures and, as appropriate, develop new meaningful, well-defined measures to track progress towards our strategic and annual goals

Prepare and publish an annual performance plan to describe the measures to be used to assess GAO's progress in meeting its strategic goals and objectives

Provide an annual accountability report that documents GAO's performance in accomplishing its strategic goals and objectives

Develop and implement an annual planning process

### *Potential Outcomes*

Increased awareness by the Congress and GAO's staff of the measures that will be used to determine progress toward achieving the strategic goals and objectives

Improved ability to compare actual performance to the goals established in the annual performance plans

Increased ability to adjust and prioritize the work remaining to accomplish strategic goals and objectives



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## *Realign Organizational Structure and Resources to the Strategic Goals and Objectives*

### *Significance*

Sound planning is only one aspect of ensuring the success of any organization. Core business processes, human capital, and information technology must be aligned to support the organization's mission and to help achieve its goals. GAO is currently organized around five major operating divisions, 31 separate working units within the divisions—called issue areas—and 16 field offices to carry out the agency's audit and evaluation work. This structure—including staff office support—was formed in response to congressional needs over the past decade; it does not reflect the broader and more integrated nature of GAO's new strategic goals and objectives. Hence, it is time to evaluate and realign the organization to focus on accomplishing the strategic goals and objectives for serving congressional clients and improving internal operations. In addition, realigning our structure and resources will aid in fully implementing matrix management and risk management principles in our operations. Matrix management will bring the right mix of interdisciplinary skills to GAO's work and help to eliminate barriers to cooperation in order to efficiently and effectively conduct audits, evaluations, and investigations. Risk management aims to concentrate the right mix of management attention to projects based on their inherent and situational risk, along with their significance to our clients and the organization.



### *Key Efforts*

Realign the organizational structure—in stages—to provide clear responsibility for achieving the strategic goals and objectives

Assess the level and mix of in-house and contractual support resources needed to address each strategic goal and objective and, over time, assign resources accordingly

Provide information and training to GAO managers and staff on matrix management, risk management, and other strategies and tactics to be implemented throughout GAO

### *Potential Outcomes*

Better alignment of organizations and resources to the strategic goals and objectives

Enhanced cooperation and collaboration across the agency in conducting audits and evaluations

Improved agency efficiency and effectiveness

MAXIMIZE THE  
VALUE OF GAO



BY BEING A  
MODEL ORGANIZATION  
FOR THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Client relations  
Strategic and annual planning  
**HUMAN CAPITAL**  
Core business and  
supporting processes  
Information technology services

## *Align Human Capital Policies and Practices to Support GAO's Mission*

GAO is a multidisciplinary, knowledge-based professional services organization. Our ability to produce products and serve our clients is directly linked to the quality of our senior leadership team, the abilities of our staff, and a work environment that supports high performance. With the vast majority of our resources devoted to staff salary and benefits, our people are our most important investment. Effective and efficient human capital management strategies, policies, and systems are crucial to our continued success.

We will develop and implement a human capital plan that ensures our policies and practices align with and support our mission and goals and best practices. In developing this plan, we will complete a human capital self-assessment that focuses on organizational alignment, leadership, skills, and a performance-oriented culture. In conjunction with the assessment, we will take steps to address critical areas by developing and applying a tool to inventory the skills of our staff and to identify skill gaps; updating our performance appraisal system; and improving our recruitment, training/development, succession planning, and recognition/reward programs. Based on results from our organizational alignment assessments, we will seek contractual assistance, where appropriate, in implementing our human capital and other initiatives.

This section of the plan identifies four multiyear performance goals to support our objective of aligning human capital policies and practices to support our mission.

### *Performance Goals*

- Develop and Implement a Strategic Human Capital Plan
- Implement an Approach to Assessing and Inventorying Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Our Strategic Goals and Objectives
- Update Appraisal Systems to Support the Agency's Core Values, Strategic Plan, and Performance Goals
- Improve Recruitment, Training/Development, and Recognition/Reward Programs



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## *Develop and Implement a Strategic Human Capital Plan*

### *Significance*

Developing and implementing a human capital plan ensures that our human capital policies and systems are aligned to support our strategic goals. The plan will provide the framework for assessing current activities, designing and implementing new programs where needed, and monitoring and evaluating activities and outcomes.

For GAO, human capital planning is particularly important for several reasons. Much of our current workforce is reaching retirement eligibility. Furthermore, demographic, economic, and technological changes indicate that there will be greater competition for the available skilled labor pool in the future. Consequently, we need to explore ways to recruit, develop, and retain new employees, provide incentives for key employees eligible for retirement to remain with us; and/or retain institutional knowledge and acquire subject matter expertise through succession planning or contracting.

In addition, we will establish processes to monitor and evaluate our human capital programs. These processes will include regular analysis of data on such matters as hiring, diversity, retention, promotions, recognition/rewards, and performance management, as well as feedback from employees. The information will show which programs are working well and which ones need to be improved.



### *Key Efforts*

Complete a human capital self-assessment

Monitor and evaluate our human capital programs and practices annually to determine progress in aligning the human capital plan with strategic goals. Compile and analyze data on hiring, diversity, retention, retirement eligibility, promotions, pay-for-performance results, awards, training, and other matters as needed

Provide opportunities for employee feedback, including a periodic survey of employees regarding the agency's mission and vision, its leadership, morale, staff development, work processes, and communication

Monitor, evaluate, and support, on an ongoing basis, applicable family-friendly policies, programs, and services

### *Potential Outcomes*

A clearer understanding of human capital management systems and processes on which to make decisions and base plans

Improved information on the results of human capital programs in order to assess them and determine the extent to which they support the agency's strategic goals and objectives

An improved work environment that helps staff balance their work and family lives

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CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Sallyanne Harper, Chief Mission Support Officer, (202) 512-5800, [harpers@gao.gov](mailto:harpers@gao.gov); John H. Luke, Deputy Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources, (202) 512-5533, [lukej@gao.gov](mailto:lukej@gao.gov).





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## *Implement an Approach to Assessing and Inventorying Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Our Strategic Goals and Objectives*

### *Significance*

Employing a matrix management approach to our work will ensure that all appropriate interdisciplinary skills are brought to bear in serving the Congress and used to enhance our efficiency. This approach will improve our ability to combine our collective talents and work as an integrated team to serve the Congress. To implement this approach, we need to capture and analyze, on a real time basis, information on the skills possessed by our workforce and the skills needed today and in the future. Maintaining timely and accurate information on the skills possessed by the individual members of the workforce will allow for “knowledge and skills gap” analyses that will support critical efforts such as recruitment; staff development; and, where appropriate, the procurement of contract services. This information will also facilitate the assignment of staff resources and requisite knowledge and skills to projects across organizational and geographical boundaries.



### *Key Efforts*

Conduct a workforce profile analysis and develop and conduct a GAO-wide skills inventory aligned with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan and our business processes

Develop and implement an agencywide succession planning model

Perform a skills gap analysis periodically and assess gaps for various workforce implications in the areas of recruitment, training/development, and contractual and expert support

### *Potential Outcomes*

Enhanced capability to identify where critical skills reside in the agency

Improved management and deployment of workforce skills

Increased skills in critical areas

Better targeted recruitment and training/development efforts to meet identified current and future needs

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## *Update Appraisal Systems to Support the Agency's Core Values, Strategic Plan, and Performance Goals*

### *Significance*

One of the most important human capital issues we face is the need to improve our performance management process, with special attention to the performance appraisal systems. Over the years, our performance appraisal systems have experienced inflation: performance rating averages increased each year while dispersion dramatically decreased. As a result, performance appraisals need to be improved to support critical human capital efforts—such as providing timely and quality feedback and making pay/reward and promotion decisions. Furthermore, the performance appraisals must provide more meaningful information to employees on their strengths and areas for additional emphasis, such as teamwork, particularly across organizational lines. The objective of an appraisal system should be to provide fair, honest, and accurate assessments of performance that are based on competency-based standards that are reasonable, appropriate, properly applied, and transparent to staff. The system should be designed to provide a sound basis for rewarding high-performing staff, strengthening all staff, and dealing with poor performers. Improving our performance appraisal systems is an important first step toward improving our human capital programs and compensation system.



### *Key Efforts*

Update existing performance dimensions and standards to better reflect the agency's core values and support the strategic goals

Define/clarify roles, responsibilities, and required competencies by level throughout the agency

Develop competency models to strengthen staff development throughout all disciplines

Using competencies as the foundation, design and implement a new appraisal system for evaluator and evaluator-related staff

Review, design, and implement new appraisal systems for mission support and legal staff

Review and revise performance management and reward policies, practices, and systems to be consistent with the new definitions of roles, matrix management, and appraisal systems

### *Potential Outcomes*

Enhanced expectation setting and the identification of desired outcomes, such as teamwork, for assignments relying on matrix management

Increased recognition of the most deserving staff

Improved methods of assessing promotion potential

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## *Improve Recruitment, Training/Development, and Recognition/Reward Programs*

### *Significance*

Central to our ability to provide timely and accurate information to the Congress is having productive, motivated people who have the right skills and the ability to work in a “matrix” organization. For GAO to continue on the path of a high-performance organization, we must have competent and flexible means to ensure that we can attract, develop, retain, and reward the talent to accomplish our mission. In addition, we must develop and implement strategies to address imbalances in the existing workforce. To address these challenges, we must identify and implement improvements that support our strategic plan. Essential to transforming our human capital policies, programs, and practices are the alignment and integration of all of our human capital initiatives related to hiring, developing, and training staff, as well as the performance appraisal and compensation programs. Results from our human capital self-assessment will facilitate establishing priorities and time frames in these areas.



### *Key Efforts*

Redesign the Educator's Panel to assist in our training, recruiting, and other human capital initiatives

Target recruitment needs based on ongoing assessments of our competencies/skills and workforce imbalances

Develop learning and performance approaches (including curriculum development) to address competency/skills gaps in the current workforce and to enhance productivity and improve behavioral and technical skills

Provide opportunities and support for training/development efforts

Develop and implement retention strategies, including mentoring activities to minimize replacement costs

Refine and/or develop incentive programs that support matrix management

### *Potential Outcomes*

Enhanced relations with colleges and universities and, thus, improved ability to identify and attract highly qualified candidates

A more capable and balanced workforce commensurate with the changing needs of the organization

A revised training and development program that reduces skills gaps in disciplines and increases core competencies across the office

Improved performance capability of the workforce

Improved management and support of succession planning efforts

Increased availability of monetary and other recognition for staff

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**CORE BUSINESS AND  
SUPPORTING PROCESSES**  
Information technology services

## *Develop Efficient and Responsive Business Processes*

The Congress is inundated from numerous sources with information and analyses to influence congressional decisionmaking on critical policy issues and efforts to improve federal government operations. What often sets GAO apart from these other sources is the nature of its work—original data collection and analyses—combined with professional, objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, nonideological, fair, and balanced information. The Congress and the public depend on us to turn assertions and information into facts and knowledge. The continued credibility of our work, products, and other services depends on internal business processes that are efficient, are responsive to our clients' needs, reflect risk-based management principles, demand the application of methodological rigor, and ensure the highest-quality work and product standards. At the same time, we also want to take advantage of opportunities for greater efficiency and responsiveness through reengineering our product line and improving our job process, along with having greater collaboration and consultation with our sister congressional agencies, the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service. In addition, we need to move to a managerial-based accounting system to develop the cost information needed to better measure our performance and enhance decisionmaking.

This section of the plan identifies four multiyear performance goals to support the strategic objective of developing efficient and responsive business processes.

### *Performance Goals*

- Continue Improving the Job Management Process and Other Business Processes to Be More Responsive to Our Clients' Needs, Reduce Administrative Burden, and Expedite Product Issuance
- Reengineer Our Product and Service Lines
- Enhance Coordination With CBO and CRS to Increase Opportunities for Collaboration and Consultation
- Develop and Implement a Managerial Accounting System



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## *Continue Improving the Job Management Process and Other Business Processes to Be More Responsive to Our Clients' Needs, Reduce Administrative Burden, and Expedite Product Issuance*

### *Significance*

GAO reengineered the Job Management Process—its core business process for designing, conducting, and providing audits and evaluations—in 1996 and realized improvements in on-time delivery, cycle time, and cost. Since that time, a number of improvements have been made to the process. For example, we recently implemented two new forums for GAO's senior executives to review all new requests for work and the progress of ongoing engagements, thereby expanding the risk-based management approach introduced in our reengineered process. These changes should ensure top managers' involvement in high- and medium-risk assignments and reports and reduce their role in low-risk efforts. However, we need to make greater use of risk-based management principles in our program units and implement matrix management concepts to continue to improve our product and service delivery to the Congress. In addition, based on our recent employee survey results, process measurement data, and feedback from process owners (senior executives), we will continue our efforts to identify opportunities to be more responsive to clients' needs, reduce administrative burden, and expedite product issuance.

In addition to our audit and evaluation work, we have two other key business processes for providing legal advice and opinions and doing investigations. They serve our client, the Congress; our beneficiary client, the public; and internal customers (our auditors and evaluators). We will also reevaluate these processes to maximize their efficiency, usefulness, and value.



### *Key Efforts*

Implement a core business process improvement plan that identifies and prioritizes opportunities based on our clients' needs, process data, and management and staff feedback

Implement matrix management principles to ensure appropriate skills are brought to bear in managing our engagements

Update our existing product line to make the products more useful and less costly

Institutionalize risk management in product development and quality review and in managing engagements

Evaluate and implement improvements to the processes for providing legal advice and opinions and investigations

### *Potential Outcomes*

Reduced administrative burden on staff and facilitate evaluators' work

Reduced cycle time and cost for meeting our clients' needs while maintaining or enhancing the quality of GAO's work

Increased responsiveness to our clients' needs

Increased value added by senior management in accepting engagements, monitoring their progress, and ensuring quality products

Enhanced efficiency and value of legal advice and opinions and investigations

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CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Richard L. Hembra, Chief Quality Officer, (202) 512-6802, [hembrar@gao.gov](mailto:hembrar@gao.gov)



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## *Reengineer Our Product and Service Lines*

### *Significance*

A major reengineering of our product and services line is needed. Our product line, based on a best practices study that was done in the early 1980s, reflects the emphasis on print media that was prevalent at that time. Since then, changes in what technology offers; how we do our work; and—most importantly—how the Congress works provide opportunities to produce products and services that maximize GAO’s responsiveness, efficiency, and impact. This effort is critical to our ability to satisfy our clients’ needs in future years.



### *Key Efforts*

Identify our clients’ requirements for products and services

Identify “best practices” in the public and private sectors

Reengineer our product and service lines to meet clients’ needs and information requirements

Develop an implementation plan that includes a process owner, a communications and change management strategy, and an approach for evaluation and continuous improvement

### *Potential Outcomes*

Increased satisfaction for clients by producing products and services more suited to their needs

Reduced costs and cycle time for producing our products and services while maintaining or enhancing the methodological rigor in our work and the quality of our products



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## *Enhance Coordination With CBO and CRS to Increase Opportunities for Collaboration and Consultation*

### *Significance*

GAO, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Congressional Research Service are the three legislative branch agencies charged with providing information on federal activities to the Congress for its use in enacting legislation and overseeing the activities of the executive branch. In short, GAO audits and evaluates the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of federal programs; CBO analyzes spending for federal programs; and CRS provides a variety of services aimed at informing the Congress. Although all three have distinct missions, there may be opportunities to enhance cooperation so that information prepared for the Congress is nonduplicative and well integrated. The bulk of the agencies' coordination activities to date have been aimed at preventing unnecessary duplication.



### *Key Efforts*

Establish a new senior-level coordination group to suggest opportunities where greater cooperation might provide more comprehensive, consistent, or less costly research for the Congress

Work with CBO and CRS to develop a plan for increasing collaborative efforts

Work with CBO and CRS staff to identify opportunities to share more information and avoid redundancy, especially through the use of the Internet

Develop an electronic mechanism to provide a list of ongoing research projects to the Congress and the other support agencies

### *Potential Outcomes*

Better research to meet congressional needs

Greater access for staff to information from other agencies

Increased congressional knowledge and awareness of studies that the legislative branch agencies have recently initiated and that are under way



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## *Develop and Implement a Managerial Accounting System*

### *Significance*

Performance measurement is one key component of the Government Performance and Results Act. A key measure of our performance is the cost of our operations and reviews. GAO's existing systems are budgetary and proprietary accounting focused. Traditional budgetary accounting focuses on compliance with legal constraints and controls over the use of federal funds; proprietary accounting focuses on the application of accrual-based accounting concepts for assets, liabilities, and net position (capital) and, ultimately, the preparation of annual audited financial statements. To develop the cost information needed to better measure performance and enhance decisionmaking, we need to move to a managerial-based accounting system. Managerial accounting focuses on cost accounting, such as activity-based accounting, and links such information with performance information to provide management with unit cost data needed to make resource allocation decisions.



### *Key Efforts*

Survey managers to determine functional requirements for a managerial accounting system

Inventory and evaluate available systems that meet functional requirements

Procure, implement, and test a managerial accounting system

Train staff on the new system and move to production

### *Potential Outcomes*

Enhanced financial management services to staff

More meaningful, reliable, and timely financial management information leading to improved decisionmaking and management within GAO

Increased financial management efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability



MAXIMIZE THE  
VALUE OF GAO



BY BEING A  
MODEL ORGANIZATION  
FOR THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Client relations  
Strategic and annual planning  
Human capital  
Core business and  
supporting processes  
**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
SERVICES**

## *Build an Integrated and Reliable Information Technology Infrastructure*

### *Significance*

For GAO to become a model of organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the federal government, we must be able to maximize the benefits of information technology. Over the years, we have made important strides in—and realized efficiencies by—introducing technology into the organization. However, we need to maintain and enhance our ability to take greater advantage of modern technology and achieve an integrated infrastructure that supports our goals and objectives for client services, strategic planning, human capital, and business processes. Furthermore, we need to ensure that we choose the most cost-effective approach, carefully weighing options for outsourcing and shared services.

This section of the plan identifies four multiyear performance goals to support our objective of building an integrated and reliable information technology infrastructure.

### *Performance Goals*

- Develop a Long-Term Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated Information Technology Approach
- Develop and Implement a Short-Term Cost-Effective Approach That Begins to Satisfy GAO's Information Needs Quickly
- Establish Performance and Cost Metrics Addressing the Quality and Value of Information Technology Services
- Ensure the Availability of Required Information Technology Skills



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## *Develop a Long-Term Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated Information Technology Approach*

### *Significance*

We are currently redefining our business goals and objectives and improving our business processes and products. This will result in changes in work and information flows. Therefore, we must also redefine our information technology architecture, consistent with the Clinger-Cohen Act, in support of management and organizational changes and work process reengineering, mapping work and information flows, and refining standards that enable the integration and interoperability of systems. Evolving technologies, such as Web-based applications, provide opportunities for us to accomplish our work in support of the strategic objectives in new, more efficient, and more timely ways. The resultant technology architecture—articulated in a comprehensive plan—will need to be adaptable to meet new requirements and will need to maintain configuration discipline through standards. The plan must link the business and technology architectures and define an integrated infrastructure to support our client service, planning, human capital, job process, and product development and production processes.



### *Key Efforts*

Enhance partnerships between the technology and program units to define business requirements and determine how technology can support these requirements

Evaluate the adaptability of the current information technology architecture to changes in GAO's organization and the business architecture

Determine effective means of supporting our organizational business needs through technology

Identify and evaluate existing and new technologies to support business processes

Develop an adaptable enterprise information technology architecture that meets the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen Act

Develop an information technology strategic plan to lay the foundation for the technology needed to support our strategic and business objectives

### *Potential Outcomes*

Improved working relationships among program and technology staff, ensuring that information technology more effectively and economically meets the needs defined

Increased understanding of what the current technology can and cannot do and the relationship between the business and technology architectures

Acquisition of technical capabilities through an appropriate balance of in-house, out-house, and shared services

Increased understanding of what new technologies could add to GAO's capabilities

Improved information technology planning and decisionmaking and flexibility to respond to continual improvements in business processes

Clear articulation of information technology needs and strategies

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CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Sallyanne Harper, Chief Mission Support Officer, (202) 512-5800, [harpers@gao.gov](mailto:harpers@gao.gov); Tony Cicco, Acting Assistant Comptroller General, Office of Information Management and Communications, (202) 512-5851, [ciccoa.oimc@gao.gov](mailto:ciccoa.oimc@gao.gov)



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## *Develop and Implement a Short-Term Cost-Effective Approach That Begins to Satisfy GAO's Information Needs Quickly*

### *Significance*

We need to satisfy our most critical information needs using technology that is easy to use, that is cost effective, and that can be quickly developed, while maintaining effective security over our infrastructure and assets. Effectively leveraging and making information easily accessible is becoming more and more important in the “information age.” The explosion of information sources and tools, such as the Internet, intranets and extranets, both expedites and complicates this requirement. Managing this knowledge so it serves not only our staff and managers but also our congressional clients requires an integrated approach for identifying, managing, and sharing the organization's information and intellectual assets. These assets include databases, plans, analyses, documents, reports, policies, procedures, management information, and staff expertise.

To work effectively and efficiently, GAO staff and managers need ready access to information and intellectual assets from their desktop, and congressional users need quick and easy access to our experts and expertise. As we reengineer our business processes and redefine both our business and information technology architecture, we will also define our knowledge management approach—our information architecture. This approach will address information flows, sources, and tools to support our strategic initiatives. In addition, we will determine the most cost-effective approach, including outsourcing and seat management, to procure information services and tools.



### *Key Efforts*

Determine critical information needs of our congressional clients, GAO managers, and staff

Evaluate information technology tools such as document management and Web-based applications that support knowledge needs

Determine the most cost-effective methods to deliver applications supporting knowledge management (in-house, out-house, shared services, seat management)

Develop and begin to implement a cost-effective approach for satisfying the information needs to support our client service, planning, human capital, job process, and product development and production processes

Conduct reassessments of information needs and processes as additional information requirements and technology evolve

Develop and institute a comprehensive computer security program based on best practices

### *Potential Outcomes*

Enhanced understanding of the information needed to meet our clients' needs

More effective use, and greater ease of use, of knowledge sources and tools

More cost-effective acquisition of technical capabilities

Improved, more timely, and higher-quality products and service delivery

A more responsive information strategy to support changing business processes

Improved data integrity while maintaining safeguards over sensitive information

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## *Establish Performance and Cost Metrics Addressing the Quality and Value of Information Technology Services*

### *Significance*

Information technology has become a critical link for organizations in accomplishing business goals and improving organizational performance. Much attention has been directed at how to effectively and economically manage information technology and how to measure the impact of technology on an organization. As information technology must compete with other priorities for resources, technology must demonstrate success in supporting business needs and achieving expected benefits and strategic objectives. GAO must lead by example in executing sound information technology investment and management practices, consistent with governmentwide management reform initiatives, to ensure the cost-effectiveness and value of information technology at the agency.



### *Key Efforts*

Develop performance indicators for determining how information technology supports objectives and strategies in the strategic plan

Develop and apply performance metrics on the quality and value of information technology services, including network reliability, customer feedback, user assistance, and application stability

Use performance metrics to identify significant gaps in performance and take action to address the gaps

Use cost models for distributed computing to measure GAO's information technology services and costs against those of peer organizations in terms of size, architecture, cost, and complexity

Strengthen the role of GAO's Information Technology Investment Committee to guide the direction of information technology initiatives and priorities and make decisions on investment proposals

### *Potential Outcomes*

More accurate and timely information for assessing the value of information technology

Better identification of information technology management and service issues to guide needed actions

Improved performance and reliability of information technology services and systems

More accountability for information technology investments

Enhanced decisionmaking and management of information technology

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## *Ensure the Availability of Required Information Technology Skills*

### *Significance*

Information technology has become increasingly critical to organizations, whether public or private, in carrying out core business functions. This holds true for multidisciplinary professional services organizations like GAO, where any downtime in technology systems or services affects the ability to conduct mission work, provide products and services, and meet deadlines. To ensure the reliability of information technology services and systems, we need to ensure that it has a skilled technology workforce to effectively manage, develop, and maintain information technology systems and services.

Given the rapid pace of change in technology, this workforce needs to remain current in its knowledge of and skills in existing technologies as well as acquire new knowledge of and skills in emerging technologies, as appropriate. Knowledge and skills should also match the core competencies—such as contract management, client service, project management—identified to carry out the work required, consistent with GAO’s overall strategic initiatives and business processes.



### *Key Efforts*

Reassess core competencies for information technology staff based on short- and long-term needs

Conduct a skills assessment of information technology staff to identify gaps in skills

Develop and implement a plan to address skill gaps with actions specifically addressing training, reassignments, hiring, and contracting out

Practice skills-based management and implement an annual assessment of information technology staffing requirements

### *Potential Outcomes*

Improved human capital planning for information technology services

Better identification of staffing and training/development requirements for information technology

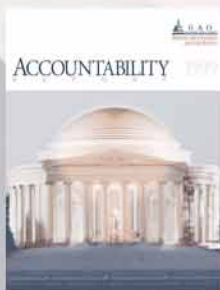
Better decisionmaking on alternative approaches for information technology staffing, such as outsourcing and seat management

Better skills-based management of information technology staffing

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*The full set of GAO's strategic planning, performance, and accountability documents are listed below. All of these documents, as well as other GAO reports and documents, may be obtained electronically on our website, [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov).*



**Accountability Report for fiscal year 1999**

**Strategic Plan, 2000-2005**

*Strategic Plan Executive Summary*

*Strategic Plan Framework*

**Strategic Objective Plans**

*Health Care Needs and Financing*

*Retirement Income Security*

*Social Safety Net*

*Education/Workforce Issues*

*Effective System of Justice*

*Community Investment*

*Natural Resources Use and Environmental Protection*

*Physical Infrastructure*

*Diffuse Security Threats*

*Military Capabilities and Readiness*

*Advancement of U.S. Interests*

*Global Market Forces*

*Fiscal Position of the Government*

*Government Financing and Accountability*

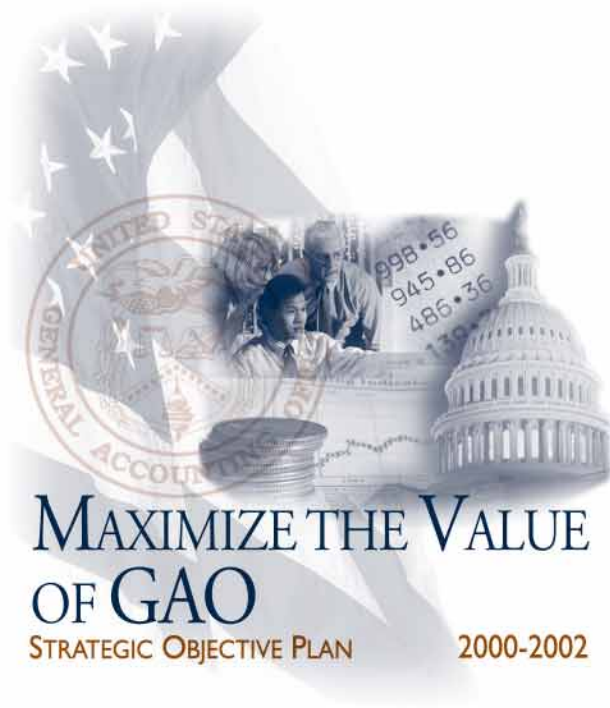
*Governmentwide Management Reforms*

*Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness*

*Improvements in Federal Agencies*

*Maximize the Value of GAO*

**Performance Plan Fiscal Year 2001**



# MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF GAO

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE PLAN

2000-2002