

GAO

Report to the Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Oversight of Government Management, the
Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia,
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

November 2008

CONFIRMATION OF POLITICAL APPOINTEES

Eliciting Nominees' Views on Management Challenges within Agencies and across Government



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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

November 17, 2008

The Honorable George V. Voinovich
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,
the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

Dear Senator Voinovich:

While some progress has been made in recent years, agencies urgently need to strengthen basic management capabilities to successfully address current and emerging demands. The incoming administration will face challenges in implementing its policy and program agendas because of shortcomings in agencies' management capabilities. Building and developing the institutional capacity to meet these challenges will require appointing the right people to the right positions. It is vitally important that leadership and management skills, abilities, and experience be among the key criteria the new President uses to select his leadership teams in the agencies. The Senate's interest in leveraging its role in confirmation hearings—as evidenced by your request and by the interest expressed in hearings about the upcoming transition—will send a strong message that nominees should have the requisite skills to deal effectively with the broad array of complex management challenges they will face.

In keeping with previous work that we performed in 2000 and 2001 to facilitate the confirmation process of individuals nominated to selected leadership positions in major executive branch agencies, you asked us to update the report entitled *Confirmation of Political Appointees: Eliciting Nominees' Views on Leadership and Management Issues* (GAO/GGD-00-174) along with its companion report, *Potential Questions to Elicit Nominees' Views on Agencies' Management Challenges* (GAO-01-332R). You expressed concern then and now that some nominees may lack the depth and breadth of experience required to manage a federal agency effectively. This letter provides you with a series of questions that Senate committees of jurisdiction could use to help determine the management experience and capabilities of upcoming nominees.

As requested, this report includes questions in 35 appendixes; one for each of 28 major executive branch departments and agencies, and one for each of the following seven major governmentwide management areas:

- acquisition management,
- collaboration,
- financial management,
- human capital management,
- information and technology management,
- results-oriented decision making, and
- real property management and security.

Questions are organized within each appendix by the major issues that need to be addressed as identified by our work, and a GAO contact is listed for each agency and for each management area. The major issues that need to be addressed are discussed in detail on our Transition Web site at <http://www.gao.gov/transition>. That Web site also contains information on urgent issues facing the nation, opportunities for cost savings across the federal government, discussions of the country's long-term fiscal challenges, and summaries of major upcoming GAO reports on federal policies and programs.

These questions are intended to contribute to the diverse array of resources available to Senators as they fulfill their constitutional responsibilities to advise and consent on presidential nominations. The questions cover a wide range of management-related issues, and, as a result, not all questions will be relevant to all nominees.

We look forward to working with you and other members of Congress and executive branch officials on this collective effort in leading agencies as they work toward addressing key challenges and achieving missions.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution of it until 30 days after its date. At that time, we will provide copies of this report to others on request. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 512-5600.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene L. Dodaro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gene L. Dodaro
Acting Comptroller General of the United States

Appendix I: Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture has a broad and far-reaching mission—to enhance agricultural trade, improve farm economies and quality of life in rural America, help protect the nation’s food supply, improve the nation’s nutrition, and protect and enhance the nation’s natural resource base and environment—by providing leadership that is based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management. For fiscal year 2009, total outlays for the department’s 17 agencies—such as Rural Development, the Economic Research Service, and the Food Safety and Inspection Service—are estimated at \$95 billion, including about \$72 billion associated with mandatory programs such as the majority of food assistance programs; farm commodity programs; export promotion programs; and a number of conservation programs, and including an estimated \$23 billion as discretionary funds to support, among other things, rural development loans and grants; management of national forests; research and education; and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that, for the period 2008-2012, spending on the programs covered in the 2008 Farm Bill will total about \$307 billion.

The department faces challenges that could affect its ability to carry out certain of its responsibilities effectively and efficiently. As a steward of the nation’s natural resources, the department faces the increasing severity and frequency of wildland fires that cross into populated rural and urban areas. Declining economic conditions, extreme weather events, a stronger U.S. dollar abroad, and rising food prices—all factors outside the department’s control—bring increased demand for food and farm assistance programs and challenge the department to further improve its controls for ensuring proper payments. The department’s Inspector General has identified information-technology management and security as a material weakness that could seriously jeopardize the department’s operations and compromise the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of sensitive information. Today’s global marketplace makes safeguarding food from contamination and protecting livestock and other natural resources from foreign diseases and invasive species more complicated, and more important than ever.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Ensuring Proper Farm Program Payments
- Ensuring Farm and Conservation Programs Do Not Work at Cross Purposes
- Ensuring Meat and Poultry Safety and Humane Slaughter of Livestock
- Protecting American Agriculture
- Addressing Civil Rights Issues
- Improving Food Assistance Program Integrity
- Protecting Natural Resources
- Improving Management of the Competitive Sourcing Program
- Defining “Rural” for Housing Programs
- Assessing the Multifamily Housing Portfolio
- Implementing the Agricultural Systems Initiative
- Addressing Concerns about Renewable Fuels

Questions

Ensuring Proper Farm Program Payments

1. GAO has documented abuse in federal farm programs related to the requirement that people who receive payments be actively engaged in farming. The abuse results from the department’s lack of a measurable standard to ensure these payments are made only to actual working farmers. The department needs to develop and enforce measurable standards for what constitutes a “significant contribution to active personal management” of a farm so that individuals who may have had limited involvement in farming operations do not qualify for payments. Have you previously been involved in development of performance or other measures? What lessons have you learned that might be useful for developing a standard measurable definition of a working farmer to be eligible for federal farm programs?
2. The 2008 Farm Bill lowered the income eligibility limits for farm program payments, likely decreasing the number of people eligible for payments. What expertise would you bring to the department to improve management controls in its farm programs and help ensure that future payments go only to intended individuals?

Ensuring Farm and Conservation Programs Do Not Work at Cross Purposes

3. Along with rising crop prices, department programs such as crop insurance increase the profitability of crop production and encourage the conversion of grassland to cropland. What skills and abilities do you possess that would prepare you to address the incompatibility between these programs and conservation programs, which pay producers to convert environmentally sensitive cropland to grassland?

4. The growing biofuels industry is spurred on by subsidies such as grants and loans for small-scale ethanol and biodiesel refineries in rural communities. The growth of this industry is putting further pressure to convert environmentally sensitive drought-prone grasslands and range historically used for livestock into cropland. Highly erodible and environmentally sensitive land, which is currently enrolled in the department's land retirement programs (e.g., the Conservation Reserve Program), is also under pressure to be put back into agriculture production without penalty to the landowner. What specific leadership skills and experiences do you have in managing competing priorities? How would those skills and experiences help the department address competing demands, such as cropland for biofuels versus grassland for livestock grazing?

**Ensuring Meat and Poultry
Safety and Humane
Slaughter of Livestock**

5. The department faces challenges that could impact its ability to carry out certain of its responsibilities effectively. In particular, today's global marketplace makes safeguarding food from contamination and protecting livestock and other natural resources from foreign diseases and invasive species more complicated. How might your prior work help in leading the department to manage a changing product environment?
6. The 2008 Farm Bill gives the department responsibility for grading examination and inspection of catfish processed for human consumption. The new inspection responsibility also includes the conditions under which the catfish were raised and transported. The catfish industries may be quite different from the traditional meat and poultry industries that the department inspects and there may be other differences from developing catfish inspection procedures to the trade agreements that the new procedures may impact. Can you describe any prior work of yours relevant to leading and directing new and expanding roles and responsibilities, and how you managed expectations within the organization? How could your experience help in effectively managing the department's expanding food safety role?

**Protecting American
Agriculture**

7. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Homeland Security have not resolved how they will work together in the event of a disease outbreak when a presidential emergency or major disaster is declared. How have you previously worked across organizational boundaries to develop joint plans? What key steps do you believe are needed to ensure a clear understanding between agencies of their

leadership and roles in responding to crises, such as catastrophic agriculture- and food-related events?

8. In light of the 2001 anthrax attack, the proliferation of institutions maintaining high-consequence biological pathogens, and the many weaknesses we found in securing such pathogens at the Plum Island Animal Disease facility, significant management challenges continue regarding the safety and security of pathogens maintained at numerous laboratories across the United States. What types of experiences have you had that might demonstrate your abilities to manage and lead in such critical, high-risk, rapidly changing situations?
9. We will, in all likelihood, continue to hear about animal diseases in the news media, such as avian influenza and mad cow disease, which can cause illness and death in humans. The potential for this type of illness has a negative effect on the public, who fear illness and avoid products that they believe present a risk, thereby having a negative effect on industry, in terms of lost revenues and jobs. Do you have experience that will help ensure that consumers are well informed on a timely basis when episodic events arise? What are key steps that need to be taken during a crisis to address and contain the potential animal disease threat, public fear, and the effect on industry?

Addressing Civil Rights Issues

10. What has been your background in dealing with civil rights performance problems and ensuring a work environment that is free from discrimination and provides equal opportunity for all? How could your leadership help turn around the long-standing poor civil rights performance of the department?

Improving Food Assistance Program Integrity

11. In recent years, the department has made great strides in reducing fraud in its nutrition assistance programs, yet challenges remain. Have you been successful in identifying, preventing, or addressing fraud? If so, how could those experiences help the department effectively build on past efforts to improve program integrity and continue to make improvements especially in the food stamp and school lunch programs?
12. Given the current economic climate and rising food prices, increasing numbers of households may find they are eligible for and in need of nutrition assistance. The department's Food and Nutrition Service endeavors to ensure that those with the greatest need enroll in nutrition assistance programs while ensuring that recent progress in

improving the integrity of food stamps and other federal nutrition programs continues. Have you been involved in efforts to target assistance programs to those—and only those—in need of and eligible for benefits? What related insights and guidance would you offer to the Food and Nutrition Service?

13. Obesity has become recognized as a major health threat that jeopardizes the well-being of millions of Americans. In your work, have you ever attempted to address negative trends that have multiple causes and come about over time, such as obesity? Based on your knowledge or lessons learned, to what extent can or should the department be involved in addressing the obesity issue?

Protecting Natural Resources

14. Wildland fires continue to threaten our nation's public lands and communities and consume significant appropriations. GAO reports dating back to 1999 have recommended that the Forest Service, along with agencies in the Department of the Interior, develop a cohesive strategy that identifies options and associated funding to reduce wildfire fuels and address wildland fire problems, and develop a tactical plan that lays out the steps and time frames needed to develop such a strategy. How would you go about developing a cohesive fire strategy that identifies long-term options and associated funding needs for responding to wildland fire issues? What steps could you take to contain and manage the costs of the strategy?
15. Forest pests have caused substantial damage in the past and continue to pose a serious threat to the nation's environment and economy. How have you networked with local, regional, and other organizations such as may be needed to implement cost-effective early warning systems for invasive forest pests, particularly in urban and suburban forests that are at high risk of receiving invasive insects and disease?

Improving Management of the Competitive Sourcing Program

16. The President's Management Agenda included a governmentwide initiative to improve government efficiency and reduce costs of government programs by promoting competition between federal employees and private sector organizations. What is your management experience in competing for work? How would you improve the department's efforts in this area?

Defining "Rural" for Housing Programs

17. The department's Economic Research Service has developed a number of density-based approaches that can be used to measure the "rurality" of an area, based on, for example, whether residents are within

commuting distance to, or constitute the labor market for, an urban area. What, if any, programs have you managed that provided economic services to people living in rural communities? Based on the knowledge you acquired managing those programs, what factors would you use to update the definition of “rural” for the department’s rural housing programs?

Assessing the Multifamily Housing Portfolio

18. Rural Development has been administering the department’s Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization demonstration program. Do you have experience with pilot or temporary demonstration programs? What criteria should be used to determine whether such programs are meeting their goals? What should be considered in determining whether the current structure is adequate to preserve all the properties identified by the Rural Housing Service as structurally sound but in need of updates and repair, or whether permanent legislation would be required?

Implementing the Agricultural Systems Initiative

19. The department is undertaking an information systems modernization effort known as MIDAS. Have you ever taken an organization through information systems modernization? How close were the cost and completion estimates to the actual numbers when all systems were operational? What insights can you share that might help the department ensure that MIDAS is successful and delivered within cost and schedule estimates?

Addressing Concerns about Renewable Fuels

20. Meeting our renewable fuel standard’s goal of 36 billion gallons of biofuels annually by 2022 will stretch our use of water, arable land, and other resources. Can you describe your skills in managing the achievement of long-term goals? With those skills and your understanding, are you comfortable planning to reach the renewable fuel standard’s goal without overburdening these resources?

Point of Contact: Patricia Dalton, Managing Director, Natural Resources & Environment, (202) 512-3841 or daltonp@gao.gov.

Appendix II: Department of Commerce

The historic mission of the Department of Commerce is “to foster, promote, and develop the foreign and domestic commerce” of the United States. This has evolved, as a result of legislative and administrative additions, to encompass broadly the responsibility to foster, serve, and promote the nation’s economic development and technological advancement. The department comprises 12 bureaus that further this mission through their goals. These bureaus include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Bureau of the Census, the International Trade Administration, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). For fiscal year 2009, the department requested about \$8.73 billion to implement its various missions and programs, including about \$4.1 billion for NOAA and about \$3.1 billion for the Census Bureau.

Two department bureaus in particular face upcoming challenges that we believe merit the attention of America’s senior leadership. First, NOAA’s capacity to provide critical weather-forecasting services has been hampered by ineffective oversight of satellite contracts worth billions of dollars. Second, as the Census Bureau approaches the constitutionally mandated 2010 Census, there have been performance deficiencies and uncertain, escalating costs.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving Acquisition of Weather-Forecasting Satellites• Ensuring an Effective Census |
|--|

Questions

Improving Acquisition of Weather-Forecasting Satellites

1. The National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) program was restructured in 2006 to decrease program complexity and address growing costs. As a result, the program was directed to remove some critical climate and space environment measuring sensors from the program. More than 2 years after this occurred, agencies still have not agreed upon appropriate paths forward for these sensors or measurements. What experience do you have collaborating across organizational boundaries that will help you ensure that this interagency process works smoothly and quickly? What practices are key to ensuring that this long-term planning will take place?
2. What prior experience, if any, do you have with interagency agreements (such as those affecting the NPOESS program)? What are

specific key practices to assure that interagency agreements are made in a timely manner and maintained appropriately?

3. In the past, GAO has reported lessons learned from satellite acquisitions such as underestimating program costs and the unanticipated expansion of the program's scope. What specific large-scale acquisitions have you been involved in? Have acquisitions you have been involved in experienced cost overruns or expansions in scope? What lessons have you learned from your prior experiences that will ensure that future acquisitions, such as the GOES-R program, do not also experience similar problems?

Ensuring an Effective Census

4. The 2010 Census is less than 2 years away. What do you think are the key challenges facing its managers, and what advice would you give them to help overcome those challenges?
5. In March 2008, GAO placed the 2010 Census on its list of high-risk federal programs because of long-standing weaknesses in the Census Bureau's information technology (IT) acquisition and contract management function, risks associated with the performance of its handheld computers, uncertainty over the ultimate cost of the 2010 Census, and the elimination of several operations from the 2008 Dress Rehearsal. What experience, if any, do you have that prepares you to deal with such technical management concerns? Based on that, what steps do you think might mitigate these risks and ensure that the 2010 Census is a success?
6. The bureau plans to spend an estimated \$3 billion on IT investments for the 2010 Census. Management of these large investments will be important to the success of the Decennial Census. Do you have experience overseeing or managing such large contracts? What do you think is most important to ensuring that IT contracts meet expected cost, schedule, and performance?
7. Many agencies are involved in the data collection and dissemination of federal statistics, including the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Do you have experiences with significant data sharing among statistical agencies? How would you balance data sharing with concerns about privacy and confidentiality?
8. In June 2005, GAO reported that 45 percent of the workforce at the Census Bureau will be eligible to retire by 2010. Have you ever been faced with the prospect of projected high staff turnover? What did you

do about it? Are there key steps that you believe are useful in carrying out effective succession planning?

9. The Department of Commerce could be described as a federal holding company of sorts, including a diverse group of agencies and programs with wide-ranging missions. Have you ever been involved in managing an organization with such a diverse set of missions, objectives, cultures, and constituencies? What key management principles do you believe are most important to the effective and integrated management of the Department of Commerce?

Point of Contact: Mathew Scirè, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, (202) 512-6794 or sciremj@gao.gov.

Appendix III: Department of Defense

The Department of Defense's mission is to defend the United States from attack upon its territory and to secure its interests abroad. Through the coordinated efforts of the military services, defense agencies, combatant commands, and other components, it provides and supports the forces needed to deter war and protect the security of the United States. With an annual appropriation of about \$512 billion for fiscal year 2009 and supplemental funding of about \$807 billion in the past several years to support the global war on terror, the department has been entrusted with more of the taxpayers' dollars than any other federal agency. Given its size and mission, the department is one of the largest and most complex organizations to manage in the world.

The department faces a number of management challenges and underlying fiscal pressures. It continues to experience a mismatch between its programs and budget due to overly optimistic planning assumptions, and the lack of a strategic approach to investment decision making. Extended operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have taken a toll on readiness, especially in the Army and Marine Corps. Rebuilding readiness is a costly and complex effort but will be even more challenging because, at the same time, the department is pursuing broad-based initiatives to reshape and grow the size of the force, and modernize and transform capabilities. It is also experiencing rising personnel costs for pay and compensation, and health care, as well as significant growth in the costs of its weapon system programs. Striking an affordable balance between current and future defense needs will be an ongoing challenge, particularly with the nation's fiscal imbalance. The department spends billions on its business operations, but long-standing weaknesses have resulted in substantial waste and inefficiency. For example, eight individual items on GAO's list of high-risk government operations and several of the governmentwide high-risk areas apply to the department's business operations. The department has initiated actions to transform these operations and produced some positive results, but significant challenges remain.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Developing Affordable Plans and Budgets to Accomplish Missions
- Rebuilding Near-Term Readiness and Transforming Capabilities to Meet Threats
- Sizing and Organizing the Force to Meet National Security Demands
- Managing Weapon System Programs
- Developing Cost-Effective Pay and Compensation Strategies
- Improving Health Care for Servicemembers and Veterans
- Stabilizing Regions in Conflict
- Transforming Business Operations
 - Establishing an Overall Management Approach
 - Establishing Financial Management Operations
 - Managing Business System Investments
 - Reducing Contract Risk
 - Providing Logistics Support
 - Creating and Maintaining Support Infrastructure
 - Developing an Effective Process for Granting Security Clearances

Questions

Developing Affordable Plans and Budgets to Accomplish Missions

1. To what extent do you have experience in managing complex organizations with large budgets, including developing near-term and long-term investment strategies, prioritizing resource needs, and balancing needs with resource constraints to prepare affordable program plans and funding requests? Given the significant challenges facing the department to address current, emerging, and future threats and the considerable increases in the department's funding to address these threats, if confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to identify defense plans and budgets that are linked to a strategic, risk-based framework?
2. Describe your ability to develop ways to change the historical allocation of resources across services and programs so the new allocations reflect the results of a forward-looking comprehensive threat risk assessment and capabilities-based approach to determine defense needs.
3. The department currently continues to identify funding needs for its longer war against terror separately from its base defense needs. Funding needs for the war on terror include expenses that it considers to be related to ongoing military operations, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, because of the growing similarities between items included in the department's funding requests for the war on

terror and base defense needs, it is becoming increasingly difficult for decision makers to achieve transparency of the department's total funding picture. What has been your experience in managing and developing complex and multifaceted budgets, and developing and implementing fiscal guidance to ensure consistent approaches to estimating funding needs within organizational entities? How do you plan to apply your knowledge and skills to provide Congress and the taxpayers more transparency over the total defense budget?

**Rebuilding Near-Term
Readiness and
Transforming Capabilities
to Meet Threats**

4. The military services face significant challenges in equipping, training, and preparing forces for the ongoing large-scale operations as well as maintaining readiness to meet other operational requirements. How does your background and experience enable you to address these pervasive problems?
5. Given the enormous challenges facing the department to rebuild the military forces, what experience will you apply to ensure that the department takes steps to manage these near- and long-term efforts? Specifically, describe how your qualifications and experience have prepared you to develop and implement a comprehensive investment strategy, including plans, timelines, and funding priorities, to tackle this critical need to rebuild the readiness of U.S. forces. How would you hold managers accountable for implementing actions, meeting timelines, and developing risk-based rationales to fund investments?

**Sizing and Organizing the
Force to Meet National
Security Demands**

6. The department has moved from sizing and organizing its forces based on specific threats, as it did in the Cold War era, to identifying capabilities the combatant commanders need to face a broad range of threats and managing capabilities by portfolios across the services rather than individual service programs. What factors do you see as most important in making choices about how to size and organize the military services, including the role of the reserve component?
7. The department has become increasingly reliant on contractors to support deployed forces. What experience do you have in managing large-scale contracting and what actions do you believe the department should take to improve its management and oversight of contractors?
8. Six years after its establishment, the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) is still "finding its way" as a federal joint military command with operational responsibilities in the continental United

States to defend the homeland and assist civil authorities. NORTHCOM's missions are likely to include other federal departments as well as state and local agencies. How would you ensure that NORTHCOM is an effective organization in the future in terms of defending the homeland as well as assisting civil authorities?

Managing Weapon System Programs

9. The department's weapon system acquisition has been on GAO's high-risk list since the list began in 1990. Since that time, the department has made what GAO has called well-conceived changes to its acquisition policies, but outcomes are still not improving. In your view, why is this issue so immune to improvement? What in your experience prepares you to further improve management of the department's acquisition system to reduce its susceptibility to cost growth, delivery delays, and poor performance?
10. The department's budget process allocates resources on a roughly proportional basis across the military services. Do you have experience that would help you to encourage the department to reexamine the status quo and reallocate budget authority across the military services when priorities call for it? For example, the department has committed to spending about \$10 billion each year on missile defense for the foreseeable future, while the Navy is canceling ship programs because it does not have the money, and the Army cannot afford to recapitalize the assets it is bringing back from war theaters. How would you help us reexamine the levels of investment we are committing to each portfolio of capability?
11. It seems quite clear that there will not be enough money in future budgets to cover the costs (currently underreported) of the weapon system programs currently underway. How would you propose that we tackle this problem? How would you go about making choices, if available funds will not cover current acquisition commitments?
12. When an agency starts an acquisition program, commercial best practices indicate there needs to be a match between the requirements of the program and the resources (time, money, and people) needed to execute it. What do you believe are the key steps to ensure that your agency has sufficient workforce capacity before starting a major acquisition program? What has been your experience with tracking the people-cost of running an acquisition program, and do you think it should be a specific part of that program's budget?

Developing Cost-Effective
Pay and Compensation
Strategies

13. Given the constrained fiscal environment and the lack of transparency over military compensation costs, what steps would you take to manage growing compensation costs while ensuring that the compensation strategy effectively meets the department's recruiting and retention goals? How does your background and experience prepare you to determine to what extent the current military compensation system is affordable and sustainable?
14. Internal safeguards, such as transparency over rating results and meaningful distinctions in employee performance, are an integral part of successful performance management systems in the federal government. Based on your prior experience and knowledge, what steps would you take to ensure that meaningful distinctions are made in employee performance and that civilian employees do not perceive quotas or "forced distributions" as part of the performance management system?

Improving Health Care for
Servicemembers and
Veterans

15. The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs (VA) are in the process of pilot testing an integrated approach to determining disability benefits for servicemembers leaving active duty service. Have you been involved in taking two different processes and combining them into one integrated process? What would be key steps to follow in doing so?
16. In recent years, problems have been identified with the Department of Defense and VA efforts to coordinate the care of servicemembers returning from military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as veterans from those military operations. Can you tell us about a specific example where you had responsibility for enhancing collaboration across significant organizational boundaries, such as is needed to coordinate care for this population and manage the transition from Department of Defense to VA care?
17. What steps would you take to ensure that servicemembers returning from military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are appropriately screened, diagnosed, and treated for mental health and other conditions?

Stabilizing Regions in
Conflict

18. What skills and abilities do you have that would prepare you for managing government programs that are implemented in war zones or regions in conflict?

19. What experience do you have successfully working with a wide variety of civilian and military stakeholders and balancing competing priorities, approaches, and objectives?
 20. Does your background provide you with any lessons learned for developing comprehensive strategic plans and using these plans to measure progress toward achieving goals in regions in conflict?
-

Transforming Business Operations

Establishing an Overall Management Approach

21. The department spends billions of dollars to sustain key business operations intended to support the warfighters. While the department has taken positive steps toward achieving reforms on its business side, significant inefficiencies continue to exist, including the lack of sound requirements and processes, sustained leadership, and a comprehensive and integrated enterprisewide business plan. Describe your ability to manage large reform efforts, including establishing management accountability, governance structures, and integrated strategic plans to guide reform efforts and investment decisions.
22. As required by statute, the department has established a Chief Management Officer (CMO) and Deputy CMO at the departmentwide level, and CMO positions within the military departments. What experience have you had in organizing large institutions that will allow you to further guide the refinement of the roles, responsibilities, and relationships among these positions over the next few years? Given that the Deputy Secretary of Defense serves as the CMO and performs many other duties, what actions would be necessary to ensure that the business side of the department gets the proper attention?
23. How has your background prepared you to establish management actions and timelines to identify performance goals and measures, conduct regular performance reporting and progress reports, and show clear linkages to budgets for improving and evaluating the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the business operations of the department? How would you hold managers accountable to meet these milestones efficiently and effectively?

Establishing Financial Management Operations

24. The department faces tremendous challenges in transforming its financial management operations. How do your background and experience prepare you to understand and address challenges that not only hinder the department's ability to produce auditable financial

statements, but more importantly to produce timely, reliable, and relevant financial data for decision making?

25. Financial management is dependent upon other business processes and systems to provide the data and other information needed to support financial accountability. What do you think should be done to ensure that the department's efforts to improve financial management are reflective of an integrated approach with shared goals, objectives, and measures?
26. A clean financial-statement audit opinion is an important transformation goal; however, neither the department nor its military components have yet to achieve this goal because they have failed to address the underlying material weaknesses in their business systems, operations, processes, and controls that have adversely affected reported financial-statement information. What steps would you take to ensure that material weaknesses that impede financial reporting are identified and addressed in an effective and sustainable manner?
27. What steps would you take to understand and address how the department's financial management community can support internal and external department oversight, accountability, and decision making?
28. What skills do you bring that will enable you to ensure that at the institutional level, the department extends (federates) its corporate Business Enterprise Architecture (BEA) and related transition plan to its component organizations? How will you ensure that the plan reflects the department's complete investment portfolio, and its corporate and component investment management processes are effectively defined and institutionalized at all levels of the organization?
29. In the absence of a well-defined federated architecture, how would you ensure that department programs are being defined and implemented in a way that sufficiently ensures interoperability and avoids duplication and overlap, which are goals of BEA and the department's related business system investment management approach?
30. Describe experience that will help you to ensure that the thousands of department business-system programs and projects employ acquisition management rigor and discipline, including economically justifying investments on the basis of reliable estimates of future costs and benefits; pursuing investments within the context of an enterprise architecture; and adequately executing key acquisition functions, such

Managing Business System
Investments

as requirements management, risk management, test management, performance management, and contract management.

Reducing Contract Risk

31. Setting the tone at the top is essential for assuring that the department's acquisition personnel adhere to sound contracting practices. What steps would you take to establish and communicate your vision, goals, and values to an organization as diverse and complex as the department?
32. The department generally has established sound policies to govern its acquisitions, but such policies are not always reflected in the department's practices on individual programs or acquisition decisions. What approach would you take to assure that the department's policies are consistently implemented throughout the department?
33. What would be your highest priorities with regard to assuring that the acquisition workforce is capable of meeting the demands posed by the increasing volume and complexity of contracting activity?
34. Do you believe the department has become overly dependent on contractors to support key functions or missions? If so, what steps would you take to identify and mitigate the risks that such dependence might pose?

Providing Logistics Support

35. From a management perspective, please address what you see as the main challenges in integrating and optimizing the department's end-to-end supply system given the diffused organization and funding of the department's logistics operations?
36. Could you describe your ability to develop and use performance and cost metrics of the type that could and should be used as a basis to monitor the effectiveness and the efficiency of the department's supply system?
37. What experiences have you had in managing the implementation of new logistics technologies and processes across a large enterprise, and what do you see as the keys to successfully managing such changes?

Creating and Maintaining Support Infrastructure

38. What management principles or criteria do you think should be relied upon when considering whether to redirect authorized funds to other unrelated purposes, as the department persistently does with funds for the sustainment, modernization, and restoration of base facilities?

Developing an Effective
Process for Granting Security
Clearances

39. What experience do you have with the development or refinement of models or processes for estimating cost savings, such as the ones that may need to be done for developing the initial costs and savings estimates that would be required in the event of another base realignment and closure (BRAC) round?
40. What experience do you possess that you will be able to call upon to help implement such challenging initiatives as transforming the military in such areas as supply-chain management and the delivery of medical health care for military personnel and their families through the department's BRAC process?
41. What experience do you have that will help the department to efficiently implement and pay for the significant base realignments underway through the BRAC, Grow the Force, Army Modularity, overseas rebasing, and Guam military buildup initiatives in the limited period of time available and in an era of constrained budgets? What, in your opinion, are good ways to communicate with local communities surrounding affected bases?
42. Long-standing delays in granting personnel security clearances and a variety of other problems continue to persist that heighten the risk that classified information will be disclosed to unauthorized personnel. It is recognized throughout the federal government that the clearance process needs to be overhauled. Based on your involvement with transformation efforts, what best practices would you use to follow through with such a transformation of the clearance process?
43. Could you elaborate on your experience managing the trade-offs between complying with legal deadlines for timeliness and not compromising quality, such as is required with security clearance investigations and adjudications?

Point of Contact: Janet St. Laurent, Managing Director, Defense Capabilities and Management, (202) 512-4300 or stlaurentj@gao.gov.

Appendix IV: Department of Education

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. The department focuses on establishing policies on federal financial aid for education and distributing and monitoring those funds; collecting data on America's schools and disseminating research; focusing national attention on key educational issues; and prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to education. For fiscal year 2009, the department requested almost \$65 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding, including over \$22 billion for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and over \$22 billion for federal student aid.

In the coming years, the United States will continue to face increased economic competition from countries around the world. While the shift to a global economy, technological advances, and changing population demographics challenge existing federal approaches to educating the nation's people, these changes make ensuring that all citizens have access to a high quality education all the more important. Yet, not all students in this country are receiving the education they need to be successful. For example, a 2006 study of 30 advanced countries found that American 15-year-olds ranked 25th in math and 21st in science and that large achievement gaps persist for students of different backgrounds. In addition, many of the federal government's higher-education policy tools, designed decades ago, may not be as well suited for an increasingly diverse population. Moreover, the cost of attending college has increased, heightening concerns that underserved populations specifically targeted by federal aid may be precluded from attending college or opt to attend schools that may not align well with their needs. As a backdrop to this concern, the recent instability in the credit markets has resulted in a number of lenders who have reduced or ceased their participation in the loan program and some are concerned about the ability of the federal government's student loan programs to fill this void.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving Student Achievement in Elementary and Secondary Schools
 - Improving Oversight of Federal Student Aid Programs
 - Ensuring Continued Access to Federal Student Loans
-

Questions

Improving Student Achievement in Elementary and Secondary Schools

1. How would your management experience, skills, and abilities help the department assist states in raising student achievement?
2. Can you talk about any prior efforts you have undertaken to improve the quality of program management data? What challenges did you face, and how did you address them? What tools do you think you would be prepared to use to improve the quality of education achievement data reported by states?
3. Does your background involve helping to assure that funding or program benefits are well targeted to those most in need of them? What are some key steps toward implementing a risk-based, need-based, or other system of prioritizing the direction of program funds or technical assistance resources?
4. Given the limited federal role in K-12 education, would you describe two or three specific experiences you have had in intergovernmental relationships that demonstrate your readiness to help guide federal approaches to providing states technical assistance and oversight in the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?

Improving Oversight of Federal Student Aid Programs

5. What experience, if any, do you have with monitoring and other internal controls over financial transactions that might prepare you to ensure that the Department of Education is effectively monitoring schools and lenders to identify and address improper lending activities?
6. Can you describe a role you may have had in developing or implementing performance measures or fraud indicators that are designed to identify emerging areas of risk and potential instances of noncompliance? How qualified are you to help the department monitor schools and lenders' participation and compliance with the rules in federal student aid programs?

**Ensuring Continued
Access to Federal Student
Loans**

7. Improper lending activities among lenders participating in the Federal Family Education Loan Program can hamper student access to federal support for higher education. Do you have any familiarity with how a monitoring or reporting system designed to document and follow up on “bad apples” might have to work? What type of criteria might an organization have to rely on to take action in response to lenders with improper practices that are not necessarily illegal?

8. GAO has reported that the Office of Federal Student Aid has had weak management controls and difficulty accounting for the cost of one of its capital improvement programs. What is your familiarity with management and cost controls? Can you describe how you have used management controls to improve transparency or accountability?

Point of Contact: Cynthia M. Fagnoni, Managing Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, (202) 512-7202 or fagnonic@gao.gov.

Appendix V: Department of Energy

The Department of Energy's overarching mission is to advance the national, economic, and energy security of the United States; to promote scientific and technological innovation in support of that mission; and to ensure the environmental cleanup of the national nuclear weapons complex. The department's eight program offices such as the Offices of Science and Environmental Management, six separately organized agencies such as the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), and 21 National Laboratories and Technology Centers such as Los Alamos and Oak Ridge National Laboratories, work together to accomplish this mission. For fiscal year 2009, the department requested more than \$25 billion to implement its programs, including \$5.3 billion for environmental cleanup, \$6.6 for nuclear weapon activities, and more than \$5 billion for science and technology.

The department faces numerous challenges, including conducting energy-related research and development and the management and protection of key assets—such as the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—that are vital to the nation's energy and national security. In addition, the department faces challenges in maintaining the safety, reliability, and physical and information security of the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile in the absence of clear Department of Defense requirements and with an inefficient and outmoded nuclear weapons complex. The department's nonproliferation efforts, while having some positive effects, need to be reviewed for relevance and effectiveness. Underlying these issues are the continued and related problems of the department's contract administration and project management of large and complex projects and the department's human capital challenge of developing and retaining a skilled workforce capable of overseeing those projects.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve
- Developing Advanced Energy Technologies
- Addressing Concerns about Renewable Fuels
- Improving Energy Efficiency
- Transforming the Nuclear Weapons Complex
- Improving Contract Administration and Project Management
- Strengthening Cyber Security
- Consolidating Surplus Nuclear Material
- Assessing Nonproliferation Efforts

Questions

Filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve

1. GAO has recommended that the cost of filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve be reduced and the reserve made more effective by exchanging some of the lighter oil currently stored in the reserve for less-expensive heavier oil. What experiences have you had that would bear on your decision of whether to adopt GAO's recommendations?
2. GAO has recommended options to improve the cost-effectiveness of filling the reserve, including the adoption of a dollar-cost averaging strategy when purchasing fill oil and allowing oil companies more flexibility to defer delivery of oil to the reserve in return for additional deliveries in the future. Both of these strategies involve reducing the rate of filling the reserve when oil prices are higher and increasing the rate of fill when prices are lower. What prior experience do you have in managing large assets in a cost-effective way and, given that experience, how would you go about assessing these options to improve the cost-effectiveness of filling the Reserve?
3. Both GAO and the department's own Inspector General have questioned the efficiency and transparency of filling the reserve by trading royalty oil received from the Department of the Interior. What prior experience, if any, do you have with the use of management and accounting controls to ensure transparency with highly visible or potentially controversial transactions? What types of reporting or communication strategies have you used in the past to ensure the appropriate transparency of sensitive decisions?
4. With over 700 million barrels of oil currently in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, there are sufficient reserves to meet all but the most extreme oil supply disruptions. However, as demand for oil rises in the future, the level of protection provided by the reserve may fall unless it

increases along with demand. What do you see as the trade-offs in deciding how large the reserve should be? What criteria or decision process would you suggest for deciding when to fill the reserve with an eye to managing cost?

Developing Advanced Energy Technologies

5. State and local governments, other nations, and the worldwide private sector have shown interest in advanced energy technology development. Have you ever leveraged such a broad range of entities in trying to direct the efforts of your own organization? What prepares you to determine the appropriate federal government role and lead the department in the development of advanced renewable, fossil, and nuclear energy technologies?
6. The federal government faces severe fiscal challenges and limited budgets, and that will put pressure on all discretionary spending, including federally funded research and development in advanced energy technologies. What successes can you cite in building a business case for long-term investments involving high uncertainty? What do you think are key strategies for ensuring taxpayers get the most “bang for the buck” from department-funded and other federally funded research and development efforts for advanced energy technologies?
7. Besides direct funding, what other federal policies, incentives, standards, and mandates will be important in the development of advanced energy technologies? How familiar are you with these various “governance” tools, and how are you prepared to coordinate them with direct funding?

Addressing Concerns about Renewable Fuels

8. During 2008, food prices skyrocketed and some have attributed these price increases, at least in part, to increased demand for corn and other biofuel feedstock. Would any of your prior experiences help you coordinate the implementation of energy and agriculture policies in a way that would identify and mitigate any unintended consequences of one policy on another? How so?
9. Meeting our renewable fuel standard’s goal of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels annually by 2022 will stretch our use of water, arable land, and other resources. Can you describe the kinds of long-term strategic planning that you have done that might help us attain such a goal without overburdening these resources?

Improving Energy Efficiency

10. Sustained high prices for all types of energy and concerns about the United States' dependence on imported fuels have raised concerns about our energy security. While improving the security of supply is important, reducing demand for energy could also be part of a strategy to improve our energy security. The department sets appliance efficiency standards and funds some research and development in energy efficiency. How would you look for crosscutting solutions to address energy security concerns? And what specific principles or criteria would you turn to to balance supply versus demand policies?
11. The Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the Department of Transportation share responsibility for encouraging and enabling energy conservation. What experiences do you have that would enable you to help successfully lead this joint effort? Can you describe specific examples where you have successfully collaborated across organizational boundaries to achieve a common goal?

Transforming the Nuclear Weapons Complex

12. The department is planning a 25-year, \$80 billion transformation of the nation's nuclear weapons complex from Cold War legacy facilities into a modern organization. This transformation—including the construction of major new facilities—is being planned without clear requirements from the Department of Defense about its weapons and stockpiling needs. Can you describe any major planning efforts you have been involved in that had to proceed with great uncertainty about key parameters or operating assumptions? How does an organization proceed with its planning in a way that accommodates such uncertainty?
13. Drawing on your experiences, how does an organization sustain its focus on a multiyear, long-term program that is likely to transcend at least several administrations?
14. Transforming the nuclear weapons complex will require that the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense collaborate and work closely together to develop a future vision for the nuclear weapons stockpile. What role, if any, have you played in carrying out organizational transformation? What do you think are some of the key implementation steps to a successful organizational transformation? Can you describe specific examples where you have successfully facilitated cooperation and collaboration across organizational boundaries to achieve a common goal?

Improving Contract Administration and Project Management

15. Although the department spends billions of dollars on contracts, the department's contract and project management has been on GAO's high-risk list for fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement since the list's inception in 1990. Please provide us examples of how you have addressed issues of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in your current or past roles. How would you apply those experiences at the department?
16. Have you overseen or managed complex projects? Were they completed within cost and on schedule? What challenges or pitfalls do you believe are common in contract and project management, and how do you overcome them?
17. The department has had problems managing human capital shortfalls, including insufficient staff with project management experience. What successes have you had in attracting and retaining highly qualified and technically proficient staff?
18. Based on your experiences, what are the most significant barriers in the U.S. government to building and retaining the human capital needed to manage complex projects? How do you propose to overcome these barriers?

Strengthening Cyber Security

19. The department must balance the physical security of key assets, including nuclear weapons and special nuclear material, with the security of its sensitive computer and information systems. The department must actively engage in risk management that seeks to address vulnerabilities, consequences, and costs of real and potential threats. Can you describe how in your prior work you have developed and implemented risk management strategies? What were the risks you were trying to balance? How successful were these strategies?
20. What are your qualifications and experience to manage the information sharing and security needs of large, complex organizations like the department and its contractors?
21. Have you successfully managed a large blended workforce, ensuring uniform compliance with cyber security policies? What steps are key to ensure that the department's numerous contractor employees, in multiple locations throughout the United States, are complying with the department's cyber security policies?

**Consolidating Surplus
Nuclear Material**

22. Consolidation of the department's special nuclear material is a complex task involving multiple department organizations. How does your background qualify you to ensure that department organizations and other actors, such as state governments, are coordinating sufficiently to allow the department's consolidation plans to come to fruition? Please provide examples of how you have facilitated successful interorganizational cooperation and collaboration.
23. Consolidation of the department's special nuclear material involves difficult trade-offs between the competing priorities of safety, security, cost, and programmatic need. How have you managed sensitive trade-offs between competing priorities—such as these—in your career?

**Assessing Nonproliferation
Efforts**

24. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. government, led by the department's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), has spent more than \$11 billion to reduce the proliferation risks posed by nuclear and radiological materials and warheads at facilities in Russia and other countries. Given that the department's nonproliferation efforts involve a number of foreign countries, what kinds of international or diplomatic qualifications do you have that might assist you furthering NNSA's nonproliferation efforts?
25. Given that NNSA's nonproliferation efforts involve other U.S. government agencies such as the Departments of Defense and State, can you describe some examples of your facilitating successful interorganizational cooperation and collaboration?
26. Some of the department's nonproliferation programs are coming to an end after 15 years. What experience do you have in successfully terminating programs? What experience do you have in maintaining morale and retaining key staff during downsizing efforts?

Point of Contact: Patricia Dalton, Managing Director, Natural Resources & Environment, (202) 512-3841 or daltonp@gao.gov.

Appendix VI: Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services' mission is to protect the health of Americans and provide essential human services, especially for vulnerable populations. To support this mission, the department's 11 agencies—such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS); the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)—manage more than 300 federal health and social programs, which accounted for almost a quarter of all federal spending in 2008. For fiscal year 2009, the department requested \$805.5 billion to support its mandatory and discretionary spending, including \$711.2 billion for CMS and \$2.4 billion for FDA.

The department and its agencies face numerous management challenges. CMS faces challenges to improve management of Medicare and Medicaid and oversee patient care and safety in settings such as nursing homes and hospitals, while difficulties in ensuring the integrity of their payments undermine CMS's efforts to curb outlays in these high-risk programs. Due to weaknesses in agency capacity and data, FDA has had problems overseeing the safety and efficacy of medical products and limitations in strategic planning have hindered its food safety efforts. The department's efforts to strengthen preparedness for public health emergencies have been hampered by shortages in the public health workforce and difficulties in intergovernmental coordination. Finally, the department faces challenges in overseeing programs that target the well-being and economic independence of children and families. In particular, given that these programs are generally administered by states and grantees, the department is challenged to balance the quality of services, program participation and the integrity of these programs—which is especially critical given the potential for rising numbers of applicants and the needs of vulnerable individuals in an increasingly difficult labor market.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Reforming and Refining Medicare Payments
- Improving Medicare Program Management
- Enhancing Medicare Program Integrity
- Enhancing Medicaid Oversight
- Overseeing Patient Care and Safety
- Ensuring Medical Product Safety
- Ensuring Food Supply Safety
- Strengthening Emergency Preparedness
- Improving the Well-being of Children and Families

Questions

Reforming and Refining Medicare Payments

1. What unique knowledge, skills, and abilities would you bring to the department that would help you identify, negotiate, and implement measures to assure Medicare's fiscal sustainability?
2. Can you explain what experience and skills you would bring to an effort to shift Medicare from paying for a volume of care to being a prudent purchaser that pays for the value of care?
3. Private payers take many steps to restrain medical costs and maintain quality, such as guiding physicians toward more efficient care by using information on their practice patterns to compare them with their peers. Could you describe what experience you have had that could be helpful in managing the implementation of such practices by the federal government?

Improving Medicare Program Management

4. Can you describe the skills that you would bring to an effort to improve CMS oversight of beneficiary protections and fiscal management of Medicare Parts C and D?
5. What management experiences would you bring to the department to help CMS improve its oversight of Medicare and Medicaid providers?

Enhancing Medicare Program Integrity

6. Preventing enrollment of providers that lack integrity or have intentions to defraud Medicare is a key step to stem fraud and abuse. Have you ever successfully prevented fraud and abuse? What have you learned that would help strengthen critical preventive measures in this area?

Enhancing Medicaid Oversight

7. Given the size and growth of Medicaid as well as the diversity in funding and coverage levels across states, reforming how the Medicaid program is financed is going to be quite complex. Can you describe what has prepared you to help lead a reexamination of how Medicaid is financed?
8. Given the size and growth of Medicaid, there is significant financial risk associated with insufficient oversight of state Medicaid financial management—for example, addressing high levels of improper payments. How has your involvement in financial management at a previous organization helped reduce its financial risk? What would be key steps to help the department create an effective strategic plan for CMS financial management and oversight of Medicaid?
9. CMS continues to approve waivers to allow states to operate Medicaid demonstration programs even when those programs affect beneficiaries and increase the federal government’s potential financial liability substantially. If you were involved in efforts to improve the criteria and transparency of the process for reviewing and approving Medicaid demonstrations, what skills would you bring to the process? What principles would you use to improve the way that groups representing beneficiaries can provide federal-level input regarding waiver proposals?

Overseeing Patient Care and Safety

10. What skills, knowledge, and abilities would you bring to the department to improve patient safety and care quality?
11. When CMS revamped its Special Focus Facility program for poorly performing nursing homes in 2004, it promised to initiate progressive enforcement actions and to remove homes that failed to show improvement within 18 months, but several years later, some poorly performing nursing homes have been in the program for more than 36 months. Could you describe how your experience could help you better manage oversight of poorly performing nursing homes?
12. In the late 1990s, CMS initiated the development of a revised nursing home survey methodology to address shortcomings in surveyors’ abilities to identify all serious quality problems. As of September 2008, almost 10 years and more than \$10 million later, CMS has still not released the results of its evaluation of the new methodology nor its nationwide deployment plans. What experience can you bring to bear on moving along initiatives that seem to have stalled?

13. Since 2004, CMS's Survey and Certification Group—the entity responsible for oversight of Medicare and Medicaid providers—has undergone significant staffing reductions, while increasing concern has been focused on provider quality of care issues. How has your prior work ever involved you in managing after significant staffing reductions? Describe how you would ensure that CMS's workload to oversee care is managed, given its reduced staffing levels.

Ensuring Medical Product
Safety

14. What knowledge, skills, and abilities could you bring to bear to help FDA take short-term and long-term actions to improve the accuracy of the data it uses to manage its foreign inspections programs?
15. FDA has expressed interest in conducting a greater number of inspections of foreign establishments that manufacture drugs and medical devices for the U.S. market. Have you managed efforts operating in multiple countries and dealing with varying legal frameworks? Based on that experience, if any, what would be the most important steps for FDA to take when increasing its foreign inspections? And, since resources have been an issue for the agency, what steps could you take to ensure that FDA has all the resources it needs to take these important steps?
16. FDA has taken initial steps to collaborate more with drug regulators in foreign countries. What experience do you have that can help FDA further leverage the resources of foreign regulatory bodies to improve the information it has on foreign establishments that manufacture drugs and devices?
17. FDA's initiative to allow inspections of medical device manufacturers by third parties has faced obstacles to manufacturers' participation. What skills could you use to encourage greater manufacturer participation in such an inspection program?
18. FDA faces a great challenge in overseeing an enormous volume of promotional materials submitted by drug companies. Do you have any experiences that might illustrate your readiness to help FDA ensure that this growing volume of promotional material is not false or misleading?

Ensuring Food Supply
Safety

19. GAO has testified that FDA's Food Protection Plan presented positive first steps and urged additional information on strategies and resources as well as public reporting of the plan's progress. Can you

describe the skills that you could bring to an effort to ensure that FDA can protect the nation's food supply?

**Strengthening Emergency
Preparedness**

20. If you were to assume a position in the department, what would you do to encourage greater interest in joining the public health workforce?
21. What in your experience prepares you to help strengthen the department's intergovernmental relationships, particularly with the Department of Homeland Security, to improve preparedness and response for public health and medical emergencies?

**Improving the Well-being
of Children and Families**

22. Despite substantial federal and state investment in social services intended to support families and protect vulnerable youth, no state's child welfare system has been able to meet all of the expected outcomes as defined and measured by the department. Where, if at all, have you had successes in working with different levels of government to improve their programs? Would you please discuss how your experience might help the department address the challenges it faces in helping states improve their child welfare systems?
23. While many American children and families thrive, others live in poverty, increasing their risks for adverse outcomes, such as low educational attainment, poor health, and criminal activity. Would you discuss how your experience could be brought to bear in the department to ensure the effective and efficient operation of its programs to promote child well-being and economic independence for families?

Point of Contact: Marjorie Kanof, Managing Director, Health Care, (202) 512-7114 or kanofm@gao.gov.

Appendix VII: Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for securing the homeland from terrorist attacks. Formed in 2002 in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, the department's current mission is to prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation, ensure safe and secure borders, welcome lawful immigrants and visitors, and promote the free flow of commerce. The department is the integration of 22 component agencies, including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA); the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the U.S. Coast Guard. For fiscal year 2009, the department will receive about \$41.2 billion to implement its various missions and programs, including about \$4.4 billion for TSA and \$9.4 billion for the Coast Guard.

The department must remain prepared and vigilant with respect to securing the homeland, particularly during the presidential transition period, when the nation could be seen as vulnerable. Although the department has made progress in addressing major management and mission challenges, which prior GAO work has identified as key to successfully integrating its agencies into one department and effectively carrying out its homeland security mission, the department lacks not only a comprehensive strategy with overall goals and a timeline but also a dedicated management integration team to support its management integration efforts. In 2003, GAO designated the implementation and transformation of the newly created department as a high-risk area, where it remains today, due to the enormous undertaking required to manage the department's transformation, as well as the serious consequences that could face the nation if the department failed to effectively address its management and programmatic challenges. The department and its components are developing corrective action plans to address weaknesses in the management of financial, information technology, and acquisition systems. They are also making improvements in all mission areas, such as transportation security and emergency management. Finally, the department is developing partnerships with other levels of government and nongovernmental organizations and is starting to base many of its major investment decisions on risk.

Key Issues Needing Attention

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Effectively Coordinating the Mitigation of and Response to All Hazards
- Improving Interoperable Communications for Federal, State, and Local Public Safety Officials
- Enhancing the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

Border Security and Immigration

- Enhancing Border Security
- Improving Immigration Enforcement and Services
- Balancing the Department's Homeland Security Mission with Its Legacy Customs Functions

Transportation Security

- Strengthening Security of Surface Modes of Transportation
- Assessing Aviation Security Measures
- Balancing Resources across Missions and Enhancing Technologies to Improve Maritime Security
- Strengthening Container Security

Critical Infrastructure Protection

- Developing Strategies for Securing Critical Infrastructure
- Forming Partnerships in Securing Critical Infrastructure
- Making Trade-Offs Related to Protection and Resiliency

Transforming the Department of Homeland Security

- Integrating Management Functions
- Improving Acquisition Management
- Improving Financial Management and Controls
- Improving Real Property Management
- Applying Risk Management to Homeland Security Investments
- Improving Terrorist Information Sharing
- Protecting Privacy and Civil Liberties in a Post-9/11 Environment
- Strengthening Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement

Questions

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Effectively Coordinating the Mitigation of and Response to All Hazards

1. In 2008 the department issued the new National Response Framework, a summary of principles, participants, and structures rather than an operational plan for responding to national disasters. Can you cite a couple of examples of your involvement in the development of operational plans?

2. There is concern that the department and FEMA have not yet clarified how prepared they expect first responders to be. Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), providing direction and setting many expectations for the department and FEMA. Do you have significant experience ensuring that key executives and other partners have clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations?
3. GAO identified the potential for significant fraud and abuse as a result of FEMA's management of the Individuals and Households Program for disaster relief assistance in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Describe your views on the importance of financial management, in general, and what your role would be in addressing these challenges in order to provide accurate, relevant, and timely financial management information to decision makers.
4. Flaws in a disaster assistance program registration process resulted in what GAO estimated to be between \$600 million and \$1.4 billion in improper and potentially fraudulent payments due to invalid registration data. In your view, what can be done to improve the accuracy and integrity of federal payments? Does your experience suggest anything specific that the department and FEMA might do to prevent future problems in distributing disaster assistance through the Individual and Households Program?
5. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Homeland Security have not resolved how they will work together in the event of a disease outbreak where a presidential emergency or major disaster is declared. Do you have experience with continuity of operations and succession planning under emergencies? What key steps do you believe are necessary to ensure there is a clear understanding of leadership and agency roles in responding to catastrophic agriculture- and food-related events?
6. What experience do you have with assessing, developing, and implementing plans for integrating competing legacy systems? How are you prepared to help the department develop and implement a plan for improving emergency response interoperability among all levels of government?
7. GAO placed NFIP on its high-risk list in March 2006, following unprecedented losses from the 2005 hurricane season. At that time, GAO also cited a number of management challenges that need to be addressed including managing the inventory of subsidized properties and map modernization efforts, and mitigating losses from repetitive-

Improving Interoperable Communications for Federal, State, and Local Public Safety Officials

Enhancing the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

loss properties. What experience do you have relevant to addressing any of these specific management challenges confronting NFIP? How would you use that experience to help NFIP address these management challenges?

8. Although FEMA administers NFIP, an insurance program, FEMA's primary mission is emergency management, requiring a balance of demands. What examples can you cite where you have had to balance different, often competing goals? What key principles would you suggest for keeping in mind for situations where a choice across such competing goals needs to be made?
9. As you know, private-sector insurance companies that administer the NFIP, called Write-Your-Own insurers, are reimbursed and overseen by FEMA. What experience do you have in working with the insurance industry? Based on your past experience, what are your views about the inherent conflict of interest that exists between these private insurers that must adjust claims for both NFIP flood policies and their own homeowners' policies on the same property? What experience do you have in managing conflicts of interest and developing policies and procedures to effectively mitigate the challenges these conflicts can pose?

Border Security and Immigration

Enhancing Border Security

10. The department is pursuing the Secure Border Initiative, a multiyear, multibillion-dollar program aimed at securing U.S. borders and reducing illegal immigration. Concerns have been raised about whether early results are meeting user needs, and whether the department will be able to deliver the program on schedule and at cost. Do you have significant experience you can cite with major programs or initiatives depending on the integration of technology? What were key success factors? Based on your experiences, what would be key considerations for deciding whether to continue when faced with significant delays or cost overruns?
11. The department continues to invest hundreds of millions of dollars each year in its US-VISIT program intended to collect, maintain, and share information on selected foreign nationals who enter and exit the United States. However, the department still does not have an operational exit tracking capability. Given the extreme uncertainty of being able to develop an exit capability at land ports of entry, what

criteria do you think would be appropriate for determining whether to still pursue such a capability?

Improving Immigration Enforcement and Services

12. Most experts believe that the majority of those who migrate illegally to the United States do so to obtain employment. The department has a program called E-verify that provides participating employers with a means for electronically verifying employees' work eligibility, but mandating participation for the estimated 7.4 million employers in the United States would be challenging. What prior experience do you have that would help the federal government market the benefits of or provide incentives to participate in the program by the nation's employers?

13. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has had long-standing backlogs of immigration benefit applications and has a major program underway to transform its business processes. However, USCIS has previously attempted efforts to revise its business processes to no avail. Have you ever been involved in successful business transformation efforts? If so, what practices would you suggest to USCIS for its transformation program?

Balancing the Department's Homeland Security Mission with Its Legacy Customs Functions

14. In 2002, the U.S. Customs Service's historical responsibilities for enforcing trade laws and collecting customs duties, taxes, and fees were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security. The department's first priority is to enforce border measures to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States. GAO has identified several operational weaknesses within Customs and Border Protection's trade and customs revenue functions that could benefit from improved management attention. How does an executive approach balancing the department's homeland security mission with its customs revenue and trade functions? What are key steps a manager can take to help meet such a challenge?

Transportation Security

Strengthening Security of Surface Modes of Transportation

15. Regarding efforts to secure the transportation network, the department and TSA have made limited progress in defining TSA's role with respect to securing surface modes of transportation, including passenger rail, mass transit, freight rail, commercial vehicles, highway infrastructure, and pipelines. What has been your experience in helping an organization determine its role in a dynamic environment involving many partnerships? What key steps would your experience suggest that the department and TSA might take to define and

implement a strategy to strengthen security in these nonaviation modes?

Assessing Aviation Security Measures

16. Regarding efforts to secure commercial aviation, the security measures in place today in commercial airports have largely been shaped by legislation passed immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. What experiences do you have in implementing systemic, environmental, or procedural scans intended to identify opportunity for fundamental changes in organizational strategy or tactic? Explain how this experience might help the department and TSA identify any necessary fundamental changes to the existing security structure in place in airports today.

Balancing Resources across Missions and Enhancing Technologies to Improve Maritime Security

17. The Coast Guard and outside observers have noted problems with shortages of personnel and other resources devoted to maritime missions. The Commandant has hinted that the Coast Guard will be asking for more personnel and other resources in the fiscal year 2010 budget. In some cases, we have heard that Coast Guard has reduced its operations to better align with resource realities, raising concerns that the agency is just reducing operations arbitrarily to meet budget constraints. What relevant experiences can you cite where you have been involved in the trade-off between quality and budget? What are your views on how the department and its components should set and measure security standards and balance them against existing resources?

18. In most recent years, the vast majority of the Coast Guard's capital funding requests has been dedicated to the Deepwater program, leaving very little funding left for other acquisitions, construction, and improvements projects—such as replacing the ever-aging icebreakers and aids-to-navigation boats, and improving shore facilities. This has left the Coast Guard without modern equipment to perform some of its more routine missions. What experience do you have balancing the mission needs of high-visibility projects with other less-visible projects? What role do you think senior management should play in monitoring this trade-off?

Strengthening Container Security

19. For U.S. Customs and Border Protection container security programs and other component programs, the department has stationed its staff overseas to work with foreign governments, raising issues of high costs, security of personnel, language capabilities, and international sovereignty. In addition, there are concerns that components have not made clear determinations of how many staff need to be overseas and how they coordinate with other departments and components. What

experience, if any, do you have managing a multinational footprint and determining the right staffing needs for the right locations?

20. The Secure Freight Initiative is a pilot program to test the feasibility of 100 percent scanning of United States-bound container cargo. Such containers would be scanned regardless of their assessed risk level. A risk management approach generally calls for identifying higher risk threats (such as high-risk containers) and then applying resources against those threats—but not against all potential threats. Do you have experience with using either of these approaches in a security environment, or a blend of them? What would you advise for striking the balance between them?

Critical Infrastructure Protection

Developing Strategies for Securing Critical Infrastructure

21. As you know, the department has issued the National Infrastructure Protection Plan, and the individual sectors such as energy, banking, and agriculture have issued their plans. These plans do not always recognize their interdependencies. Can you describe a couple of examples of your involvement with strategic planning that involved multiple organizations or multiple sectors with interdependencies? What next steps would you suggest for identifying gaps and aligning disparate plans into an overall, long-term strategy to protect critical infrastructure?

Forming Partnerships in Securing Critical Infrastructure

22. Could you provide a couple of examples where you worked with state and local governments? What advice would you offer the department for involving state and local governments in the department's critical infrastructure protection efforts?
23. In light of the 2001 anthrax attack, the proliferation of institutions maintaining high-consequence biological pathogens, and the many weaknesses we found in securing such pathogens at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, what experience do you have with assuring security at geographically dispersed facilities with numerous stakeholders? What lessons do you offer to help the incoming administration assure the safety and security of pathogens maintained at numerous laboratories throughout the United States?

Making Trade-Offs Related to Protection and Resiliency

24. Industry has criticized the department for focusing on protection, rather than resiliency, that is, the ability to quickly recover from an incident. Do you have experience wrestling with such a trade-off? If so,

how would you balance protection with recovery in addressing critical infrastructure security?

Transforming the Department of Homeland Security

Integrating Management Functions

25. GAO has reported that departmental transformation takes at least 5-7 years. Can you describe how that compares to any fundamental transformations you have been involved with? Given the department's upcoming 6-year anniversary, what actions should the department undertake to promote an efficient transformation?
26. Have you ever been involved with the merger of disparate entities and the integration of their management functions, including acquisition management, financial management, human capital management and information-technology management? What lessons have you learned that will be useful to the department as it continues its own integration?
27. In order to build the management infrastructure needed to help support the department's integration and transformation, GAO recommended in 2005 that the department should develop an overarching management integration strategy for the department. Are you familiar with such a concept, and, if so, how? What elements do you believe are necessary for such a strategy to be useful and effective?
28. What are your thoughts/concerns regarding the establishment of a Chief Operating Officer or Chief Management Officer (CMO) as it relates to attaining sustained departmental leadership?

Improving Acquisition Management

29. What major acquisitions have you been involved in, and what is the appropriate role for department-level oversight of its major investments? Given long-standing concerns about the department's Investment Review Process and issues with major acquisitions such as Deepwater and SBInet, what advice would you offer to help ensure that the department's acquisitions stay within cost and on schedule, and perform as intended?
30. What experiences do you have relying on contractors to support major acquisitions? Given the department's extensive reliance on contractors, what would you suggest are the key considerations in

determining the appropriate role for contractors in supporting major acquisitions?

Improving Financial Management and Controls

- 31. Improving the acquisition workforce has been noted as one of the acquisition management priorities at the department. What experience have you had recruiting and retaining individuals with skills that are in high demand? How will this experience help the department make progress in recruiting, hiring, and retaining contract specialists, as well as address the challenge of filling the remaining acquisition workforce gaps?
- 32. What actions would you take to move the focus of the department's system-improvement efforts from getting a clean audit opinion to providing reliable, timely, and useful information to support day-to-day decision making and oversight and for the systematic measurement of performance?

Improving Real Property Management

- 33. All executive agencies are required to develop a physical security plan under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7, and the department has not developed one yet. Have you ever developed or managed the development of a physical security plan for an organization? What advice do you have for others doing so?
- 34. The Federal Protective Service faces funding and operational challenges as it provides physical security and law enforcement services to 9,000 General Services Administration (GSA) facilities. GAO has made several recommendations about how to address these challenges including developing and implementing a strategic approach to better manage staffing resources and evaluating current and alternative funding mechanisms. What experience do you have addressing staffing and funding constraints within an organization?
- 35. The department, currently dispersed in more than 80 buildings in more than 50 locations, would like to consolidate its headquarters on the western campus of the former St. Elizabeth's Hospital. What involvement have you had, if any, with consolidating the operations of an organization that are dispersed geographically? Did the consolidation go on schedule? What do you believe are key steps in assessing whether to make such a move?

Applying Risk Management to Homeland Security Investments

- 36. GAO has reported that the department has made varying levels of progress in making risk-based investment decisions, but that more work remains, including more centralized assessment and prioritization of risk across sectors. What has been your experience with using integrated risk management processes? How will you

leverage that experience to help collectively assess departmentwide priorities so that resources can be appropriately targeted across the department's broad areas of responsibility?

Improving Terrorist Information Sharing

37. Do you have experiences in either the private or public sector that suggest ways Congress can assist the department in strengthening the use of risk management to establish priorities for systems and assets that should be protected, and ensuring that resources are aligned with these priorities?
38. What has been your experience in aligning widespread internal information and knowledge systems to better leverage the sum of their knowledge? For example, what advice would you offer the department to ensure that each component in the department is collecting and sharing important information within the agency that could lead to tactical and strategic intelligence to help thwart possible terrorist threats?
39. Describe a specific experience of yours working across organizational boundaries to achieve a common goal with others and how it would help you ensure that the department is collecting and sharing important information with other federal agencies, as well as state, local, and tribal partners, which could lead to tactical and strategic intelligence to help thwart possible terrorist threats.
40. Citing your experiences working across organizational boundaries, what performance measures would you suggest for monitoring progress on implementation of interagency plans, such as the department's obligations to help implement the Information Sharing Environment that Congress mandated as a means to avoid the problems the tragedies of 9/11 exposed?

Protecting Privacy and Civil Liberties in a Post-9/11 Environment

41. How knowledgeable are you about the need for developing system-of-records notices and privacy impact assessments for systems relying on personal data? What do you think are the competing priorities in ensuring that an organization, like the department, stays current with its privacy notices?

Strengthening Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement

42. The department has gone through continued delays in issuing its strategic plan, a key component of which should be the identification and timeline for achieving departmental goals. Describe your successes with strategic planning and how they would prepare you to help develop short- and long-term goals for the department/component/office.

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43. How important has performance measurement been to the organizations you have worked with? How are you prepared to ensure that the department's components and offices establish appropriate measures, coordinate their performance measurement activities, and use the results of measurement efforts to make appropriate program or operational adjustments?
44. Based on your experience, what are key practices you would recommend in using performance-measurement data to monitor the department's progress, and to assess its performance in meeting established targets and achieving specific outcomes?

Point of Contact: Cathleen Berrick, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, (202) 512-3404 or berrickc@gao.gov.

Appendix VIII: Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's overall mission is to provide rental housing assistance to low- and moderate-income families, increase homeownership opportunities, support community development, and enforce the nation's fair housing laws. To accomplish this mission, the department administers multiple programs through component agencies and offices such as the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), Office of Public and Indian Housing, and Office of Community Planning and Development. For fiscal year 2009, the department requested about \$38 billion to implement its various programs, including approximately \$28 billion for rental assistance.

In recent years, the nation's housing sector has faced major challenges that threaten the financial security and well-being of millions of American families. Foreclosure rates for home mortgages have soared to record levels, and the resulting turmoil in the credit markets has severely limited financing options for homeowners and developers of multifamily rental housing. In addition, the number of very-low-income renters with severe housing cost burdens has significantly increased, while the supply of low-cost housing has declined. These developments have compounded already serious housing and community development challenges in areas recovering from major natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Modernizing the Federal Housing Administration (FHA)
- Reforming Rental Housing Assistance Programs
- Strengthening Accountability in Disaster Assistance

Questions

Modernizing the Federal Housing Administration (FHA)

1. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that under a program created by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, FHA will help refinance about 400,000 distressed borrowers into FHA-insured loans, but that roughly one-third of these loans will fail. Could you please describe your experience related to the task of helping borrowers avoid foreclosure, while mitigating financial losses on troubled loans? Similarly, given that FHA is likely to see an increase in its inventory of foreclosed properties, how has your prior work prepared you to help the department manage and dispose of these properties in a manner that expands homeownership opportunities, strengthens neighborhoods, and maximizes return to FHA's insurance fund?

2. FHA has taken some steps to modernize its insurance processes, but still has administrative inefficiencies, risk management challenges, and has seen its financial condition deteriorate. What would be your management priorities in terms of resource investments and process reengineering to improve FHA's administrative and financial performance? Drawing from your experience, what techniques in understanding and managing risk could FHA improve upon as it takes on an expanded role in today's unsettled mortgage market?

Reforming Rental Housing
Assistance Programs

3. As you may know, thousands of third-party administrators—such as housing agencies and individual property owners—are responsible for ensuring that only eligible households receive rental housing assistance, that properties meet health and safety standards, and that federal resources are spent wisely. Based on your experience, what are the critical management skills needed to ensure that these third-party entities are performing effectively?
4. The department faces a number of challenges in ensuring that property owners continue to participate in the department's rental assistance programs and in preserving the stock of assisted units that are affordable to low-income households. How, if at all, has your prior work exposed you to the incentives and challenges property owners face? How can the department's management better leverage incentives and challenges to build stronger ties with property owners and work with them to encourage program participation?

Strengthening
Accountability in Disaster
Assistance

5. What do you believe should be the department's role in assisting victims of hurricanes and other natural disasters, and what obstacles, if any, prevent the department from performing such a role?
6. Have you ever managed an organization's preparation and response to a natural disaster? Based on that experience, what steps would you propose that the department take to better prepare itself for future disasters?

Points of Contact: Mathew Scirè, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, (202) 512-6794 or sciremj@gao.gov; and William B. Shear, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, (202) 512-4325 or shearw@gao.gov.

Appendix IX: Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior is one of the nation's principal conservation and land management agencies. Its mission is to protect and provide access to our nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives and our commitments to island communities. Operating at approximately 2,400 locations, the department is responsible for 500 million acres of America's public land (about one-fifth of the land in the United States), a variety of water and underwater resources, including 479 dams and 348 reservoirs, and more than 56,000 active onshore and offshore oil and gas leases. Approximately 30 percent of the nation's energy production comes from projects on department-managed lands and offshore areas. The department is comprised of eight bureaus: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Minerals Management Service, the Office of Surface Mining, and the U.S. Geological Survey. The President's budget for the department for fiscal year 2009 is \$10.7 billion, including \$2.1 billion for park operations under the Centennial Initiative to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the National Park System.

As the guardian of much of the nation's vast natural resources, the department is entrusted to preserve the nation's most awe-inspiring landscapes, such as the wild beauty of the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Denali National Parks; our most historic places, like Independence Hall and the Gettysburg battlefield; and such revered national icons as the Statue of Liberty and the Washington Monument. At the same time, the department is to provide for the environmentally sound production of oil, gas, minerals, and other resources found on the nation's public lands; protect habitat to sustain fish and wildlife; help manage water resources in western states; and provide scientific and technical information to allow for sound decision making about resources. The department's management of this vast federal estate is largely characterized by the struggle to balance the demand for greater use and consumption of its resources with the need to conserve and protect them for the benefit of future generations.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Strengthening Resource Protection
 - Strengthening the Accountability of Indian and Island Community Programs
 - Improving Federal Land Acquisition and Management
 - Reducing Interior's Deferred Maintenance Backlog
 - Ensuring the Accurate Collection of Royalties
 - Enhancing Other Revenue Collection
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Questions

Strengthening Resource Protection

1. Wildland fires continue to threaten our nation's public lands and communities and consume significant appropriations as the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service prepare for and respond to wildland fires. How would you go about developing a cohesive fire strategy that identifies long-term options and associated funding needs for responding to wildland fire issues? What steps could you take to contain and manage the costs of the strategy?
2. Over the past several years, federal land management agencies have been participating in collaborative resource management efforts that involve public and private stakeholders working together to resolve natural resource conflicts and problems. Can you describe specific examples where you have worked across organizational boundaries with stakeholders in other sectors to develop coordinated solutions? What steps do you think would be necessary to enhance further collaboration among federal, state, and local stakeholders to reduce resource management conflict and improve natural resource conditions?

Strengthening the Accountability of Indian and Island Community Programs

3. Having land held in trust for the benefit of tribes or individual Indians is important for tribal sovereignty and economic development. GAO and the department's Inspector General have reported that it usually takes over a year for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to process land in trust applications for both gaming and nongaming purposes. One application that GAO reviewed took almost 19 years. What experience do you have with developing an action plan to address these challenges? How would you instill a priority and a sense of urgency in the department to strengthen its performance in this area?
4. Tribal membership disputes and tribal leadership disputes seem to be occurring more and more frequently. What experience do you have in

working with tribal leadership and trying to resolve these types of disputes or in trying to prevent them?

5. GAO has reported that the department could be doing more to assist island communities with long-standing financial and program management difficulties. What qualifications would you cite for being able to ensure that proper guidance, technical assistance, and accountability are put in place to help island communities make progress in areas such as accounting for expenditures, collecting taxes and other revenues, controlling expenditures, and delivering program services?

Improving Federal Land Acquisition and Management

6. GAO and the department's Inspector General have reported on the difficulties the Bureau of Land Management and other federal land management agencies have had in managing land appraisals and the resulting loss of millions of federal dollars. Challenges include a wide variation in the quality of appraisals, the lack of a system for ensuring realistic time frames for appraisal delivery, and inadequate inspections to ensure landowners' compliance with easement restrictions. What aspects of your background in internal controls would enable you to assure that these challenges are addressed? What actions would you recommend to help improve performance?
7. Since the inception of the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program in the late 1950s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has acquired and permanently protected about 3 million acres of wetlands and grasslands in the Prairie Pothole Region, primarily using Migratory Bird Conservation Funds. However, at the current pace of acquisitions, it could take the service around 150 years and billions of dollars to acquire its 12 million goal acres, and some emerging market forces suggest that the service may have only several decades before most of its goal acreage is converted to agricultural uses. What experience do you have with developing action plans for a dynamic business environment? How would you tackle the need for developing targeted priorities flexible to varying market conditions? How could you help the federal government acquire more lands, and what strategies would you institute?

Reducing Interior's Deferred Maintenance Backlog

8. Many tribes, individual Indians, and non-Indians rely on irrigation projects managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to provide water for their agriculture. In 2006, GAO reported that the estimated maintenance backlog for 16 Indian irrigation projects was about \$850

million, and there are maintenance backlogs for Indian schools. How do you balance priorities to ensure that regular maintenance happens, and what steps do you believe should be taken address these maintenance backlogs?

Ensuring the Accurate Collection of Royalties

9. What steps would you take to ensure that management of public oil and gas resources is efficient, effective, and generates an appropriate return to the public? How does one go about deciding the balance between the need to protect our nation's natural resources and the pressure to rapidly expand energy production on federal lands?
10. GAO, the department's Inspector General, and the Royalty Policy Committee have made more than 100 recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior over the past year on ways to improve the accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness of royalty collections for oil and gas produced on federal lands and waters. What specific steps should the department take to ensure that a system is in place to evaluate and implement these recommendations?

Enhancing Other Revenue Collection

11. The collection and control of authorized fees and revenues has been a major management challenge for the department for years. Have you managed or led an organization with fee collection responsibilities? What management controls would you find important to have in place to assure that fees were being set, charged, collected, and used properly? Are there practices or innovations from elsewhere that you think you might bring to enhance and better control the collection of authorized revenues at the department?

Other Broad Management Questions for the Department of the Interior

12. The department operates in a decentralized environment, allowing the many planning and project decisions to be made by managers assigned to parks and other units. Have you managed or led in a decentralized organization? How would you balance the need to provide discretion to local managers while ensuring that they are accountable for achieving departmentwide goals and objectives while operating efficiently?
13. The department, like many other federal departments and agencies, has an aging workforce, and some of its positions (such as firefighters) require special skills and abilities that take years to train and develop. Have you had to wrestle with attracting and retaining talent? What

specific workforce challenges have you faced and how did you overcome them?

14. Over the years, GAO has identified a number of areas where program management problems exist at the department. Resolving systemic management problems will require strong leadership to ensure needed steps are taken and funding priorities are identified. Can you describe your style and philosophy for holding executives accountable for making progress in program management areas? What specific methods do you use to ensure that progress is being made?

Point of Contact: Patricia Dalton, Managing Director, Natural Resources & Environment, (202) 512-3841 or daltonp@gao.gov.

Appendix X: Department of Justice

The Department of Justice's mission is to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; ensure public safety against threats; provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans. The department comprises 40 component agencies with wide-ranging missions, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the U.S. Attorney's Offices; the Office of Justice Programs (OJP); and the Bureau of Prisons. For fiscal year 2009, the department requested about \$25.4 billion to implement its various missions and programs, including about \$5 billion for preventing terrorism and promoting national security and about \$12 billion for crime reduction and civil and constitutional rights enforcement.

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the department expanded its activities and added new missions to help combat terrorism and provide for homeland security. For example, in fiscal year 2006 the department created the National Security Division to improve information sharing, coordination, and counterterrorism capacity. Adjusting to these new missions has posed challenges to the department and its component agencies in balancing competing resource needs and providing appropriate management and oversight of major programs.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Balancing Traditional Crime-Fighting Efforts with Counterterrorism
- Transforming the FBI to Address Terrorism
- Protecting Civil Liberties and Privacy in the 21st Century
- Managing a Growing Prison Population
- Ensuring Effective Grant Programs

Questions

Balancing Traditional Crime-Fighting Efforts with Counterterrorism

1. What experiences and skills do you have that would help you to distinguish, implement, monitor, and troubleshoot the roles of each of the criminal investigation components of the department in carrying out both its counterterrorism and traditional crime-fighting missions?
2. Please describe how you have worked to coordinate different levels of government and how that experience would help you define, fund, and manage the roles of state and local law enforcement agencies to fill

any gaps left by federal agencies' shifting away from traditional crime-fighting to counterterrorism?

Transforming the FBI to Address Terrorism

3. What experiences would help you balance the trade-offs of the FBI's integration of its domestic intelligence mission with its traditional law enforcement mission and how would you ensure that the integration is succeeding?
4. Have you ever been involved in an organizational transformation, such as the one the FBI is undergoing? How do you track and measure transformation progress and success?
5. What skills do you have that will help ensure that all components of the FBI effectively share, analyze, and use intelligence information not only to support investigations but also to promote more strategic analyses of threats to the nation?

Protecting Civil Liberties and Privacy in the 21st Century

6. The department is often faced with balancing the requirements of providing security while protecting civil liberties and privacy. To what extent has your prior work prepared you for guiding the agency in maintaining balance between multiple goals and objectives?
7. Based on your experiences to date, are there tools—external to the department (such as advisory groups) or internal—that you have determined could help you ensure that rights and liberties are protected?

Managing a Growing Prison Population

8. Considering the increasing prison population and the extraordinary number of offenders who are released back into the community each year, the American public depends on the Department of Justice to ensure to the maximum extent possible that these ex-convicts are productive citizens and do not end up back in prison. What types of problems have you resolved in the past that will prepare you to address this daunting challenge?

Ensuring Effective Grant Programs

9. The department's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides grant funding for various prisoner reentry programs and activities at the state and local levels. What are important steps to consider in ensuring that proper monitoring and evaluation data are collected, such as data

that would be needed to effectively assess whether these reentry grant programs are having their desired effect?

10. Concerns have been raised about the department's overall management of its grant programs, particularly related to the ways in which it awards funds and monitors and assesses the success of its funded programs. What in your background prepares you to help ensure the transparency, accountability, sustainability, and overall effectiveness of the department's grant programs?
11. Given that federal grant funding for state and local law enforcement assistance has decreased in recent years, targeting grant funding and support to state and local entities will be key to the successful performance of these programs. What experience do you have that will help the department set priorities and establish criteria to ensure that funding is targeted to its best use for the country?

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Appendix XI: Department of Labor

The Department of Labor's mission is to foster and promote the welfare of job seekers, wage earners, and retirees of the United States by improving their working conditions; advancing their opportunities for profitable employment; protecting their retirement and health care benefits; helping employers find workers; strengthening free collective bargaining; and tracking changes in employment, prices, and other national economic measurements. The department and its 26 offices and agencies, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Veterans' Employment Training Service, and the Employee Benefits Security Administration, help administer a variety of federal laws including those that guarantee workers' rights to safe and healthful working conditions; a minimum hourly wage and overtime pay; freedom from employment discrimination; civilian reemployment after leaving to perform military service; unemployment insurance; and other income support. For fiscal year 2009, the department requested about \$53 billion to implement its various missions and programs, including about \$3.1 billion for training and employment services and about \$238 million for veterans' employment and training.

With rising concerns about workplace safety, employment security, and retirement income prospects, the department needs to focus on policies to enhance workers' physical and economic security, while at the same time enforcing laws requiring employers to safeguard workers' safety, rights, and resources. As the growth in the labor force slows and America faces a shortage of skilled workers, it is critical for the department to have reliable information on how well its employment and training programs are achieving their objectives and allocating resources, and how management and oversight of these programs can be improved. In addition, the department must take steps to ensure that employers follow the law and that workers have the tools they need to make wise saving choices.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Enhancing Employment and Training Programs
- Ensuring Safe and Productive Workplaces
- Improving Private Pension Plan Monitoring and Enforcement

Questions

Enhancing Employment and Training Programs

1. What experience do you have evaluating employment and training programs, and how can such experience help inform policy decisions about what level of federal investment is warranted in these programs?

2. Please describe any experience you have developing or implementing performance measures and implementing systems to capture performance data on federal employment and training programs.
3. What promising practices have you identified that would help ensure that all stakeholders (e.g., employers, community colleges, unions) are involved in and are effective partners in the national employment training system?
4. Based on your experiences, what policies have you found to be effective in encouraging employers to engage and retain older workers or encouraging workers to work longer, and what role can job training programs play in this effort?

Ensuring Safe and Productive Workplaces

5. The department is responsible for enforcement of labor laws designed to protect workers, including the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Mine Act, Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act, and Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. What is your familiarity with these laws, and what do you think are key steps for improving their enforcement?
6. The department's strategic planning process focuses, in part, on setting goals and performance measures for protecting workers' rights under various federal labor laws. These efforts include establishing performance goals and measures and involving key stakeholders in the establishment of these goals and measures. What strategic planning experience do you have that might assist the department in improving its planning processes?
7. The department annually evaluates and reports on the effectiveness of its programs designed to protect workers. For example, the department measures the effectiveness of many of its enforcement and compliance assistance programs by relying on self-reported injury and illness data from employers. What management experience do you have in evaluating programs and what actions would you take to improve the department's evaluations of its enforcement and compliance assistance programs?
8. Please discuss any policies or partnerships that you have helped develop that would inform federal efforts to foster the inclusion of new or underutilized groups of workers in the labor force.

Improving Private Pension
Plan Monitoring and
Enforcement

9. How familiar are you with the legal and regulatory framework the department uses to protect the pension assets of American workers? How are you prepared to help identify any additional authorities or remedies that would assist the department in refining this framework?
10. GAO has recommended that the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) take a more proactive approach to its investigations, including conducting routine compliance examinations and ongoing risk assessments. Do you have prior work with investigations? What would be key considerations in implementing a risk-based compliance examination program?
11. In a report on pension plan conflicts of interest, GAO suggested that Congress consider amending the Employee Retirement Income Security Act to allow EBSA greater enforcement authority regarding pension service providers. From your experience with pension plans, what would you say are the conflicts of interest that might still need to be addressed?

Points of Contact: Barbara Bovbjerg, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, (202) 512-5491 or bovbjergb@gao.gov; and George Scott, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, (202) 512-5932 or scottg@gao.gov.

Appendix XII: Department of State

The Department of State's overarching mission is to advance freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system. The many bureaus, embassies, and consulates that constitute the department contribute to achieving its mission at home and around the world. The Secretary of State also chairs the board of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a U.S. government corporation that provides assistance to some of the poorest countries in the world. For fiscal year 2009, the President requested about \$39.5 billion for the International Affairs budget for the Department of State, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other foreign affairs agencies.

The 2007-2012 Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan outlines seven goals: achieving peace and security; governing justly and democratically; investing in people; promoting economic growth and prosperity; providing humanitarian assistance; promoting international understanding; and strengthening our consular and management capabilities. In addition to those goals, the strategic plan notes that the department must address a variety of challenges to U.S. security interests, development efforts, and democratic ideals, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and the spread of disease and environmental degradation. The department is challenged to address the growing threat posed by violent extremism while also combating poverty and laying foundations for economic prosperity, human rights, and democracy. The department also faces daunting personnel challenges, including language proficiency gaps; critical reconstruction and democracy-building challenges throughout the world; and an ongoing challenge to promote the image of the United States abroad.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Stabilizing Regions in Conflict
- Strengthening Visa and Passport Operations
- Fostering Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting
- Addressing Staffing Challenges
- Reforming United Nations Management
- Sustaining Counternarcotics Activities
- Addressing HIV/AIDS Challenges
- Implementing the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compacts
- Enhancing Democracy and Human Right Activities
- Maximizing Humanitarian Assistance

Questions

Stabilizing Regions in Conflict

1. What skills and abilities do you have that would prepare you for managing government programs in war zones or regions in conflict?
2. What experience do you have successfully working with a wide variety of civilian and military stakeholders and balancing competing priorities, approaches, and objectives?
3. What aspects of your background provide you with any lessons learned for developing comprehensive strategic plans and using these plans to measure progress toward achieving goals in regions in conflict?

Strengthening Visa and Passport Operations

4. What skills do you have for developing a comprehensive long-term strategy to enhance and rationalize passport operations in ways that go beyond simply increasing capacity?

Fostering Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting

5. What experience do you have in implementing an international communications strategy?
6. What skills and abilities do you have to address human capital challenges—such as staffing shortfalls, foreign language proficiency deficiencies, limited time to conduct public outreach, short tours of duty, and inadequate training—and security challenges, which limit public outreach efforts?

7. What approaches to communications have you used in past jobs, and have any of them included the use of in-depth audience research and detailed country-level communications plans?
8. What experience do you have that prepares you for managing a disparate collection of broadcasters with varying missions, overlapping language services, and duplicative management structures?

Addressing Staffing Challenges

9. What in your background prepares you for addressing the staffing challenges at the department, which include the need to enhance and maintain a skilled multilingual global workforce that shifts around the world every few years?
10. What experience have you had managing overseas operations of a large organization and allocating resources, including human capital, across various competing lines of effort?
11. What skills do you have that would be applicable to the department's rightsizing efforts that must balance mission priorities with security and cost concerns?

Reforming United Nations Management

12. What experience do you have as a change-agent that would help push forward the management reform agenda within the UN and with member states?
13. What skills and abilities do you have that would help you measure and assess the progress in advancing and implementing management reforms, such as those needed at the UN?
14. Do you have any background in international member organizations that illustrates how you might address long-standing barriers to the advancement of UN management reforms, including disagreements and competing priorities among member states?

Sustaining Counternarcotics Activities

15. International counternarcotics programs bring together activities that are both development assistance and law enforcement in nature. How does your management experience fit with these two aspects of these programs?

16. What skills and abilities do you bring to run programs in adversarial foreign environments like those in Afghanistan and parts of Colombia and Mexico?

Addressing HIV/AIDS Challenges

17. What skills do you have that would allow you to overcome challenges of and successfully manage programs to achieve the United States' international objectives for health?
18. Do you have experience developing accurate and appropriate systems for monitoring and evaluating results of these types of programs?

Implementing the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compacts

19. We understand that the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has had to reduce the scope of some of its compacts in order to address rising implementation costs. What experiences can you cite that prepare you to help MCC navigate the choice of proper scope given this rising cost constraint, without compromising on goals for contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction?

Enhancing Democracy and Human Right Activities

20. What experience do you have in working with governments in transition and how has this experience prepared you to lead and oversee U.S. programs designed to support democracies abroad?
21. Other countries' human rights records are an important consideration for making a range of foreign policy decisions. What aspects of your background have prepared you to address human rights violations and make these important decisions?

Maximizing Humanitarian Assistance

22. What skills and abilities do you have to manage humanitarian assistance programs in crisis situations, be they short-term or open-ended in nature?
23. What in your professional background prepares you to help guide the department to facilitate coordination with other U.S. departments and agencies, as well as other non-U.S. stakeholders that may be involved in disaster recovery and reconstruction programs?
24. What experience can you cite for measuring organizational performance and effect of humanitarian programs, such as establishing and using frameworks that link project activities with goals and targets and implementing efforts to obtain reliable program data?

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Appendix XIII: Department of Transportation

The overall mission of the Department of Transportation is to ensure a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system that meets vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future. Such a transportation system is integral to the health of our economy and quality of life. The department comprises 12 operating administrations and bureaus, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). For fiscal year 2009, the department requested about \$68 billion to implement its various missions and programs, including about \$37 billion to reduce congestion and about \$20 billion on safety activities.

Our nation's vast system of airways, railways, roads, pipelines, transit, and waterways has served this need, yet is under considerable strain from increasing congestion; large maintenance and improvement costs; and the human cost of the more than 44,000 people killed and more than 2.5 million injured each year in transportation-related accidents. The department will face a range of key challenges as it seeks to fulfill its mission.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Maintaining and Improving Our Nation's Mobility
- Financing the Nation's Transportation System
- Improving Transportation Safety
- Transitioning to the NextGen
- Improving Performance and Accountability
- Improving Energy Efficiency
- Building Human Capital Strategies
- Fostering Improved Financial Management

Questions

Maintaining and Improving Our Nation's Mobility

1. Despite large increases in expenditures in real terms for transportation, the investment has not commensurately improved the performance of the nation's surface transportation system as congestion continues to grow. Many believe that major changes in the federal approach are needed but agreement on what those changes should be is lacking. What past experiences have prepared you to take a lead role in determining what types of changes are needed?
2. Freight tonnage carried by freight railroads is forecasted to increase by about 73 percent between 2006 and 2035. This situation has led to calls

for increased federal investment in the U.S. railroad network. In your opinion, what information and factors should be considered in determining the appropriate role the federal government should play in investing in freight railroads?

3. Higher fuel prices have attracted more attention to the role of public transit, as well as Amtrak, in the nation's passenger transportation system. What experiences do you have that prepare you to help determine their appropriate roles and the changes, if any, that are needed in federal policy in these areas?
4. Aviation congestion and delays have plagued air travelers for some time and 2007 was one of the worst years for delays in the last decade. What experiences do you have that would help you ensure that the FAA work with the aviation industry is adequate to reduce congestion and delays?
5. The Essential Air Service (EAS) program was established to ensure that small communities served by air carriers before deregulation would continue to receive scheduled service. This program's design has changed little in 30 years and recently several EAS carriers have gone out of business or announced their intent to leave the program due to rising operating costs. Have you ever contributed to a fundamental reexamination of a long-standing program or line of business that may have become out of touch with its market or operating environment? What prepares you to help determine whether the EAS program is designed adequately to address the needs of America's small and rural communities?

Financing the Nation's Transportation System

6. In January 2007, GAO designated the financing of our nation's transportation system as a high-risk area because of an increasing demand for transportation services, and the inability of revenue from traditional funding mechanisms to keep pace. In particular, expenditures now exceed revenues for the Highway Trust Fund and, to prevent a funding shortfall, Congress recently transferred \$8 billion from the general fund of the Treasury to the Highway Trust Fund. Without major changes in funding levels or planned spending, deficits will continue to occur. Can you cite some prior experiences that would help you contribute to both immediate and longer-term steps to improve the fiscal condition of the Highway Trust Fund?
7. In December 2007, the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission recommended significant increases in investments across surface transportation modes—increases between

\$130 billion and \$250 billion annually—in order to maintain the condition of the nation’s infrastructure, relieve congestion, and improve essential services. In your experience, what are important factors to consider in determining what level of funding is truly needed, and in determining which funding sources should be tapped to meet it?

8. The highway public-private partnerships created to date have resulted in benefits to state and local governments, such as the construction of new infrastructure, without using public funding. However, these partnerships are largely a new form of privately issued debt that must be repaid to private investors by road users. What knowledge and experiences do you have that might suggest your readiness to help discern the appropriate federal approach and role regarding such partnerships?
9. The revenues that are generated from FAA’s current funding mechanisms depend heavily on factors, such as ticket prices, that are not connected to FAA’s workload and costs to maintain, operate, and modernize the nation’s air traffic control system. The previous administration proposed better aligning FAA’s costs and revenues through a system based largely on user fees. What prepares you to objectively help determine how FAA should be funded? What criteria should be used to help determine if funding will be acquired through the traditional mechanisms of taxes and a general fund contribution, or a new user-fee regimen?

Improving Transportation Safety

10. Over the last 10 years, the number of traffic fatalities has unfortunately remained at about 42,000 to 43,000 annually. The two leading factors contributing to fatalities are the failure to use safety belts and alcohol-impaired driving; however, speeding and motorcycle crashes are also key factors. What knowledge and experience do you possess that prepare you to lead the department’s efforts to address these problems nationwide in order to reduce the number of traffic related fatalities?
11. Serious concerns have been raised regarding FAA’s oversight and enforcement of air carrier safety. What qualifications do you have for implementing, managing, and enforcing safety standards? Have you ever had to deal with oversight and enforcement lapses? How would you use your management skills to ensure these kinds of problems do not occur in the future?
12. GAO recently reported that FMCSA, which is responsible for reducing crashes involving large trucks and buses, does not assess maximum

finances as often as required by law and that the Federal Railroad Administration only takes enforcement action on a very small percentage of railroad safety problems it identifies. What in your management history suggests that you are prepared and qualified to take specific actions to ensure enforcement measures are taken when necessary?

Transitioning to NextGen

13. As you know, FAA is beginning to implement the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen), a large-scale, highly complex, and costly effort aimed at increasing the safety and efficiency of the national air transportation system. Have you ever been responsible for a large-scale or highly complex technology acquisition or implementation? If so, was it completed within cost and schedule estimates? What challenges did you face and how did you address them?

Improving Performance and Accountability

14. GAO has found that many surface transportation programs are not linked to performance of the transportation system or grantees, as most highway, transit, and safety funds are distributed through formulas that indirectly relate to needs and may have no relationship to performance. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the effect of recent record levels of federal highway expenditures. In addition, programs often do not use the best tools or approaches, such as using rigorous economic analysis to select projects. What experiences do you bring that demonstrate your ability to manage federal investments so that taxpayers can be assured that the large amounts of funding for surface transportation programs are used efficiently and effectively?

15. As a provider of billions of dollars worth of highway and transit funding to states and cities, the department has the responsibility to oversee the projects to ensure that they meet standards and that money is spent efficiently. What major investment project experience, if any, do you have? What in your opinion are key steps to ensure that projects are executed on time and without cost overruns?

Improving Energy Efficiency

16. The transportation sector is a major source of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. GAO has reported that improving the efficiency of the air traffic system is key to reducing emissions from aviation. Have you worked before on initiatives involving multiple levels of government, their agencies, independent authorities, and businesses? What qualifications do you have to help department efforts to develop

and effectively execute strategies across the aviation sector to reduce the overall transportation sector's contribution to local air pollution and global warming?

17. Record high prices on gasoline have stimulated consumer interest in highly fuel-efficient vehicles. Auto manufacturers are responding to this new consumer interest, although rolling out new efficient vehicles takes time, investment, and involves financial risk. What knowledge and experience do you have that would enable you to help determine the appropriate role of standards (such as Corporate Average Fuel Economy, or "CAFE") and market-based incentives to lower the nation's fuel consumption and assist auto manufacturers in continuing to roll out fuel-efficient vehicles?

Building Human Capital Strategies

18. Over the next decade, FAA will need to hire and train nearly 17,000 air traffic controllers to replace current controllers who are expected to retire from or leave the agency, and it can take up to 3 to 5 years for a controller to complete training and become certified. In addition, air traffic controller fatigue, brought about by long work weeks and overtime, will become more critical as the number of retirements increase, leaving some facilities short-staffed. Can you describe your prior responsibilities, if any, with a large technical workforce? What training, hiring, and retention challenges have you faced, and how did you address them?
19. As a result of increased capabilities at state transportation agencies to conduct detailed reviews of highway project design plans and inspections of their projects, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) staff responsibilities have shifted from detailed oversight functions to broader reviews. Have you been involved in a major evolution or reorientation of an organization's human capital needs? What type of strategic human capital planning have you undertaken?

Fostering Improved Financial Management

20. While FAA has made progress in recent years in improving its financial management systems and practices, work remains to ensure that the agency soundly manages its finances. For fiscal years 2006 and 2007, the department's Inspector General reported FAA's challenges in managing a construction account of more than \$2 billion, and described this as a material weakness. What successes, if any, can you cite from your involvement in overseeing or implementing reforms to financial management systems? What characteristics do you believe are essential to a sound financial management system?

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Appendix XIV: Department of the Treasury

The Department of the Treasury's mission is to serve the American people and strengthen national security by managing the federal government's finances effectively, promoting economic growth and stability, and ensuring the safety, soundness, and security of U.S. and international financial systems. The department is made up of 12 bureaus, including the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the U.S. Mint. In its role as the nation's tax collector, IRS has a demanding responsibility to collect taxes, process tax returns, and enforce the nation's tax laws. In fiscal year 2007, IRS collected about \$2.7 trillion in tax payments.

Our past and ongoing work has identified key challenges facing the department as it works toward ensuring economic growth, that financial markets are efficient and stable, and that the nation's tax system is fair and efficient. These challenges are significant because they affect the department's ability to stabilize financial markets and collect sufficient tax revenue to fund domestic and international priorities while minimizing economic harm. Like other federal agencies, the department will be confronting these issues at a time when it also faces a looming retirement wave. Indeed, 35 percent of the department's workforce that was on-board at the end of fiscal year 2007 will be eligible to retire by 2012. As a result, it will be important for the department to ensure it has the requisite skills and expertise to carry out its diverse responsibilities.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Implementing the Troubled Asset Relief Program
- Obtaining an Opinion on Consolidated Financial Statements
- Improving Reporting on the Federal Government's Long-Term Fiscal Challenge
- Reexamining Tax Policies and Priorities
- Reducing the Tax Gap
- Modernizing Business Systems
- Implementing Debt Relief
- Ensuring Retirement Income Security

Questions

Implementing the Troubled Asset Relief Program

1. There are inherent challenges in implementing and managing any new federal program. However, the Troubled Asset Relief Program faces a number of unique challenges in achieving its statutory purposes, which include mitigating foreclosures, stabilizing financial markets and protecting taxpayers. How will your prior experience help you in meeting your responsibilities over the Troubled Asset Relief Program?

Improving Reporting on the Federal Government's Long-Term Fiscal Challenge

2. The Office of Financial Stability is responsible for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, and one challenge facing the new management of this office will be hiring a highly-qualified management team. Could you please discuss your experience in hiring, leading, and retaining high performing work teams?
3. As you well know, our nation faces a serious structural fiscal imbalance. A number of other countries issue fiscal sustainability reports to explain and to improve the understanding of the long-term outlook and the magnitude of necessary change. The Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board has recently issued an exposure draft on fiscal sustainability reporting for the federal government. How has your experience prepared you to help with such reporting?
4. While the basic reporting would be on the long-term fiscal sustainability of current spending and tax policies, how would you incorporate alternative scenarios and assumptions—on both the spending and the revenue side—into the report?

Reexamining Tax Policies and Priorities

5. There are differing opinions on whether the goals for the nation's tax system can best be achieved by reforming the current income tax so that it has a broader base and a flatter rate schedule, or switching in whole or in part to some form of a consumption tax. What experience, background, and skills do you have that will assist you in contributing to a policy change of this magnitude?
6. Tax expenditures represent a substantial federal commitment that needs to be examined. Some tax incentives fail to achieve congressional objectives, have costs that outweigh their benefits, duplicate other programs, or are not the most cost-effective means for achieving their objectives. What principles or criteria would you use to determine which tax incentives need to be reconsidered?

Reducing the Tax Gap

7. Can you provide two or three specific examples where you were involved in balancing the need for quality customer service against other corporate or organizational goals? Tax administration must emphasize customer service and enforcement. Citing lessons from your experience, what is important to a successful strategy to improve tax administration given this requirement?
8. Streamlining and simplifying the current tax system could potentially make it more transparent and less burdensome to taxpayers while reducing opportunities for tax evasion. Have you ever been involved significantly in a major rewrite of procedures, regulations, or rules?

What do you think would be important steps in implementing such a major effort?

9. The tax gap is a perennial problem. Despite numerous IRS compliance initiatives, rates of tax noncompliance have persisted at roughly their current levels for decades, based on available evidence. Could you please describe your enforcement and related experience that may provide insights into helping reduce the tax gap?
- Modernizing Business Systems
10. Do you have a couple of specific experiences of modernizing technology that may be relevant to improving IRS's modernization management controls and capabilities or bolstering IRS's efforts to mitigate the future risks associated with securing modern systems?
11. What financial management experiences will help you to ensure that IRS's financial management system will be fully integrated and able to give IRS the information it needs to more effectively manage daily operations?
- Implementing Debt Relief
12. Could you please describe the skills and abilities you have that prepare you for building consensus for U.S. positions in institutions like the World Bank and African Development Bank?
13. How has your previous work related to issues of debt relief for poor countries and potential financing plans? Have you successfully brokered significant economic development or financing plans before? What do you think are key inputs to successful processes that do so?
- Ensuring Retirement Income Security
14. Tax deductions and deferrals are meant to encourage pension benefits. Yet, despite billions of dollars' worth of these tax expenditures, many Americans will reach retirement age without adequate retirement income prospects. More needs to be done not only to encourage employers to offer benefit plans, but to assure that the plans will be sufficient for a secure retirement at the end of a worker's career. What experiences with these sorts of policy trade-offs would you bring to the department, and how specifically would you help the nation move forward to deal with this?

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Appendix XV: Department of Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) mission reflects the nation's commitment to care for veterans, their families, and their survivors. The department is composed of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. VA operates nationwide programs for the health care, financial assistance, and burial benefits of approximately 74.5 million potentially eligible people, which is about a quarter of the nation's population. The health care delivery system operated by VA is the largest in the nation and provides a broad range of services, including those uniquely related to veterans' health or special needs. VA also provides disability compensation to veterans who are disabled by injury or disease incurred or aggravated during military service, as well as pensions for certain wartime veterans with disabilities. For fiscal year 2009, VA requested \$93.7 billion to deliver its services and address various management challenges.

VA faces a range of key management challenges in the areas of disability benefits, health care delivery, property management, and information technology. VA continues to face long-standing problems with large pending disability claims inventories, lengthy processing times, and concerns about decision accuracy and consistency. Further, both VA and the Department of Defense (DOD) face challenges in meeting the health care and disability evaluation needs of servicemembers returning from the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as veterans of those military operations. VHA also faces difficulties in managing its resources to be consistent with a substantial increase in its patient workload and encounters obstacles when recruiting and retaining health care professionals to provide care to its veteran population.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving Criteria for Disability Compensation
- Improving Claims Process
- Ensuring Processing of Benefits
- Improving Health Care for Servicemembers and Veterans
- Enhancing Health Care Delivery
- Improving Controls over Third-Party Insurers
- Recruiting and Retaining Professionals
- Improving Property Management
- Improving Information Technology Accountability
- Improving Controls over IT Equipment
- Improving Controls over Obligations

Questions

Improving Criteria for Disability Compensation

1. The economic portion of VA's rating schedule—VA's eligibility criteria—hasn't been updated since 1945, although several changes have taken place in medicine, technology, and the labor market since then that could affect veterans' earning capacity. GAO and others have questioned whether VA's rating schedule reflects modern concepts about disability and its effect on veterans' ability to work. Do you have an experience you can describe where you were involved in fundamentally reexamining and overhauling something as organizationally ingrained in the culture and processes as VA's eligibility criteria are?
2. What experience or knowledge do you have about the effect that medical advances, technology, and the labor market have on disabled veterans' earning capacity?

Improving Claims Process

3. VA hired about 1,800 claims processing staff between January 2007 and February 2008 and estimated that by the end of fiscal year 2008, 3,100 new claims processing staff would be on board. Have you ever overseen a large increase in workforce?
4. Making timely, accurate, and consistent decisions about veterans' eligibility has been a challenge for VA for years. Describe your involvement with process quality-assurance programs that might help you address this challenge and ensure our veterans get the service they deserve from their government.

Ensuring Processing of Benefits

5. Would you discuss how your experience could be brought to bear in VA to ensure that the processing of benefits to veterans and their families is carried out effectively and efficiently?
6. The department has multiple efforts underway to improve the processing of benefits payments to its beneficiaries. Some of these efforts, such as "VETSNET"—a computer-based system for processing disability compensation, pension, and survivor benefits—have taken much longer to complete than anticipated. Have you had any significant role in technology project management? Was the project completed on time and within cost estimates? What do you think are keys to ensuring that technology-based process improvements come to completion in a timely manner?

Improving Health Care for Servicemembers and Veterans

7. In recent years, problems have been identified with DOD and VA efforts to coordinate the care of servicemembers returning from military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as veterans from those military operations. Can you tell us about a specific example where you had responsibility for enhancing collaboration across significant organizational boundaries, such as is needed to coordinate care for this population and manage the transition from DOD to VA care?
8. What in your prior work prepares you to help strengthen VA's intragovernmental relationships, particularly with DOD, to improve the transition of servicemembers from DOD health care to VA health care?
9. DOD and VA are in the process of pilot testing an integrated approach to determining disability benefits for servicemembers leaving active duty service. Have you been involved in taking two different processes and combining them into one integrated process? What would be key steps to follow in doing so?

Enhancing Health Care Delivery

10. What unique knowledge, skills, and abilities would you bring to VA that would help you identify, negotiate, and implement measures to improve the health care VA provides to our nation's veterans?
11. What steps would you take to ensure that veterans returning from military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are appropriately screened, diagnosed, and treated for mental health and other conditions when they seek care from VA facilities?
12. Over the last few years, VA's appropriations have grown substantially. What in your background best illustrates that you would be able to ensure that VA's appropriations are used in the most effective manner possible?

Improving Controls over Third-Party Insurers

13. Have you ever been involved in the accountability of systems responsible for accounts receivable or in debt collections operations? Could you describe how you could help manage oversight of VA's system to collect payments from third-party insurers?
14. GAO found that significant internal control weaknesses and inadequate management oversight limit VA's ability to maximize revenue from private insurance companies (third-party insurers). What experience do you have in implementing internal controls? How could

these help an organization increase its collection of payments from third-parties?

Recruiting and Retaining Professionals

15. If you were to assume a position at VA, what would you do to encourage greater interest by health care providers in working in VA medical facilities?
 16. Like other federal departments, VA has been challenged by a shortage of qualified human resources personnel. Can you describe your involvement in any successful, sustained recruiting efforts?
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Improving Property Management

17. VA has a large portfolio of vacant and underutilized property, many with historic significance, which hinders VA's options for modernizing or disposing of the property. What experience do you have in managing large portfolios of property?
 18. One of the challenges to disposing of federal property, GAO identified, is administrative complexity and cost. Please describe two or three experiences where you played a role in implementing or simplifying administrative processes.
-

Improving Information Technology Accountability

19. Have you ever played a major role in the management of large-scale information technology (IT) for organizations or programs? How would you help ensure the successful realignment of VA's IT management processes?
 20. As part of the centralization of departmental IT management, the Office of Information and Technology has developed 36 management processes to guide IT activities. Describe how you have held IT managers responsible for implementing management processes.
 21. Would you discuss your experience in institutionalizing best technology management practices across a large decentralized organization?
-

Improving Controls over IT Equipment

22. GAO and the VA Office of Inspector General have both identified weaknesses in VA's internal control systems over IT assets. Describe your philosophy about the importance of internal controls and whether or how that has shaped your involvement in any organization.

23. Could you describe what in your experience could help you better manage oversight of VA's accountability for IT equipment?

Improving Controls over Obligations

24. GAO and the VA Office of Inspector General have both identified weaknesses in VA's internal control systems over appropriated funds. What experience have you had in leading organizations that have implemented and maintained internal controls to help ensure that organizational resources are used appropriately?

25. GAO and other auditors have identified internal control weaknesses related to VA financial management. Could you share with us your thoughts on the importance of internal controls in financial management, and whether you have any experience identifying control weaknesses? What types of control problems existed, and what steps did you take to address them?

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Appendix XVI: Environmental Protection Agency

The overarching mission of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to protect human health and the environment by implementing and enforcing environmental laws intended to improve the quality of our air and water and to protect our land. Key environmental laws include the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (or Superfund). This 17,200 person agency is headed by an Administrator and Deputy Administrator who are politically appointed. The agency comprises nine major offices generally aligned with major environmental laws—the Office of Air and Radiation, the Office of Water, the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and so on—each headed by a politically appointed Assistant Administrator, and 10 regional offices each headed by a politically appointed regional administrator. For fiscal year 2009, the agency requested \$7.14 billion, including \$940 million for clean air and climate change, \$2.58 billion for clean water, and \$1.69 billion for land restoration.

EPA, like many agencies, has been faced with declining budgets over the past several years, exacerbating its already challenging portfolio of implementing and enforcing the nation's environmental laws. Enforcement of environmental laws occurs through EPA's 10 regions as well as authorized states. This has, at times, led to uneven enforcement of environmental laws. In some cases, EPA must also balance the cost of implementing regulations with the benefits to public health and the environment—always a controversial proposition depending upon one's point of view. In addition, EPA is often relegated to being reactive in its approach to implementing environmental law, resulting from the need to comply with numerous court orders emanating from the myriad lawsuits brought against the agency by states, concerned citizens, special interest groups, and others. Finally, the lack of complete and comprehensive environmental information on, for example air quality or water quality, makes it difficult for EPA to evaluate the success of its policies and programs.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Ensuring Sound Science
- Providing More Effective Controls over Toxic Substances
- Ensuring Consistent Environmental Enforcement and Compliance
- Reducing Pollution in the Nation's Water Bodies
- Speeding the Pace of Cleanup of Hazardous Waste Sites
- Ensuring the Safety of the Nation's Drinking Water
- Addressing Challenges in Implementing the Clean Air Act
- Improving the Development and Use of Environmental Information
- Addressing Human Capital Management Challenges at EPA
- Addressing Concerns about Renewable Fuels
- Improving Energy Efficiency

Questions

Ensuring Sound Science

1. During the past several years, concerns have been raised about the length of EPA's scientific chemical risk-assessment process, and the influence of industry groups, the Department of Defense, and others on what should be a scientific process. What role have you played in either making decisions based on scientific data, or in assuring the quality of such science? What are your views on the importance of transparency in decision-making processes, such as the chemical risk-assessment process? What steps would you take to help restore the credibility of EPA's scientific assessments and ensure that decisions are based on sound science?
2. Many agencies, including EPA, often inappropriately appoint members to their Federal Advisory Committee Act committees as representatives rather than as special government employees. Since these members did not go through a screening process, EPA cannot ensure that committee members are free from significant conflicts of interest and that the committee as a whole is appropriately balanced. What steps will you take to ensure that EPA's federal advisory committee members are free from conflicts of interest and that the committees are appropriately balanced as a whole?
3. Over the years, EPA has convened several advisory groups, such as the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee and the Clean Air Advisory Committee, to help the agency develop policy, guidance, and laws. Some have questions about how effectively the agency is using these groups. Could you describe your experience in proactively using expert groups? What organizational construct and specific steps would

you take to ensure that the views of groups are appropriately considered?

Providing More Effective Controls over Toxic Substances

4. A number of states have introduced legislation to regulate toxic chemicals in commerce due to concerns that EPA's Toxics Substances Control Act (TSCA) program is inadequate. Some states that have taken or considered taking steps to ramp up their chemical oversight and assessment programs. The Centers for Disease Control is finding through studies that a large percent of Americans have been exposed to potentially toxic chemicals. What experience do you have in assessing risks posed by chemicals and in protecting the public against these risks? Based on your experience, how much of the responsibility of finding out if chemicals are safe for use should be with EPA and how much should be with companies that produce the chemicals?
5. The National Academy of Sciences has found that children may be more susceptible to adverse health effects from exposure to chemicals than adults. What in your background prepares you to understand and address the risks of chemicals to vulnerable populations? Do you support requiring industry to demonstrate the safety of chemicals they produce when children may be exposed to them?
6. When assessing chemical risk, EPA sometimes relies on information about a chemical's properties that industry may claim is confidential, and whose disclosure would hurt their business. Yet the public has great interest in knowing the dangers posed by chemicals in products it uses. How has your experience prepared you to address the complicated relationship between information that business claims as confidential, but that the public may need to know?
7. The bulk of chemicals produced in the United States today are chemicals that were grandfathered in to the inventory of chemicals required by Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). EPA has rarely used its authorities under TSCA to require that chemical companies provide data on the safety of the chemicals they produce, and even more rarely used its authorities to ban the use of chemicals. Instead, EPA is implementing a program calling on companies to voluntarily supply information on the chemicals they produce. What experience do you bring to the federal rule-making process? What is the appropriate balance between relying on industry's voluntary cooperation to protect human health from the risks of chemicals and using the power of government to regulate these risks?

Ensuring Environmental
Enforcement and
Compliance

8. Enforcement of environmental laws occurs though EPA's 10 regions as well as authorized states. What experiences in your career have provided you with the expertise necessary to ensure that the nation's environmental laws are consistently enforced? Do you believe that this should be a goal of EPA, or do you believe it is appropriate for there to be variations in enforcement of the nation's environmental laws by states and regions?
9. Pursuing administrative, civil, or criminal actions against suspected polluters is a complex undertaking that often lasts years. EPA and the Department of Justice (DOJ) work closely in these efforts, with DOJ primarily responsible for prosecuting and settling civil judicial and criminal enforcement cases. Despite the efforts of EPA and DOJ, there are significant aspects of the legal and policy environment that can affect enforcement outcomes. What experiences can you draw upon that would provide you with the tools necessary to address legal and policy changes that may influence progress in EPA's environmental enforcement program?

Reducing Pollution in the
Nation's Water Bodies

10. Under the Clean Water Act, EPA is responsible for publishing water quality criteria that establish thresholds, including for pathogens, at which contamination may threaten human health. In 2000, the Beach Act required EPA to create new or revised water quality criteria for pathogens by October 2005. However, in 2007, EPA had not yet established a firm timeline for completing the necessary studies or developing new water quality criteria. How would you approach the complex problem of establishing water quality criteria? What expertise do you have that would help you ensure that such criteria are consistent, regularly updated, and protective of human health?
11. Developing the analytical methods needed to measure pollutants at or below established water quality criteria has been a challenge for EPA. For example, although EPA established water quality criteria for nine bioaccumulative chemicals of concern found in the Great Lakes Basin in 1995, the agency has approved analytical methods for only two of the nine chemicals. Do you have experience that would allow you to examine and improve EPA's process for developing and approving measurement methods to ensure the states can detect and quantify harmful pollutants at the established water quality criteria levels?

Speeding the Pace of
Cleanup of Hazardous
Waste Sites

12. EPA and the Department of Defense have been in a dispute related to several National Priority List hazardous waste sites for which there is currently no interagency agreement, as required by law. Without an agreement, EPA has not been able to fully oversee some sites to ensure that cleanup is progressing appropriately. To what extent has your experience equipped you with the tools necessary to address interagency conflicts such as this, and how would you position EPA to work to avoid such challenges in the future?
13. EPA authorizes states to implement many environmental programs, not only in the area of cleaning up contaminated sites, but across a wide range of environmental programs. Have you worked across various levels of government before? What experiences have you had that will allow you to ensure greater cooperation and coordination between EPA and states in their hazardous waste cleanup efforts so as to maximize environmental benefits?

Ensuring the Safety of the
Nation's Drinking Water

14. Following the terrorist attacks in 2001, Congress appropriated more than \$140 million through fiscal year 2004 to help drinking-water systems assess vulnerabilities to terrorist threats and develop response plans. Numerous public and private organizations worked together with EPA to facilitate a coordinated effort to address preparedness. What in your background has prepared you to address similar macro-level concerns that involve government and industry working together with others to facilitate important changes by numerous stakeholders and hundreds of affected entities?

Addressing Challenges in
Implementing the Clean
Air Act

15. Since the passage of the Clean Air Act, EPA and its state, local, and tribal partners have made significant progress in decreasing harmful air emissions from a variety of sources. However, in recent years, EPA has undertaken efforts to revise its existing clean air regulations and issue new regulations to help meet air quality standards, and in many cases, EPA's efforts have been challenged by others and overturned by the courts. Can you give examples from your work where you have applied tools to build consensus among a variety of federal, state, local, tribal, and private partners?
16. Can you describe how you have used data to help target your efforts or the efforts of your organization? How might available information on public health threats, ambient levels of air pollution, and major sources of emissions be used to establish priorities for the agency?

Improving the Development and Use of Environmental Information

17. EPA has long recognized the need for more robust and comprehensive environmental indicators and information for strategic planning, prioritizing the allocation of limited resources, and measuring the success of environmental policies and programs. However, significant gaps exist in environmental information due to the lack of resources and comprehensive monitoring in several environmental areas. What work have you been involved in that relied heavily on performance measures or progress measures? Can you describe the role you see environmental information playing in agency strategic and operational planning? How would you go about determining the right amount of expensive environmental monitoring given limited resources?
18. One of EPA's primary goals under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act is to keep the public informed regarding the risks of dangerous chemicals and the existence of facilities in their localities that manufacture and use dangerous chemicals. Limiting the regulatory burden on industry as well as keeping the public informed are both laudable, but sometimes conflicting, goals. Can you describe where you have had to make decisions involving conflicting goals before? What in your background or experience suggest that you are ready to manage the sometimes conflicting goals of industry and the public in this regard? What would be the key principles that would guide your decision making in striking this balance?

Addressing Human Capital Management Challenges at EPA

19. EPA has made some progress in addressing human capital management challenges since GAO first issued a report on this subject in 2001, but has not yet established a workforce planning and analysis system to ensure that EPA deploys an appropriate number of staff and technical competencies to its 10 regions throughout the country. As a result, EPA's resource requests to Congress are largely based on historical precedents, rather than on a bottom-up review of the nature and distribution of the agency's current workload. Could you describe your experience in workload analysis and human capital management that would equip you to effectively deal with this long-standing problem at EPA. What are your general thoughts on how a new workforce planning and analysis system could best be implemented?
20. GAO work has shown that EPA lacks essential information needed for resource planning and allocation, such as complete and reliable information on the amount of time that regional staff devote to various types of environmental program activities, and on the universe of regulated entities in a given region. What in your experience and

background would equip you to effectively deal with workload planning for a 17,000-person organization such as EPA? How would you ensure that staffing levels are based on needs and priorities rather than historical levels?

Addressing Concerns about Renewable Fuels

21. During 2008, food prices skyrocketed due in part to the ethanol industry's demand for corn. This may be good for farmers who grow corn and those concerned about replacing fossil fuels with renewable fuels and lessening our dependency on foreign oil, but bad for everyday consumers concerned about food prices. In addition, there are energy costs associated with producing ethanol. What in your background makes you equipped to deal with balancing the needs of different sectors of the economy, and addressing complicated, multiagency, interrelated problems such as this?
22. Meeting our renewable fuel standard's goal of producing 36 billion gallons of biofuels annually by 2022 will stretch our use of water, arable land, and other resources. How would you approach the biofuels area, and what experiences and expertise have you acquired in your career that would give you the tools for dealing with such a complex problem?

Improving Energy Efficiency

23. Sustained high prices for all types of energy and concerns about the United States' dependence on imported fuels worry citizens and policymakers alike, and much has been made of becoming more energy efficient in all aspects of today's life, from household appliances, to buildings, to vehicles. Have you been involved in initiatives requiring participation by broad elements of the population to achieve the initiative's objectives? What steps would you recommend in developing a national plan to improve the nation's energy efficiency? How could this experience help you play a role in addressing major challenges facing the federal government in doing all it can to enable citizens to conserve as much energy as possible?
24. EPA, the Department of Energy, the Department of Transportation, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission share responsibility for encouraging and enabling energy conservation. Can you describe any significant results you have been able to achieve by reaching across organizational boundaries to accomplish a shared goal? What experiences can you cite that demonstrate your ability to work effectively across such distinct agency boundaries to leverage resources and knowledge to get results?

**Appendix XVI: Environmental Protection
Agency**

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Appendix XVII: Export-Import Bank of the United States

The Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank) is the official export credit agency of the United States. Ex-Im Bank's mission is to assist in financing the export of U.S. goods and services to international markets. It was created during the Great Depression to promote U.S. trade by supplementing, but not competing with, private sources of finance. The bank provides working capital guarantees (preexport financing), export credit insurance, loan guarantees, and direct loans (buyer financing) to U.S. companies, both large and small. For fiscal year 2009, Ex-Im Bank requested budget authority of about \$82 million for administrative expenses and \$41 million for the cost of loans, loan guarantees, and tied-aid, all of which it projected would be covered by offsetting receipts, such as fees.

While the bank's traditional role was to finance U.S. exports to buyers in countries that the private sector considered too risky, the global economy has evolved and the reach of private finance has expanded. Some critics have come to question the necessity of Ex-Im Bank; however, supporters argue that Ex-Im Bank continues to be an important resource for helping U.S. exporters compete in a global marketplace against companies that are financed, and sometimes subsidized, by foreign export credit agencies. To meet the challenge presented by its foreign counterparts, Ex-Im Bank has worked within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to develop a common set of rules to govern export finance; its efforts have met with some success but uneven practices remain. Against this backdrop, Ex-Im Bank faces questions about the types and sizes of U.S. companies it most often supports and whether its business mix needs to change.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Reevaluating Small Business Outreach and Financing
- Improving Economic Impact Assessments
- Reviewing Energy-Related and Environmental Exports
- Reassessing Efforts to Combat Subsidized Export Credit Financing
- Budgeting for Future Losses and Limiting Fraud

Questions

Reevaluating Small Business Outreach and Financing

1. Congress recently increased the minimum percentage of financing that Ex-Im Bank is required to make available to small businesses. What experience do you have in working with small businesses? Are you familiar with the challenges that such businesses face in developing successful, viable, export markets?

2. Congress recently required Ex-Im Bank to develop performance standards to measure its progress in providing financing to small business. What has been your involvement in the development of performance standards in the financing arena? How has this prepared you to implement standards to measure performance in a federal agency?

Improving Economic Impact Assessments

3. Congress has directed that Ex-Im Bank take into account any negative effect of its projects on U.S. producers before approving transactions, but GAO found flaws with that process. What kind of economic impact assessments have you performed in your prior positions?
4. Like many financial institutions, projects financed by Ex-Im Bank cover a wide range of industries. How would Ex-Im Bank benefit from your prior experiences when dealing with such a diverse portfolio? What steps should a financial institution take to ensure that its economic impact assessments carried out for a variety of industries are consistent and transparent?

Reviewing Energy-Related and Environmental Exports

5. Fossil fuel-related projects have been a significant area of financing for Ex-Im Bank, but there is growing interest in having the bank finance renewable energy projects. What experience do you have in the financing of energy projects? Does this experience include both traditional and renewable forms of energy?
6. Ex-Im Bank has worked in recent years through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to develop common environmental policies for export credit agencies, in part to help level the playing field among export credit agencies. However, concerns about the environmental effect of global financing continue. In what ways has your experience prepared you to address environmental effect issues related to project finance?

Reassessing Efforts to Combat Subsidized Export Credit Financing

7. Congress has shown long-standing interest in how financing provided by Ex-Im Bank compares with the support from other countries' export credit agencies. In what ways has your work prepared you to address uneven government subsidies or other policies regarding export finance?

Budgeting for Future
Losses and Limiting Fraud

8. Given its role, Ex-Im Bank has substantial exposure to risky borrowers in developing countries. Have you managed a loan portfolio similar to Ex-Im Bank's, and how have you managed such risks in the past?
9. Ex-Im Bank is required to budget up front for any losses the U.S. government could incur as a result of defaults. What responsibilities have you had in the past for estimating the expected losses from developing country financing, and how accurate have your estimates been?
10. International financial markets have experienced substantial turmoil and loss, and investors' confidence has been shaken. What lessons have you learned from your prior experiences that prepare you to lead Ex-Im Bank through these difficult times and minimize the potential for future losses?
11. Ex-Im Bank's Inspector General recently began a review of its medium-term loan guarantee program that includes examining the potential for fraud. Can you describe when you have been successful in identifying and addressing instances of fraud in a financial institution?

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Appendix XVIII: Federal Communications Commission

The overall mission of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is to ensure that the American people have available—at reasonable costs and without discrimination—rapid, efficient, nationwide, and worldwide communication services. FCC is responsible for ensuring that an orderly framework exists where communications products and services can be quickly and reasonably provided to consumers and businesses. There are seven operating bureaus within the FCC such as the Media bureau and the Wireline Competition bureau, all of which are organized by function, and 10 staff offices such as the Office of Managing Director. FCC addresses the communications aspects of public safety, health, and emergency operations; universal availability of basic telecommunications service; accessibility of communications services to all people; and consumer protection. To carry out its mission, FCC requested \$339 million for its fiscal year 2009 budget, with \$1 million as a direct appropriation and the remainder from regulatory fees collected by the commission.

FCC regulates industries that touch the lives of every American, including radio, television, telephone, the Internet, and satellite. In addition, FCC manages use of the radio-frequency spectrum by all nonfederal entities, such as commercial enterprises, state and local governments, and public safety organizations. FCC oversees the Universal Service Fund, which helps ensure the diffusion of communications services to a variety of communities and entities. In each of these areas, FCC faces critical challenges. FCC's regulatory function has become more complex as separate communications networks that provide distinct services, sometimes in a monopoly environment, have increasingly converged to provide similar bundled services. FCC faces difficulties of ensuring robust competition in this environment. FCC also faces the challenges of balancing competing demands for a limited radio-frequency spectrum, protecting existing users of this spectrum while facilitating new services such as wireless broadband, and ensuring an adequate spectrum for critical public safety services. Finally, the cost of the Universal Service Fund has increased dramatically to about \$7 billion in 2007, imposing greater burdens on consumers.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Facilitating a Robust Communications Industry
- Managing and Overseeing Universal Service
- Managing Information and Human Capital

Questions

While no current Commissioner's term expires before June 2009, and terms are independent of changes in the executive branch administration, these questions may be used when subsequent appointments are made.

Facilitating a Robust Communications Industry

1. In recent years, the United States has fallen in the world rankings of broadband service, when measured as the percentage of the country's population with broadband. But broadband deployment and rates of adoption involve many factors and competing interests. Can you tell us when you have succeeded in bringing different organizations—such as businesses and government—together to achieve a common goal?
2. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of media content contributing to a changing media landscape with the growth of Web-based content and the decline of newspaper subscribership and broadcast ratings. Yet, many well-known media outlets remain owned by major corporations. Would you describe any experience you have had in confronting and balancing the competing interests of large private-sector entities and the public?

Managing and Overseeing Universal Service

3. Since 1998, the Universal Service Fund has disbursed over \$51 billion to companies serving rural areas, low-income consumers, and schools and libraries. What is your vision of the respective roles of FCC, the Universal Service Administrative Company, and state governments in the management and oversight of the fund? How has your prior work prepared you for helping oversee a multibillion-dollar program?
4. Press accounts have reported instances of individuals and companies defrauding the Federal Schools and Libraries program—commonly referred to as the Federal E-Rate program. What experiences do you have in managing internal controls that would be helpful for the E-Rate program?
5. In 2007, FCC's Office of Inspector General found that the erroneous payment rates for each of the four Universal Service Fund programs ranged from 9.5 percent to 20.6 percent, far exceeding the 2.5 percent threshold that marks programs as susceptible to risk of improper payment. What actions have you taken in the past that might be useful to improve the internal controls of the Universal Service Fund?

Managing Information and Human Capital

6. GAO defined management of human capital as a governmentwide high-risk area because of a pattern of human capital shortcoming across the federal government that has eroded mission capabilities. FCC requires highly trained, expert staff capable of assessing and understanding technological and industry trends. What has been your experience in dealing with such a technical workforce, and how might it help FCC address its human capital challenges?
7. In the past decade, the communications industry has experienced significant convergence, with traditional telephone companies providing video service and cable companies providing telephone service, among the many changes. Based on your experience, what do you think are key steps when changing organizational structures to better align them with the external environment?
8. FCC has traditionally collected different data in a piecemeal manner from the various industries it regulates. What familiarity do you have with the data-collection challenges that you believe FCC might face? How might you help enhance FCC's data collection efforts?

Point of Contact: Mark L. Goldstein, Director, Physical Infrastructure,
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Appendix XIX: General Services Administration

The General Services Administration (GSA) was established in 1949 to serve as a central procurement and property management agency for the federal government. GSA's mission is to leverage the buying power of the federal government to acquire the best value for taxpayers and its federal customers. GSA consists of the Public Buildings Service (PBS), the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), the Office of Governmentwide Policy (OGP), and various other offices. GSA's major areas of responsibility include real property management, government telecommunications, and the acquisition of supplies and services. GSA obligated over \$20 billion in fiscal year 2008 to meet agencies' needs through various revolving funds. A large bulk of this spending—over \$8 billion—is through the Federal Buildings Fund, which is used to acquire, lease, and renovate federal facilities under GSA's stewardship.

GAO's work has highlighted several key areas at GSA in need of oversight, mostly in the real property area. Like many real property-holding agencies, GSA has a multibillion-dollar repair backlog and has property that is not needed or is underutilized. Furthermore, GSA's overreliance on leasing for long-term needs, where ownership would be less costly, is an ongoing challenge; and, the benefits of contracts under its National Broker Services (NBS) program, where four brokers receive commissions for lease acquisition services, have yet to be demonstrated. Related to GSA's construction responsibilities, oversight of its multibillion-dollar courthouse construction program will continue to be critical. Finally, in fiscal year 2007, agencies spent \$960 million through GSA's telecommunications services program, known as FTS2001. GSA has awarded contracts for a successor program called Networx and faces challenges with the transition.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Reducing Repair Backlogs and Excess Property
- Addressing Reliance on Costly Leasing
- Managing Courthouse Construction Effectively
- Overseeing National Broker Services Contracts
- Transitioning to a New Telecommunications Program

Questions

Reducing Repair Backlogs and Excess Property

1. What experience and skills would you bring to GSA that would be beneficial in developing strategies that GSA could use to reduce its repair and maintenance backlog and reduce its excess and underutilized property?

2. Have you been involved in fundamental reviews of legal or regulatory frameworks before? How might your experiences prepare you to advise GSA and Congress on any possible changes to existing laws or regulations, should they be needed, to address GSA's repair backlog and facilitate the sale or reuse of its excess or underutilized properties?
3. The Federal Buildings Fund is the interagency revolving fund GSA uses for meeting agencies' construction, repair and restoration, and leasing needs. What skills and experiences do you have with revolving funds for capital investment?
4. What experience do you have in any past positions with managing a large real estate portfolio? If you lack any specific real property background, what other experiences would be applicable to GSA's real property mission?

Addressing Reliance on Costly Leasing

5. GAO has reported since the late 1980s that overreliance on costly, long-term operating leases has cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and needs to be addressed. To what extent have you wrestled with the own-lease trade-off in organizations before? Based on your experience, under what conditions should the federal government lease real property and what should guide budgeting for leasing versus ownership?

Managing Courthouse Construction Effectively

6. Since the early 1990s, GSA and the federal judiciary have undertaken a multibillion-dollar courthouse construction initiative to address the judiciary's growing needs, yet routine and comprehensive analyses of the judiciary's needs for space had not been undertaken. Have you ever directed major assessments of a client's needs or developed long-term plans for a client based on their projected needs? What experiences do you have in client relations that would be beneficial to the GSA-judiciary relationship?
7. The federal judiciary is one of GSA's biggest customers and the success of its relationship with the judiciary hinges on striking a balance between customer service and safeguarding taxpayer dollars. What experiences would you bring to GSA that would be beneficial to achieving this balance?

Overseeing National
Broker Services Contracts

8. Given diminishing in-house resources, the National Broker Service (NBS) contracts and GSA's control over them are critical to the success of GSA's overall leasing program. To what extent have you ever been involved in significant evaluations of management controls? Evaluations of contractor performance? Can you suggest three things that GSA should keep in mind when assessing the effectiveness of NBS contracts, which GSA expects to eventually cover 90 percent of its lease acquisition workload?
9. What experience have you had with ensuring that services contracts, such as the NBS contracts, have the necessary safeguards in place to ensure that the government's interests are well protected?

Transitioning to a New
Telecommunications
Program

10. What experience have you had in conducting or overseeing large, multifaceted technology contracts, such as those GSA manages in the telecommunications area? What factors are most critical to the successful performance of such contracts?
11. On the basis of your experience, what are the pitfalls GSA should avoid in ensuring that it is getting the best deal from private-sector service providers, such as those that provide hundreds of millions of dollars in telecommunications services?

Point of Contact: Mark L. Goldstein, Director, Physical Infrastructure,
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Appendix XX: National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The mission of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is to pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research. Its activities span a broad range of complex and technical endeavors such as investigating and evaluating the composition and resources of Mars and working with its international partners to complete and operate the International Space Station, developing a new series of space flight vehicles capable of carrying humans to space, providing satellite and aircraft observations of Earth for scientific and weather forecasting, and developing new technologies designed to improve air flight safety. In order to continue with these activities and meet future goals, NASA requested \$17.6 billion for its fiscal year 2009 budget. NASA is organized under four mission directorates—Aeronautics Research, Exploration Systems, Science, and Space Operations—which provide direction and oversight of the agency’s research and development programs. Its programs and projects are executed by nine centers located around the country, and the contractor-operated Jet Propulsion Laboratory. In addition, NASA partners with academia, the private sector, state and local governments, other federal agencies, and a number of international organizations.

NASA is currently at a crossroad. In response to President Bush’s Vision for Space Exploration, the agency is in the midst of phasing out the Space Shuttle Program and beginning another major undertaking, the Constellation Program, which will create the next generation of spacecraft for human spaceflight. This is NASA’s biggest transition effort since landing humans on the moon more than three decades ago and then initiating the Space Shuttle Program a few years later. Moreover, it is expected ultimately to cost nearly \$230 billion over the next two decades. Numerous people, hardware, and infrastructures will be affected by coming changes. There are also pressures for funds to be spent on other projects, which poses a financing challenge for the agency.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Retiring the Space Shuttle
 - Balancing NASA's Investments in Programs
 - Completing and Sustaining the International Space Station
 - Developing the Next Generation of Human Spaceflight Systems
 - Improving NASA's Financial Management Systems
-

Questions

Retiring the Space Shuttle

1. A decision must be made soon on whether to retire the space shuttle in 2010, as currently planned, or to extend its life in view of limited options for supporting the International Space Station. What are the consequences to the future of U.S. human spaceflight if the Space Shuttle program is extended? What are the important steps that need to be taken if a decision is made to continue operating the Space Shuttle?
2. NASA will have to spend considerable funds on the transition from the Space Shuttle Program to the Constellation Program, so it may have to delay or take dollars away from other programs or ask Congress for more funds to cover these activities. Do you have any experience in shutting down a major project or program? What actions or steps are key to implementing a successful exit strategy?
3. Currently, the nation is facing a gap in human space flight until at least 2015. Moreover, NASA could face a loss of critical skills, suppliers, and technological edge due to the retirement of the space shuttle. What in your background prepares you to cope with these types of challenges?

Balancing NASA's Investments in Programs

4. NASA's workforce comprises about 18,700 civil servants at various centers across the country. Can you describe what role you have previously played in managing a highly skilled technical workforce?
5. Overall, NASA's programs and projects continue to have significant cost growth and schedule delays. Have you ever been responsible for long-term project development? Was it completed within estimated cost and timelines? What major project-implementation challenges have you encountered and how have you addressed them?
6. In addition to managing work at multiple NASA centers, NASA works with academia, the private sector, state and local governments, other federal agencies, and a number of international organizations. Are you

practiced at managing the coordination of multiple independent entities to achieve a common goal? What practices are key to facilitating effective collaboration across organizational boundaries?

Completing and Sustaining the International Space Station

7. NASA plans to finish assembling the International Space Station in fiscal year 2010 and operate the station until 2016. How has your prior work prepared you to manage a multibillion-dollar project with multiple international partners?
8. NASA is working with the commercial space sector to develop and produce transport vehicles that can take equipment and, ultimately, crew to and from the space station during the gap between the Space Shuttle and the Orion Crew Launch Vehicle. What skills could you bring to encourage greater participation by the aerospace industry in developing private orbital transportation services to send cargo and transport crews to the International Space Station?

Developing the Next Generation of Human Spaceflight Systems

9. The Constellation program faces challenges in developing the next generation of human-rated space craft capable of carrying humans to space. Continued uncertainty about the Orion and Ares I vehicles' requirements have led to considerable unknowns as to whether NASA's plans for these vehicles can be executed within scheduled time goals, as well as what these efforts will ultimately cost. What qualifications do you have that would suggest you may be able to help rein in some of this uncertainty and reduce the risk of cost growth and schedule slippage? What are the important steps to consider for reducing the development problems experienced by these and other Constellation projects, such as Ares V and Altair?
10. In order to minimize the Orion's weight, NASA used a process that zero-based the design of the vehicle. The zero-based design only met minimal mission requirements but was not safe for human flight. Beginning with the zero-based design of the Orion vehicle, NASA first added back the systems necessary to ensure crew safety and then conducted a series of engineering trade-offs to determine what other systems should be included to maximize the probability of mission success while minimizing the system's weight. Have you been involved in product development that involved trade-offs between cost and risks to program success? What specific principles or criteria should managers turn to when weighing such trade-offs, and how can costs be contained on improving spacecraft development without increasing risks to the program or crew safety?

Improving NASA's Financial Management Systems

11. NASA has struggled to implement a modern financial management system that produces the kind of accurate and reliable information needed to manage its projects and programs and produce timely, reliable financial information for external reporting purposes. Could you describe what financial management experience you have had at other organizations that could help you ensure that NASA will produce auditable financial statements and implement a financial management system that can generate timely, accurate, and useful financial information?
12. For years, GAO and others have reported that NASA does not maintain effective control over its largest asset categories—property, plant, equipment, and materials. How prepared are you to strengthen the agency's control and accountability over government-owned equipment? What in your management background has prepared you?
13. NASA continues to rely largely on its contractors to identify and report property values for assets created at the contractors' facilities. Based on your experience, what would be the most important steps for NASA to take to ensure that contractors begin providing complete and accurate information related to contractor-created assets?

Point of Contact: Cristina Chaplain, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, (202) 512-484 or chaplainc@gao.gov.

Appendix XXI: National Archives and Records Administration

As the nation's record keeper, the mission of National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is to safeguard and preserve the records of the federal government, including presidential records, and ensure ready access to this information for the public, the President, Congress, and the courts. In order to serve its mission, NARA is home to the Information Security Oversight Office and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and requested \$404 million from Congress for its fiscal year 2009 budget.

Agency business throughout the federal government is increasingly being conducted using electronic documents, including e-mail, which continue to grow in volume and complexity. This transformation has led to improvements in the way that federal agencies do business but has also created new challenges for NARA in managing and preserving electronic records.

Key Issues Needing Attention

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring Management and Preservation of Electronic Records |
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Questions

Ensuring Management and Preservation of Electronic Records

1. Have you guided or advised transitions from paper to electronic records before? What experiences could you bring to this position that would enable you to effectively lead the government's transition to electronic records?
2. What challenges in managing and preserving electronic records have you helped address?
3. Please describe your experience or knowledge related to managing, implementing, or using records management tools or principles to ensure that critical business information, such as information in e-mail messages, is available to those who need it when they need it.
4. One of NARA's most critical projects is the development of the Electronic Records Archive, which is to preserve and provide access to federal and presidential records. Have you led the development and implementation of large systems before? What, in your view, are the critical factors for successfully managing such an effort?

Point of Contact: Linda Koontz, Director, Information Technology, (202) 512-6240 or koontzl@gao.gov.

Appendix XXII: Office of Management and Budget

The mission of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is to serve the President by developing the annual budget proposal; overseeing the execution of the budget; developing and monitoring the administration of policies and programs, including management policies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government; and advising and assisting the President, including coordination and clearance of all executive branch communications to Congress and all executive orders.

Within OMB, there are also three statutory offices that are responsible for federal government policies on information and regulations, financial management, and procurement. GAO's work has identified key challenges facing OMB as it assesses competing and growing funding demands, sets policy, and oversees important management initiatives.

The federal government faces an unsustainable fiscal outlook that warrants increased transparency over the longer-term costs implicit in existing and proposed policies. With the various views on how OMB should carry out its rulemaking role, OMB must develop an agreed-upon oversight approach and develop ways to improve transparency and communication of its decisions to all stakeholders. Also, as Internet-based exchanges of information become the standard, agencies are increasingly under pressure to collect, process, and protect information and systems, and OMB will have to set the overall direction and oversee these important initiatives. Finally, there is a continued and widespread lack of effective financial management systems. Additional efforts are needed to ensure that agencies have systems that can provide reliable, useful, and timely information.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving Reporting and Recognition of the Federal Government's Long-Term Fiscal Challenge
- Budgeting for Contingencies
- Improving Budgeting for Federally Owned Capital
- Addressing the Role of OMB and OIRA on Regulatory Matters
- Examining the Implementation of E-Government and Line of Business Initiatives
- Protecting Government Facilities and Systems
- Ensuring That Agencies Protect Privacy
- Improving Federal Information Collections
- Managing IT to Achieve Benefits and Control Costs
- Developing and Implementing Well-Defined Modernization Blueprints
- Strengthening Information Security Controls
- Improving Federal Financial Management Systems
- Strengthening Risk Assessments to Determine Susceptibility to Improper Payments
- Ensuring the Transparency of Federal Awards
- Completing and Executing Corrective Action Plans for High-Risk Areas

Questions

Improving Reporting and Recognition of the Federal Government's Long-Term Fiscal Challenge

1. As you well know, our nation faces a serious structural fiscal imbalance, and it is clear that more needs to be done to raise awareness and stimulate debate in the country about how to address it. How are you prepared to help the federal government do this? What would you do to raise awareness and stimulate debate about how to address our nation's long-term fiscal challenges?
2. A number of other countries issue fiscal sustainability reports to explain and to improve the understanding of the long-term outlook and the magnitude of necessary change. The Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board has recently issued an exposure draft on fiscal sustainability reporting for the federal government. How has your experience prepared you to help with such reporting?
3. OMB is in a unique position to innovate and improve the performance and budgeting reporting to Congress. What types of information have you either relied on or provided to others before that is most useful for decision making? What measures or reporting mechanisms do you think would be most useful for congressional decision makers?
4. What steps would you take to increase recognition of existing exposures and encourage explicit consideration of the long-term

implications of new proposals before the government makes any additional commitments?

5. The government already uses accrual concepts for credit programs, and agencies have been working for nearly 20 years to refine credit subsidy estimates. Estimating the long-term claims on budgetary resources from government insurance programs and federal retiree health programs also can be difficult. How would you support agencies' efforts to improve the estimates of these long-term costs?

Budgeting for Contingencies

6. In the last several years the bulk of funding for the war on terrorism has been provided through supplemental appropriations. How would you ensure that the base budget reflects the best and most complete estimate for defense policies and activities?
7. Although we recognize that flexibility to respond to unexpected events is necessary, how would you ensure the budget includes the best estimate of likely claims?
8. Estimating the risk assumed under various insurance programs can be difficult. What would you do to support agencies' efforts in this area?

Improving Budgeting for Federally Owned Capital

9. What are your views on recognizing the full costs of commitments at the time they are incurred?
10. What ideas do you have to ensure that budget decisions be driven by best value?

Addressing the Role of OMB and OIRA on Regulatory Matters

11. How would you characterize the role of OMB and OIRA in regulatory oversight and what approach do you believe would be most effective in working with regulatory agencies?
12. Where and when do you believe OIRA can add the greatest value in the rulemaking process? How would your skills and abilities contribute to OMB and OIRA's performance in overseeing and managing that process?
13. Does your prior experience provide insights into whether the many procedural and analytical requirements placed on executive branch regulatory agencies' rulemaking are all still necessary and useful? Are there requirements that you perceive as duplicative or that should be revised to better address current regulatory challenges?

14. Are there areas where you believe more transparency, better documentation, and improved communication would help Congress and the public to better understand OIRA's role? Conversely, does your prior experience suggest activities and situations where you believe transparency is not necessary or desirable?

Examining the Implementation of E-Government and Line of Business Initiatives

15. E-Government was one of five priorities under the prior administration's President's Management Agenda. In addition, nine lines of business to develop common solutions to service delivery are in various stages of development. What management experiences have you had with e-commerce or "e-service" delivery? What criteria would you use to decide to continue, redirect, or eliminate such lines of business?
16. Based on your experience with e-commerce, what steps are important to ensure that all phases of development and implementation of e-services are carried out on schedule and at reasonable cost? What advice would you give to OMB and other agency officials on how to adequately address project risks?
17. Agencies are required to report annually to Congress on the benefits of these initiatives. How would you monitor for quality and accuracy of this reporting? As a manager, what indicators or data on benefits would you find most useful?

Protecting Government Facilities and Systems

18. Maintaining security over facilities and systems is a daunting challenge for all large organizations. Can you provide an example of how you successfully led efforts to address this or similar challenges in the past?
19. What are the key lessons that you took away from this experience and how might they apply to improving security in the federal government?

Ensuring That Agencies Protect Privacy

20. What experiences do you have that would prepare you to provide leadership on this critical issue?
21. Based on your experience, what are the most important issues that need to be considered in determining how to strike an appropriate balance between ensuring homeland security and protecting personal privacy?

Improving Federal Information Collections

22. What has prepared you to help OMB exercise leadership in ensuring that government information collections maximize utility and minimize burden?
23. Based on your experience, what kinds of steps do you think OMB might take to help agencies use the information-collection certification process to optimize their information management?

Managing IT to Achieve Benefits and Control Costs

24. Every year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and agencies identify IT projects totaling billions of dollars as being poorly planned and poorly performing through OMB's Management Watch List and high-risk projects processes. Despite agencies' efforts to address management weaknesses, the numbers remain high every year. What key practices have you found effective for improving project planning and performance?
25. Ensuring that system programs and projects are effectively planned and managed can be challenging. Describe the experience you have had that will help you to ensure that key capabilities and controls are implemented across agencies to increase project success.
26. The idea of establishing a Federal CIO to better focus on the challenges agencies are facing in managing their investments has been debated. What previous experience do you have that would inform your views on creating this position?

Developing and Implementing Well-Defined Modernization Blueprints

27. GAO has identified organizational leadership as the key element to departments and agencies overcoming the challenges associated with defining and using enterprise architectures—challenges such as cultural resistance, resource constraints, lack of top management understanding, and the lack of skilled staff. What is your position on the value of having and using enterprise architecture, and how do you envision overcoming the challenges that federal departments and agencies face in effectively leveraging architectures for organizational transformation?
28. What qualifications and experiences do you bring relative to encouraging federal departments and agencies to leverage enterprise architectures to facilitate organizational transformation?

Strengthening Information Security Controls

29. What do you see as the greatest information security challenges facing government? What experience or knowledge of information security do you have that you could use to help address these challenges?
30. Considering OMB's oversight role under the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002, what metrics should be used to measure information security effectiveness at agencies and governmentwide?

Improving Federal Financial Management Systems

31. Improving federal financial management and systems has been in the forefront of concern for Congress, the administration, and oversight bodies such as GAO. While agencies have taken a number of steps over the years to modernize federal financial management systems, more work remains. What steps do you think can be taken to further improve federal financial management?
32. Over the last eleven years, three continuing major impediments have prevented the United States Government from receiving an opinion on its consolidated financial statements: (1) serious financial management problems at the Department of Defense, (2) the federal government's inability to adequately account for and reconcile intragovernmental activity and balances between federal agencies, and (3) the federal government's ineffective process for preparing the consolidated financial statements. What strategies would you implement to ensure that agencies take appropriate actions to address these long-standing challenges? What steps would you take to sustain OMB's working relationship with GAO, the auditor of the consolidated financial statements?

Strengthening Risk Assessments to Determine Susceptibility to Improper Payments

33. Ensuring the integrity of program payments has been in the forefront of concern for Congress and the administration. While agencies have taken a number of steps to reduce improper payments more work remains. What steps do you think can be taken to further reduce improper payments?

Ensuring the Transparency of Federal Awards

34. OMB is responsible for publishing information on all federal awards via a Web site at USASpending.gov. Have you ever been responsible for the upkeep of large amounts of data coming from a variety of sources? Could you describe the challenges you faced? What do they suggest as steps OMB might need to take to ensure the reliability of the data reported on the Web site?

35. With increasing interest in making information on federal grants and contracts available to the public, collecting accurate and complete information on subawardees is essential, yet very difficult. Have you ever successfully partnered with others across levels of government and with a variety of businesses or nongovernmental organizations? How would you approach getting the cooperation of the many nonfederal partners needed to address this problem?

Completing and Executing
Corrective Action Plans for
High-Risk Areas

36. OMB has led an initiative to prompt agencies to develop detailed action plans for each area on GAO's high-risk list. Based on your past experience, what strategies could OMB use to ensure that agencies take appropriate actions to address these high-risk areas?
37. While agencies have made significant progress to address high-risk issues, sustained attention from OMB is needed to ensure progress continues. Based on your knowledge or lessons learned, what do you believe OMB needs to do demonstrate continued leadership and hold agencies accountable for results? To what extent could the Government Performance and Results Act including the provision for a Governmentwide Performance Plan be used as a mechanism for holding agencies and OMB accountable for progress on high-risk issues?

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Appendix XXIII: Office of Personnel Management

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) oversees the management of the federal governments' most important asset—its employees—and plays a central role in helping agencies transform their human capital management functions. OPM's specific responsibilities include leading agencies and holding them accountable for acquiring, developing, retaining, and managing employees with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to carry out their diverse missions. OPM also helps federal agencies uphold governmentwide values such as merit system principles, veterans' preference, and workforce diversity, and administers retirement, health benefits, and other insurance services for employees, annuitants, and beneficiaries. For fiscal year 2009, OPM requested about \$229 million to help complete the transition to new technology supporting the retirement program, procure and begin implementing a new financial system, undertake new human resources policy initiatives, and maintain the Merit System Accountability (Compliance) Program.

In 2001, GAO identified strategic human capital management as a governmentwide high-risk area, because human capital shortfalls were eroding the ability of many agencies—and threatening the ability of others—to effectively, efficiently, and economically perform their missions. Although OPM and agencies have made commendable progress in transforming their human capital functions, the area remains high risk because additional efforts are needed.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Strengthening Internal Capacity to Assist Agencies
- Modernizing Federal Employee Retirement Systems
- Helping Agencies Attract and Retain Older Workers

Questions

Strengthening Internal Capacity to Assist Agencies

1. OPM plays a central role in helping agencies transform their human capital management functions. This responsibility is critical as agencies continue to struggle with aligning their human capital activities with their mission and program goals. Can you describe a couple of specific experiences where you have led and implemented human capital reforms?
2. Congress recognizes the critical leadership role that agency Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) and the CHCO Council must play in implementing the fundamental changes that need to take place across the executive branch. What experience do you have collaborating with

others that would prepare you to work with CHCOs in agencies to ensure continued reforms?

3. Regarding OPM's role in supporting other federal agencies, what prior experience do you have in client relations and the provision of technical assistance? What do you believe would be a useful role for OPM in working with agencies to help them address challenges in recruiting, hiring, and performance management?
4. In recent years, in terms of how it assists agencies, OPM has moved from a focus on rules, to a focus on tools. What steps would you take to continue this trend of building more collaborative, constructive relationships with agencies? To what extent would you proactively reach out to top cabinet officials to understand their needs?
5. Performance metrics are essential for effective oversight and holding agencies accountable for results. What metrics do you feel are appropriate for gauging OPM's and agencies' human capital efforts?

Modernizing Federal Employee Retirement Systems

6. OPM's retirement modernization initiative has faced many project management challenges related to deploying new technology to improve the timeliness and accuracy of retirement application processing. In your prior work have you been involved in deploying new technology organizationwide? If so, what do you think are key variables a manager can and should track to ensure timely deployment?
7. What prior experience do you have in overcoming hurdles that can be inherent in large-scale modernization projects similar to OPM's retirement initiative?
8. In modernizing the federal employee retirement system, OPM has had difficulty developing a reliable program cost estimate. Could you please describe the steps you would take to develop more reliable cost estimates and stay within those costs when implementing the program?

Helping Agencies Attract and Retain Older Workers

9. Helping federal agencies prepare for the looming baby boomer retirement wave will require a multifaceted approach that could include hiring, engaging, and retaining older workers beyond their normal retirement age. Have you wrestled with these challenges in a way that would prepare you to assume a leadership role in this area?

How would you encourage federal departments and agencies to recruit and retain older workers?

10. The demographics of the nation's workforce, and the workforce as a whole, are in flux. For the first time, four distinct generations will be in the workforce together, and each group possesses unique values, attitudes, and expectations. How should the employer-employee relationship adapt to these changes in order to build an inclusive work environment that supports success?
11. In addition to becoming more multi-generational in nature, the federal workforce is also becoming increasingly "blended." Federal agencies are making greater use of contractors, career employees, full-timers, part-timers, tele-workers, etc., all working together to carry out an organization's mission. What should federal agencies do to manage, supervise, and develop staff in this new environment?

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Appendix XXIV: Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade, commodity, and direct investment policy, and overseeing negotiations with other countries. It seeks to contribute to U.S. economic growth, competitiveness, and prosperity by opening markets and reducing trade and investment barriers around the world. The head of USTR is the U.S. Trade Representative, a Cabinet member who serves as the President's principal trade advisor, negotiator, and spokesperson on trade issues. For fiscal year 2009, USTR requested slightly over \$46 million to carry out its mission.

The U.S. economy is unquestionably tied to international trade. According to the U.S. International Trade Commission, the United States exported about \$1.6 trillion in goods and services in 2007 and imported about \$2.3 trillion. The number of multilateral, regional, and bilateral trade agreements that USTR has negotiated, and to which the United States is a party, have increased substantially in the last two decades. According to USTR, these agreements have greatly expanded markets and provided benefits for American workers, farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and service providers. However, U.S. public opinion on the benefits of free trade are mixed, and continued liberalization of trade rules throughout the world is a difficult undertaking. Moreover, ensuring that U.S. companies obtain the trade agreements requires vigilant monitoring and enforcement by USTR and other trade agencies.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Integrating Development-through-Trade Programs
- Expanding Consultations with Stakeholders
- Ensuring Compliance with Trade Agreements
- Improving USTR Human Capital Management

Questions

Integrating Development-through-Trade Programs

1. Assessing the effect of trade preference programs entails comprehensive review and analysis across multiple issues and countries. What leadership experience do you have in compiling and reviewing a range of information from multiple sources?
2. GAO has said that a more integrated and systematic approach is needed to review other countries' compliance with U.S. trade/development programs. Can you cite any examples in which you

led an organization through a major overhaul of its progress, review, or assessment practices?

Expanding Consultations with Stakeholders

3. Formulating trade policy and negotiating agreements requires USTR to obtain input from a variety of stakeholders, including Congress, other federal agencies, and the private sector. What experience do you have in leading an organization that required broad stakeholder input? What lessons did you learn in your previous positions about balancing divergent or competing interests among stakeholders?
4. Congress has had concerns in the past with USTR's efforts to obtain timely and substantive congressional input for trade negotiations. What experience do you have in creating incentives for managers to seek timely stakeholder input? How did you hold managers accountable for obtaining input in the manner expected?

Ensuring Compliance with Trade Agreements

5. A significant part of federal efforts to monitor other countries' compliance with trade agreements are undertaken by officials from the Departments of Commerce, State, and Agriculture, requiring a high level of collaboration and communication among USTR and these agencies. Please describe how you have collaborated with multiple organizations to achieve a common goal.
6. What mechanisms should be in place to ensure that collaboration and communication among these agencies regarding potential compliance issues occurs in a timely and efficient manner?

Improving USTR Human Capital Management

7. What experience do you have in developing and implementing strategic human capital plans to improve the ability of an organization under your leadership to achieve its mission?
8. Given USTR's small size, it must frequently leverage resources at other agencies to help it carry out its mission. Have you led an organization that faced a similar circumstance, and what steps did you take to access outside resources to help the organization carry out its mission?
9. How would you determine whether an organization under your leadership had the right mix of skills in place to carry out current and emerging mission needs?

10. USTR has limited resources with which to manage a growing monitoring and enforcement workload, created by new WTO members and new trade agreements. As a manager and leader, how do you handle the challenge of “doing more with less”?

Point of Contact: Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers, Managing Director,
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Appendix XXV: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) protects the retirement incomes of nearly 44 million American workers in 30,000 private-sector defined-benefit pension plans. It was established to insure the pension benefits of participants in qualified plans and to pay participants' benefits when plans could not. PBGC aims to encourage the continuation and maintenance of private-sector defined-benefit pension plans, provide timely and uninterrupted payment of pension benefits, and keep pension insurance premiums at a minimum. PBGC receives no funds from general tax revenues; instead operations are financed by insurance premiums set by Congress. PBGC's board of directors consists of the Secretaries of Labor, Treasury, and Commerce.

In July 2003, GAO designated PBGC's single-employer pension insurance program—its largest insurance program—as “high risk,” including it on GAO's list of major programs that need urgent attention and transformation due to the financial risk that they face. The program remains on the list today. PBGC projected its financial deficit at nearly \$14 billion as of September 2007. Further, recent GAO reports have highlighted several management challenges facing PBGC.

Key Issues Needing Attention

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Questions

Improving the Stability of PBGC

1. Currently, PBGC's investment policy's goal is to invest 55 percent of assets in equity and real estate, reflecting investment policies aligned with pension plans. What experience do you have that would help you develop and maintain an appropriate investment policy at this unique agency? What criteria do you think are appropriate in developing recommendations for such a policy?
2. The PBGC board of directors consists of the Secretaries of Labor, Treasury, and Commerce, who have limited time to oversee corporation policy and management. GAO has recommended that Congress expand PBGC's board of directors to include more members with diverse backgrounds related to PBGC's mission. What experiences do you have working with boards of directors that might help Congress and PBGC better align the board with PBGC's needs? Are there other measures, in your experience, that could help strengthen the governance of PBGC under current law?

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3. The decline in the provision of defined-benefit pension plans calls PBGC's very role into question for the long-term future. What skills or experience do you have with other entities facing threats to their financial viability that may be helpful to PBGC at this time?

Point of Contact: Barbara Bovbjerg, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, (202) 512-5491 or bovbjergb@gao.gov.

Appendix XXVI: Small Business Administration

The Small Business Administration's (SBA) primary mission is to promote small business development and entrepreneurship. SBA carries out its mission with programs that provide access to credit and by providing entrepreneurial assistance through partnerships with private entities that offer small business counseling and technical assistance. SBA also administers various small business procurement programs, which are designed to assist small and small disadvantaged businesses obtain federal contracts and subcontracts. Additionally, SBA provides financial assistance through its Disaster Loan Program to help homeowners, renters, and businesses of all sizes recover from disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and terrorist attacks. SBA requested \$657 million in its fiscal year 2009 budget proposal in order to implement these programs and achieve its mission.

In the past several years, SBA has faced the same budget pressures as other agencies while demand for its loans, services, and programs has grown. For example, SBA's 7(a) loan program has grown from approximately 44,000 loans approved in fiscal year 2000 to 92,500 in fiscal year 2007. The growth in its programs has also created a demand for increased oversight. SBA must oversee lenders who make loans through the 7(a) program, contracting assistance programs, and technical assistance grantees. However, SBA's workforce (not including disaster assistance employees whose levels fluctuate) decreased by about 26 percent between 2000 and 2007. SBA's disaster loan program also faces challenges. Due to the damage associated with the Gulf Coast hurricanes in 2005, SBA faced unprecedented demand for its disaster loan services. Nine months following the hurricanes, SBA had approved nearly 150,000 such loans totaling nearly \$10 billion, which will continue to be serviced by the agency until the loans are paid off or liquidated as a result of default.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Providing Timely and Effective Disaster Assistance
- Addressing the Effects of Transformation Efforts
- Overseeing the 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program
- Strengthening the HUBZone Program

Questions

Providing Timely and Effective Disaster Assistance

1. The farm bill that was enacted in 2008 contained several provisions designed to strengthen SBA's disaster planning processes (such as requiring the appointment of a qualified disaster planner, conducting planning simulations, and ensuring the availability of adequate personnel and office space in an emergency). Could you describe a couple of examples of your experience with similar steps taken elsewhere and how they prepare you to help SBA to implement these requirements?
2. The federal response to the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes was widely criticized. Have you ever helped an organization respond to a major crisis? Could you provide examples of how you would manage and oversee SBA's response to a major disaster?

Addressing the Effect of Transformation Efforts

3. A recent GAO report identified several practices implemented by a previous SBA Administrator that helped to improve employee morale and the operational capacity of the agency. In that report, GAO noted that SBA's leadership would need to remain committed to sustain the progress it had made. What has been your experience with transformation efforts, and what do you think are key steps to ensuring the sustainability of successful practices?
4. SBA has faced a number of human capital challenges, including overcoming low employee morale from earlier restructuring efforts and developing employees to succeed an increasing number of employees eligible to retire. Have you managed a large workforce? Have you had to address similar human capital challenges and if so, what are some of the actions you found successful in addressing these challenges?
5. SBA has a significant field presence with 68 district offices, 10 regional offices, and numerous centers that process and service loans. These offices have employees that work directly with potential entrepreneurs, small businesses, and lenders. Have you had experience

working in or managing an organization with a large field presence and if so how have you communicated with employees across offices? What are some of the methods you believe would be effective in ensuring that employees who work outside of SBA's Washington, D.C., headquarters are also able to provide their input, knowledge, and expertise?

Overseeing the 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program

6. Through SBA's largest small business loan program, private-sector lenders make the loans with a government guaranty if the loan defaults. Recent Office of Inspector General reports have found that SBA's lender oversight program has been deficient in taking enforcement actions when its examinations of certain lenders have found numerous problems. Given that SBA's loan programs require a partnership with the private sector, what is your experience in managing public-private relationships and what skills and knowledge do you think you could offer that would improve SBA's oversight of lenders?
7. Can you describe examples of where you have taken action to implement, oversee, or enforce internal controls? How could you be helpful to oversee improved enforcement of controls for the 7(a) loan guaranty program?

Strengthening the HUBZone Program

8. The HUBZone program is just one of several contracting programs that support small business development by encouraging federal agencies to award contracts to small businesses. How have you successfully worked with multiple organizations to achieve common goals? What do you think would be key to successfully working across multiple agencies to increase the percentage of federal contracting dollars awarded to small businesses?
9. GAO's recent work on the HUBZone program identified several deficiencies in SBA's management of the program and concluded that the program was vulnerable to fraud. What is your experience with implementing internal controls to ensure that an organization's policies and procedures prevent fraud, waste, and abuse?

Point of Contact: William B. Shear, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, (202) 512-8678, or shearw@gao.gov .

Appendix XXVII: Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) overarching mission is to advance the economic security of the nation's people through its leadership in shaping and managing America's Social Security programs. SSA administers three major benefit programs with estimated outlays totaling over \$680 billion in fiscal year 2009: the Old Age and Survivors Insurance program provides benefits to retired workers and their families and to survivors of deceased workers; the Disability Insurance (DI) program provides benefits to eligible workers who have qualifying disabilities, and their eligible family members; and the Supplemental Security Income program provides income for aged, blind, or disabled individuals with limited income and resources.

SSA is facing challenges on a number of fronts—disability claims processing, service delivery, and trust fund solvency. SSA has experienced significant growth in its disability programs and is struggling to keep pace with a large number of applications for benefits, resulting in large backlogs and long waits for claimants. Moreover, the criteria the agency uses to make decisions about eligibility for benefits may not sufficiently assess the work capacity of individuals in the 21st century. Additionally, SSA is having difficulty fulfilling its many other responsibilities, including processing retirement claims, helping to administer the Medicare prescription drug program, verifying employees' authorization to work, and performing program integrity activities. Further, the aging of the baby boom generation, increased life expectancy, and declining birth rates have adversely affected the long-term financial sustainability of the Social Security trust fund.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving Criteria for Disability Compensation
- Improving Claims Process
- Addressing Service Delivery Challenges
- Restoring Financial Sustainability to Social Security Programs

Questions

While the Commissioner's term expires in 2013 and is independent of changes in the executive branch administration, these questions may be used during confirmation hearings for others.

Improving Criteria for Disability Compensation

1. Medical and technological advances as well as changes in the labor market over the years have afforded more employment opportunities for some people with disabilities in the 21st century, raising questions about whether SSA's eligibility criteria for disability benefits appropriately take such factors into account. What experience have

you had in managing complex issues in a constantly changing environment?

Improving Claims Process

2. SSA, which is responsible for administering a number of programs that affect the lives of Americans daily, is facing significant challenges in delivering timely, accurate, and consistent service to the public. What prior work has exposed you to the demands a business or other organizations face in providing high-quality customer service? How has that prepared you to effectively address such challenges as lengthy waiting times and large disability claims backlogs?

**Addressing Service
Delivery Challenges**

3. As the baby boom generation begins to retire, some SSA managers believe that the current field office structure is financially unsustainable at the current level of appropriations. Have you managed a large field presence of an organization or been involved in fine-tuning it to best meet the mission? If so, what criteria are important for obtaining an efficient structure that ensures quality service delivery into the future under tight resource constraints?
4. In numerous field offices, the average customer waiting time is over 1 hour. What practices, in your experience, can help assure high quality and timely service to customers? What experience do you have in addressing the trade-off between face-to-face service and a more electronic approach?
5. In some field offices, the resources devoted to processing applications for new and replacement Social Security cards have increased, which may have contributed to longer wait and processing times for other types of SSA services. Do you have experience in making trade-offs between competing lines of business that might help SSA address this situation?
6. SSA faces a looming retirement wave of its own—at precisely the time its workload is significantly increasing. What experience do you have with this type of challenge, and what steps would you take to ensure that you have the people you need to do the job?

**Restoring Financial
Sustainability to Social
Security Programs**

7. The Social Security program is not currently financially sustainable in the decades to come. What experience do you bring that would help policymakers reach agreement on how to finance Social Security benefits in the future?

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Appendix XXVIII: U.S. Agency for International Development

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the principal U.S. agency providing assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms. The agency's work supports long-term and equitable economic growth and advances U.S. foreign policy objectives by supporting economic growth, agriculture, trade, global health, democracy, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance. The agency provides assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Eurasia, and the Middle East. For fiscal year 2009, the President requested about \$39.5 billion for the International Affairs budget for the Department of State, USAID, and other foreign affairs agencies.

The agency plays a vital role in supporting U.S. national security, foreign policy, and the war on terrorism by addressing one of the root causes of violence: poverty fueled by lack of economic opportunity. The agency must operate amidst long-standing and emergent challenges, such as the world's growing poor and malnourished population, and the critical need to rebuild regions and nations in conflict, such as Afghanistan. In addition, the agency must work to maximize the effect of humanitarian assistance programs, while also strengthening democracy and human rights programs in places such as Cuba and elsewhere.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Stabilizing Regions in Conflict
- Addressing International Food Aid and Security
- Maximizing Humanitarian Assistance
- Improving Foreign Assistance Management
- Enhancing Democracy and Human Rights Activities

Questions

Stabilizing Regions in Conflict

1. What skills and abilities do you have that would prepare you for managing government programs in war zones or regions in conflict?
2. What experience do you have successfully working with a wide variety of civilian and military stakeholders and balancing competing priorities, approaches, and objectives?
3. Does your background provide you with any lessons learned for developing comprehensive strategic plans and using these plans to measure progress toward achieving goals in regions in conflict?

**Addressing International
Food Aid and Security**

4. As a 2008 GAO report pointed out, lack of agricultural and rural development are major factors contributing to food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa. What expertise do you have in the areas of agricultural and rural development?
5. Currently, U.S. food aid is funded under four program authorities and delivered through six programs administered by USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A 2008 GAO report said the United States lacks an integrated governmentwide strategy that defines actions and resources to deal with food insecurity. What prepares you to be a leader in working with other federal agencies and others to develop such a strategy?
6. With increasing prices for commodities and agricultural products worldwide, what experience do you have managing operations that are affected by global commodity markets?

**Maximizing Humanitarian
Assistance**

7. What skills and abilities do you have to manage humanitarian assistance programs in crisis situations, be they short-term or open-ended in nature?
8. What in your professional background prepares you to help guide USAID to facilitate coordination with other U.S. departments and agencies, as well as other non-U.S. stakeholders that may be involved in disaster recovery and reconstruction programs?
9. What experience can you cite for measuring organizational performance and effect of humanitarian programs, such as establishing and using frameworks that link project activities with goals and targets and implementing efforts to obtain reliable program data?

**Improving Foreign
Assistance Management**

10. What experiences do you have in overseeing the integration of and accounting for operating-expense budgets across a variety of offices and programs, such as Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance must do?
11. What skills and expertise do you have that prepares you for addressing the many human capital challenges that face USAID and other agencies providing humanitarian assistance?

Enhancing Democracy and
Human Rights Activities

12. What experience do you have in working with governments in transition and how has this experience prepared you to lead and oversee U.S. programs designed to support democracies abroad?
13. Other countries' human rights records are an important consideration for making a range of foreign policy decisions. What aspects of your background have prepared you to address human rights violations and make these important decisions?

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Appendix XXIX: Acquisition Management

Bolstering the size and skill of the acquisition workforce continues to be a primary goal for procurement executives at virtually all federal agencies. Agencies across the government are increasingly reliant on contractors to execute their missions. In fact, federal agencies spent more than \$450 billion on goods and services in fiscal year 2007, a significant increase since 2000.

With this increase in reliance comes a commensurate responsibility to assure that funds are spent wisely and result in good acquisition outcomes, that is, that agencies are buying the right things the right way. GAO's work has shown, however, that agencies confront several interrelated challenges, including separating wants from needs; executing acquisition programs within available funding and established time frames; using sound contracting arrangements with appropriate incentives and effective oversight; assuring that contractors are used only in appropriate circumstances and play proper roles; and sustaining a capable and accountable acquisition workforce. GAO has designated five high-risk areas within acquisition management, including management and use of interagency contracting; weapon system acquisition; and contract management at three agencies—the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Collectively, these high-risk areas expose hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars to potential waste and misuse. Addressing these challenges will require sustained management attention and leadership at both the agency level and from organizations such as the Office of Management and Budget and its Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving Acquisition Outcomes on Major Systems
- Promoting the Use of Sound Business Arrangements
- Ensuring Agencies Have the Capacity to Effectively Manage and Appropriately Use Contractors
- Making Progress to Address GAO High-Risk Areas

Questions

Improve Acquisition Outcomes on Major Systems

1. Major acquisition projects at Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration are all are projected to cost significantly more than initially estimated and to take longer to complete than initially planned. What experience do you have overseeing the management of

major acquisitions and improving outcomes on these projects? What lessons learned from those experiences can you bring to the management of major programs at these federal agencies and others?

2. We routinely hear about large government contracts that are over cost and behind schedule, yet the contractors for these efforts continue to win new work. How would you hold contractors accountable for acquisition outcomes, particularly those large government contractors that continue to get new work no matter how bad past outcomes were?
3. The amount spent on federal contracting continues to grow and may be unsustainable given other mandated budgeted priorities. How would you go about making spending priorities and choices if the amount of money for acquisitions declines?

Promoting the Use of Sound Business Arrangements

4. GAO's work at the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies, has found that the lack of well-defined requirements, the use of ill-suited business arrangements or poorly structured incentives, and inadequate oversight of contractor performance have contributed to poor acquisition outcomes. In your experience, what are the keys to structuring effective business arrangements with contractors? What are the most effective mechanisms for motivating them to perform?
5. When a contract goes poorly it can be due to actions taken by both the government and the contractor. How would you assign responsibility for bad outcomes and ensure that neither side gets a free pass? What are the responsibilities of contractors to push back on the government when it takes an action that is likely to negatively affect the contractor's ability to deliver the desired outcomes? Do you have experience discontinuing or terminating poor-performing contracts or programs?
6. What are the most important aspects of contractor performance to measure? What steps would you take to ensure that your agency is consistently capturing performance information in these areas and using that information when awarding new contracts?

Ensuring Agencies Have the Capacity to Effectively Manage and Appropriately Use Contractors

7. Large numbers of the federal workforce are eligible to retire in the next few years, and D.C.-based agencies are reportedly competing among themselves for acquisition talent. How have you recruited and retained individuals with skills that are in high demand? How has your experience prepared you to help bring discipline to this area to ensure that federal agencies do not become their own worst enemies in the battle for employees in acquisition-related fields?
8. In the 1990s, conventional wisdom said that it was cheaper to contract out for services rather than provide them in-house with federal employees. Today, data suggests that a contractor employee could cost the government 25 percent more than a federal employee. Where, if at all, have you compared “in-house” and contracted services and their cost? What lessons have you learned from these experiences?
9. What do you propose to do to create more transparency about the number and use of contractors to support federal agencies? What are your views on the need for, and how would you go about, requiring large organizations like federal agencies to develop a strategy for determining when contracting makes sense?
10. When the decision is made to use contractors in roles closely supporting inherently governmental functions, additional risks are present. Contractors are not subject to the same ethics rules as the government even when doing the same job, and the government risks entering into an improper personal services contract if an employer/employee relationship exists between the government and the contractor employee. What are your professional views on how best to address these challenges to ensure proper oversight of such arrangements, particularly given the evolving and enlarging role of contractors in federal acquisitions?

Making Progress to Address GAO High-Risk Areas

11. GAO has designated contract management as a high-risk issue in three agencies and has identified problems in individual acquisitions at numerous other agencies. What steps will you take to help address this governmentwide challenge? What steps will you take to ensure that this agency is effectively performing its contract management responsibilities?
12. Over the past few years, a number of concerns have arisen pertaining to the adequacy of competition for government contracts, whether it is to rebuild Iraq, the ability of small businesses to compete for contracts, or agencies finding that they have only one or two sources for key

services. In your experience, what are some key steps that can help ensure robust competition in federal contracting?

13. What experience can you describe that demonstrates your ability to marshal sustained attention necessary to address systemic weaknesses or deficiencies, such as may be required to show progress toward addressing long-standing issues on GAO's high-risk list?

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Appendix XXX: Collaboration

Achieving meaningful national results in many policy and program areas requires some combination of coordinated efforts among various actors across federal agencies, often with other governments (for example, internationally and at state and local levels), nongovernmental organizations (NGO), for-profit and not-for-profit contractors, and the private sector. Examples of such results include taking additional action to protect the homeland, strengthening preparedness for large-scale public health emergencies, revamping oversight of food safety, and improving the United States' image abroad.

These and many other public issues vividly underscore the critical importance of employing a broad governance perspective to meet global and national needs and will highlight challenges Congress and the new administration face in devising integrated solutions to such multidimensional problems.

There are several tools for forging successful partnerships across these networks. GAO has identified key practices that can help enhance and sustain federal agency collaboration, some of which can also be applied more broadly to collaboration in networks. These practices include, for example, having collaborating parties (1) establish mutually reinforcing or joint strategies; (2) identify and address needs by leveraging resources; (3) agree on roles and responsibilities; and (4) establish compatible policies, procedures, collaboration, and other means to operate across boundaries.

An annual governmentwide performance plan could provide a broader view of the federal government's goals and strategies to address issues that affect different federal agencies and could help highlight redundancy and other inefficiencies in how the government does its business.

A longer-term strategic plan for the federal government, along with key national indicators to assess performance, could also enable governmentwide reexamination of both existing programs and proposed new programs.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has a central role in overseeing the management of federal agencies and promoting the President's Management Agenda (PMA). While OMB has used the PMA to foster greater interagency collaboration, its efforts have been limited, and the agency could be doing much more to improve coordination among federal agencies.

The increasing complexity of how the government does its business—and who does it—presents new challenges to congressional decision making, as well. Throughout the nation’s history, Congress has consistently shown the ability to respond to the nation’s most technically complex and politically difficult challenges. Congress will increasingly need to rely on integrated approaches to help its decision making on the many issues requiring effective collaboration across federal agencies, levels of government, and sectors.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Strengthening Partnerships to Protect the Homeland
- Ensuring a Strategic, Integrated Approach to Recovering and Rebuilding from the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes, and Implications for Future Catastrophic Events
- National Preparedness for, and Response to, an Influenza Pandemic
- Developing a Comprehensive, Governmentwide Approach to Climate Change
- Improving the Cost-Effectiveness of Federal Programs Supporting Children and Families
- Developing an Integrated Approach to Guide Interagency Efforts to Coordinate, Plan, and Implement Crosscutting National Security Programs
- Ensuring a Competitive and Informed Energy Market
- Protecting Technologies Critical to U.S. National Security While Allowing Legitimate Trade

Questions

1. Can you describe specific successes you have had establishing partnerships with other organizations that created benefits for both? What was accomplished through these partnerships?
2. What challenges have you faced in working collaboratively with other organizations? What approaches did you take to overcome those challenges?
3. What experiences have you had creating incentives for your managers in other organizations to work collaboratively with external parties? How can managers be held accountable for working collaboratively?
4. When in your prior work have you identified and leveraged the resources of other organizations to accomplish shared goals?
5. Are you aware of the networks and partnerships (including federal agencies, state and local governments, domestic and international nongovernmental or quasi-governmental organizations, and for-profit and not-for-profit contractors and grantees) that you and your agency rely on to achieve results and form public policy? Do you know whether these networks and partnerships have been identified? What

would be your plan for reaching out to these other agencies or organizations?

6. What are some specific ways in which your agency could work collaboratively with other federal or nonfederal organizations to improve performance outcomes for the American public?

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Appendix XXXI: Financial Management

While significant improvements have occurred, the federal government has a long way to go in assuring that Congress and federal policymakers and management have reliable, useful, and timely financial and financial-related performance information needed to support well-informed decision making. While many individual federal agencies can now produce reliable financial statements, for the 11th consecutive year, GAO was unable to render an opinion on the federal government's fiscal year 2007 accrual basis consolidated financial statements. In addition, financial management system deficiencies and continuing material weaknesses continue to hinder federal agency accountability and program performance measurements. Most recently, there has been increasing concern over the financial implications of turmoil in the nation's housing and financial markets. Given the fiscal challenges facing the federal government, the need for reliable, useful, and timely cost and other financial performance information is greater than ever.

A multipronged approach will be required to make greater progress and meet the financial management challenges of the 21st century. This approach should include (1) sustaining top-level commitment and leadership to build on progress made to date, (2) focusing on establishing and maintaining accountability for programs and resources, and minimizing improper payments, and (3) considering whether federal financial reporting enhancements are needed, and (4) recognizing that the longer actions to address these important issues are delayed, the greater the risk that the eventual changes will be disruptive and destabilizing.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving Internal Controls to Enhance Accountability and Reduce Improper Payments
- Improving the Extent and Reliability of Cost Information Available to Assist in Evaluating Federal Program Operations
- Obtaining an Unqualified Opinion on the U.S. Government's Consolidated Financial Statements
- Developing and Implementing Effective Federal Financial Management Systems
- Improving Federal Grant Accountability
- Evaluating Federal Accountability Requirements and Practices for Opportunities to Streamline and Enhance Effectiveness

Questions

Improving Internal Controls to Enhance Accountability and Reduce Improper Payments

1. The federal government's reported improper payment estimate has increased from about \$20 billion in fiscal year 2002 to \$55 billion in fiscal year 2007. In your view, what can be done to improve the accuracy and integrity of federal payments?

Improving the Extent and Reliability of Cost Information Available to Assist in Evaluating Federal Program Operations

2. What is your experience in using cost information to manage and modify large and complex programs for an organization?
3. Several agencies' accounting systems have significant weaknesses and lack the necessary information to help guide daily decision making. Please elaborate on your views on agencies' cost accounting information and whether it could be helpful to Congress during its oversight.

Obtaining an Unqualified Opinion on the U.S. Government's Consolidated Financial Statements

4. Over the last eleven years, three continuing major impediments have prevented the United States Government from receiving an opinion on its consolidated financial statements: (1) serious financial management problems at the Department of Defense, (2) the federal government's inability to adequately account for and reconcile intragovernmental activity and balances between federal agencies, and (3) the federal government's ineffective process for preparing the consolidated financial statements. What strategies do you think would help ensure that agencies take appropriate actions to address these long-standing challenges?
5. What are your views regarding needed financial information and how it should be used to effectively manage operations and hold managers accountable?

Developing and Implementing Effective Federal Financial Management Systems

6. What is your experience with developing and implementing systems providing integrated planning, programming, budgeting, and execution data to better demonstrate the relationship between dollars allotted and results achieved?
7. What are your views on the challenges of modernizing systems and how your skills and experience will assist you in overcoming such challenges?
8. What are your views regarding the importance of financial management technology in becoming a world-class finance organization and what are the consequences of not having a modernized, integrated financial management system?

9. What actions do you intend to take to ensure that financial management system initiatives are implemented on time and within budget, and provide the promised capabilities?

**Improving Federal Grant
Accountability**

10. What skills and experiences do you possess that could help navigate the trade-offs between financial control, audit burden, and maintaining accountability in government programs that rely heavily, if not exclusively, on grants?

**Evaluating Federal
Accountability
Requirements and
Practices for Opportunities
to Streamline and Enhance
Effectiveness**

11. How would your financial management experience be useful in effectively administering government programs?

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Appendix XXXII: Human Capital Management

The importance of a high-performing federal workforce cannot be overstated. The nation faces new and more complex challenges in the 21st century including a large and growing long-term fiscal imbalance, evolving national and homeland security threats, increasing global interdependence, and a changing economy. To help address these challenges, federal agencies will need to recruit and retain employees able to create, sustain, and thrive in organizations that are flatter, results-oriented, and externally focused, and that can collaborate with other government entities as well as with the private and nonprofit sectors to achieve desired outcomes.

In 2001, we identified federal human capital management as a governmentwide high-risk area because federal agencies lacked a strategic approach to human capital management that integrated human capital efforts with their missions and program goals. Exacerbating this problem is the fact that federal agencies are facing a looming retirement wave. Governmentwide, about one-third of federal employees on board at the end of fiscal year 2007 will become eligible to retire by 2012. Further, proportions of workers eligible to retire are projected to be especially high in certain occupations. As experienced employees retire, they leave behind critical gaps in leadership and institutional knowledge, which could adversely affect the government's ability to carry out its diverse responsibilities and missions.

Over the past few years, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), individual federal agencies, and Congress have made a number of noteworthy human capital reforms. For example, OPM has developed online decision support tools to provide agencies with guidance on how to use hiring flexibilities and retention strategies, while individual agencies have developed targeted recruitment strategies to identify and attract a talented workforce. For its part, Congress has provided agencies with hiring flexibilities that could help streamline the hiring process. Still, strategic human capital management remains on our high-risk list because federal agencies do not consistently have the modern human capital programs and policies needed to ensure that they have the right people in the right jobs at the right time to meet the challenges they face.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Addressing Human Capital and Related Organizational Transformation Issues
- Ensuring Agencies Have the Right Mix of Skills to Address Current and Emerging Missions
- Ensuring Effective Diversity Management Strategies Are in Place
- Ensuring Full Use Is Being Made of Available Flexibilities
- Developing a Results-Oriented Organizational Culture

Questions

Addressing Human Capital and Related Organizational Transformation Issues

1. How important to you is human capital management and what experience do you have in leading human capital reforms?
2. Can you describe your philosophical view of the role that a human capital office plays in fulfilling an organization’s mission?
3. What human capital innovations that you have used elsewhere might you bring with you to the federal workforce in your agency?
4. In your view, what are the key ingredients of successful workforce transformation, and how would you apply them to your agency?

Ensuring Agencies Have the Right Mix of Skills to Address Current and Emerging Missions

5. What steps would you take to ensure your agency has the right mix of skills in place at the right time to meet current and emerging mission needs?
6. What were some of the workforce challenges you have faced, and how did you address them?
7. What do you expect to be some of the biggest workforce challenges facing you in the position to which you have been nominated?

Ensuring Effective Diversity Management Strategies Are in Place

8. Can you describe your reliance, if any, on a diversity strategy and plan for organizations you have worked in? How have these related to the strategic plans of the organizations?
9. What types of qualitative and quantitative measures have you found to be useful in assessing the impact of various aspects of an organization’s overall diversity program?

10. Do you have experience in holding managers accountable for diversity initiatives? What successes have you had by linking their performance assessment and compensation to the progress of diversity initiatives?
-

Ensuring Full Use Is Being Made of Available Flexibilities

11. Please describe the hiring and retention flexibilities you have used successfully in the past, and explain how important they were to your organization.
12. What experience do you have using work/life flexibilities that enable employees to balance their personal lives with their work lives? Can you describe any success your organization has achieved using these flexibilities?
-

Developing a Results-Oriented Organizational Culture

13. Agencies have encountered difficulties when they have attempted to make their performance management systems more results-oriented. How would you address this issue at your agency?
14. Can you describe some specific results that you or your organization have achieved as a result of strategic human capital planning you have been involved in?
15. What experience do you have using performance metrics to measure the success of your organization's human capital efforts?

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Appendix XXXIII: Information and Technology Management

The government is dependent on information management systems and networks to help carry out vital missions and public services, including tax collection, national defense, and social benefits. However, GAO and agency Inspectors General have reported that federal agencies have spent billions of dollars in developing systems and processes that are not cost-effective, fail to deliver expected results, and provide suboptimal solutions to agencies' core mission and business needs. Perhaps more importantly, not all agencies are taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by technological change and innovation—opportunities to reengineer key business processes and take advantage of (for example) techniques developed for e-business/e-commerce to make dramatic improvements in customer service and drive down administrative costs. Exploiting such opportunities requires the government to build its capacity not only to manage information technology (IT) but also to manage the collection, use, and dissemination of information in an era of rapidly changing technology. Among other things, this entails providing adequate security and privacy protections for the government's automated systems and the information they contain. Thus, to ensure that taxpayer money is well spent and vital government missions are not compromised, it is essential that information and technology are well managed.

Challenges in this crosscutting management area have led to the inclusion of several topics on GAO's high-risk list, such as the most recent addition—preparing for and carrying out the rapidly approaching 2010 Decennial Census. Other high-risk areas include carrying out crucial large-scale modernization efforts at the Department of Defense (DOD), the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service; implementing and transforming the Department of Homeland Security; establishing information-sharing mechanisms to improve homeland security; and protecting the federal government's information systems and the nation's critical infrastructures.

As a result of GAO's work on these challenges, Congress and the agencies have taken important actions addressing information and technology management. For example, GAO's work on the 2010 Census helped to prompt congressional hearings and focused attention on solving the Census Bureau's information systems problems, helping the bureau better manage key systems acquisition risks and thus improve the accuracy and management of the 2010 Decennial Census. Another example is recommendations that GAO developed regarding DOD's business systems modernization program, which Congress embraced in legislative mandates to DOD and which have formed the basis for annual oversight hearings. As a result, DOD has made progress in establishing institutional management

controls associated with successful modernizations. A final example is GAO's work to address the increasing concern that individuals' personal information could be inadequately protected by federal agencies, potentially compromising privacy rights or exposing personal information to misuse (such as identity theft). In response to these concerns and GAO findings on privacy issues, including the Privacy Act's controls over federal collection and use of personal information, Congress is considering amending the Privacy Act to better align its requirements with modern technology and uses of information.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Managing IT to Achieve Benefits and Control Costs
- Working with the Private Sector and Other Levels of Government to Protect Cyber Critical Infrastructure
- Developing and Implementing Well-defined Modernization Blueprints
- Ensuring Privacy Protections in a Post-9/11 Environment
- Ensuring Citizen Access to Government Information
- Strengthening Controls to Ensure Identity Protection
- Strengthening Information Security Controls
- Furthering the Exchange of Electronic Patient Health Information

Questions

1. Based on your experience, please explain the role technology should play in your agency to support mission needs. What measures would you implement to show the effect technology has in meeting these needs?
2. How would you determine whether your agency has in place the key information management processes and tools required by law, including well-defined enterprise architecture, an investment control process, and computer security plans? What role do you envision you would play in managing or providing oversight over these processes and tools? How would you go about implementing or improving these processes and tools?
3. Based on your experience, how would you go about assessing your core mission and business processes to identify opportunities for reengineering and for the enhanced use of technology? What challenges do you believe your agency may face in reengineering your processes and using technology? In using e-government? In hiring and retaining qualified IT professionals?

Managing IT to Achieve Benefits and Control Costs

4. Every year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and agencies identify IT projects totaling billions of dollars as being poorly planned and poorly performing through OMB's Management Watch List and high-risk projects processes. Despite agencies' efforts to address management weaknesses, the numbers remain high every year. What do you believe are key practices for effective IT project planning, management, and oversight?
5. Although executive-level involvement is critical to projects' success, it is lacking at many agencies. What would you do to ensure that executives are involved in overseeing projects at your agency?
6. Ensuring that system programs and projects are effectively planned and managed can be challenging. Describe the experience you have had that will help you to ensure that key capabilities and controls are implemented to increase project success.

Working with the Private Sector and Other Levels of Government to Protect Cyber Critical Infrastructure

7. GAO has studied cyber critical infrastructure protection—commonly referred to as cyber CIP—since the mid 1990's, when the leadership responsibility and focal point for this area was placed in an office of the White House. Since then, this role has been shifted to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The work of GAO and others has raised questions concerning whether this placement is at the appropriate level for a national cyber focal point. What are your views on this issue? Please describe your leadership experiences that inform these views.
8. While DHS currently has lead responsibility for cyber CIP, federal policy and strategy also identify lead federal agencies to coordinate CIP efforts with public and private stakeholders within 18 infrastructure sectors—such as banking and finance, and nuclear reactors. GAO and others have reported that effective voluntary partnerships have not always been built, and where action is being taken, it is not necessarily being implemented evenly across the 18 sectors. What partnership-building experience do you have in the technology sector that prepares you to help ensure a collaborative and effective national response across many types of stakeholders?
9. GAO recently had the responsible federal agencies help it identify the federal cyber security laws, regulations, and mandatory standards that specifically pertain to each of the 18 CIP sectors. The resulting inventory showed a patchwork of requirements. Specifically, while certain sectors, such as banking and finance, cited multiple requirements, others (such as telecommunications) did not cite any.

What principles and criteria would you draw on to help harmonize or rationalize this patchwork of requirements into an effective framework for making sure that cyber security is addressed by our critical infrastructure sectors?

**Developing and
Implementing Well-Defined
Modernization Blueprints**

10. GAO has identified organizational leadership as the key element to departments and agencies' overcoming the challenges associated with defining and using enterprise architectures—challenges such as cultural resistance, resource constraints, lack of top management understanding, and the lack of skilled staff. What is your position on the value of having and using enterprise architecture, and how do you envision overcoming the challenges associated with effectively leveraging architectures for organizational transformation?
 11. What qualifications and experiences do you bring relative to leveraging enterprise architecture to facilitate organizational transformation?
-

**Ensuring Privacy
Protections in a Post-9/11
Environment**

12. Various laws address the protection of personally identifiable information that is accessed, processed, stored, or disseminated by the federal government. What has been your experience in ensuring that private information is protected? What laws applied in those situations? What challenges have you faced in implementing applicable privacy protections?
 13. How does your experience prepare you for overseeing privacy practices and ensuring that they are adequate?
 14. What prior work qualifies you to help people understand their responsibilities for protecting personal privacy? What would qualify you to review and update agency guidance on protecting personal privacy?
 15. The Fair Information Practices are generally accepted privacy principles that form the foundation for the Privacy Act. How familiar are you with these principles and do you have experience applying them? What challenges do you see in ensuring that current practices adequately reflect these principles in an era of rapid of technological change?
-

**Ensuring Citizen Access to
Government Information**

16. Based on the principles of openness and accountability in government, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) gives the public the right to access government records and information. What challenges would

you foresee in supporting these principles while still ensuring that certain kinds of government information are protected from disclosure, such as privacy-related information?

17. What kind of information would you envision presenting the greatest challenges?
18. Responding to FOIA requests requires agencies to be able to find and review information. What experience do you have that would help your agency take measures to maximize the efficiency of such processes?

**Strengthening Controls to
Ensure Identity Protection**

19. News reports and research by privacy and consumer advocates have documented a wide variety of purposes for which Social Security numbers (SSN) are collected and used. These range from using SSNs as identifiers for posting grades of college students without revealing names, to using the number as a unique identifier for individuals with similar names or other identifying characteristics in conducting background or credit checks. Have you been involved in decisions regarding the use of SSNs as personal identifiers? What do you believe are the trade-offs and key considerations in using SSNs as personal identifiers besides establishing or maintaining Social Security accounts?
20. Do you have prior experience that would help inform whether or not to display the full SSN on identification cards, such as federal benefit or insurance program cards, or what alternatives, such as encrypting it in a magnetic strip or not using it at all, may be appropriate?
21. Social Security Administration (SSA) officials believe that SSA does not have any statutory authority to regulate the use of SSNs in areas other than its use in administering Social Security benefits or within SSA's internal operations. What would you consider in deciding whether the use of SSNs in the agency you are nominated to serve in needs to be changed?

**Strengthening Information
Security Controls**

22. What do you see as the greatest information security challenges facing your agency? What experience or knowledge of information security do you have that you could use to help address your agency's challenges?

23. Have you had experience dealing with data breaches involving personally identifiable information? What kinds of steps do you think are most important in responding to such a data breach?

Furthering the Exchange of Electronic Patient Health Information

24. Increasing the extent to which electronic patient health information is exchanged depends on the sustained cooperation of very large organizations and interests (e.g., DOD and insurance companies). How do you intend to build and maintain the relationships that are necessary to sustain cooperation among all the key players?

25. What do you see as the top three challenges our country faces in moving toward the widespread exchange of electronic patient health information? What should be the role of the federal government in meeting these challenges? What are your particular qualifications and what specific actions would you take to address the challenges?

26. What experience do you have in protecting the privacy of medical or other sensitive information transmitted between organizations? Based on your experience, what do you see as the most important (or urgent) steps that should be taken by the federal government and the health care industry to ensure that the privacy of electronic personal health information is adequately protected? Based on your experience, what, if any, are the critical gaps in current privacy protections in this area? In what ways have you worked to resolve these gaps or to determine how they could be resolved?

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Appendix XXXIV: Real Property Management and Security

The federal real property portfolio is vast and diverse, totaling over 3 billion square feet of space with an estimated gross value in the hundreds of billions of dollars. The Department of Defense, the U.S. Postal Service, the General Services Administration, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs hold the majority of federally owned and leased space. Real property decisions draw considerable attention during congressional deliberation over federal appropriations. Members of Congress take a keen interest in federal facilities in their districts and in the economic effect of any decisions. Several stakeholders other than Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and the real property-holding agencies, have an interest in how the federal government carries out its real property acquisition, management, and disposal practices. These stakeholders include state and local governments, business interests in the communities where the properties are located, private-sector construction and leasing firms, historic preservation organizations, various advocacy groups, and the public in general, which often views the facilities as the physical face of the federal government in its communities.

GAO first designated federal real property management as a high-risk area in January 2003 due to long-standing problems with excess and underutilized property, deteriorating facilities, unreliable real property data, and overreliance on costly leasing. Federal agencies also face many challenges securing real property due to the threat of terrorism. Our work also showed that these problems have persisted and been exacerbated by competing stakeholder interests in real property decisions, various legal and budget limitations to businesslike outcomes, and the need for better capital planning among agencies. Since our high-risk designation, the President added real property management to the President's Management Agenda, and a related executive order (13327) established a Federal Real Property Council to address the problems. Agencies have also established asset management plans; standardized data; and adopted performance measures to gauge progress. Overall, there has been progress, but our recent and ongoing work indicates that the underlying problems still exist.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Demonstrating Significant Progress toward Eliminating Problems
- Addressing Underlying Obstacles to Real Property Reform
- Developing Performance Measurement Standards for Facility Protection

Questions

1. In your view, how should an agency use its real property portfolio to accomplish its mission?
2. What experience do you have with developing and implementing action plans to address identified operational weaknesses, such as may be required to address outstanding recommendations specific to real property management at the agency level as identified by GAO and others?

Demonstrating Significant Progress toward Eliminating Problems

3. Long-standing problems such as excess property, repair backlogs, security concerns, and reliance on leasing have made real property management a problem area at many agencies. Could you describe a specific example where you have had to deal with these types of problems?
4. Executive order 13327 was issued to improve real property management in the federal government and, among other things, established the position of senior real property officer at agencies. Based on your past, what advice would you give the senior real property officer in the agency you are being appointed to lead?
5. Based on your experiences and knowledge, how would you measure the progress of an agency that was trying to improve the efficiency of its management of its real property portfolio?

Addressing Underlying Obstacles to Real Property Reform

6. Are you aware of the obstacles that the agency faces in managing and securing its real property? Do you have experience addressing such obstacles?
7. Do you have experience juggling the competing interests involved in deciding when to lease or when to own? What principles do you think should guide the long-term capital planning involved in planning for long-term space needs?
8. Can you describe any specific challenges you have faced managing underutilized assets and how you dealt with the challenges?
9. What experience do you have facing the trade-offs between demands for deferred maintenance and other activity that more directly affects the short-term bottom line or your organization's expected results?

Developing Performance
Measurement Standards
for Facility Protection

10. What do you know about the challenges of facility protection in today's post 9/11 environment? Do you have any experience identifying and balancing the many competing trade-offs in ensuring the protection of facilities from the threat of terrorism?

11. GAO has found that other entities outside the federal government use security-related performance measures to help improve security, make decisions about risk management and resource allocation, and hold employees accountable for whether a program meets its security goals and objectives. Could you describe any experience you have overseeing the physical security program of a large organization, particularly with respect to using performance data and standards to measure success?

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Appendix XXXV: Results-Oriented Decision Making

The federal government must address and adapt to a range of major trends and challenges in the nation and the world—a long-term, structural fiscal imbalance; a transformation from an industry-based to a knowledge-based economy; revolutionary changes in technology that have altered how we communicate and do business globally; greater reliance on market forces and competition; and changing national security threats. Furthermore, recent events, such as the financial markets crisis, lead paint in imported children’s products, tainted meat, predatory mortgage lending, contract fraud, and national disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the attacks of September 11, 2001, raise questions among the American people about the capacity of the federal government to meet their most pressing needs.

To respond to these trends and challenges, government must have the institutional capacity to plan more strategically, identify and react more expediently, and focus on achieving results. Over the past 15 years, federal agencies have developed an infrastructure of outcome-oriented strategic plans, performance measures, and accountability reporting that provides a solid foundation for improving the performance of federal programs. However, the danger to any management reform is that it can become a hollow, paper-driven exercise where management improvement initiatives are not integrated into the day-to-day activities of the organization and fail to be relevant to Congress for its decision making. In addition, agencies across the federal government, such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the Postal Service, and others are embarking on large-scale organizational transformations to address 21st century challenges. The management weaknesses in some agencies are deeply entrenched and long-standing, and it can take at least 5 to 7 years of sustained attention and continuity to fully implement transformations and change management initiatives. However, high turnover among politically appointed leaders in federal agencies can make it difficult to follow through with organizational transformation because of the length of time often needed to provide meaningful and sustainable results. For these reasons, GAO has recommended the creation of a senior-level position—a chief operating officer/chief management officer (COO/CMO)—in federal agencies to help elevate attention on management issues and transformational change, integrate various key management and transformation efforts, and institutionalize responsibility for addressing management issues and leading transformational change.

Key Issues Needing Attention

- Improving the Use of Performance Information
 - Improving Leadership Capacity and Continuity
-

Questions

Improving the Use of Performance Information

1. During your tenure in this appointed position, what key performance goals do you want to accomplish, and how would this committee know whether you have accomplished them?
2. Under the Government Performance and Results Act, federal agencies are required to establish long-term, strategic goals and related annual performance goals and report on actual performance achieved. How would you demonstrate your commitment to achieving agency performance goals? How would you motivate your managers to improve the agency's performance? How would you use performance information to improve performance results?
3. Without developing an effective strategy for obtaining and acting on congressional views on what to measure, how to measure it, and how to best present this information to a congressional audience, it is more likely that performance information would largely be ignored in the authorization, appropriations, and oversight processes. How would you obtain Congress's views on these matters? What steps would you take to ensure that your agency's performance measures and reporting meet congressional as well as executive branch needs?

Improving Leadership Capacity and Continuity

4. To successfully lead an organization into the future, a leader must be able to create and share a vision that inspires people to follow. In your past experience, what specific steps have you taken to successfully create a vision for an organization, and how did you make sure that the entire organization had a common understanding of the mission and was aligned so that it could be accomplished?
5. Describe two or three tangible examples of instances where your personal leadership skills were essential in getting your employees to accomplish a challenging goal. How could those leadership abilities help you in the position for which you have been nominated?
6. With regard to the creation of Chief Operating Officer / Chief Management Officer (COO/CMO) positions, what are your views on using these positions to help oversee organizational transformation

efforts? Are there other mechanisms that you would use to elevate, integrate and institutionalize management and transformational change efforts in federal agencies?

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