BUSINESS SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION

Strategy for Evolving DOD's Business Enterprise Architecture Offers a Conceptual Approach, but Execution Details Are Needed

Why GAO Did This Study

In 1995, we first designated the Department of Defense's (DOD) business systems modernization program as "high risk," and we continue to designate it as such today. To assist in addressing this high-risk area, Congress passed legislation consistent with prior GAO recommendations for Defense to develop a business enterprise architecture (BEA). In September 2006, DOD released version 4.0 of its BEA, which despite improvements over prior versions, was not aligned with component architectures. Subsequently, Defense issued a strategy for extending its BEA to the component military services and defense agencies. To support GAO's legislative mandate to review DOD's BEA, GAO assessed DOD's progress in defining this strategy by comparing it with prior findings and recommendations relevant to the strategy's content.

What GAO Recommends

To assist DOD in its efforts to evolve and extend its BEA, GAO is augmenting a prior recommendation to the Secretary of Defense for developing an architecture development management plan by recommending that this plan incorporate details needed to execute DOD's Business Mission Area federation strategy. In comments, DOD largely disagreed with GAO's recommendation, noting that elements of it were either unnecessary or not appropriately focused.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-451.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Randolph C. Hite at (202) 512-3439 or hiter@gao.gov.
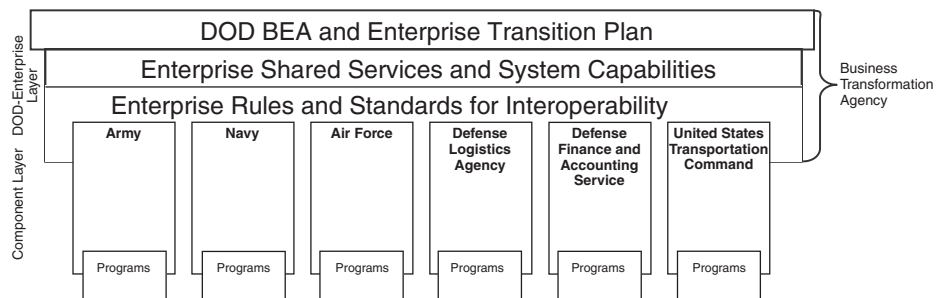
What GAO Found

DOD's Business Mission Area federation strategy for extending its BEA to the military departments and defense agencies provides a foundation on which to build and align the department's parent business architecture (the BEA) with its subordinate architectures (i.e., component- and program-level architectures). (See figure.) In particular, the strategy, which was released in September 2006, states the department's federated architecture goals; describes federation concepts that are to be applied; and explains high-level activities, capabilities, products, and services that are intended to facilitate implementation of the concepts.

Simplified Diagram of DOD's Business Mission Area Federated Architecture

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

However, the strategy does not adequately define the tasks needed to achieve the strategy's goals, including those associated with executing high-level activities and providing related capabilities, products, and services. Specifically, it does not adequately address how strategy execution will be governed, including assignment of roles and responsibilities, measurement of progress and results, and provision of resources. Also, the strategy does not address, among other things, how the component architectures will be aligned with the latest version of the BEA and how it will identify and provide for reuse of common applications and systems across the department. According to program officials, the department intends to develop more detailed plans to execute the strategy. This means that much remains to be decided and accomplished before DOD will have the means in place to create a federated BEA that satisfies GAO's prior recommendations and legislative requirements. Without one, the department will remain challenged in its ability to minimize duplication and maximize interoperability among its thousands of business systems.