



Highlights of [GAO-04-478T](#), testimony before the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The federal government spends billions of dollars annually on information technology (IT) investments that are critical to the effective implementation of major government programs. To help agencies effectively manage their substantial IT investments, the Congress has established a statutory framework of requirements and roles and responsibilities relating to information and technology management, that addresses, for example, (1) IT strategic planning/performance measurement (which defines what an organization seeks to accomplish, identifies the strategies it will use to achieve desired results, and then determines how well it is succeeding in reaching results-oriented goals and achieving objectives) and (2) IT investment management (which involves selecting, controlling, and evaluating investments).

GAO was asked to summarize its January 2004 report on IT strategic planning/performance measurement and investment management (*Information Technology Management: Governmentwide Strategic Planning, Performance Measurement, and Investment Management Can Be Further Improved*, GAO-04-49, January 12, 2004) and to discuss how agencies can improve their performance in these areas.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-478T.

To view the full product, click on the link above. For more information, contact David Powner at (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

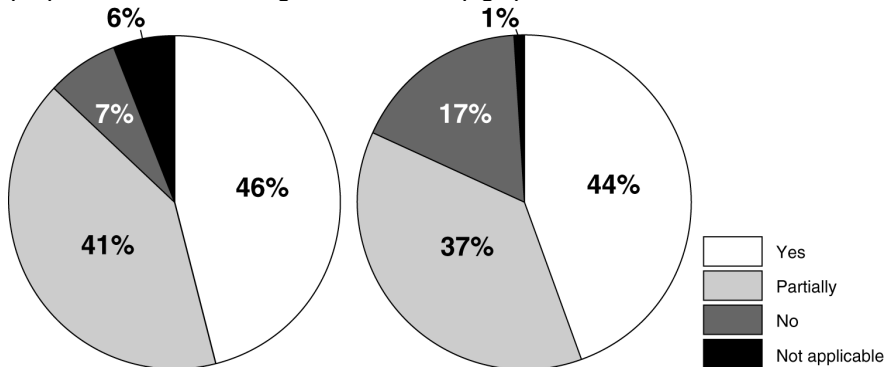
Improvements Needed in Strategic Planning, Performance Measurement, and Investment Management Governmentwide

What GAO Found

GAO recently reported that the use of important IT strategic planning/performance measurement and investment management practices by 26 major federal agencies was mixed (see figure below). For example, agencies generally had IT strategic plans and goals, but these goals were not always linked to specific performance measures that were tracked. Agencies also largely had IT investment management boards, but no agency had the practices associated with the oversight of IT investments fully in place. Although they could not always provide an explanation, agencies cited a variety of reasons for not having practices fully in place, including that the chief information officer position had been vacant and that the process was being revised. By improving their IT strategic planning, performance measurement, and investment management, agencies can better ensure that they are being responsible stewards of the billions of dollars for IT that they have been entrusted with through the wise investment of these monies.

To help agencies improve in these areas, GAO has made numerous recommendations to agencies and issued guidance. For example, in the January 2004 report, GAO made recommendations to the 26 agencies regarding practices that were not fully in place. In addition, today GAO is releasing the latest version of its Information Technology Investment Management (ITIM) framework, which identifies critical processes for selecting, controlling, and evaluating IT investments and organizes them into a framework of increasingly mature stages; thereby providing agencies a road map for improving IT investment management processes in a systematic and organized manner.

Percentage of Agencies' Use of IT Strategic Planning/Performance Measurement Practices (left) and Investment Management Practices (right)^a



Source: GAO.

^aPercentages do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Note: Yes—the practice was in place. Partially—the agency has some, but not all, aspects of the practice in place. Examples of circumstances in which the agency would receive this designation include when (1) some, but not all, of the elements of the practice were in place; (2) the agency documented that it has the information or process in place but it was not in the prescribed form (e.g., in a specific document as required by law or the Office of Management and Budget); (3) the agency's documentation was in draft form; or (4) the agency had a policy related to the practice, but evidence supported that it had not been completely or consistently implemented. No—the practice was not in place. Not applicable—the practice was not relevant to the agency's particular circumstances.