

Department of Energy



Highlights of [GAO-03-100](#), a report to Congress included as part of GAO's Performance and Accountability Series

Why GAO Did This Report

In its 2001 performance and accountability report on the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), GAO identified important issues facing the department as it works to carry out its multiple, complex, and highly diverse missions. The information GAO presents in this report is intended to help to sustain congressional attention on these challenges and a departmental focus on continuing to make progress in addressing these challenges and ultimately overcoming them. The report should help improve government for the benefit of the American public. This report is part of a special series of governmentwide and agency-specific issues.

What Remains to Be Done

GAO believes that DOE should:

- Continue its focus on security upgrades needed for meeting new terrorist threats.
- Ensure that the National Nuclear Security Agency (NNSA) continues progress with its major operational and organizational reforms.
- Establish results-oriented performance data to determine if contractor performance has improved.
- Complete initiatives to accelerate cleanup and reduce costs.
- Enhance efforts to ensure a stable, reliable energy supply.
- Manage infrastructure upgrade projects effectively.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-100.

To view the full report, click on the link above. For more information, contact Robert A. Robinson, at 202-512-3841, or robinsonr@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

DOE has taken steps to address the specific performance and management challenges that we previously identified. However, each of these challenges requires more work and vigilance to be overcome. In addition, the agency must face emerging challenges to meet the nation's energy needs and upgrade DOE's deteriorating infrastructure.

- **Address security threats and problems.** DOE has upgraded its physical, cyber and document security. However, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, changed the threat that DOE had planned for and will likely require new security measures and additional resources.
- **Improve management of the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile.** NNSA, an agency within DOE, continues to develop its new planning, programming, and budgeting system and redesign its organization. However, both activities are far from complete and will need continued executive leadership to ensure that these major changes are effectively implemented.
- **Resolve problems in contract management that place DOE at high risk for fraud, waste, and abuse.** DOE has made progress in implementing contract reforms by using alternative contract types, competing more contracts, and using performance-based requirements. However, it is unclear whether these reforms have improved contractor performance. To better ensure the effectiveness of its initiatives, DOE must establish clear goals, results-oriented outcome measures, and performance data.
- **Improve management for cleanup of DOE radioactive and hazardous wastes.** DOE's environmental management program has begun initiatives to improve contract management, streamline business practices, and increase the technical expertise of DOE staff. However, continued management leadership is needed to ensure that these initiatives are implemented in a safe manner to accomplish program goals of accelerating risk reduction and reducing overall cleanup costs.
- **Enhance DOE leadership in meeting the nation's energy needs.** Our nation's energy supply system is under stress and is a potential terrorist target. Enhanced DOE leadership is needed to research new energy technologies, help develop a competitive electricity generation system, and reduce the vulnerability of the U.S. economy to supply disruptions of petroleum.
- **Revitalize DOE's infrastructure.** DOE has a new program to spend billions of dollars to upgrade its production facilities, research and development laboratories, and other infrastructure. DOE needs to ensure that these major projects are managed effectively and efficiently.