



Highlights of [GAO-03-770](#), a report to congressional requesters

CONTAINER SECURITY

Expansion of Key Customs Programs Will Require Greater Attention to Critical Success Factors

Why GAO Did This Study

Since September 11, 2001, concern has increased that terrorists could smuggle weapons of mass destruction in the 7 million ocean containers that arrive annually at U.S. seaports. In response to this concern, the U.S. Customs Service (Customs) implemented the Container Security Initiative (CSI) to screen for high-risk containers at overseas ports and Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) to improve global supply chain security in the private sector. GAO (1) describes the purpose and elements of these new programs, (2) examines Customs' implementation of CSI and C-TPAT during the first year, and (3) assesses the extent to which Customs has focused on factors critical to the programs' long-term success and accountability.

What GAO Recommends

To ensure that CSI and C-TPAT achieve their long-term objectives, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Homeland Security, working with the Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection and managers for both programs

- develops human capital plans that clearly describe how the programs will recruit, train, and retain staff;
- expands efforts to develop performance measures that include outcome-oriented indicators; and
- develops strategic plans that clearly lay out the programs' goals, objectives, and implementation strategies.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-770.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Loren Yager at (202) 512-4347 or yagerl@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

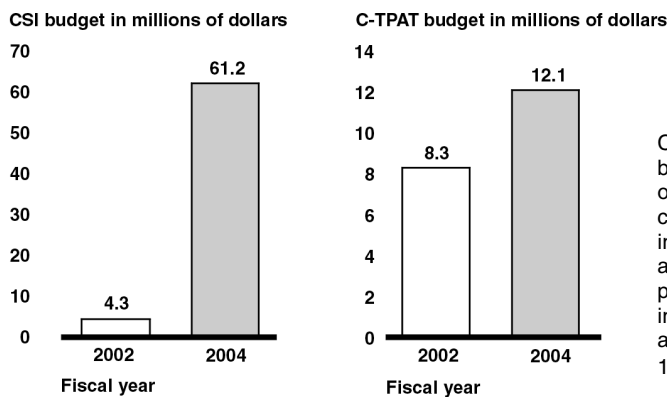
Announced in January 2002, CSI places Customs staff at designated foreign seaports to screen containers for weapons of mass destruction. In November 2001, Customs also initiated C-TPAT, in which private companies improve the security of their supply chains in return for the reduced likelihood that their containers will be inspected for weapons of mass destruction.

Customs quickly implemented both programs in the first year. It concluded bilateral arrangements with foreign governments to place Customs personnel at 24 foreign ports and deployed staff to 5 of these ports under CSI, and it enrolled more than 1,700 companies in C-TPAT. Customs is developing critical program elements intended to ensure that C-TPAT companies improve and maintain their security practices. GAO found that Customs' implementation of these programs evolved in response to challenges it encountered.

Although Customs is preparing to devote significantly more resources to CSI and C-TPAT as it expands the programs, it has not taken adequate steps to incorporate factors necessary for the programs' long-term success and accountability. These factors include human capital planning, development of performance measures, and strategic planning. GAO found the following:

- Although CSI seeks to staff Customs officials at more than 30 overseas ports and C-TPAT expects to hire more than 150 additional staff, Customs has not devised systematic human capital plans to meet long-term staffing needs for both programs.
- While Customs has created some performance measures to quantify operational activities and efforts, it has not developed measures to establish accountability and measure program achievement.
- In its efforts to rapidly implement the programs and enroll participants, Customs focused on short-term planning. Customs lacks a strategic plan that would allow it to establish accountability for approximately \$73 million in planned expenditures for fiscal year 2004.

Budgets and Anticipated Growth for CSI Ports and C-TPAT Staff, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2004



Customs expects increased budgets and rapid expansion of two programs to address container security. CSI budget increase represents an anticipated growth from 1 to 30 ports. C-TPAT budget increase represents an anticipated growth from 10 to 167 staff.

Source: GAO analysis of Customs data.