


GAO
 Accountability Integrity Reliability
Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-563](#), a report to the Senate and House Subcommittees on Homeland Security, Committees on Appropriations

Why GAO Did This Study

Pursuant to legislative direction, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now part of the Department of Homeland Security, plans to acquire and deploy an entry exit system to assist in monitoring the flow of foreign nationals in and out of the United States. By separate legislative direction, INS must submit to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations a plan for this system that meets certain conditions, including being reviewed by GAO, before funds can be obligated. This report satisfies GAO's mandated review obligation by (1) addressing whether the plan submitted by INS, along with related INS documentation and plans, meets required conditions and (2) providing observations about the plan and INS's management of the system.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Homeland Security (1) plan for and implement system investment and acquisition management controls and (2) ensure that future expenditure plans provide sufficient details to permit an understanding of (a) system capabilities, benefits, cost, and delivery date and (b) how the acquisition will be managed to meet these commitments. The department did not explicitly agree or disagree with GAO's conclusions and recommendations, but described actions it plans to take that are consistent with these recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-563.

To view the full report, 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.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Homeland Security Needs to Improve Entry Exit System Expenditure Planning

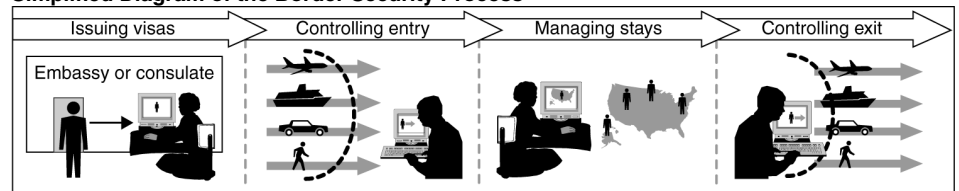
What GAO Found

INS's initial expenditure plan and associated system acquisition documentation and plans for the entry exit system partially meet the legislative conditions imposed by the Congress. That is, INS has implemented or has defined plans for implementing most of the legislatively mandated requirements for the plan's content, which include such areas as capital planning and investment control, acquisition, and systems acquisition management. However, key issues related to understanding and implementing system requirements, such as developing a system security plan and assessing system impact on the privacy of individuals, remain to be addressed. Moreover, INS reported that it had obligated some entry exit funding before it submitted the plan to the Appropriations Committees. Since then, INS officials told GAO that they have de-obligated and reclassified these obligations to other available funding sources.

GAO observed that INS has preliminary plans showing that it intends to acquire and deploy a system that has functional and performance capabilities that satisfy the general scope of capabilities required under various laws. These include the capability to (1) collect and match alien arrival and departure data electronically; (2) be accessible to the border management community (including consular officers, federal inspection agents, and law enforcement and intelligence agencies responsible for identifying and investigating foreign nationals); and (3) support machine-readable, tamper-resistant documents with biometric identifiers at ports of entry. Each of these capabilities is integral to supporting our nation's border security process (see figure).

However, GAO also observed that the initial plan does not provide sufficient information about INS commitments for the system, such as what specific system capabilities and benefits will be delivered, by when, and at what cost, and how INS intends to manage the acquisition to provide reasonable assurance that it will meet these commitments. Without sufficiently detailed information on system plans and progress, the Congress will be impeded in its efforts to oversee the system.

Simplified Diagram of the Border Security Process



Sources: GAO (data), Nova Development Corp. (images).