



**ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY,
AND EFFECTIVENESS
IMPROVEMENTS IN
FEDERAL AGENCIES**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE PLAN

2000-2002



GAO'S MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its Constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

CORE VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY

describes the nature of GAO's work. GAO helps the Congress oversee federal programs and operations to ensure accountability to the American people. GAO's evaluators, auditors, lawyers, economists, public policy analysts, information technology specialists, and other multidisciplinary professionals seek to enhance the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and credibility of the federal government both in fact and in the eyes of the American people. GAO accomplishes its mission through a variety of activities, including financial audits, program reviews, investigations, legal support, and program analyses.

INTEGRITY

describes the high standards that GAO sets for itself in the conduct of its work. GAO takes a professional, objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, nonideological, fair, and balanced approach to all of its activities. Integrity is the foundation of reputation, and GAO's approach to its work ensures both.

RELIABILITY

describes GAO's goal for how its work is viewed by the Congress and the American public. GAO produces high-quality reports, testimony, briefings, legal opinions, and other products and services that are timely, accurate, useful, clear, and candid.

FOREWORD

In fulfilling its mission, GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and activities; and provides analyses, options, recommendations, and other assistance to help the Congress make effective oversight, policy, and funding decisions. In this context, GAO works to continuously improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the federal government through the conduct of financial audits, program reviews and evaluations, analyses, legal opinions, investigations, and other services. Most of this work is based upon original data collection and analysis.

To ensure that GAO, in serving the Congress, targets the right issues, provides balanced perspectives, and develops practical recommendations, GAO regularly consults with the Congress and maintains relationships with a variety of federal, state, academic, and professional organizations. GAO also obtains the perspectives of applicable trade groups and associations and attends professional conferences. Moreover, GAO regularly coordinates its work with CRS, CBO, and agency Inspector General offices. Throughout, GAO's core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability are guiding principles.

In keeping with its mission and responsibilities, GAO has developed a strategic plan that includes four strategic goals and 21 related strategic objectives. To ensure that GAO's resources are directed to achieving its goals, a separate strategic plan underlies each objective. Bolstering GAO's goal of supporting the transition to a more results-oriented and accountable government, this strategic plan describes the performance goals GAO will use in recommending economy, efficiency, and effectiveness improvements in departments and agencies.

This plan covers a 3-year period; however, because unanticipated events may significantly affect even the best of plans, GAO's process allows for updating this plan to respond quickly to emerging issues. If you have questions or desire information on additional or completed work related to this strategic objective, please call or e-mail us or the contact persons listed on the following pages.

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SERVING THE CONGRESS GAO'S STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

MISSION

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its Constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

GOALS

PROVIDE TIMELY, QUALITY SERVICE TO THE CONGRESS AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



TO ADDRESS CURRENT AND EMERGING CHALLENGES TO THE WELL-BEING AND FINANCIAL SECURITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUPPORT THE TRANSITION



TO RESPOND TO CHANGING SECURITY THREATS AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE

MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF GAO



BY BEING A MODEL ORGANIZATION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



TO A MORE RESULTS-ORIENTED AND ACCOUNTABLE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

THEMES

Demographics

Globalization

Quality of Life

Security

Technology

Government Performance and Accountability

OBJECTIVES

Health care needs and financing
Retirement income security
Social safety net
Education/workforce issues
Effective system of justice
Community investment
Natural resources use and environmental protection
Physical infrastructure

Diffuse security threats
Military capabilities and readiness
Advancement of U.S. interests
Global market forces

Fiscal position of the government
Government financing and accountability
Governmentwide management reforms
ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY, AND EFFECTIVENESS IMPROVEMENTS IN FEDERAL AGENCIES

Client relations
Strategic and annual planning
Human capital
Core business and supporting processes
Information technology services

CORE VALUES

Accountability

Integrity

Reliability

SUPPORT THE
TRANSITION



TO A MORE
RESULTS-ORIENTED AND
ACCOUNTABLE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT

Fiscal position of the
government
Government financing and
accountability
Governmentwide
management reforms

**ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY,
AND EFFECTIVENESS
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IN FEDERAL AGENCIES**

RECOMMEND ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY, AND EFFECTIVENESS IMPROVEMENTS IN FEDERAL AGENCY PROGRAMS

Since 1990, GAO has periodically reported on government operations that it has identified as “high-risk” because of their greater vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. The latest high-risk report, in January 1999, focused on 26 areas in six categories that span critical government programs. To help improve this situation, we have made hundreds of recommendations to get at the heart of these problem areas, which have at their core a lack of fundamental accountability. Legislative and agency actions have resulted in progress toward fixing these high-risk areas and establishing a solid foundation to help ensure greater progress. However, because these areas involve long-standing problems that are difficult to fix, additional corrective measures are necessary.

Also in January 1999 and as a complement to GAO’s high-risk series, GAO issued its first performance and accountability series, which covered a broad range of major management challenges across government. Collectively, these reports show that federal agencies face challenges for achieving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in their operations. The series also underscores the critical role that the tools and approaches used by high-performing organizations can play in achieving lasting solutions to high-risk problems and management challenges. Such solutions offer the potential to save billions of dollars and dramatically improve service to the American public.

Also, congressional committees and Members frequently request GAO to evaluate federal agencies and programs to determine whether they are efficient, economical, and effective. These evaluations often result in important improvements to government operations.

GAO’s Strategic Plan identifies two multi-year performance goals to achieve the strategic objective of recommending economy, efficiency, and effectiveness improvements in major departments and agencies. The following pages discuss the significance of the performance goals and the key efforts that will be undertaken, and the potential outcomes.

Performance Goals

- Highlight the Specific Major Management Challenges Confronting Agencies and Those Federal Operations at Highest Risk of Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Mismanagement
- Review the Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness of Key Federal Agencies and Activities



Highlight the Specific Major Management Challenges Confronting Agencies and Those Federal Operations at Highest Risk of Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Mismanagement

Significance

GAO has identified high-risk areas across the spectrum of government programs and operations. High-risk areas include multibillion-dollar information technology modernizations that are key to the government's future ability to deliver critical services—safe and efficient air travel, modern tax processing and customer service operations, and improved weather forecasting—and the improvement of systems that support national defense operations. Also at high risk are the financial management operations at DOD, FAA, the Forest Service, and IRS. GAO has also identified a number of government programs that are not managed effectively or that experience chronic waste and inefficiency, including Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, and programs at HUD, as well as student financial aid and farm loan programs. In addition, GAO's work has shown that some of the government's largest procurement operations are not always run efficiently, including DOD's inventory management, weapons systems acquisition, and contract management.

GAO's first performance and accountability series contains separate reports on 20 agencies—one for each of the cabinet departments and one each on most of the major independent agencies, as well as the U.S. Postal Service. These reports highlight the major performance and management challenges that limit the effectiveness of agencies to carry out missions, corrective actions they have taken or initiated on these challenges, and further actions that are needed.



Key Efforts

Review the assessments of high-risk and major performance and management challenges and reconsider them in connection with selected functions, such as human capital strategies and contract management, as well as at the overall department or agency level

Highlight for the Congress and executive branch decisionmakers the specific major management challenges confronting agencies and those federal operations at highest risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement

Assess the progress agencies are making in addressing their major management challenges and high-risk areas

Recommend and press agencies to implement solutions to major management challenges and high-risk problems

Potential Outcomes

Greater attention to sustain commitment and complete actions to resolve high-risk areas and overcome major management challenges

Provide information on the extent and severity of high-risk problems and major management challenges at departments and agencies at the beginning of each new Congress

Consideration of recommendations to get at the root causes of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in high-risk government programs and to achieve greater economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in government operations

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Review the Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness, Key Federal Agencies and Activities

Significance

Committees and Members of Congress often request GAO to analyze and evaluate federal agencies and programs to determine whether they are as efficient, economical, and effective as they can be and whether they are complying with applicable laws and regulations. These efforts often result in important improvements to government operations. Prime examples are assessments of specific operations or management decisions of the Postal Service, such as reviews of labor-management relations and automation efforts. Another focus of GAO reviews is the District of Columbia, for which the Constitution assigns ultimate governance responsibility to the Congress. GAO also reviews legislative branch agencies and small independent entities, such as the Architect of the Capitol, Library of Congress, Government Printing Office, Federal Election Commission, Federal Trade Commission, National Archives and Records Administration, Federal Labor Relations Authority, and an ever-changing array of ad hoc entities, such as the National Study Commission on the Impact of Gambling and the President's Health Care Task Force.

Another focus of GAO's work is determining whether particular agency activities and programs are complying with applicable laws and regulations. In addition to analyzing legal issues as part of its reviews and evaluations, GAO provides legal opinions and analyses directly to the Congress and federal agencies. GAO is statutorily vested with certain functions such as resolving bid protests against agency contract awards, reviewing all major rules to determine their compliance with applicable procedural requirements, and determining whether acting officers appointed to vacant executive agency positions are serving beyond statutory time limits. In addition, at the request of Committees and Members of Congress, GAO provides legal opinions on issues spanning the range of government programs and activities.



Key Efforts

Respond to congressional requests to evaluate the operations of specific entities

Evaluate the economy and efficiency of key federal agency programs

Assess the effectiveness of federal agency programs in meeting their missions, goals, and objectives

Determine whether federal programs and operations are being conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations

Assess certain elements of the District of Columbia's criminal justice system

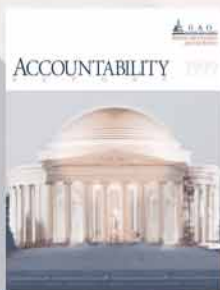
Potential Outcomes

Less costly, more timely programs that result in greater achievement of agencies' missions, goals, and objectives

Improved compliance with laws and regulations by federal managers and staff, as well as by federal contractors

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The full set of GAO's strategic planning, performance, and accountability documents are listed below. All of these documents, as well as other GAO reports and documents, may be obtained electronically on our website, www.gao.gov.



Accountability Report for fiscal year 1999

Strategic Plan, 2000-2005

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Strategic Plan Framework

Strategic Objective Plans

Health Care Needs and Financing

Retirement Income Security

Social Safety Net

Education/Workforce Issues

Effective System of Justice

Community Investment

Natural Resources Use and Environmental Protection

Physical Infrastructure

Diffuse Security Threats

Military Capabilities and Readiness

Advancement of U.S. Interests

Global Market Forces

Fiscal Position of the Government

Government Financing and Accountability

Governmentwide Management Reforms

Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness

Improvements in Federal Agencies

Maximize the Value of GAO

Performance Plan Fiscal Year 2001



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