Strategic Objective:

Leverage Institutional Knowledge and Experience

Issue: GAO is a knowledge-based professional services organization. It needs to use a wide and expanding variety of media to communicate the results of its work to its clients and the public. It also needs to preserve information from its work for the long-term and to share knowledge among its staff and with others so that it can improve service to its clients, the executive branch, taxpayers, and other governments, both domestic (state and local) and international.

Performance Goals: To support the objective to leverage its institutional knowledge and experience, GAO will

- improve GAO's Web-based knowledge tools;

- develop a framework to manage the collection, use, distribution, and retention of organizational knowledge; and

- strengthen relationships with other national and international accountability and professional organizations.

Improve GAO's Web-Based Knowledge Tools

Key Efforts

❏ Conduct a Web usability study to recommend enhancements to the agency's external Web site

❏ Develop standards to govern the content and appearance of GAO's intranet sites

❏ Identify and develop training initiatives to increase awareness and use of Web-based knowledge services

Significance

Over the past few years, GAO's use of Web-based technology to do work, communicate with others, and exchange information and products has dramatically increased. The use of Web-based technology has greatly expanded GAO's ability to provide timely and cost-effective products and services. This technology has made GAO's knowledge resources more readily available to external clients. Additionally, GAO staff are getting direct access from their desktops to information and intellectual assets critical to performing the work of the agency. As GAO moves forward, it must assess the present and future of using Web-based technology, with careful attention on measuring the value of Web-based information.

Potential Outcomes

A consistent appearance and content categories to GAO's intranet

Increased use of the World Wide Web as a research tool

Increased knowledge and ability of GAO's staff to use the World Wide Web

Better access to information that will contribute to meeting client needs

Develop a Framework to Manage the Collection, Use, Distribution, and Retention of Organizational Knowledge

Key Efforts

- ❏ Assess internal management processes for identifying and preserving valuable organizational knowledge and develop a long-range strategy for implementing needed enhancements

- ❏ Pilot communities of practice that support crosscutting themes within the strategic goals

- ❏ Pilot knowledge-sharing initiatives among teams

- ❏ Facilitate integration of knowledge from GAO's internal technical specialists into engagements

- ❏ Assess the usefulness of portal technology for access to and delivery of information to GAO staff

- ❏ Develop a communications strategy for identifying and sharing information across GAO and with its clients, external organizations, and the press

- ❏ Develop short- and long-term communications standards for various media to guide the presentation of all of GAO's knowledge products

- ❏ Complete the integration of GAO's document management system with electronic record keeping capabilities

Significance

Managing information and knowledge so that it serves not only GAO's staff and managers but also the agency's congressional clients requires an integrated approach for identifying, managing, and sharing the organization's information and intellectual assets. These assets include databases, plans, analyses, documents, reports, policies, procedures, management information, and staff expertise. In 1996, GAO developed a knowledge management database on audit engagements that was an early attempt to collect, use, distribute, and retain organizational knowledge. GAO must begin to rethink the use of its internal data resources and applications to create a framework by which to capture, store, and maintain organizational knowledge that is valuable to GAO's clients and customers and that achieves GAO's work priorities.

Potential Outcomes

Enhanced processes for capturing, maintaining, and sharing institutional knowledge

Improved processes and methods for sharing relevant information with all GAO staff

Increased access to GAO's published products by the Congress and the American people

Improved capture of and access to the agency's essential evidence

Capitalize on the intellectual assets of GAO

Improved quality of engagements that better meet the needs of the client

Strengthen Relationships with Other National and International Accountability and Professional Organizations

Key Efforts

❏ Inform GAO's strategic planning and work processes through the use of the Comptroller General's Advisory Board, the intergovernmental audit forums and domestic working groups, the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions and global working groups, and other external government accountability and professional organizations

❏ Initiate and support collaborative national and international audit efforts and provide technical assistance

Significance

GAO works strategically with other accountability and professional organizations to broaden and leverage its institutional knowledge and experience, and in turn, improve GAO's overall service to the Congress and the American people. The Comptroller General, for example, has created a new advisory board and new global and domestic working groups to advise GAO on how important, dynamic themes are likely to influence Americans and on how those themes might influence GAO's strategic plan. The Comptroller General has also set in motion a number of collaborative efforts in the intergovernmental audit community that should help GAO and other accountability organizations better identify ways to develop and share methods, tools, benchmarking results, and best practices for doing their work.

Potential Outcomes

Increased knowledge and awareness of studies initiated by other accountability and professional organizations

Increased leveraging and sharing of knowledge throughout the government accountability profession

Improved quality of engagements that better meet the needs of the client