



Highlights of GAO-03-111, a report to Congress included as part of GAO's Performance and Accountability Series

# U.S. Agency for International Development

## Why GAO Did This Report

In its 2001 performance and accountability report on the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), GAO identified important management issues facing the agency. The information GAO presents in this report is intended to help sustain congressional and agency attention on continuing to make progress in addressing these challenges and ultimately overcoming them. This report is part of a special series of 23 reports on governmentwide and agency-specific issues.

## What Remains to Be Done

GAO believes that USAID should

- complete a workforce strategy for its civil service employees and align its staff to systematically support the agency's mission, goals, and objectives;
- improve its ability to develop reliable performance measures that accurately report program outcomes; and
- make further improvements in its information technology systems, and ensure that its financial management systems comply with federal requirements.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-111](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-111).

To view the full report, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4268 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov).

## What GAO Found

USAID faces a number of performance and accountability challenges that affect its ability to implement its foreign economic and humanitarian assistance programs. USAID has recognized that it needs to address these problems and has made some progress, but further action is needed as follows:

- Since the early 1990s, GAO has reported that USAID has made limited progress in addressing its human capital management challenges. Some progress has been made, such as implementing annual foreign service recruitment plans. However, the agency has not established and integrated a comprehensive workforce plan with its strategic goals and objectives. Developing such a plan is critical due to a reduction in the agency's workforce during the 1990s.
- USAID faces difficulties in identifying and collecting data that would enable it to develop reliable performance measures and accurately report the results of its programs. USAID has taken several steps to try to overcome these difficulties, such as holding training seminars in field missions. However, although USAID has made a serious effort to develop improved performance measures, it continues to report numerical outputs that do not measure the impact of its programs.
- USAID's ability to become a high-performing organization is also affected by its information technology and financial management challenges. USAID has recognized these challenges and has demonstrated a commitment to address them, such as establishing a structure for the acquisition of information technology and improving its computer security deficiencies. However, USAID's agency managers continue to lack complete, reliable, and timely information needed to make sound, cost-effective decisions. In addition, the agency has had long-standing financial management weaknesses and has been unable to provide its managers with reliable financial information.

### USAID's Major Challenges



Source: GAO.