



Highlights of [GAO-04-842](#), a report to congressional requesters

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

# Foundational Steps Being Taken to Make Needed FBI Systems Modernization Management Improvements

### Why GAO Did This Study

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investing more than a billion dollars over 3 years to modernize its information technology (IT) systems. The modernization is central to the bureau's ongoing efforts to transform the organization. GAO was asked to determine whether the FBI has (1) an integrated plan for modernizing its IT systems and (2) effective policies and procedures governing management of IT human capital, systems acquisition, and investment selection and control.

### What GAO Recommends

To help the bureau better manage its systems modernization risks, GAO is making several recommendations to the Director, including that the FBI limit its near-term investments in IT systems until the bureau develops an integrated systems modernization plan and effective policies and procedures for systems acquisition and investment management. GAO is also recommending that the Director provide the Chief Information Officer (CIO) with the responsibility and authority to effectively manage IT across the bureau. In the FBI's written comments on a draft of this report, the bureau agreed that steps are being taken to lay the foundation for improving IT operations, and that much work remains to institutionalize IT management improvements. The FBI also described recent actions and plans to address our recommendations.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-842](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-842).

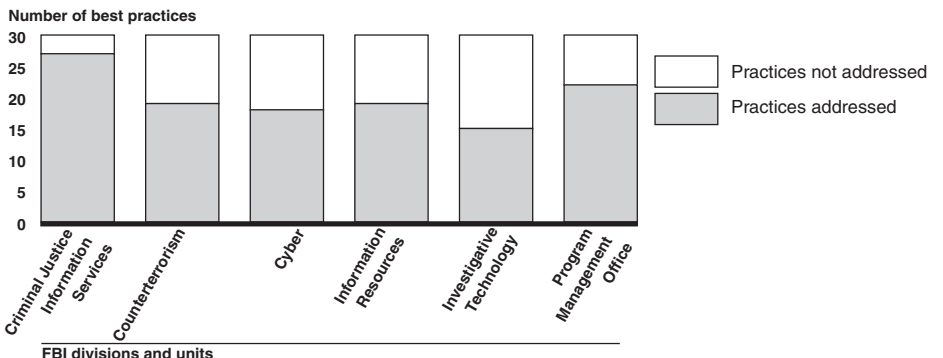
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Randolph C. Hite at (202) 512-3439 or [hiter@gao.gov](mailto:hiter@gao.gov).

### What GAO Found

Although improvements are under way and planned, the FBI does not currently have an integrated plan for modernizing its IT systems. Each of the bureau's divisions and other organizational units that manage IT projects performs integrated planning for its respective IT projects. However, the plans do not provide a common, authoritative, and integrated view of how IT investments will help optimize mission performance, and they do not consistently contain the elements expected to be found in effective systems modernization plans. FBI officials attributed the state of modernization planning to, among other things, the bureau's lack of a policy requiring such activities, which is due in part to the fact that the responsibility for managing IT—including modernization planning—has historically been diffused and decentralized. The FBI's CIO recognizes these planning shortfalls and has initiated efforts to address them. Until they are addressed, the bureau risks acquiring systems that require expensive rework to be effectively integrated, thus hampering organizational transformation.

The FBI has established policies and procedures governing IT human capital that are consistent with best practices used by leading private and public organizations. However, the bureau's policies and procedures governing systems acquisition, which are developed on a decentralized basis by the divisions and other units that manage IT projects, include some but not all best practices (see figure). In addition, the bureau's investment management policies and procedures, which started in 2001, have been evolving and progressing slowly toward alignment with best practices. According to FBI officials, the state of the bureau's acquisition and investment management policies and procedures is due to a number of factors, including diffused and decentralized IT management authority. The CIO recognizes these problems and has efforts planned and under way to strengthen policies and procedures. Until these efforts are completed, the bureau increases the risk that it will experience problems delivering promised IT investments on time and within budget, which, in turn, could adversely affect systems modernization and organizational transformation.

**IT Systems Acquisition Best Practices Addressed in FBI Divisions' Policies and Procedures**



Source: GAO analysis of FBI data.