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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON

HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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January 31, 2011

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
United States Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) assess the Integrated Acquisition Environment.

In 2001, President Bush directed a task force of agency personnel in coordination with OMB to promote electronic government by developing and supporting projects that would “maximize interoperability and minimize redundancy.” One project recommended by the task force was the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), a concept that would bring together the technology, services, and operations of the different acquisition systems into one integrated system. According to the IAE Strategy Document finalized in 2007, the mission of the IAE is “to simplify, unify and streamline the complex federal acquisition process for government buyers as well as vendors and sellers.” According to the President’s IT Dashboard, the actual cost of the IAE to date is \$370.2 million.

The IAE will bring together nine separate systems that contain information related to acquisition and procurement, including the Central Contractor Registration, Excluded Parties List System, FedBizOpps, the Federal Procurement Data System, and the Past Performance Information Retrieval System. The IAE strategy envisions that there will be a single portal where the government, vendors, and the public will be able to access information relating to contracting. If carried through to its full potential, the IAE will represent a substantial improvement in the ability of these groups to input, manage, and track contract-related information.

The IAE initiative is managed by the General Services Administration. In February 2010, GSA awarded IBM a \$74 million contract to design and develop an architecture to bring together the nine separate component systems. The contract does not include software development or design that would improve the transparency, ease of use, or reliability of the underlying data. The existing databases will mostly be migrated “as-is” to the new architecture; contracts to improve the system will be awarded later.

On Tuesday, September 29, 2009, the Subcommittee held a hearing, entitled “Improving Transparency and Accessibility of Federal Contracting Databases,” which examined the IAE. At

the hearing, I highlighted the need to conduct thorough oversight of the government's acquisition and technological strategies for the IAE. I also raised concerns regarding the quality of data in the component databases and the need to improve the public's access to this information.

The Subcommittee has had numerous conversations with GSA and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) regarding the IAE in the months since the hearing. Despite receiving assurances that the IAE is proceeding well, I remain concerned regarding the implementation of the IAE strategy. As a result, I request that GAO examine the IAE. In particular, I request that GAO review:

- (1) the overall scope and status of the IAE effort, including the management over its cost and schedule, its acquisition strategy, and key requirements, including the needs of users, including the public;
- (2) the recent addition of the System for Award Management (SAM), specifically how SAM aligns with the IAE's acquisition strategy and provides for systems architecture;
- (3) the IAE's governance structure and its provision for contractor oversight, management of resource needs, and mitigation of risks and challenges including costs, requirements changes, and data quality issues;
- (4) the status of critical technologies and plans needed to ensure the successful integration of IAE component systems and data migration, including the extent to which the IAE acquisition plan addresses information technology needs and maintenance over the project's lifecycle.

Please contact Margaret Daum with the Subcommittee staff at (202) 224-8316 with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to kelsey_stroud@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Chairman
Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight

cc: Scott Brown
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight