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Accounting and Information Management Division

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Information Resources Management Policy and Issues Issue Area

Active Assignments

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Foreword

This report was prepared primarily to inform Congressional members and key staff of ongoing assignments in the General Accounting Office's Information Resources Management Policy and Issues issue area. This report contains assignments that were ongoing as of January 2, 1996, and presents a brief background statement and a list of key questions to be answered on each assignment. The report will be issued quarterly.

This report was compiled from information available in GAO's internal management information systems. Because the information was downloaded from computerized data bases intended for internal use, some information may appear in abbreviated form.

If you have questions or would like additional information about assignments listed, please contact Christopher Hoenig, Director, on (202) 512-6208; or Frank Reilly, Associate Director, on (202) 512-6252; or William Franklin, Associate Director, on (202) 512-6234.

Contents

FEDERAL IRM POLICY/PROCESSES & GUIDANCE

TITLE: **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT PROFILE AND PROCESSES (510981)**

BACKGROUND : AIMD's recent work indicates that agencies should manage information technology (IT) expenditures as investments. While we knew that some agencies have IT investment controls established, we were uncertain of (1) the extent to which they were in place across the government, and (2) the effects of their absence or implementation.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) For selected federal agencies, what is the level and type of IT spending? (2) Do these agencies have IT investment controls in place? If so, to what extent? (3) What positive and negative effects can be associated with the presence or absence of investment controls?

TITLE: **THE STATUS OF INFORMATION SECURITY AT FEDERAL AGENCIES (510983)**

BACKGROUND : Agencies must review their information security controls under such laws as the Computer Security Act, the CFO Act and the FMFIA. As such, required reports prepared to comply with these laws are a key source for identifying major computer security risks.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What information security weaknesses have been reported since 9/30/94 as a result of financial statement audits, FMFIA reviews, and IG reviews? (2) Do reported weaknesses highlight any governmentwide security issues that should be addressed by the Congress? (3) Are there any apparent weaknesses in the reviews performed?

TITLE: **PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING (510991)**

BACKGROUND : The objective of this continuing assignment is to build up-do-date knowledge in IRM issues and a foundation for "state-of-the-practice" approaches for IRM audit and evaluation work throughout GAO and in federal agencies.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1) Which public and private organizations are most successful in applying IT to achieve mission performance? 2) How do these leading organizations achieve their vision? 3) What can Congress and federal agencies learn?

FEDERAL IRM POLICY/PROCESSES & GUIDANCE

TITLE: **METHODS AND TOOLS (511001)**

BACKGROUND : The objective of this continuing assignment is to develop analytical methods and tools for standard approaches in evaluating IRM issues for use throughout GAO, and in federal agencies.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1) What audit and evaluation methods are required to create quality, responsive, and efficient reviews of agency IRM? 2) What analytical tools are necessary to support execution of these methods?

TITLE: **ADVISORY, COORDINATION AND SUPPORT (511011)**

BACKGROUND : The objective of this continuing assignment is to transfer knowledge on topics such as strategic information management (SIM), information technology (IT) investment, business process reengineering, and information security to: GAO staff, Congressional members, and executive branch oversight officials.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1) What are the key IRM-related issues and decisions currently being addressed by internal and external customers? 2) What existing information/knowledge do we currently possess on these issues? 3) In what form and at what times is it most useful?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - GIFM

TITLE: **REENGINEERING GOVERNMENT-WIDE CIVILIAN TRAVEL (510982)**

BACKGROUND : In March 1995, GAO reported that for every dollar the Department of Defense spends on travel, it spends about 30 cents on administrative costs. The average travel administration cost in the private sector was reportedly only 10 cents per dollar. Our requestor asked GAO to follow up with a job looking at administrative costs for civilian federal travel.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What is the unit administrative cost for travel in selected civilian federal agencies? (2) What is the process by which travel is planned and approved, and by which expenses are reimbursed and audited? (3) How much money might be saved if these agencies adopted industry best practices?