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August 1998

Advanced Studies and  
Evaluation Methodology  
Area of Interest

Active Assignments

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# Foreword

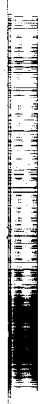
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This report was prepared primarily to inform Congressional members and key staff of ongoing assignments in the General Accounting Office's Advanced Studies and Evaluation Methodology area of interest. This report contains assignments that were ongoing as of August 17, 1998, 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 Nancy Kingsbury, Director, on (202) 512-7824; or Susan Westin, Associate Director, on (202) 512-3655.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud. The text also notes that accurate records are necessary for the preparation of financial statements and for the calculation of taxes.



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## *Advanced Studies and Evaluation Methodology*

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### **OTHER AREA OF INTEREST WORK - ASEM**

**TITLE: METHODS AND CRITERIA OF THE ARMED SERVICES FOR ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES' CONDITION AND FOR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND PRIVATE SECTOR PRACTICES (713021)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** No single system exists to evaluate the repair & maintenance needs of the military services, which hold about 2 billion square feet of facilities & spend about \$5 billion annually on maintenance. GAO has been asked to review Real Property Management (RPM) needs. (1) What are the RPM methods & criteria of the services? (2) How do RPM methods and criteria of the other large entities compare to those of DOD? (3) For the services, what is the relationship between RPM ratings & the allocation of resources?

**TITLE: CURRENT FEDERAL DEMOGRAPHIC/STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION (966700)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Illegal Immigration Reform and Individual Responsibility Act of 1996 increased the restrictions on the eligibility of aliens for public benefits. Valid and reliable information on the legal status of foreign-born persons is essential for credible public policy and its implementation. (1) What are congressional policymakers' needs for demographic, statistical information on the (legally and illegally) resident foreign-born population? (2) What federal information addresses these needs, which agencies provide the estimates, and what are the important data gaps? (3) What is known about the quality of the existing information? (4) How can key information needs be better met?

**TITLE: EVALUATION, AUDITING, AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS (966707)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Three evaluative approaches--audits, evaluations & performance measurement systems--can contribute to improved government functioning, especially through assessing effectiveness. But there are no clear "blueprints" for how the three approaches interface. The purpose of the job is to help clarify the circumstances or conditions when these approaches would be most useful--alone or in combination. We will address: (1) What are distinguishing characteristics & unique strengths of audits and evaluations? (2) How have aspects of audits and evaluations been blended in a single work effort? (3) How have separate audits and evaluations been used in combination? (4) How have audits and evaluations been used together with performance measurement systems to provide more useful information?

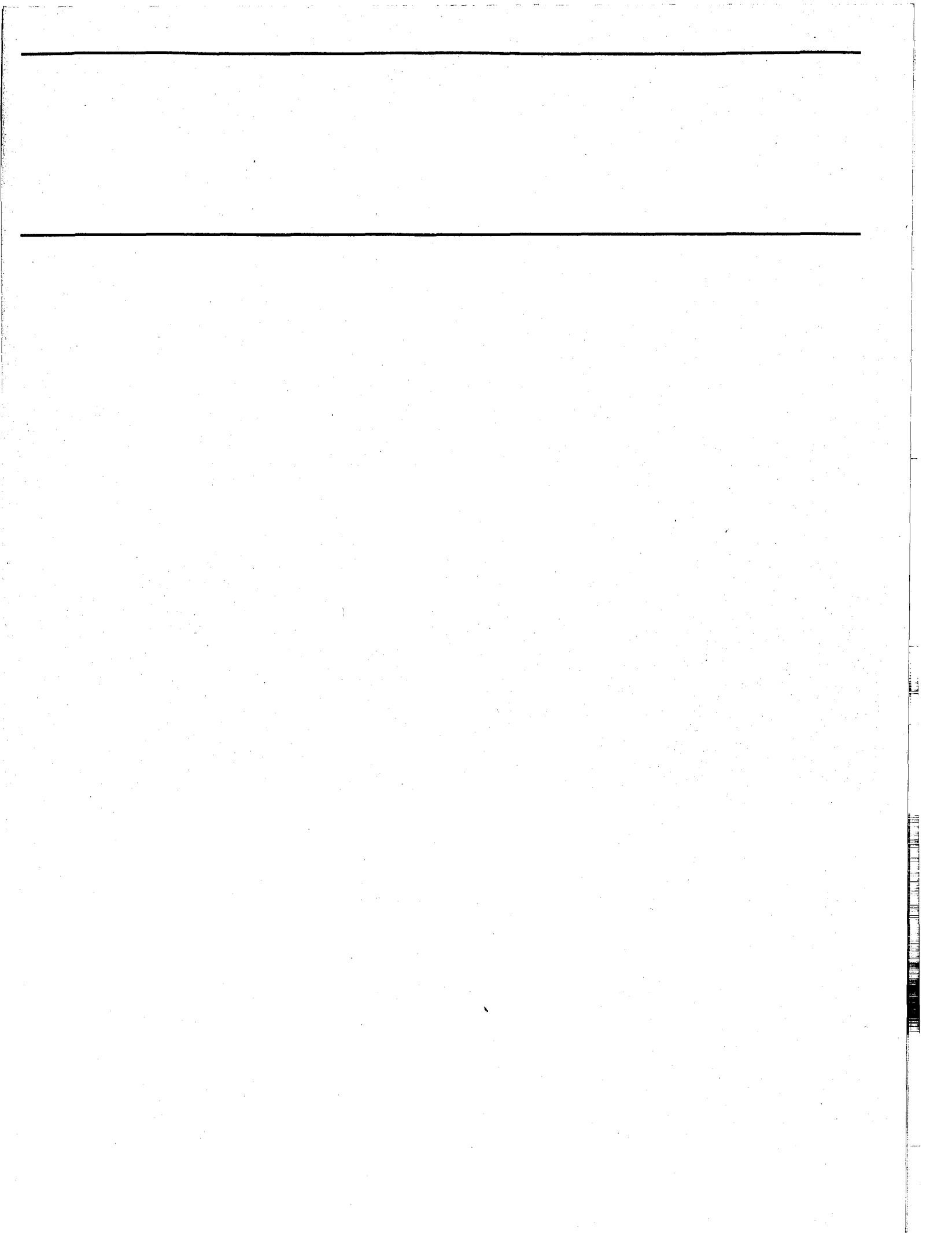
**TITLE: MEASURING THE RESULTS OF PROGRAMS AIMING TO INFLUENCE COMPLEX SYSTEMS (966709)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Many of the first agency annual performance plans developed under the Results Act faltered at the central task: developing measurable goals for the outcomes or results their programs are intended to achieve. Our previous study identified numerous analytic challenges to measuring program outcomes (GAO/HEHS/GGD-97-138). In particular, many programs had difficulty measuring objectives that are the result of complex systems or phenomena outside government control. However, for agencies that faced this challenge yet did propose outcome measures, we aim to learn: (1) what strategies or techniques did agencies use to overcome this analytic challenge, and any related challenges and (2) what special resources or circumstances, if any, were identified as important to their success?

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