



Highlights of [GAO-07-565](#), a report to congressional committees

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Immigration and Customs Enforcement Needs to Fully Address Significant Infrastructure Modernization Program Management Weaknesses

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) fiscal year 2006 appropriations act provided \$40.15 million for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) program to modernize its information technology (IT) infrastructure. As mandated by the appropriations act, the department is to develop and submit for approval an expenditure plan for the program, referred to as "Atlas," that satisfies certain legislative conditions, including a review by GAO. In performing its review of the Atlas plan, GAO (1) determined whether the plan satisfies certain legislative conditions and (2) provided other observations about the plan and management of the program. To do this, GAO analyzed the fiscal year 2006 Atlas expenditure plan and supporting documents against the legislative conditions, federal requirements, and related best practices. GAO also interviewed relevant DHS officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that DHS minimize Atlas program risks by fully adhering to requirements development and management practices, implementing key contract management and oversight practices, completing planned risk management activities, and implementing critical performance management practices. DHS concurred with GAO's recommendations and described actions planned and under way to implement them.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-565.

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.

What GAO Found

The fiscal year 2006 Atlas expenditure plan, in combination with related program documentation and program officials' statements, satisfies or partially satisfies the legislative conditions set forth by Congress (see table).

DHS's Satisfaction of Legislative Conditions

Legislative conditions	Status
1. Expenditure plan must meet the capital planning and investment control review requirements established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).	partially satisfies
2. DHS must ensure Atlas is compliant with DHS's enterprise architecture.	partially satisfies
3. The plan must comply with the acquisition rules, requirements, guidelines, and systems acquisition management practices of the federal government.	partially satisfies
4. The plan must include a certification by DHS's chief information officer that an independent verification and validation agent is currently under contract for the project.	partially satisfies
5. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the DHS Investment Review Board, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and OMB.	satisfies

Source: GAO.

This satisfaction, however, is based on plans and commitments that provide for meeting these conditions rather than on completed actions to satisfy them. For example, to address the legislative condition related to capital planning and investment control review requirements, the program plans to, among other things, update its cost-benefit analysis in September 2007 to reflect emerging requirements and other program changes and to complete a privacy impact assessment by April 2007. In addition, the program is in the process of defining how it plans to use its independent verification and validation agent.

GAO also observed that DHS has not implemented key system management practices. Specifically,

- rigorous practices are not being fully adhered to in developing and managing system requirements,
- key contract management and oversight controls have not been fully implemented,
- planned risk management practices have yet to be implemented, and
- performance management practices that are critical to measuring progress against program goals are still being implemented.

Thus, much still needs to be accomplished to minimize the risks associated with the program's capacity to deliver promised IT infrastructure capabilities and benefits on time and within budget. Given that hundreds of millions of dollars are to be invested and the program is critical to supporting the ICE mission, it is essential that DHS follow through on its commitments to build the capability to effectively manage the program. Proceeding without it introduces unnecessary risks to the program and potentially jeopardizes its viability for future investment.