

GAO

Accounting and Information
Management Division

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**General Government
Information Systems
Issue Area**

Active Assignments

Foreword

This report was prepared primarily to inform Congressional members and key staff of ongoing assignments in the General Accounting Office's General Government Information Systems issue area. This report contains assignments that were ongoing as of July 6, 1995, 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 Hazel Edwards, Director, on (202) 512-6418; or Linda Koontz, Associate Director, on (202) 512-7487.

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General Government Information Systems

TAX POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

TITLE: REVIEW OF IRS' PROGRESS IN ELIMINATING COMPUTER SECURITY RISKS (511080)

BACKGROUND : In recent assessments of the adequacy of IRS' overall computer systems security, we identified a number of weaknesses which exposed taxpayer data to unauthorized disclosure, alteration, misuse, and loss. IRS generally agreed with our assessments and initiated a series of activities to address the weaknesses we had identified.

KEY QUESTIONS : What is the status of IRS' efforts to (1) improve application controls used to limit access to taxpayer data in the Information Data Retrieval System (IDRS), and (2) strengthen general controls for software changes, disaster recovery, and telecommunications at IRS headquarters, the Martinsburg and Detroit Computing Centers, and Austin and Cincinnati service centers?

TITLE: SURVEY OF IRS' MANAGEMENT OF TAX SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION USING GAO'S STRATEGIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (SIM) METHODOLOGY (511081)

BACKGROUND : IRS is modernizing operations by replacing outdated technology under Tax Systems Modernization (TSM) and making changes to its business operations and organizational structure. To date, IRS has spent \$2.5 billion on TSM with marginal results. Weak strategic information management practices may prevent IRS from focusing TSM investments on the most critical outcomes.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) Is IRS strategically managing TSM to focus on mission problems and performance goals? (2) Has IRS identified customer needs, designed TSM to meet those needs, and created mechanisms to gauge how needs are being met? (3) Does IRS have processes to analyze TSM projects as business investments? (4) Are business process improvement efforts linked with TSM projects?

TITLE: HRA 23: REVIEW OF IRS' TAX SYSTEM MODERNIZATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY'S INFORMATION SYSTEMS (511477)

BACKGROUND : IRS is modernizing operations by replacing outdated technology under the Tax System Modernization (TSM) and making changes to its business operations and organizational structure. To date, IRS has spent \$2.5 billion on TSM, but poor strategic information management and technical capabilities, we have identified, prevent IRS from focusing on key TSM investments.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What effort is IRS undertaking to resolve the issues and concerns GAO has raised regarding strategic management of the overall TSM? (2) What is the status of IRS's data bases? (3) How does IRS secure taxpayer information? (4) Are IRS' Paper and Electronic Submission Processing systems consistent with its business strategy?

General Government Information Systems

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

TITLE: INS' MANAGEMENT OF ITS CRIMINAL ALIEN INFORMATION (511068)

BACKGROUND : The Information, Justice, Transportation, and Agriculture Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations has requested a review of INS information systems, focusing on their usefulness for identifying criminal aliens.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) Will current and planned systems initiatives regarding criminal alien information resolve identification problems and assist in detention and deportation? (2) What is the extent of inaccurate and incomplete criminal alien data in INS systems?

TITLE: REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CUSTOMS AUTOMATION PROGRAM (NCAP) UNDER THE MODERNIZATION ACT (511089)

BACKGROUND : Over the years, GAO found that Customs had inadequate information resources management and related systems. The 1993-Modernization Act established a Nat'l Customs Automation Prgm (NCAP), requiring Customs to automate and modernize import processing. In FY '94, imports were valued at \$660 billion and duties at \$23 billion. Customs has begun modernizing its infor. tech. (IT) systems.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What is Customs' strategy for modernizing operations and its IT systems to meet NCAP, financial management, and other requirements? (2) Is the strategy adequate? (3) What is the current status of Customs' implementation?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - GGIS

TITLE: REVIEW OF TREASURY'S EFFORTS TO ACQUISITION THE TREASURY COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (TCS) (511076)

BACKGROUND : In September 1995, Treasury plans to replace its 10-year old Consolidated Data-Network (CDN) with the Treasury Communication System (TCS) at a cost of \$850 million. Treasury plans to use TCS like CDN to transmit data among sites located in the U.S.. GAO and others (e.g., NSA) have identified serious CDN security weaknesses. Treasury states TCS will correct them.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What are the security and other internal control weaknesses that have been found with CDN? (2) What steps does Treasury plan to take to correct these problems with TCS and ensure the security of data stored on and transmitted via the new network? (3) What is Treasury doing to mitigate the development risks associated with acquiring such a major network?


