



Highlights of [GAO-10-835](#), a report to congressional committees

## DRUG CONTROL

# DOD Needs to Improve Its Performance Measurement System to Better Manage and Oversee Its Counternarcotics Activities

### Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) leads detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the United States in support of law enforcement agencies. DOD reported resources of more than \$1.5 billion for fiscal year 2010 to support its counternarcotics activities.

Congress mandated GAO report on DOD's counternarcotics performance measurement system. Specifically, this report addresses the extent to which (1) DOD's counternarcotics performance measurement system enables DOD to track progress and (2) DOD uses performance information from its counternarcotics performance measurement system to manage its activities. GAO analyzed relevant DOD performance and budget documents, and discussed these efforts with officials from DOD and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

### What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense take steps to improve DOD's counternarcotics performance measurement system by (1) revising its performance measures and (2) applying practices to better facilitate the use of performance data to manage its counternarcotics activities. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendations.

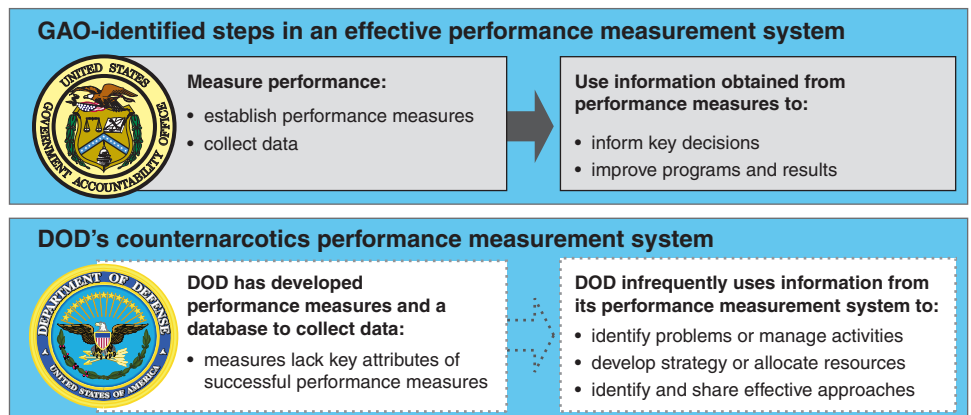
View [GAO-10-835](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Jess Ford at (202) 512-4268 or [fordj@gao.gov](mailto:fordj@gao.gov).

### What GAO Found

DOD does not have an effective performance measurement system to track the progress of its counternarcotics activities; however, it continues efforts to improve the system. GAO has previously reported that measuring performance provides managers a basis for making fact-based decisions. DOD has established performance measures for its counternarcotics activities and a database to collect performance information, including measures, targets, and results. However, these measures lack a number of attributes, such as being clearly stated and objective, which GAO considers key to successful performance measures. In May 2010, DOD issued new guidance for its counternarcotics performance measurement system. However, DOD officials noted the department will face challenges implementing the guidance. These challenges include creating performance measures that assess program outcomes and ensuring adequate resources, such as expertise in performance management, are available to develop measures.

DOD rarely uses the information in its performance measurement system to manage its counternarcotics activities and has applied few practices to facilitate its use. GAO has found that the full benefit of collecting performance information is realized only when managers use it to inform key decisions. However, DOD officials responsible for counternarcotics activities throughout the department told us they rarely use data submitted to the system to manage activities. Rather, they tend to manage programs using data not submitted to the system, such as information obtained in weekly program meetings regarding the cost and timeliness of projects. Moreover, officials responsible for oversight of DOD's activities stated they use the system to develop reports for ONDCP, but not to allocate resources. While DOD has applied some practices to facilitate the use of the performance information in its system, it does not utilize certain key practices identified by GAO, such as frequently and effectively communicating performance information. Absent an effective performance management system, DOD lacks critical information to use to improve the management and oversight of its counternarcotics activities.

DOD's Performance Measurement System as Compared to GAO-Identified Steps



Source: GAO; Corel Draw (logos).