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MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Using the Results Act to Address Mission Fragmentation and Program Overlap





United States
General Accounting Office
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Accounting and Information
Management Division

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The Honorable Richard K. Armev
Majority Leader
House of Representatives

The Honorable John R. Kasich
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
House of Representatives

The Honorable Dan Burton
Chairman
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight
House of Representatives

The Honorable Bob Livingston
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

This letter responds to your request that we describe the challenge of multiple and overlapping federal programs within the framework of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, known as GPRA or the Results Act. As the government searches for ways to do more with less, mission fragmentation and program overlap have become increasingly important issues. The Congress and the administration, as well as GAO, have identified the fragmented nature of many federal activities, coupled with the need to reduce the deficit, as the basis for a fundamental reexamination of federal programs and structures.¹

The Results Act presents a viable means to begin such a reexamination. Under the act, agencies are to set strategic and annual goals, measure performance, and report on the degree to which goals are met; based on the agencies' plans, the President is required to submit a governmentwide performance plan presenting, in conjunction with the annual budget submission, a comprehensive picture of government performance. The Congress intended for the Results Act to fundamentally shift the focus of

¹Federal Government Management: Examining Government Performance as We Near the Next Century, Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, House of Representatives, H. Rpt. No. 861, 104th Cong. 2d Sess. pp. 5-6 (1996); Office of the Vice President, Transforming Organizational Structures: Accompanying Report of the National Performance Review, Sept. 1993; and Government Restructuring: Identifying Potential Duplication in Federal Missions and Approaches (GAO/T-AIMD-95-161, June 7, 1995).

accountability from a preoccupation with staffing and activity levels to a focus on the outcomes of federal programs. This focus should lead to new information on those programs that cut across agency lines but share common goals.

As requested, this report summarizes our prior work dealing with mission fragmentation and program overlap and then describes specific ways in which the Results Act can focus attention on these management challenges and help to develop strategies to harmonize federal responses. As agreed with your offices, we did not update issued work for this report, although we did ensure that the work was still relevant and timely.

Results in Brief

Our work has documented the widespread existence of fragmentation and overlap from both the broad perspective of federal missions and from the more specific viewpoint of individual federal programs. Appendix I captures this body of work, which addresses nearly a dozen federal mission areas and over 30 program areas. Our work has shown that as the federal government has responded over time to new needs and problems, many federal agencies have been given responsibilities for addressing the same or similar national issues; but our work also suggests that some issues will necessarily involve more than one federal agency or more than one approach. Taken as a whole, this body of work indicates that fragmentation and overlap will present a particular and persistent challenge to the successful implementation of the Results Act.

But at the same time, the Results Act should offer a new and structured framework to address crosscutting issues. Each of its key stages—defining missions and desired outcomes, measuring performance, and using performance information—offers a new opportunity to address fragmentation and overlap. For example, the Results Act is intended to foster a dialogue on strategic goals involving the Congress as well as agency and external stakeholders. This dialogue should help to identify agencies and programs addressing similar missions and associated performance implications. The act's emphasis on results-based performance measures should lead to more explicit discussions of contributions and accomplishments within crosscutting programs and encourage related programs to develop common performance measures. Finally, if the Results Act is successfully implemented, performance information should become available to clarify the consequences of fragmentation and the implications of alternative policy and service delivery options, which, in turn, can affect future decisions concerning

department and agency missions and the allocation of resources among those missions.

Emphasizing missions, goals, and objectives, as envisioned by the Results Act, should facilitate a broader recognition of the nature and extent of fragmentation and overlap. However, past efforts to deal with crosscutting federal activities and recent developments in both the executive branch and the Congress underscore the need for specific institutions and processes to sustain and nurture a focus on these issues.

Background and Methodology

In this report, we use the term “mission fragmentation” to refer to those circumstances in which more than one federal agency (or more than one bureau within an agency) is involved in the same broad area of national need. Historically, national need areas have been described by a classification system called budget functions. Developed as a means to classify budgetary resources on a governmentwide basis according to the need addressed, budget functions are, by intention, very broad. Presently, there are 17 national need areas, including such mission areas as international affairs and income security.² Functional classifications have been used in the federal budget process for many years to serve a variety of purposes; since 1974, the Congress has used these categories as the framework for the concurrent resolution on the budget. Budget functions will also provide the framework for the governmentwide performance plan that is required by the Results Act to be included with the President’s Fiscal Year 1999 Budget submitted in February 1998.

Although this type of system can indicate broad categories of fragmentation and overlap, it does not directly address the issue of program duplication. While mission fragmentation and program overlap are relatively straightforward to identify, determining whether overlapping programs are actually duplicative requires an analysis of target populations, specific program goals, and the means used to achieve them. For example, as an indication of duplication within employment training programs, we reported in 1994 on the extent to which 38 separate programs shared common goals, targeted comparable client populations, provided similar services, and used parallel service delivery mechanisms

²In addition, there are three other functions—net interest, allowances, and undistributed offsetting receipts—which allow full coverage of federal spending. The function categories, while complete, do have certain limitations as a classification system. For a discussion of this topic, see Budget Issues: Fiscal Year 1996 Agency Spending by Budget Function (GAO/AIMD-97-95, May 13, 1997).

and administrative structures. Thirty of the programs shared characteristics with at least one other program.³

To respond to this request, we compiled an inventory of GAO reports and testimonies dealing with mission fragmentation and program overlap. As agreed, we did not update this issued work, but each identified product was reviewed for relevance and currency. Our goal was to capture the breadth of our published work but to include only those products which described or expanded previous discussions of mission fragmentation or program overlaps, “patchworks,” or duplications. Products which were very narrow in scope—for example, dealing with a program coordination question within a single agency—were not included unless they were part of a larger body of work on the specific program area. The abstracts contained in appendix I summarize matters relevant to fragmentation and overlap and do not necessarily reflect the entirety of the product’s message.

Mission Fragmentation Is Widespread

Whether approached from a governmentwide perspective or on the basis of individual programs, our work has documented mission fragmentation and program overlap. Although this broad and diverse body of work—covering nearly a dozen missions and over 30 programs and involving most departments and agencies—clearly indicates the potential for inefficiency and waste, it also helps to disclose areas where intentional participation by multiple agencies may be a reasonable response to a specific need. In either case, the Result Act, and its emphasis on defining missions and expected outcomes, can provide the environment needed to begin the process of reassessment.

In response to requests from the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and more recently from House Leadership, we attempted to quantify the question of mission fragmentation by using spending patterns to describe the relationship between federal missions and organizations.⁴ By mapping department and agency spending against the federal mission areas described by budget function classifications, we showed that most federal agencies addressed more than one mission and, conversely, most federal missions were assigned to multiple departments and agencies. In 1996, for example, most agencies made obligations to three or more

³Multiple Employment Training Programs: Overlap Among Programs Raises Questions About Efficiency (GAO/HEHS-94-193, July 11, 1994).

⁴See Budget Issues: Fiscal Year 1996 Agency Spending by Budget Function (GAO/AIMD-97-95, May 13, 1997) and Budget Function Classification: Agency Spending by Subfunction and Object Category, Fiscal Year 1994 (GAO/AIMD-95-116FS, May 10, 1995).

budget functions, and six of the budget functions were addressed by six or more executive branch departments and major agencies. For example, seven major federal organizations made obligations in 1996 to the Natural Resources and Environment mission area, and seven to Community and Regional Development.⁵ While the use of broad budget functions as a proxy for federal missions cannot yield an exact measure of the extent of fragmentation, our analyses served to illustrate the potential scope of the issue and indicate areas for further assessment.

We have also done a large body of work reviewing specific federal programs. Again, in program area after program area—from early childhood programs to land management and from food safety to international trade—the picture remains the same: widespread fragmentation and overlap, often involving many federal departments and agencies. Such unfocused efforts can waste scarce funds, confuse and frustrate program customers, and limit overall program effectiveness. Table 1 summarizes the program areas included in appendix I, which contains an annotated bibliography of GAO products covering over two dozen federal program areas including, for example, the following:

- We have reported extensively on federal programs seeking to help people find productive employment. In 1995, we identified over 160 employment training programs scattered across 15 departments and agencies. While about 60 percent of the programs were administered by two departments, the remainder resided in departments not generally expected to provide employment training assistance. Many of the new employment training programs had emerged in these latter departments in recent years.⁶
- We reported in 1995 that at least 12 federal departments and agencies were responsible for hundreds of community development programs that assist distressed urban communities and their residents. Historically, there has been little coordination among the agencies, imposing an unnecessary burden on urban communities seeking assistance. We reported that agencies tended not to collaborate with each other for a variety of reasons, including concerns about losing control over program resources.⁷

⁵GAO/AIMD-97-95, May 13, 1997.

⁶Multiple Employment Training Programs: Major Overhaul Needed to Create a More Efficient, Customer-Driven System (GAO/T-HEHS-95-70, Feb. 6, 1995).

⁷Community Development: Challenges Face Comprehensive Approaches to Address Needs of Distressed Neighborhoods (GAO/T-RCED-95-262, Aug. 3, 1995).

- In the emerging area of telemedicine, federal efforts are fragmented within nine federal departments and agencies.⁸ As noted in our 1997 report, no formal mechanism or overall strategy exists to ensure that federal investments are fully coordinated to serve a common purpose.

Table 1: Missions and Program Areas Discussed in GAO Products

<p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety <p>Commerce and housing credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial institution regulation <p>Community and regional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community development • Economic development • Emergency preparedness • Housing • Rural development <p>Education, training, employment and social services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood programs • Employment training • Student aid <p>General science, space, and technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High performance computing • National laboratories • Research and development facilities • Small business innovation research <p>General government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal statistical agencies 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term care • Substance abuse • Nuclear health and safety • Telemedicine <p>Income security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care • Welfare and related programs • Youth programs <p>International Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational programs • Foreign affairs • Trade <p>Law enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border inspections • Drug control • Investigative authority • Terrorism and drug trafficking <p>Natural resources and environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal land management • International environmental programs • Hazardous waste cleanup • Water quality
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⁸The involvement of many federal entities is a function of the breadth of activities encompassed by telemedicine and an example of how federal responses to emerging issues can often lead to fragmented systems. Depending on how it is defined, telemedicine can involve the use of imaging and diagnostic equipment to gather data from a patient, computer hardware and software to record data, communication lines or satellites to send the data from one location to another, and computer equipment at the receiving end for a physician or specialist to interpret the data. A telemedicine system could be as simple as a computer hookup to a medical reference source or as advanced as robotic surgery. See *Telemedicine: Federal Strategy Is Needed to Guide Investments* (GAO/NSIAD/HEHS-97-67, Feb. 14, 1997).

Notwithstanding the performance problems suggested by this work, a common theme emerges—the evident fragmentation and overlap is the result of an adaptive and responsive federal government. As new needs were identified, the common response has been a proliferation of responsibilities and roles to federal departments and agencies, perhaps targeted on a newly identified clientele (e.g., at-risk children), or involving a new program delivery approach (e.g., credit programs in addition to grants), or, in the worst case, merely layered onto existing systems in response to programs that have failed or performed poorly.

However, as noted in a recent House Government Reform and Oversight Committee report,⁹ “a certain amount of redundancy is understandable and can be beneficial if it occurs by design as part of a management strategy to foster competition, provide better service delivery to customer groups, or provide emergency backup.” Several of our products provide examples of these types of federal environments.

- In some situations, redundancy may be seen as inherently necessary due to the nature of the federal effort. For example, because of security requirements, the Department of Energy’s (DOE) processes for planning, funding, and evaluating nuclear weapons development work came to rely on competition among multiple weapons laboratories as a means of ensuring quality.¹⁰
- In other cases, the involvement of multiple federal agencies may reflect the breadth of activities associated with a given federal mission. For example, countries formerly part of the Soviet Union have received assistance through over 200 federal programs, some as part of a multiagency approach established by law in 1992. Assistance provided by 23 federal departments and agencies has included food aid, private sector development, emergency humanitarian assistance, disposition of weapons of mass destruction, and democratic reform.¹¹ Similarly, numerous federal agencies are involved in providing disaster assistance. The Federal Response Plan prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency identifies 27 federal agencies as service providers following any type of disaster or emergency that requires a federal response.¹²

⁹H. Rpt. No. 104-861, p. 6.

¹⁰DOE’s National Laboratories: Adopting New Missions and Managing Effectively Pose Significant Challenges (GAO/T-RCED-94-113, Feb. 3, 1994).

¹¹Former Soviet Union: Information on U.S. Bilateral Program Funding (GAO/NSIAD-96-37, Dec. 15, 1995).

¹²Results Act: Observations on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Draft Strategic Plan (GAO/RCED-97-204R, July 22, 1997).

- In some program areas, inefficiencies may be difficult to address because of other, overriding goals. For example, the decentralized structure of federal statistical agencies has been cited as inefficient and contributing to data quality problems. However, the potential advantages of consolidation must be weighed against other concerns, such as the potential for abuse and breaches of confidentiality that could occur when so much information about individuals and businesses is concentrated in one agency.¹³

Nevertheless, whether seen as the cause of unfocused and confusing program structures or as a necessary consequence of federal approaches in a specific program area, the fragmentation and overlap described by our work inevitably leads to consideration of reorganization and restructuring. In testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, the Comptroller General noted that experiences in this and foreign countries suggested several basic principles associated with any reorganization assessment.¹⁴ The most important lesson gleaned from these experiences was that any reorganization demands a coordinated approach within and across agency lines, focused on specific, identifiable goals. With its emphasis on defining agency missions, goals and objectives, and strategies to achieve those goals and objectives—and its requirement for involvement of the Congress and other agency and external stakeholders—the Results Act provides a statute-based environment to begin such an assessment.

Results Act Holds Potential to Address Mission Fragmentation

The Results Act will present the Congress and the administration with a new opportunity to address mission fragmentation and program overlap. As we noted in our recent assessment of the status of Results Act implementation, the act's emphasis on results implies that federal programs contributing to the same or similar outcomes should be closely coordinated, consolidated, or streamlined, as appropriate, to ensure that goals are consistent and that program efforts are mutually reinforcing.¹⁵ To implement the act, agencies will need to undertake three key steps: define mission and desired outcomes, measure performance, and use performance information. Each of these steps offers opportunities for the

¹³Statistical Agencies: Consolidation and Quality Issues (GAO/T-GGD-97-78, Apr. 9, 1997).

¹⁴Government Reorganization: Issues and Principles (GAO/T-GGD/AIMD-95-166, May 17, 1995).

¹⁵The Government Performance and Results Act: 1997 Governmentwide Implementation Will Be Uneven (GAO/GGD-97-109, June 2, 1997).

Congress and the administration to intervene in ways that could address mission fragmentation. For example,

- as missions and desired outcomes are determined, instances of fragmentation and overlap can be identified and appropriate responses can be defined;
- as performance measures are developed, the extent to which agency goals are complementary and the need for common performance measures to allow for cross-agency evaluations can be considered; and
- as continued budget pressures prompt decisionmakers to weigh trade-offs inherent in resource allocation and restructuring decisions, the Results Act can provide the framework to integrate and compare performance of related programs to better inform choices among competing budgetary claims.

Define Missions and Desired Outcomes

Perhaps the most important element of the Results Act, at least with respect to the challenge of mission fragmentation and program overlap, is that it creates a framework that enables and expects congressional and other stakeholder consultation in agency strategic planning.¹⁶ This should create the environment needed to look across the activities of individual programs within specific agencies and toward the goals and objectives that the federal government is trying to achieve. The consultation process should present an important opportunity for congressional committees and executive branch agencies to mutually address the extent and consequences of fragmented and overlapping agency missions and poorly targeted programs.

In many areas, our previous work has shown that emphasizing missions is the best means to cut across organizational boundaries and identify fragmentation. By emphasizing the intended outcomes of related federal programs, our work has identified legislative changes needed to clarify the Congress' intent and expectations or to address changing conditions that have arisen since initial statutory requirements were established. Examples include the following:

- In the area of rural development, we reported in 1994 that the patchwork of uncoordinated, narrowly focused programs was an inefficient surrogate for a single federal policy. At the time of our review, a federal interagency group had been established to address service delivery problems, but it

¹⁶Managing for Results: Achieving GPRA's Objectives Requires Strong Congressional Role (GAO/T-GGD-96-79, Mar. 6, 1996).

could take only limited action because it lacked the authority to make changes in the programs. We suggested that the Congress consider establishing an interagency executive committee with a mandate to report on alternatives to the current fragmented environment, including establishing measurable program goals.¹⁷

- Following on our work examining federal export promotion programs, the Congress tasked an interagency working group, the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee, with establishing governmentwide priorities for promotion programs and proposing an annual unified federal budget reflecting those priorities. Our work had shown a lack of information on what federal export promotion programs were achieving, whether federal resources for export promotion were being used as effectively as possible, and obstacles to accessing the programs due to the fragmentation of needed services among several agencies.¹⁸
- Healthy People 2000 is a national strategy for improving the health of the American people. Started in 1979, Healthy People is a series of outcome-based public health objectives developed and updated each decade by the U.S. Public Health Service in consultation with other federal agencies, state governments, and national organizations. Currently, three broad goals are supported by 300 objectives that address 22 priority areas. Over time, the Congress has required that Healthy People objectives be incorporated into other federal programs as a means to ensure that goals and objectives are coordinated to meet federal needs.¹⁹

The opportunity for congressional involvement in agency strategic planning could present challenges given the complexity of current committee jurisdictions. To address this, bipartisan teams in the House of Representatives have been established to coordinate and facilitate committee consultations with executive branch agencies. We have supported and will continue to actively support the House's departmental staff teams as they review and consult on agencies' draft strategic plans. For example, at the request of the Chairmen of the House Committees on Government Reform and Oversight, Appropriations, and the Budget, we recently developed a set of key questions to be used by the staff teams during their reviews. These questions dealt with identifying relationships

¹⁷Rural Development: Patchwork of Federal Programs Needs to Be Reappraised (GAO/RCED-94-165, July 28, 1994).

¹⁸See Export Promotion: Governmentwide Strategy Needed for Federal Programs (GAO/T-GGD-93-7, Mar. 15, 1993).

¹⁹GAO/GGD-97-109, June 2, 1997, and Public Health: A Health Status Indicator for Targeting Federal Aid to States (GAO/HEHS-97-13, Nov. 13, 1996).

among agencies' strategic plans, determining similar or related efforts across agencies, and noting the extent of interagency coordination.²⁰

The apparent challenge of integrating performance expectations for crosscutting programs with congressional oversight processes and executive management structures should also be aided by an additional Results Act requirement: the governmentwide performance plan. The act requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to present a governmentwide performance plan, based on agencies' annual performance plans, with the President's Budget; the first plan is required to be issued in February 1998 with the fiscal year 1999 budget. The Congress intended that this plan present a "single cohesive picture of the annual performance goals for the fiscal year."²¹ While the precise format is left to the discretion of the OMB Director, the plan is expected to be organized around budget functions, thus providing a mission-based, cross-agency perspective. This approach should facilitate identifying crosscutting programs while also supporting integration with the concurrent resolution on the budget—an important congressional oversight tool that also uses budget functions.

Measure Performance

The Results Act requires agencies to develop annual plans with suitable performance measures in order to reinforce the connection between the long-term strategic goals outlined in strategic plans and the day-to-day activities of managers and staff. To the extent that federal efforts are fragmented across agency lines, developing crosscutting performance measures through interagency coordination could ease implementation burdens while strengthening efforts to develop best practices. Complementary and, where appropriate, common performance measures could permit comparisons of related programs' results and the tools used to achieve those results.

Both the need for and the potential benefits arising from efforts to build a crosscutting perspective into outcome-oriented performance measurement development can be drawn from our previous work. However, the persistent theme from this body of work is that although results-based performance information would help federal managers improve their programs, little information is collected.

²⁰Agencies' Strategic Plans Under GPRA: Key Questions to Facilitate Congressional Review (GAO/GGD-10.1.16, May 1997).

²¹Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, S. Rpt. No. 58, 103d Cong. 1st Sess. p. 27 (1993).

- Our work on employment training programs found that many federal agencies did not know if they were really helping people find jobs. For example, in a study of programs targeting the economically disadvantaged, we found that most agencies did not collect information on whether participants found jobs; or if they did, whether the jobs were related to the training provided; and if it was, what wages the participants earned. Without this information, program administrators could not determine if they were preparing participants for local labor market opportunities, whether employment resulted from participation in employment training, or if participants would most likely have found the same types of jobs on their own.²²
- The challenge of performance measurement development is increased when there are multiple nonfederal entities, in addition to multiple federal agencies, involved in a program area. For example, our work on ecosystem management noted that data needed to test the concept were often noncomparable and insufficient and that a governmentwide approach would require unparalleled interagency and federal/nonfederal coordination.²³

Even where efforts are made to develop common performance information across overlapping programs, the information developed can still differ from program to program, hampering crosscutting comparisons. For example, our 1996 review of three agencies whose programs provide economic development assistance found that each cited a “performance ratio”—computed as a comparison of total dollars invested in a project to the dollars invested by the federal agency—as one measure of how they were meeting their goals.²⁴ However, each agency defined total dollars invested differently and calculated the ratio for only a portion of its programs. While determining the outcomes of economic development programs certainly presents significant challenges, the use of different methods to calculate apparently similar performance indicators would in any case preclude comparison of the programs.

Our work also suggests that sustained congressional involvement, in some cases spanning many years, will be required even where a legislated

²²Multiple Employment Training Programs: Basic Program Data Often Missing (GAO/T-HEHS-94-239, Sept. 28, 1994) and Multiple Employment Training Programs: Most Federal Agencies Do Not Know If Their Programs Are Working Effectively (GAO/HEHS-94-88, Mar. 2, 1994).

²³Ecosystem Management: Additional Actions Needed to Adequately Test a Promising Approach (GAO/RCED-94-111, Aug. 16, 1994).

²⁴The agencies were the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Economic Development Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. See Economic Development: Limited Information Exists on the Impact of Assistance Provided by Three Agencies (GAO/RCED-96-103, Apr. 3, 1996).

coordinating mechanism exists. For example, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) was established in 1988 after several previous legislative efforts were unsuccessful in causing development of a comprehensive national drug strategy. ONDCP is responsible for developing and coordinating implementation of a drug control strategy among the now more than 50 federal agencies involved in this program area. Recently, ONDCP began developing national performance measures to be collected in addition to individual agency performance data to help determine whether or how well counternarcotics efforts were contributing to the goals of the national strategy. Consistent with the intent of the Results Act, we recommended that ONDCP complete a long-term plan with meaningful performance measures and multiyear funding needs linked to the goals and objectives of the strategy. In February 1997, ONDCP proposed a 10-year strategy and is making progress toward developing performance targets and measures for each of its goals.²⁵

Lastly, the Congress has a vital role regarding performance measurement development in addition to its consultative role with respect to agency strategic plans. This role can be particularly important in areas of uncoordinated and fragmented missions. For example, assessing the outcomes of science-related programs can be extremely difficult because a wide range of factors determine if and how a particular research and development project will result in commercial or other benefits, and the challenge of this type of assessment is heightened by the involvement of multiple federal agencies. Recently, the Research Roundtable, a consortium of federal research and development agencies, has been considering the extent to which its member agencies can and should adopt a common approach to measuring performance. The Roundtable is one of about 25 interagency groups, many of which were recently formed on an ad hoc basis to discuss common concerns in crosscutting issues, including goal setting and performance measurement. The Congress could work with these types of interagency coordinating groups to ensure that congressional data needs are met within any common performance measurement model. Moreover, this consultation will also reinforce earlier strategic planning consultations intended to clarify and harmonize missions.²⁶

²⁵Drug Control: Reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (GAO/T-GGD-97-97, May 1, 1997).

²⁶Managing for Results: Key Steps and Challenges in Implementing GPRA In Science Agencies (GAO/T-GGD/RCED-96-214, July 10, 1996).

Use Performance Information

For the Results Act to achieve its objective of improved federal performance and accountability, the performance information made available must be used. Of course, different users will have different needs. Agency managers should use performance information to ensure that programs meet intended goals, to assess the efficiency of processes, and to promote continuous improvement. The Congress needs information on whether and in what respect a program is working well to support its oversight of agencies and their appropriations.²⁷ In the specific area of fragmented and overlapping activities, performance information can help identify performance variations and redundancies and can lay the foundation for improved coordination, program consolidations, or the elimination of unneeded programs.

However, developing useful performance information in an environment of fragmented missions presents unique demands, partly because of the number of federal decisionmakers involved. For example, federal employment training programs are not only spread across multiple departments and agencies but are also subject to multiple congressional authorization, oversight, and appropriations jurisdictions. In fact, for the major departments and agencies providing employment training programs, seven different appropriations subcommittees currently review and determine funding levels.²⁸

Ideally, the consultation requirements associated with strategic plan development can help address these concerns. In particular, the House departmental teams, composed of representatives from relevant House authorizing committees as well as the appropriations, budget, and oversight committees, were specifically established to help coordinate committee consultations and simplify the provision of congressional views on agency strategic plans. These actions should help promote clarity and consistency of congressional information needs, thus setting the stage for subsequent congressional interest in collected performance information. But the performance measurement challenge of fragmented missions—that is, concentrating attention on redundancies or performance differences across agencies, in addition to performance gaps within a single agency—will present unique difficulties for both the executive branch and the Congress.

²⁷For a discussion of possible implications of the Results Act on resource allocation processes, see Performance Budgeting: Past Initiatives Offer Insights for GPRA Implementation (GAO/AIMD-97-46, Mar. 27, 1997).

²⁸For a discussion of the intersection of federal missions, departments and agencies delivering services, and cognizant appropriations subcommittees, see Budget Account Structure: A Descriptive Overview (GAO/AIMD-95-179, Sept. 18, 1995).

Building a Sustained Focus on Fragmentation and Overlap

Past efforts to deal with crosscutting federal activities suggest that even within the statutory framework of the Results Act, success will take time and will require sustained attention in both the executive branch and the Congress. At this very early stage of Results Act implementation, it is clear that much work remains to be done. In June 1997 testimony before a joint hearing of the Senate Appropriations and Governmental Affairs Committees, the Director of OMB acknowledged, “(A)gencies understandably have first focused on their own programs, and are only beginning to look at enhancing interagency coordination for programs or activities that are crosscutting in nature.”²⁹ Our reviews of draft agency strategic plans, requested by House Leadership to assist the congressional consultation process, confirmed that agencies are only beginning to consider the challenges of fragmentation and overlap.

- Nearly all of the draft plans lacked evidence of interagency coordination, and some of the plans—including those from some agencies that operate complex programs where interagency coordination is clearly required—lacked any discussion of the need to coordinate with other agencies on crosscutting issues. For example, the ability of the Department of Health and Human Services to achieve its goal of self-sufficiency and parental responsibility for welfare recipients is likely to depend on employment, training, and education programs administered by the Departments of Labor and Education; yet, the draft plan makes no mention of the roles of these other agencies.
- Even if an agency’s draft plan recognized the need to coordinate with others, there was generally little information about what strategies would be pursued to address mission fragmentation and program overlap. For example, although the draft plans for the Departments of Justice and Veterans Affairs contained a general goal to improve coordination among agencies involved in related functions, no specific strategies to achieve this goal were discussed.

These developments serve to emphasize a fundamental issue: the need for specific institutions and processes to sustain and nurture a focus on mission fragmentation and program overlap. The very nature of this issue presents special challenges for both the executive branch and the Congress.

In the executive branch, the sheer number of departments and agencies, many of which are “holding” organizations for widely diverse subordinate

²⁹Statement of Franklin D. Raines, Director, Office of Management and Budget, before the Senate Appropriations and Governmental Affairs Committees, June 24, 1997, p. 3.

bureaus, administrations, and services, will present a significant impediment. The Results Act establishes mechanisms to deal with this environment: strategic plans, emphasizing long-term goals and objectives in consultation with the Congress and external stakeholders, and the governmentwide performance plan, presenting “a single cohesive picture of the federal government’s annual performance goals.” However, notwithstanding consultation requirements and the iterative nature of strategic planning, such plans will likely focus internally, especially if there are no persistent, external, cross-agency integrating efforts. The recent growth of ad hoc interagency coordinating groups is an encouraging development, but sustained impetus from OMB will likely be needed to ensure that agency plans address fragmentation concerns. The governmentwide performance plan, prepared by OMB based on agency performance plans, offers perhaps the best opportunity for continued attention to coordination and integration issues within the executive branch, but it remains an untested approach whose relationship to the Congress, as discussed below, is unclear.

The departmental staff teams established in the House of Representatives have provided a valuable means to coordinate congressional consultations, but mission fragmentation and program overlap will continue to present challenges to the traditional committee structures and processes. Moreover, the governmentwide performance plan raises a series of questions for the Congress, including the following:

- How can the Congress most appropriately respond to the performance goals specified in the plan?
- How can the Congress express its perspectives and priorities on governmentwide performance goals, especially with respect to areas of fragmentation and overlap?
- How can the Congress best stimulate development of common performance measures within fragmented mission areas and programs, especially for those that cut across jurisdictions of specific committees?

These questions suggest continuing challenges for the Congress as it seeks to address crosscutting performance issues in the context of its current institutions and processes.

As agreed with your offices, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies to the House Minority

Leader and the Ranking Minority Members of your Committees; the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Committee on the Budget, and Committee on Governmental Affairs; and other interested Members of the Congress. We will also send copies to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and will make copies available to others upon request.

The major contributors to this letter were Michael J. Curro, Assistant Director, and Linda F. Baker, Senior Evaluator. Please contact me at (202) 512-9573 if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul L. Posner".

Paul L. Posner
Director, Budget Issues

Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on Mission Fragmentation and Program Overlap

This appendix lists principal GAO products regarding mission fragmentation and program overlap. Included are (1) products that provide general commentary on the subject and related issues; (2) products that pertain to mission fragmentation at a single department or agency; and (3) products that examine fragmentation within a particular mission or program area.

General Commentary

Managing for Results: The Statutory Framework for Improving Federal Management and Effectiveness ([GAO/T-GGD/AIMD-97-144](#), June 24, 1997)

Managing for Results: Analytic Challenges in Measuring Performance ([GAO/HEHS/GGD-97-138](#), May 30, 1997)

The Government Performance and Results Act: 1997 Governmentwide Implementation Will Be Uneven ([GAO/GGD-97-109](#), June 2, 1997)

Budget Issues: Fiscal Year 1996 Spending by Budget Function ([GAO/AIMD-97-95](#), May 13, 1997)

Performance Budgeting: Past Initiatives Offer Insights for GPRA Implementation ([GAO/AIMD-97-46](#), Mar. 27, 1997)

Measuring Performance: Strengths and Limitations of Research Indicators ([GAO/RCED-97-91](#), Mar. 21, 1997)

Managing for Results: Enhancing the Usefulness of GPRA Consultations Between the Executive Branch and Congress ([GAO/T-GGD-97-56](#), Mar. 10, 1997)

Managing for Results: Using GPRA to Assist Congressional and Executive Branch Decisionmaking ([GAO/T-GGD-97-43](#), Feb. 12, 1997)

Managing for Results: Key Steps and Challenges in Implementing GPRA in Science Agencies ([GAO/T-GGD/RCED-96-214](#), July 10, 1996)

Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act ([GAO/GGD-96-118](#), June 1996)

Managing for Results: Achieving GPRA's Objectives Requires Strong Congressional Role ([GAO/T-GGD-96-79](#), Mar. 6, 1996)

Budget Account Structure: A Descriptive Overview ([GAO/AIMD-95-179](#), Sept. 18, 1995)

Program Evaluation: Improving the Flow of Information to the Congress ([GAO/PEMD-95-1](#), Jan. 30, 1995)

Government Restructuring: Identifying Potential Duplication in Federal Missions and Approaches ([GAO/T-AIMD-95-161](#), June 7, 1995)

Program Consolidation: Budgetary Implications and Other Issues ([GAO/T-AIMD-95-145](#), May 23, 1995)

Government Reorganization: Issues and Principles ([GAO/T-GGD/AIMD-95-166](#), May 17, 1995)

Products Pertaining to Individual Departments or Agencies

The Department of Housing and Urban Development: Information on Its Role, Programs, and Issues ([GAO/RCED-97-173R](#), July 21, 1997)

GAO presented information on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) role, organization, and resources and a description of its major programs, their condition, and related issues. For example, in addition to HUD, five other federal departments, two independent agencies, and three government-sponsored enterprises—as well as private investors, public housing authorities, and nonprofit groups—contribute to meeting our nation's housing needs.

Housing and Urban Development: Potential Implications of Legislation Proposing to Dismantle HUD ([GAO/RCED-97-36](#), Feb. 21, 1997)

GAO discussed the breadth of HUD's responsibilities in housing assistance, community development, housing finance, and related regulatory functions in the context of a legislative proposal to dismantle the Department. The report summarized the potential impact of the proposal on HUD's customers and the capacity of states and other federal agencies to assume functions proposed in the bill. GAO also discussed the evolution of HUD's missions, noting that when created in 1965, it captured most federal housing and community development functions whose focus was primarily urban; HUD was not given responsibility for certain client-specific programs (e.g., veterans housing), for programs affecting rural areas, or for oversight of tax policies that affect housing or of financial institutions that participate in the nation's mortgage markets.

Government Reorganization: Observations on the Department of Commerce ([GAO/T-GGD/RCED/AIMD-95-248](#), July 25, 1995)

The missions and functions of the Department of Commerce have been among the most diverse of the cabinet departments, with its components responsible for such functions as expanding U.S. exports, developing innovative technologies, gathering and disseminating statistical data, measuring and fostering economic growth, granting patents and trademarks, promoting minority entrepreneurship, predicting the weather, and serving as an environmental steward. GAO noted that developing a strategic plan will be particularly challenging for Commerce because the Department does not have exclusive federal responsibility for any of these themes.

Environmental Protection: Current Environmental Challenges Require New Approaches ([GAO/T-RCED-95-190](#), May 17, 1995)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not been able to target its resources as efficiently as possible to the nation's highest environmental priorities because it does not have an overarching legislative mission and its environmental responsibilities have not been integrated. Over the years, the Congress has responded to a series of environmental threats with individual laws that tended to assign pollution control responsibilities according to environmental medium (such as air or water) and often prescribed implementing requirements and mandated time frames for their completion.

Department of Energy: Need to Reevaluate Its Role and Missions ([GAO/T-RCED-95-85](#), Jan. 18, 1995)

Created to deal with the energy crisis of the 1970s, Department of Energy's (DOE) mission and priorities have changed over time, with new missions in weapons production and now environmental cleanup emerging. This testimony suggests a set of questions that could be used to clarify DOE's mission, a necessary step to addressing its long-standing management problems.

Department of Education: Opportunities to Realize Savings ([GAO/T-HEHS-95-56](#), Jan. 18, 1995)

GAO discussed (1) a need to reexamine programs previously suggested by Education for elimination because they duplicated other programs, had

already achieved their purposes, or were more appropriately funded through nonfederal sources and (2) programs related to employment training that overlapped with each other and other programs outside Education.

Products by Mission or Program Area

Agriculture

Food Safety

Food Safety: Changes Needed to Minimize Unsafe Chemicals in Food ([GAO/RCED-94-192](#), Sept. 26, 1994)

GAO identified fundamental weaknesses in the federal programs that monitor chemicals in food. Because the problems associated with the current fragmented federal system cannot be solved by individual agencies' efforts, GAO recommended various actions that the Congress should take, including creating a single agency to carry out a cohesive set of food safety laws.

Food Safety: A Unified, Risk-Based System Needed to Enhance Food Safety ([GAO/T-RCED-94-71](#), Nov. 4, 1993)

Efforts made in response to many recommendations to improve food safety had fallen short because the agencies continued to operate under different regulatory approaches contained in their basic laws. GAO suggested that a single food safety agency may be needed to effectively resolve long-standing problems, deal with emerging food safety issues, and ensure a safe food supply.

Commerce and Housing Credit

Financial Institution Regulation

Bank Oversight Structure: U.S. and Foreign Experience May Offer Lessons for Modernizing U.S. Structure ([GAO/GGD-97-23](#), Nov. 20, 1996)

In response to proposals to consolidate U.S. bank regulatory agencies, GAO examined how other countries structure and carry out their bank

regulation and central bank activities. In contrast to foreign systems, the U.S. bank oversight system was relatively complex, with four different federal agencies having the same basic oversight responsibilities for those banks under their respective purview. Prior work showed that these agencies often differed on how laws should be interpreted, implemented, and enforced; how banks should be examined; and how to respond to troubled institutions. GAO also noted that differentiating oversight responsibilities by type of financial institution can result in overlap and a lack of accountability.

Financial Market Regulation: Benefits and Risks of Merging SEC and CFTC
([GAO/T-GGD-95-153](#), May 3, 1995)

GAO commented on legislation which sought to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of financial services regulation by merging the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the two agencies that regulate U.S. domestic equity and futures markets. Although a logical step to consider as part of continuing modernization efforts, the Congress must ultimately decide whether the potential benefits of a merger outweigh the risks.

Bank Regulation: Consolidation of the Regulatory Agencies
([GAO/T-GGD-94-106](#), Mar. 4, 1994)

GAO supported in principle consolidating regulatory activities of the various agencies involved, endorsing a partial consolidation pending clarification of the role of the Federal Reserve.

Bank And Thrift Regulation: Concerns About Credit Availability and Regulatory Burden ([GAO/T-GGD-93-10](#), Mar. 17, 1993)

The current regulatory system of four separate agencies evolved over decades of legislative efforts to address specific problems, resulting in a fragmented system that may no longer be capable of handling the complexities of today's banking and thrift industries. However, further analyses of the root causes of regulatory burden would be needed so that the burden could be eased without adversely affecting safety and soundness and consumer protection goals.

Community and Regional Development

Community Development

HUD: Inventory of Self-Sufficiency and Economic Opportunity Programs
([GAO/RCED-97-191R](#), July 28, 1997)

GAO inventoried and discussed the programmatic and funding linkages among 23 HUD self-sufficiency and economic opportunity programs that target tenants of public and assisted housing or low- and moderate-income residents in certain geographic areas.

Community Development: Challenges Face Comprehensive Approaches to Address Needs of Distressed Neighborhoods ([GAO/T-RCED-95-262](#), Aug. 3, 1995)

The fragmentation of federal programs among at least 12 federal departments and agencies imposes a burden on distressed urban communities seeking assistance. Historically, there has been little coordination among the agencies, which have been protective of their own resources and separate organizational missions.

Community Development: Comprehensive Approaches and Local Flexibility Issues ([GAO/T-RCED-96-53](#), Dec. 5, 1995)

GAO summarized its work on comprehensive approaches, noting that the many federal programs involved, considered individually, make sense but together often work against their intended purposes.

Community Development: Comprehensive Approaches Address Multiple Needs but Are Challenging to Implement ([GAO/RCED/HEHS-95-69](#), Feb. 8, 1995)

Comprehensive approaches to helping distressed neighborhoods face many challenges. One such challenge is that community organizations have to piece together a complex web of funding from private and public sources, with coordination among the many federal agencies involved having been limited.

Economic Development

Economic Development: Limited Information Exists on the Impact of Assistance Provided by Three Agencies ([GAO/RCED-96-103](#), Apr. 3, 1996)

The limited information available on the impact of economic development assistance provided by three programs—the Appalachian Regional

Commission, the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority—did not establish a strong causal linkage between a positive effect and agency assistance. As one measure of how an agency's programs met their goals, each of the three agencies cited a 3-to-1 "performance ratio," computed as a comparison of total dollars invested in a project with dollars invested by the agency. However, each agency defined "total dollars" differently and calculated the ratio for only a portion of its programs.

Economic Development Programs ([GAO/RCED-95-251R](#), July 28, 1995)

This report lists and provides budgetary information on 342 economic development programs described in the 1994 Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance.

Emergency Preparedness

Chemical Weapons Stockpile: Changes Needed in the Management of the Emergency Preparedness Program ([GAO/NSIAD-97-91](#), June 11, 1997)

GAO found that efforts to improve management of the chemical stockpile emergency preparedness program have been frustrated by continued disagreement between the Army and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) over their roles and responsibilities. Because these disagreements risk the future effectiveness of the program, GAO recommended that the agencies work together to resolve differences or, alternatively, implement congressional direction to eliminate FEMA's role in the program.

Chemical Weapons Stockpile: Emergency Preparedness in Alabama Is Hampered by Management Weaknesses ([GAO/NSIAD-96-150](#), July 23, 1996)

The Army's chemical stockpile emergency preparedness program in Alabama has been hampered by management weaknesses at the federal level and inadequate action by state and local agencies. Management weaknesses at the federal level include fragmented and unclear roles and responsibilities and a lack of teamwork in the budget process. GAO found these weaknesses contribute to time-consuming negotiations and delays in implementing projects critical to emergency preparedness.

Disaster Management: Improving the Nation's Response to Catastrophic Disasters ([GAO/RCED-93-186](#), July 23, 1993)

Following on two hurricanes in 1992, GAO summarized its analyses, conclusions, and recommendations concerning federal disaster management. GAO concluded that the federal strategy—encompassing 26 different agencies—does not promote adequate preparedness when there is advance warning of a disaster.

Housing

Government-Sponsored Enterprises: Advantages and Disadvantages of Creating a Single Housing GSE Regulator ([GAO/GGD-97-139](#), July 9, 1997)

GAO reported that our work continued to indicate that the three housing GSE regulators—HUD, the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, and the Federal Housing Finance Board—would be more effective if combined and authorized to oversee both safety and soundness and mission compliance. Although the GSEs operate differently, the risks they manage and their missions are similar. GAO noted that a combined independent regulatory agency should be better positioned to achieve the autonomy and prominence necessary to oversee the large and influential housing GSEs, which include the Federal National Mortgage Association, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Association, and the Federal Home Loan Bank System.

Homeownership: The Federal Housing Administration's Role in Helping People Obtain Home Mortgages ([GAO/RCED-96-123](#), Aug. 13, 1996)

GAO identified several federal agencies and other entities which shared the basic mission of assisting households who may be underserved by the private market; however, none reached as many households as the Federal Housing Administration. Each of the programs differed in several key dimensions, including loan limits, allowable debt-to-income ratios, and the involvement of direct federal funding.

Rural Development

Rural Development: Steps Towards Realizing the Potential of Telecommunications Technologies ([GAO/RCED-96-155](#), June 14, 1996)

As of December 1995, at least 28 federal programs administered by 15 federal agencies provided funds that were either specifically designated for telecommunications projects in rural areas or could be used for that purpose. Rural development experts and public officials suggested various

needed changes to federal telecommunications programs, including making the multiple programs easier to identify and use.

Rural Development: Patchwork of Federal Water and Sewer Programs Is Difficult to Use ([GAO/RCED-95-160BR](#), Apr. 13, 1995)

Seventeen programs administered by eight federal agencies are designed specifically for, or may be used by, rural areas to construct or improve water and wastewater facilities. The programs had common objectives but different eligibility criteria. The complexity and number of programs hampered the ability of rural areas to utilize them.

Rural Development: Patchwork of Federal Programs Needs to Be Reappraised ([GAO/RCED-94-165](#), July 28, 1994)

The web of federal policies, programs, and regulations accompanying federal funding for rural development makes service delivery inefficient, according to local and regional officials. Moreover, the federal interagency group established to address some service delivery problems can take only limited action due to its restricted authority.

Rural Development: Federal Programs That Focus on Rural America and Its Economic Development ([GAO/RCED-89-56BR](#), Jan. 19, 1989)

Using data from the Bureau of the Census and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, GAO identified 88 federal rural development programs.

Education, Training, Employment and Social Services

Early Childhood Programs

Early Childhood Programs: Multiple Programs and Overlapping Target Groups ([GAO/HEHS-95-4FS](#), Oct. 31, 1994)

In fiscal years 1992 and 1993, there were over 90 early childhood programs in 11 federal agencies and 20 offices. This “system” of multiple programs with firm eligibility cutoffs could lead to disruptions in services from even slight changes in a child’s family status. While multiple programs targeted

disadvantaged preschool-aged children, GAO noted that most such children did not participate in any preschool program.

Employment Training

Department of Labor: Challenges in Ensuring Workforce Development and Worker Protection ([GAO/T-HEHS-97-85](#), Mar. 6, 1997)

The Department of Labor has taken some action to address fragmentation issues described by GAO, but these actions have not been enough to solve the problems. Passage of recent welfare reform legislation puts even greater demands on an employment training system that appears unprepared to respond.

People With Disabilities: Federal Programs Could Work Together More Efficiently to Promote Employment ([GAO/HEHS-96-126](#), Sept. 3, 1996)

Federal assistance to people with disabilities is diffuse, involving 130 programs in 19 agencies. Often services are not coordinated between programs, and people with disabilities may receive duplicate services or face service gaps.

Multiple Teacher Training Programs: Information on Budgets, Services, and Target Groups ([GAO/HEHS-95-71FS](#), Feb. 22, 1995)

In fiscal year 1993, at least 86 teacher training programs in 9 federal agencies funded similar types of services.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Information Crosswalk on 163 Employment Training Programs ([GAO/HEHS-95-85FS](#), Feb. 14, 1995)

GAO provided a crosswalk between employment training programs and their fiscal year 1995 appropriation, program purposes, authorizing legislation, budget accounts, target groups, and type of assistance provided.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Major Overhaul Needed to Create a More Efficient, Customer-Driven System ([GAO/T-HEHS-95-70](#), Feb. 6, 1995)

At least 163 programs—administered by 15 federal departments and agencies which received about \$20 billion in fiscal year 1995—provide employment training assistance to a wide variety of client groups. The current fragmented system suffers from problems arising from a multitude

of narrowly focused programs that often compete for clients and funds. Separate administrative structures raise questions about the programs' efficiency; the system confuses those seeking assistance and frustrates employers and administrators.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Basic Program Data Often Missing ([GAO/T-HEHS-94-239](#), Sept. 28, 1994)

Federal agencies tended to focus their assessment efforts on inputs—dollars spent and participants served. Only about one-half of the programs surveyed collected data on what happened to participants after they received program services, and only about one-quarter collected data on wages earned.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Overlap Among Programs Raises Questions About Efficiency ([GAO/HEHS-94-193](#), July 11, 1994)

Of the 38 programs in GAO's analysis, 30 were determined to be overlapping. That is, they shared common goals, had comparable clients, provided similar services, and used parallel delivery mechanisms and administrative structures with at least one other program.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Conflicting Requirements Underscore Need for Change ([GAO/T-HEHS-94-120](#), Mar. 10, 1994)

Despite decades of efforts to better coordinate employment training programs, conflicting eligibility requirements and differences in annual operating cycles hamper the provision of needed services.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Most Federal Agencies Do Not Know If Their Programs Are Working Effectively ([GAO/HEHS-94-88](#), Mar. 2, 1994)

Federal agencies closely monitor their expenditure of billions of dollars for employment training assistance for the economically disadvantaged, but most agencies do not collect information on participant outcomes or conduct studies of program effectiveness—both of which are needed to know how well programs are helping participants enter or reenter the workforce.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Overlapping Programs Can Add Unnecessary Administrative Costs (GAO/HEHS-94-80, Jan. 28, 1994)

GAO's review of nine programs targeting the economically disadvantaged showed those programs had similar goals, often served the same categories of people, and provided many of the same services using separate but parallel delivery structures.

Multiple Employment Training Programs: Conflicting Requirements Hamper Delivery of Services (GAO/HEHS-94-78, Jan. 28, 1994)

Despite decades of efforts to better coordinate employment training programs, conflicting eligibility requirements and differences in annual operating cycles are hampering the provision of needed services. For example, nine programs targeting the economically disadvantaged use several different standards for measuring income level, defining family or household, and determining what is included in income; 16 programs that target youth have four different operating cycles.

Multiple Employment Programs: National Employment Training Strategy Needed (GAO/T-HRD-93-27, June 18, 1993)

Federal, state, and local officials have struggled with the problems created by a fragmented system of employment training programs, with several states launching coordination efforts at the local level. Despite the elimination of some programs, the total number has continued to grow.

Multiple Employment Programs (GAO/HRD-92-39R, July 24, 1992)

In fiscal year 1991, 14 federal departments or independent agencies administered 125 federal employment training programs. Most of the programs and the majority of the funding were for programs administered by either the Department of Education or the Department of Labor.

Student Aid

Department of Education: Information on Consolidation Opportunities and Student Aid (GAO/T-HEHS-95-130, Apr. 6, 1995)

GAO described efforts by the Department of Education to consolidate its programs and noted instances of potential overlap with programs administered by other federal agencies.

General Science, Space and Technology

High Performance Computing

High Performance Computing and Communications: New Program Direction Would Benefit From a More Focused Effort ([GAO/AIMD-95-6](#), Nov. 4, 1994)

Much valuable research has been accomplished within the context of the High Performance Computing and Communications program, a coordinated effort among nine federal agencies to accelerate the availability and utilization of the next generation of high performance computers and networks. GAO stated that a more focused management approach could better ensure that new program goals regarding the national information infrastructure are met.

National Laboratories

DOE's National Laboratories: Adopting New Missions and Managing Effectively Pose Significant Challenges ([GAO/T-RCED-94-113](#), Feb. 3, 1994)

GAO called for DOE to take a more strategic focus to managing and evaluating its laboratories, noting that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the missions of DOE's laboratories needed clarification. These labs—originally created to develop nuclear weapons—faced the prospect of limited future funding at the same time they were under pressure to address current national priorities, such as improving economic competitiveness and cleaning up the environment.

Research and Development Facilities

Federal R&D Laboratories ([GAO/RCED/NSIAD-96-78R](#), Feb. 29, 1996)

For fiscal year 1995, 17 federal departments and agencies identified 515 federal research and development laboratories, including those operated by contractors. While the Department of Agriculture reported the largest number of laboratories (185), laboratories in the Department of Defense (DOD), DOE, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) accounted for 88 percent of the funding.

Small Business Innovation Research

Federal Research: Interim Assessment of the Small Business Innovation Research and Technology Transfer Programs ([GAO/T-RCED-96-93](#), Mar. 6, 1996)

GAO found that 11 federal agencies participate in the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, which requires agencies with

substantial amounts of R&D spending to award a certain number of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to small businesses to encourage experimental, developmental, or research work. Each agency manages its own program, but the Small Business Administration issues policy directives and annual reports for the program. GAO identified instances in which companies received funding for the same proposals multiple times before agencies became aware of the duplication.

Federal Research: Preliminary Information on the Small Business Technology Transfer Program ([GAO/RCED-96-19](#), Jan. 24, 1996)

GAO identified five agencies that participate in the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program, which requires agencies with substantial amounts of R&D spending to award a certain number of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to small businesses who agree to collaborate with a nonprofit research institution to encourage experimental, developmental, or research work. The five STTR agencies also participate in the similar SBIR program. GAO concluded that similarities between the two programs raise questions about the need for the STTR program.

General Government

Federal Statistical Agencies

Statistical Agencies: Consolidation and Quality Issues ([GAO/T-GGD-97-78](#), Apr. 9, 1997)

Of the 70 federal agencies engaged in statistical activities, 11 are considered the principal statistical agencies, with 2 Commerce agencies—the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Analysis—together with the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, accounting for about \$825 million of a total \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 1997. This decentralized system contributes to inefficiency, a lack of national priorities for allocation of resources, a burden on data users and providers, and restrictions on the exchange of data among statistical agencies. Centralization appeared to address these types of problems, but potential disadvantages could include diminished responsiveness to the needs of former parent departments and objections to the concentration of data in a single agency.

Statistical Agencies: A Comparison of U.S. and Canadian Statistical Systems ([GAO/GGD-96-142](#), Aug. 1, 1996)

U.S. and Canadian statistical systems are characterized by different organizational approaches and legal frameworks. The U.S. system is highly decentralized; 11 agencies collect, analyze, and produce statistics as their primary mission. A number of laws, policies, or regulations, some of which apply only to a specific agency, govern the collection, use, and confidentiality of statistical information. Each agency has its own separate budget; in some cases, to protect the confidentiality of data providers, laws allow only the agency collecting specific data to have access to them. In Canada, a single agency, operating under a single law, produces and disseminates virtually all broadly used official government statistics.

Federal Statistics: Principal Statistical Agencies' Missions and Funding ([GAO/GGD-96-107](#), July 1, 1996)

OMB considers any agency spending at least \$500,000 in a fiscal year for statistical activities to be part of the federal statistical system. In fiscal year 1995, 72 agencies met this threshold. Eleven of these agencies collect, analyze, and produce statistics as their primary mission, and these 11 agencies received over \$1 billion in current appropriations in both fiscal years 1994 and 1995.

Health

Long-Term Care

Long-Term Care: Demography, Dollars, and Dissatisfaction Drive Reform ([GAO/T-HEHS-94-140](#), Apr. 12, 1994)

GAO noted that at the core of the considerable dissatisfaction with the long-term care system is a belief that services from a fragmented delivery system are difficult to access.

Services for the Elderly: Longstanding Transportation Problems Need More Federal Attention ([GAO/HRD-91-117](#), Aug. 29, 1991)

GAO reported that fragmentation of special transportation serving the elderly was a major, long-standing barrier limiting the effectiveness of federal resources. Experts contacted attributed fragmentation to multiple funding sources, differences between social service and transportation providers, and the costs of coordination.

Administration on Aging: More Federal Action Needed to Promote Service Coordination for the Elderly ([GAO/HRD-91-45](#), Apr. 23, 1991)

Officials and others contacted agreed that shared responsibility between multiple state and local agencies frequently resulted in fragmented service delivery. The Administration on Aging, this report stated, did not keep pace in the 1980s with growing coordination needs. Improving the efficiency and quality of services through stronger coordination will continue to be important in the 1990s as an aging population increases the demand for home and community-based services.

Substance Abuse

Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention: Multiple Youth Programs Raise Questions of Efficiency and Effectiveness ([GAO/T-HEHS-97-166](#), June 24, 1997)

GAO identified 70 programs in 13 federal departments and agencies in 1995—in addition to state, county, and local government and private programs—which could be used to provide substance abuse and/or violence prevention services for youths. Previous GAO work raised questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of this overlapping system, which also creates difficulties for those seeking to access the most appropriate services and funding sources. Insufficient information exists on the accomplishments of the federal programs.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health: Reauthorization Issues Facing the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([GAO/T-HEHS-97-135](#), May 22, 1997)

GAO noted that given the number of federal agencies with related responsibilities in the area of substance abuse and mental health services, SAMSHA has a particular challenge as well as an opportunity to coordinate activities and promote the development of effective linkages.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse: Billions Spent Annually for Treatment and Prevention Activities ([GAO/HEHS-97-12](#), Oct. 8, 1996)

Federal funding for substance abuse treatment and prevention increased by \$1.6 billion from fiscal years 1990 through 1994. Federal agencies involved also increased from 12 to 16. Three departments accounted for most of the federal funds available for substance abuse treatment and prevention—HHS, Education, and Veterans Affairs.

Drug Use Among Youth: No Simple Answers to Guide Prevention
(GAO/HRD-94-24, Dec. 29, 1993)

GAO identified 19 federal prevention programs listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance devoted exclusively to substance abuse prevention and analyzed these programs in terms of risk factors addressed.

Nuclear Health and Safety

Nuclear Health and Safety: Consensus on Acceptable Radiation Risk to the Public Is Lacking (GAO/RCED-94-190, Sept. 19, 1994)

Federal agencies have set different limits on human exposure to radiation, in part because the agencies have not agreed on calculation methods and have different radiation protection strategies. These differences raise questions about the precision, credibility, and overall effectiveness of federal radiation standards and guidelines in protecting public health. GAO also noted that historically, interagency coordination efforts, often prompted by congressional interest and concerns, have been ineffective.

Telemedicine

Telemedicine: Federal Strategy Is Needed to Guide Investments
(GAO/NSIAD/HEHS-97-67, Feb. 14, 1997)

From fiscal years 1994 to 1996, nine federal departments and independent agencies invested at least \$646 million in telemedicine projects, with DOD the largest federal investor. Opportunities to share lessons learned have been lost due to the lack of a governmentwide strategy to ensure that maximum benefits are gained from the numerous federal telemedicine efforts. Efforts of the Joint Working Group on Telemedicine to develop a federal inventory—a critical starting point for coordination—have been hampered by definitional issues and inconsistent data.

Income Security

Child Care

Child Care: Narrow Subsidy Programs Create Problems for Mothers Trying to Work (GAO/T-HEHS-95-69, Jan. 31, 1995)

Although child care subsidies can have a dramatic effect on drawing low income mothers into the workforce, the fragmented nature of child care funding—with entitlements to some client categories, time limits on others, and activity limits on still others—produces unintended gaps in services, which limit the ability of low income families to become self-sufficient.

Appendix I
Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on
Mission Fragmentation and Program
Overlap

Welfare and Related Programs

Welfare Programs: Opportunities to Consolidate and Increase Program Efficiencies (GAO/HEHS-95-139, May 31, 1995)

GAO discussed low-income families' participation in multiple welfare programs; examined program inefficiencies, such as program overlap and fragmentation; and identified issues to consider in deciding whether and to what extent to consolidate welfare programs. Program areas discussed include employment training, food assistance, and early childhood programs. The report observes that little is known about the effectiveness of many welfare programs.

Youth Programs

At-Risk and Delinquent Youth: Multiple Federal Programs Raise Efficiency Questions (GAO/HEHS-96-34, Mar. 6, 1996)

GAO identified 131 federal programs serving at-risk or delinquent youth with total estimated appropriations for fiscal year 1995 of more than \$4 billion. Many programs provided multiple services and had multiple target groups, raising questions about the overall efficiency of federal efforts.

Multiple Youth Programs (GAO/HEHS-95-60R, Jan. 19, 1995)

For fiscal year 1995, eight federal agencies administered at least 46 programs earmarked for youth development. This report lists each program, together with one-page overviews of program authority, objectives, and target groups.

International Affairs

Educational Programs

Promoting Democracy: Foreign Affairs and Defense Agencies Funds and Activities—1991 to 1993 (GAO/NSIAD-94-83, Jan. 4, 1994)

GAO developed an inventory of U.S. government-funded programs aimed at democratic development. Because there is no governmentwide democracy program and no common definition of what constitutes such a program, the inventory was based on what agencies considered to be their support of democratic processes.

Exchange Programs: Inventory of International Educational, Cultural, and Training Programs ([GAO/NSIAD-93-157BR](#), June 23, 1993)

GAO inventoried 16 federal agencies with about 75 programs funding international educational, cultural, and training exchange programs.

Foreign Affairs

Foreign Affairs: Perspectives on Foreign Affairs Programs and Structures ([GAO/NSIAD-97-6](#), Nov. 8, 1996)

This report summarizes the views of participants at a GAO-sponsored 1996 conference on foreign affairs issues. Among other issues, participants discussed a need for policymakers to understand how various U.S. agencies are operating overseas and whether coordination mechanisms need to be strengthened.

State Department: Options for Addressing Possible Budget Reductions ([GAO/NSIAD-96-124](#), Aug. 29, 1996)

Among options to address budget reductions, GAO discussed lessening the degree of overlap within the structure of State's bureaus and other agencies, noting that some decisions could necessitate an interagency forum or might require legislative approval.

Former Soviet Union: Information on U.S. Bilateral Program Funding ([GAO/NSIAD-96-37](#), Dec. 15, 1995)

GAO summarized financial information on U.S. bilateral programs seeking to help the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union transition to democratic societies with market economies. From fiscal years 1990 through 1994, 23 departments and independent agencies implemented 215 programs in the former Soviet Union, with 3 agencies implementing the majority of noncredit programs.

Trade

National Export Strategy ([GAO/NSIAD-96-132R](#), Mar. 26, 1996)

The Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC) is an interagency coordinating group legislatively mandated to establish governmentwide priorities for federal export promotion activities and propose an annual unified federal budget reflecting those priorities. While TPCC has made efforts to develop interagency performance measures, it has yet to create measures sufficiently refined to influence budget allocation decisions.

Farm Bill Export Options ([GAO/GGD-96-39R](#), Dec. 15, 1995)

GAO identified options for improving agricultural export assistance programs within the Department of Agriculture, including improving coordination among, restructuring, and abolishing some federal export promotion programs.

Commerce's Trade Functions ([GAO/GGD-95-195R](#), June 26, 1995)

GAO commented on how federal trade activities might be consolidated if the Department of Commerce were abolished. Commerce plays a significant role in several international trade functions, including trade policy-making and negotiating, export promotion, trade regulation, and trade data collection and analysis. GAO listed other agencies that are involved in performing these and other trade functions.

Export Promotion: Initial Assessment of Governmentwide Strategic Plan
([GAO/T-GGD-93-48](#), Sept. 29, 1993)

TPCC's initial effort to develop a governmentwide strategic plan for federal export promotion programs presented a status report on progress to date. TPCC did not, however, reach consensus on priorities, nor did TPCC create a unified budget proposal for federal trade promotion programs, as required under TPCC's legislative mandate.

Export Promotion: Improving Small Businesses' Access to Federal Programs ([GAO/T-GGD-93-22](#), Apr. 28, 1993)

GAO endorsed in principle a network of "one-stop shops" to improve the service delivery of export promotion programs. Under the current fragmented system, contacting multiple offices can leave companies confused as to what services are available and may discourage some from seeking assistance.

Export Promotion: Governmentwide Strategy Needed for Federal Programs ([GAO/T-GGD-93-7](#), Mar. 15, 1993)

While significant funds are devoted to export promotion programs, these are not allocated on the basis of any governmentwide strategy or set of priorities. Consequently, taxpayers do not have reasonable assurance that their money is being effectively used to emphasize sectors or programs with the highest potential return. The Export Enhancement Act of 1992 incorporated GAO's recommendations for mandating the TPCC to devise a

Appendix I
Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on
Mission Fragmentation and Program
Overlap

governmentwide strategic plan and propose an annual unified federal budget for export promotion.

Export Promotion: Federal Approach is Fragmented ([GAO/T-GGD-92-68](#), Aug. 10, 1992)

In fiscal year 1991, 10 federal agencies offered export promotion programs, which spent about \$2.7 billion. This system is characterized by funding imbalances and program inefficiencies. GAO recommended that the Secretary of Commerce, as chair of the TPCC, work with member agencies to develop a strategic plan and ensure that the budget requests for export promotion programs are consistent with priorities.

Export Promotion: Overall U.S. Strategy Needed ([GAO/T-GGD-92-40](#), May 20, 1992)

Ten federal agencies offer export promotion services, in an often inefficient and sometimes confusing manner. This testimony describes specific instances of fragmentation and its consequences to the U.S. business community and taxpayers.

Export Promotion: U.S. Programs Lack Coherence ([GAO/T-GGD-92-19](#), Mar. 4, 1992)

The lack of a governmentwide strategy for a system of export promotion programs implies that much more might be achieved with existing resources if they were allocated according to national priorities and administered by a different agency structure. TPCC has had some modest successes in coordinating federal export promotion efforts, but the government cannot devise a coherent export promotion strategy one agency at a time.

Law Enforcement

Border Inspections

Customs Service and INS: Dual Management Structure for Border Inspections Should Be Ended ([GAO/GGD-93-111](#), June 30, 1993)

Long-standing coordination problems between the two agencies responsible for primary inspections at land border points of entry could best be resolved by ending the dual management structure. GAO presented several options for change to prepare the government to meet the broader

challenges posed by changing international business competition and increasing international migration flows.

Drug Control

Drug Control: Reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (GAO/T-GGD-97-97, May 1, 1997)

Given the complexity of issues and the fragmentation of national drug control strategy among more than 50 agencies, GAO endorsed the continued need for a central planning agency, such as the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), to coordinate the nation's drug control efforts. ONDCP has recently begun a new effort to develop national drug control performance measures, relying on working groups consisting of representatives from federal drug control agencies and state, local, and private organizations. ONDCP and operational agency data should be considered together because results achieved by one agency in reducing the use of drugs may be offset by less favorable results by another agency.

Drug Control: Observations on Elements of the Federal Drug Control Strategy (GAO/GGD-97-12, Mar. 14, 1997)

This report provides information on ONDCP's development of national-level measures of drug control performance and assesses the U.S. Coast Guard's performance measures for its antidrug activities in the context of the Results Act.

Drug Control: Long-Standing Problems Hinder U.S. International Efforts (GAO/NSIAD-97-75, Feb. 27, 1997)

GAO endorsed ONDCP's efforts to prepare a long-term strategic plan and suggested an approach to planning and budgeting for drug control similar to that used in DOD.

Drug Control: Reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (GAO/T-GGD-94-7, Oct. 5, 1993)

Given the persistent severity of the drug problem and the large number of federal, state, and local agencies working on the problem, GAO saw a continuing need for a central planning agency to provide leadership and coordination. GAO recommended that the Congress reauthorize ONDCP for an additional finite period of time and suggested that ONDCP be directed to develop additional performance measures to assess progress in reducing

Appendix I
Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on
Mission Fragmentation and Program
Overlap

drug use and to incorporate the measures into annual national drug control strategies.

Drug Control: Coordination of Intelligence Activities ([GAO/GGD-93-83BR](#), Apr. 2, 1993)

GAO described instances of duplication and overlap in the analysis and reporting of drug intelligence data, listing federal centers involved in these activities. The report noted that ONDCP, charged with managing the nation's war on drugs, establishes priorities and encourages agency cooperation but does not have the authority to direct agency intelligence activities.

Drug Control: Inadequate Guidance Results in Duplicate Intelligence Production Efforts ([GAO/NSIAD-92-153](#), Apr. 14, 1992)

GAO cited areas of duplication and overlap and recommended that DOD develop guidance for DOD organizations involved in antidrug efforts.

Controlling Drug Abuse: A Status Report ([GAO/GGD-88-39](#), Mar. 1, 1988)

GAO provided an overview of the drug problem and the federal response. The report noted that information about which antidrug programs worked best was lacking and that fragmented and uncoordinated antidrug policies and programs remained obstacles to the success of federal efforts.

Federal Drug Interdiction Efforts Need Strong Central Oversight ([GAO/GGD-83-52](#), June 13, 1983)

At the time of this review, authority and responsibility for federal drug interdiction efforts were split among three agencies in three executive departments, each with different programs, goals, and priorities. Very little information was available that could be used as a basis for evaluating program results. Legislation passed in 1972 and 1976 recognized that fragmentation of federal efforts was a problem and required the President to develop a comprehensive national drug strategy and appoint a drug abuse policy coordinator. However, existing strategies had not defined agencies' roles, and the drug abuse policy coordinator lacked authority to set priorities in federal drug efforts.

Appendix I
Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on
Mission Fragmentation and Program
Overlap

Investigative Authority

Federal Law Enforcement: Information on Certain Agencies' Criminal Investigative Personnel and Salary Costs ([GAO/T-GGD-96-38](#), Nov. 15, 1995)

Federal Law Enforcement: Investigative Authority and Personnel at 13 Agencies ([GAO/GGD-96-154](#), Sept. 30, 1996)

Federal Law Enforcement: Investigative Authority and Personnel at 32 Organizations ([GAO/GGD-97-93](#), July 22, 1997)

In this series, GAO reported on the jurisdictional overlaps among organizations authorized to investigate suspected criminal violations of federal law. GAO noted that the growth of federal law enforcement activities has been evolutionary, with additional organizations established in response to new laws and expanding jurisdictions. In the September 1996 report, GAO provided information on 13 federal organizations that employed 700 or more law enforcement investigative personnel; in the July 1997 report, 32 additional federal organizations, including 20 inspectors general offices, employing more than 25 but less than 700 personnel were profiled. Collectively, these organizations employed almost 50,000 investigative personnel as of September 30, 1996.

Terrorism and Drug Trafficking

Drug Trafficking: Responsibilities for Developing Narcotics Detection Technologies ([GAO/T-NSIAD-97-192](#), June 25, 1997)

Four agencies—ONDCP, Customs, DOD, and OMB—are primarily responsible for coordinating or developing narcotics detection technologies. ONDCP and Customs have differing views on the need for various detection technologies—for example, the specific types of technologies needed along the southwest border. GAO believes these differing views should be resolved as ONDCP and Customs work with other agencies in preparing a long-term technology development plan.

Terrorism and Drug Trafficking: Responsibilities for Developing Explosives and Narcotics Detection Technologies ([GAO/NSIAD-97-95](#), Apr. 15, 1997)

Four agencies—the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Security Council, the Department of Transportation (DOT), and OMB—are responsible for overseeing or developing explosives detection technologies, while other agencies—DOD, ONDCP, Customs, and OMB—are primarily responsible for coordinating or developing narcotics detection technologies. GAO noted that these agencies have several joint efforts to

strengthen development of explosives and narcotics detection technologies but have not yet agreed to formal understandings on how to establish standards for explosives detection systems, profiling and targeting systems, and the deployment of canine teams at airports. In addition, the agencies have not agreed on how to resolve issues related to a joint-use strategy and liability. Joint technology development is important because similar technologies are used to detect explosives and narcotics. GAO recommended that the Secretaries of Transportation and the Treasury establish a memorandum of understanding on how FAA, Customs, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Administration, and other agencies are to work together to address issues surrounding the development of these technologies. GAO also suggested that the Congress consider directing the Secretaries of Transportation and the Treasury to provide an annual report on all the government's efforts to develop and field explosives and narcotics detection technology.

Natural Resources and Environment

Federal Land Management

Land Management Agencies: Major Activities at Selected Units are Not Common Across Agencies (GAO/RCED-97-141, June 26, 1997)

At six land management agencies, little commonality existed among the 31 different mission-related activities—including cultural and natural resource management, habitat conservation, and rangeland management—identified by GAO. Visitor services, maintenance, and construction were the most common major activities, being performed at units of three or more of the six agencies, but most agency resources were devoted to unique activities related to their specific missions.

Forest Service Decision-making: A Framework for Improving Performance (GAO/RCED-97-71, Apr. 29, 1997)

In this report examining the Forest Service's decision-making process, GAO discussed a variety of internal and external causes of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, including unresolved interagency issues. For example, although authorized to plan along administrative boundaries, such as those defining natural forests and parks, the agencies are required to analyze environmental concerns along the boundaries of natural systems, which can lead to duplicative environmental analyses, increased costs, and less effective land management decision-making. GAO also noted that land

Appendix I
Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on
Mission Fragmentation and Program
Overlap

management and regulatory agencies do not work together to address issues that transcend their boundaries and jurisdictions and that environmental and socioeconomic data gathered by the agencies are often not comparable and have large gaps.

Federal Land Management: Streamlining and Reorganization Issues
([GAO/T-RCED-96-209](#), June 27, 1996)

GAO's work at four land management agencies—the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service within the Department of the Interior, and the Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture—indicated that streamlining the existing structure and reorganizing it are not mutually exclusive. However, such efforts will require a coordinated approach within and across agency lines to avoid creating unintended consequences for the future.

Ecosystem Management: Additional Actions Needed to Adequately Test a Promising Approach ([GAO/RCED-94-111](#), Aug. 16, 1994)

GAO described barriers to the planned governmentwide ecosystem management concept, including the fact that data needed for ecosystem management, which are collected independently by various agencies for different purposes, are often not comparable and insufficient. A governmentwide approach to ecosystem management would require unparalleled coordination among federal agencies as well as consensus-building among federal and nonfederal parties.

Forestry Functions: Unresolved Issues Affect Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Organizations in Western Oregon ([GAO/RCED-94-124](#), May 17, 1994)

Summarizing efforts at the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to rethink their organizational structures and relationships, GAO suggested that an agency-by-agency approach to downsizing and restructuring may not have the potential to achieve efficiencies that could be derived through a collaborative federal approach to land management.

**Appendix I
Annotated Bibliography of GAO Work on
Mission Fragmentation and Program
Overlap**

**International Environmental
Programs**

International Environment: U.S. Funding of Environmental Programs and Activities (GAO/RCED-96-234, Sept. 30, 1996)

At least five federal agencies spent nearly \$1 billion from 1993 through 1995 in support of 12 international environmental agreements. These agencies exhibited significant differences in both the amount of their spending and in the purposes for which the money was spent.

Hazardous Waste Cleanup

Federal Facilities: Consistent Relative Risk Evaluations Needed for Prioritizing Cleanups (GAO/RCED-96-150, June 7, 1996)

EPA has designated 154 sites, involving facilities operated by at least five federal departments, as priorities warranting further study and possible cleanup. However, EPA's listing does not fully and completely identify the most contaminated facilities because, among other reasons, (1) some federal agencies have not finished identifying the universe of their contaminated sites or completed the preliminary assessment of the extent of contamination, and (2) EPA has not developed evaluation priorities because of the poor quality of data received from other federal agencies.

Water Quality

Water Quality: A Catalogue of Related Federal Programs (GAO/RCED-96-173, June 19, 1996)

GAO identified 72 federal programs and other initiatives in eight departments and agencies that assist states, municipalities, individuals, and others in their efforts to improve and/or protect water quality from various pollution threats.

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