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BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

Progress In Improving Program And Budget Information For Congressional Use

The Comptroller General is required, by law, to develop standard terms and classifications for Federal fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information; to identify congressional needs for such information; and to monitor recurring reporting requirements of the Congress and recommend changes. This annual report, required by Title VIII of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, summarizes GAO's work in these areas over the past year and it summarizes GAO's views on new directions in Federal financial management.



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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

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To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report is submitted to the Congress in accordance with section 202(e) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. This section requires us to report annually on the progress and results of our continuing program, undertaken in accordance with the 1970 Act, as amended by Title VIII of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, to improve the fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information reported to the Congress. The relevant statutory provisions assign our responsibilities for:

- developing standard terminology, definitions, classifications, and codes for Federal fiscal, budgetary, and program-related data and information reported to the Congress;
- conducting a continuing program for identifying and specifying the needs of the Congress for fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information;
- monitoring the recurring reporting requirements of the Congress and making recommendations for changes and improvements in such requirements;
- maintaining inventories and directories of sources and information systems containing fiscal, budgetary, and program-related data and information;
- maintaining central files of Federal fiscal, budgetary, and program-related data and information to meet the recurring requirements of the Congress;
- evaluating the extent to which the executive branch reporting meets identified information needs and specifying the changes required to meet congressional needs;
- cooperating with the executive branch in standardizing the budget, fiscal, and program-related information systems; and
- cooperating with the executive branch in meeting the needs of State and local governments for budget, fiscal, and program-related information.

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Our work over the last year, as in previous years, has been directed towards improving financial management in the Federal Government, including the congressional budget process and the financial management systems that support policymaking in the Congress and the executive branch. We communicated the results of our work in reports, testimony before congressional committees, and comments on pending legislation. We also provided numerous services and special analyses by our program and budget information services staff using our automated Legislative Authorization, Program, and Budget Information System (LAPIS). These studies and services are discussed in appendix I; appendixes II and III provide detailed listings of reports and statements we have issued since September 1, 1981.

During this past year we have given particular attention to the current condition of the financial management systems of the Federal Government and have begun to identify the new directions that should be taken to improve these systems. We shared these ideas in recent testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. We are making them the main message of this year's report because we believe they need to be addressed along with the improvements in the congressional budget process which are already being considered in the Congress.

IMPROVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974, by providing an operational umbrella over the other policymaking processes of the Congress (budget and fiscal policymaking, appropriations, revenue raising, and authorization), was designed to create a framework within which the Congress could set national budget priorities and establish appropriate levels of Federal revenues and expenditures.

However, implementation of this act has most recently been beset with difficulties--severe timing problems, repetition and duplication in the process, and the increased use of continuing resolutions. The budget has become so all-consuming that little time is left for other legislative matters. Nevertheless, despite extraordinary efforts of members of Congress, delays in funding decisions have increased. These delays have an effect on both financial markets and the effective and efficient operation of Government agencies and programs. The Congress must solve these problems, and must solve them soon. Fortunately, committees in both the Senate and the House are working on proposals to improve the process.

It is essential that much greater stability be brought to our Government's activities and thus to our economy. Accomplishing this task will require not only strengthening the basic framework for congressional decisionmaking but also greatly improving the Federal Government's financial management system at all levels.

The financial management processes and systems that support Federal policymaking--planning, budget formulation, budget execution, accounting, evaluation, and management information systems in particular--have not kept pace with the needs of the Congress or the executive branch.

The basic development of these systems has lagged badly with designs that might have been appropriate to an earlier era. Also, the degree of integration that could permit these systems to be mutually supportive never really emerged. Decisionmakers in both the executive branch and the Congress have had to cope with separate, and often disjointed, budgetary and other management systems. As we overhaul the financial management systems, our objectives should be simplification, adoption of a revised budget structure and funding methods, integration of budgeting, accounting, and other supporting systems, enhanced capability and information for congressional oversight, and a longer-term, more integrated approach to policymaking. In summary, what is needed is more stability in Government operations using new improved systems that complement each other.

Simplification

No decisionmaker can be expected to grapple simultaneously with the thousands of separate decisions represented by the appropriation account, activity, and object class structure in the Appendix to the President's Budget. Attempting to do so almost forces even the most conscientious decisionmaker to focus on the details instead of concentrating on the larger policy issues.

This is not to say that decisions at this level of detail are unimportant. Decisions made at the top of the governmental structure obviously must be converted into more detailed decisions as one moves down the hierarchy and simultaneously moves from planning broad priorities to executing specific programs and activities.

Top policy officials of the Congress, the President, and the executive agencies should focus on broad policy, including the basic direction and general content of programs. Once these directions are decided upon, program managers should be delegated the authority needed to carry out those policy decisions and should be held responsible and accountable for the results. This concept has been endorsed often in a broad manner, but over the years, more and more detailed account structure and funding constraints have been built into the process. Nevertheless, there should be a greater inclination to simplify the financial management system today, in part because of the evident "decision and detail overload" that exists for top policy officials, including members of Congress.

Revised budget structure and funding methods

Currently, there are proposals to separate from the unified budget such items as capital investments and the trust funds that finance retirement programs. These issues warrant particular attention and visibility in the budget process. However, this can and should be done within the unified budget. We suggest that the main budget structure might be revised to group the Federal Government's programs and activities into the following policy areas:

- investment in capital assets, both defense and domestic;
- research and development;
- aid to State and local governments;
- credit assistance;
- entitlements for individuals;
- interest; and
- operating expenses.

There are many ways to structure budget data. Modern data processing techniques should permit the budget to be reformatted in a variety of ways to serve a variety of purposes. But this structure would have a special value. By looking at the budget from these policy perspectives, one can deal more easily and comprehensively with the national needs, the Federal Government's roles, and the means for financing. This cannot be done program by program, nor can it be done effectively using the current budget functions, although each of those structures has value for other purposes. We chose these seven categories because each involves large portions of the Federal budget and each requires different planning, financing, and management approaches. We believe funding methods can be tailored for each of these policy areas.

Investments in capital or physical assets should involve long-term decisions on programs and funding whenever possible. Greater stability for investment programs is a necessary ingredient in program efficiency, and we have often suggested this for major military weapons programs. A longer-term focus for investment decisions would allow the Congress to consider budget levels in relation to the overall conditions and needs for the Nation's public infrastructure and the defense structure. The 5-year programs for shipbuilding and the 3-year programs for aircraft construction are good examples of how this is presently being done for defense.

The research and development (R&D) category too, should include both Department of Defense and domestic programs. Decision-making focused on this category would recognize the need for greater certainty and continuity of work as well as the need to look across agencies. As with capital investment programs, we believe multi-year funding is appropriate, to avoid the disruptive effects of sudden, unplanned changes in direction. We feel that this type of funding would have a very positive and stabilizing

effect on the conduct of Federal R&D. Funding also should be available to move from one phase of research to the next without disruption.

The third category is aid to State and local governments. The use of this category would recognize that these recipients of Federal monies need more stability and continuity of funding. We currently are studying the timing problem between the Federal, State, and local budget processes. We have found that most State and local governments must have definitive Federal information 6 months before the start of their fiscal years (in most cases July 1), but Federal decisions on funding levels are often made just before the beginning of the Federal fiscal year, October 1, if the Congress adheres to its budget timetable. This means that most Federal decisions are made at least 9 months too late from the State and local point of view. It is for this reason that we recommend that consideration be given under this new category, for funding decisions to operate on a 2-year cycle, with advance budgeting by 1 year.

The fourth category is credit assistance. Grouping all credit programs into a category should encourage more consistent treatment of credit activities as an integral part of the budget. Credit is now treated in a variety of ways, including loans as appropriations, repayments as receipts, loans via revolving funds, off-budget loans, and loans via Government-sponsored enterprises. Many of these are off-budget or not fully disclosed in the budget. These various methods create a wide range of funding cycles, many of which are already multi-year. The Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have already started to deal with credit programs as a group. We believe this could be carried further by establishing them as a separate group to make their financing more consistent and visible.

The fifth category, entitlements for individuals, brings together a family of programs that are continuous and are not linked to any particular period, other than the cyclical aspect of the timing of cost-of-living adjustments. Entitlements can only be changed through altering substantive law, which can be done at any time. Generally, when the Congress sets up a program as an entitlement, it does so in recognition of the need for stability in such a program and a long-term commitment to participants. This category provides the vehicle to cluster these similar programs together in one place in the budget and to deal with them at a policy level as separate and distinct from the rest of the budget. A key policy issue for entitlements is indexation, and this issue should be treated with consistency among the programs. In past reports, we have recommended that the best option for constraining indexation is to give the President and the Congress the discretion to modify, through the budget process, the amount of adjustment indicated by the index. This approach would restore flexibility by permitting

the President and the Congress each year to make decisions balancing budgetary considerations against the desire to maintain the real level of benefits.

The sixth category is interest. Since the national debt is very large and increasing and interest has become a major portion of the Federal budget, debt management is becoming a very important Government function. Consequently, a separate budget category for interest is needed to focus policy attention on the debt management function.

The seventh category is Government operating expenses. This category would include the amount spent by Federal agencies for personnel costs, administrative travel, training, and the like. Funding decisions for these activities could be made on a 2-year cycle. However, based on our knowledge of biennial experience at the State level, it is desirable to provide a mechanism for adjustment in the second year. Care should be taken in structuring the mechanism so that the fine-tuning changes would be permitted, but the funding in this category could not be totally revised. The appropriations committees might be assigned the task of managing this adjustment process.

Implementing all the changes in funding methods to achieve greater stability in Government operations and services would create some additional rigidity in the expenditure elements of fiscal policy. Therefore, greater attention would need to be given in the adjustment mechanisms to revenues as well as expenditures.

Integration of budget, accounting, and other supporting systems

When we think of a sound financial management system, we need to think about integrating systems that support the formulation and execution of budget policy. Officials acquire the information they need in a wide variety of ways, and that is part of the problem. We have a vast number of information systems and sources that frequently work at cross-purposes. We have systems in budgeting, accounting, program and policy analysis and evaluation, management information, economic forecasting, program monitoring and reporting, and auditing, as well as many others.

Each source of information tends to be designed as if there were no other source. It has its own language, its own structure, its own set of data elements, and its own reporting frequency. Thus, the decisionmaker is faced with reconciling inconsistencies and somehow figuring out what it all means.

Complaints about information overload have been around for a long time. We should start doing something about it through developing fully-integrated data bases, from which it is possible to pull various facets of information about something of interest

(such as a program, financing source, or location) with confidence that the data have both commonality and integrity.

The budget, particularly if it begins to be simplified and restructured along the lines we are suggesting, is likely to become both the source of pressure for this integration and the framework around which the integration occurs. Systems of information that cannot be integrated around this one unifying decision framework are likely to find themselves increasingly isolated and irrelevant in the decisionmaking process.

Enhanced oversight and program review

We believe another component needed in financial management reform is an enhanced role for oversight, program review, and budget execution--how the money was spent and whether it was done efficiently and effectively. The biennial budgeting approaches now being considered usually include a set-aside period for the Congress to do oversight. While this should certainly go a long way to enabling the Congress to do more oversight, a procedure or mechanism for conducting oversight is needed. The President could be required to develop and submit a 4-, 5- or 6-year Administration budget plan that could serve as an initial input to the Congress, which could then develop its own oversight and program review agendas.

The existence of such agendas would also permit us to focus our work on the programs and policy areas the Congress will be addressing in its oversight process, thereby better meeting the information needs of the Congress. For example, we could provide the Congress with one or more summary reports every 2 years covering our work on major issues the Congress plans to address plus any other matters that have come to our attention that we believe the Congress should consider. We could also provide the entire Congress with separate reports on each of the major programs and policy areas. Our reviews can be general oversight reviews of management or program effectiveness or budget-oriented reviews to identify potential areas for savings. For example, given that military spending is projected to be about 32 percent of the total budget in 1985, up from 24 percent in 1980, we have taken a critical look at Defense's plans and examined actual use of these increased funds, and found a number of areas where improvements are needed.

Between fiscal years 1980 and 1982, the Defense budget increased by approximately \$72 billion, a 50 percent increase since the 1980 budget year. Most of the increase was directed to improving readiness and sustainability, modernizing the forces, and improving the quality of life for military personnel. Our examination of this spending and the way Defense makes its spending decisions show that corrective action is required in numerous areas.

- The Secretary of Defense needs to follow through on his pledge to improve stability in the weapon systems acquisition process by eliminating marginal programs to fund higher priority programs at more economical levels of production.
- The Secretary of Defense needs to monitor more closely those programs receiving large funding increases to ensure that additional funding can be spent prudently.
- The Secretary and the Congress need better visibility over the way funds are used in the operations and maintenance areas. Currently, reporting to higher levels is primarily through the financial controls, such as obligation rates, rather than through reporting on what was accomplished with the funds in relation to the plan.
- The current Defense budget system needs to be improved, because it is virtually silent on what was accomplished with the funds provided. In addition, Defense needs to (1) better justify its requests, (2) develop a strategy for carrying out the programs, (3) clearly state its objectives and develop a measure to gauge performance, (4) report its accomplishments in relation to its established criteria, and (5) build into subsequent budget requests feedback on actual performance.

The Congress may want to consider other steps to enhance its oversight role, including using a procedure patterned after the Department of Defense SAR (Selected Acquisition Reports) system for major capital investments throughout the Government. The Defense SAR system provides useful information on the status and progress of selected major weapons systems. Through this system, which has been in existence for over a decade, some visibility on weapon system cost and cost growth, as well as changes to schedule and technical performance data and reasons for such changes, are provided to congressional committees. Just as important, the SAR system provides categories recording specific causes of cost growth. This type of data, accumulated over a period of years on a wide variety of systems, has provided a valuable insight into such growth. Such a system would provide the Congress and top agency management with oversight data on the progress and direction of projects and allow them to readily identify problem areas and their causes. We feel that the SAR system can be improved. It should be an integral part of the congressional oversight and budget execution processes. There is a great need for better information on capital investments, including development of longer-range plans and the evaluation of agency performance in light of these plans.

Integration of economic policies

Our economy is in the midst of a severe recession; yet we persist in sending mixed signals to the financial and business communities by simultaneously embracing a restrictive monetary policy and a stimulative fiscal policy. Many economists predict that the economic uncertainty will continue. The conflict between monetary and fiscal policies will increase as future budget deficits clash with a restrictive monetary policy designed to squeeze out the recent inflationary trends.

We believe there is a growing recognition that it is the mix of fiscal, monetary, and at times, incomes policies, that affect economic conditions. In the final analysis, integration will depend on the Administration, the Congress, and the Federal Reserve Board agreeing on the long-range goals and policies necessary to achieve those goals.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH PROGRESS

The Department of the Treasury and OMB issued their eighth annual report to the Congress (March 1982) in accordance with Section 202(f) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, as amended. That section requires that:

"On or before March 1, 1975, and each year thereafter, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Secretary of the Treasury shall report to the Congress on their plans for addressing the needs identified and specified [by us], including plans for implementing changes to classifications and codes to meet the information needs of the Congress as well as the status of prior year system and classification implementations."

Treasury and OMB noted that their positions on numerous reports issued by us to improve the fiscal, budget, and program information provided the Congress have not changed. Their report also identified a number of areas in which the executive branch has improved congressional access to budget and fiscal information, standards and classifications, and the executive budget process. Some positive actions noted in the executive branch report were on matters that have been addressed by us. Examples include better information on off-budget Federal entities, improved debt collection, more uniform coding, and improved budget treatment of borrowing authority. We concur that many of the actions described will contribute to improved information for the Congress.

Treasury and OMB officials in their March 1982 report stated that they have not changed their positions on many of our proposals for improving the budget, program, and fiscal informa-

tion for the Congress. Areas of disagreement between us include the need for:

- better information and policy coordination for Federal capital investments;
- increased emphasis on budget execution monitoring;
- reporting spending and revenue on a gross basis;
- improving procedures for developing and reporting budget estimates (including emergency programs); and
- improved information on estimated increases and decreases that are contingent on passage of legislation.

We continue to believe that these improvements would greatly strengthen the Government's decisionmaking on programs and budget priorities. For this reason, we will continue to work with the Congress and OMB to bring about a more complete implementation of our recommendations. But, as we have outlined above, these changes should be addressed as part of a major improvement in the Federal financial management systems.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations, Committee on the Budget, and Committee on Government Operations; the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Committee on the Budget, and Committee on Governmental Affairs; the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and other interested persons.



Comptroller General
of the United States

WORK TO IMPROVE BUDGET CONCEPTS,
PROCEDURES, AND REPORTING

NEW STUDIES UNDERTAKEN

During the last year, we issued reports on several specific budget matters. These reports are listed in appendix II; selected reports are briefly summarized below.

Budgetary savings

The Reagan Administration included about \$2 billion in savings to be achieved through improved administrative practices in the fiscal year 1982 budget. Since then, the Administration has implemented a number of actions to achieve these savings and revised its savings estimates to \$2.8 billion which will be achieved in fiscal year 1982. We will continue to monitor the Administration's progress in these areas.

The fiscal year 1983 budget includes \$20.3 billion in proposed savings based on certain management initiatives. These proposals require legislative and administrative action. In our report, "Assessment of the Administration's Actions and Proposals for Budgetary Savings in Fiscal Years 1982-83" (PAD-82-34, April 20, 1982), we stated that we believe the most attainable and supportable savings is in debt and tax collection; additional documentation was necessary to support the Administration's savings estimates in some of the other areas.

In addition to broad budgetary analysis studies, we also conduct program-specific studies which have significant budget impact. An example of such a report is "Legislative and Administrative Changes to Improve Verification of Welfare Recipients' Income and Assets Could Save Hundreds of Millions" (HRD-82-9, January 14, 1982), in which we stated that under-reporting of income and assets by recipients of benefits from needs-based programs--whether deliberate or otherwise--results in hundreds of millions of dollars in improper payments each year. Current verification requirements and practices are not adequate to prevent such payments. Verification requirements vary widely, but generally are extremely vague or overly restrictive. Furthermore, some Federal laws and regulations preclude the use of information which, if available, would significantly enhance the verification process. We recommended that the Congress eliminate the present restrictions on the use of certain data for verifying eligibility and determining benefit amounts in needs-based programs.

Defense budget increases

Between fiscal years 1980 and 1982, the defense budget increased by approximately \$72 billion, a 50 percent increase over the 1980 budget year. Most of the increase was directed to improving readiness and sustainability, modernizing the

forces, and improving the quality of life for military personnel. Our report, "Defense Budget Increases: How Well Are They Planned and Spent?" (PLRD-82-62, April 13, 1982), is discussed on page 7.

In another report, "Budgetary Pressures Created by the Army's Plans to Procure New Major Weapon Systems Are Just Beginning" (MASAD-82-5, October 20, 1981), we stated that the Army is now facing the problems of funding the procurement of all 14 of its new major weapon systems. Recent experience has shown that as new Army weapons begin production, procurement costs run considerably higher than anticipated. Since 11 of the 14 weapon systems have not yet gained any significant production experience, their cost estimates are likely to be on the low side.

Fielding all 14 new systems during the next decade is likely to seriously strain the Army's operation and support resources since, compared to present weapons, these systems will require more people with higher skills, as well as increased expenditures for fuel, spare parts, and ammunition. We recommended improvements in planning for the procurement and eventual support of these weapon systems to alleviate the future budgetary strains they could impose.

Funding gaps

In our report, "Cost to the Government of the Recent Partial Shutdown of Government Offices" (PAD-82-24, December 10, 1981), to the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Trade, Finance and Security Economics of the Joint Economic Committee, we reported on shutdown costs for the 13 cabinet departments and 12 selected agencies and offices. We reaffirmed an earlier recommendation (PAD-81-31, March 3, 1981) that the Congress enact permanent legislation that authorizes agencies to incur obligations, but not expend funds, when agency appropriations expire.

Credit program control

In our report, "The Congress Should Control Federal Credit Programs to Promote Economic Stabilization" (PAD-82-22, October 21, 1981), we reported that Federal credit assistance programs have contributed little to U.S. economic stability since 1960. We also reported the current rate of direct and guaranteed loan flows exceeded \$70 billion annually in fiscal 1981 and that recently, the Congress and the Administration proposed a credit budget to limit the rapid growth of Federal credit. We demonstrated in this report that the best point of program control is the amount of the interest rate subsidy. Controlling subsidy levels rather than program activity levels would allocate credit efficiently and would, at the same time, lead to Federal credit flows that would contribute to the economic stabilization goals of the Federal Government.

TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL
COMMITTEES

We continue to be asked to provide our views on budget-related matters in hearings before congressional committees. Over the last year, we presented testimony on possible changes in the Federal Government's budgeting process. Appendix III contains a listing of testimony we have given since September 1, 1981. The subjects we have testified on include:

- the Budget Reform Act of 1982 (S. 2629);
- the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act;
- proposed controls of tax expenditures;
- debt collection;
- funding gaps;
- payments in lieu of taxes for Federal property; and
- data collection on geographic distribution of Federal funds (S. 2386).

In testifying on Senator Roth's S. 2629, we pointed out that biennial budgeting offers several potential advantages over the current system. It can reduce the number of times the Congress must act on the same programs. It can provide more time for long-range planning and oversight. It can provide the opportunity for better budget analysis, financial and operational planning, budget execution, and program review by both the Congress and the executive branch.

Biennial budgeting can also provide more funding certainty for recipients of Federal monies or services, especially if it were coupled with greater use of advance funding for these programs.

Despite these potential advantages, several items must be given particular attention:

- the sequence and timing of key events;
- the adjustment mechanisms in the second year;
- streamlining the process; and
- the estimating process, particularly for revenues and entitlements.

We also commented that because the Budget Act is so integral to the way the Congress behaves as an institution, reforming the Act will require a bipartisan consensus within the Congress and a careful balancing of conflicting objectives; S. 2629 has been drafted with these requirements in mind. Consequently, the bill will be an excellent vehicle for furthering the Congress' understanding both of the issues and of some innovative approaches it might wish to take toward simplifying its budget process, allowing more time to do its work, and strengthening discipline and enforcement within its budget process.

We will work with the congressional committees and the executive branch officials to develop specific approaches and actions to bring about the changes we believe are needed in Federal financial management.

In addition to testimony before congressional committees, we have been active in giving briefings to interested members of Congress and their staff and addressing professional organizations regarding our work in the budget area. Most notable were a series of briefings for the Budget Process Task Force of the House Budget Committee regarding long-term budget trends for an aging population, defense, Federal aid to State and local governments, and other out-year considerations.

COMMENTS ON PENDING LEGISLATION

Another significant part of our work each year consists of providing our analyses and views to congressional committees on pending legislation concerning budgeting practices. Usually this is done at committee request. The last several years saw an upsurge in requests for our analyses on pending legislation, indicating growing congressional interest in budgetary procedures and concepts. We anticipate continued high congressional interest in budget-related legislation in the next Congress and will, on request, continue to provide our analyses of bills being considered. The 97th Congress' bills on which we provided comments are listed as part of appendix II.

SERVICES IN PROVIDING INFORMATION AND RELATED ANALYSES

We continue to make significant progress in developing the staff expertise and information system to better support the needs of the Congress for better program, fiscal, and budget-related information. With these we can now respond to a wide range of congressional needs. We found in the last year that congressional interest in, and use of, these services and materials increased, and we expect that further use will be made of these informational tools in succeeding years. Our information services staff maintains five machine-readable files, which are discussed below.

Program inventory file

In the past year, we continued to update and make further use of our automated file of Federal programs and related information. This file, known as the Legislative Authorization, Program, and Budget Information System (LAPIS), now contains over 6,000 Federal programs, activities, and projects spanning virtually all Federal agencies (both on- and off-budget). For each program or other entity, LAPIS provides up-to-date information on the following:

- name of the program or activity, as well as its objective and description;
- administering agency and bureau;
- citation of law that authorizes the program or activity;
- appropriations account, including budget function and subfunction designations;
- amounts authorized and funding limitations;
- expiration and reauthorization dates;
- budget amounts, namely obligations, outlays, and budget authority for the past, current, and budget fiscal years;
- special program and policy area identifiers;
- House and Senate appropriation and authorization committee jurisdiction;
- target group and type of assistance designations.

The categories and information elements in our LAPIS inventory are basic building blocks of congressional decision-making on Federal programs. With LAPIS, we are able to make comparisons and analyses of Federal programs and related budgetary amounts to aid the Congress in its authorizing and funding actions. For example, in the last year we provided special reports to 21 authorizing committees containing budget-related information on the programs under their jurisdiction, for committee use in preparing the annual "views and estimates" reports required by the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. We believe this information provided to the authorizing committees is of particular value given the requirements placed upon them by the budget reconciliation process. The authorizing committees are playing an increasingly important role in congressional budgeting actions, and their needs for timely and useful budget related information has increased in recent years. We expect that our services and LAPIS file will continue to prove useful in this regard.

For example, we have provided fiscal year 1983 funding information for programs that primarily benefit business, including spending programs, credit programs, and tax expenditures (GAO/PAD-82-40, July 21, 1982). We have also provided detailed listings on programs and funding for the Health and Education policy areas as well as low income and elderly target groups to the House Budget Committee. Additionally, we have provided our research and development programs inventory

to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Science and Technology Committee to support their ongoing work in this area.

Congressional Information Sources,
Inventories, and Directories

As part of our statutorily mandated responsibilities to help improve the Congress' fiscal, budgetary, and program information resources, we have established the Congressional Information Sources, Inventories, and Directories (CISID) files--an automated data base of (1) statutory requirements for recurring reports to the Congress; (2) Federal program evaluation studies; (3) information sources and resources on fiscal, budgetary, and program matters; and (4) information systems containing data on such matters. This data base is maintained on computer files so it can be transferred to other organizations, including the Library of Congress' SCORPIO information retrieval system, thus facilitating using the inventories by congressional committees.

Over the last year, we responded to many congressional requests for information and analyses that we developed from these automated files, and for briefings to committee staffs on the scope and possible uses of the files. Additionally, we published the 1981 edition of the Federal Evaluations containing some 1,500 program and management evaluation reports produced Government-wide since September 1979. For each evaluative study, this publication provides a complete range of information including standard bibliographic information, a descriptive abstract, budget and program information, authorizing legislation, and the congressional recipients. Six indexes are provided to facilitate the use of the publication by subject, agency, congressional committee names, program name, legal references, and Federal budget functional categories.

Additional work on
reporting requirements

Last year we completed our study entitled "A Systematic Management Approach Is Needed for Congressional Reporting Requirements" (PAD-82-12, November 25, 1981). We identified problems in the way congressional reporting requirements are presently being managed which affect the timeliness and usefulness of the information the Congress receives in support of its legislative, oversight, and budgetary functions. We recommended that a systematic management approach be developed to insure that reports are timely, that they are distributed to those who can make the most productive use of them in fulfilling their responsibilities, and that both the reporting requirements and report documents reflect the needs of the Congress in its decisionmaking process.

PROGRAM AND BUDGET INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL USE:REPORTS AND BILL COMMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 1981

<u>Report Title</u>	<u>Control Number</u>	<u>Date</u>
Fraud in Government Programs:		
--How Extensive It Is?	AFMD-81-73	09/30/81
--How Can It Be Controlled?	AFMD-82-3	11/06/81
Stronger Action Needed to Recover \$730 Million in Defaulted National Direct Student Loans	HRD-81-124	09/30/81
Actions to Improve the Timeliness of Bill Paying by the Federal Government Could Save Hundreds of Millions of Dollars	AFMD-82-1	10/08/81
Budgetary Pressures Created by the Army's Plans to Procure New Major Weapon Systems Are Just Beginning	MASAD-82-5	10/20/81
The Congress Should Control Federal Credit Programs to Promote Economic Stabilization	PAD-82-22	10/21/81
Oil and Gas Royalty Collections-- Longstanding Problems Costing Millions	AFMD-82-6	10/29/81
A Systematic Management Approach is Needed for Congressional Reporting Requirements	PAD-82-12	11/25/81
Legislative and Administrative Changes to Improve Verification of Welfare Recipients' Income and Assets Could Save Hundreds of Millions	HRD-82-9	01/14/82
Summaries of Conclusions and Recommendations on the Operations of Civil Departments and Agencies	OISS-82-1	01/25/82

<u>Letter Reports</u>	<u>Control Number</u>	<u>Date</u>
Summaries of Conclusions and Recommendations on Department of Defense Operations	OISS-82-2	10/26/82
Request to Fully Fund Two Nuclear Aircraft Carriers in Fiscal Year 1983	MASAD-82-27	03/26/82
Defense Budget Increases: How Well Are They Planned and Spent?	PLRD-82-62	04/13/82
Assessment of the Administration's Actions and Proposals for Budgetary Savings in Fiscal Years 1982-83	PAD-82-34	04/20/82
Status of Major Acquisitions as of September 30, 1981: Better Reporting Essential to Controlling Cost Growth	MASAD-82-24	04/22/82
Analysis of NASA's Fiscal Year 1983 Budget Request for Research and Development to Determine the Amount that Supports DOD's Programs	MASAD-82-33	04/26/82
A CPI for Retirees Is Not Needed Now But Could Be in the Future	GAO/GGD-82-41	06/01/82
Outlook For Achieving Fiscal Year 1983 Offshore Revenue Estimate--Possible But Not Likely	GAO/EMD-82-83	06/08/82
<u>Special Publications</u>		
U.S. General Accounting Office Staff Views on the President's Fiscal Year 1983 Budget Proposals	OPP-82-1	03/05/82
1981 Federal Evaluations Sourcebook	PAD-82-9	06/10/82

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Status Report on Implementation of GAO Audit Findings and Recommendations	PAD-81-87	09/10/81
Cost to the Government of the Recent Partial Shutdown of Government Offices	PAD-82-24	12/10/81
Savings from 1981 and 1982 Personnel Ceiling Reductions	FPCD-82-23	01/15/82
Maintenance of the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds (GDFP) Information System	B-206675	03/10/82
Evaluation of NASA's Compliance with Congressional Reporting Requirements	MASAD-82-31	04/16/82
GAO Analysis of Projects Proposed by the Department of Defense for Multiyear Contracting in its Fiscal Year 1983 Budget Request	PLRD-82-73	04/29/82
Estimated Savings Reported by the Department of Defense	PLRD-82-69	04/30/82
Validity and Comparability of Quantitative Data Presented by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency on Inspectors General (IG's) Activities	GAO/AFMD-82-78	05/18/82

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PROGRAM AND BUDGET INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL USETESTIMONY SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 1981

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Witness</u>
Payment in lieu of taxes for Federal property	10/20/81	Subcommittee Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources, House Committee on Government Operations	Kenneth W. Hunter, Senior Associate Director, Program Analysis Division
Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act	10/29/81	Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs	Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation
Proposed controls of tax expenditures	12/09/81	House Committee on Rules	Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation
Credit programs	12/10/81	Senate Committee on the Budget	Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation
Debt collection	03/12/82	House Committee on the Budget	Wilbur D. Campbell, Acting Director, Accounting and Financial Management Division
Impoundments	03/29/82	Budget Process Task Force, House Committee on the Budget	Milton J. Socolar, Special Assistant to the Comptroller General
Funding gaps	04/21/82	Subcommittee on Legislative Process, House Budget Committee	Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General of the United States
H.R. 2386, which calls for data collection of geographic distribution of Federal funds	05/12/82	Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs	Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Witness</u>
Eliminating recurring reports to the Congress	07/29/82	Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security, House Committee on Government Operations	Arthur Corazzini, Deputy Director, Program Analysis Division
H.R. 2629, The Budget Reform Act of 1982	08/19/82	Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs	Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General of the United States



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