



Highlights of [GAO-10-131](#), a report to the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Significant management challenges exist for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it continues to integrate its varied management processes, policies, and systems in areas such as financial management and information technology. These activities are primarily led by the Under Secretary for Management (USM), department management chiefs, and management chiefs in DHS's seven components. GAO was asked to examine: (1) the extent to which DHS has developed a comprehensive strategy for management integration that includes the characteristics recommended in GAO's 2005 report; (2) how DHS is implementing management integration; and (3) the extent to which the USM is holding the department and component management chiefs accountable for implementing management integration through reporting relationships. GAO reviewed DHS plans and interviewed management officials in DHS's headquarters and in all components.

What GAO Recommends

Once DHS develops a management integration strategy, GAO recommends that it establish performance measures for assessing management integration, and that it fully implement its current performance management policies between the department and component management chiefs. DHS's USM commented that DHS is taking certain actions to address our recommendations.

View [GAO-10-131](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Bernice Steinhardt at (202) 512-6543 or steinhardtb@gao.gov, or David Maurer at (202) 512-8777 or maurerd@gao.gov.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Actions Taken Toward Management Integration, but a Comprehensive Strategy Is Still Needed

What GAO Found

DHS has not yet developed a comprehensive strategy for management integration as required by the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 and with the characteristics GAO recommended in a 2005 report. Although DHS stated in response to the 2005 report that it was developing an integration strategy, it has not yet done so, in part because it has focused on building operations capacity within functional management areas. In the absence of a comprehensive management integration strategy, DHS officials stated that documents such as management directives and strategic plans address aspects of a management integration strategy and can help the department to manage its integration efforts. However, they do not generally include all of the strategy characteristics GAO identified, such as identifying the critical links that must occur among management initiatives and time lines for monitoring the progress of these initiatives. In addition, DHS has increased the number of performance measures for the Management Directorate, but has not yet established measures for assessing management integration across the department, although DHS officials stated that the department intends to do so. Without these measures DHS cannot assess its progress in implementing and achieving management integration.

In the absence of a comprehensive strategy, DHS's Management Directorate has implemented management integration through certain initiatives and mechanisms to communicate and consolidate management policies, processes, and systems. The directorate uses councils to communicate information related to the implementation of management initiatives, among other things. The directorate has also established governance boards and processes to manage specific activities. Further, the directorate is in the process of consolidating certain management systems. However, without a documented management integration strategy, it is difficult for DHS, Congress, and other key stakeholders to understand and monitor the critical linkages and prioritization among these various efforts.

The USM and department and component management chiefs are held accountable for implementing management integration through reporting relationships at three levels—between the Secretary and the USM, the USM and department chiefs, and the department and component chiefs—in which, among other things, the Secretary of Homeland Security, USM, and department chiefs are required to provide input into performance plans and evaluations. The Deputy Secretary—through delegation from the Secretary—and the USM have provided input into the USM's and department chiefs' plans and evaluations, respectively. Although department chiefs are required by management directives to provide component chiefs with written objectives at the start of the annual performance cycle, in fiscal year 2009 only two out of six department chiefs provided such input to component chiefs. Without ensuring that the management chiefs provide input into component chiefs' performance plans and evaluations as required, the directorate cannot be sure that component chiefs are fully implementing management integration.