MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Agencies’ Trends in the Use of Performance Information to Make Decisions

Why GAO Did This Study

GAO has long reported that agencies are better equipped to address management and performance challenges when managers effectively use performance information for decision making. However, GAO’s periodic surveys of federal managers indicate that use of performance information has not changed significantly.

GAO was mandated to evaluate the implementation of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. GAO assessed agencies’ use of performance information from responses to GAO’s surveys of federal managers at 24 agencies. To address this objective, GAO created an index to measure agency use of performance information derived from a set of survey questions in the 2007 and 2013 surveys that reflected the extent to which managers reported that their agencies used performance information for various management activities and decision making. GAO’s analysis of the average index score among managers at each agency found that most agencies showed no statistically significant change in use during this period. As shown in the table below, only two agencies experienced a statistically significant improvement in the use of performance information. During the same time period, four agencies experienced a statistically significant decline in the use of performance information.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this report. Office of Management and Budget staff generally agreed with the report. Four agencies (the Departments of Commerce and the Treasury, the General Services Administration (GSA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)) provided comments that are addressed. Commerce and GSA agreed with the report. Treasury and NASA raised concerns about the findings and conclusions in this report, including the design of the surveys. GAO continues to believe its findings and conclusions are valid as discussed in the report. Twenty other agencies did not have comments.

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