DEFENSE LOGISTICS

Improved Performance Measures and Information Needed for Assessing Asset Visibility Initiatives

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) has identified performance measures for the eight selected asset visibility initiatives GAO reviewed, but these performance measures generally cannot be used to monitor progress. Specifically, GAO found that the measures for the eight initiatives reviewed did not generally include key attributes of successful performance measures. For example, for six initiatives there were no baseline and trend data associated with the measures. While DOD’s 2014 and 2015 Strategy for Improving DOD Asset Visibility (Strategies) called for performance measures to be identified for the initiatives, the Strategies lacked complete direction on how to develop performance measures that would allow DOD to assess the progress of the initiatives toward their intended outcomes. GAO also found that after-action reports for the initiatives did not always include key information needed to determine the success of the initiatives in achieving the goals described in the Strategies. Without improved performance measures and information to support that progress has been made, DOD may not be able to monitor and show progress in improving asset visibility.

DOD has made progress and meets the criteria related to capacity and its corrective action plan but needs to take additional actions to monitor implementation and demonstrate progress to meet GAO’s two remaining criteria for removal from the High Risk List, as shown in the figure. For the capacity criterion, in its draft update to the 2015 Strategy, DOD provides guidance on how to document cases where the funding for the initiatives is embedded within the overall program funding. Also, for the action plan criterion, DOD included matrices in its 2015 Strategy to link ongoing initiatives to the Strategy’s goals and objectives. DOD has also taken steps to monitor the status of initiatives. However, the performance measures for the selected initiatives that GAO reviewed generally cannot be used to track progress and are not consistently incorporated into reports to demonstrate results. Until these criteria are met, DOD will have limited ability to demonstrate sustained progress in improving asset visibility.

DOD’s Progress in Meeting GAO’s High-Risk Criteria for Asset Visibility

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD use key attributes of successful performance measures in refining measures in updates to the Strategy and incorporate information related to performance measures into after-action reports for the asset visibility initiatives. DOD partially concurred with both recommendations. The actions DOD proposed are positive steps, but GAO believes the recommendations should be fully implemented, as discussed in the report.

View GAO-17-183. For more information, contact Zina Merritt at 202-512-5257 or merrittz@gao.gov.