

## Why GAO Did This Study

SPOT-ES contains data on almost 1 million contractor personnel who have supported DOD, State, and USAID in contingency operations. Also, USAID's GLAAS provides data, such as award value, for reports to Congress on contract support. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 mandated that GAO review the data systems of DOD, State, and USAID related to certain contract support.

This report evaluates the extent to which, among other things, (1) DOD and USAID have assessed resources needed to sustain the systems used to track contracts and contractor personnel; (2) DOD has developed business rules and processes to help ensure the timeliness and reliability of SPOT-ES data; and (3) DOD has completed interoperability testing and registered and approved data for SPOT-ES. GAO reviewed DOD and USAID documents, such as cost schedules, business rules, and user manuals, and interviewed cognizant officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends, among other things, that DOD regularly update its lifecycle cost estimate for SPOT-ES to include defining and assessing its plans for SPOT-ES; use mechanisms to track contractor performance of SPOT-ES data entry; and complete SPOT-ES registration in the DSE. DOD concurred with these recommendations, and described planned steps to address them.

# CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING

## Contractor Personnel Tracking System Needs Better Plans and Guidance

### What GAO Found

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has assessed resources that it needs to sustain its contract data system, the Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS), but the Department of Defense (DOD) has not assessed all resources that it will need to sustain the Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker–Enterprise Suite (SPOT-ES). DOD, the Department of State (State) and USAID use SPOT-ES as a repository of information on contracts and contractor personnel in contingency operations; USAID also uses GLAAS to record information about contracts. DOD uses the budget process to identify resources it projects it will need in the next budget year to modernize and operate its systems, but DOD has not updated its life-cycle cost estimate or fully defined and assessed its plans to determine all resources needed to sustain SPOT-ES. For example, DOD has not updated its life-cycle cost estimate since 2010, despite changes to costs due to schedule delays, because officials said the system has proven stable. Also, DOD has not defined some of its plans that involve cost elements that need to be included in the estimate because it accepted the system's previous program management estimates as reported. GAO's *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide* states that cost estimates should be current and comprehensive. Without regularly updating life-cycle costs and defining and assessing plans to provide a full accounting for the systems' costs, management will have difficulty planning program resource requirements and making decisions.

DOD has business rules for the entry of contract and contractor personnel data in SPOT—the database component of SPOT-ES—but lacks reasonable assurance that SPOT provides personnel data that are consistently timely and reliable because the department does not use its available mechanisms for assessing contractor performance to track whether contractors enter data in accordance with the business rules. The business rules, DOD guidance, and an applicable Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement clause describe how contractors and contracting officers are to enter data in SPOT. Using existing mechanisms for tracking contractor performance could provide DOD reasonable assurance that contractors have abided by business rules to enter and provide timely and reliable data.

DOD has completed SPOT-ES interoperability testing, but has not fully registered or approved the system's data. DOD Instruction 8320.02 directs heads of DOD components to register authoritative data sources and metadata in DOD's Data Services Environment (DSE), its primary online repository for technical descriptions related to information technology and systems for all authorized users, and provides policy that data will be visible and trusted. GAO found that registration for SPOT-ES data was not completed, although program officials thought they had completed all the steps needed to register the system. Full registration and approval in the DSE would help ensure that data are visible and trusted.