

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-342T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

DHS's border enforcement system, known as TECS, is the primary system for determining admissibility of persons to the United States. It is used to prevent terrorism, and provide border security and law enforcement, case management, and intelligence functions for multiple federal, state, and local agencies. It has become increasingly difficult and expensive to maintain and is unable to support new mission requirements. In 2008, DHS began an effort to modernize the system. It is being managed as two separate programs by CBP and ICE.

In December 2013, GAO reported that DHS needed to strengthen its efforts to modernize these key enforcement systems. This statement summarizes that report. Specifically, it covers (1) the scope and status of the two TECS Mod programs, (2) selected program management practices for TECS Mod, (3) the extent to which DHS is executing effective oversight and governance of the two TECS Mod programs, and (4) the importance of addressing our recommendations for improving DHS's development efforts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making no new recommendations in this statement. In its December 2013 report, GAO recommended that DHS improve its efforts to manage requirements and risk, as well as its governance of the TECS Mod programs. DHS agreed with all but one of GAO's eight recommendations, disagreeing with the recommendation about improving CBP's master schedule. GAO continues to believe improvements are necessary to validate schedule commitments and monitor progress.

View [GAO-14-342T](#). For more information, contact David A. Powner at (202) 512-9586, or pownerd@gao.gov

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BORDER SECURITY

DHS Needs to Strengthen Its Efforts to Modernize Key Enforcement Systems

What GAO Found

The schedule and cost for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) border enforcement system modernization program known as TECS Mod that is managed by Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) continue to change; while the part managed in parallel by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is undergoing major revisions to its scope, schedule, and cost after discovering that its initial solution is not technically viable. CBP's \$724 million program intends to modernize the functionality, data, and aging infrastructure of legacy TECS and move it to DHS's data centers by 2016. To date, CBP has deployed functionality to improve its secondary inspection processes to air and sea ports of entry and, more recently, to land ports of entry in 2013. However, CBP is in the process of revising its schedule baseline for the second time in under a year. Further, CBP has not developed its master schedule sufficiently to reliably manage work activities or monitor program progress. These factors raise questions about the certainty of CBP's remaining schedule commitments. Regarding ICE's \$818 million TECS Mod program, it is redesigning and replanning its program, having determined in June 2013 that its initial solution was not viable and could not support ICE's needs. As a result, ICE largely halted development and is now assessing design alternatives and is revising its schedule and cost estimates. Program officials stated the revisions will be complete in spring 2014. Until ICE completes the replanning effort, it is unclear what functionality it will deliver, when it will deliver it, or what it will cost to do so, thus putting it in jeopardy of not completing the modernization by its 2015 deadline.

CBP and ICE have managed many risks in accordance with some leading practices, but they have had mixed results in managing requirements for their programs. In particular, neither program identified all known risks, nor escalated them for timely management review. Further, CBP's guidance reflects most leading practices for effectively managing requirements, but important requirements development activities were underway before such guidance was established. ICE, meanwhile, operated without requirements management guidance for years, and its requirements activities were mismanaged, resulting in testing failures and delays. ICE issued requirements guidance in March 2013 that is consistent with leading practices, but it has not yet been implemented.

DHS's governance bodies have taken actions to oversee the two TECS Mod programs that are generally aligned with leading practices. Specifically, they have monitored TECS Mod performance and progress and have ensured that corrective actions have been identified and tracked. However, a lack of complete, timely, and accurate data have affected the ability of these governance bodies to make informed and timely decisions, thus limiting their effectiveness. Until these governance bodies base their performance reviews on timely, complete, and accurate data, they will be constrained in their ability to effectively provide oversight.