

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-62](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

DHS's border enforcement system, known as TECS, is the primary system available 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 because of technology obsolescence and its inability to support new mission requirements. Accordingly, in 2008, DHS began an effort to modernize the system. It is being managed as two separate programs working in parallel by CBP and ICE.

GAO's objectives were to (1) determine the scope and status of the two TECS Mod programs, (2) assess selected CBP and ICE program management practices for TECS Mod, and (3) assess the extent to which DHS is executing effective executive oversight and governance of the two TECS Mod programs.

To do so, GAO reviewed requirements documents and cost and schedule estimates, and determined the current scope, completion dates, and life cycle expenditures. GAO also reviewed risk management and requirements management plans, as well as governance bodies' meeting minutes.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending DHS improve its efforts to manage requirement and risk, as well as its governance of the TECS Mod programs. DHS agreed with all but one of GAO's eight recommendations, and described actions planned and underway to address them.

View [GAO-14-62](#). For more information, contact David A. Powner at (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov.

BORDER SECURITY

DHS's Efforts to Modernize Key Enforcement Systems Could be Strengthened

What GAO Found

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has defined the scope for its TECS (not an acronym) modernization (TECS Mod) program, but its schedule and cost continue to change; while Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is overhauling the scope, schedule, and cost of its program 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. CBP plans to develop, deploy, and implement these capabilities between 2008 and 2015. 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, portions of CBP's schedule remain undefined and the program does not have a fully developed master schedule. These factors increase the risk of CBP not delivering TECS Mod by its 2015 deadline. 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 halted development and is now assessing design alternatives and will revise its schedule and cost estimates. Program officials stated the revisions will be complete in December 2013. 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 and escalated them for timely management review. Further, CBP's guidance defines key practices associated with effectively managing requirements, but important requirements development activities were underway before these practices were established. ICE, meanwhile, operated without requirements management guidance for years, and its requirements activities were mismanaged as a result. For example, ICE did not complete work on 2,600 requirements in its initial release, which caused testing failures and the deferral and deletion of about 70 percent of its original requirements. ICE issued requirements guidance in March 2013 that is consistent with leading practices, but it has not yet been implemented.

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) governance bodies have taken actions to oversee the two TECS Mod programs that are generally aligned with leading practices. Specifically, DHS's governance bodies have monitored TECS Mod performance and progress and have ensured that corrective actions have been identified and tracked. However, the governance bodies' oversight has been based on sometimes incomplete or inaccurate data, and therefore the effectiveness of these efforts is limited. For example, one oversight body rated CBP's program as moderately low risk, based partially on the program's use of earned value management, even though program officials stated that neither they nor their contractor had this capability. 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.