

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-598](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD continues to confront organizational challenges that hinder collaboration. To address these challenges, section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 directed the Secretary of Defense to, among other things, issue an organizational strategy that identifies critical objectives that span multiple functional boundaries; establish cross-functional teams to support this strategy; and provide related guidance and training.

The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 also included a provision for GAO to assess DOD's actions in response to section 911. This report assesses the extent to which DOD has made progress in implementing the requirements of section 911, including establishing a new cross-functional team on electromagnetic spectrum operations.

GAO reviewed documentation, interviewed cross-functional team members and other DOD officials, and compared DOD's actions to section 911 requirements and leading practices for cross-functional teams.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making six recommendations, including that DOD set and ensure that it meets specific internal deadlines for review and approval of outstanding requirements of section 911, and that DOD clarify roles and responsibilities for providing funding for the EMSO cross-functional team. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendations and set deadlines for addressing the remaining requirements.

View [GAO-19-598](#). For more information, contact Elizabeth Field at (202) 512-2775 or fieldel1@gao.gov.

August 2019

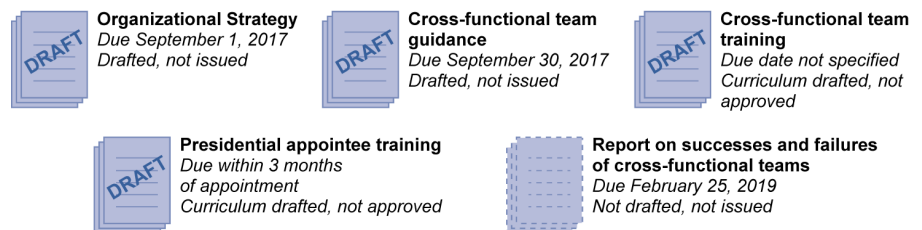
DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

DOD Should Set Deadlines on Stalled Collaboration Efforts and Clarify Cross-Functional Team Funding Responsibilities

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) is up to 21 months late in fully addressing five of seven requirements of section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017. These remaining five requirements are designed to strengthen collaboration within the department to foster effective and efficient achievement of objectives and outputs (see figure).

Remaining Requirements for the Department of Defense's (DOD) Implementation of Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, as of June 2019



Source: GAO analysis of legislation and DOD information. | GAO-19-598

DOD has not addressed most of these remaining requirements of section 911 largely because the Chief Management Officer (CMO) has not approved the documents drafted to meet the requirements or coordinated department-wide review of the documents and provided them for Secretary of Defense issuance. According to Office of the CMO (OCMO) officials, some of the draft documents were provided to the CMO for review and approval as early as August 2018. After providing a draft of this report to the department for comment, GAO learned that the organizational strategy was circulated for department coordination in July 2019, with components expected to provide input by August 2019. However, while the OCMO has set an internal time frame for the organizational strategy, it has not set similar time frames for completing the other four remaining requirements, such as delivering guidance and training on cross-functional teams. GAO previously reported that establishing internal deadlines with key milestones and deliverables is important for tracking progress and implementing actions effectively.

DOD established a cross-functional team pursuant to section 911 on electromagnetic-spectrum operations (EMSO), but according to a team official, funding for the team was delayed. EMSO refers to those activities consisting of electronic warfare and joint electromagnetic-spectrum management operations used to exploit, attack, protect, and manage the electromagnetic operational environment to achieve the commander's objectives. According to the memorandum establishing the team, the CMO is required to provide administrative support to and coordinate with the team to ensure adequate resources are immediately available. However, team officials stated that this funding was delayed in part because of disagreements over responsibility for funding the team under the terms of this memorandum. Moreover, according to a team official, plans for funding in future fiscal years have not been developed. If DOD does not clarify roles and responsibilities for funding the team, the CMO and the EMSO team may face additional delays securing funding, which could negatively affect the team's ability to conduct its work and meet its objectives.