



August 2019

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

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

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 fielde1@gao.gov.

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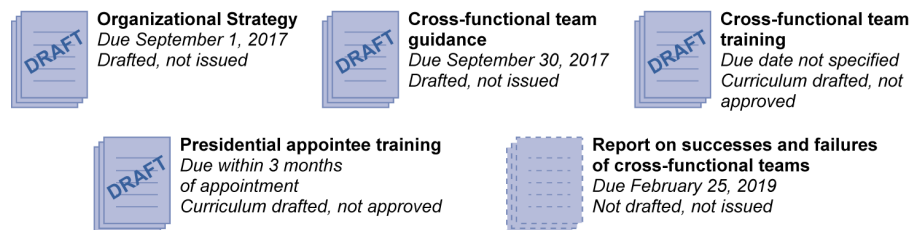
DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

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.

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Abbreviations

CMO	Chief Management Officer
DOD	Department of Defense
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
OCMO	Office of the Chief Management Officer

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August 20, 2019

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Department of Defense’s (DOD) National Defense Business Operations Plan for Fiscal Years 2018–2022 highlights that collaboration and communication among the Office of the Secretary of Defense, military services, and combatant commands are essential to ensuring the success of the readiness program across the department.¹ However, DOD has faced organizational, management, and cultural challenges that can limit effective and efficient collaboration needed to accomplish departmental objectives. For example, we reported in August 2017 that DOD’s efforts to implement a hierarchical, portfolio-based approach to strategically acquire contracted services had not been successful.² This effort failed for various reasons, including that it was met with strong cultural resistance to changing DOD’s traditional decentralized approach to managing services. We have highlighted these challenges in additional reports, including our High-Risk report, which calls attention to agencies

¹The National Defense Business Operations Plan presents the department’s priority business operation goals and objectives with specific and measurable priority and performance goals. DOD previously referred to the National Defense Business Operations Plan as the department’s Agency Strategic Plan.

²GAO, *Defense Contracted Services: DOD Needs to Reassess Key Leadership Roles and Clarify Policies for Requirements Review Boards*, [GAO-17-482](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 31, 2017). In that report, we noted, among other things, that our prior work had cautioned that a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach may not work. We recommended, and DOD concurred, that it needed to reassess the roles, responsibilities, authorities, and organizational placement of key leadership that had been established at the DOD and military department levels to lead this transformation.

and program areas that are high risk because of their vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, or are most in need of transformation.³

Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 contained multiple requirements to help advance a more collaborative culture within DOD.⁴ DOD's Chief Management Officer (CMO) is leading the department's efforts to implement section 911.⁵ This section directed the Secretary of Defense to do the following, among other things:

- Formulate and issue an organizational strategy for DOD that identifies the critical objectives and other organizational outputs that span multiple functional boundaries and would benefit from the use of cross-functional teams to ensure collaboration and integration across the department.
- Establish cross-functional teams that, among other things, address the critical objectives and outputs outlined in the department's organizational strategy.
- Issue guidance on cross-functional teams and provide training to members of those established teams and their supervisors on elements of successful cross-functional teams.
- Provide training on leadership, modern organizational practice, collaboration, and the operation of cross-functional teams to individuals who have been appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate to a position within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, or request waivers from this requirement.

³GAO, *High-Risk Series: Substantial Efforts Needed to Achieve Greater Progress on High-Risk Areas*, [GAO-19-157SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 6, 2019). DOD currently manages six of the areas we have designated as high risk: (1) weapons systems acquisition, (2) contract management, (3) financial management, (4) business systems modernization, (5) support infrastructure management, and (6) approach to business transformation.

⁴Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 911 (2016).

⁵Prior to February 2018, the Deputy Chief Management Officer led the department's efforts to implement section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017. The CMO assumed these responsibilities effective February 1, 2018, in accordance with section 910 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2018, which disestablished the position of the Deputy Chief Management Officer as a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed position and established the CMO position.

Central to these requirements is the use of cross-functional teams. According to academic literature and subject-matter experts with whom we spoke, cross-functional teams rely on individuals with different types of expertise to work toward a common, well-defined goal, and are thought to deliver better and faster solutions to complex and fast-moving problems. As of our January 2019 report, DOD had established one cross-functional team under section 911, which has since been disestablished.⁶ The team had been responsible for managing the transfer of background investigations for certain DOD personnel from the Office of Personnel Management to DOD. Because those responsibilities were transferred to a newly created Personnel Vetting Transformation Office within DOD, department officials made the decision to disestablish the team. According to a DOD official, the team was disestablished as of January 2019.

The John S. McCain NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019 subsequently introduced new requirements on DOD's implementation of section 911. Among other things, sections 918 and 1053(c) of the act required the Secretary of Defense to establish a cross-functional team pursuant to section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 on electronic warfare in order to identify gaps in electronic warfare and joint electromagnetic spectrum operations, capabilities, and capacities within the department across personnel, procedural, and equipment areas.⁷

Section 911 also included a provision for us—every 6 months after the date of enactment on December 23, 2016, through December 31, 2019—to submit to the defense committees a report setting forth a comprehensive assessment of the actions that DOD has taken pursuant to section 911 during each 6-month period and cumulatively since the NDAA's enactment. We have issued four reports to date and made five

⁶In addition, as we reported in January 2019, the department previously considered its cross-functional business reform teams to be responsive to section 911, but plans to no longer do so.

⁷Pub. L. No. 115-232 §§ 918 and 1053(c) (2018). DOD established the team as the electromagnetic spectrum operations cross-functional team, with electromagnetic spectrum operations comprised of electronic warfare and spectrum management. See Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Establishment of the Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Cross Functional Team*, (Feb. 2, 2019). As a result, we use the term electromagnetic spectrum operations when referring to the team in this report.

recommendations to DOD.⁸ In our most recent report, issued in January 2019, we reported that DOD had made limited progress in addressing the remaining statutory requirements from section 911 and was reducing the number of cross-functional teams it considered responsive to section 911.⁹ We also reported that DOD's enterprise business reform efforts were driven by nine cross-functional teams, but progress had been uneven.¹⁰ We recommended, and DOD concurred, that DOD establish a process to identify and prioritize funding for implementing these business reform teams' initiatives. Appendix I provides information on these four reports, including the status of DOD's implementation of recommendations made in these reports.

In this report, we describe the extent to which DOD has made progress in implementing the requirements of section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017, including the establishment of a new cross-functional team on electromagnetic spectrum operations.

To assess DOD's progress in implementing the section 911 requirements, we reviewed documentation and interviewed Office of the Chief Management Officer (OCMO) officials on DOD's efforts to finalize its draft organizational strategy; DOD's guidance on cross-functional teams; its training for cross-functional team members, their supervisors, and presidential appointees; and its report on the successes and failures of cross-functional teams. We compared DOD's efforts to the requirements

⁸GAO, *Defense Management: DOD Has Taken Initial Steps to Formulate an Organizational Strategy, but These Efforts Are Not Complete*, [GAO-17-523R](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 23, 2017); *Defense Management: DOD Needs to Take Additional Actions to Promote Department-Wide Collaboration*, [GAO-18-194](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2018); *GAO, Defense Management: DOD Senior Leadership Has Not Fully Implemented Statutory Requirements to Promote Department-Wide Collaboration*, [GAO-18-513](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 25, 2018); and *Defense Management: DOD Needs to Implement Statutory Requirements and Identify Resource for Its Cross-Functional Teams*, [GAO-19-165](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 17, 2019).

⁹[GAO-19-165](#).

¹⁰Our January 2019 report included our assessment of DOD's actions pursuant to section 921 of the John S. McCain NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019, as required by the statute. Section 921 requires the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Chief Management Officer (CMO), to reform its enterprise business operations in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency of mission execution. The CMO is required to submit to the congressional defense committees a plan, schedule, and cost estimate for conducting these reforms, and we are required to provide a report that verifies whether the plan is feasible within 90 days of that plan being submitted. DOD submitted the plan on April 24, 2019. We expect to provide our report on that plan in September 2019.

in section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017. To assess DOD's efforts to establish the new cross-functional team on electromagnetic spectrum operations, we interviewed OCMO and other officials involved in the establishment of the team to discuss their efforts and reviewed documentation associated with the establishment of the team. We evaluated these efforts against the requirements for cross-functional teams in section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017, as well as leading practices from our prior work on implementing effective cross-functional teams.¹¹ To assess the team against these requirements, two analysts independently reviewed the testimony and documents provided and compared them to these requirements. In any cases where there was a disagreement, the analysts discussed any differences. If they were not resolved, a third analyst reviewed the assessments and made a determination.

We conducted this performance audit from December 2018 to August 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

¹¹We previously reported on eight leading practices for implementing effective cross-functional teams. See [GAO-18-194](#). We identified these leading practices by reviewing literature and case studies on the use of cross-functional teams in the private and public sectors, as well as interviewing six academic and practitioner experts. Leading practices for effective cross-functional teams are aligned with leading practices for interagency collaboration. See GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms*, [GAO-12-1022](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).






DOD's Efforts to Implement Section 911 Requirements Have Largely Stalled, and Funding Delays Have Slowed DOD's Newest Cross-Functional Team

DOD Has Continued to Delay Full Implementation of Section 911 Requirements

DOD is up to 21 months late in fully addressing five remaining requirements of section 911 related to DOD's organizational strategy and cross-functional teams, as shown in figure 1 and discussed below.¹²

¹²App. II lists the requirements of section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017, the corresponding due date, and the date completed, if applicable, for each requirement as of May 2019. In addition to these five remaining requirements, DOD is also required to take actions to streamline the organizational structure and processes of the Office of the Secretary of Defense by June 23, 2018. As we reported in January 2019, OCMO officials have revised the draft organizational strategy to identify the actions that the department has taken in response to this requirement. As noted, however, the organizational strategy has not been issued. We will assess these actions against the requirements of section 911 after the organizational strategy has been issued.

Figure 1: Status of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Implementation of Requirements in Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, as of June 2019

In progress »	Complete »
 <p>Organizational Strategy Due September 1, 2017 Drafted, not issued</p>	 <p>Study on implementation of cross-functional teams Due July 15, 2017 Completed September 28, 2017</p>
 <p>Cross-functional team guidance Due September 30, 2017 Drafted, not issued</p>	 <p>Report on establishment of cross-functional teams Due June 23, 2018 Completed June 21, 2018</p>
 <p>Cross-functional team training Due date not specified Curriculum drafted, not approved</p>	
 <p>Presidential appointee training Due within 3 months of appointment Curriculum drafted, not approved</p>	
 <p>Report on successes and failures of cross-functional teams Due February 25, 2019 Not drafted, not issued</p>	

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

Note: In addition to the requirements depicted, the Secretary of Defense is also required to take actions as the Secretary considers appropriate to streamline the organizational structure and processes of the Office of the Secretary of Defense by June 23, 2018. DOD has identified those actions in its draft organizational strategy, but as noted, the organizational strategy has not been issued. We will assess these actions, if any, against the requirements of section 911(e) after issuance of the organizational strategy.

Specifically, DOD has not fully addressed the following statutory requirements:

1. **Issue an organizational strategy:** DOD has not issued its organizational strategy, which as of June 2019 is 21 months past the statutorily required issuance date of September 1, 2017. In January 2019, we reported that OCMO officials had revised the draft organizational strategy, incorporating, among other things, the criteria that distinguish cross-functional teams established under section 911 from other types of cross-functional working groups, committees, integrated product teams, and task forces, as required by section 918(b) of the John S. McCain NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019.¹³ The

¹³Pub. L. No. 115-232, § 918(b)(1) (2018). [GAO-19-165](#).

revised draft of the organizational strategy also includes steps DOD plans to take to advance a collaborative culture. As we reported in our June 2018 report, these steps, as outlined in the draft strategy, align with our leading practices for mergers and organizational transformations, which we recommended that DOD incorporate into its strategy.¹⁴ Based on our review of OCMO's current draft of the organizational strategy, we found that it addresses all required elements laid out in section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017. That January 2019 draft strategy, according to an official from OCMO's Administration and Organizational Policy Directorate, was provided to OCMO leadership for review as early as August 2018, but has not been approved. A senior OCMO official stated that approval of the draft was delayed to ensure it aligned with the National Defense Strategy, issued in January 2018, and the National Defense Business Operations Plan, issued in May 2018, and to incorporate additional requirements of the John S. McCain NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019, which was enacted in August 2018. In addition, according to senior OCMO and Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense officials, the Acting CMO and the Deputy Secretary of Defense informally discussed the draft organizational strategy, but those conversations did not lead to the Acting CMO formally approving the draft for department-wide coordination. In May 2019, a senior OCMO official told us that the Acting CMO was fully committed to completing department-wide coordination of the draft strategy in June 2019 and advancing it for issuance by the Secretary of Defense in July 2019. After providing a draft of this report to the department for comment, we learned that the organizational strategy was circulated for department-wide coordination on July 12, 2019, with components expected to provide input by August 5, 2019.

¹⁴[GAO-18-194](#). We identified leading practices and implementation steps for mergers and organizational transformations that can help agencies transform their cultures so that they are more results-oriented, customer-focused, and collaborative. The leading practices include: (1) ensure top leadership drives the transformation; (2) establish a coherent mission and integrated strategic goals to guide the transformation; (3) focus on a key set of principles and priorities at the outset of the transformation; (4) set implementation goals and a timeline to build momentum and show progress from day one; (5) dedicate an implementation team to manage the transformation process; (6) use the performance management system to define responsibility and assure accountability for change; (7) establish a communication strategy to create shared expectations and report related progress; (8) involve employees to obtain their ideas and gain their ownership for the transformation; and (9) build a world-class organization. See GAO, *Results-Oriented Cultures: Implementation Steps to Assist Mergers and Organizational Transformations*, [GAO-03-669](#) (July 2, 2003).

2. **Issue guidance for cross-functional teams:** DOD has not issued guidance for cross-functional teams, which, as of June 2019, is 20 months past the required date of September 30, 2017. In June 2018, we reported that OCMO officials had revised the draft guidance to fully address all section 911 requirements and incorporate leading practices for effective cross-functional teams in the guidance, consistent with our February 2018 recommendation.¹⁵ Based on our review of this draft, we found that it addresses all required elements from section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017, as well as all of the leading practices for effective cross-functional teams. That draft guidance, according to an official from OCMO's Administration and Organizational Policy Directorate, was provided to OCMO leadership for review as early as August 2018, but has not been approved by the CMO.

3. **Provide training to cross-functional team members and their supervisors:** OCMO officials have provided some of the required training to members and leaders of a recently established cross-functional team described later in this report. The training included several required elements, including information on the characteristics of successful cross-functional teams, conflict resolution, and how to appropriately represent the views and expertise of functional components. However, OCMO officials have not provided training to supervisors in team members' functional organizations as required.

We reported in February 2018 that DOD had developed a draft curriculum for this training that addressed the section 911 requirements.¹⁶ An OCMO official told us it has not altered the curriculum since then, but that the department has still not provided the training to team members' supervisors because the curriculum has not been approved by the Acting CMO or the Secretary of Defense. Such approval, though not required by statute, would demonstrate senior leadership support for cross-functional teams, a leading practice we have identified. Further, according to an OCMO official, department-wide coordination and approval would serve to strengthen the effectiveness of the training. However, the need for this training is evident. For example, when we observed one of the training sessions, a member of a cross-functional team stated that he did not believe his supervisors knew what cross-functional teams were.

¹⁵[GAO-18-513](#).

¹⁶[GAO-18-194](#).

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4. **Provide training to presidential appointees:** OCMO has not provided the required training to individuals filling presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Section 911 requires these individuals to complete the training within 3 months of their appointment or DOD to request waivers. As of June 2019, 24 of 36 such officials had been appointed and in their positions for more than 3 months, and, according to an OCMO official, none had received their training or been granted a training waiver.¹⁷ An OCMO official told us in October 2018 he had revised the draft training curriculum following our February 2018 report to include all the required elements in section 911.¹⁸ However, as of May 2019, OCMO officials had not provided a copy of the revised curriculum for our review. After the curriculum is approved, the officials stated that they plan to recommend to the Secretary of Defense that all presidential appointees in the Office of the Secretary of Defense receive the training, rather than request waivers.
5. **Report on successes and failures of cross-functional teams:** OCMO has not completed an analysis of the successes and failures of DOD's cross-functional teams, which, as of June 2019, is 3 months past its required completion date. Section 911 requires that an analysis of the success and failures of the teams and how to apply lessons learned from that analysis is completed 18 months after the establishment of the first cross-functional team. With the establishment of the first cross-functional team on personnel vetting in August 2017, the required completion date for the report was February 25, 2019. An OCMO official stated that OCMO planned to

¹⁷Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 911(f)(2) (2016) permits the President to waive the training requirement if the Secretary of Defense determines that the individual already possesses, through training and experience, the skill and knowledge to be provided through the required training.

¹⁸GAO-18-194. Section 911 requires the training to include the following four elements: (1) leadership, (2) modern organizational practice, (3) collaboration, and (4) the operation of cross-functional teams. In February 2018, we reported that the draft training curriculum addressed only one of the required elements—the element about the operation of cross-functional teams. We recommended, and DOD concurred, that the CMO should either (1) provide training that includes all of the required elements in section 911 or (2) develop criteria for obtaining a waiver and have the Secretary of Defense request such a waiver from the President for these required elements.

conduct an analysis on the personnel vetting team, but had not yet begun and had not set a time frame for doing so.¹⁹

DOD has not addressed most of these remaining requirements of section 911 because, according to an OCMO official, the Acting CMO has not approved the draft documents prepared by OCMO staff to satisfy the requirements. Moreover, the Acting CMO has not coordinated most of the documents department-wide and provided them to the Secretary of Defense for review and issuance. Specifically, according to an OCMO official, the Acting CMO has not reviewed or approved the guidance on cross-functional teams or curricula for cross-functional team members, their supervisors, and presidential appointees.²⁰ These delays occurred in part because the department has not established and communicated internal deadlines for reviewing, coordinating, and approving these documents. According to OCMO officials, the primary reason they have not met these other outstanding requirements, including the guidance and training for cross-functional teams, is that they would like to have the organizational strategy approved and issued first, so that it can be reflected in the accompanying materials. However, while the OCMO has set an internal time frame for the organizational strategy, it has not set similar time frames for completing the remaining requirements.²¹

¹⁹In August 2017, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum authorizing a cross-functional team to address challenges with personnel vetting and background investigation programs. The cross-functional team was established to assist with the transition of background investigations for certain DOD personnel from the Office of Personnel Management's National Background Investigations Bureau to DOD's Defense Security Service. Section 925 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2018 required DOD to implement a phased transition plan to transfer the conduct of background investigations of certain DOD personnel from the Office of Personnel Management to DOD. Pub. L. No. 115-91, § 925 (2017). According to a DOD official, DOD has since disestablished this team and subsumed its roles and responsibilities into a new Personnel Vetting Transformation Office.

²⁰As noted earlier, after providing a draft of this report to the department for comment in June 2019, we learned that the organizational strategy was circulated for department coordination on July 12, 2019, with components expected to provide any input by August 5, 2019.

²¹In its response to our draft report, DOD provided new information on a timeline for completing the outstanding section 911 requirements. Specifically, DOD updated its internal deadline for submission of the organizational strategy to the Secretary of Defense from July 2019 to August 2019. DOD also stated that it plans to issue the guidance on cross-functional teams and training for cross-functional team members, their supervisors, and presidential appointees by September 2019 and complete its report on the successes and failures of cross-functional teams by November 2019.

Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government emphasize the need to establish time frames to implement actions effectively.²² In addition, as we reported in June 2018, establishing time frames with key milestones and deliverables to track implementation progress are important for agency reform efforts.²³ By not setting and following clear internal deadlines for meeting the outstanding section 911 requirements, DOD has continued to fall short in meeting statutory requirements and missed opportunities to effectively implement its cross-functional teams and advance a collaborative culture that could bolster broader efforts within the department, such as reforming its business operations.

DOD Established a Cross-Functional Team on Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations, but the Team's Efforts Have Been Slowed by Delayed Funding Decisions

Sections 918 and 1053(c) of the John S. McCain NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019 required the Secretary of Defense to establish a cross-functional team pursuant to section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 on electronic warfare to identify gaps in electronic warfare and joint electromagnetic spectrum operations, capabilities, and capacities within the department across personnel, procedural, and equipment areas. In addition, section 1053(d) of the act required the electronic warfare cross-functional team to, among other things, (1) update the department's Electronic Warfare Strategy in coordination with the Electronic Warfare Executive Committee by February 9, 2019, and (2) provide assessments of the electronic warfare capabilities of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in consultation with the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency by May 10, 2019.²⁴

Section 918 of the John S. McCain NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019 required the team's establishment by November 11, 2018; however, DOD did not establish an electromagnetic spectrum operations cross-functional team until February 2019, and the team did not begin its work until April 2019.²⁵

²²GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

²³GAO, *Government Reorganization: Key Questions to Assess Agency Reform Efforts*, [GAO-18-427](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 13, 2018).

²⁴Pub. L. No. 115-232, § 1053 (2018).

²⁵According to DOD, joint electromagnetic spectrum operations are 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. Department of Defense, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (as of May 2019).

An official from the team told us that the standup of the team was delayed due to the extensive department-wide review of the February 2019 memorandum that established the team.²⁶ Because of the delayed establishment of the team, DOD officials estimated that the required update to DOD's Electronic Warfare Strategy would be completed by the end of September 2019—7 months after the statutory deadline—and that the required assessments would be provided by fall 2019.²⁷ According to the team's establishment memorandum, the team will continue its work until at least fiscal year 2022.

In addition to the requirements discussed above, section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 includes specific requirements for cross-functional teams established under that section, including that each team's objectives be clearly established in writing and that the team should establish a strategy to achieve those objectives. We found that DOD and the electromagnetic spectrum operations cross-functional team have addressed 10 of 11 of those requirements for cross-functional teams. We also found that the team demonstrates several of the leading practices for cross-functional teams.²⁸ For example, we found that the team has a well-defined team structure and well-defined team goals. However, as previously discussed, DOD has not fully addressed the section 911 requirement for training for cross-functional team members' supervisors.

We were also told by team officials that DOD was delayed in providing administrative support and funding to support the team's operations. According to the memorandum establishing the electromagnetic spectrum operations team, the CMO is responsible for providing administrative support to the new team, to include providing the team with office space, information technology equipment, contracting, human resources,

²⁶Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Establishment of the Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Cross Functional Team*, (Feb. 2, 2019).

²⁷We will continue to review the electromagnetic spectrum operations team's work to address these requirements in our subsequent report on section 911, as required by Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 911(g)(1) (2016), which is expected to be issued this winter.

²⁸See [GAO-18-194](#). In that report, we identified eight leading practices associated with effective cross-functional teams: (1) open and regular communication, (2) well-defined team goals, (3) inclusive team environment, (4) senior management support, (5) well-defined team structure, (6) autonomy, (7) committed cross-functional team members, and (8) an empowered cross-functional team leader. These leading practices and their related key characteristics are reproduced in app. III.

security, cross-functional team training, and other services, as appropriate.²⁹ The memorandum also requires the team to work with the CMO to develop resource requirements for team operations for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 to ensure adequate resources are immediately available.

However, according to a team official, funding was not provided to the team until late May 2019—over 3 months after the team was established and over 1 month after most of the team members were provided by their home units to work on the team full time. According to a team official, this funding was to be used for several team requirements, including dedicated office space, computer systems, travel funds, and contractor support. This funding was delayed in part because of disagreements over responsibility for funding the team under the terms of the memorandum establishing the team. Specifically, according to a team official, OCMO officials believed that funding should be provided by another organization, such as the Joint Staff. Team and Joint Staff officials told us that they believed the OCMO was responsible for this funding based on the memorandum establishing the team. A team official further stated that funding was provided only when the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed that funding be provided to the team. OCMO officials told us that because the team was not a budgeted activity for fiscal year 2019, the team was added to DOD's unfunded requirements list. The Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) identified funds for the team via the unfunded requirements process at the end of April 2019.

However, a team official told us funding for the team for future fiscal years has not been identified and responsibility for providing that funding is still unclear. OCMO officials told us that the team will continue to rely on the unfunded requirements process for funding, since the team is not a budgeted activity for fiscal year 2020, and would need to compete for funding through DOD's program budget review process for fiscal year 2021 and later fiscal years. Those officials also told us that the team has not yet signed a memorandum of agreement that is required to execute transfer of the funds to the team. A team official told us the team had not yet signed the memorandum because it believed the memorandum would transfer responsibility for funding the team from OCMO to the team. As

²⁹Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Establishment of the Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Cross Functional Team*.

noted previously, team officials believe the OCMO is responsible for this funding based on the memorandum establishing the team.

According to a team official, this delay in funding hampered the team's ability to achieve full operating capability. For example, until late May the team was working from the Pentagon Conference Center and OCMO conference rooms with only one secure laptop. A team official told us in June 2019 that though the team has moved into its own office space, that space does not have the level of security required for the team to work on a third of its initiatives. As a result, the team was also delayed in conducting mission analysis, work plan development, organizational design, and production of executive-level briefings. A team official told us the team expects to be at full operating capability in late July 2019.

Leading practices for implementing effective cross-functional teams highlight the importance of senior management providing teams with access to resources. In addition, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* state that agencies' management should assign responsibility to achieve the entity's objectives.³⁰ If DOD does not clarify roles and responsibilities for providing funding for the new cross-functional team, the Acting CMO and the electromagnetic spectrum operations team may continue to have delays in funding and those delays may negatively affect the team's ability to conduct its work and to meet its objectives.³¹

Conclusions

Section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 called for organizational and management reforms to assist DOD in addressing challenges that have hindered collaboration and integration across the department. The department has taken some steps to implement the section 911 requirements, but still has not met statutory time frames for implementing key requirements intended to support its cross-functional teams and to advance a more collaborative culture within the department. Setting

³⁰[GAO-14-704G](#).

³¹In January 2019, we reported that a key challenge facing DOD's cross-functional business reform teams was that some lacked resources to fully implement their approved initiatives. We recommended, and DOD concurred, that DOD establish a process to identify and prioritize funding for implementing these business reform teams' initiatives. However, this finding and recommendation were limited to the business reform teams and therefore do not apply to other cross-functional teams, including those established in response to section 911.

specific internal deadlines would help ensure action on these outstanding statutory requirements. Moreover, DOD has established a new electromagnetic spectrum operations cross-functional team under section 911—one of the only requirements for which the department has made progress since our last report—but has not ensured that the team will have the funding it needs beyond fiscal year 2019 to maintain full operational capability and accomplish its assigned objectives. Senior leadership commitment to fully supporting this team and fulfilling all section 911 requirements could help the department make important advances in the type of collaboration necessary for the department to accomplish some of its most ambitious goals.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following six recommendations to DOD:

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO meets DOD's August 2019 deadline for final submission of the organizational strategy to the Secretary of Defense for review and issuance. (Recommendation 1)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO meets DOD's September 2019 deadline for review and approval of DOD's guidance on cross-functional teams and final submission to the Secretary for review and issuance. (Recommendation 2)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO meets DOD's September 2019 deadline for review and approval of DOD's training curriculum for cross-functional team members and their supervisors. (Recommendation 3)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO meets DOD's September 2019 deadline for review and approval of DOD's training curriculum for presidential appointees. (Recommendation 4)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO meets DOD's November 2019 deadline for drafting, review, and approval of DOD's report on the success and failures of cross-functional teams and final submission to the Secretary for review and approval. (Recommendation 5)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO and the electromagnetic spectrum operations cross-functional team clarify roles and responsibilities for providing administrative support and funding for

the team beyond fiscal year 2019 in accordance with the memorandum establishing the team. (Recommendation 6)

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for review and comment. In written comments that are reproduced in appendix IV, DOD concurred with our recommendations. DOD officials provided separate oral technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

In its response, DOD provided new information on a timeline for completing the outstanding section 911 requirements. Specifically, DOD updated its internal deadline for submission of the organizational strategy to the Secretary of Defense from July 2019 to August 2019. DOD also stated that it plans to issue the guidance on cross-functional teams and training for cross-functional team members, their supervisors, and presidential appointees by September 2019 and complete its report on the successes and failures of cross-functional teams by November 2019. We updated our first five recommendations to reflect this information. Establishing these timelines is an important step forward in meeting the statutory requirements under section 911 as well as addressing our recommendations. As part of our next and final audit of DOD's implementation of section 911 requirements, we will assess the extent to which the department has met these new internal deadlines and fully addressed our recommendations in this report. Fully addressing these outstanding requirements will strengthen DOD's ability to effectively implement its cross-functional teams and advance a collaborative culture within the department.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense, and DOD's Deputy Chief Management Officer. In addition, the report is available at no charge on our website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2775 or fielde1@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Field". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Elizabeth Field
Acting Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Prior GAO Reports on the Department of Defense's (DOD) Implementation of Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017

Section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 included a provision for us—every 6 months after the date of enactment on December 23, 2016, through December 31, 2019—to submit to the congressional defense committees a report. Each report is to set forth a comprehensive assessment of the actions that DOD has taken pursuant to section 911 during each 6-month period and cumulatively since the NDAA's enactment. Table 1 identifies our four prior reports on DOD's implementation of section 911 and the status of the five recommendations from those reports.

**Appendix I: Prior GAO Reports on the
Department of Defense's (DOD)
Implementation of Section 911 of the National
Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal
Year 2017**

Table 1: Prior GAO Reports on the Department of Defense's (DOD) Implementation of Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 and Status of Recommendations, as of June 2019

Report title	Report issuance date	Recommendation	Status of DOD's implementation
<i>Defense Management: DOD Needs to Implement Statutory Requirements and Identify Resource for Its Cross-Functional Reform Teams,</i> GAO-19-165	January 17, 2019	The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Chief Management Officer (CMO) establishes a process for identifying and prioritizing available funding to develop and implement initiatives from the cross-functional reform teams. ^a	Not implemented
<i>Defense Management: DOD Senior Leadership Has Not Fully Implemented Statutory Requirements to Promote Department-Wide Collaboration,</i> GAO-18-513	June 25, 2018	We did not make recommendations in this report.	Not applicable
<i>Defense Management: DOD Needs to Take Additional Actions to Promote Department-Wide Collaboration,</i> GAO-18-194	February 28, 2018	The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO, in its revisions to the draft organizational strategy, address how the department will promote and achieve a collaborative culture, as required under section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017. The CMO could accomplish this by incorporating our leading practices on mergers and organizational transformations.	Not implemented
		The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO obtain stakeholder input on the development of the organizational strategy from key stakeholders, including the Secretary of Defense, the military departments, the combatant commands, and defense agencies.	Not implemented
		The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO fully address all requirements in section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 and incorporate leading practices for effective cross-functional teams in guidance on Secretary of Defense-empowered cross-functional teams.	Not implemented
		The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO either: (a) provide training for presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed individuals in the Office of the Secretary of Defense that includes the required elements—leadership, modern organizational practice, and collaboration—in section 911 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017, or (b) develop criteria for obtaining a waiver and have the Secretary of Defense request such a waiver from the President for these required elements if the individual possesses—through training and experience—the skill and knowledge otherwise to be provided through a course of instruction.	Not implemented

Appendix I: Prior GAO Reports on the Department of Defense's (DOD) Implementation of Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017

Report title	Report issuance date	Recommendation	Status of DOD's implementation
<i>Defense Management: DOD Has Taken Initial Steps to Formulate an Organizational Strategy, but These Efforts Are Not Complete, GAO-17-523R</i>	June 23, 2017	We did not make recommendations in this report.	Not applicable

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

^aThe department previously considered its cross-functional business reform teams to be responsive to section 911, but plans to no longer do so. The National Defense Business Operations Plan for Fiscal Years 2018–2022, issued in May 2018, stated that these teams were established pursuant to section 911. However, DOD's draft organizational strategy states that these teams were not established in response to section 911. Instead, it describes them as a second layer of cross-functional coordination that will aid in ensuring broader implementation of collaborative and team-oriented practices in the department.

Appendix II: Summary of Requirements in Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017

Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 requires the Secretary of Defense to take several actions. Table 2 summarizes these requirements, the due date, and the date completed, if applicable, as of June 2019.

Table 2: Status of Requirements in Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, as of June 2019

Not later than . . .	The Secretary of Defense is to . . .	Date completed
Not specified	Ensure that team members and all leaders in functional organizations that are in the supervisory chain for personnel serving on such team receive training in elements of successful cross-functional teams, including teamwork, collaboration, conflict resolution, and appropriately representing the views and expertise of their functional components.	Not completed
3 months of the appointment of an individual to a position in the Office of the Secretary of Defense appointable by and with the advice and consent of the Senate	Send the individual to a training course in leadership, modern organizational practice, collaboration, and the operation of cross-functional teams. This training requirement can be waived under certain circumstances.	Not completed
March 15, 2017	Award any necessary contract for a study to determine how to best implement effective cross-functional teams in the Department of Defense (DOD). This study should include (1) lessons learned, as reflected in academic literature, business and management school case studies, and the work of leading management consultant firms, on the successful and failed application of cross-functional teams in the private sector and government, and on the cultural factors necessary to support effective cross-functional teams and (2) the historical and current use by DOD of cross-functional working groups, integrated process teams, councils, and committees, and the reasons why such entities have or have not achieved high levels of teamwork or effectiveness.	June 9, 2017
July 15, 2017	Provide the results of the study to the congressional defense committees.	September 28, 2017
September 1, 2017	Develop and issue an organizational strategy that (1) identifies the critical objectives and other organizational outputs for DOD that span multiple functional boundaries and would benefit from the use of cross-functional teams; (2) improves the manner in which DOD integrates the expertise and capacities of the functional components of DOD for effective and efficient achievement of such objectives and outputs; (3) improves the management of relationships and processes involving the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the combatant commands, the military departments, and the defense agencies with regard to such objectives and outputs; (4) improves the ability of DOD to work effectively in interagency processes with regard to such objectives and outputs in order to better serve the President; and (5) achieves an organizational structure that enhances performance with regard to such objectives and outputs.	Not completed
September 30, 2017	Establish cross-functional teams to address critical objectives and outputs for such teams as determined to be appropriate in accordance with the organizational strategy. ^a	August 25, 2017

**Appendix II: Summary of Requirements in
Section 911 of the National Defense
Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017**

Not later than . . .	The Secretary of Defense is to . . .	Date completed
September 30, 2017	Issue guidance on cross-functional teams (1) addressing the role, authorities, reporting relationships, resourcing, manning, training, and operations of cross-functional teams; (2) delineating decision-making authority of such teams; (3) providing that the leaders of functional components of DOD that provide personnel to such teams respect and respond to team needs and activities; and (4) emphasizing that personnel selected for assignment to such teams shall faithfully represent the views and expertise of their functional components while contributing to the best of their ability to the success of the team concerned.	Not completed
18 months after the date of the enactment of the act (i.e., June 23, 2018)	Submit to Congress a report on the establishment of cross-functional teams, including descriptions from the leaders of teams on the manner in which the teams were designed and how they functioned.	June 21, 2018
18 months after the date of the enactment of the act (i.e., June 23, 2018)	Take actions, as the Secretary considers appropriate, to streamline the organizational structure and processes of the Office of the Secretary of Defense in order to increase spans of control, achieve a reduction in layers of management, eliminate unnecessary duplication between the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff, and reduce the time required to complete standard processes and activities.	Not yet completed; actions identified in draft organizational strategy ^b
18 months after the date on which the first cross-functional team is established (i.e., February 25, 2019)	Complete an analysis of the successes and failures of teams established, and determine how to apply the lessons learned from that analysis.	Not completed

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

^aFor each cross-functional team established pursuant to section 911, the Secretary of Defense is required to (1) assign as leader of such team a senior qualified and experienced individual, who shall report directly to the Secretary regarding the activities of such team; (2) delegate to the team leader authority to select members of such team from among civilian employees of the department and members of the armed forces in any grade who are recommended for membership on such team by the head of a functional component of the department within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the military departments, by the commander of a combatant command, or by the director of a defense agency; (3) provide the team leader with necessary full-time support from team members, and the means to co-locate team members; and (4) ensure that the congressional defense committees are provided information on the progress and results of such team upon request.

^bAs we reported in January 2019, Office of the Chief Management Officer officials have revised the draft organizational strategy to identify the actions that the department has taken in response to this requirement. As noted, however, the organizational strategy has not been issued. We will assess these actions against the requirements of section 911 after the organizational strategy has been issued.

Appendix III: Leading Practices for Implementing Effective Cross-Functional Teams

In February 2018, we reported on eight leading practices for implementing effective cross-functional teams.¹ Table 3 identifies these leading practices and their related key characteristics.

Table 3: Leading Practices and Key Characteristics of Cross-Functional Teams

Leading practice	Description	Key characteristics
Open and regular communication	Efficient cross-functional teams have effective communication mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional teams should openly share information within the team. • Teams should proactively seek feedback and information from stakeholders. • Cross-functional teams should have open and regular communication with team members, team leaders, and management.
Well-defined team goals	Effective cross-functional teams have clear, updated, and well-defined goals common to the team, team leader, and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team goals should be clear, well defined, linked, updated, and commonly shared with team members, team leaders and senior leaders (management). • Team objectives should have linkages to the organization's goals. • Team members and leaders should be supportive of the cross-functional team's goals.
Inclusive team environment	Effective cross-functional teams invest in a supportive and inclusive team environment where all team members have collective responsibility and individual accountability for the team's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional teams should invest in a single team culture with shared values of inclusiveness and collective responsibility. • Cross-functional team members should be supportive and trusting of one another. • Cross-functional team members should have mutual respect and cooperation with each other. • Individual team members should participate and be accountable for the team's work.
Well-defined team structure	Effective cross-functional teams have well-defined team operations with project-specific rules and procedures established for each team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional teams should have a well-defined structure, project-specific rules, and procedures. • Cross-functional teams should be collocated within the same physical proximity. • Cross-functional teams should have appropriate training and learning environments.

¹[GAO-18-194](#). We identified these leading practices by reviewing literature and case studies on the use of cross-functional teams in the private and public sectors, as well as interviewing six academic and practitioner experts. Leading practices for effective cross-functional teams are aligned with the leading practices for interagency collaboration we have identified in our prior work. See GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms*, [GAO-12-1022](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).

**Appendix III: Leading Practices for
Implementing Effective Cross-Functional
Teams**

Leading practice	Description	Key characteristics
Autonomy	Effective cross-functional teams are independent and have the ability to make decisions independently and rapidly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional teams should be empowered to make decisions. • Cross-functional teams should be able to creatively solve problems.
Senior management support	Effective cross-functional teams have senior managers who view the teams as a priority within the organization and provide these teams with resources and rewards to recognize their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management should support cross-functional teams as a priority. • Senior management should provide cross-functional teams with access to resources and rewards. • Senior management should provide career advancement opportunities, recognition, and incentives for cross-functional team leaders and members.
Committed cross-functional team members	Effective cross-functional teams have members committed to the team's goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional team members should have a wide diversity of knowledge and expertise. • Cross-functional team members should be committed to working toward achieving the team's goals.
Empowered cross-functional team leader	The selected cross-functional team leader should be clear in guidance for team members, be proactive, empowered to make decisions and provide feedback and developmental opportunities to team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional team leaders should be empowered to provide clear guidance and be proactive in decision making. • Cross-functional team leaders should provide feedback and developmental opportunities to team members. • Cross-functional team leaders should regularly interact with senior management.

Source: GAO. | GAO-19-598

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of Defense

Note: The title of the report was edited slightly after DOD received the draft report for comment.



DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
9010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-9010

Ms. Elizabeth Field
Acting Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Field,

The Department of Defense (DoD) reviewed the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Draft Report GAO-19-598 "DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: DOD Should Set Deadlines on Stalled Efforts to Improve Collaboration and Clarify Cross-Functional Team Funding Responsibilities," dated August, 2019 (GAO Code 103205), and concurs with the recommendations of Department's lack of adequate progress in implementing the series of actions mandated in Section 911 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, Public Law 114-328, and the related statutory mandates that followed, including those prescribed in the NDAA, for FY 2019. DoD offers the following comments.

I reviewed the draft report and associated recommendations. As a result, the Department increased its efforts to ensure the rapid implementation of the mandated actions. It is expected that the issuance of an Organizational Strategy (OS) will be advanced for the Secretary of Defense's consideration/approval in August of 2019. Subsequently, the Department plans to complete the remaining statutory requirements including: (1) issuing cross-functional team guidance; (2) conducting cross-functional team training; (3) conducting Presidential appointee training; and (4) issuing a report on cross-functional team performance in November 2019.

The imminent issuance of the foundational OS for DoD will inform development of all actions outlined in your recommendations within the next 120 days. Please be assured that the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and I are committed to implementing all outstanding requirements expediently.

Enclosed is the DoD response to the Report's draft recommendations. My point of contact is Mr. Brian Helmer, who can be reached by email at brian.w.helmer.civ@mail.mil and by phone at 703-614-4783.

Sincerely,

HERSHMAN.LISA
.W.1544505641

Digitally signed by
HERSHMAN.LISA.W.1544505641
Date: 2019.08.02 15:33:41 -0400

Lisa W. Hershman

Enclosure:
As stated

GAO Draft Report Date June 21, 2019
GAO-19-598 (GAO CODE 103205)

**“DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: DOD Should Set Deadlines on Stalled Efforts to Improve
Collaboration and Clarify Cross-Functional Team Funding Responsibilities”**

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS

GAO Recommendations for Executive Action

RECOMMENDATION 1: “The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO meets DOD’s revised internal deadline of June 2019 for department-wide coordination of DOD’s organizational strategy and July 2019 for final submission to the Secretary of Defense and issuance.”

DoD RESPONSE: Concur that the Department needs to address the outstanding statutory action, consistent with a revised timeline of formal coordination of DoD’s Organizational Strategy in early August 2019 and SecDef consideration/approval in late August 2019.

RECOMMENDATION 2: “The Secretary of Defense should establish a specific internal deadline and ensure that the CMO meets this deadline for review and approval of DOD’s guidance on cross-functional teams and final submission to the Secretary for review and issuance.”

DoD RESPONSE: Concur that the Department needs to address the outstanding statutory action, consistent with the 120-day implementation plan. The Department will coordinate the Secretary’s guidance on cross-functional teams following the issuance of the Organizational Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 3: “The Secretary of Defense should establish a specific internal deadline and ensure that the CMO meets this deadline for review and approval of DOD’s training curriculum for cross-functional team members and their supervisors.”

DoD RESPONSE: Concur that the Department needs to address the outstanding statutory action, consistent with the 120-day implementation plan. The OCMO will approve the training curriculum for cross functional team members and their supervisors simultaneous to the issuance of the Secretary’s guidance on cross-functional teams by September 2019.

RECOMMENDATION 4: “The Secretary of Defense should establish a specific internal deadline and ensure that the CMO meets this deadline for review and approval of DOD’s training curriculum for presidential appointees.”

DoD RESPONSE: Concur that the Department needs to address the outstanding statutory action, consistent with the 120-day implementation plan. The OCMO will review and approve the DOD’s training curriculum simultaneous to the issuance of the Secretary’s guidance on cross-functional teams by September 2019.

RECOMMENDATION 5: “The Secretary of Defense should establish a specific internal deadline and ensure that the CMO meets this deadline for drafting, review, and approval of DOD’s report on the success and failures of cross-functional teams and final submission to the Secretary for review and approval.”

DoD RESPONSE: Concur on the requirement to assess cross functional teams, subject to the issuance of the Organizational Strategy and the maturity of the work of the EMSO cross functional team. The OCMO will complete the DOD's report on the success and failures of cross-functional teams and submit to the Secretary for review and approval by November 2019.

RECOMMENDATION 6: "The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the CMO and the EMSO cross-functional team clarify roles and responsibilities for providing administrative support and funding for the team beyond fiscal year 2019, in accordance with the memorandum establishing the team."

DoD RESPONSE: Concur, the OCMO will clarify roles and responsibilities for providing administrative support and funding for the EMSO cross-functional team beyond fiscal year 2019.

Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Elizabeth Field, (202) 512-2775 or fielde1@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Margaret Best (Assistant Director), Tracy Barnes, Arkelga Braxton, Sierra Hicks, Michael Holland, Matthew Kienzle, Amie Lesser, Ned Malone, Judy McCloskey, Sheila Miller, Richard Powelson, Daniel Ramsey, Ron Schwenn, and Sarah Veale made key contributions to this report.

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