

Why GAO Did This Study

Given that the federal government spends over \$90 billion annually on IT, it is important that agencies avoid spending on duplicative contracts. Such duplication can occur, for example, when an agency awards two or more contracts to the same vendor for the same services. Category management—in which spending is managed by categories such as IT—and analyses of agency spending on products and services (called spend analyses) have been recognized as effective practices for identifying duplicative contracts.

GAO was asked to review agencies' efforts to reduce IT contract duplication. GAO determined the extent to which (1) selected agencies' efforts to prevent, identify, and reduce duplicative or wasteful IT contracts were consistent with OMB guidance; and (2) these efforts were informed by spend analyses.

GAO compared relevant documentation from seven federal agencies with the most IT spending and new contracts to five activities identified in OMB guidance and two spend analyses activities identified in guidance. GAO rated each agency as having fully, partially, or not implemented each activity.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making 20 recommendations to six agencies to fully implement the category management and spend analyses activities. The agencies generally concurred. Two agencies provided additional evidence that led GAO to withdraw one recommendation and modify one other.

View [GAO-20-567](#). For more information, contact Carol C. Harris at (202) 512-4456 or harriscc@gao.gov.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Selected Federal Agencies Need to Take Additional Actions to Reduce Contract Duplication

What GAO Found

Selected agencies varied in their efforts to implement five Office of Management and Budget (OMB) category management activities that contribute to preventing, identifying, and reducing duplicative information technology (IT) contracts. For example, most of the seven selected agencies had fully implemented the activities associated with identifying a Senior Accountable Official and training their workforces. In contrast, about half the agencies had fully implemented the activity associated with sharing contract information (see figure). Agencies cited several reasons for their varied implementation, including that they were still defining how to best integrate category management into the agency.

Extent to Which Seven Selected Federal Agencies Implemented Five Category Management Activities That Contribute to Reducing Information Technology (IT) Contract Duplication



Source: GAO analysis of agency documentation. | GAO-20-567

^aThis refers to spending on contracts that are not aligned with the Office of Management and Budget's criteria for agency-wide, multi-agency or government-wide, and "Best in Class" contracts.

^bThis activity applies to sharing information with officials for agency-wide, government-wide, and "Best in Class" IT contracts, that are owned by the agency. Since nearly all of the Department of State's IT contracts were owned by other agencies, GAO determined that this activity was not applicable.

Four of the seven agencies had fully or partially implemented the activity to regularly use a spend analysis to identify potential contract duplication. Each of these four agencies had fully implemented the activity to develop and implement strategies to address the identified duplication, which, according to agency officials, resulted in millions of dollars in savings. The remaining three agencies had not implemented either of the two spend analysis activities. Until agencies ensure that their efforts to prevent, identify, and reduce duplicative IT contracts are fully aligned with category management principles and practices, and are informed by spend analyses, they will be at increased risk of wasteful spending. In addition, they will likely miss opportunities to identify and realize savings of potentially hundreds of millions of dollars.