



Strategic Objective:

Sharpen GAO's Focus on Clients' and Customers' Requirements

Issue: GAO interacts and works with a diverse set of external clients and internal customers. GAO's principal client is the Congress, but its work is also important to other stakeholders, including federal, nonfederal, and international agencies, organizations, and institutions. GAO's internal customers are its own staff. They are the principals responsible for delivering quality products and services to GAO's clients. Therefore, being a model agency depends on both determining and meeting the requirements of clients and internal customers.

For external clients, GAO plans to continuously update its understanding of their needs and expectations through expanded outreach efforts and strategic planning. GAO also plans to develop and use quality measurement systems and feedback mechanisms to obtain external clients' views on GAO's products and services. In addition, to complement congressional protocols implemented during the previous planning cycle, GAO will develop

protocols for each major stakeholder group—agencies and international organizations—to help govern interactions and manage expectations.

For internal customers, GAO plans to identify their needs and expectations through expanded outreach and planning efforts. GAO will identify and develop high-quality measurements to assess customer satisfaction, business processes, and accomplishment of the agency's strategic direction. In addition, GAO will develop policies and procedures to guide how its work responds to customer needs.

Performance Goals: To support the objective to sharpen GAO's focus on clients' and customers' requirements, GAO will

- continuously update client requirements,
- develop and implement stakeholder protocols and refine client protocols, and
- identify and assess customer requirements and measures.

Continuously Update Client Requirements

Key Efforts

- ❑ With each new Congress, increase outreach by the Comptroller General, Congressional Relations, and appropriate other senior executives to the Senate and House leadership, committee chairs, ranking minority members, and members responsible for GAO's oversight and appropriations
- ❑ Meet annually with committee leaders and their key staff to discuss ongoing work and emerging issues that may influence future requests
- ❑ Solicit input and involvement from GAO's clients in developing and carrying out GAO's strategic plan
- ❑ Develop high-quality approaches to gauge GAO's external clients' satisfaction on an ongoing basis and use the results to manage and be responsive to their needs
- ❑ Implement a Web-based client feedback survey on select reports and testimonies
- ❑ Outreach by the Comptroller General and other GAO senior executives to other federal, nonfederal, and international agencies, organizations, and institutions to facilitate improvements in government

Significance

In GAO's first strategic plan, the agency recognized that while GAO's senior executives and staff have always communicated with congressional clients in planning and performing the work GAO does at their request, the agency should continue to make improvements in strengthening these communications. GAO wants to continue these efforts to increase its ability to respond more quickly, efficiently, and effectively in accordance with its core values. Soliciting feedback and measuring its clients' satisfaction with its products and services is critical to determining how well GAO's work is meeting their needs.

Potential Outcomes

Improved communication and relationships with GAO's clients

Increased ability of GAO to focus on the most important global and national issues facing the Congress and the American people

Work that meets the needs of the Congress and facilitates improvements in government

Develop and Implement Stakeholder Protocols and Refine Client Protocols

Key Efforts

- ❑ Implement clearly defined, consistently applied, well-documented, and transparent policies and protocols for GAO's work relating to agencies and investigative engagements
- ❑ Develop and implement clearly defined, consistently applied, well-documented, and transparent international protocols
- ❑ Analyze the implementation of GAO's protocols for working with the Congress and determine if refinements should be made

Significance

During the last planning cycle, GAO implemented congressional protocols to enhance the agency's communications with its congressional clients in the planning and execution of its work. During this planning cycle, GAO will continue to assess the effectiveness of these protocols and implement similar protocols for its work with agencies and international accountability organizations—GAO's major stakeholder groups. Communicating clearly and openly about GAO's work and engagement policies will help strengthen the constructive relationships needed to perform the agency's work.

Potential Outcomes

Improved communications with GAO's clients about how GAO does its work

Increased understanding of how GAO responds to requests and allocates its resources

A consistent, transparent approach to meeting GAO's commitments to the Congress

Increased transparency about how GAO does its work

Identify and Assess Customer Requirements and Measures

Key Efforts

- ❑ Develop and implement a strategy to change the culture of customer service within GAO's mission support community
- ❑ Develop and implement an agencywide strategy for determining customer requirements, to include soliciting input and involvement from customers on GAO's strategic direction
- ❑ Identify and implement appropriate communication mechanisms, such as service-level agreements and Web-based guides, on how GAO plans to meet customer requirements
- ❑ Design and implement a system of measures to help managers assess customer requirements, provide needed support, and improve business processes
- ❑ Monitor and assess the newly realigned mission support structure to determine whether the component organizations are aligned and staffed to meet customer requirements, and recommend adjustments, as needed

Significance

GAO needs to establish a strategic direction for mission support operations that is aligned with the needs of its internal customers. Assessing the customers' requirements and the effectiveness of mission support in meeting those requirements will enable GAO to make adjustments, as needed, to function as a high-performing organization. By doing this, mission support operations can provide mission staff with the tools and resources they need to perform quality work for the Congress.

Potential Outcomes

Improved communications and relationships with GAO's internal customers

Improved identification of emerging issues and trends in customer service that are important to providing exceptional mission support

A high level of performance from the mission support organization

Support services that enable staff to perform work that meets the needs of the Congress and facilitates improvements in government