GAO Fully Transitions to EMS!! Bids Adieu to MATS, JIS, and NED!

In a journey that has been years in the making, GAO is officially saying goodbye to the Mission and Assignment Tracking System (MATS), the Job Information System (JIS), and the New Engagement Database (NED) and making a full transition to the Engagement Management System (EMS).

The 3.0 upgrade to EMS in January 2017 marked the system’s 16th release. With this upgrade, EMS is more comprehensive than ever, providing users with a single location for managing work source, engagement, and non-engagement administrative data. By the end of March, GAO will have transitioned all engagements and work sources into EMS.

This milestone also marks the retirement of GAO’s legacy systems—MATS and JIS—as well NED, which was retired in 2012. The shift to EMS has been GAO’s largest effort in recent decades to modernize the systems that support day-to-day management and executive oversight of engagement and non-engagement data.
EMS provides many advantages over GAO’s legacy systems, such as

- eliminating duplicative entries across several systems
- enabling analysts to own their data (no need to manually markup MATS reports with updates)
- promoting transparency by providing all GAO staff with easy access to timely engagement data (some data were previously accessible to only a limited number of users, such as MATS Coordinators)
- generating useful engagement management reporting capabilities, including agendas for the Engagement Acceptance Meeting (EAM) and the Engagement Review Meetings (ERM)

For more information on EMS and its benefits, please refer to CPIO’s EMS Web page.

EMS has been developed using an iterative and incremental software development approach called Agile, which focuses on satisfying customers through early and continuous delivery of valuable working software. Agile also emphasizes collaboration among developers, stakeholders, and customers (https://www.agilealliance.org/)

In 2011, GAO Chief Operating Officer Pat Dalton and former Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Financial Officer David Fisher led efforts to improve the efficiency of the engagement process, a project known as the 2011 Engagement Efficiency Initiative. The transition to the Updated Engagement Process (UEP) and EMS is intended to address numerous pain points and inefficiencies that the study identified and communicated through some of
its 31 recommendations. In January 2014, some mission teams participated in the first phase of an EMS pilot, and by June 2015, teams across GAO began creating all new engagements in EMS.

In early March, a handful of remaining MATS engagements were converted into EMS. On March 13, COO Pat Dalton and Sonya Hockaday, NRE, participated in a ceremony that formally shut down one of the final MATS engagements.

Commenting on the progress made to date, Dalton said, “The development and implementation of EMS has been a great team effort involving all of GAO. We not only replaced very old legacy systems, but added new functionality and greater information access and transparency in the new system.”

MATS became operational in 1991 replacing its predecessor, the Central Assignment and Payables System, which was operational from 1979-1990. Historically, MATS consisted of many subsystems that maintained and processed GAO administrative tracking information for use by GAO staff in managing their engagements, non- engagements, and staff resources. MATS also provided management statistics and reports for analysis and planning, and enabled the tracking of actions related to congressional correspondence.

In 1997, GAO rolled out JIS as a network-based, mission-related automated system that produced information needed to enter a new job into MATS. At that time, JIS went a long way toward meeting the goal of streamlining GAO’s job management process by reducing duplicative data requirements in job start and job management documentation. JIS replaced its predecessor, the Job Starts System (JSS), which was GAO’s first attempt to move toward the “paperless” office.

NED, a Microsoft access application developed by General Counsel staff in 2002, was designed to create an agenda for the weekly EAM. While MATS contained records on every letter GAO received, NED complimented MATS by facilitating searches for requests, mandates and potential mandates, as well as CGA engagements.

GAO is planning a celebration this spring to mark the retirement of MATS, JIS, and NED. Further details will be provided in an upcoming GAO Notice.

**GAO Celebrates 2016 CFC Success**

At a special celebration on March 21, members of GAO’s executive committee extended a personal thanks to GAO staff who helped make the agency’s 2016 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) fund-raising drive a success. The celebration recognized the hard work of more than 180 team captains and keyworkers, as well as the generosity of GAO employees throughout the agency. The annual CFC fund-raising drive allows federal employees to donate funds to support a wide range of international, national, and local nonprofit organizations.

Tim DiNapoli, ASM, served as CFC Vice Chair for the second year in row. The campaign, conducted last fall and ending December 31, raised $537,722, which exceeded the headquarters goal of $486,533. The agency’s participation rate was 39.4%, and the average gift at headquarters was $656.56. Last year’s total was $509,529.

Fourteen teams earned President's Awards with either a $275 per capita contribution level or a participation level of 75% or more. They were ASM, ARM, APQA, EWIS, FASAB, HCO, IAT, CR, IG, OOI, PA, CG, GC, and PAB.

The Chairman’s Award for teams or units with either a $225 per capita contribution level or a participation level of 67% or more went to FMCI, FAIS, ISTS and PI.

DCM, FMA, HC, IT, NRE, SI, and SPEL received Honor Awards for achieving either a $175 per capita contribution level or a participation level of 60% or more. FMBO and IO received a Merit Award for achieving either a $125 per capita contribution level or a participation level of 50% or more.
James Perez, field office manager of the Chicago Office, who served as the CFC field office campaign manager, reported that GAO Field staff raised $269,128.00 (111% of the goal). Field staff had a 44% participation rate and an average gift of $688. Field offices are recognizing their accomplishments in various ways, from mentions at staff meetings to more elaborate celebrations.

Comptroller General (CG) Gene Dodaro congratulates the CFC captains and keyworkers in the audience for a great fundraising effort for CFC. Headquarters exceeded its goal of $486,533. In attendance on the stage are Chief Human Capital Officer Bill White, CFC Co-Chair Tim DiNapoli, ASM, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Karl Maschino, and with Eznana Dessie, the National Capital Area Combined Federal Campaign (2016) Loaned Executive from the U.S. Postal Service.

SPEL Coordinates Meeting in Boston with Massachusetts State Auditor

On Monday, March 6, Nancy Donovan and Nathaniel O'Brien (SPEL) coordinated a meeting between the Massachusetts State Auditor, Suzanne Bump, and 16 of her staff with Pat Dalton, COO; James-Christian Blockwood, SPEL MD; Nancy Kingsbury, ARM MD and Vijay D'Souza, ARM Director of the Center for Enhanced Analytics; Anu Mittal, APQA MD; and Johana Ayers, FAIS MD. The meeting was hosted over VTC between HQ and the Boston Field Office. Joan Mahagan, Boston Field Office Manager, welcomed Auditor Bump and her staff to the Boston office and represented GAO in Boston during the meeting.

Pat Dalton gave the opening remarks, followed by a presentation from Nancy Kingsbury on how ARM is organized for methodology. Vijay D'Souza then covered data analytics within ARM, the role of the Center for Enhanced Analytics within GAO, and ARM's relationship with mission teams. Johana Ayers also provided the FAIS perspective on ARM support of mission teams. Anu Mittal discussed GAO's frameworks and processes for
conducting our work. The meeting agenda was designed with a deliberate focus on open discussion and questions. This format allowed for maximum dialogue among the meeting participants and contributed to a successful knowledge sharing effort for both GAO and the Massachusetts State Auditor staff.

The meeting was an outcome of the January 12 Domestic Working Group meeting, an advisory group to the Comptroller General comprised of leaders from the intergovernmental accountability community. Several DWG members, including Auditor Bump, expressed great interest at the January meeting in how GAO is organized for methodology and data analytics.

“The positive reception by the State Auditor’s Office and the involvement of SPEL, GAO senior leaders, and a GAO field office demonstrate GAO’s importance as a resource for offices throughout the intergovernmental accountability community and the benefits of knowledge sharing with this community,” said Dalton.

Data analytics has been a topic of growing interest for the audit community, both internationally and domestically. This interest manifested internationally most recently in December 2016, when the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions established a Working Group on Big Data. GAO was actively involved in that effort and is serving as co-chair of the group. Domestically, data analytics has been a topic of growing interest for many organizations. Much of the interest is on how organizations can use data to accomplish their work more effectively and how auditors can use data analytics to improve the quality of reports to their clients. The interest has resulted in data analytics being a frequent topic of interest at the intergovernmental audit forums.

145 Attend Pacific Northwest Intergovernmental Audit Forum

The Pacific Northwest Intergovernmental Audit Forum held a meeting March 15-17 in Seattle, WA with the theme titled, “An Auditor’s Toolbox,” organized by Jenny Wong (SPEL), Camille Keith (SPEL), Natalie Block (NRE) and Tim Schindler (FO). The event was sold out with 145 attendees. The meeting featured Karl Maschino, CAO, who gave a keynote on improving internal control and enterprise risk management among GAO’s administrative units. Chris Jones (PI) also spoke on audit evidence and Delwen Jones (PI) spoke on rapid response audits.
An advisory board planned and piloted the program, inviting undergraduate and graduate students from local universities to learn about auditing. Ten students were paired with mentors from federal, state and local government audit organizations throughout the event. Melissa Greenway, MPA student from the University of Washington, Evans School of Public Affairs, commented, “This was a great opportunity to meet people from audit shops from across the region. I learned about the most important audit topics that are being addressed.”

From Here and There

Arrivals and Departures

Welcome to recently hired GAO employees:
ISTS: Jeffrey Applin

Good luck to recently retired GAO employees:
DCM: Bonita Anderson
EWIS: Kay Brown
ISTS: Jean Nazzaro, Theresa Placentra
PI: Paul Aussendorf

Goodbye and best wishes to employees leaving GAO:
FMA: Kevin McAloon
HC: Dharani Ranganathan (Seattle)

Mark Your Calendar

April is Financial Literacy Month
Since 2012, GAO has provided employees with information and resources to help develop informed personal financial plans. The program has grown stronger through the efforts of the Workplace Financial Literacy Leadership Committee and a working group of employees from across GAO.

Monday, April 3, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., Planning for College Webinar (Prior Registration Required)
Register in TRRS (SPEC1157) to attend this special webinar for GAO employees on how to lower college costs and options for funding college.

Tuesday, April 4, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m., Benefits of Buying a Home
HQ Learning Center Room 8 and GAOTV
The U.S. Senate Federal Credit Union will share information on what you need to know when you decide to buy a home.

Thursday, April 13, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m., Financial Literacy Basics Webinar (Prior Registration Required)
The webinar will focus on the building blocks of financial literacy, including budget planning, credit reports, TSP basics and protecting assets from fraud. Register here to attend this session.

Tuesday, April 18, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m., Understanding the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program
2N30 and GAOTV
Learn about the benefits, features, and costs of the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program.
Thursday, April 20, 11:00 - 1:00 p.m., Understanding Medicare and Federal Health Benefits
5N30 and GAOTV

Learn about Medicare eligibility and how Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) and Medicare coordinate to provide comprehensive coverage.

Tuesday, April 25, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m., Blast from the Past: Former GAOers Share Their Experiences about Retirement
Staats Briefing Room (7C13) and GAOTV

Hear from a panel of four former GAO employees about life after retirement, including what they would have liked to have known prior to retirement, surprises they encountered after retiring, and common mistakes or myths about what retirement is really like.

See Notices for up-to-date information. Also, see GAO's Financial Literacy Website, dedicated to providing information and tips on personal finance.

Job Market

GAO is seeking applicants for the following position. Detailed information may be found at USAjobs.

Financial Auditor Undergraduate Intern, GS-0599-04/04, closes 4/7
Financial Auditor Graduate Intern, GS-0599-07/07, closes 4/7

Recent Reports, Testimony, and Legal Products

Public GAO products—reports, testimony, and legal decisions and opinions—are available on GAO's website as they are released. In addition, you may sign up for daily e-mail alerts about issued products. You may also subscribe to Twitter alerts for reports and legal products. Use the search engine to locate older products.

Reports

Research and Development: DOE Activities and Costs to Oversee Investments. GAO-17-261, February 14

Antibiotic Resistance: More Information Needed to Oversee Use of Medically Important Drugs in Food Animals. GAO-17-192, March 2


Defense Logistics: Improved Performance Measures and Information Needed for Assessing Asset Visibility Initiatives. GAO-17-183, March 16

National Park Service: Concessions Program Has Made Changes in Several Areas, but Challenges Remain. GAO-17-302, February 16

Federal Telework: Additional Controls Could Strengthen Telework Program Compliance and Data Reporting. GAO-17-247, February 17

Oil and Gas Management: Stronger Leadership Commitment Needed at Interior to Improve Offshore Oversight and Internal Management. GAO-17-293, March 21
Grants Management: Monitoring Efforts by Corporation for National and Community Service Could Be Improved.  
**GAO-17-90**, March 21

Department of State: Foreign Language Proficiency Has Improved, but Efforts to Reduce Gaps Need Evaluation.  
**GAO-17-318**, March 22

VA Disability Benefits: Additional Planning Would Enhance Efforts to Improve the Timeliness of Appeals Decisions.  
**GAO-17-234**, March 23

Immigration Status Verification for Benefits: Actions Needed to Improve Effectiveness and Oversight.  
**GAO-17-204**, March 23

**GAO-17-80**, March 23

**GAO-17-366**, March 23

KC-46 Tanker Modernization: Delivery of First Fully Capable Aircraft Has Been Delayed over One Year and Additional Delays Are Possible.  
**GAO-17-370**, March 24

Building Partner Capacity: Inventory of Department of Defense Security Cooperation and Department of State Security Assistance Efforts.  
**GAO-17-255R**, March 24

Maritime Environment: Federal and State Actions, Expenditures, and Challenges to Addressing Abandoned and Derelict Vessels.  
**GAO-17-202**, March 28

Defense Acquisition Workforce: DOD Has Opportunities to Further Enhance Use and Management of Development Fund.  
**GAO-17-332**, March 28

Troubled Asset Relief Program: Few Participants Remain as Treasury Continues to Wind Down Capital Purchase Program.  
**GAO-17-422**, March 2

Private Deposit Insurance: Credit Unions Largely Complied with Disclosure Rules, but Rules Should Be Clarified.  
**GAO-17-259**, March 29

**Restricted Reports**

International Air Travelers: CBP Collaborates with Stakeholders to Facilitate the Arrivals Process, but Could Strengthen Reporting of Airport Wait Times.  
**GAO-17-252SU**, February 15

**Congressional Testimony**

**GAO-17-486T**, March 16

Offshore Oil and Gas Oversight: Actions Needed to Address Leadership Commitment Deficiencies at Interior, by Frank Rusco, NRE, before the Interior, Energy and Environment Subcommittee, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.  
**GAO-17-505T**, March 21
Department of Justice: Continued Actions Needed to Enhance Program Efficiency and Resource Management, by Diana Maurer, HSJ, before the House Judiciary Committee.
GAO-17-471T, March 21

Veterans Health Administration: Actions Needed to Better Recruit and Retain Clinical and Administrative Staff, by Debra Draper, HC, and Robert Goldenkoff, SI, before the Health Subcommittee, House Veterans’ Affairs Committee.
GAO-17-475T, March 22

FBI Face Recognition Privacy and Accuracy Concerns, by Diana Maurer, HSJ, before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.
GAO-17-489T, March 22

GAO-17-508T, March 23

GAO-17-504T, March 23

GAO-17-494T, March 28

Status of the Einstein/CDM Programs, by Greg Wilshusen, IT, before the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee, House Homeland Security Committee.
GAO-17-518T, March 28

GAO-17-528T, March 28

GAO-17-519T, March 29

Legal Decisions and Opinions

Bid Protest Decisions

Northrop Grumman Systems Corporation—Costs, B-412278.6, February 7.
XPO Logistics Worldwide Government Services, LLC, B-412628.6, B-412628.7, March 14.
Peers Health, B-413557.3, March 16.
Wall Colmonoy Corporation, B-413320, B-413322, October 3.
LCPP, LLC, B-413513.2, March 10.
Glacier Technical Solutions, LLC, B-412990.3, March 15.
Leader Communications, Inc., B-413104.9, March 17.
Vanguard Building LP, B-414207, B-414207.2, March 21.
Fiore Industries, Inc., B-414197, March 17.
Major Rules


Violation of the 210-Day Limit Imposed by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998--Chief Financial Officer, Department of State, B-328671, March 3.

Speakers’ Platform

Melissa Swearingen, PI, presented GAO’s work on Passenger Facility Charges at the “Annual Airport Minority Advisory Council Fly-In Day” at the Hart Senate Office Building on March 22.

Dave Powner, IT, provided the key note address at the “2017 Data Center Brainstorm” held in Washington, DC, March 23.


On the Air

Zina Merritt, DCM, was interviewed by Federal News Radio about the team’s report on defense asset visibility initiatives (GAO-17-183, March 16), March 20. Zina also discussed that work with NewsChannel 8’s “Government Matter” program, March 21.

Rebecca Gambler, HSJ, spoke with Federal News Radio about the team’s new report on immigration status verification for benefits (GAO-17-204, March 23), March 27.

Chris Mihm, SI, appeared on C-SPAN’s Washington Journal to talk about the High Risk List (GAO-17-317, February 15), March 27.

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