

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-22-104687](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

DOD spends billions of dollars annually to acquire systems critical to the nation's security, including new major weapon systems—such as aircraft, ships, and satellites—and business systems to manage DOD operations. DOD weapon and business systems acquisition has been on GAO's High-Risk List since the 1990s. Over the last several years, the department implemented significant reforms that introduced new considerations for tracking and reporting on acquisitions. However, the ability of congressional leadership to conduct timely oversight remains fundamental to ensuring the acquisition system responds to warfighter needs.

A House Report included a provision for GAO to review DOD's proposal for a new reporting methodology for its acquisition programs. This GAO report describes DOD's proposed methodology and assesses the extent to which the department is prepared to implement the proposed approach. GAO reviewed DOD's proposal, as well as policies and other relevant documentation, and compared DOD's planning efforts to its proposal and to leading reform practices from prior GAO work. GAO also interviewed DOD officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations that DOD fully implement leading practices for managing reform efforts, such as by developing an implementation plan to track progress. DOD concurred with both recommendations and described planned or ongoing actions to address them.

View [GAO-22-104687](#). For more information, contact Shelby S. Oakley at (202) 512-4841 or [OakleyS@gao.gov](mailto:OakleyS@gao.gov).

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## DEFENSE ACQUISITIONS


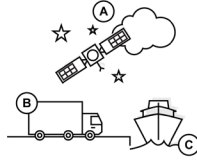
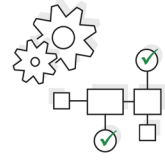

### Additional Actions Needed to Implement Proposed Improvements to Congressional Reporting

## What GAO Found

For decades, the Department of Defense (DOD) reported to Congress on its costliest weapon programs via Selected Acquisition Reports. However, in January 2020, DOD adopted an Adaptive Acquisition Framework (AAF) with multiple acquisition pathways that broadened the range of approaches that could be used for costly, complex acquisition efforts. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 mandated that DOD propose a new method for reporting on acquisition programs, including for programs using alternative acquisition pathways.

DOD proposed a web-based reporting approach intended to improve efficiency and data transparency by providing real-time access to acquisition information for Congress and other stakeholders. This proposal builds on larger, ongoing initiatives within the department to make data more accessible to users. However, despite proposing to begin using this approach in fiscal year 2022, DOD's preparation for implementation has been limited and many open questions remain about how the approach would be implemented (see figure).

#### DOD Has Yet to Address Open Questions Related to Its Proposed Reporting Approach

What information to report	What criteria to use for selecting acquisition efforts to report	How to improve reporting timeliness	How to provide congressional access
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data elements</li> <li>Performance metrics</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost thresholds</li> <li>Adaptive Acquisition Framework pathways</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting frequency</li> <li>Automation of data reporting</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to web-based system</li> <li>How many users will need access</li> </ul>

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense (DOD) documentation and interviews with DOD officials. | GAO-22-104687

DOD has yet to determine key aspects of implementing its proposal, in part, because it has not fully adopted leading practices associated with successful reform efforts. For example, DOD has yet to develop an implementation plan with key milestones or identify resources necessary to enact its proposal, among other actions it could take.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, enacted in December 2021, requires DOD to develop plans and demonstrations related to the reporting system that will replace Selected Acquisition Report requirements. As DOD moves forward with addressing these new requirements, fully following leading reform practices would improve the department's preparation to effectively transform acquisition reporting in a timely manner. With programs already using the AAF, delays in DOD improving its reporting approach will ultimately affect Congress' access to complete information on acquisition efforts that it needs to perform its oversight role.