

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-105310](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives.

Why GAO Did This Study

Evolving terrorist threats, such as those posed by lone offenders and those who are radicalized online, highlight the continued need for effective information sharing between the federal government and its non-federal partners. In 2004, Congress passed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, which required the President to establish and develop the ISE. The ISE Implementation Plan has guided federal efforts in this area.

GAO was asked to review federal efforts related to the ISE Implementation Plan. This report examines, among other things, the extent to which agencies took action to complete the plan's objectives. GAO reviewed agency documents and interviewed ODNI, DHS, DOJ and White House officials about their implementation efforts. GAO assessed these efforts against statutory provisions.

What GAO Recommends

Congress should consider amending the ISE's enabling statute to clarify authorities for filling the Program Manager position. In addition, GAO is recommending that the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism take steps to ensure that (1) a Program Manager is in place and (2) implementation efforts are assessed. The Executive Office of the President did not provide comments on GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-23-105310](#). For more information, contact Triana McNeil at (202) 512-8777 or McNeilT@gao.gov.

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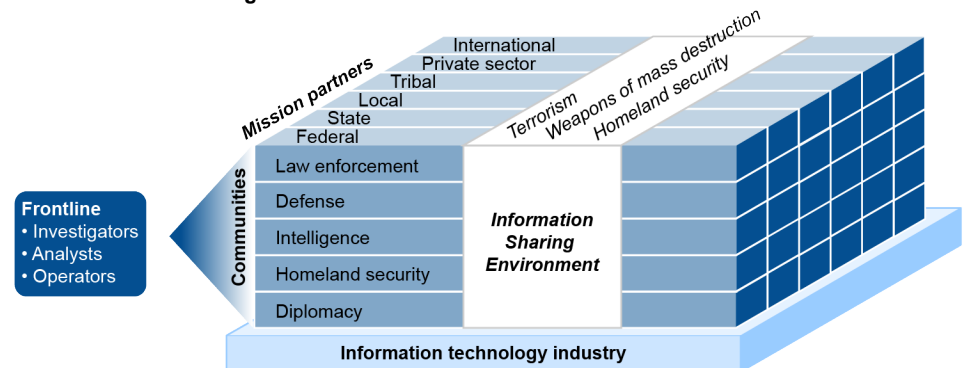
COUNTERTERRORISM

Action Needed to Further Develop the Information Sharing Environment

What GAO Found

The Information Sharing Environment (ISE) is a framework to improve terrorism-related information sharing among federal and non-federal partners (i.e., Tribal, state, local, territorial, and private sector partners) through policy guidelines, common standards, and technologies. In 2013, federal officials developed an implementation plan that identified 16 priority objectives (e.g., develop baseline sharing capabilities) needed to implement the framework. As of 2017, federal agencies—including the Office of the Director of the National Intelligence (ODNI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Department of Justice (DOJ)—had completed all but three of the 16 priority objectives.

The Information Sharing Environment



Source: Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment. | GAO-23-105310

GAO found that agencies have implemented ISE-related projects to complete the three remaining priority objectives since 2017. However, since that time, there has not been a Program Manager to guide and assess those efforts. Assessing agencies' progress with the ISE is a statutory responsibility of the Program Manager. Without someone in this position to assess agency efforts, how much work is needed to complete the ISE Implementation Plan's remaining objectives remains undetermined.

GAO also identified recent amendments to the statute establishing the ISE that, according to White House and ODNI officials, have complicated efforts to name a new ISE Program Manager. Clarifying that the President has full statutory authority to fill the Program Manager position would help ensure that a new Program Manager is named to continue work on the ISE Implementation Plan and broader federal terrorism information sharing goals.