



# Changes to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA): Overview of the New Framework of Products and Processes

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## Summary

On January 4, 2011, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) became law. The acronym “GPRA” in the act’s short title refers to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA 1993), a law that GPRAMA substantially modified. When GPRA 1993 was enacted, it was regarded as a watershed for the federal government. For the first time, Congress established statutory requirements for most agencies to set goals, measure performance, and submit related plans and reports (hereafter, “products”) to Congress for its potential use.

After a four-year phase-in period for GPRA 1993 and 13 years of the law’s full implementation, GPRAMA makes substantial changes. Among other things, GPRAMA

- continues three agency-level products from GPRA 1993, but with changes;
- establishes new products and processes that focus on goal-setting and performance measurement in policy areas that cut across agencies;
- brings attention to using goals and measures during policy implementation;
- increases reporting on the Internet; and
- requires individuals to be responsible for some goals and management tasks.

In making these changes, GPRAMA aligns the timing of many products to coincide with presidential terms and budget proposals. The law also includes more central roles for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), an entity that often seeks to advance the President’s policy preferences. GPRAMA also contains more specific requirements for consultations with Congress.

By design, many of GPRAMA’s products are required to be submitted to Congress for scrutiny and potential use. The law also provides opportunities for Congress and non-federal stakeholders to influence how agencies and OMB set goals and assess performance. This report provides an overview of GPRAMA’s products and processes. In addition, the report highlights potential issues for Congress. Related questions that Congress might consider include the following:

- Are agencies’ and OMB’s consultations with Congress working well? Are agencies and OMB defining goals and assessing performance in ways that reflect underlying statutes and congressional intent?
- Are the representations that agencies and OMB make about government performance perceived by Congress, federal personnel, and the public as credible and useful? What are the implications of evidence that is presented?
- Are agencies and OMB implementing GPRAMA with desired levels of transparency and public participation?
- Are agencies, OMB, and Congress focusing effectively on crosscutting policy areas to better coordinate efforts and reduce any unnecessary duplication?
- Are agencies and OMB implementing GPRAMA in a responsive, effective manner? Is GPRAMA working well? If not, what might be done?

This report will be updated as events warrant.

## **Contents**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Background: Congress and Performance.....                           | 2  |
| GPRAMA’s Products and Processes.....                                | 3  |
| Agency-Level Products and Processes Continuing from GPRA 1993 ..... | 4  |
| New Agency-Level Products and Processes.....                        | 7  |
| New Executive Branch-Wide Products and Processes .....              | 8  |
| Institutional Changes.....  | 11 |
| Viewing the Products and Processes Together.....                    | 13 |
| Implementation Schedule: Requirements and Deadlines .....           | 13 |
| Relationships Among Contents of Products and Processes.....         | 15 |
| Potential Implications and Issues for Congress .....                | 17 |
| Some Potential Implications.....                                    | 17 |
| Potential Issues for Congress.....                                  | 19 |

## **Figures**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Timeline for GPRAMA Implementation: Requirements and Deadlines .....         | 14 |
| Figure 2. Illustrative Relationships Among the Contents of Products and Processes..... | 16 |

## **Appendixes**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Appendix A. Acronyms.....          | 22 |
| Appendix B. Glossary of Terms..... | 23 |

## **Contacts**

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Author Contact Information..... | 33 |
| Acknowledgments .....           | 33 |

On January 4, 2011, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) became law.<sup>1</sup> The acronym “GPRA” in the act’s short title refers to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA 1993), a law that GPRAMA substantially modified.<sup>2</sup> When GPRA 1993 was enacted, it was regarded as a watershed for the federal government. For the first time, Congress established requirements in statute for most agencies to set goals, measure performance, and report the information to Congress for potential use.<sup>3</sup> Agencies submitted this information in three major products: multi-year strategic plans, annual plans, and annual reports. The law also required agencies to consult with Congress and non-federal stakeholders when developing some of these plans and goals. As a thread running through these requirements, the authors of GPRA 1993 said the law especially was intended to address the needs of Congress in its policy making, oversight, and budgeting work, and the needs of agency program managers.<sup>4</sup>

After a four-year phase-in period for GPRA 1993 and 13 years of the law’s full implementation, GPRAMA makes substantial changes. Among other things, GPRAMA

- continues the three agency-level products from GPRA 1993, but with changes;
- establishes new products and processes that focus on goal-setting and performance measurement in policy areas that cut across agencies;
- brings attention to using goals and measures during policy implementation;
- increases reporting on the Internet; and
- requires individuals to be responsible for some goals and management tasks.

In making these changes, GPRAMA aligns the timing of many products to coincide with presidential terms and budget proposals.<sup>5</sup> The law also includes more central roles for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), an entity that often seeks to advance the President’s policy preferences. GPRAMA also contains more specific requirements for consultations with Congress.

By design, many of GPRAMA’s products are required to be submitted to Congress for scrutiny and potential use. The law also provides opportunities for Congress and non-federal stakeholders to influence how agencies and OMB set goals and assess performance. This report provides an

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<sup>1</sup> P.L. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (H.R. 2142). The law also has been cited as GPRMA, GPRA 2010, and GPRA.

<sup>2</sup> P.L. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285. Some of GPRA 1993’s provisions were amended before enactment of GPRAMA.

<sup>3</sup> GPRA 1993 stood in contrast with past initiatives that several Presidents pursued through their use of discretion. All of the initiatives were generally abandoned due to changes in Administration, a perception of unrealistic ambitions, or lack of congressional buy-in. The initiatives included the Lyndon B. Johnson Administration’s Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS, 1965); the Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford Administrations’ Management by Objectives (MBO, 1973); and the Jimmy Carter Administration’s Zero-Base Budgeting (ZBB, 1977). After GPRA 1993’s enactment, the William Clinton Administration undertook a National Performance Review (NPR, 1993) and the George W. Bush Administration pursued the President’s Management Agenda (PMA, 2001). The Barack Obama Administration has pursued an Accountable Government Initiative (AGI). For discussion of the AGI, see CRS Congressional Distribution Memorandum, *Obama Administration Agenda for Government Performance: Evolution and Related Issues for Congress*, January 19, 2011, by (name redacted) (available on request).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993*, report to accompany S. 20, 103<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 16, 1993, S.Rept. 103-58 (Washington: GPO, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> For example, as discussed later in this report, agency-level strategic plans under GPRA 1993 were required to cover five years and to be revised every three years. They could be revised at times that suited the circumstances of individual agencies. Under GPRAMA, these products cover four years and are required to be revised and submitted at the same time, every four years, in alignment with the beginning of presidential terms.

overview of GPRAMA's products and processes. In addition, the report highlights potential issues for Congress. To provide context, the report first identifies potential congressional roles that relate to performance. Furthermore, because GPRAMA inserts an extensive vocabulary into law and practice, the report also includes a list of acronyms (**Appendix A**) and glossary (**Appendix B**).

## **Background: Congress and Performance**

The roles that Congress may take regarding government performance are pervasive and difficult to overstate. In exercising its constitutional powers, Congress may by law establish agencies, their missions and goals, processes for how they operate, their priorities, and their resource levels. Congress also may influence the actions of agencies and OMB through non-statutory means, conduct oversight, and study policy problems. In any of these activities, Congress may cooperate or compete with the President to influence how agencies implement public policies.

Like GPRA 1993, GPRAMA provides for goal-setting, measurement, and evaluation. These activities may not always be pursued in a neutral way, however. The choice of a policy goal or a trade-off among goals may be contested. It could be argued, therefore, that goals are inherently political in nature. Similarly, the definition of "success" that is to be used when assessing a program's performance also may be contested. In these situations, two tools of policy analysis often are used to help inform assessments of performance: program evaluation and performance measurement. Program evaluations use one or more methods to assess how, and the extent to which, programs or policies achieve intended objectives or cause unintended consequences (see box at right). By contrast, performance measurement is narrower in scope. It refers to periodic measurement of data that are related to programs. Used in isolation, performance measures do not necessarily reflect how well a program is working, because measurements may be driven by so-called "external factors" that are separate from the program, such as a natural disaster or downturn in the economy. In response, measurement and evaluation may be used together to help inform policy making. Policy making also may be informed by a variety of other analyses and considerations, such as forecasting, logic, risk assessment, and values.

### **Illustrations of Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement**

A federal program might focus on helping homeless veterans and reducing their rate of homelessness. In this context, a program evaluation might address the question whether the program is reducing the rate of homelessness in comparison to what would have happened in the absence of the federal program. A program evaluation also might assess whether the program's services are meeting the needs of clients. Performance measurement, by contrast, focuses on counting things such as the number of services provided or the overall homelessness rate. Typically, both program evaluation and performance measurement are helpful sources of information. They answer different kinds of questions, however.

In this context, Congress may assume at least two roles. First, when Congress looks at a specific program or policy area, Congress may use performance information to help inform its thinking, oversight, and policy making. For example, an interest group or the President may cite goals, evaluations, and measures when justifying a proposal to Congress. Congress and other consumers of performance information may face challenges in these situations—such as when scrutinizing whether information has been presented without bias or is relevant to a policy problem. A large volume of incoming information also may strain time and staff resources. Challenges like these highlight another potential role. In this second role, Congress may establish federal policies and processes that relate to how the government's goal-setting, planning, and evaluation are to be conducted. Congress's passage of GPRA 1993 and GPRAMA are examples of this role. In

addition, Congress may require agencies to involve non-federal stakeholders in processes like goal-setting or direct agencies to act transparently. In these ways, stakeholders may help Congress to identify performance-related issues that merit closer attention.<sup>6</sup> Policies and processes like these typically are intended to generate useful information for multiple audiences—including Congress, agencies, the President, and the public—and, thereby, to help inform policy making, oversight, and faithful and effective implementation of laws.

This CRS report focuses primarily on the first role, regarding the information and opportunities that GPRAMA may generate.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Congress might also assume the second role if it were assessing GPRAMA's design and implementation or considering changes to the law.

## **GPRAMA's Products and Processes**

GPRAMA substantially modified and added to GPRAMA 1993's framework of products and processes. In making these changes, GPRAMA's design drew from multiple sources. These included the views of the law's authors, the Barack Obama Administration's approach to government performance, the George W. Bush Administration's approach to government performance, the work during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress of a Senate Budget Committee task force, and Government Accountability Office (GAO) views.<sup>8</sup> Looking ahead, these influences and the federal government's experience with GPRAMA 1993 may provide insights into current issues of GPRAMA's design, implementation, and prospects. This CRS report, however, focuses more immediately on GPRAMA's statutory requirements and the information and opportunities that the law may generate for Congress. In that light, the following subsections discuss GPRAMA's major provisions in four categories:

- agency-level products and processes that GPRAMA continues from GPRAMA 1993, albeit with significant changes;<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For discussion, see David H. Rosenbloom, *Building a Legislative-Centered Public Administration: Congress and the Administrative State, 1946-1999* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2000); and Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 28, no. 1 (February 1984), pp. 165-179.

<sup>7</sup> Analysis of the rationales for changing GPRAMA 1993 and the prospects for GPRAMA to succeed are outside the scope of this report.

<sup>8</sup> For committee reports that accompanied the legislation during its development, see U.S. Congress, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Government Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Performance Improvement Act of 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 2142, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., June 14, 2010, H.Rept. 111-504 (Washington: GPO, 2010); and U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *GPRAMA Modernization Act of 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 2142, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., December 16, 2010, S.Rept. 111-372 (Washington: GPO, 2010). For views about how GPRAMA addressed the findings of Senate Budget Committee's Task Force on Government Performance, see Sen. Mark Warner, remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 156 (September 28, 2010), p. S7630. For discussion of the Obama Administration's performance agenda and some aspects of the George W. Bush Administration performance agenda, see CRS Congressional Distribution Memorandum, *Obama Administration Agenda for Government Performance: Evolution and Related Issues for Congress*, January 19, 2011, by (name redacted) (available on request). GAO suggested that Congress consider changes to GPRAMA 1993 in U.S. General Accounting Office (later renamed Government Accountability Office, hereafter GAO), *Results-Oriented Government: GPRAMA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results*, GAO-04-38, March 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Provisions that GPRAMA did not modify include authority for OMB to exempt agencies with annual outlays of \$20 million or less from certain requirements (31 U.S.C. §1117); authority for agencies to receive waivers of non-statutory administrative requirements in order to achieve an ambitious goal (31 U.S.C. §9703); requirements for pilot projects and phased implementation of GPRAMA 1993 (31 U.S.C. §§1118, 1119, and 9704); a requirement for the Office of (continued...)

- new agency-level products and processes;
- new products and processes that are executive branch-wide in scope; and
- institutional changes.<sup>10</sup>

After reviewing these provisions, subsequent sections of this report discuss how the changes fit together, some of their potential implications, and potential issues for Congress.

## Agency-Level Products and Processes Continuing from GPRAMA 1993

GPRAMA retains the three agency-level products that GPRAMA 1993 created. However, the law provides the products with new statutory names, inserts additional requirements, and makes several changes to their schedules and processes for being developed.<sup>11</sup>

- **Agency Strategic Plan (ASP; formerly Strategic Plan).** GPRAMA requires an agency to post a four-year Agency Strategic Plan on its public website.<sup>12</sup>
  - *Contents.* Some provisions from GPRAMA 1993 remain unchanged. Like GPRAMA 1993, GPRAMA requires an Agency Strategic Plan to identify “general goals and objectives” for the major functions and operations of the agency and to describe the evaluations used in establishing goals and objectives. GPRAMA also adds new requirements. Among other things, an agency must describe how it is working with other agencies to achieve certain goals.
  - *Timing requirements.* GPRAMA newly aligns the process of developing and updating an Agency Strategic Plan to coincide with presidential terms and budget proposals. An ASP must cover four fiscal years and must be updated every four years. An agency is required to submit the revised plan just after the first year of a President’s term, by the first Monday in February—the same deadline as the President’s annual budget proposal.<sup>13</sup> In the transition

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Personnel Management to develop a training component on strategic planning and performance measurement for managers (Section 9 of P.L. 103-62; 107 Stat. 295); and separate goal-setting and performance measurement provisions for the U.S. Postal Service (39 U.S.C. §§2801-2805). These provisions are not discussed further in this report.

<sup>10</sup> Two other significant provisions do not fit neatly into these categories. One requires the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to identify skills and competencies needed by government personnel for goal-setting, evaluation, and analysis; incorporate the skills and competencies into relevant position classifications; and work with agencies to incorporate the skills and competencies into employee training (GPRAMA, Section 12; 124 Stat. 3882; 5 U.S.C. §5105 note). Another provision requires GAO to report on the GPRAMA’s implementation (GPRAMA, Section 15; 124 Stat. 3883; 31 U.S.C. §1115 note). Specifically, GAO is required to report on the law’s early implementation by June 2013. GPRAMA also requires GAO to report on the law’s later implementation, with respect to both the CFO Act agencies and executive branch-wide goals and plans, by deadlines in September 2015 and September 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Statutory citations and capsule summaries for individual products, processes, and related terms are provided in **Appendix B**. Full listings of subcomponents that are required to be included in a product or process may be found in the statutory text. Past experience suggests that when agencies and OMB implement a law like GPRAMA, they may use terms that are different from those specified in law. Generally speaking, this CRS report uses terms as specified in the statutory text. However, the report and **Appendix B** will be updated to track informal usage.

<sup>12</sup> In **Appendix B**, see “agency” for discussion of which agencies are covered by GPRAMA.

<sup>13</sup> Under GPRAMA 1993, agencies were not required to develop Strategic Plans (SPs) according to an identical schedule. The SP covered a future period of at least five fiscal years. The SP was required to be updated with a minimum frequency of every three years, or for the Department of Defense (DOD), every four years. Aside from DOD, an (continued...)

from GPRA 1993, GPRAMA requires agencies to adjust the Strategic Plans that they developed under GPRA 1993 to conform to GPRAMA's requirements by the deadline for the President's FY2013 budget proposal, in February 2012. Thereafter, agencies are required to submit revised ASPs just after the first year of each presidential term (e.g., February 2014).

- *Agency consultations with Congress and non-federal stakeholders.* Like GPRA 1993, GPRAMA requires agencies to involve Congress and stakeholders in the development of Agency Strategic Plans. However, GPRAMA provides more specific requirements for how agencies are required to consult with Congress. When developing or adjusting an ASP, an agency is required to consult "periodically" with Congress, including majority and minority views from the "appropriate" authorizing, appropriations, and oversight committees. Agencies also are required to consult with "appropriate" committees of Congress every two years, regardless of whether an ASP is updated.<sup>14</sup> When developing or adjusting an ASP, an agency also is required to solicit and consider the views and suggestions of stakeholders.<sup>15</sup>
- **Agency Performance Plan (APP; formerly Annual Performance Plan).** GPRAMA requires an agency annually to post an Agency Performance Plan on its public website. The plan accompanies the agency's budget proposal, as submitted by the President or the agency.<sup>16</sup> The APP is required to cover each "program activity" (portion of a budget account; see **Appendix B**), as presented in the *Appendix* volume of the President's budget proposal to Congress.
- *Contents.* Like GPRA 1993, GPRAMA requires an Agency Performance Plan to establish one or more "performance goals."<sup>17</sup> An APP is required to establish performance indicators to be used in measuring or assessing progress toward these performance goals. Indicators may be of many types, including efficiency, outputs, and outcomes.<sup>18</sup> Under GPRAMA, the APP has new requirements, as well. For example, the product must describe how an agency plans to address major management challenges. In addition, the APP must identify "low-priority program activities" and provide an "evidence-

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agency could update its plan on a customized schedule.

<sup>14</sup> Apart from the frequency of consultations, the frequency of actual updates to an ASP that Congress may influence could diminish, from a minimum of two out of every three Congresses (under GPRA 1993, two updates every six years, at customized times) to one out of every two Congresses (under GPRAMA, one update every four years, at the beginning of a President's term).

<sup>15</sup> Compared to GPRA 1993, GPRAMA decreases the required frequency of an agency's consultations about its ASP with non-federal stakeholders, from a minimum of once every three years to once every four years. If an ASP is updated once every four years, this type of consultation might occur only at the beginning of a President's term.

<sup>16</sup> Under the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 (codified at 31 U.S.C. §1108), most executive branch agencies must submit budget requests to the President for potential modification, before the requests are sent to Congress. OMB performs much of this work on the President's behalf. When OMB receives an agency's budget request and Agency Performance Plan, OMB may direct that the products be modified to reflect the President's policy preferences in his or her budget proposal to Congress. Congress later gave authority to some executive agencies to submit budget proposals directly to Congress without modification by the President.

<sup>17</sup> A performance goal is a target level of performance to be achieved in a particular time period; see **Appendix B**.

<sup>18</sup> GPRAMA provides definitions for terms like these to clarify Congress's meaning; see **Appendix B**.

based justification” for the low-priority designation. The product also is required to identify agency officials, called “goal leaders,” who are responsible for the achievement of each performance goal.

- *Time coverage.* GPRAMA continues the GPRA 1993 requirement for the Agency Performance Plan to cover the forthcoming fiscal year, to coincide with the agency’s budget request. Newly, however, the law also requires the APP to cover the current year in which the plan is submitted. Consequently, the APP becomes a two-year goal-setting product, in which the plan covers the forthcoming year and also updates goals and other information for the current year that were included in the previous year’s APP.<sup>19</sup>
- **Agency Performance Update (APU; formerly Program Performance Report).** GPRAMA requires that an “update on agency performance” be made available each year on the agency’s public website.<sup>20</sup>
  - *Contents.* Continuing from GPRA 1993, GPRAMA requires the Agency Performance Update to provide performance indicators from the relevant Agency Performance Plan and compare performance goals with actual results. If a past performance goal was not met, an agency’s APU is required to explain why and to describe plans for achieving the goal or explain if the goal is infeasible. Under GPRAMA, the APU also is newly required to provide data of significant value more frequently than annually if this can be done at a “reasonable” level of administrative burden.
  - *Timing requirements.* The authors of GPRAMA probably intended for the Agency Performance Update to be made available no later than 150 days after the end of the fiscal year.<sup>21</sup> In practice, agencies probably will comply with the APU’s requirements sooner than the 150-day deadline. Depending on how an agency wishes to comply with current law and OMB direction, the APU may be completed (1) in November, several weeks after the end of a fiscal year, or (2) in February of the next calendar year, accompanying the agency’s budget request and Agency Performance Plan.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In February, when the President’s budget proposal is submitted to Congress, four months of the current fiscal year have already passed. There may be changes in goals, targets, or funds for the current fiscal year, compared to the previous APP, that correspond to funding or policy decisions that were made in the interim time period. The requirement to cover the current year may capture such changes.

<sup>20</sup> For ease of reference, this CRS report refers to the product as an Agency Performance Update (APU). Under GPRA 1993, agencies were required to submit an annual Program Performance Report (PPR). OMB later called this product the Annual Performance Report (APR). OMB’s use of the non-statutory term “APR” may continue under GPRAMA.

<sup>21</sup> This was the timing requirement for GPRA 1993’s equivalent product, the Program Performance Report. As drafted, GPRAMA requires an agency to make the APU available “no less than 150 days” after the end of the fiscal year. This timing requirement would prohibit an agency from making the APU available until 150 days after the end of the fiscal year. This probably is a drafting error. For information about the authors’ intent, see U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 2142, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., December 16, 2010, S.Rept. 111-372 (Washington: GPO, 2010), p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 (RCA; P.L. 106-531) permits an agency, with OMB concurrence, to package its Agency Performance Update together with certain financial statements and reports. If an agency does so, the consolidated document is referred to as a Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). OMB requires PARs to be submitted to Congress no later than 45 calendar days after the end of an agency’s fiscal year (e.g., November 15), and draft PARs to be submitted to OMB for clearance at least 10 working days before then (see U.S. Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget (hereafter OMB), *Circular No. A-136*, “Financial Reporting (continued...)”).

## New Agency-Level Products and Processes

At the agency level, GPRAMA adds new requirements for goal-setting, implementation reviews, and plans and reports.

- **Agency priority goals (APGs).** Every two years, GPRAMA requires the heads of certain executive agencies—the so-called CFO Act agencies plus any additional agencies designated by OMB—to identify a small subset of the performance goals from their Agency Performance Plans.<sup>23</sup> These goals are to be identified as “agency priority goals” (APGs). Agencies are required to identify an agency official, called a goal leader, who is responsible for achieving each APG.
  - *Process, timing, and role of OMB.* GPRAMA requires agency priority goals to be identified beginning with each agency’s FY2013 Agency Performance Plan. Apart from this requirement, GPRAMA establishes a potentially central role for OMB in structuring the APG process. The law provides that OMB determines the total number of agency priority goals and the number of goals to be developed by each agency. The law also appears to allow OMB to choose APGs and to determine the schedule for identifying them.<sup>24</sup>
  - *Determining priorities.* GPRAMA requires these goals to “reflect the highest priorities of the agency,” as determined by the head of the agency and informed by two sources: OMB-developed “federal government priority goals” (see next section, under “New Executive Branch-Wide Products and Processes”) and an agency’s consultations regarding its Agency Strategic Plan. However, the law does not require agencies or OMB to consult with Congress or stakeholders when they identify agency priority goals.
- **Quarterly reviews for agency priority goals.** During each fiscal year, GPRAMA requires an agency head and deputy head to conduct a “quarterly priority progress review.” The quarterly review is required to focus on progress toward achieving each agency priority goal. GPRAMA’s provisions appear to be modeled on the Obama Administration’s “high-priority performance goal” (HPPG) initiative, where reviews were conducted as in-person meetings.<sup>25</sup>
  - *Timing requirements.* The reviews were required to begin for the third quarter of FY2011 based on HPPGs from the President’s FY2011 budget proposal.

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Requirements,” September 29, 2010, pp. 3-4). OMB initially required all agencies to adopt the PAR format with the earlier, November deadline for the GPRA-required Program Performance Report. Subsequently, OMB gave agencies flexibility to instead submit the Program Performance Report several months later, in February, along with the forthcoming year’s congressional budget justification and APP (see *ibid.*, pp. 14-15).

<sup>23</sup> The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (CFO Act; P.L. 101-576) established statutory CFOs in agencies that were listed at 31 U.S.C. §901(b). These twenty-four agencies include the 15 departments and nine other large agencies, and as a group they frequently are called the “CFO Act agencies.”

<sup>24</sup> The law says “[e]very 2 years, the head of each agency listed in section 901(b) of [Title 31], or as otherwise determined by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall identify agency priority goals from among the performance goals of the agency” (emphasis added; GPRAMA, Section 5; 31 U.S.C. §1120(b)(1)).

<sup>25</sup> CRS Congressional Distribution Memorandum, *Analysis of Subcommittee-Reported H.R. 2142 (111<sup>th</sup> Congress) and Related Issues*, May 19, 2010, by (name redacted), p. 7 (available on request). OMB began to convene quarterly reviews of HPPGs in September 2010. Some agencies began conducting their own reviews earlier.

After agencies made available their FY2013 Agency Performance Plans, GPRAMA required the reviews to be based on agency priority goals.

- *Transparency.* GPRAMA does not require the reviews themselves to be transparent to Congress or the public. Some information about APGs is required to be included on an OMB-developed website (see next section, under “New Executive Branch-Wide Products and Processes”).
- **“Unmet goal” reports and plans.** GPRAMA requires OMB to annually determine whether an agency meets the performance goals in its Agency Performance Plan, or whether any goals are “unmet.” Using these determinations, agencies and OMB are required to generate several kinds of reports and plans to address unmet goals.<sup>26</sup> Under GPRAMA, agency priority goals are subject to these requirements, because they are performance goals that are required to be included in an agency’s APP.
- **Lists of plans and reports produced for Congress.** GPRAMA requires an agency to annually list all plans and reports it produces for Congress that are required by statute or directed in congressional reports. From this list, the agency is required to identify a minimum percentage of the products as “outdated” or “duplicative.” GPRAMA provides that the minimum percentage is to be determined annually by OMB but must be at least 10% in the first year of GPRAMA’s implementation. The agency is required to submit this second list to OMB. Next, GPRAMA requires the agency to consult with congressional committees that receive the documents to determine whether the products are no longer useful to them and could be eliminated or consolidated.

## **New Executive Branch-Wide Products and Processes**

At the executive branch-wide level, GPRAMA adds new requirements for goal-setting, plans, implementation reviews, and reports.

- **Federal government priority goals (FGPGs).** OMB is required to work with agencies to develop long-term “federal government priority goals” (FGPGs).
  - *Contents.* Federal government priority goals are required to be developed in two categories: (1) outcome-oriented goals in a limited number of policy areas that cut across agency boundaries, and (2) goals for management improvements across the federal government. In the second category, goals may relate to improvements in financial management, human capital management, information technology management, procurement and acquisition management, and real property management.
  - *Timing requirements.* GPRAMA aligns the process of developing federal government priority goals to coincide with the deadline for submitting the President’s budget proposal just after the first year of his or her term. The goals are required to be updated or revised every four years according to this schedule. In the transition from GPRA 1993, GPRAMA requires interim FGPGs to be submitted with the President’s FY2013 budget proposal.

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<sup>26</sup> For more details and statutory citations, see “OMB and Agency Reports and Plans on Unmet Goals” in **Appendix B**.

- *OMB consultations with Congress.* When OMB develops or adjusts FGPGs, GPRAMA requires OMB to consult “periodically” with the majorities and minorities of several specific committees (see **Appendix B**) and any other “appropriate” committees. OMB also is required to consult at least once every two years with “appropriate committees,” presumably about FGPGs.
- **Federal Government Performance Plan (FGPP).** GPRAMA requires OMB to coordinate with agencies to develop an annual Federal Government Performance Plan (FGPP).<sup>27</sup> OMB is required to submit the plan to Congress with the President’s budget proposals for FY2013 and each subsequent year.
  - *Contents.* Among other things, the Federal Government Performance Plan is required to establish one or more “federal government performance goals” for each federal government priority goal. The plan also is required to identify a “lead Government official” to be responsible for coordinating efforts to achieve each federal government priority goal.
  - *Time coverage.* Like the Agency Performance Plan, the FGPP is a two-year plan that covers the forthcoming year and the year in which the plan is submitted.
- **Quarterly reviews for FGPGs.** During each fiscal year, GPRAMA requires OMB to conduct a “quarterly priority progress review” of the progress toward achieving each federal government priority goal.
  - *Timing requirements.* The quarterly reviews are required to begin for the quarter ending June 30, 2012 (i.e., third quarter of FY2012).
  - *Transparency.* The law does not require the reviews themselves to be transparent to Congress or the public. Some information about federal government priority goals is required to be included on an OMB-developed website (see next bullet, below).
- **OMB performance website.** GPRAMA requires OMB to establish a single, performance-related website by October 1, 2012.<sup>28</sup> The website is required to be accessible to Congress and the public in a searchable, machine-readable format. With respect to content, GPRAMA requires the website to make available
  - information about the two kinds of “priority” goals that GPRAMA establishes—agency priority goals and federal government priority goals—including how both kinds of priority goals incorporate views and suggestions obtained through congressional consultations;

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<sup>27</sup> These requirements expand on a provision from GPRAMA 1993 that did not specify the plan’s contents. Under previous law, GPRAMA 1993 did not require an agency to submit an Annual Performance Plan (under GPRAMA, Agency Performance Plan) to Congress. Rather, the APP submission was intended to support the President’s annual development of a “federal government performance plan.” GPRAMA 1993 did not specify any of the contents of this broader plan. In practice, OMB considered the President’s budget proposal to satisfy this statutory requirement. Agencies then submitted their presidentially-modified APPs and budget requests to Congress.

<sup>28</sup> For more information, see **Appendix B** for the item “OMB performance website.” GPRAMA’s provision appeared to draw in part from the Obama Administration’s plans to establish a performance-related website, Performance.gov. That website was established in 2010 to contain data about HPPGs, but was accessible only in the executive branch. The website was opened to the public in 2011, albeit without HPPG data.

- all information required for the Federal Government Performance Plan, posted concurrently with submission of the President’s budget proposal;
- agency-level Agency Strategic Plans, Agency Performance Plans, and Agency Performance Updates; and
- detailed information about each “program” identified by agencies, including in each case an explanation of how the agency defines the term “program.”<sup>29</sup>

GPRAMA requires the OMB performance website to be updated quarterly. It remains to be seen, however, which categories of data on the website will be updated on that schedule.<sup>30</sup> GPRAMA does not require the website to provide transparency into the quarterly reviews that OMB and agencies conduct for the two kinds of priority goals. Therefore, information from the reviews may or may not be posted online.

- **Presidential list of plans and reports for Congress.** GPRAMA requires the President’s budget proposal to include an executive branch-wide list of certain plans and reports that agencies produce for Congress.
  - *Contents.* The President’s list is required to include products “that agencies identified for elimination or consolidation because the plans and reports are determined outdated or duplicative of other required plans and reports.”<sup>31</sup> GPRAMA further says OMB may concurrently submit draft legislation to eliminate or consolidate these products.
  - *Process.* As noted earlier, each agency is separately required to identify an OMB-determined percentage of reports and plans as outdated or duplicative,

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<sup>29</sup> GPRAMA requires agencies to define the term “program” in a way that is consistent with OMB guidance. It might be noted in this context that during the George W. Bush Administration, OMB undertook an initiative to rate all “programs” in the executive branch. From 2003 until the inauguration of President Obama, OMB used the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), a questionnaire, to annually assign ratings of “overall effectiveness” to OMB-defined programs. OMB’s definitions of “program” for purposes of the PART sometimes were controversial. OMB sometimes aggregated separate programs for the purposes of the PART, while in other cases it disaggregated programs. As a consequence, OMB’s PART assessments sometimes were said to correspond to “PART programs,” as distinct from how agencies and non-federal stakeholders might define a program. GAO noted that OMB’s aggregation and disaggregation of activities into a PART program sometimes (1) made it difficult to select performance measures for PART programs that had multiple missions, or (2) ignored the context in which programs operated. See GAO, *Performance Budgeting: Observations on the Use of OMB’s Program Assessment Rating Tool for the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget*, GAO-04-174, January 2004, pp. 29-30.

<sup>30</sup> Specifically, it remains to be seen whether OMB will interpret a general frequency-of-update requirement as applying to data items that do not explicitly call for quarterly information. In 31 U.S.C. §1122, GPRAMA requires OMB to operate the website. In this context, the only explicit mentions of quarterly information are two requirements to provide “results achieved during the most recent quarter” for agency priority goals and federal government priority goals. It remains to be seen if other information about priority goals will be updated quarterly. Other provisions require products or information to be posted on the OMB performance website but are silent with regard to frequency or seem to contemplate other frequencies of updating. For example, GPRAMA requires data from the Federal Government Performance Plan to be included on the website and updated annually. In addition, Agency Strategic Plans, Agency Performance Plans, and Agency Performance Updates are required to be posted on the website, but these products reflect snapshots in time according to their schedules for publication and may not be updated quarterly.

<sup>31</sup> Presidents may attempt to treat as non-binding a statutory provision that says the President or OMB “may” or “shall” make legislative recommendations. Presidential signing statements sometimes justify this view by using language from Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution, which says the President “shall ... recommend to [Congress’s] Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” For example, see U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, *George W. Bush White House Web Site*, “Statement by the President,” November 25, 2002, at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/11/20021125-11.html>.

send this list to OMB, and consult with congressional recipients about which products could be eliminated or consolidated.<sup>32</sup> The agency-level requirement does not specify that agencies go beyond identifying reports and plans as outdated or duplicative to also identify them for elimination or consolidation. If agencies operate according to the sequence in the separate requirement, the President's list may not reflect agencies' consultations about whether any of the products are considered by recipients to be outdated or duplicative.

## **Institutional Changes**

GPRAMA's provisions that relate to products and processes are accompanied by several institutional changes that involve officials and organizations. GPRAMA provides that the officials and organizations have specific duties in relation to many of the products and processes.

- **Chief Operating Officers (COOs).** GPRAMA establishes an additional title for the deputy head or equivalent position of each agency: Chief Operating Officer (COO). GPRAMA says the agency's COO is "responsible for improving the management and performance of the agency" and specifies several corresponding functions. These include responsibility for assisting the agency head in implementing GPRAMA, conducting quarterly reviews for agency priority goals, and overseeing efforts to improve mission-support functions (e.g., procurement).
- **Performance Improvement Officers (PIOs).** GPRAMA requires each agency head to designate a senior executive as Performance Improvement Officer (PIO).
  - *Qualification requirements and reporting relationship.* An agency's Performance Improvement Officer may be a career civil servant or a political appointee. GPRAMA does not identify specific qualification requirements. A PIO is required to report directly to the agency Chief Operating Officer.
  - *Duties.* The primary duties of a Performance Improvement Officer under GPRAMA are to advise and assist the head and deputy head of an agency in areas like goal-setting, planning, and performance measurement. A PIO also is required to assist with quarterly reviews of progress toward APGs and the "development and use ... of performance measures in personnel performance appraisals." GPRAMA does not explicitly provide for transparency outside the executive branch into the activities and agendas of individual PIOs.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> For the agency-level requirement, see the earlier heading "Lists of plans and reports produced for Congress."

<sup>33</sup> The statutory PIO position focuses on several activities, including goal-setting, planning, management, measurement, analysis, and employee performance appraisal. The duties are similar to those that were included in Executive Order (E.O.) 13450, which the George W. Bush Administration used to establish the position in 2007. However, the extent to which these varied activities may fit effectively into the competencies of one position remains to be seen. PIOs have operated with little transparency since the beginning of their activities in January 2008. Nevertheless, a pre-GPRAMA study of PIOs found several challenges to their effectiveness. These included "that [PIOs] often have multiple duties that include budget and financial issues, causing them to give performance management short shrift" (see Partnership for Public Service and Grant Thornton, *A Critical Role at a Critical Time: A Survey of Performance Improvement Officers*, April 2011, p. 1). Along these lines, GPRAMA does not require a PIO to have performance-related duties as his or her primary duty. In addition, observers have noted that government performance policy has had two distinct orientations: (1) goal-setting and performance measurement and (2) program evaluation. GPRA 1993 especially focused on the former. This tendency led the evaluation community to argue for elevating the salience of program evaluation in federal officials and organizations. See American Evaluation Association, *An Evaluation Roadmap for a* (continued...)

- **Performance Improvement Council (PIC).** GPRAMA establishes in law a Performance Improvement Council (PIC).
  - *Membership.* The Performance Improvement Council’s membership includes OMB’s Deputy Director for Management (DDM) as chairperson, Performance Improvement Officers from the 24 CFO Act agencies, and other PIOs and individuals as determined by OMB’s DDM.
  - *Duties.* The Performance Improvement Council’s primary duties include assisting OMB with topics related to GPRAMA and serving at the direction of OMB’s Deputy Director for Management, who determines the council’s agenda and directs its work. The PIC also is tasked with developing related recommendations for the Director of OMB or the President, as specified by the DDM, and working to resolve crosscutting performance issues. GPRAMA does not explicitly provide for transparency outside the executive branch into the PIC’s activities and agenda.<sup>34</sup>
- **OMB-directed staff of agency personnel for the Performance Improvement Council.** GPRAMA requires each of the 24 CFO Act agencies, plus any other agencies with Performance Improvement Officers who serve as members of the Performance Improvement Council, to provide up to two “personnel authorizations” to serve at the direction of OMB’s Deputy Director for Management upon his or her request.<sup>35</sup> If the reference to “personnel authorizations” were interpreted as requiring an agency to provide detailees, OMB could use this authority to direct 48 or more agency staff in support of the PIC’s duties and the President’s performance-related agenda.
- **Officials responsible for certain goals and topics.** As noted earlier, GPRAMA requires individual officials to be identified as responsible for certain topics. A consolidated listing of these topics and officials follows:
  - *Agency-level performance goals.* An Agency Performance Plan is required to identify the agency officials, called goal leaders, who are responsible for the achievement of each performance goal.
  - *Agency priority goals.* Agencies and the OMB performance website are required to identify an agency official, also called a goal leader, who is responsible for achieving each agency priority goal.
  - *Federal government priority goals.* The Federal Government Performance Plan and the OMB performance website are required to identify a lead

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(...continued)

*More Effective Government*, September 2010, pp. 8-10, at <http://www.eval.org/EPTF/aea10.roadmap.101910.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> In 2009, the Senate Committee on Appropriations directed OMB to include a budget justification for the PIC in the annual budget request for the Executive Office of the President (EOP) beginning with the President’s FY2011 budget proposal. Subsequently, the EOP budget request has provided some information about the PIC’s activities and plans. For the committee’s directive, see U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill, 2010*, report to accompany S. 1432, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., July 9, 2009, S.Rept. 111-43 (Washington: GPO, 2009), p. 40.

<sup>35</sup> Section 9 of GPRAMA (31 U.S.C. §1124(b)(3)) says that heads of agencies whose PIOs serve on the PIC “shall, as appropriate and to the extent permitted by law, provide at the request of the chairperson of the [PIC] up to 2 personnel authorizations to serve at the direction of the chairperson.” GPRAMA identifies the DDM as the PIC’s chairperson.

government official to be responsible for coordinating efforts to achieve each federal government priority goal.

- *Resolution of major management challenges.* An Agency Performance Plan is required to identify the agency official who is responsible for resolving major management challenges that the agency faces.
- *Improvement strategies for unmet goals.* When OMB determines that an agency has not met one or more performance goals from its Agency Performance Plan for one year, the agency is required to designate a “senior official” to oversee “performance improvement strategies” for each goal.

## Viewing the Products and Processes Together

### Implementation Schedule: Requirements and Deadlines

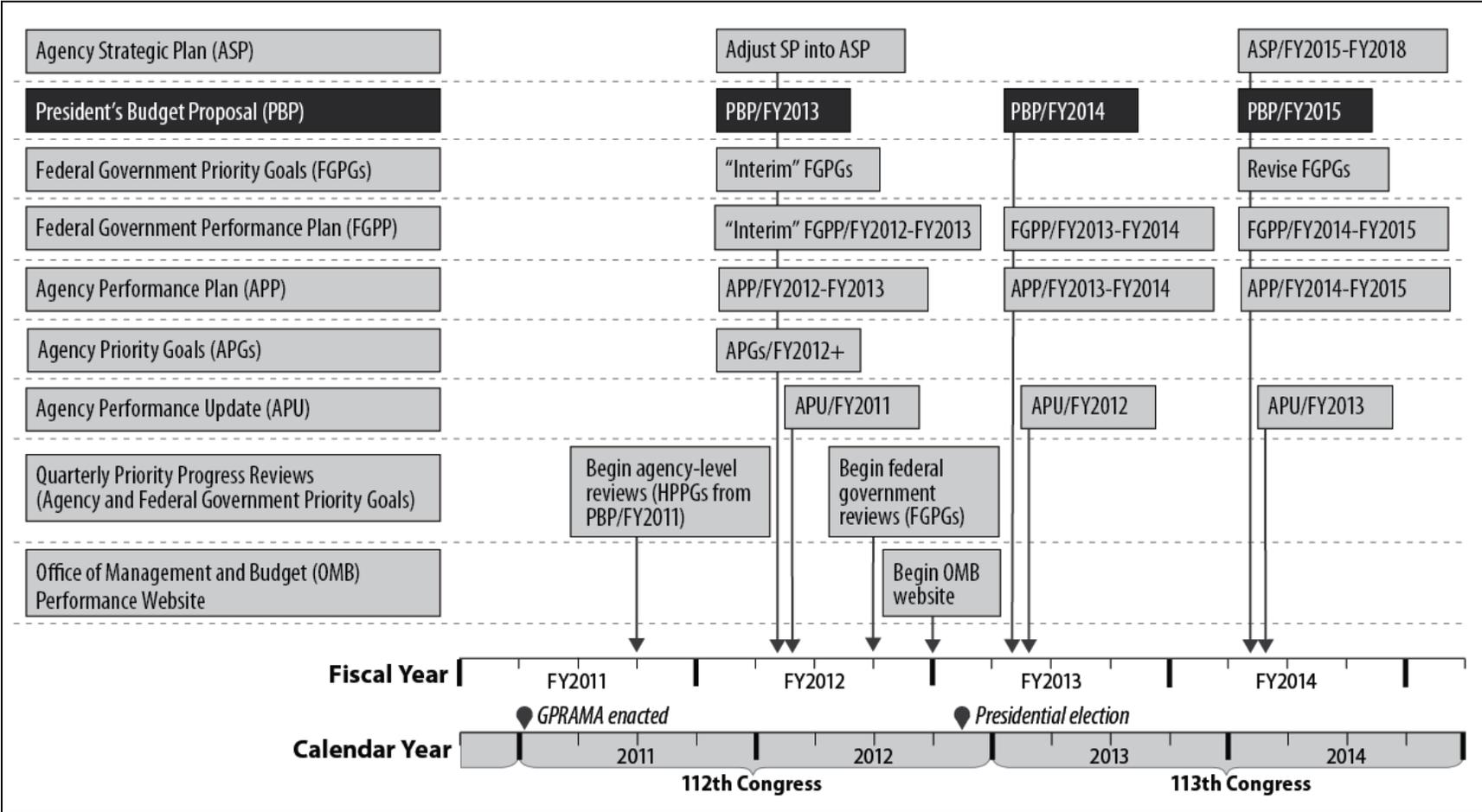
GPRAMA provides for many products and processes that will be presented to Congress. Each may be viewed in isolation. Several patterns emerge, however, when they are viewed together. **Figure 1** provides a timeline for GPRAMA’s implementation. On the left side, the figure lists some of GPRAMA’s requirements for products and processes. Items that are associated with GPRAMA appear as rectangles with light grey background and black print. For reference, the figure also includes the statutory requirement for the President’s budget proposal (black background, white print), because GPRAMA aligns the schedules of several products to coincide with the President’s budget proposal. At the bottom, timelines show fiscal and calendar years. Moving from left to right, when the figure shows a vertical line that intersects with a product or process, GPRAMA requires the product or process to be submitted or initiated by that time.

**Figure 1** illustrates several of GPRAMA’s changes from prior practice and some patterns from GPRAMA’s requirements. As noted earlier, three products associated with GPRAMA 1993 have new names, modified contents, and different years of coverage. For example, Agency Performance Plans are required to cover two fiscal years instead of only one.<sup>36</sup> The figure shows these revised requirements for successive APPs. The figure also shows how Agency Strategic Plans are required to be adjusted with the FY2013 President’s budget proposal and then submitted on a regular, four-year schedule beginning with the FY2015 President’s budget proposal.

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<sup>36</sup> An Agency Performance Update is required to cover the same time period as the relevant Agency Performance Plan. The precise years that are covered, however, may depend on whether an agency chooses to package the APU along with the agency budget request or with an agency’s Performance and Accountability Report. On one hand, budget requests are due to Congress in February, several months after the beginning of a fiscal year. PARs are due in November, just after the end of a fiscal year. If an agency submits its APU in February 2014 along with the FY2015 budget request, the APU would be required to cover all of FY2013 and the first few months of FY2014, the same time period as the previously submitted Agency Performance Plan (FY2013-FY2014). If an agency submits its APU in November 2013 along with its PAR, by contrast, it remains to be seen whether the APU would cover only FY2013 and omit FY2014 (because little time would have passed in FY2014) or cover the same time period as the earlier APP (the two fiscal years FY2012 and FY2013). In either case, FY2013 would appear to be included.

Figure I. Timeline for GPRAMA Implementation: Requirements and Deadlines



Source: CRS.

Notes: On the left side, GPRAMA’s requirements for several products and processes are listed (gray background, black print). The figure also includes the statutory requirement for the President’s budget proposal, for reference (black background, white print). When the figure shows a vertical line that intersects with a product or process, GPRAMA requires the product or process to be submitted or initiated by that time. For example, “PBP/FY2013” stands for the FY2013 President’s budget proposal due by February 2012; and on the right side at the top, “ASP/FY2015-FY2018” stands for an Agency Strategic Plan that is due by February 2014 to cover the period FY2015-FY2018.

Separately, GPRAMA required agencies to commence with quarterly reviews of previously established high-priority performance goals based on performance during the third quarter of FY2011. GPRAMA requires agency priority goals to be included in FY2013 Agency Performance Plans and subject to quarterly reviews thereafter. Subsequently, the schedule for establishing and revising agency priority goals may be determined by OMB. Consequently, the schedule for release of new or revised APGs may vary over time and differ among Presidents.

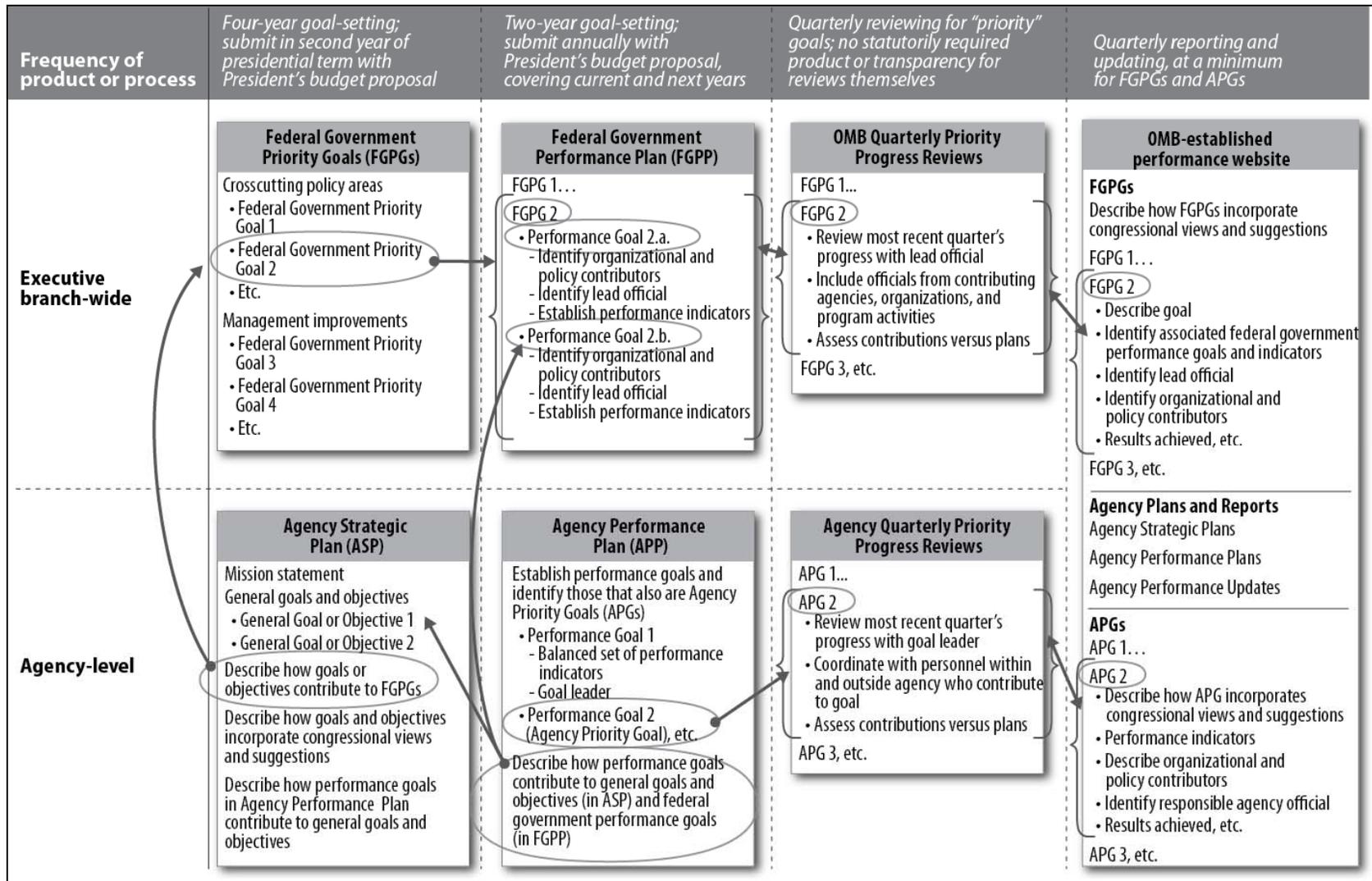
With respect to deadlines, GPRAMA aligns the timing for many of its products with submission of the President's budget proposal, as shown by the vertical lines. Initially, the law requires the President, OMB, and agencies to produce several products to accompany the President's FY2013 budget proposal. However, GPRAMA provides that a one-year transition from GPRA 1993 take place. Consequently, the law characterizes some of these goals and plans as "interim" or "adjusted." After the FY2013 transition, full implementation begins with the President's budget proposals for FY2014 and FY2015. The FY2015 submission will occur just after the first year of the presidential term that begins in January 2013. The products that are due in February 2014 also illustrate how GPRAMA aligns Agency Strategic Plans and federal government priority goals with presidential terms.

## **Relationships Among Contents of Products and Processes**

By design, many of GPRAMA's products are required to be submitted to Congress as potential inputs for its work. The law directs, for example, that an Agency Performance Plan shall provide detailed information to Congress about the agency's goals, operations, and results. In considering the representations that these products make, Congress may examine each product in isolation. However, additional perspective may be gained by viewing how the contents of the products and processes relate each other. **Figure 2** illustrates some of these interrelationships. In the figure, several products and processes are illustrated by graphics that contain small subsets of GPRAMA's detailed requirements. Agency-level products and processes are shown in the bottom row, and executive branch-wide products and processes are shown in the top row. Notably, while GPRA 1993 focused on agency-level products and processes, GPRAMA added several items at the executive branch-wide level. Moving from left to right across columns, **Figure 2** shows how GPRAMA's products and processes reflect four-year goal-setting at both the executive branch-wide level and the agency level (second column), annual submission of two-year goal-setting (third column), quarterly reviews of priority goals (fourth column), and inclusion of information on the OMB website (fifth column). The OMB website is required to provide both agency-level and executive branch-wide information.

The figure illustrates how GPRAMA requires some of the contents of products and processes to relate to each other. For example, GPRAMA requires OMB to establish federal government priority goals. Inside the small graphic for FGPGs (upper left), **Figure 2** circles a hypothetical federal government priority goal for a crosscutting policy area, labeled as "FGPG 2." This might be a goal related to food safety, for example, where multiple agencies and programs work to promote a safe national food supply. The figure then uses arrows to trace how other products and processes at the executive branch-wide and agency levels are required to relate to that goal. Moving to the right, the Federal Government Performance Plan is required to have one or more performance goals for each FGPG. Continuing to toward the right, OMB is required to conduct a review of progress with the federal government priority goal's lead official each quarter. Finally, OMB is required to post the most recent quarterly results that were achieved for FGPG 2.

**Figure 2. Illustrative Relationships Among the Contents of Products and Processes**



Source: CRS.

Notes: Arrows indicate relationships between the circled or bracketed information in different products and processes.

At the agency level, **Figure 2** illustrates that each Agency Strategic Plan (graphic at lower left) is required to describe how any of the agency's general goals or objectives may contribute to federal government priority goals. In turn, an Agency Performance Plan is required to describe how the agency's own performance goals, such as the circled "Performance Goal 2," contribute to the agency's general goals in the Agency Strategic Plan. The APP also is required to describe how agency-level performance goals contribute to the executive branch-level federal government performance goals in the Federal Government Performance Plan. If an agency has a performance goal that also is designated as an agency priority goal (e.g., "APG 2"), GPRAMA requires the agency to review quarterly progress with the relevant goal leader. Finally, the law requires OMB and agencies to post online the most recent quarterly results for each agency priority goal.

The ways in which OMB and agencies present information to Congress in these products and processes may vary over time. GPRAMA establishes minimum expectations in law, however.

## Potential Implications and Issues for Congress

### Some Potential Implications

Depending on how GPRAMA's changes are implemented, the law may have significant implications. To highlight a few, GPRAMA brings additional attention to policy implementation and oversight in several ways. For example, GPRA 1993 focused on annual plans that were used to support the President's budget proposal. These plans were not required to be revised to reflect congressional action. By contrast, GPRAMA adds a requirement that effectively requires the Agency Performance Plans to be updated to reflect this policy making. In quarterly reviews, the law may bring focus to achieving goals during policy implementation, and the performance-related website may facilitate congressional oversight. GPRAMA's requirements for individual officials to be responsible for various management- and performance-related tasks also may provide a convenient means for Congress to interact with agencies about discrete topics.

GPRAMA continues with GPRA 1993's emphasis on goal-setting and performance measurement, with little explicit emphasis on producing or presenting program evaluations. Under GPRA 1993, this sometimes could leave unclear how well programs themselves were performing, why, and what might be done in response.<sup>37</sup> For example, achievement or non-achievement of a goal might be driven by "external" factors other than the program, and measurement of goal achievement may reveal little information that is actionable for an agency, Congress, or the President. At the same time, GPRAMA also brings more attention to goal-setting and performance in areas that cut across federal programs and agencies. As shown in **Figure 2**, the law established a new set of executive branch-wide products and processes. In addition, nearly 20 provisions in GPRAMA relate to the concept of crosscutting policy areas, where multiple agencies, programs, regulations, delivery partners, and other policy tools may "contribute" to the accomplishment of a goal or

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<sup>37</sup> American Evaluation Association, *An Evaluation Roadmap for a More Effective Government*, September 2010, pp. 8-9, at <http://www.eval.org/EPTF/aea10.roadmap.101910.pdf>. In practice, however, it may be noted that evaluation and measurement often are complementary. Performance measurement might be characterized as answering the question "where are we?", and evaluation may answer questions such as "what influences did a program have?", "how and why?", and "what might be done to improve?" Measures and evaluation may be integrated through a logic model (see **Appendix B**), which shows how activities in one or more programs align with results (or more specifically, how disparate inputs, activities, and outputs are expected to influence one or more desired policy outcomes).

desired outcome. Several provisions require assessments of whether activities that cut across these boundaries are contributing toward achievement of the same goal. GPRAMA does not specify how such assessments are to be made or presented to Congress. Nevertheless, agencies and OMB might use program evaluations or “logic modeling” (see **Appendix B**) to portray and demonstrate these relationships.

In several ways, GPRAMA establishes more specific requirements for agency and OMB interactions with Congress. For example, agency consultations with Congress about Agency Strategic Plans are required to include both majority and minority views from authorizing, appropriations, and oversight committees. In this context, another GPRAMA provision requires consultations with “appropriate” committees to occur every two years. Similarly, when OMB coordinates development of long-term federal government priority goals, GPRAMA requires OMB to consult “periodically” with the majorities and minorities of several specific committees. To provide some accountability with regard to consultations, GPRAMA requires reporting in Agency Strategic Plans and on the OMB website regarding how (or whether) congressional views and suggestions were incorporated into certain kinds of goals.

At the same time, it remains to be seen if GPRAMA could have any implications for the working relationships and the power relationships among Congress, agencies, OMB, the President, and the public. To illustrate, the OMB website has stated that

[t]he core mission of OMB is to serve the President of the United States in implementing his vision across the Executive Branch.... As the implementation and enforcement arm of Presidential policy government-wide, OMB carries out its mission through five critical processes that are essential to the President’s ability to plan and implement his priorities across the Executive Branch.<sup>38</sup>

GPRAMA gives OMB specific statutory authorities that it could attempt to use to influence several products, processes, and institutions.<sup>39</sup> In any of these situations, if a GPRAMA product or process were perceived as reflecting primarily the President’s policy preferences or assessing performance in a way that does not reflect underlying statute or congressional intent, some observers might view the product or process as less credible or useful. Similarly, GPRAMA aligns or re-aligns numerous products and processes according to presidential terms and budget proposals. As a consequence, it arguably remains to be seen whether GPRAMA’s authorities could be used to alter the responsiveness of agencies to Congress and congressional intent. For example, in spite of more specific consultation requirements, it might become more difficult for Congress to influence agencies’ goal-setting in Agency Strategic Plans. Under GPRAMA, all agencies probably will submit draft ASPs to OMB for clearance at the same time, in the first year of a new President’s term.<sup>40</sup> This is a time when the President traditionally attempts to influence

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<sup>38</sup> OMB’s website lists (1) budget development and execution and (2) management as two of these five processes. The website also says that the budgeting role is “a mechanism by which a President implements decisions, policies, priorities, and actions in all areas (from economic recovery to health care to energy policy to national security).” OMB, “The Mission and Structure of the Office of Management and Budget,” at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/organization\\_mission/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/organization_mission/).

<sup>39</sup> These include the possibilities of OMB selecting priority goals; populating the performance-related website; directing agencies to provide staff to support the OMB-directed PIC; deciding when an agency’s performance goal is considered to be “unmet”; guiding agencies on how to define the term “program”; and, via OMB’s role in developing the President’s budget proposal, influencing or directing how agencies identify any “low priority program activities” and “outdated or duplicative” reports to Congress.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, OMB’s direction to agencies on revisions to strategic plans during the transition from GPRA 1993 (continued...)

agencies to adopt and implement his or her policy agenda.<sup>41</sup> As a consequence, OMB's ability to influence or direct the choices of agencies and the information that they present may be enhanced in comparison with GPRA 1993.<sup>42</sup>

GPRAMA's more specific requirements for congressional consultations about ASPs and priority goals, along with transparency from the OMB performance website, also could affect working and power relationships. For example, it remains to be seen whether congressional consultations might mitigate any of the possibilities discussed above, create enhanced opportunities for Congress to influence the choices of agencies, or foster congressional-executive collaboration and compromise.

## Potential Issues for Congress

With these and other potential implications in mind, the bullets below highlight more specific issues for Congress that might arise during implementation of GPRAMA. Each bullet also includes questions that might be considered.

- **Congressional consultations and defining “success.”** GPRAMA requires agencies and OMB to consult with Congress regarding Agency Strategic Plans, federal government priority goals, and agency submissions of plans and reports to Congress. Committees also might consider asserting broader prerogatives to interact with or direct agencies. In these contexts, have meaningful consultations occurred with relevant committees and Members? Did the consultations occur during formulation of the plans, goals, and proposals, or only after the fact? Are agencies being responsive to committees of jurisdiction? Do committees and Members agree with the way in which agencies or OMB are defining what constitutes a “program,” as this is required to be portrayed on the OMB performance website by October 2012? How might committees and Members engage on these topics effectively? Do goals and objectives reflect current law and congressional intent? Does Congress agree with the designation of certain goals as being priority goals? Are plans and goals well formulated and coordinated?

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to GPRAMA (OMB, *Circular No. A-11*, Section 210, “Preparing and Submitting an Agency Strategic Plan,” August 2011, pp. 4-5).

<sup>41</sup> GPRAMA also decreases the statutorily required frequency of an agency's consultations about its Agency Strategic Plan with non-federal stakeholders. As a result, this type of consultation might occur only in the first year of a President's term. It remains to be seen whether this change may affect the ability of non-federal stakeholders to influence agencies' choices.

<sup>42</sup> Under GPRA 1993, nearly all of the law's duties to produce plans and reports were vested with agency heads rather than OMB. Following enactment of GPRA 1993, OMB was quick to require that agencies submit documents to OMB for review and clearance—that is, potential modification before release in order to conform to presidential policy views. When an agency developed a Strategic Plan, for example, OMB required the agency to submit the plan to OMB for clearance at least 45 days prior to submission to Congress (see OMB, *Circular No. A-11*, Part 2, “Preparation and Submission of Strategic Plans,” June 1996, p. 237). However, whenever agencies produced such documents, they typically chose when to make a revision and “moved first” in completing full versions of these documents, without direct or sustained OMB involvement in their initial preparation. In other words, OMB's influence on such documents likely most often focused on an end-of-the-process clearance and modification role, as opposed to full-process direction or participation.

- **Agency and OMB representations about performance.** By design, GPRAMA requires many products to be submitted to Congress to inform its policy deliberations. If the products are to be considered useful to Congress and the public, one input to perceptions of usefulness may be whether the products are perceived as making credible, unbiased representations about how well agencies and programs are performing. How credible are these representations? For a program or agency, is “success” being defined appropriately? Are credible and appropriate methods of policy analysis, measurement, and evaluation being used? What resources and tools might Congress draw upon, including from its support agencies and the public, to scrutinize any “evidence” that is presented? What are the policy implications of available evidence and analyses?
- **Oversight, transparency, and public participation.** Congress oftentimes relies on transparency and public participation to help it conduct oversight of policy development and implementation within agencies and OMB. Oversight findings may generate interest in subsequent lawmaking or other legislative activity. What have been the recent activities of Performance Improvement Officers and the Performance Improvement Council? Are they functioning effectively? What is happening during quarterly reviews? Are agencies and OMB focusing on learning and improvement in addition to goal achievement? Is the OMB performance website providing the required information? If a goal is removed from the website, or if a goal’s target is revised, will the website retain any record of the previous goal or target?<sup>43</sup> Might it be worthwhile to communicate informally with a goal leader or other official who is responsible for a topic under GPRAMA, or more formally invite the official to testify at a hearing? Are non-federal stakeholders being consulted by agencies in the development of Agency Strategic Plans? What are stakeholders’ views about agencies’ goals? Are OMB and agencies consulting effectively with Congress about the potential elimination of requirements to submit plans and reports to Congress? Is GPRAMA being implemented in a way that helps agency program managers and front-line staff without creating perverse incentives for organizations and individuals?<sup>44</sup>
- **Crosscutting policy areas.** Congress and observers have expressed interest in policy areas that cut across agency and programmatic boundaries. In these areas, more than one agency or program may collaborate and contribute toward desired policy outcomes or, conversely, duplicate effort. For example, GPRAMA requires OMB to include information on its performance website about each agency program and how the program contributes to one or more of the agency’s goals. GAO is separately required to report annually on programs, agencies, and initiatives with “duplicative goals and activities.”<sup>45</sup> Most of GAO’s March 2011

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<sup>43</sup> It may be difficult or burdensome for an observer to track changes to a website’s contents if information is presented in formats other than discrete files (e.g., PDF). Nevertheless, information about changes to a website’s contents might be captured if the website provides a bulk-download capability through which an observer could take a “snapshot” in time of the website’s contents. This kind of issue may become more salient when information is provided primarily or only on the Internet in machine-readable format. As noted earlier, the OMB performance website is required to present its contents in machine-readable format.

<sup>44</sup> For discussion of the potential for implementation of performance initiatives to create perverse incentives, see CRS Congressional Distribution Memorandum, *Obama Administration Agenda for Government Performance: Evolution and Related Issues for Congress*, January 19, 2011, by (name redacted) (available on request).

<sup>45</sup> P.L. 111-139, Title II (124 Stat. 29). GAO’s first report that was issued in compliance with this requirement was (continued...)

findings cited “potential” fragmentation, overlap, or duplication, and GAO oftentimes recommended further analysis or enhanced coordination. Are agencies and OMB using their scarce analytical resources effectively to coordinate efforts and identify and exploit potential efficiencies? Are agencies and OMB using appropriate tools to conduct these analyses, potentially including evaluations and logic modeling? Are there implications for coordination across congressional committees?

- **GPRAMA’s design and implementation.** Compared to the four-year phase-in period for GPRA 1993, the phase-in period for GPRAMA before full implementation is fairly short. Answers to specific questions posed above about the implementation of GPRAMA may raise broader questions about how well the law is designed and how well it is being implemented by OMB or specific agencies. In that light, how well is GPRAMA serving Congress’s needs? How well is it serving the needs of agency personnel, the President, and the public? Are agencies and OMB adequately complying with the act? Are agencies and OMB using the act in way that promotes improvement and learning in addition to accountability? Do agencies have the necessary capacity—including staff, skills, technology, and funding—to implement the law’s numerous and detailed requirements? In response to any of these topics, and if a problem were perceived, what options might be considered to enhance the law’s design or implementation?

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(...continued)

released in March 2011. See Section I of U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue*, GAO-11-318SP, March 2011, pp. 1-154.

## Appendix A. Acronyms

This table lists acronyms that are used in this CRS report. For some entries, text that is located inside parentheses indicates when an acronym is associated with implementation of GPRAMA, GPRA 1993, another law, or a presidential initiative. For acronyms associated with a particular President, the table indicates the relevant administration. In practice, some terms and corresponding acronyms have been used that do not mirror the precise language from underlying statutes. In **Appendix B**, a glossary provides more information about these cases.

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| APG       | Agency Priority Goal (GPRAMA)  |
| APP       | Agency Performance Plan (GPRAMA) or Annual Performance Plan (GPRA 1993)                    |
| APR       | Annual Performance Report (non-statutory term associated with GPRAMA and GPRA 1993)        |
| APU       | Annual Performance Update (GPRAMA)   |
| ASP       | Agency Strategic Plan (GPRAMA)   |
| CFO       | Chief Financial Officer (CFO Act)  |
| CHCO      | Chief Human Capital Officer (P.L. 107-296)   |
| CFO Act   | Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-576)  |
| COO       | Chief Operating Officer (GPRAMA)   |
| DDM       | Deputy Director for Management (of the Office of Management and Budget)                    |
| EOP       | Executive Office of the President  |
| FGPG      | Federal Government Priority Goal (GPRAMA)  |
| FGPP      | Federal Government Performance Plan (GPRAMA)   |
| FY        | Fiscal Year  |
| GAO       | Government Accountability Office (previously General Accounting Office)                    |
| GPRA 1993 | Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62)                               |
| GPRAMA    | GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-352)  |
| HPPG      | High Priority Performance Goal (Barack Obama Administration)                               |
| OMB       | Office of Management and Budget (in the Executive Office of the President)                 |
| OPM       | Office of Personnel Management   |
| PAR       | Performance and Accountability Report (RCA, GPRA 1993, and GPRAMA)                         |
| PART      | Program Assessment Rating Tool (George W. Bush Administration)                             |
| PBP       | President's Budget Proposal (Budget and Accounting Act, 1921; codified at 31 U.S.C. §1105) |
| PIC       | Performance Improvement Council (GPRAMA and George W. Bush Administration)                 |
| PIO       | Performance Improvement Officer (GPRAMA and George W. Bush Administration)                 |
| PPR       | Program Performance Report (GPRA 1993)   |
| RCA       | Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-531)   |
| SP        | Strategic Plan (GPRA 1993)   |

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## Appendix B. Glossary of Terms

Government processes oftentimes involve specialized terms. The federal budget process, for example, has evolved to a level of complexity where participants in the process often perceive a need for glossaries and guides.<sup>46</sup> GPRAMA similarly establishes an elaborate framework of products and processes that focus on government performance. In doing so, the law uses terms that are interrelated and sometimes technical in nature.<sup>47</sup> Notably, the designs and legislative histories of GPRAMA 1993 and GPRAMA indicate Congress's intention for Congress itself, along with agencies, the President, non-federal stakeholders, and the broader public, to be consumers of the laws' products and to actively participate in the laws' processes for managing performance of the government.<sup>48</sup> To assist with navigating through GPRAMA's varied products and processes, this glossary provides capsule summaries and statutory citations for related terms.<sup>49</sup> In each entry, when a term is included that also is listed elsewhere in the glossary, the term is written in *italics* the first time it is used.

### Glossary

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| <b>agency</b>                        | GPRAMA imposes requirements on certain federal agencies. The act's use of the term "agency" determines which agencies are covered by these requirements. In GPRAMA, the term is defined as an "executive agency" under 5 U.S.C. §105. This definition includes most executive branch departments and agencies but explicitly does not include the Central Intelligence Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the United States Postal Service, and the Postal Regulatory Commission. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(1); and Section 2, 5 U.S.C. §306(f).) GPRAMA 1993 used the same definition.   |
| <b>Agency Performance Plan (APP)</b> | Under GPRAMA, an agency-level, two-year plan that an agency is required to submit annually according to the same schedule as the <i>President's budget proposal</i> . (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(b).) The plan includes <i>performance goals</i> for the next fiscal year and updates performance goals for the current fiscal year. In addition, GPRAMA requires the plan to describe how the performance goals contribute to <i>general goals and objectives</i> in an <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> and to any of the <i>federal government performance goals</i> that are in the <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i> . The Agency Performance Plan also is required to contain information about how performance goals are to be achieved, establish "balanced sets" of <i>performance indicators</i> , address <i>major management challenges</i> , and identify "low-priority" <i>program activities</i> . A classified appendix may be submitted to cover any portion of an Agency Performance Plan that by executive order is both authorized to be kept secret and properly classified. GPRAMA states that the drafting of an APP is considered to be <i>inherently governmental</i> , which means that this activity may not be contracted out. The requirement for an Agency Performance Plan replaced the GPRAMA 1993 requirement for an |

<sup>46</sup> For example, see U.S. Government Accountability Office, *A Glossary of Terms Used in the Federal Budget Process*, GAO-05-734SP, September 2005; and CRS Report 98-721, *Introduction to the Federal Budget Process*, coordinated by (name redacted). Similar publications are available for other government processes like rulemaking and procurement, where Congress also has legislated in detail and, in varying degrees, has involved itself in administration of policy.

<sup>47</sup> Some terms may have specific meanings in fields such as policy analysis, performance measurement, program evaluation, management, and budgeting.

<sup>48</sup> As noted in this report, implementation of GPRAMA will result in presentation of many plans and reports to Congress for scrutiny and potential use. The law also requires most of the products to be made available to the public, which may assist Congress in its legislative work.

<sup>49</sup> Full listings of the subcomponents of various products and processes may be found in the statutory text (124 Stat. 3866). As a convention, some terms in this CRS report and glossary are capitalized. Where relevant, the glossary shows acronyms that are used in this CRS report. A separate table containing acronyms is included as **Appendix A**. Past experience suggests that when agencies and OMB implement a law like GPRAMA, they may use terms and acronyms that are different from those specified in law. Updates to this report will note significant developments in this regard.

*Annual Performance Plan.*

**Agency Performance Update (APU)**

GPRAMA requires that an “update on agency performance” be made available annually on the agency’s public website. (GPRAMA, Section 4, 31 U.S.C. §1116.) For ease of reference, this CRS report refers to the product as an Agency Performance Update (APU). The APU is required to provide, among other things, comparisons of *performance goals* from the two-year *Agency Performance Plan* with actual performance. It could be argued that the authors of the legislation intended for the APU to be made available no later than 150 days after the end of the fiscal year,<sup>50</sup> which was the timing requirement for GPRA 1993’s *Program Performance Report* (PPR). If an APU includes any *program activity* or information that by executive order is both authorized to be kept secret and properly classified, an agency head is required to make the information available in a classified appendix to the Agency Performance Plan. GPRAMA states that the drafting of an APU is considered to be *inherently governmental*, which means that this activity may not be contracted out. The requirement for the APU replaced the GPRA 1993 requirement for a PPR. In practice, OMB sometimes has called the APU and PPR by a different name: *Annual Performance Report*. In compliance with the *Reports Consolidation Act of 2000*, OMB has said administratively that agencies may comply with the requirement to publish the APU by either including the APU with along with the agency’s congressional budget justification (in February of each year, to accompany the *President’s budget proposal*) or, if an agency produces a *Performance and Accountability Report* (PAR), including the APU along with the PAR (typically due by November 15, 45 days after the end of an agency’s fiscal year).<sup>51</sup>

**agency priority goal (APG)**

Under GPRAMA, a small subset of agency-level *performance goals* from an agency’s *Agency Performance Plan* may be given this additional designation. (GPRAMA, Section 5, 31 U.S.C. §1120(b).) Agency heads are required to identify agency priority goals (APGs) every two years, but OMB is authorized to deviate from this requirement and to specify the manner and timing of how agency priority goals are to be identified. APGs are required to reflect the “highest priorities of the agency” as determined by the agency head, and as informed by *federal government priority goals* and congressional consultations regarding an *Agency Strategic Plan*. Each APG is required to have a corresponding agency official, or *goal leader*, who is responsible for achieving the goal. OMB determines the total number of APGs across the government and also for each agency. With establishment of APGs and *quarterly priority progress reviews*, GPRAMA enacted into law a framework similar to the Obama Administration’s initiative to pursue *high-priority performance goals*. If an APG includes any *program activity* or information that by executive order is both authorized to be kept secret and properly classified, an agency head is required to make the information available in a classified appendix to the Agency Performance Plan. GPRAMA states that the development of an APG is considered to be *inherently governmental*, which means that this activity may not be contracted out.

**agency quarterly priority progress review**

Under GPRAMA, a “review” that an agency head and *Chief Operating Officer* conduct with a minimum frequency of every three months for each *agency priority goal*. (GPRAMA, Section 6, 31 U.S.C. §1121(b).) The review is required to include a *goal leader* and to be supported by the agency’s *Performance Improvement Officer*. The agency head and Chief Operating Officer are further required to coordinate with personnel within and outside the agency who contribute to the accomplishment of each agency priority goal. Several assessments are required to take place in this context. GPRAMA specifies no product or transparency requirement for the quarterly reviews themselves. Under the Obama Administration’s *high-priority performance goal* initiative, OMB conducted similarly structured quarterly reviews as in-person meetings.

<sup>50</sup> GPRAMA requires an agency to make the APU available “no less than 150 days” after the end of the fiscal year. As drafted, the timing requirement would prohibit an agency from making the APU available until 150 days after the end of the fiscal year. This probably is a drafting error. For information about the authors’ intent, see U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 2142, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., December 16, 2010, S.Rept. 111-372 (Washington: GPO, 2010), p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> OMB, *Circular No. A-11*, Section 230, “Preparing and Submitting an Annual Performance Report,” August 2011, p. 2.

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| <b>Agency Strategic Plan (ASP)</b>        | Under GPRAMA, an agency-level, four-year plan that an agency is required to submit every four years at the beginning of the second year of each presidential term and on the same schedule as the <i>President's budget proposal</i> . (GPRAMA, Section 2, 5 U.S.C. §306.) The plan is required to contain, among other things, <i>general goals and objectives</i> for the major functions and operations of the agency, a description of how the goals and objectives contribute to <i>federal government priority goals</i> , and a description of how the goals and objectives incorporate views and suggestions obtained through certain congressional consultations. When an agency is developing or adjusting its Agency Strategic Plan, GPRAMA requires the agency to consult with Congress, including majority and minority views from the “appropriate” authorizing, appropriations, and oversight committees, and also to solicit and consider the views and suggestions of entities affected by or interested in the plan. Regardless of whether the plan is revised during a President's term, an agency also is required to consult with “appropriate” committees every two years. GPRAMA states that the drafting of an Agency Strategic Plan is considered to be <i>inherently governmental</i> , which means that this activity may not be contracted out. The requirement for this plan replaced the GPRA 1993 requirement for a <i>Strategic Plan</i> . |
| <b>Annual Performance Plan (APP)</b>      | No longer current law. An agency-level, annually submitted, one-year plan that was required by GPRA 1993. GPRAMA replaced the requirements for this plan with expanded requirements for an <i>Agency Performance Plan</i> .  |
| <b>Annual Performance Report (APR)</b>    | See <i>Program Performance Report</i> and <i>Agency Performance Update</i> .   |
| <b>Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)</b> | A statutorily established position that GPRAMA requires to prepare a portion of the <i>Agency Performance Plan</i> . The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) is required to prepare the APP's description of how <i>performance goals</i> are to be achieved, including “the operation processes, training, skills and technology, and the human, capital, information, and other resources and strategies required to meet those performance goals” (GPRAMA, Section 3; 31 U.S.C. §1115(b)(5)(A) and §1115(g).) GPRA 1993 contained the same requirement after it was amended in 2002. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-296, Title XIII; 116 Stat. 2135, at 2289) established CHCOs in agencies widely known as the “CFO Act agencies.” <sup>52</sup>   |
| <b>Chief Operating Officer (COO)</b>      | Under GPRAMA, a designation that is given to the deputy head of an agency or an equivalent position. (GPRAMA, Section 8, 31 U.S.C. §1123.) The law enumerates several duties for a Chief Operating Officer (COO), including responsibility for improving the management and performance of the agency and assisting the agency head in complying with GPRAMA's requirements. An agency's <i>Performance Improvement Officer</i> is required to report directly to the COO.   |
| <b>crosscutting</b>                       | Under GPRAMA, an adjective that is defined as describing something that cuts across organizational and agency boundaries, such as a policy or goal. (GPRAMA, Section 3; 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(2).) The law requires OMB to identify <i>major management challenges</i> that are government-wide or crosscutting in nature in the <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i> . In addition, for the <i>federal government priority goals</i> , OMB is required to develop <i>outcome-oriented goals</i> covering a limited number of crosscutting policy areas. Nearly 20 provisions in GPRAMA relate to the concept of crosscutting policy areas, because the provisions refer to the possibility of multiple agencies, activities, delivery partners, and policy tools “contributing” to the accomplishment of a goal or desired outcome. Many provisions require assessments of whether activities that cut across organizational boundaries are contributing toward achievement of the same goal. GPRAMA does not specify how such assessments are to be made. In practice, agencies may use a method called <i>logic modeling</i> to comply with these provisions, and stakeholders may use logic modeling to assess agencies' representations.   |

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<sup>52</sup> The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (CFO Act; 104 Stat. 2838; now codified in Title 31 of the *U.S. Code*) established statutory CFOs in agencies that were listed at 31 U.S.C. §901(b). These twenty-four agencies are among the largest in the executive branch and frequently are called the “CFO Act agencies.”

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| <b>customer service measure</b>                 | Under GPRAMA, defined as an assessment of service delivery to a customer, client, citizen, or other recipient, which “can include an assessment of quality, timeliness, and satisfaction among other factors” (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(3).) See also <i>performance indicator</i> in this glossary.   |
| <b>Deputy Director for Management (DDM)</b>     | A statutorily established OMB position that is subject to Senate confirmation. The OMB Deputy Director for Management (DDM) position was established by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-576), with many statutory functions codified at 31 U.S.C. §503. The DDM is responsible for establishing general management policies for executive agencies across a variety of mission-support functions like procurement and financial management, subject to the direction and approval of the Director of OMB. GPRAMA gives authority to OMB’s DDM to determine the agenda and direct the work of the <i>Performance Improvement Council</i> , which is composed of agency <i>Performance Improvement Officers</i> .  |
| <b>efficiency measure</b>                       | Under GPRAMA, defined as a ratio of a program activity’s inputs, like costs or hours worked, to either its <i>outputs</i> , such as amount or products or services delivered, or to its <i>outcomes</i> , such as the desired results of a program. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(4).) See also <i>performance indicator</i> in this glossary.   |
| <b>evidence</b>                                 | GPRAMA does not define the term “evidence.” Nevertheless, GPRAMA requires an <i>agency</i> to provide evidence for certain purposes. Specifically, the <i>Agency Performance Plan</i> that accompanies the agency’s portion of the <i>President’s budget proposal</i> is required to “identify low-priority program activities based on an analysis of their contribution to the mission and goals of the agency and include an evidence-based justification for designating a program activity as low priority.” (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(b)(10).) In practice, definitions of what constitutes evidence for budgetary decision making have varied markedly and often have been controversial. <sup>53</sup> Definitions of what constitutes evidence for learning and decisions about the future have drawn from at least three categories of considerations: (1) retrospective <i>program evaluations</i> and <i>performance measurements</i> , (2) prospective policy analyses such as risk assessment and forecasting, and (3) current-day conceptions of ethics, values, and risk preference. When the definition of success for a program is contested—with different views on how to judge what constitutes good performance—even widespread consensus on how to interpret evaluations, measurements, and policy analyses still may yield disagreements about priorities and future decisions. In some cases, “evidence” may be viewed through additional lenses of values, ethics, and risk preference. Observations like these suggest that when an advocate for a proposal uses an implicit or explicit definition of evidence, there is a chance that the definition may be selective or may not be politically neutral. |
| <b>external factors</b>                         | Under GPRAMA, agencies are required to identify key factors external to the agency and beyond its control that could significantly affect whether certain goals are achieved. Similar requirements were imposed under GPRA 1993, and these factors came to be known as “external factors.” Under GPRAMA, agencies are required to identify in an <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> the external factors that correspond to <i>general goals and objectives</i> . Agencies also are required to identify on the GPRAMA-required OMB website the external factors that correspond to <i>agency priority goals</i> .  |
| <b>federal government performance goal</b>      | See <i>performance goal</i> in this glossary.   |
| <b>federal government performance indicator</b> | See <i>performance indicator</i> in this glossary.  |

<sup>53</sup> For discussion, see CRS Congressional Distribution Memorandum, *Obama Administration Agenda for Government Performance: Evolution and Related Issues for Congress*, January 19, 2011, by (name redacted), pp. 33-35 (available on request), and CRS Report RL33301, *Congress and Program Evaluation: An Overview of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) and Related Issues*, by (name redacted), (name redacted), and (name redacted).

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| <b>Federal Government Performance Plan (FGPP)</b> | <p>Under GPRAMA, an executive branch-wide, two-year plan that OMB is required to submit to Congress annually with the <i>President's budget proposal</i>. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(a).) The plan establishes <i>federal government performance goals</i> for the next fiscal year and updates federal government performance goals for the current fiscal year. One or more of these federal government performance goals are required to be established for each <i>federal government priority goal</i>. For each federal government performance goal, the Federal Government Performance Plan (FGPP) is required to provide more detailed information, including “common” <i>federal government performance indicators</i>. The Senate committee report accompanying the legislation said these indicators would “measure and assess progress across agencies toward shared goals.”<sup>54</sup> GPRAMA states that the drafting of a FGPP is considered to be <i>inherently governmental</i>, which means that this activity may not be contracted out. Before enactment of GPRAMA, GPRA 1993 required the President to submit to Congress an annual FGPP, but did not specify the plan's contents. (GPRA 1993, Section 4(a), 31 U.S.C. §1105(a).) During that time, OMB considered the President's budget proposal to satisfy the GPRA 1993 requirement for a FGPP.</p>   |
| <b>federal government priority goal (FGPG)</b>    | <p>Under GPRAMA, goals that are developed and updated by OMB with a minimum frequency of every four years and made available concurrently with the <i>President's budget proposal</i> at the beginning of the second year of a President's term. (GPRAMA, Section 5, 31 U.S.C. §1120(a).) The federal government priority goals (FGPGs) are required to be long-term in nature and are required to include at least two types of goals: <i>outcome-oriented goals</i> that cover a limited number of <i>crosscutting</i> policy areas, and goals for management improvements across the federal government in areas like financial management and procurement. For every FGPG, one or more <i>federal government performance goals</i> are required to be established in the annually submitted <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i>. An <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> is required to describe how any of the agency's <i>general goals and objectives</i> contribute to FGPGs. When OMB is developing or adjusting these goals, GPRAMA requires OMB to consult with the majority and minority of specific committees—House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, House and Senate Committees on the Budget, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Senate Committee on Finance, and House Committee on Ways and Means—plus other committees “as determined appropriate.” GPRAMA includes another provision that requires OMB to consult with “the appropriate” committees every two years, presumably about FGPGs. GPRAMA states that the development of a FGPG is considered to be <i>inherently governmental</i>, which means that this activity may not be contracted out.</p> |
| <b>general goals and objectives</b>               | <p>Under GPRAMA, goals and objectives that are specified in an <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> and which correspond to an agency's major functions and operations. (GPRAMA, Section 2, 5 U.S.C. §306.) The law requires that these goals and objectives include <i>outcome-oriented goals</i>, but not exclusively. In addition, an <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> is required to describe, among other things, how any of these goals contribute to <i>federal government priority goals</i> and how the goals and objectives incorporate congressional views and suggestions.</p>  |
| <b>goal leader</b>                                | <p>Under GPRAMA, an <i>Agency Performance Plan</i> is required to identify agency officials with this designation who are responsible for the achievement of each agency-level <i>performance goal</i>. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(b)(5)(E).) In another provision, an agency is required to have an agency official with this designation who is responsible for the achievement of each <i>agency priority goal</i>. (GPRAMA, Section 5, 5 U.S.C. §1120(b)(1)(C).) Other provisions in GPRAMA require the identification of government officials with responsibility for certain kinds of goals, but do not use the term “goal leader.” In the case of the <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i>, each <i>federal government performance goal</i> is required to have a corresponding “lead Government official.” (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(a)(3).) In an <i>Agency Performance Plan</i>, an agency is required to identify the “agency official” who is responsible for resolving <i>major management challenges</i>. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(b)(9)(C).) When an agency does not meet its performance goals and in response</p>  |

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 2142, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., December 16, 2010, S.Rept. 111-372 (Washington: GPO, 2010), p. 8.

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|  | <p>develops a <i>Performance Improvement Plan</i>, an agency is required to designate a “senior official” to oversee performance improvement strategies for each unmet goal. (GPRAMA, Section 4, 31 U.S.C. §1116(g).)</p>   |
| <b>high priority performance goal (HPPG)</b> | <p>A goal established under one of the Obama Administration’s government performance-related initiatives. The initiative began in 2009. It resulted in the release of high-priority performance goals (HPPGs) in February 2010 with the FY2011 <i>President’s budget proposal</i>. OMB guidance for the HPPG initiative required agencies to develop goals to, among other things, be achievable in 12-24 months; highly valued by the public or reflecting achievement of agency missions; authorized by law; and sufficiently funded by Congress in order to be achieved. OMB later began to hold quarterly, in-person meetings with agency officials to review progress against the HPPGs. GPRAMA enacted aspects of this initiative into law through requirements for <i>priority goals</i> and <i>quarterly priority progress reviews</i>.</p>   |
| <b>inherently governmental</b>               | <p>A term that refers to situations when a function or activity must be performed only by government employees as a matter of federal law and policy. Inherently governmental functions may not be contracted out. Like GPRA 1993, GPRAMA states that some functions and activities are considered to be inherently governmental. Under GPRAMA, these functions and activities include (1) the drafting of <i>Agency Strategic Plans</i>, the <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i>, <i>Agency Performance Plans</i>, and <i>Agency Performance Updates</i>; and (2) the development of <i>federal government priority goals</i> and <i>agency priority goals</i>. (For further discussion of this term, see CRS Report R42325, <i>Definitions of “Inherently Governmental Functions” in Federal Procurement Law and Guidance</i>, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).)</p>  |
| <b>input measure</b>                         | <p>A measurement of the resources that are used to undertake activities, produce <i>outputs</i>, and influence <i>outcomes</i>. Some types of resources include funding, personnel, and capital investments such as information technology. See also <i>logic model</i>.</p>  |
| <b>logic model</b>                           | <p>A logic model shows how multiple <i>inputs</i>, activities, and <i>outputs</i> in one or more agencies and delivery partners relate to each other and are expected to influence <i>outcomes</i>.<sup>55</sup> In this way, logic models may assist with understanding the relationships among activities and policy outcomes and assessing how well programs work. Logic modeling may be utilized to address several requirements in GPRAMA. The law contains nearly 20 provisions that refer to the prospect of multiple agencies, activities, delivery partners, and policy tools “contributing” to the accomplishment of a goal or desired outcome. Some provisions require assessments of whether these <i>crosscutting</i> activities are contributing toward achievement of the same goal. GPRAMA does not specify how such assessments are to be made. In practice, logic models may be used in several ways to assess how multiple agencies and delivery partners contribute toward achievement of an outcome. These include assessing performance, setting goals, identifying potential program overlap and duplication, and coordinating activities in crosscutting policy areas. Logic models also may be used to help assess performance when outcomes are driven substantially by <i>external factors</i>. By focusing on how measurable inputs, activities, and outputs relate to an outcome, a logic model also may be used by an agency or stakeholder to integrate <i>performance measurement</i> and <i>program evaluation</i>.<sup>56</sup></p> |
| <b>major management challenge</b>            | <p>Under GPRAMA, defined as programs or management functions, within or across agencies, that have greater vulnerability to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, where a failure to perform well could seriously affect the ability of an agency or the government to achieve its mission or goals. GPRAMA’s definition explicitly cites issues identified by GAO as high-risk or identified by an inspector general as examples of major management challenges. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(5).) GPRAMA requires that major management</p>   |

<sup>55</sup> In a job training program, for example, an agency may offer classes to clients. The classes might be considered to be an activity. The classes culminate with clients who complete a course. These course completions might be called an output. If the clients learn new skills—an intermediate outcome—they may have a better chance of finding employment or increasing earnings, which might be viewed as end outcomes. A logic model also may show how multiple activities in an agency or across agencies align with one or more goals.

<sup>56</sup> Program evaluations, performance measurements, and logic models typically complement each other when they inform policy making, oversight, or study. Like other kinds of policy analysis, these tools may raise more refined questions about how well a program is working or the circumstances that may be necessary for achieving success.

challenges be addressed in certain ways in *Agency Performance Plans* and the *Federal Government Performance Plan*. In an *Agency Performance Plan*, an agency is required to identify the “agency official” who is responsible for resolving these challenges. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(b)(9)(C).)

**milestone**

Under GPRAMA, defined as a scheduled event signifying the completion of a major deliverable or a set of related deliverables or a phase of work. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(6).) The law requires milestones to be used in the *Federal Government Performance Plan* in two contexts: when describing plans to address *major management challenges* that are government-wide or *crosscutting* in nature; and quarterly milestones for unstated purposes, but possibly in reference to *federal government performance goals*. GPRAMA also requires milestones to be used in an *Agency Performance Plan* when describing how *performance goals* are to be achieved and how *major management challenges* that the agency faces are to be resolved. Finally, if OMB determines that an agency has not met a performance goal for one fiscal year, GPRAMA requires the agency to submit a *Performance Improvement Plan* to OMB, with milestones, for each unmet goal. See also *OMB Reports on Unmet Goals* in this glossary.

**OMB performance website**

Under GPRAMA, a website that OMB is required to operate and, for certain information, update with a minimum quarterly frequency. The website is required to provide detailed information about agency *programs*, *agency priority goals*, and *federal government priority goals*; annually make information available from the *Federal Government Performance Plan*; and post *Agency Strategic Plans*, *Agency Performance Plans*, and *Agency Performance Updates*. Notably, the website is required to describe how both kinds of priority goals incorporate views and suggestions obtained through certain congressional consultations. (GPRAMA; Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(a); Section 5, 31 U.S.C. §1120(a)(5); Section 7, 31 U.S.C. §1122; and Section 10, 31 U.S.C. §1115 note.) This requirement appears to be modeled in part on the Obama Administration’s *Performance.gov* website.

**OMB quarterly priority progress review**

Under GPRAMA, a “review” that OMB conducts with a minimum frequency of every three months for each *federal government priority goal*. (GPRAMA, Section 6, 31 U.S.C. §1121(a).) The review is required to include a “lead government official” plus officials from agencies, organizations, and *program activities* that contribute to accomplishment of the federal government priority goal, and to be supported by the *Performance Improvement Council*. Several assessments are required to take place in this context. GPRAMA does not specifically require the identification of a lead official for each federal government priority goal. As a result, it is not clear how the lead government official for a federal government priority goal will be identified. (GPRAMA requires a *Federal Government Performance Plan* to identify a lead government official for each *federal government performance goal*.) GPRAMA specifies no product or transparency requirement for the quarterly reviews themselves. Under the Obama Administration’s *high-priority performance goal* initiative, OMB conducted similarly structured quarterly reviews as in-person meetings.

**OMB and Agency Reports and Plans on Unmet Goals**

Under GPRAMA, a variety of annual reporting requirements that focus on whether an agency is meeting *performance goals* in its *Agency Performance Plan*. (GPRAMA, Section 6, 31 U.S.C. §§1116(f), 1116(h), and 1116(i).) OMB is required to submit a report annually on “unmet goals” to each agency, two congressional committees, and GAO. If OMB determines that an agency’s *programs* or activities have not met performance goals for one fiscal year, an agency is required to submit a *Performance Improvement Plan* to OMB. If OMB determines that an agency’s programs or activities have unmet performance goals for either two or three consecutive fiscal years, the agency and OMB, respectively, have further reporting requirements to Congress. When OMB determines that performance goal remains unmet for two consecutive years, the agency’s head is required to submit to Congress a description of what actions “the Administration” will take to improve performance, including legislative proposals and the obligation of additional funding for an amount determined by OMB. In this situation, GPRAMA indicates that an agency head shall use any reprogramming or transfer authority available to it. When OMB determines that a performance goal remains unmet for three consecutive years, GPRAMA requires OMB to submit recommendations to improve performance within 60 days, including reauthorization proposals, other statutory changes, planned actions, and identification of a program for termination or reduction in the *President’s budget proposal*.

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| <b>outcome measure</b>                             | Under GPRAMA, defined as an assessment of the results of a <i>program activity</i> compared to its intended purpose. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(7).) This term also was defined by GPRAMA 1993, and the definition was carried forward by GPRAMA without change. See also <i>performance indicator</i> and <i>logic model</i> in this glossary.  |
| <b>output measure</b>                              | Under GPRAMA, defined as the tabulation, calculation, or recording of activity or effort that can be expressed in a quantitative or qualitative manner. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(8).) This term also was defined by GPRAMA 1993, and the definition was carried forward by GPRAMA without change. See also <i>performance indicator</i> and <i>logic model</i> in this glossary.   |
| <b>Performance and Accountability Report (PAR)</b> | The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 (RCA, P.L. 106-531) permitted an agency, with OMB concurrence, to package its GPRAMA 1993-required <i>Annual Performance Report</i> together with certain financial statements and reports. If an agency did so, the consolidated document was to be called a Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). Because GPRAMA did not modify this statutory flexibility (31 U.S.C. §3516), the applicable provision appears to allow an agency's GPRAMA-required <i>Agency Performance Update</i> to be similarly consolidated. OMB requires PARs to be submitted to Congress no later than 45 calendar days after the end of an agency's fiscal year (e.g., November 15), and draft PARs be submitted to OMB for clearance at least 10 working days before then.  |
| <b>performance goal</b>                            | Under GPRAMA, defined as a target level of performance expressed as a tangible, measurable objective, against which actual achievement can be compared. This may include a goal expressed as a quantitative standard, value, or rate. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(9).) This term also was defined by GPRAMA 1993, and the definition was carried forward by GPRAMA without change. Under GPRAMA, performance goals come in two general categories. First, agency-level "performance goals" are required to be established in an <i>Agency Performance Plan</i> (31 U.S.C. §1115(b)(1) and §1115(b)(9)(B)). A small subset of these agency-level performance goals are required to be identified as <i>agency priority goals</i> (APG). An agency is required to identify <i>goal leaders</i> who are responsible for the achievement of each agency-level performance goal and each APG. In the second category, <i>federal government performance goals</i> (FGPGs) are required to be established in the <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i> (31 U.S.C. §1115(a)(1)). For each <i>federal government priority goal</i> , OMB is required to establish one or more federal government performance goals (31 U.S.C. §1115(a)(1) and 31 U.S.C. §1120(a)). Each federal government performance goal is required to have a corresponding "lead Government official." In the context of agency-level performance goals, an agency may determine in consultation with OMB that it is not feasible to express a performance goal in an "objective, quantifiable, and measurable form." In such cases, OMB may authorize an "alternative form" of performance goal that includes descriptive statements of a "successful" program and "minimally effective" program (31 U.S.C. §1115(c)). |
| <b>Performance Improvement Council (PIC)</b>       | Under GPRAMA, an interagency council of <i>Performance Improvement Officers</i> . (GPRAMA, Section 9, 31 U.S.C. §1124(b).) OMB directly controls the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) through the chairpersonship of OMB's <i>Deputy Director for Management</i> (DDM). OMB's DDM leads the PIC, determines its agenda, and directs its work. The council consists of the OMB DDM; Performance Improvement Officers (PIOs) from the 24 largest executive branch agencies, also known as the "CFO Act agencies"; <sup>57</sup> and other individuals and Performance Improvement Officers as determined by the DDM. The PIC's duties mainly focus on assisting OMB and providing recommendations to the Director of OMB and the President. Among other things, these duties include assisting the Director of OMB in implementing GPRAMA's provisions related to <i>federal government priority goals</i> . OMB may require each agency with a PIO member of the PIC to provide up to two "personnel authorizations" to serve at the direction of OMB's DDM. OMB could use this authority to control a staff of 48 or more agency personnel (24 CFO Act agencies multiplied by two staff from each agency). GPRAMA does not explicitly provide for transparency outside the executive branch into the PIC's activities. The PIC previously had   |

<sup>57</sup> The so-called CFO Act agencies were identified in the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-576), and the list is codified at 31 U.S.C. §901(b).

been established by E.O. 13450,<sup>58</sup> which GPRAMA appeared to draw upon. Under the executive order, the PIC operated with little transparency outside the executive branch since the beginning of its activities in January 2008.

**Performance Improvement Officer (PIO)**

Under GPRAMA, a designation that is given to a career or politically appointed “senior executive” at an agency. (GPRAMA, Section 9, 31 U.S.C. §1124(a).) The Performance Improvement Officer (PIO) is required to report directly to the agency’s Chief Operating Officer. The law provides little independent authority to a PIO and enumerates mainly advisory duties, including advising the agency head and Chief Operating Officer on goal-setting, measurement, and reviewing progress toward *agency priority goals*. GPRAMA provides that the PIOs at the largest executive branch agencies are members of the *Performance Improvement Council*, an interagency group that is led by OMB’s *Deputy Director for Management*. The Deputy Director for Management also may designate other PIOs as members of the council. GPRAMA does not explicitly provide for transparency outside the executive branch into PIOs’ activities. PIOs previously had been established by E.O. 13450, which GPRAMA appeared to draw upon. Under the executive order, PIOs operated with little transparency outside the executive branch since the beginning of their activities in January 2008.

**Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**

Under GPRAMA, a plan that an agency must submit to OMB if the agency’s programs or activities have not met *performance goals* in the *Agency Performance Plan* for one fiscal year, as determined by OMB. (GPRAMA, Section 6, 31 U.S.C. §1116(g).) In this context, an agency is required to designate a “senior official” to oversee performance improvement strategies for each unmet goal. (GPRAMA, Section 4, 31 U.S.C. §1116(g).) See also *OMB and Agency Reports and Plans on Unmet Goals*.

**performance indicator**

Under GPRAMA, defined as a particular value or characteristic used to measure *output* or *outcome*. (GPRAMA, Section 3, 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(10).) This term also was defined by GPRA 1993, and the definition was carried forward by GPRAMA without change. GPRAMA contemplates agency-level performance indicators and federal-government-level performance indicators. In the first case, the law’s requirement for an *Agency Performance Plan* requires that a “balanced set” of performance indicators be established for each *performance goal*. Each set is to include, as appropriate, *customer service*, *efficiency*, *output*, and *outcome* indicators. In the second category, GPRAMA requires the *Federal Government Performance Plan* to establish “common” federal government performance indicators for each *federal government performance goal*. The Federal Government Performance Plan also is required to include relevant performance indicators for *major management challenges* that are government-wide or *crosscutting* in nature. See also *performance measurement* in this glossary.

**performance measurement**

Performance measurement is narrower in focus than *program evaluation* and typically refers to periodic monitoring and reporting of data that are related to government policies and programs. In isolation, performance measurement data often are viewed as managerially useful. However, performance measures, which sometimes are called indicators or metrics, do not necessarily reflect how well a government program or policy is working, because the measures may be significantly driven by *external factors* other than the program or policy.

**President’s budget proposal (PBP)**

By law, the President is required to submit to Congress an annual “budget of the United States Government” for the following fiscal year, including some information that is specified in statute, on or after the first Monday in January but not later than the first Monday in February of each year. (31 U.S.C. §1105.) The submission includes consolidated budget proposals for federal agencies and establishments. OMB compiles the proposal on behalf of the President. In this process, an executive branch agency’s views about funding

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<sup>58</sup> E.O. 13450, “Improving Government Program Performance,” 72 *Federal Register* 64519, November 13, 2007. The E.O. appeared to formally centralize in OMB some decision making about how agencies implement GPRA 1993. A Bush Administration OMB official was quoted to say the E.O. was issued as “an effort to sustain what we think is valuable beyond this administration” (Robert Brodsky, “Commanding Performance,” *National Journal*, April 19, 2008, p. 65).

needs may be modified by OMB before the proposal is submitted to Congress, in order to reflect the policy preferences of the President.<sup>59</sup> The President's budget proposal also may present information to justify the proposals. Under GPRAMA 1993, an agency's *Annual Performance Plan* was required to be submitted to OMB along with the agency's original budget proposal, before modification by OMB. GPRAMA considerably expands the number of products that are required to be submitted according to the same schedule as the President's budget proposal, including *Agency Strategic Plans*, *Agency Performance Plans*, *federal government priority goals*, the *Federal Government Performance Plan*, and, for FY2013, *agency priority goals*.

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| <b>presidential list of plans and reports for Congress</b> | Under GPRAMA, the President is required to submit annually to Congress a list of plans and reports that agencies produce for Congress that, according to the statute, the agencies "identified for elimination or consolidation because the plans and reports are determined outdated or duplicative of other required plans and reports." (GPRAMA, Section 11, 31 U.S.C. §1105(a)(37) and 31 U.S.C. §1125.) As an input to presidential formulation of this list, agencies are required to submit to OMB, among other things, a list of plans and reports that are labeled as "outdated and duplicative." During the first year of implementation, each agency is required to identify not less than 10% of its plans and reports to Congress as outdated or duplicative.  |
| <b>priority goal</b>                                       | See <i>agency priority goal</i> and <i>federal government priority goal</i> in this glossary.   |
| <b>program</b>   | There is no consensus definition for the term "program." Depending on an observer's preference, the term may include any government function, policy, activity, project, initiative, law, tax provision, or group thereof. GPRAMA requires OMB to include information on the <i>OMB performance website</i> about each program identified by an agency. The posted information is required to include an identification of how the agency defines the term program. However, agencies are to define the term in a manner consistent with OMB guidance. (GPRAMA, Section 7, 31 U.S.C. §1122(a).)   |
| <b>program activity</b>                                    | Under GPRAMA, defined as specific activity or project as listed in the program and financing schedules of the <i>President's budget proposal</i> . (GPRAMA, Section 3; 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(11).) This term also was defined by GPRAMA 1993, and the definition was carried forward by GPRAMA without change. One or more program activities typically are listed for each appropriation or fund account in the "appendix" volume of the President's budget proposal. In practice, a program activity may represent an aggregation or disaggregation of an agency's <i>programs</i> , organizations, and activities that are funded by one appropriations account. GPRAMA requires an Agency Performance Plan to "cover each program activity set forth in the budget [request]."   |
| <b>program evaluation</b>                                  | Under GPRAMA, defined as an assessment, through objective measurement and systematic analysis, of the manner and extent to which federal <i>programs</i> achieve intended objectives. (GPRAMA, Section 3; 31 U.S.C. §1115(h)(12).) This term also was defined by GPRAMA 1993, and the definition was carried forward by GPRAMA without change. Program evaluation is broader in scope than <i>performance measurement</i> . In practice, program evaluation uses one or more methods to answer questions about how well programs are working, whether they are achieving their objectives or causing unintended consequences, why they are performing as they are, and how they can be improved. It may encompass one or more studies, or may be pursued as an ongoing activity. Like GPRAMA 1993, GPRAMA focuses primarily on goal-setting and performance measurement, and its requirements regarding program evaluation are limited. GPRAMA requires an <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> to describe the program evaluations used in establishing or revising <i>general goals and objectives</i> . The law also requires an ASP to contain a schedule for future program evaluations. An <i>Agency Performance Update</i> is required to include summary findings of program evaluations completed during the period covered by the update. |

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<sup>59</sup> Some executive agencies are allowed to submit budget proposals directly to Congress without modification, and budget proposals for the legislative and judicial branches are included without change.

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| <b>Program Performance Report (PPR)</b>        | No longer current law. An agency-level, annually submitted, one-year report that was required by GPRA 1993. OMB sometimes called this document an Annual Program Performance Report or <i>Annual Performance Report (APR)</i> . GPRAMA replaced the requirements for this report with expanded requirements for an “update on agency performance.” This CRS report refers to the new product as the <i>Agency Performance Update</i> .   |
| <b>quarterly priority progress review</b>      | See <i>agency quarterly priority progress review</i> and <i>OMB quarterly priority progress review</i> in this glossary.   |
| <b>Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 (RCA)</b> | The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 (RCA; P.L. 106-531, codified in part at 31 U.S.C. §3516) permits an agency, with OMB concurrence, to package its <i>Agency Performance Update (APU)</i> , sometimes called an <i>Annual Performance Report (APR)</i> or <i>Program Performance Report (PPR)</i> ) together with certain financial statements and reports. If an agency does so, the consolidated document is referred to as a <i>Performance and Accountability Report (PAR)</i> . OMB initially required agencies to adopt the PAR format, but now gives agencies flexibility to instead submit the APU in February along with the forthcoming year’s congressional budget justification and <i>Agency Performance Plan</i> .   |
| <b>Strategic Plan (SP)</b>                     | No longer current law. An agency-level, five-year plan that was required by GPRA 1993 to be updated with a minimum frequency of every three years. GPRAMA replaced these requirements with a substantially different process for developing an <i>Agency Strategic Plan</i> , including a requirement for every agency’s plan to be updated and aligned with presidential terms instead of providing for staggered updates every three years. GPRAMA’s <i>Agency Strategic Plans</i> also have somewhat expanded requirements for their contents, compared to GPRA 1993’s version of an agency-level Strategic Plan.   |
| <b>tax expenditures</b>                        | Defined under current law as revenue losses attributable to provisions of the federal tax laws which allow a special exclusion, exemption, or deduction from gross income or which provide a special credit, a preferential rate of tax, or a deferral of tax liability (P.L. 93-344, as amended (2 U.S.C. §622)). GPRAMA requires discussion of tax expenditures to be included in several products and processes, including <i>federal government priority goals</i> , the <i>Federal Government Performance Plan</i> , and <i>OMB quarterly priority progress reviews</i> . Another CRS report describes tax expenditures as frequent alternatives to other policy instruments such as grants, and notes that national social and economic goals sometimes are met through the tax code rather through direct expenditures. (See CRS Report RL33641, <i>Tax Expenditures: Trends and Critiques</i> , by (name redacted).) |

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