

# GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-22-103910](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 included requirements to enhance federal efforts to develop and use performance information and other evidence in decision-making.

Both acts include provisions for GAO to periodically report on their implementation. This report assesses the extent to which (1) federal managers' reported use of performance information changed in 2020, and (2) selected leading practices and data-driven reviews were associated with greater reported use of performance information.

To conduct its work, GAO analyzed results from a survey it administered from July to December 2020 to a stratified random sample of about 4,000 managers at 24 major federal agencies. The survey had a 56 percent response rate. Results can be generalized to the population of managers government-wide and at each agency. GAO also reviewed relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) documents, interviewed OMB staff, and followed up on the implementation of prior related GAO recommendations.

In response to a draft of this report, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development provided comments that highlighted results from GAO's survey and described efforts to improve the use of evidence in decision-making. OMB and the remaining 22 agencies did not provide comments.

View [GAO-22-103910](#). For more information, contact Alissa H. Czyz at (202) 512-6806 or [CzyzA@gao.gov](mailto:CzyzA@gao.gov).

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## EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

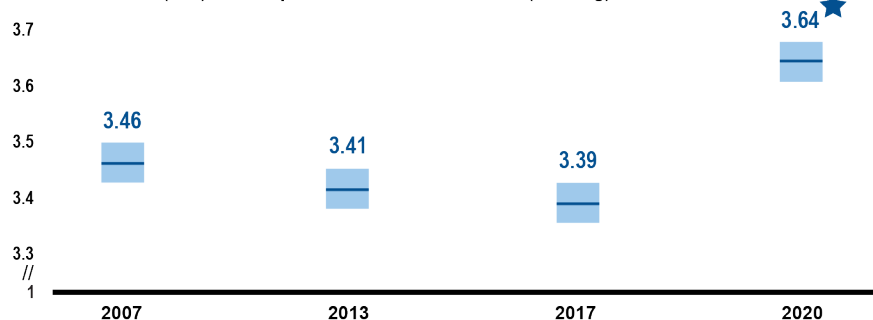
### Survey Results Suggest Increased Use of Performance Information across the Federal Government

#### What GAO Found

Performance information can help decision makers understand and improve results at federal agencies. GAO's 2020 survey of federal managers showed that the reported use of performance information in decision-making generally increased across the federal government compared to prior surveys. For example, on an index that approximates such use with a single score, GAO estimates with 95 percent confidence that the 2020 government-wide result was statistically significantly higher than each prior score since GAO created the index in 2007 (see below).

#### Managers' Reported Use of Performance Information, as Measured by GAO's Index

Use index score (line) with 95 percent confidence interval (shading)



★ 2020 result is a statistically significant increase compared to each prior survey year

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-103910

Note: The index is an average of results from 11 related survey questions on agency and manager use of performance information. Scores range from 1, which reflects managers reported the use of performance information to "no extent," to 5, which reflects to a "very great extent."

At a majority of agencies, managers reported statistically significant increases in performance information use. For example, index scores increased at 16 of the 24 agencies in 2020 compared to 2017, including at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Prior GAO work highlighted actions that NASA has taken since December 2018 to increase its use of performance information to improve the management of its acquisition projects, which have a history of cost growth and schedule delays. This includes having projects report relevant data to a central repository, which agency leaders review and discuss to help manage project performance.

GAO's analyses also found that key practices continue to be positively associated with greater reported use of performance information. For example:

- managers reported increases at a majority of agencies on actions related to *leading practices* identified by GAO's past work that promote the use of performance information, such as providing relevant training and effectively communicating performance information; and
- managers whose programs were subject to *data-driven reviews*—regular reviews of progress toward select goals—to a greater extent also reported greater use of performance information.