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Congressional Requesters.

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Title : Forest Service Decision-Making: A Framework for Improving Performance.

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Abstract : The decision-making process used by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service in carrying out its mission is costly and time-consuming, and the agency often fails to achieve its planned objectives. The agency has spent over 20 years and over \$250 million developing multiyear plans for managing national forests. It also spends about \$250 million a year for environmental studies to support individual projects. However, according to an internal Forest Service report, inefficiencies within this process cost up to \$100 million a year at the project level alone. In addition, by the time the agency has completed its decision-making, it often finds that it is unable to achieve the plans' objectives or implement planned projects because of new information and events, as well as changes in funding and natural conditions. In response to congressional requests, GAO examined the Forest Service's

decision-making process. In this report, GAO discusses the internal and external causes of inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the process: (1) the inadequate attention that the Forest Service has given to improving the process; (2) the lack of agreement, both inside and outside the agency, on how it is to resolve conflicts among competing uses on its lands; (3) unresolved interagency issues that transcend its administrative boundaries and jurisdiction; and (4) differences in the requirements of laws that help frame its decision-making.

Descriptors : *UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT , *DECISION MAKING , *FORESTRY , REQUIREMENTS , MANAGEMENT , ECONOMICS , BOUNDARIES , DEFICIENCIES.

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