

# Sources of Weapon System Cost Growth

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## Sources of Weapon System Cost Growth

Analysis of 35 Major Defense  
Acquisition Programs



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This analysis uses data from Selected Acquisition Reports to determine the causes of cost growth in 35 mature major defense acquisition programs. Four major sources of growth are identified: errors in estimation and scheduling, decisions by the government, financial matters, and miscellaneous. The analysis shows that more than two-thirds of cost growth (measured as simple averages) is caused by decisions, most of which involve quantity changes, requirements growth, and schedule changes. Cost growth in major weapon-systems programs results from errors in estimation and scheduling, government decisions, financial matters, and miscellaneous sources, with decisions involving changes in requirements, quantities, and production schedules the dominant cause.

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