

U.S. Government Accountability Office

Project Control Best Practices

Assessing the Reliability of Cost Estimates and Schedules



GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.



Source: GAO. | GAO-23-900398

Legislators, government officials, and the public want to know whether government programs are achieving their goals, what they are expected to cost, and when they will be finished.



United States Government Accountability Office
Report to Congressional Committees

June 2023

NAVY READINESS

Actions Needed to
Address Cost and
Schedule Estimates
for Shipyard
Improvement

GAO-23-106067



United States Government Accountability Office
Report to Congressional Committees

April 2023

NOAA ACQUISITIONS

Fully Aligning
Procedures with Best
Practices Could
Improve the Reliability
of Cost Estimates

GAO-23-105808



United States Government Accountability Office
A Report to Congressional Requesters

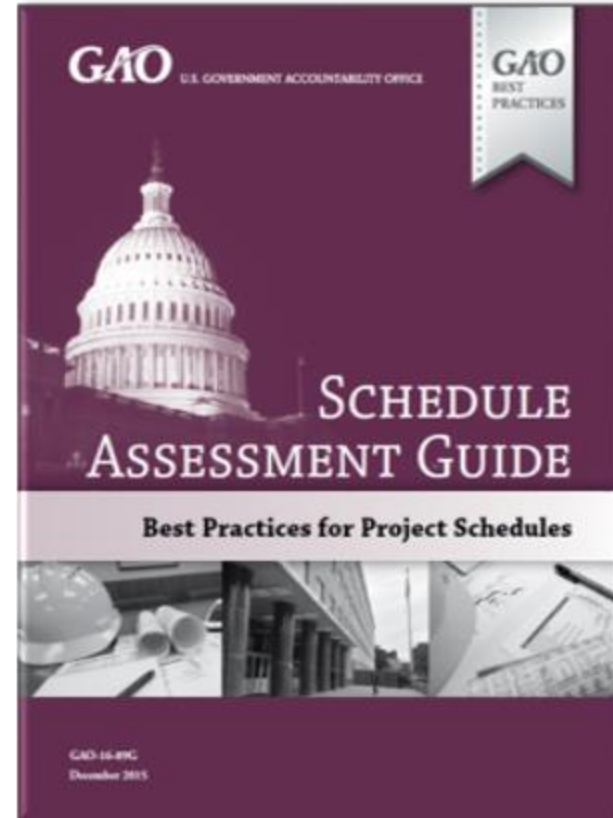
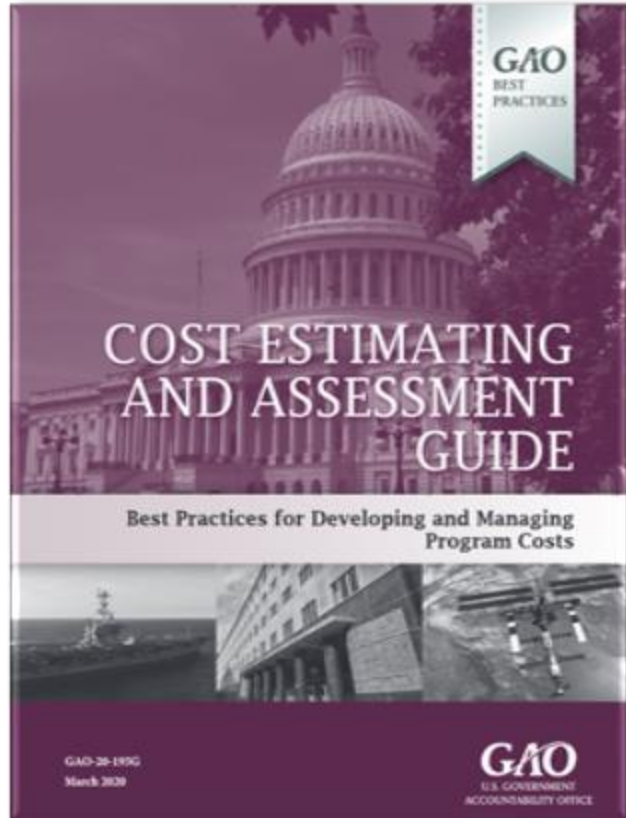
March 2023

2020 CENSUS

A More Complete
Lessons Learned
Process for Cost and
Schedule Would Help
the Next Decennial

GAO-23-105819

GAO's Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide (GAO-20-195G) and Schedule Assessment Guide (GAO-16-89G) are the criteria we use for assessing the quality of cost estimates and schedules.



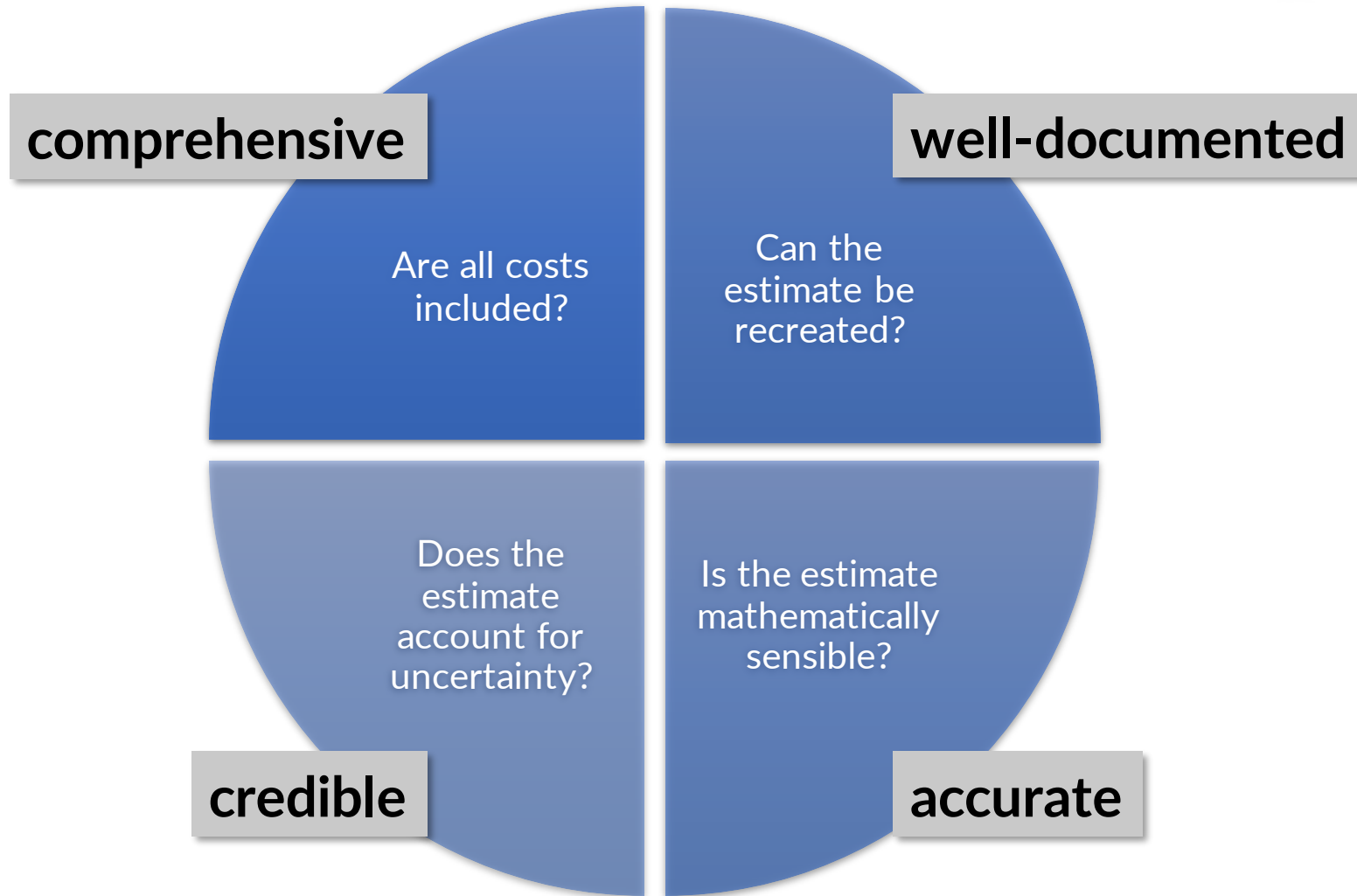


We have issued over **350** reports related to project control assessments.

We have made over **360** recommendations related to improving the quality of cost estimates, schedules, and EVM systems.

In July 2023, the GAO Cost Guide was downloaded or viewed online nearly **3,600** times.

The Characteristics of a Reliable Cost Estimate



The Characteristics of a Reliable Schedule

comprehensive

Is all effort included?

well-constructed

Is the network logical?

Does the schedule account for uncertainty?

credible

Is progress measured?

controlled

GAO's cost estimating and schedule criteria are widely applicable to both capital and non-capital programs and are not limited to large-scale acquisitions. They can be used as the foundation of agency guidance and policies.

Agency policies and guidance

Programs

Projects

The Cost and Schedule Guides are part of a suite of program management best practices guides published by GAO.

Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide

GAO-20-195G

Schedule Assessment Guide

GAO-16-89G

Technology Readiness Assessment Guide

GAO-20-48G

Federal Agile Software Guide

GAO-20-590G



What's next?

Best practices for program management

Leading practices for private sector cloud computing

Creation of automated schedule and EVM analysis tools

Meta-analyses of archived cost and schedule findings



THANK YOU