

# Quantifying Uncertainty in Early Lifecycle Cost Estimation for DOD Major Defense Acquisition Programs

## Cost Estimation Research Team:

Bob Ferguson (SEI - SEMA)  
Dennis Goldenson PhD (SEI - SEMA)  
Jim McCurley (SEI - SEMA)  
Bob Stoddard (SEI - SEMA)  
Dave Zubrow PhD (SEI - SEMA)  
Julie Cohen (SEI - ASP)  
Tim Morrow (SEI - ASP)  
Eduardo Miranda PhD (CMU ISR)  
Ricardo Valerdi PhD (U of AZ)

Date: October 31, 2012



# Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

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1. REPORT DATE <b>31 OCT 2012</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2012 to 00-00-2012</b>			
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Quantifying Uncertainty in Early Lifecycle Cost Estimation for DOD Major Defense Acquisition Programs</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Carnegie Mellon University ,Software Engineering Institute,Pittsburgh,PA,15213</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>35</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

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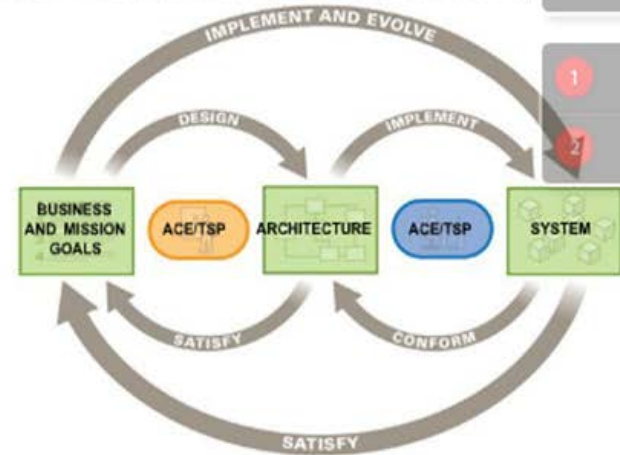
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### Agenda: Architecture-Centric Engineering



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**James McCurley**

**Senior Technical Staff**

Jim McCurley is a Senior Member of the Technical Staff at the Software Engineering Institute (SEI). During his 15 years at the SEI, his areas of expertise have included data analysis, statistical modeling, and empirical research methods. For the last several years, he has worked with various DoD agencies involved with the acquisition of large scale systems. From 1999-2005, Jim also worked as a member of the Technical Analysis Team for the CERT Analysis Center.





**Robert Stoddard**  
**Senior Technical Staff**

Robert Stoddard is a Senior Member of the Technical Staff at the Software Engineering Institute (SEI). Robert earned a BS in Business, an MS in Systems Management and is a certified Motorola Six Sigma Master Black Belt. He delivers measurement courses in public and client offerings and provides measurement consulting to external clients.



# Early cost estimation methods often result in highly inaccurate program cost predictions – and it continues to worsen

**Table 1: Analysis of DOD Major Defense Acquisition Program Portfolios**

Fiscal year 2008 dollars			
	Fiscal year		
	2000 portfolio	2005 portfolio	2007 portfolio
<b>Portfolio size</b>			
Number of programs	75	91	95
Total planned commitments	\$790 Billion	\$1.5 Trillion	\$1.6 Trillion
Commitments outstanding	\$380 Billion	\$887 Billion	\$858 Billion
<b>Portfolio performance</b>			
Change to total RDT&E costs from first estimate	27 percent	33 percent	40 percent
Change in total acquisition cost from first estimate	6 percent	18 percent	26 percent
Estimated total acquisition cost growth	\$42 Billion	\$202 Billion	\$295 Billion
Share of programs with 25 percent or more increase in program acquisition unit cost	37 percent	44 percent	44 percent
Average schedule delay in delivering initial capabilities	16 months	17 months	21 months

**Unsustainable negative trend in cost predictions**

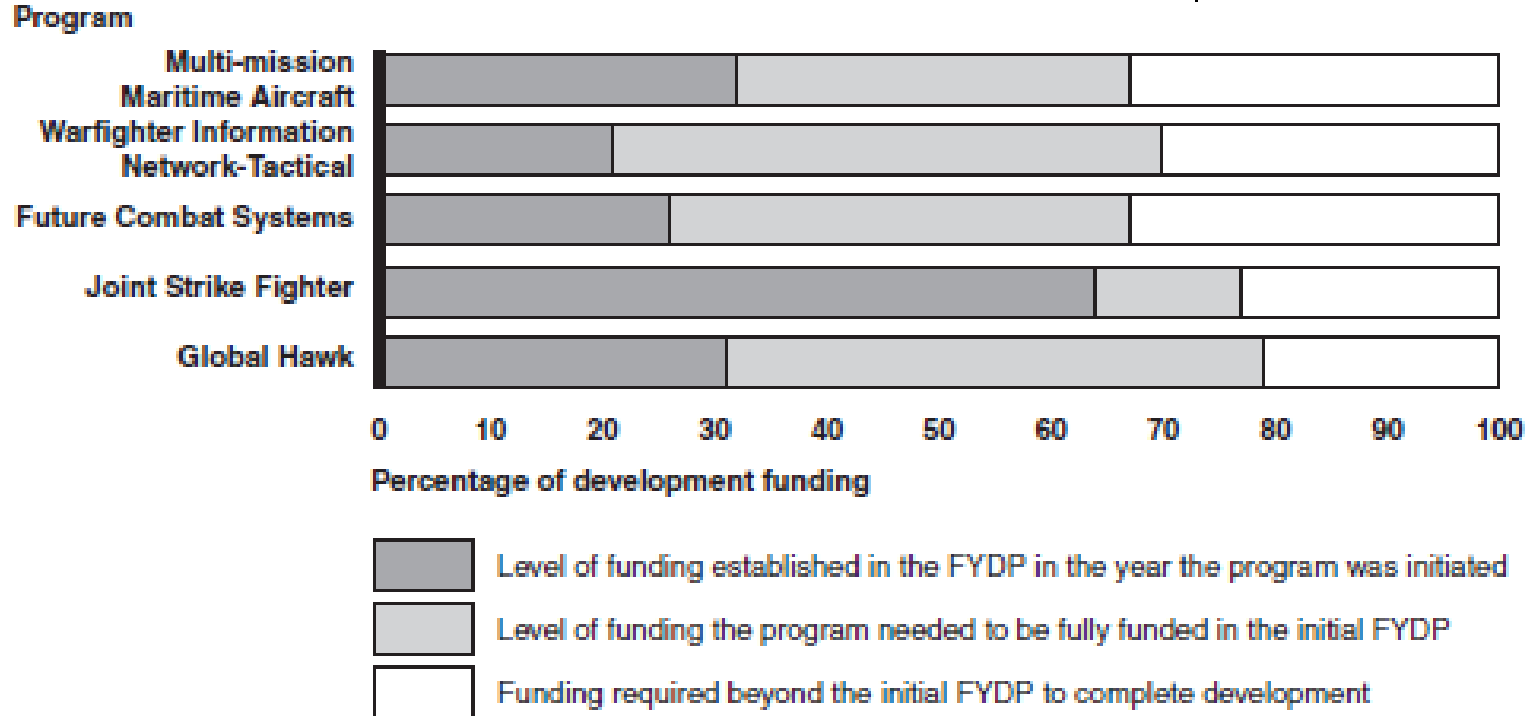
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Source: *Fundamental Changes Are Needed to Improve Weapon Program Outcomes*, GAO Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, Sept 25, 2008 GAO-08-1159T



“DOD’s flawed funding process is largely driven by decision makers’ willingness to accept unrealistic cost estimates and DOD’s commitment to more programs than it can support. DOD often underestimates development costs—due in part to a **lack of knowledge and optimistic assumptions about requirements and critical technologies.**” \*

### Funding Shortfalls at the Start of Development for Five Major Weapon System Programs

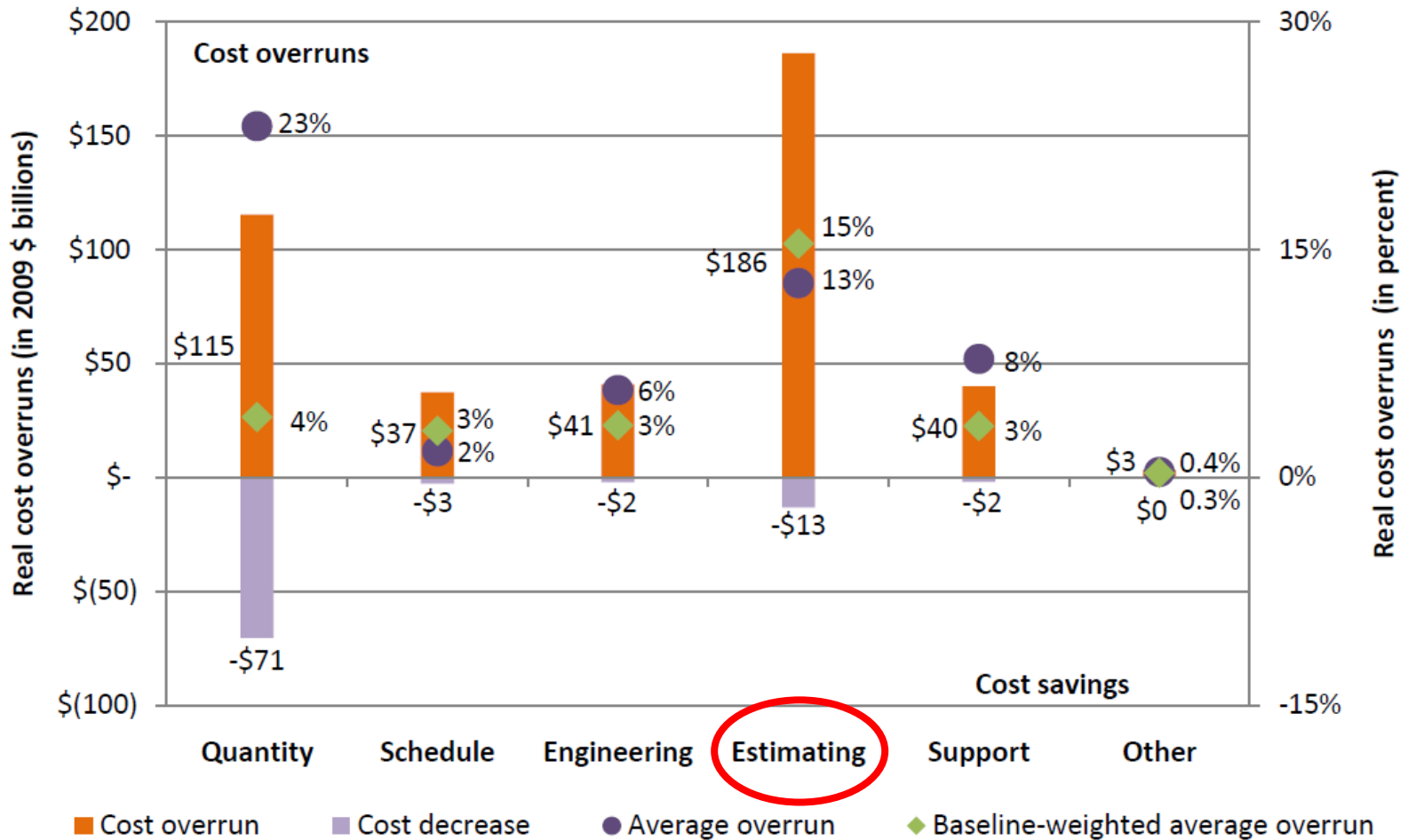


Source: DOD (data); GAO (analysis and presentation).

\*Source: *A Knowledge-Based Funding Approach Could Improve Major Weapon System Program Outcomes*, GAO Report to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate s, U.S. Senate, July, 2008 GAO-08-619



# Functional reasons for cost overruns



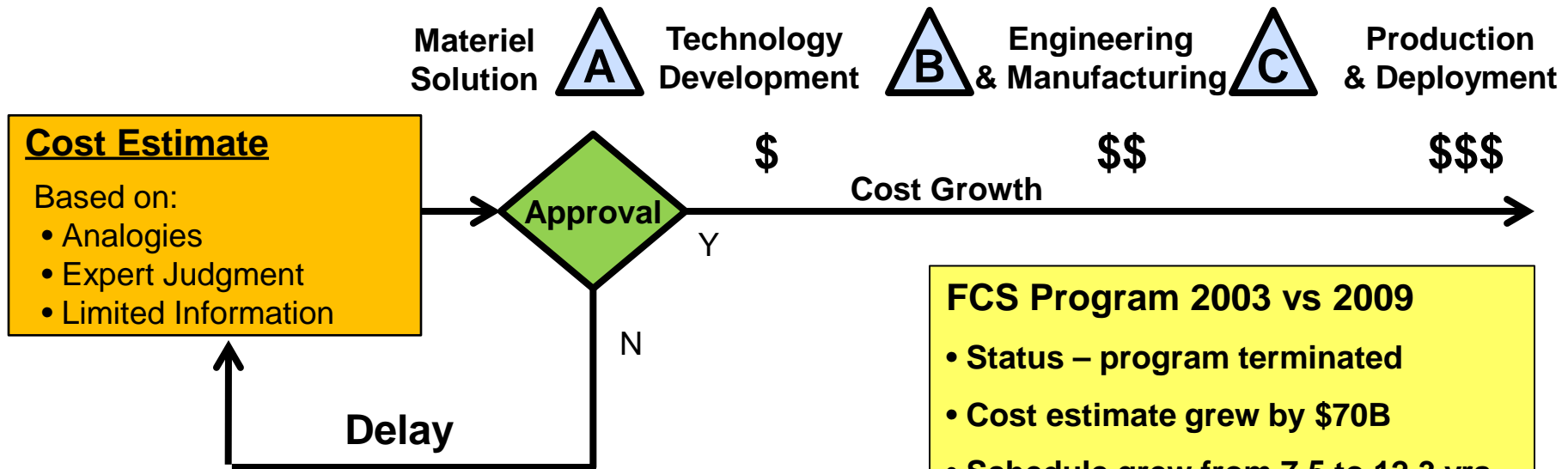
Source: December 2009 SAR; analysis by CSIS Defense-Industrial Initiatives Group  
*Cost and Time Overruns for Major Defense Acquisition Programs, 2010*





# DoD Acquisition Lifecycle

## Acquisition Phases and Decision Milestones



**FCS Program 2003 vs 2009**

- Status – program terminated
- Cost estimate grew by \$70B
- Schedule grew from 7.5 to 12.3 yrs
- Lines of code grew from 34M to 114M

Source: GAO-10-406

**Ground Combat Vehicle Delay Due to Reconciling Cost Estimates**

- 4 months delay in obtaining approval to proceed
- Rework to conduct a new Analysis of Alternatives and to produce a new cost estimate

Source: GAO-12-181T



# Information Flow for Early Lifecycle Estimation

Information from Analogous Programs/Systems



Proposed Material Solution & Analysis of Alternatives

## Program Execution Change Drivers

### System Characteristics Trade-offs

- KPP selection
- Systems Design
- Sustainment issues
- ...

### Operational Capability Trade-offs

- Mission / CONOPS
- Capability Based Analysis
- ...

### Technology Development Strategy

- Production Quantity
- Acquisition Mgt
- Scope definition/responsibility
- Contract Award

## Driver States & Probabilities

Plans, Specifications, Assessments

Cost Estimates

- analogy
- parametric
- engineering
- CERs

Probabilistic Modeling (BBN) & Monte Carlo Simulation

Program Execution Scenarios with conditional probabilities of drivers/states

Expert Judgements



# Create a Method for Quantifying the Uncertainty of Cost Estimation Inputs and Resulting Estimates

## Elements of Innovation

1. Identify Change Drivers & States

Explicit identification of domain specific program change drivers.

2. Reduce Cause and Effect Relationships via Dependency Structure Matrix techniques

Unique application of Dependency Structure Matrix techniques for cost estimation.

3. Assign Conditional Probabilities to BBN Model

BBN modeling of a larger number of program change drivers for estimation than previous research.

4. Calculate Cost Factor Distributions for Program Execution Scenarios

Scenario modeling of alternate program executions to assess influence of various underlying assumptions.

5. Monte Carlo Simulation to Compute Cost Distribution

Monte Carlo simulation applied to estimation input parameters rather than output values.

Technical Problem

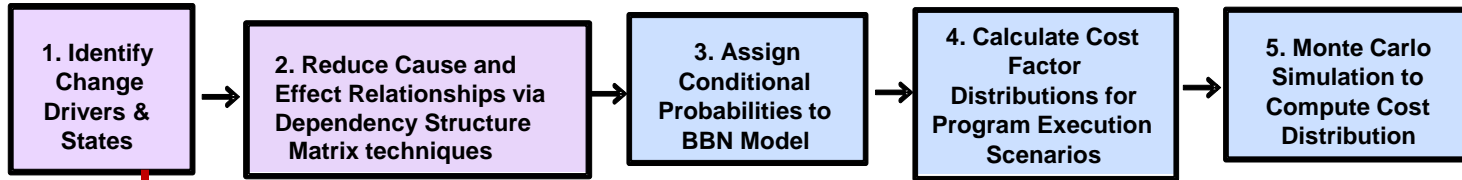
Complexity Reduction

Modeling Uncertainty



# Step 1: Identify Change Drivers and States

## Matériel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate

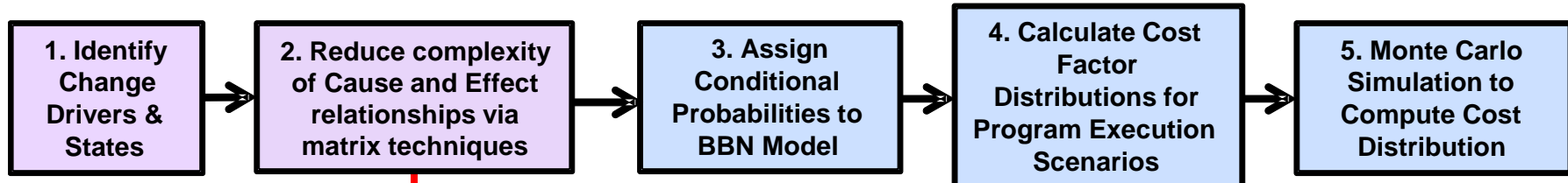


Change Driver	Nominal State	Alternative States					
Scope Definition	Stable	Users added	Additional (foreign) customer	Additional deliverable (e.g. training & manuals)	Production downsized	Scope Reduction (funding reduction)	
Mission / CONOPS	As defined	New condition	New mission	New echelon	Program becomes Joint		
Capability Definition	Stable	Addition	Subtraction	Variance	Trade-offs [performance vs affordability, etc.]		
Funding Schedule	Established	Funding delays tie up resources {e.g. operational test}	FFRDC ceiling issue	Funding change for end of year	Funding spread out	Obligated vs. allocated funds shifted	
Advocacy Change	Stable	Joint service program loses participant	Senator did not get re-elected	Change in senior pentagon staff	Advocate requires change in mission scope	Service owner different than CONOPS users	
Closing Technical Gaps (CBA)	Selected Trade studies are sufficient	Technology does not achieve satisfactory performance	Technology is too expensive	Selected solution cannot achieve desired outcome	Technology not performing as expected	New technology not testing well	
	•	<b>Domain-Specific Program Change Drivers Identified</b>					
	•	~~~~	~~~~	~~~~	~~~~	~~~~	
	•						



# Step 2: Reduce Cause and Effect Relationships via Design Structure Matrix Techniques

Material Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



Change Drivers - Cause & Effects Matrix

	Mission / CONOPS	Change in Strategic Vision	Capability Definition	Advocacy Change	Closing Technical Gaps (CBA)	Building Technical Capability & Capacity (CBA)	Interoperability	Systems Design	Interdependency	Functional Measures	Scope Definition	Functional Solution Criteria (measure)	Funding Schedule	Acquisition Management	Program Mgt - Contractor Relations	Project Social / Dev Env	Prog Mgt Structure	Manning at program office
Mission / CONOPS	3																	
Change in Strategic Vision		3																
Capability Definition			3															
Advocacy Change				3														
Closing Tech					3													
Building Tech						3												
Interoperability							3											
Systems Des								3										
Interdependency									3									
Functional Measures										3								
Scope Definition											3							
Functional Solution Criteria (measure)												3						
Funding Schedule													3					
Acquisition Management														3				
Program Mgt - Contractor Relations															3			
Project Social / Dev Env																3		
Prog Mgt Structure																	3	
Manning at program office																		3

**Capturing interrelationships among change drivers and reducing the complexity of the network**



# Step 2: Reduce Cause and Effect Relationships via Dependency Structure Matrix Techniques

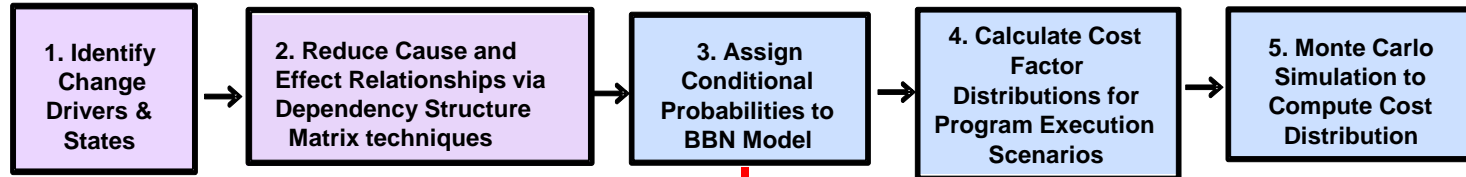
Change Drivers - Cause & Effects Matrix

Effects	Mission / CONOPS	Change in Strategic Vision	Capability Definition	Advocacy Change	Closing Technical Gaps (CBA)	Building Technical Capability & Capacity (CBA)	Interoperability	Systems Design	Interdependency	Functional Measures	Scope Definition	Functional Solution Criteria (measure)	Funding Schedule	Acquisition Management	Program Mgt - Contractor Relations	Project Social / Dev Env	Prog Mgt Structure	Manning at program office	Scope Responsibility	Standards/Certifications	Supply Chain Vulnerabilities	Information sharing	PO Process Performance	Sustainment Issues	Contract Award	Production Quantity	Data Ownership	Industry Company Assessment	Cost Estimate	Test & Evaluation	Contractor Performance	Size	Project Challenge	Product Challenge	Total	Number right of diagonal								
Mission / CONOPS	1																																				6	0						
Change in Strategic Vision	3	1																																					29	0				
Capability Definition	3	3	1																																				16	0				
Advocacy Change				1																																			6	0				
Closing Technical Gaps (CBA)					1																																		34	0				
Building Technical Capability & Capacity (CBA)						1																																	27	0				
Interoperability							1																																29	1				
Systems Design								1																															21	3				
Interdependency									1																														33	5				
Functional Measures										1																													16	0				
Scope Definition											1																													5	0			
Functional Solution Criteria (measure)												1																												10	1			
Funding Schedule													1																											5	0			
Acquisition Management														1																										19	2			
Program Mgt - Contractor Relations															1																									12	2			
Project Social / Dev Env																1																								14	2			
Prog Mgt Structure																	1																							6	1			
Manning at program office																		1																						5	2			
Scope Responsibility																			1																					6	5			
Standards/Certifications																				1																				10	2			
Supply Chain Vulnerabilities																					1																			7	4			
Information sharing																						1																		7	3			
PO Process Performance																							1																	2	4	0		
Sustainment Issues																								1																	0	0		
Contract Award																									1																0	0		
Production Quantity																										1															2	2	0	
Data Ownership																											1														2	2	0	
Industry Company Assessment																												1													0	0		
Cost Estimate																														1												0	0	
Test & Evaluation																																1										0	0	
Contractor Performance																																	1								2	2	0	
Size																																										0	0	
Project Challenge																																										2	2	0
Product Challenge																																											0	0
Totals	0	0	6	4	1	9	5	12	8	7	7	13	4	10	15	18	7	7	8	8	14	17	17	15	12	9	10	13	11	20	19	5	5	17										
Below diagonal	0	0	0	1	1	4	4	4	1	2	0	3	1	3	2	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	



# Step 3: Assign Conditional Probabilities to BBN Model

## Matériel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



**Capability Definition**

**Node Probability Table**

NPT Editing Mode ..... Manual

Mission CONOPS	0.0		1.0	
Strategic Vision	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
0.0	0.4	0.3	0.25	0.2
1.0	0.6	0.7	0.75	0.8

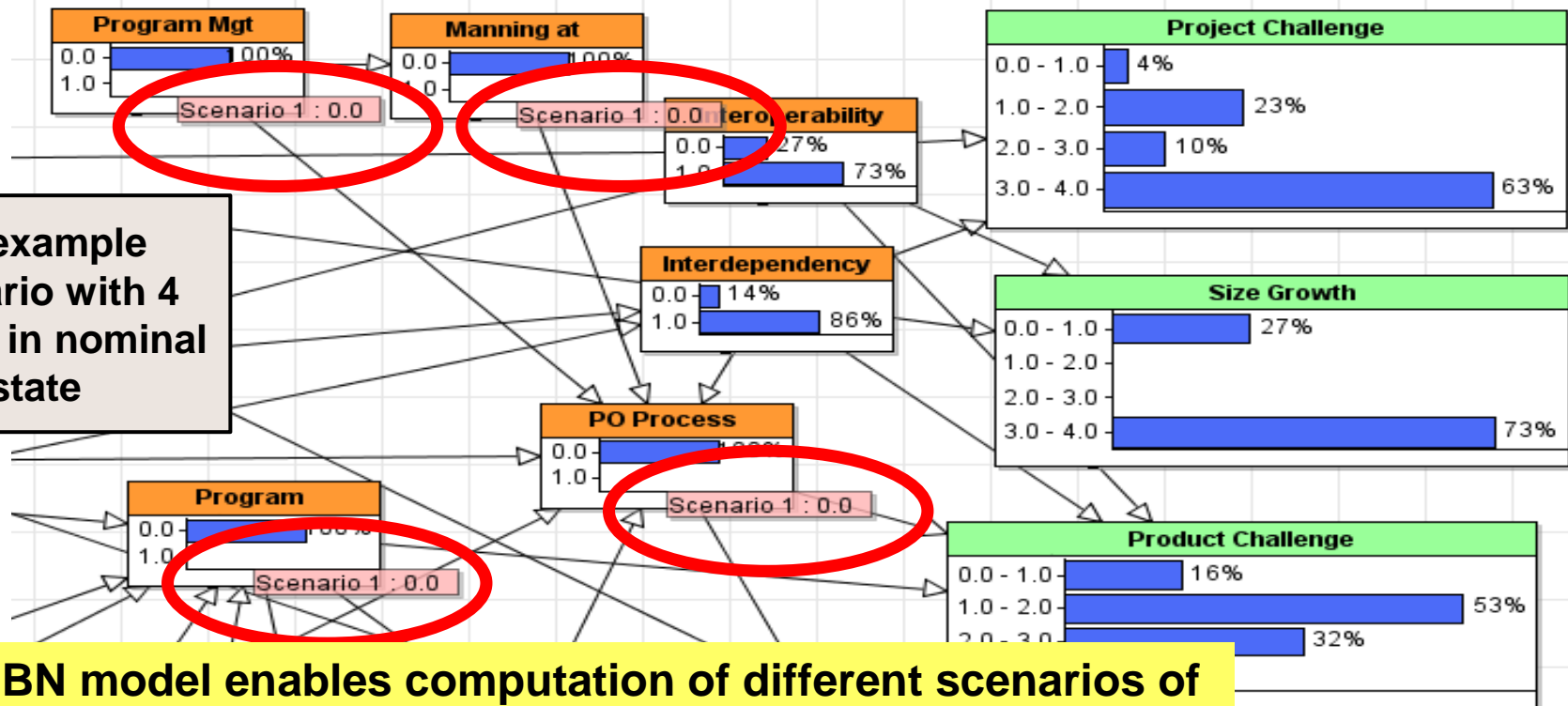
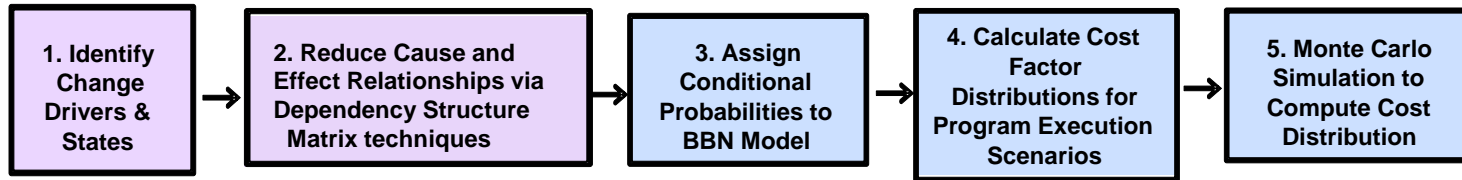
**Quantifying the uncertainty of change drivers and the cascading effects**

Capability Definition is affected by CONOPS and Strategic Vision



# Step 4: Calculate Cost Factor Distributions for Program Execution Scenarios

Material Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



An example scenario with 4 drivers in nominal state

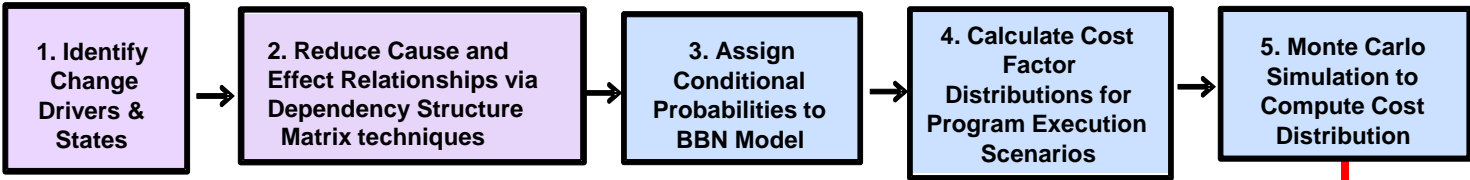
BBN model enables computation of different scenarios of program execution on cost model factors



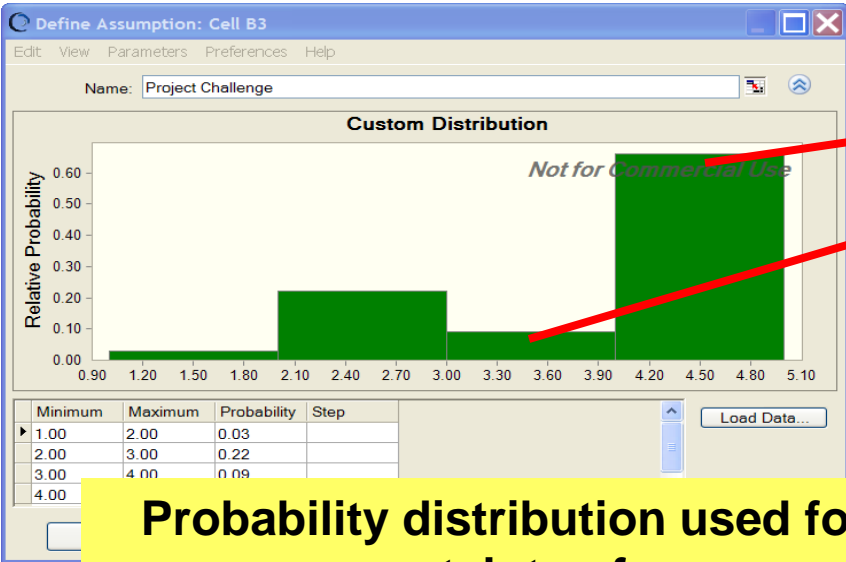


# Step 5a: Monte Carlo Simulation to Compute Cost Distribution

## Materiel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



BBN output distributions mapped to COCOMO input values



Drivers	XL	VL	L	N	H	VH	XH	Product	Project
<b>Scale Factors</b>									
PREC		6.20	4.96	3.72	2.48	1.24	0.00		<X>
FLEX		5.07	4.05	3.04	2.03	1.01	0.00	<X>	
RESL		7.07	5.65	4.24	2.83	1.41	0.00	<X>	
TEAM		5.48	4.38	3.29	2.19	1.10	0.00		<X>
PMAT		7.80	6.24	4.68	3.12	1.56	0.00		<X>
<b>Effort Multipliers</b>									
RCPX	0.49	0.60	0.83	1.00	1.33	1.91	2.72	X	
RUSE			0.95	1.00	1.07	1.15	1.24	X	
PDIF			0.87	1.00	1.29	1.81	2.61	X	
PERS	2.12	1.62	1.26	1.00	0.83	0.63	0.50	<X>	
PREX	1.59	1.33	1.12	1.00	0.87	0.74	0.62		<X>
FCU	1.40	1.00	1.10	1.00	0.87	0.70	0.60		<X>
									<X>

Probability distribution used for input to cost estimation model links uncertainty of program change drivers to cost drivers



# COCOMO “Architecture” Parameter Mapping

Product challenge factors represent uncertainty in performance criteria and technology.

PREC: Is this application unprecedented?

FLEX: How stringent are the product goals, scope and objectives?

RCPX: What is required product reliability and complexity?

RUSE: Must we design for re-usability?

PDIF: Platform difficulty? Processing speed, memory? Platform stability?

RESL: Have we addressed technology & architecture risk?

Project challenge factors represent difficulty in managing the workforce.

PREX: Personnel capability and experience?

SCED: How much schedule pressure is applied to this development?

FCIL: Are facilities adequate? Includes tools and multi-site development.

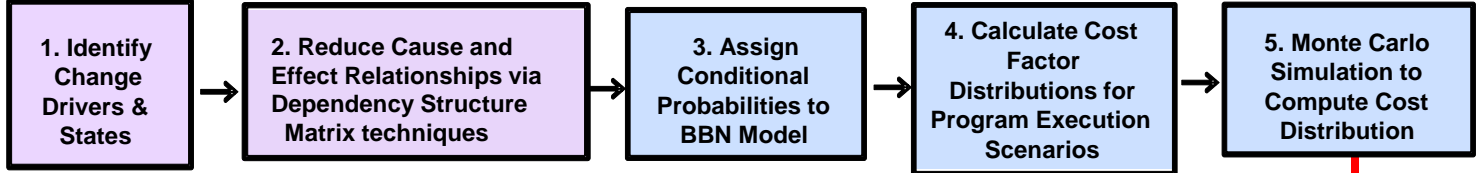
TEAM: Do we have a cohesive development team?

PMAT: Does the organization have a mature process?



# Step 5b: Monte Carlo Simulation to Compute Cost Distribution

## Matériel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate

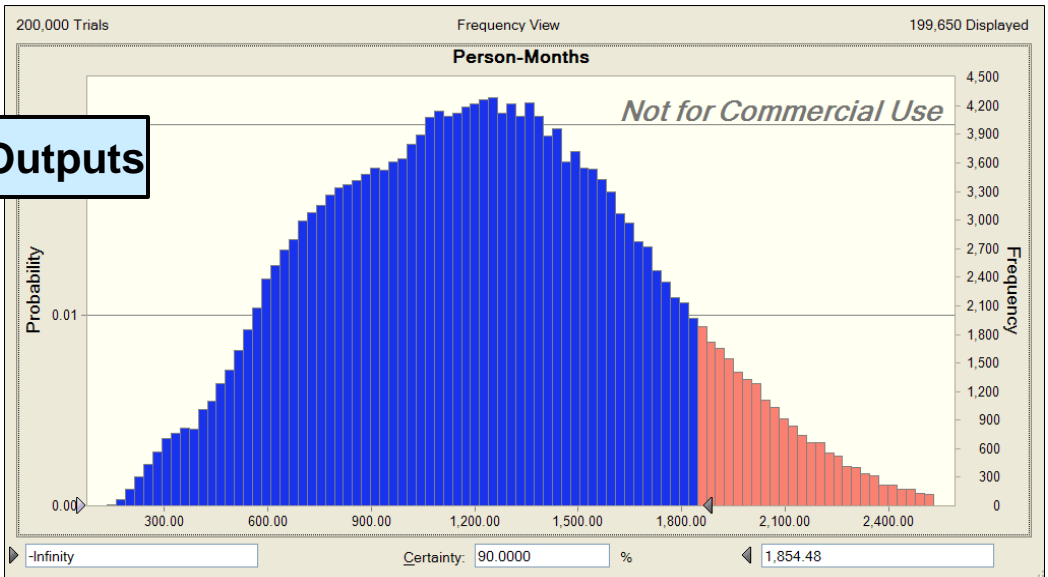


Monte Carlo simulation using program change factor distributions uses uncertainty on the input side to determine the cost estimate distribution

	A	B	C	D
1	Effect			
2	Product Challenge	5		
3	Project Challenge	4		
4	Estimated Size (KSLOC)	50		
5	Product Challenge factors		5	
6	COCOMO Parameter		XL	VL
7	Scale Factors	PREC		4
8		Val		6.2
9		FLEX		5

BBN Outputs

Mapped COCOMO value

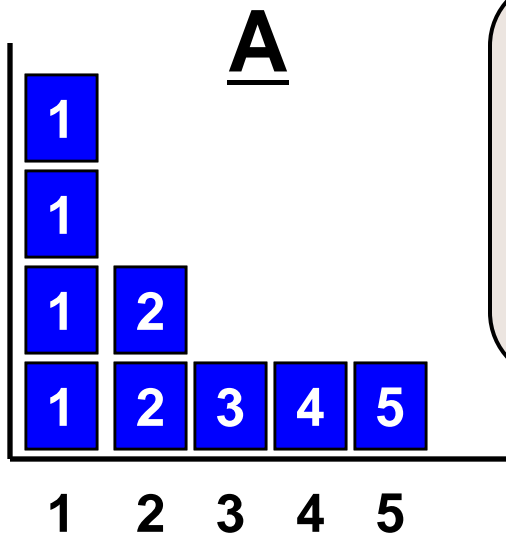


# Monte Carlo Simulation

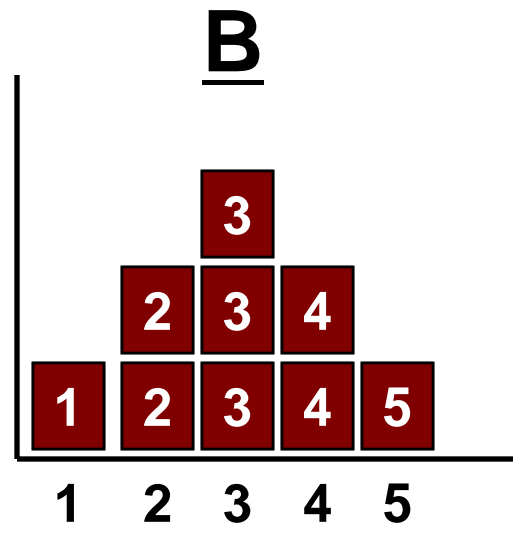
We will use Monte Carlo simulation to connect the BBN output node distributions to the COCOMO input parameter distributions

The animation on the next slide depicts the essence of Monte Carlo simulation when we need to work with distributions rather than single numbers





Crystal Ball uses a random number generator to select values for A and B

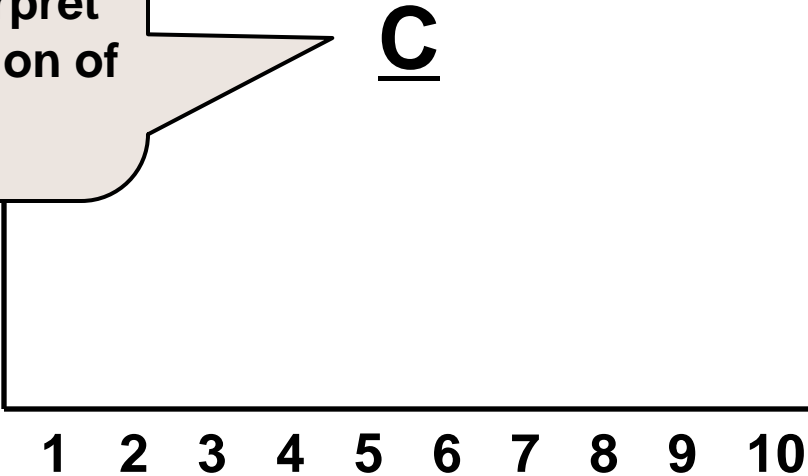


A + B = C

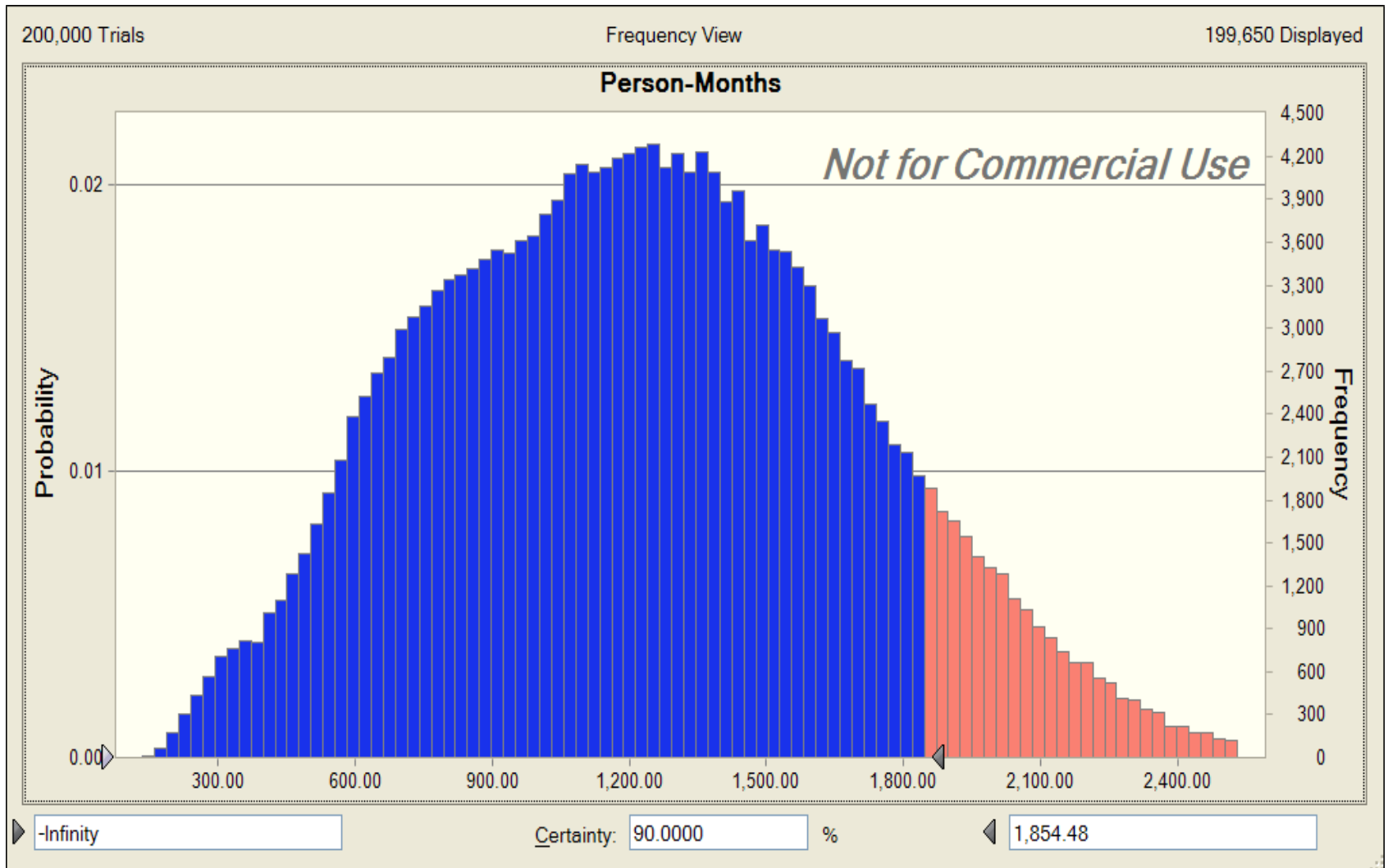
2

Crystal Ball then allows the user to analyze and interpret the final distribution of C!

Crystal Ball causes Excel to recalculate all cells, and then it saves off the different results for C!



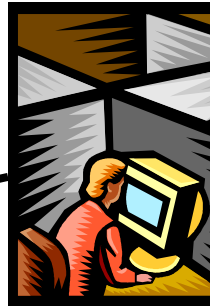
# An Example Output of Monte Carlo Simulation



# Develop Efficient Techniques To Calibrate Expert Judgment of Program Uncertainties

## Solution

**Step 2:** Iterate through a series of domain specific tests

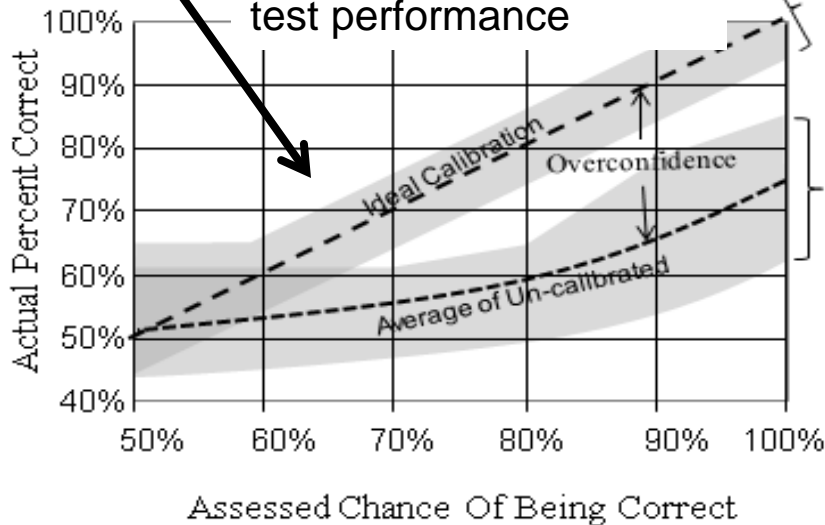


**Step 1:** Virtual training using reference points

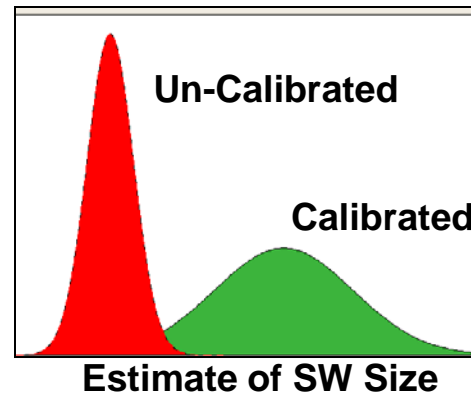
### DoD Domain-Specific reference points

- 1) Size of ground combat vehicle targeting feature xyz in 2002 consisted of 25 KSLOC Ada
- 2) Size of Army artillery firing capability feature abc in 2007 consisted of 18 KSLOC C++
- 3) ...

**Step 3:** Feedback on test performance



**Outcome:** Expert renders calibrated estimate of size



Calibrated = more realistic size and wider range to reflect true expert uncertainty

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# Polling Question 1

Do you find that your current cost estimation process relies heavily on expert judgment?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not Sure

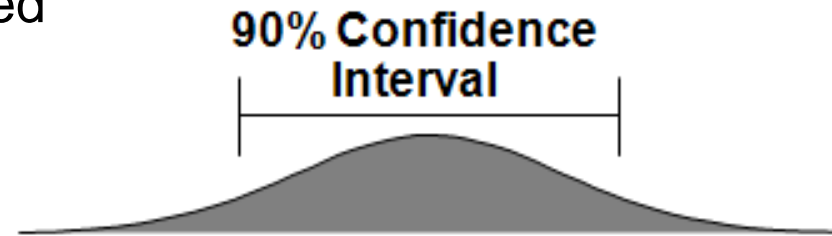




# Experts Tend to Be Over-Confident

Most people are significantly **overconfident** about their estimates, especially educated professionals

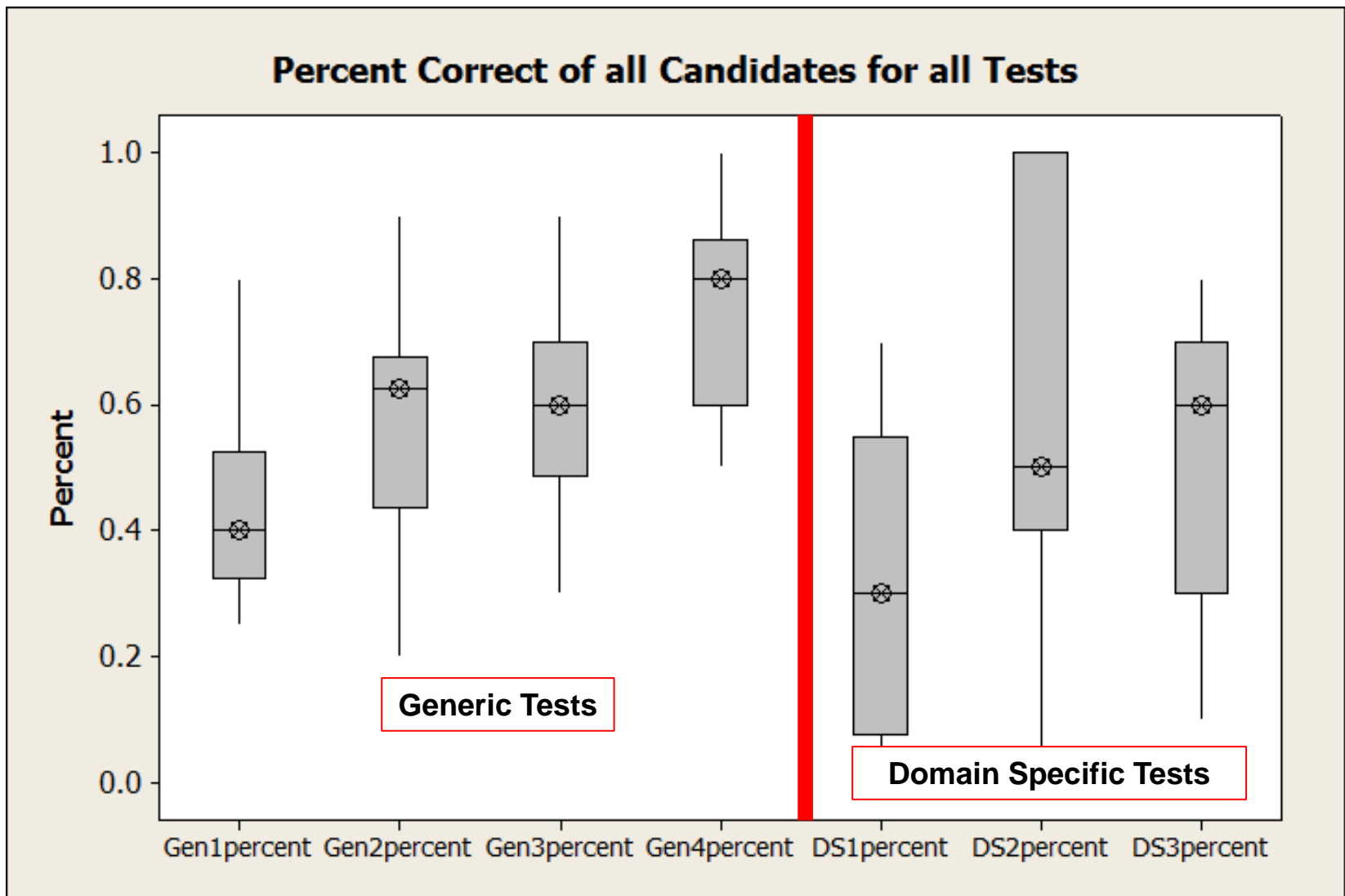
(AIE = Hubbard Generic Calibration Training)



Group	Subject	% Correct (target 90%)
Harvard MBAs	General Trivia	40%
Chemical Co. Employees	General Industry	50%
Chemical Co. Employees	Company-Specific	48%
Computer Co. Managers	General Business	17%
Computer Co. Managers	Company-Specific	36%

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Experiments confirm that calibrated judgment can be taught.



# Future Research Activities

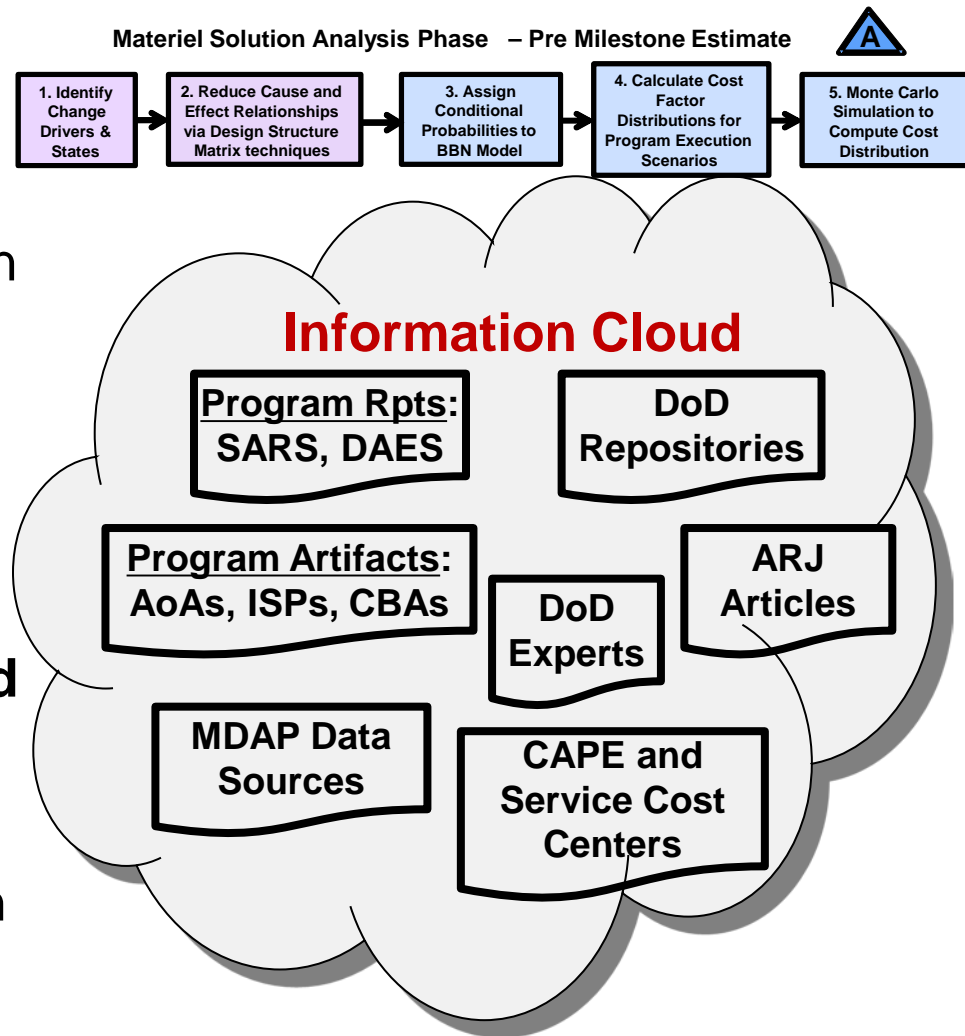


# Create A Repository for Quantifying Program Execution Uncertainties

Subject Matter Experts need DoD MDAP **data about uncertainty** to quantify relationships of program change drivers and their impact on program execution.

**Why Hard?** Empirical data need to be identified, accessed, extracted and analyzed from a **myriad of sources**. Data about program change is **not structured nor quantified** for use in estimation.

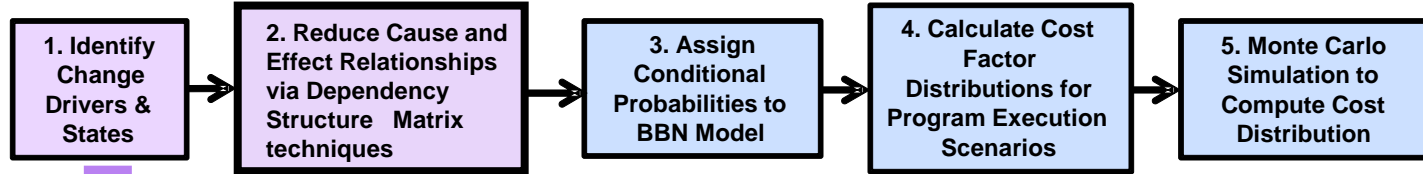
**DoD Need:** Quantified information about **cost driver uncertainty** should inform estimates.



# Repository: Analyze Existing Data to Model Program Execution Uncertainties - 1

Solution

Matériel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



Program Change Repository

Prog	State	Driver
DDG51	cond 1	CONOPS
	cond 2	System
	cond 3	CapDef
JTRS	cond 1	InterOp
	cond 2	Prod uc
F22	cond 1	Contract
	cond 2	Function
	cond 3	CONOPS

For C2 systems, how often does Strategic Vision change?

Records show that Strategic Vision changed in 45% of the MDAPS

The **Matériel Solution** of a global network command and control system anticipates a possible change in **Strategic Vision** which will include allied participation.

Sharing information with allies creates new encryption requirements (a change in **Mission/CONOPs**).

These changes lead to changes in **Capability**

Driver State Matrix

Class/State	Current State	Alternative State	Impact
Scope Definition	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Mission/CONOPS	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Capability Definition	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Funding Schedule	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Analysis Change	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Class/State	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Class/State	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load
Class/State	Users added	Additional users in system	Increased system load

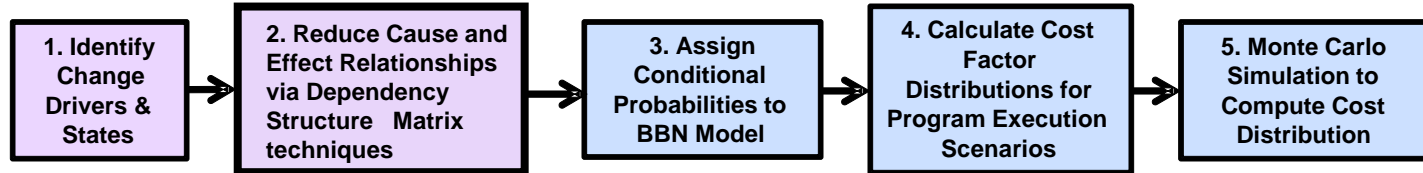
**Repository identifies probability of change in MDAP cost drivers.**



# Repository: Analyze Existing Data to Model Program Execution Uncertainties - 2

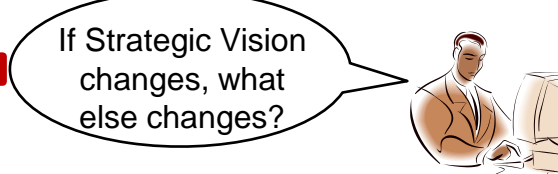
## Solution

### Matériel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



**Program Change Repository**

Prog	State	Driver
DDG51	cond 1	CONOPS
	cond 2	System De
	cond 3	CapDef
JTRS	cond 1	InterOpera
	cond 2	Prod uctio
F22	cond 1	Contract
	cond 2	Functional
	cond 3	CONOPS



70% of the time the Mission/CONOPS changes

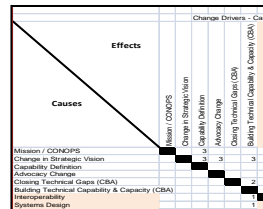
The **Matériel Solution** of a global network command and control system anticipates a possible change in **Strategic Vision** which will include allied participation.

Sharing information with allies creates new encryption requirements (a change in Mission/CONOPS).

Driver State Matrix

Change Driver	Current State	Proposed State	Relationship	Impact
Scope Definition	None added	Strategic	Strategic	Strategic
Mission/CONOPS	Defined	New mission	New mission	New mission
Capacity Definition	None	Added	Subtraction	Subtraction
Funding Schedule	Established	Changed	Change in funding	Change in funding
Authority Change	None	Added	Change in authority	Change in authority
Technical Support	None	Added	Change in support	Change in support
Operational Support	None	Added	Change in support	Change in support
Interoperability	None	Added	Change in support	Change in support
Systems Design	None	Added	Change in support	Change in support

DSM Cause-Effect Matrix



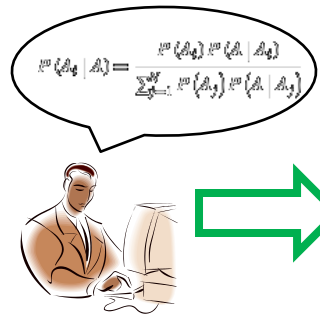
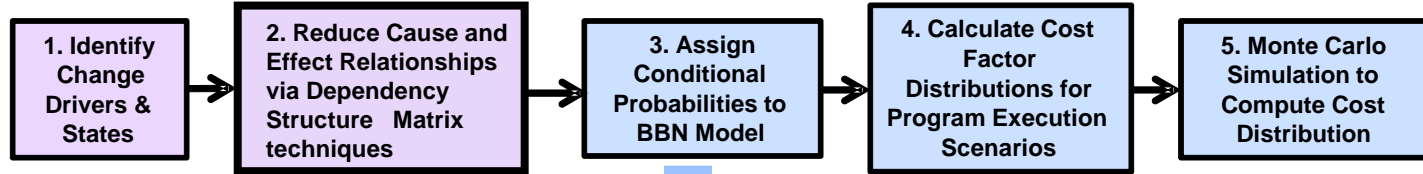
**Repository identifies cascading effects of change in MDAP cost drivers.**



# Repository: Analyze Existing Data to Model Program Execution Uncertainties - 3

Solution

Materiel Solution Analysis Phase – Pre Milestone Estimate



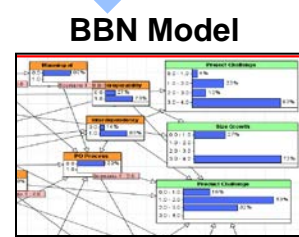
When both Strategic Vision & Mission/CONOPs experience change, the BBN calculates that Capability Definition will also change 95% of the time.

The **Materiel Solution** of a global network command and control system anticipates a possible change in **Strategic Vision** which will include allied participation.

Sharing information with allies creates new encryption requirements (a change in **Mission/CONOPs**).

These changes lead to changes in **Capability Definition**.

Joint Conditional Probabilities can be calculated for downstream changes.



# QUELCE Summary

QUELCE includes the effects of uncertainty in the resulting estimate by:

- Making visible the quantified uncertainties that exist in basic assumptions.
- Calculating uncertainty of the input factors to the model rather than adjusting the output factors.
- Using scenario planning to calculate how specific changes might affect outcomes.

The method utilizes subjective and objective data as input

- Historical data can be used to populate the BBN nodes and establish the connections between the BBN and cost model inputs.
- Expert judgments are documented and made explicit.
- Information typically not used for estimation purposes can be leveraged.

The method explicitly includes factors that have been documented as sources of program failure in the past but are not typically captured by cost models





# For More Information

## QUELCE Technical Report:

<http://www.sei.cmu.edu/library/abstracts/reports/11tr026.cfm>

## SEI Blog

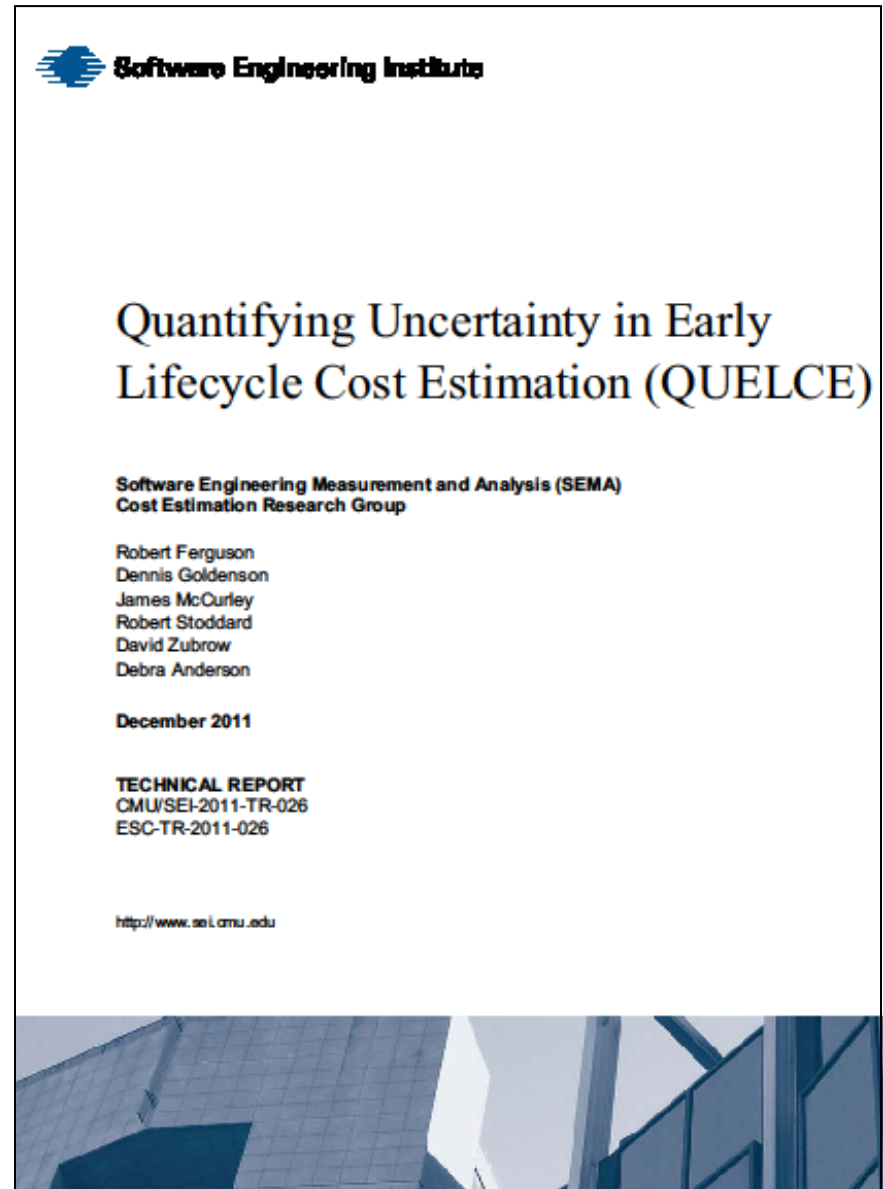
<http://blog.sei.cmu.edu>

- “Improving the Accuracy of Early Cost Estimates for Software-Reliant Systems, First in a Two-Part Series”
- “A New Approach for Developing Cost Estimates in Software Reliant Systems, Second in a Two-Part Series”
- “Quantifying Uncertainty in Early Lifecycle Cost Estimation (QUELCE): An Update”

## *Journal of Software Technology*

<http://journal.thedacs.com/issue/64/207>

- “An Innovative Approach to Quantifying Uncertainty in Early Lifecycle Cost Estimation”



# Contact Information

## Presenters / Points of Contact

SEMA Cost Estimation Research  
Group

***Robert Ferguson***

[rwf@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:rwf@sei.cmu.edu)

***Dennis Goldenson***

[dg@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:dg@sei.cmu.edu)

***Jim McCurley***

[jmccurle@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:jmccurle@sei.cmu.edu)

***Robert Stoddard***

[rws@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:rws@sei.cmu.edu)

***Dave Zubrow***

[dz@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:dz@sei.cmu.edu)

## U.S. Mail

Software Engineering Institute

Customer Relations

4500 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2612, USA

## Web

[www.sei.cmu.edu](http://www.sei.cmu.edu)

[www.sei.cmu.edu/contact.cfm](http://www.sei.cmu.edu/contact.cfm)

## Customer Relations

Email: [info@sei.cmu.edu](mailto:info@sei.cmu.edu)

Telephone: +1 412-268-5800

SEI Phone: +1 412-268-5800

SEI Fax: +1 412-268-6257



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This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Defense under Contract No. FA8721-05-C-0003 with Carnegie Mellon University for the operation of the Software Engineering Institute, a federally funded research and development center.

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