CHAPTER 11

CONTINGENCY

1. INTRODUCTION

The application of contingency for various types of cost estimates covers the entire life cycle of a project from feasibility studies through execution to closeout. The purpose of the contingency guidelines presented in this chapter is to provide for a standard approach to determining project contingency and improve the understanding of contingency in the project management process. These guidelines have been adopted by the DOE estimating community and should be incorporated into the operating procedures of DOE and operating contractor project team members.

2. CONTINGENCY DEFINITIONS

A. General Contingency

Contingency is an integral part of the total estimated costs of a project. It has been defined as—

> [a] specific provision for unforeseeable elements of cost within the defined project scope. [Contingency is] particularly important where previous experience relating estimates and actual costs has shown that unforeseeable events which will increase costs are likely to occur.

This definition has been adopted by the American Association of Cost Engineers. DOE has elected to narrow the scope of this definition and defines contingency as follows.

> Covers costs that may result from incomplete design, unforeseen and unpredictable conditions, or uncertainties within the defined project scope. The amount of the contingency will depend on the status of design, procurement, and construction; and the complexity and uncertainties of the component parts of the project. Contingency is not to be used to avoid making an accurate assessment of expected cost.

It is not DOE practice to set aside contingency for major schedule changes or unknown design factors, unanticipated regulatory standards or changes, incomplete or additions to project scope definition, force majeure situations, or congressional budget cuts. Project and operations estimates will always contain contingency. Estimators should be aware that contingency is an integral part of the estimate.

B. Buried Contingencies

Some estimators have sought to hide contingency estimates in order to protect the project so that the final project does not go over budget because the contingency has been removed by outside sources. This is affectionately known as buried contingency. All internal and external estimators should refrain from burying extra contingency allowances within the estimate. A culture of honesty should be promoted so that it is not necessary to bury contingency. In addition, estimators should be aware that estimate reviews will identify buried contingency. The estimate reviewer is obligated to remove buried contingency.

3. SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONTINGENCY ANALYSIS

Considerable latitude has been reserved for estimators and managers in the following contingency analysis specifications. These guidelines are to be followed by both the operating contractor and the DOE field office cost estimators to ensure a consistent and standard approach by the project team. Each contractor and field office should incorporate these guidelines into their operating procedures.

A written contingency analysis and estimate will be performed on all cost estimates and maintained in the estimate documentation file. This analysis is mandatory.

Estimators may use the ranges provided in this chapter of the cost guide for estimating small projects; however, larger projects require a more detailed analysis, including a cost estimate basis and a written description for each contingency allowance assigned to the various parts of the estimate.

Justification must be documented in writing when guide ranges for contingency are not followed. If extraordinary conditions exist that call for higher contingencies, the rationale and basis will be documented in the estimate. Computer programs, such as Independent Cost Estimating Contingency Analyzer (ICECAN), a Monte Carlo analysis program, are available to estimators and should be used to develop contingency factors. Risk analysis may also be necessary.

A. Construction Projects

Table 11-1 presents the contingency allowances by type of construction estimate for the seven standard DOE estimate types, and Table 11-2 presents the guidelines for the major components of a construction project.

Estimate types “a” through “e” in Table 11-1 are primarily an indication of the degree of completeness of the design. Type “f,” current working estimates, found in Table 11-2, depends upon the completeness of design, procurement, and construction. Contingency is calculated on the basis of remaining costs not incurred. Type “g,” the Independent Estimate, may occur at any time, and the corresponding contingency would be used (i.e., “a,” “b,” etc.).

Table 11-1. Contingency Allowance Guide By Type of Estimate

Type of Estimate	Overall Contingency Allowances % of Remaining Costs Not Incurred
PLANNING (Prior to CDR) Standard Experimental/Special Conditions	20% to 30% Up to 50%
BUDGET (Based upon CDR) Standard Experimental/Special Conditions	15% to 25% Up to 40%
TITLE I	10% to 20%
TITLE II DESIGN	5% to 15%
GOVERNMENT (BID CHECK)	5% to 15% adjusted to suit market conditions
CURRENT WORKING ESTIMATES	See Table 11-2
INDEPENDENT ESTIMATE	To suit status of project and estimator's judgment

The following factors need to be considered to select the contingency for specific items in the estimate while staying within the guideline ranges for each type of estimate.

1. Project Complexity

Unforeseen, uncertain, and unpredictable conditions will exist. Therefore, using the DOE cost code of accounts for construction, the following percents are provided for planning and budget estimates. They are listed in order of increasing complexity:

- Land and Land Rights 5% to 10%
- Improvements to Land/Standard Equipment 10% to 15%

•	New Buildings and Additions, Utilities, Other Structures	15% to 20%
•	Engineering	15% to 25%
•	Building Modifications	15% to 25%
•	Special Facilities (Standard)	20% to 30%
•	Experimental/Special Conditions	Up to 50%

Considerations that affect the selection in the ranges are: state-of-the-art design, required reliability, equipment complexity, construction restraints due to continuity of operation, security, contamination, environmental (weather, terrain, location), scheduling, and other items unique to the project, such as nuclear and waste management permits and reviews.

2. Design Completeness or Status

Regardless of the complexity factors listed above, the degree of detailed design to support the estimate is the more important factor. This factor is the major reason that the ranges in Table 11-1 vary from the high of 20 to 30 percent in the planning estimate to 5 to 15 percent at the completion of Title II design. Again, parts of the estimate may have different degrees of design completion, and the appropriate contingency percent must be used. As can be seen from Figure 11-1, as a project progresses, the contingency range and amount of contingency decreases.

3. Market Conditions

Market condition considerations are an addition or a subtraction from the project cost that can be accounted for in contingency. Obviously, the certainty of the estimate prices will have a major impact. The closer to a firm quoted price for equipment or a position of construction work, the less the contingency can be until reaching 1 to 5 percent for the current working type estimate for fixed-price procurement contracts, 3 to 8 percent for fixed-price construction contracts, and 15 to 17.5 percent contingency for cost-plus contracts that have been awarded.

4. Special Conditions

When the technology has not been selected for a project, an optimistic-pessimistic analysis can be completed. For each competing technology, an estimate is made. The difference in these estimates of the optimistic and pessimistic alternative can be used as the contingency.

Table 11-2. Contingency Allowances for Current Working Estimates	
	Item Contingency On Remaining Cost Not Incurred
a. ENGINEERING	
Before Detailed Estimates:	15% to 25%
After Detailed Estimates:	10%
b. EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT	
Before Bid:	
Budget	15% to 25%
Title I	10% to 20%
Title II	5% to 15%
After Award:	
Cost Plus Award Fee (CPAF) Contract	15%
Fixed-Price Contract	1% to 5%
After Delivery to Site (if no rework)	0%
c. CONSTRUCTION	
Prior to Award:	
Budget	15% to 25%
Title I	10% to 20%
Title II	5% to 15%
After Award:	
CPAF Contract	15% to 17-1/2%
Fixed-Price Contract	3% to 8%
d. TOTAL CONTINGENCY (CALCULATED)	Total of above item contingencies

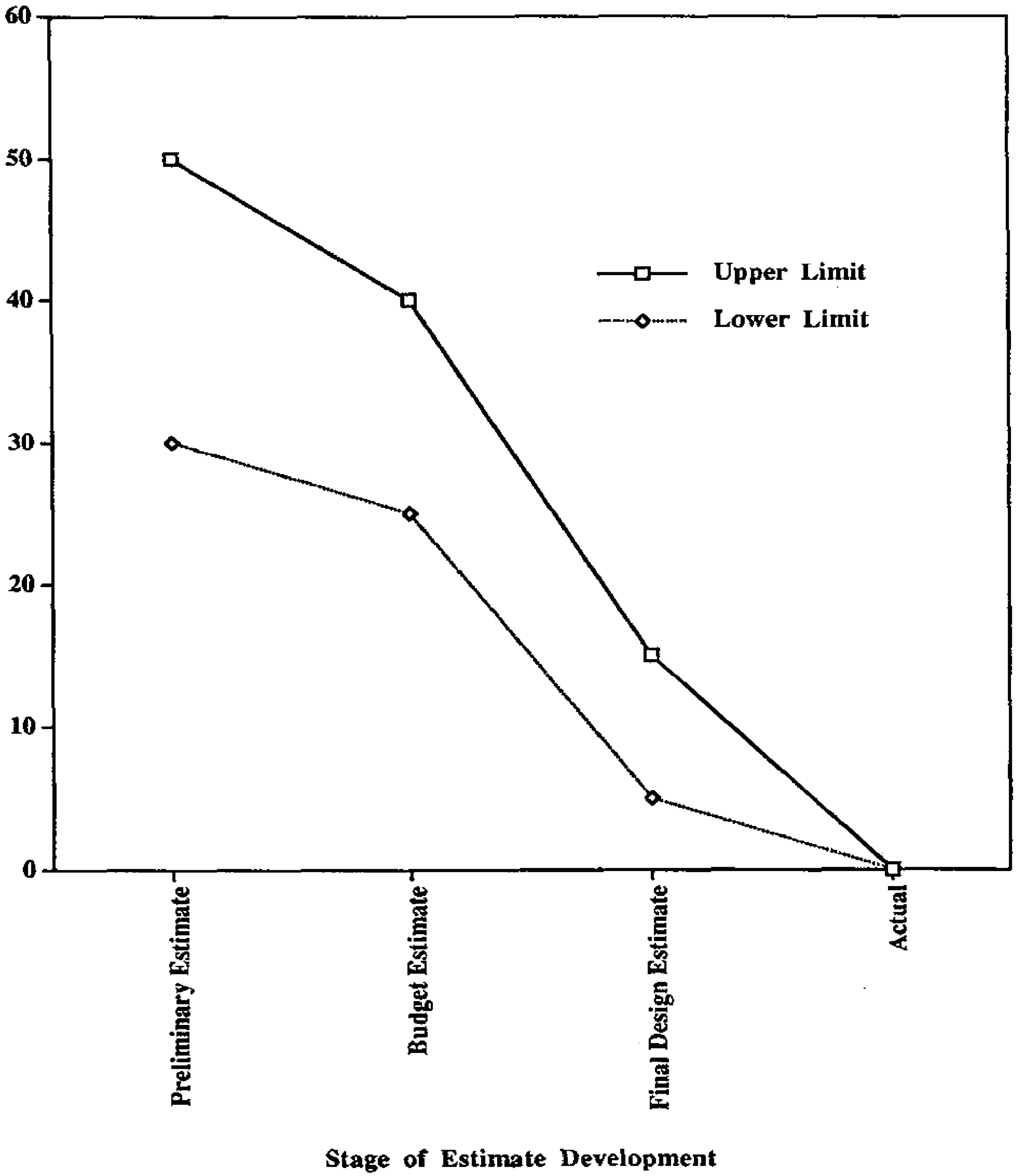

Figure 11-1. Contingency As a Function of Project Life

B. Environmental Restoration Projects

Environmental restoration projects usually consist of an assessment phase and a remediation/cleanup phase. Contingency plays a major role in the cost estimates for both phases. Recommended contingency guidelines for each phase will be discussed below. Table 11-3 lists contingency guidelines for assessment and remediation/cleanup project phases.

1. Assessment Phase

Unlike the remediation phase, the assessment phase does not include the physical construction of a remedy. An assessment determines and evaluates the threat presented by the release and evaluates proposed remedies. As a result, the assessment encompasses such items as field investigations, data analysis, screening and evaluation studies, and the production of reports.

The degree of project definition will depend on how well the scope of the assessment is defined. Higher levels of project definition will correspond to increasing levels of work completed on the assessment. Since the assessment is one of the initial stages of the environmental restoration process, there is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the technical characteristics, legal circumstances, and level of community concern. As a result, the scope of the assessment often evolves into additional operable units, and more than one assessment may be required.

Other considerations that affect the section of contingency ranges are—

- number of alternatives screened and evaluated;
- level and extent of sampling analysis and data evaluation;
- technical and physical characteristics of a site; and
- level of planning required.

Table 11-3 shows the estimate types for the assessment phase of an environmental restoration project and their corresponding expected contingency ranges. No contingency ranges for planning estimates have been provided. The contingencies become smaller as the project progresses and becomes better defined. However, it should be noted that these are only general guidelines based on the level of project definition. A higher or lower contingency may be appropriate depending on the level of project complexity, technical innovation, market innovation, and public acceptance.

Table 11-3. Contingency Guidelines for Environmental Restoration Projects

Activity and Estimate Type	Expected Contingency Range
Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation Planning Estimate for All Assessment Activities	Up to 100%
Preliminary Estimate for All Assessment Activities	30% to 70%
Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Detailed Estimate for All Assessment Activities	15% to 55%
Planning Estimate for All Cleanup Phase Activities	20 to 100%
Contingency Guidelines for Remediation/Cleanup Phase	
Pre-Design Preliminary Estimate for All Remediation/Cleanup Phase Activities	Up to 50%
Remedial Design and Action Detailed Estimate for All Remediation/Cleanup Phase Activities	0% to 25%

2. Remediation/Cleanup Phase

For the remediation/cleanup phase, contingency factors are applied to the remaining design work. Remaining design work will use the same contingency factor as established in the ROD, permit, or current baseline for the project. This contingency percentage will depend upon the degree of uncertainty associated with the project, particularly the degree of uncertainty in the scheduled completion dates.

Table 11-3 shows the estimate types for the remediation/cleanup phase and their corresponding contingency ranges. While the ranges are relatively broad, they reflect the amount of contingency that would have been needed for a set of completed projects. The wide variance accounts for differences in project definition when the estimate was generated, project complexity, technical innovation, and other factors.

Other considerations that affect the section of contingency ranges are:

- innovative technology;
- required reliability;
- equipment complexity;
- construction restraints due to continuity of operation security and contamination;
- environmental conditions (weather, terrain, location, etc.);
- scheduling; and
- other unique items to the project such as waste management permits and reviews.

Prior to the completion of a remedial/corrective measure design estimate, the contingency applied to remaining cleanup work will be no more than that established in the ROD, permit, or current baseline for that project. The percent contingency will depend upon the complexity of the work and the degree of uncertainties involved.

When the construction work is defined by definitive design but the cleanup contract has not yet been awarded, a 15 to 20 percent contingency will be provided on the estimated cost. Usually, the cost estimate is based on detailed drawings and bills of material. When the cleanup work is to be performed by a Cost Plus Award Fee contractor, and the contractor has prepared a detailed estimate of the cleanup cost, and it has been reviewed and approved, a contingency of 15 to 18 percent is applied to only that portion of the cost and commitments remaining to be accrued. On fixed-price cleanup contracts where no significant change orders, modifications, or potential claims are outstanding, a contingency of 3 to 8 percent of the uncompleted portion of the work is provided depending upon the type of work involved and the general status of the contract.

C. Contingency Tools - Monte Carlo Analyses Methodology

Many tools are available to assist estimators with contingency. There is no required tool or program, but Monte Carlo analyses may be performed for all major system acquisitions. Monte Carlo or risk analysis is used when establishing a baseline or baseline change during budget formulation. The contingency developed from the Monte Carlo analyses should fall within the contingency allowance ranges in Table 11-1.

Monte Carlo analyses and other risk assessment techniques use similar methodology to obtain contingency estimates; however, for illustrative purposes, the ICECAN program developed for DOE will be discussed in this section.

The estimator must subdivide the estimate into separate phases or tasks and assess the accuracy of the cost estimate data in each phase. After the project data have been input and checked, the computer program will calculate various contingencies for the overall project based on the probability project underrun. The random number generator accounts for the known estimate accuracy. Once the program has completed its iterations (usually 1000), it produces an overall contingency for the project with a certain accuracy.

The following information is an example project estimate that was input into the ICECAN program.

Base Cost	$1,000,000	Fixed Price
Land Rights	40% $100,000 to $250,000 40% $250,000 to $500,000 20% $500,000 to $600,000	Step-Rectangular Distribution
Labor	50% Less than $100,000 20% $100,000 to $200,000 30% $200,000 to $220,000	Discrete Distribution
Profit	Mean = $235,000 Standard Deviation = $25,000	Normal Distribution

The distribution of the ranges is based on the estimator's judgment. For example, the base cost is a fixed price of $1,000,000 with no anticipated change orders. For landrights, there is a 40 percent chance the cost will be between $100,000 and $250,000, a 40 percent chance the cost will be between $250,000 and $500,000, and a 20 percent chance it will be between $500,000 and $600,000. A step-rectangular distribution was chosen.

The ICECAN program uses the mean cost calculated by the iterations as the base estimate. With the base estimate, there is a 50 percent probability that the project will be underrun. The results in Figure 11-2 show the contingency that should be used to achieve various probabilities overrun. For example, a contingency of 11.1 percent should be used to achieve an 85 percent probability of project underrun. Therefore, the total cost estimate would be $1,901,842. If the worst case cost of each variable had been used, the total estimate would be $2,080,000 or 21.5 percent contingency.

ICECAN

STIMATE FILE: EXAMPLE — Contingency Report

Cost Estimate: ***$1,711,863

Probability of Underrun	Contingency Required		Contingency + Estimate
0.50	***********$0	(0.0%)	***$1,711,863
0.55	*********$228	(0.0%)	***$1,712,091
0.60	******$33,137	(1.9%)	***$1,745,000
0.65	******$76,269	(4.5%)	***$1,788,132
0.70	*****$111,558	(6.5%)	***$1,823,421
0.75	*****$140,282	(8.2%)	***$1,852,145
0.80	*****$163,372	(9.5%)	***$1,875,235
0.85	*****$189,979	(11.1%)	***$1,901,842
0.90	*****$224,928	(13.1%)	***$1,936,791
0.91	*****$235,725	(13.8%)	***$1,947,588
0.92	*****$248,795	(14.5%)	***$1,960,658
0.93	*****$257,706	(15.1%)	***$1,969,569
0.94	*****$266,618	(15.6%)	***$1,978,481
0.95	*****$278,856	(16.3%)	***$1,990,719
0.96	*****$292,907	(17.1%)	***$2,004,770
0.97	*****$308,836	(18.0%)	***$2,020,699
0.98	*****$321,089	(18.8%)	***$2,032,952
0.99	*****$343,554	(20.1%)	***$2,055,417
1.00	*****$366,427	(21.4%)	***$2,078,290

Figure 11-2. Contingency Data Results