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Paper Title:	Assessing performance, progress, trends, and challenges associated with NASA's major projects
Abstract:	<p>GAO's work has shown that historically NASA projects, while producing ground-breaking research and advancing understanding of the universe, tend to cost more and take longer to develop than planned, and are often approved without evidence of a sound business case. As a result, NASA Acquisition Management has remained on GAO's High Risk List for over 20 years. Every year for the past 6 years, GAO has assessed large-scale NASA projects that have an estimated life-cycle cost of over \$250 million in an annual report known as the "NASA Quicklook." This work has covered 38 distinct projects and has shown that over time, NASA has reduced cost and schedule growth across its portfolio of major projects. In 2014 GAO reported that the portfolio of projects – excluding the James Webb Space Telescope – had an average development cost growth of 3.0 percent and an average launch delay of 2.8 months, which both represent a significant decrease from 2009. NASA faces several challenges that could impact its continued ability to effectively manage its portfolio. A primary challenge in the next few years will be to complete a series of complex and expensive projects within constrained budgets and competing priorities. Any cost or schedule growth on NASA's largest, most complex projects, such as the James Webb Space Telescope and the Space Launch System and Orion programs could have a significant impact on continued execution of the remaining portfolio of major projects and the initiation of any new projects. NASA's ability to execute these expensive and complex projects effectively will be key to NASA's continued progress in improving acquisition management. Our work highlights trends in NASA's performance over the past 6 years, identifies factors contributing to recognized improvements, and discusses challenges that could impact NASA's progress.</p>
