

Why Policies Fail

Political Science

The recurring patterns behind expensive failures.

Documented causes.

Recurring causes

Optimism bias in cost and timing

Political deadline driving the design

No pilot before full rollout

Ignoring frontline warnings

IT and delivery complexity underestimated

No one accountable after the announcement

Mitigations

Reference class forecasting on costs

Staged rollout with stop points

Independent assurance reviews

Named accountable owner

Educational reference. Reference class forecasting uses outcomes of similar past projects rather than bottom-up estimates.