



2021 NASA Top Management and Performance Challenges



Returning Humans to the Moon

The Artemis program faces cost increases and delays in developing key systems such as the Human Landing System and next-generation spacesuits that will push the first lunar landing in more than 50 years to 2026 or beyond.



Improving Management of Major Projects

NASA must temper its culture of optimism by managing its ambitious science and space exploration projects to ensure that its 34 major projects currently in development are grounded in accurate estimates and meet cost, schedule, and performance goals.



Sustaining a Human Presence in Low Earth Orbit

With International Space Station operations likely to be extended through 2030, NASA must execute its plans to become a commercial destination in low Earth orbit (LEO) and avoid a gap in its ability to sustain a human presence in LEO to conduct research and technology demonstrations required for deeper and longer-term space travel.



Managing and Mitigating Cybersecurity Risk

As cyber threats become more sophisticated, NASA faces ongoing challenges to fortify its IT systems to maximize the utility of its space partnerships and other collaboration efforts while protecting intellectual property against theft.



Improving Oversight of Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements

NASA spends nearly \$20 billion annually on contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements for research and development activities, services, supplies, and equipment. In light of this significant outlay, the Agency must ensure it receives good value and that recipients spend NASA funds appropriately.



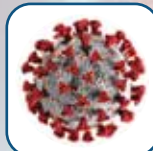
Attracting and Retaining a Highly Skilled and Diverse Workforce

NASA's efforts to attract and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce face an impending retirement wave, STEM pipeline risks, and COVID-19 workplace uncertainties—challenges that pose a risk to the success of the Agency's projects and missions.



Managing NASA's Outdated Infrastructure and Facilities

With a portfolio of \$40 billion in physical assets and more than 5,000 buildings and structures in 14 states—more than 75% of which require significant maintenance—the Agency needs to choose where to invest, divest, consolidate, and maintain its facilities.



Managing the Impacts of COVID-19 on NASA's Mission and Workforce

Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, closures to NASA Centers and disruptions to its supply chain have impacted the cost and schedule of NASA programs. These disruptions will affect how NASA conducts business for years to come and may result in large swaths of its workforce embracing expanded telework and remote work options.