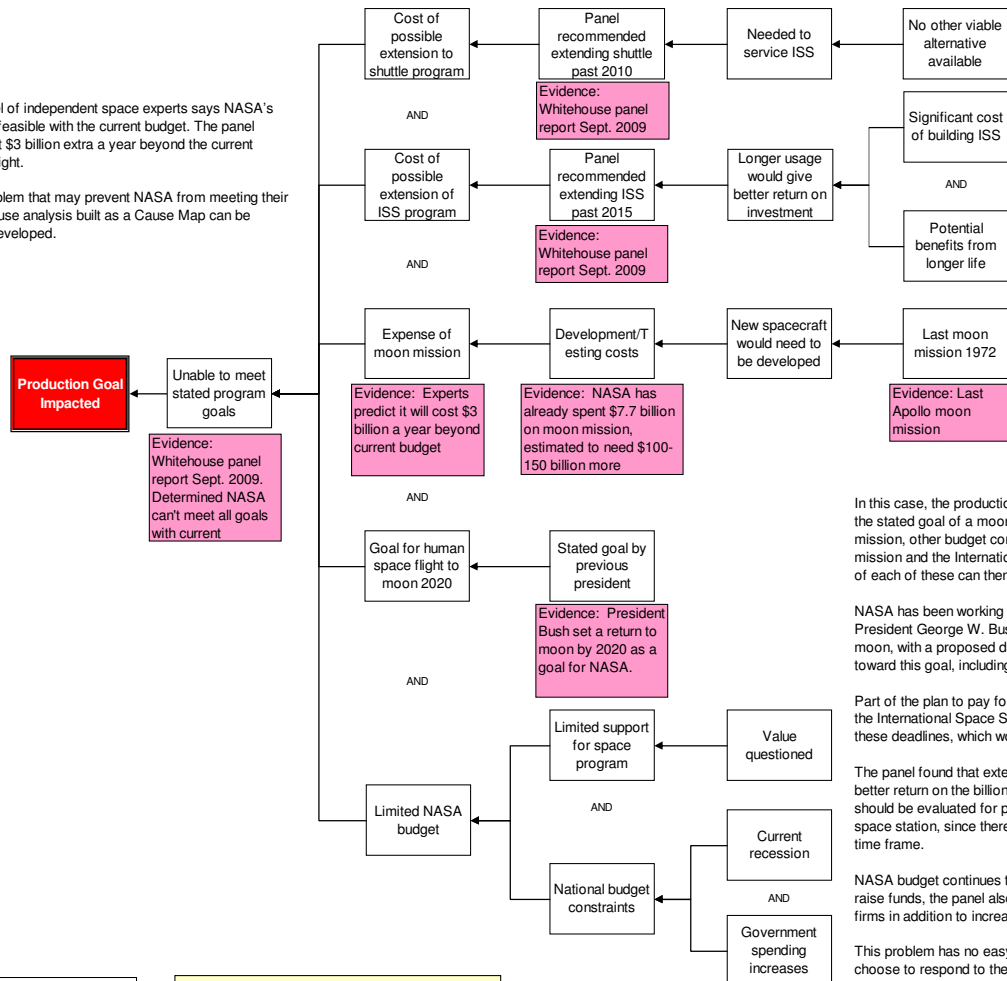


## NASA Budget Shortfalls

Fall 2009

A recent report by a White House panel of independent space experts says NASA's current goal to return to the moon isn't feasible with the current budget. The panel estimates that NASA would need about \$3 billion extra a year beyond the current budget to continue with human space flight.

The budget shortfall is obviously a problem that may prevent NASA from meeting their overall organizational goals. A root cause analysis built as a Cause Map can be created to understand how this issue developed.



In this case, the production goal is impacted because NASA is likely to be unable to meet the stated goal of a moon mission by 2010. This is caused by the high cost of a moon mission, other budget considerations (such as the cost of possibly extending the moon mission and the International Space Station) and the limited NASA budget. The causes of each of these can then be explored.

NASA has been working toward a return to the moon because five years ago then-President George W. Bush stated that NASA should work to return astronauts to the moon, with a proposed date of 2020. NASA has already spent \$7.7 billion working toward this goal, including the design and the construction of new rockets.

Part of the plan to pay for this venture was to retire the space shuttle in 2010 and deorbit the International Space Station in 2015, but the panel also recommended reevaluating these deadlines, which would add additional budget pressure.

The panel found that extending the life of the space station beyond 2015 would allow a better return on the billions of dollars invested into it. The panel also felt the space shuttle should be evaluated for possible life extension as well in order to continue to service the space station, since there is no viable alternative that will be developed in the necessary time frame.

NASA budget continues to be limited as national budget constraints increase. In order to raise funds, the panel also recommended including other countries and private-for-profit firms in addition to increasing NASA budget.

This problem has no easy, clear solution. Only time will tell how President Obama will choose to respond to these findings and if human space flight will continue to be a goal for NASA.

### Cause Map Intermediate Level



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