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Sommario/riassunto	Understanding the effects of natural and human-induced changes on the global environment and their implications requires a foundation of integrated observations of land, sea, air and space, on which to build credible information products, forecast models, and other tools for making informed decisions. The 2007 National Research Council report

on decadal survey called for a renewal of the national commitment to a program of Earth observations in which attention to securing practical benefits for humankind plays an equal role with the quest to acquire new knowledge about the Earth system. NASA responded favorably and aggressively to this survey, embracing its overall recommendations for Earth observations, missions, technology investments, and priorities for the underlying science. As a result, the science and applications communities have made significant progress over the past 5 years. However, the Committee on Assessment of NASA's Earth Science Program found that the survey vision is being realized at a far slower pace than was recommended, principally because the required budget was not achieved. Exacerbating the budget shortfalls, NASA Earth science programs experienced launch failures and delays and the cost of implementing missions increased substantially as a result of changes in mission scope, increases in launch vehicle costs and/or the lack of availability of a medium-class launch vehicle, under-estimation of costs by the decadal survey, and unfunded programmatic changes that were required by Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has made significant reductions in scope to its future Earth environmental observing satellites as it contends with budget shortfalls. Earth Science and Applications from Space: A Midterm Assessment of NASA's Implementation of the Decadal Survey recommends a number of steps to better manage existing programs and to implement future programs that will be recommended by the next decadal survey. The report also highlights the urgent need for the Executive Branch to develop and implement an overarching multiagency national strategy for Earth observations from space, a key recommendation of the 2007 decadal survey that remains unfulfilled.

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