
Performance Assessment at the National Science Foundation

Pat Tsuchitani
Senior Advisor for Performance Assessment
Budget Division, National Science Foundation
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- **Federal Performance Reporting Requirements**
 - **NSF's Performance Assessment Framework**
 - **NSF's Annual Performance Reports**

Federal Performance Reporting Requirements

- Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)
- President's Management Agenda (PMA): Quarterly Scorecard for US Government agencies
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB): Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

To comply with GPRA, NSF:

- Writes a multi-year Strategic Plan
- Incorporates an annual performance plan into its annual Budget Requests
- Conducts an annual assessment of its performance goals
- Reports annually on the results of its goals

NSF's Performance Assessment Framework

Foundation-wide

- Long-Term, Qualitative Strategic Outcome Goals
- Annual Qualitative and Quantitative Goals

Program/Portfolio Level

- Committees of Visitors (COVs)
- Merit review of proposals and approval of project reports

NSF Performance Assessment Framework



Discovery, Learning, Research Infrastructure

- NSF conducts an annual assessment of its investments in long-term research
 - External panel: Advisory Committee for GPRA Performance Assessment (AC/GPA)
 - AC/GPA reviews research outcomes reported during the past year and submits a report to the NSF Director
 - AC/GPA makes recommendations for the conduct of future assessments
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Stewardship

- 8 annual performance areas, each with qualitative and/or quantitative measures
- Focused on management; designed to improve effectiveness and efficiency of NSF's operations
- These goals change every year; now developing goals for Fiscal Year 2009 based on FY 2008 results

Stewardship Performance Areas

- Time to Decision
- Merit Review Process
- Customer Service
- Broadening Participation
- Management of Large Facilities
- Post-Award Monitoring (Financial)
- E-Government
- IT Security

Program/Portfolio Level Assessment

External Committees of Visitors (COVs) conduct a review of each program once every three years

- Program = a Division or a crosscutting activity
- COVs conduct detailed program and management reviews; Divisions must respond
- COV reports & Division responses are forwarded to the appropriate Advisory Committee
- All COV reports are publicly available at:

<http://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/activities/cov/covs.jsp>

Project Level Assessment: Merit Review of Proposals

- Reviewers must address both criteria: technical merit and broader impacts
- NSF program officer makes the recommendation to fund or not
- Division Directors must concur
- Time to decision goal benefits PI community

Project Level Reporting: Post-Award Stage

- Annual project reports and final reports are required from principal investigators
- Program officers must approve the reports
- Funding for subsequent awards is contingent upon receipt of a final project report from the investigator
- Research.gov is being enhanced to allow PIs to write about accomplishments

NSF's Performance Reports

- Annual Financial Report (November 2008)
- Annual Performance Report (January 2009)
- Citizens' Report of performance and financial highlights for FY 2008 (January 2009)
- FY 2010 Budget Request to Congress will include the Performance Report for FY 2008 and a Performance Plan for FY 2010 (February or March 2009)

Independent Validation and Verification

In addition to monitoring the progress toward achievement of the long-term strategic outcome goals and the annual goals, NSF obtains an independent validation and verification of our performance results each year before reporting the results of the goals publicly.

NSF's Performance Assessment Website

<http://www.nsf.gov/about/performance/>