



The Change to Preliminary Proposals in IOS & DEB

Chemistry Division Meeting

September 26, 2012

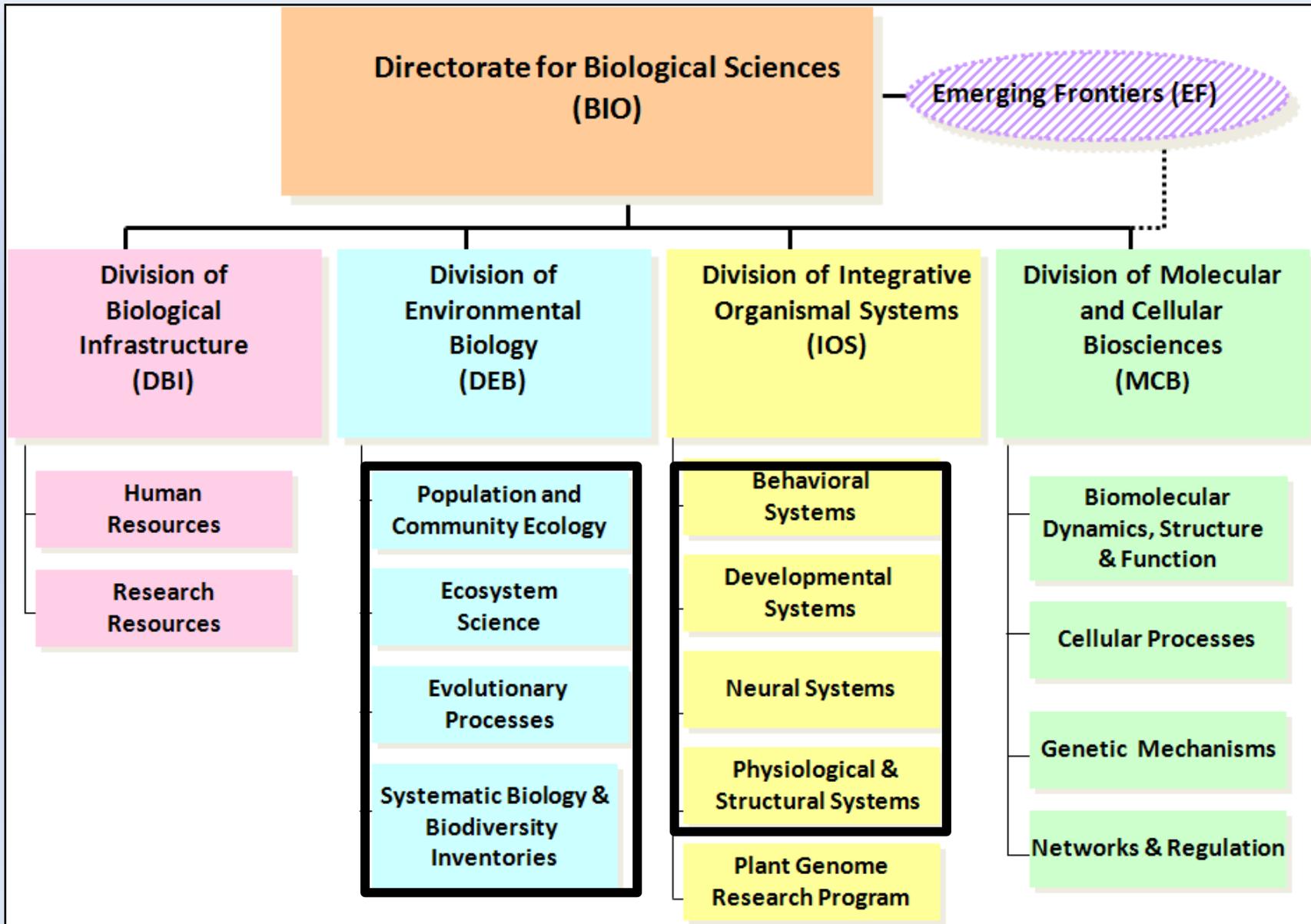


Topics

- Rationale for change
- What changed?
- What did not change?
- Outreach
- Anticipated benefits
- Managing impacts



BIO Core Programs affected:





Rationale for Change



Why Were Changes Made?

- At NSF

- The number of proposals being submitted is increasing
- The funding rates are decreasing
- Workload is increasing
- It is harder to find panel and *ad hoc* reviewers

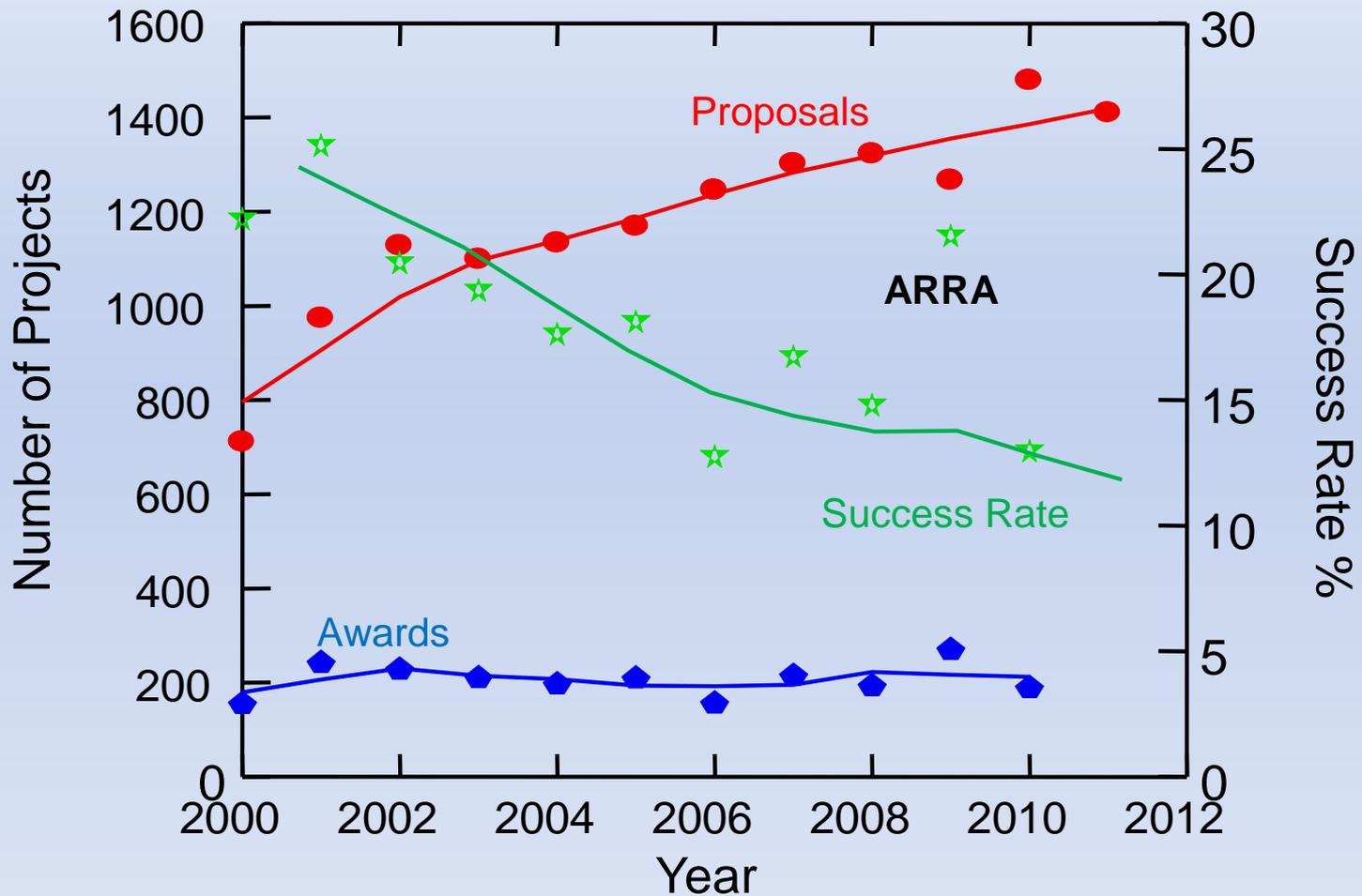
- In the Community

- PIs are writing more and more proposals to get funded
- Reviewers are being asked to provide more and more *ad hoc* and panel reviews



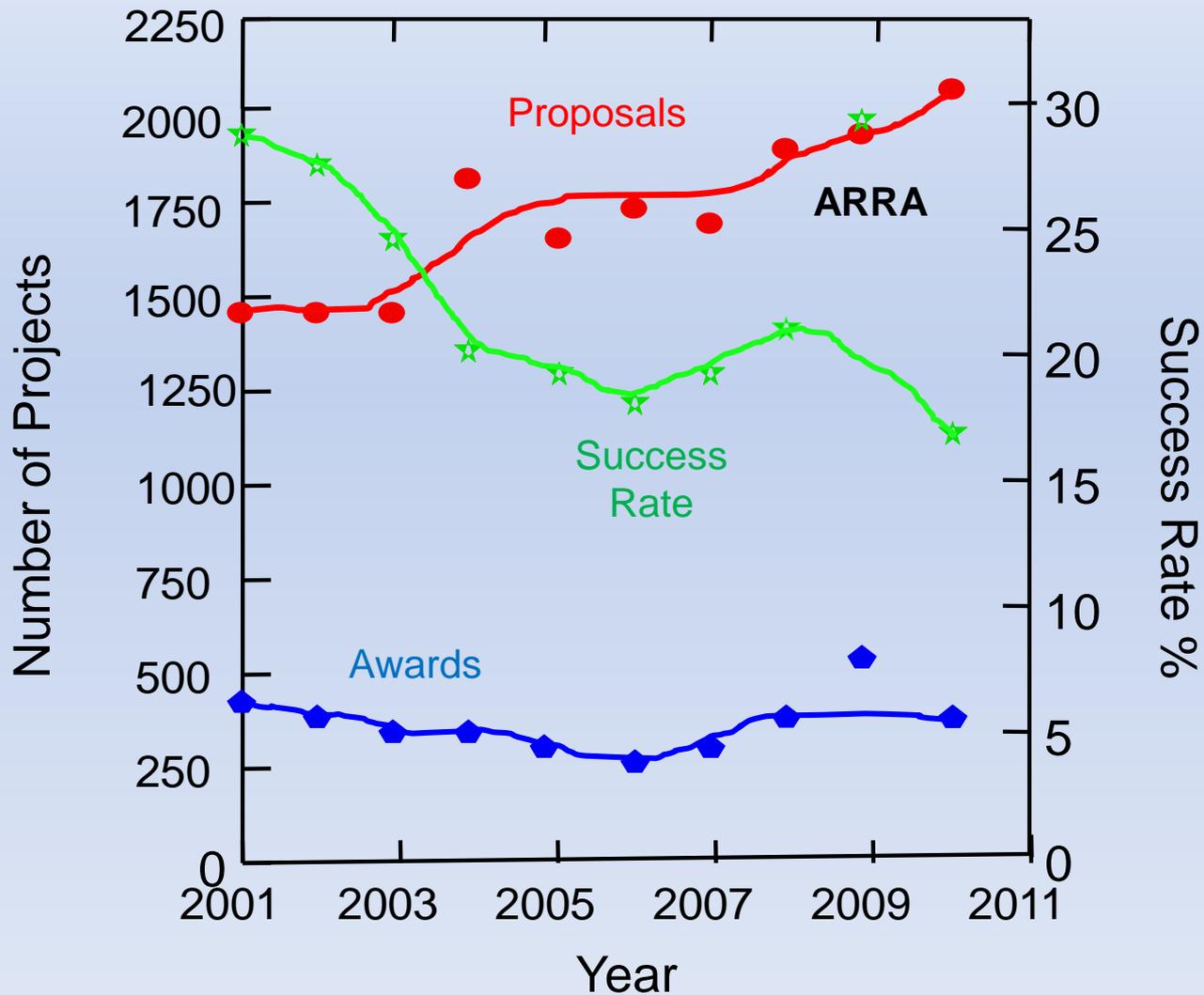


DEB Proposal Submissions and Awards



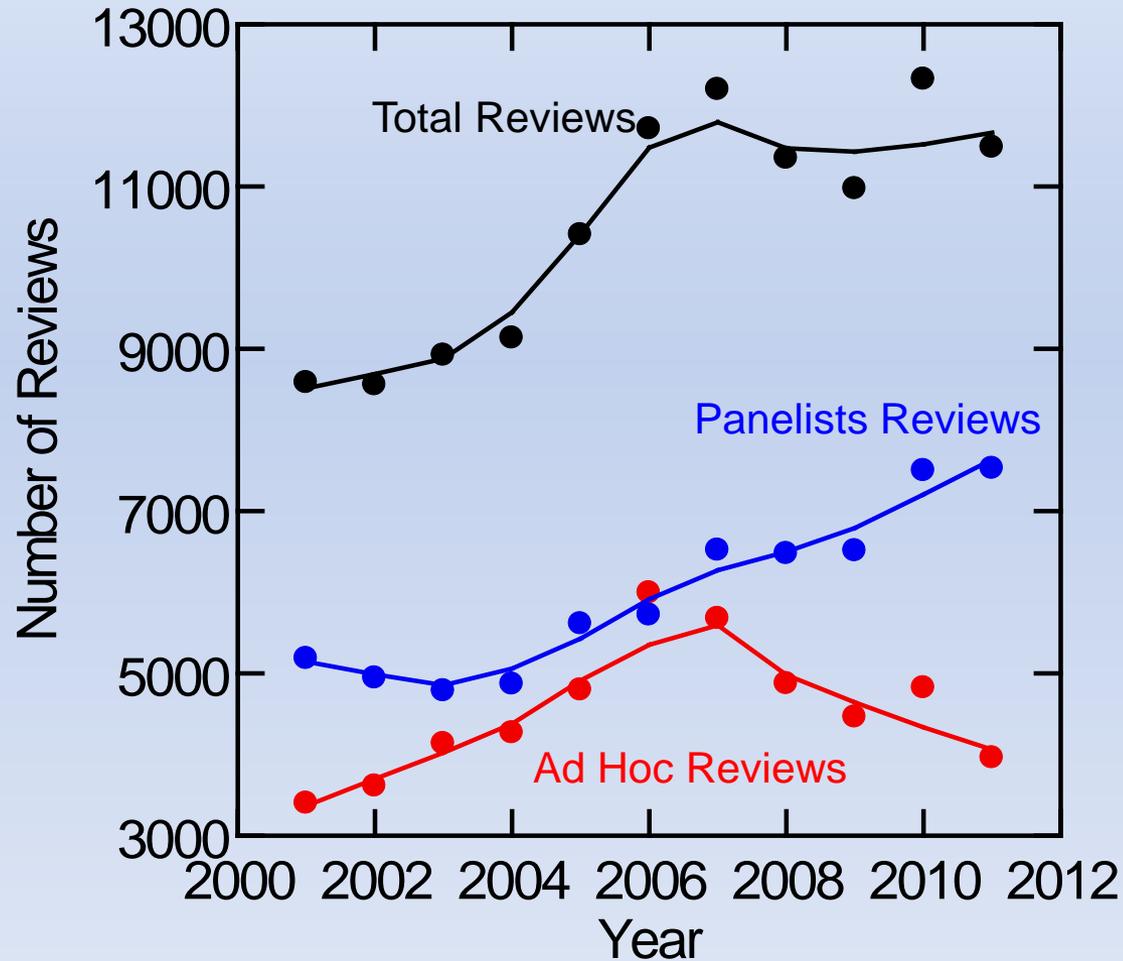


IOS Proposal Submissions and Awards



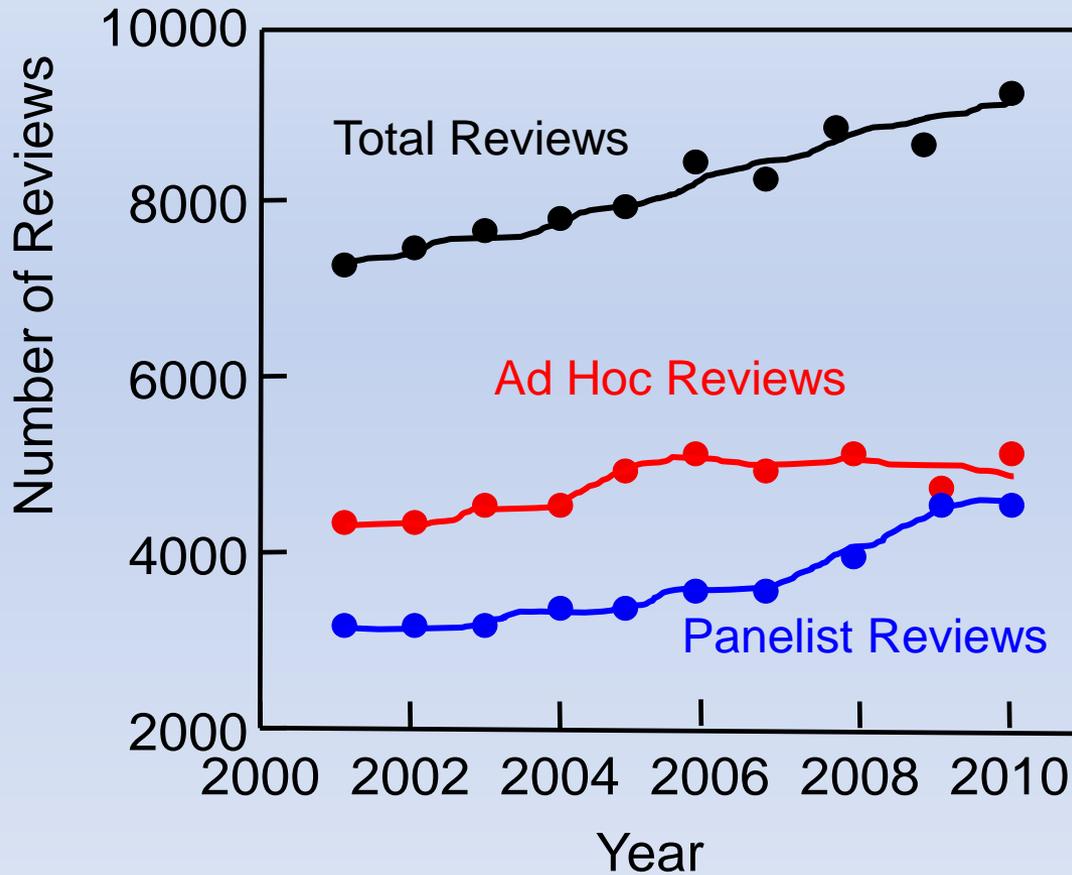


Burden on the DEB Reviewer Community





Burden on the IOS Reviewer Community





What changed in FY 2012?



IOS & DEB Core Programs

Dear Colleague Letter: [NSF 11-078](#)

Frequently Asked Questions: [NSF 11-079](#)

IOS Solicitation: [NSF 11-572](#)

DEB Solicitation: [NSF 11-573](#)

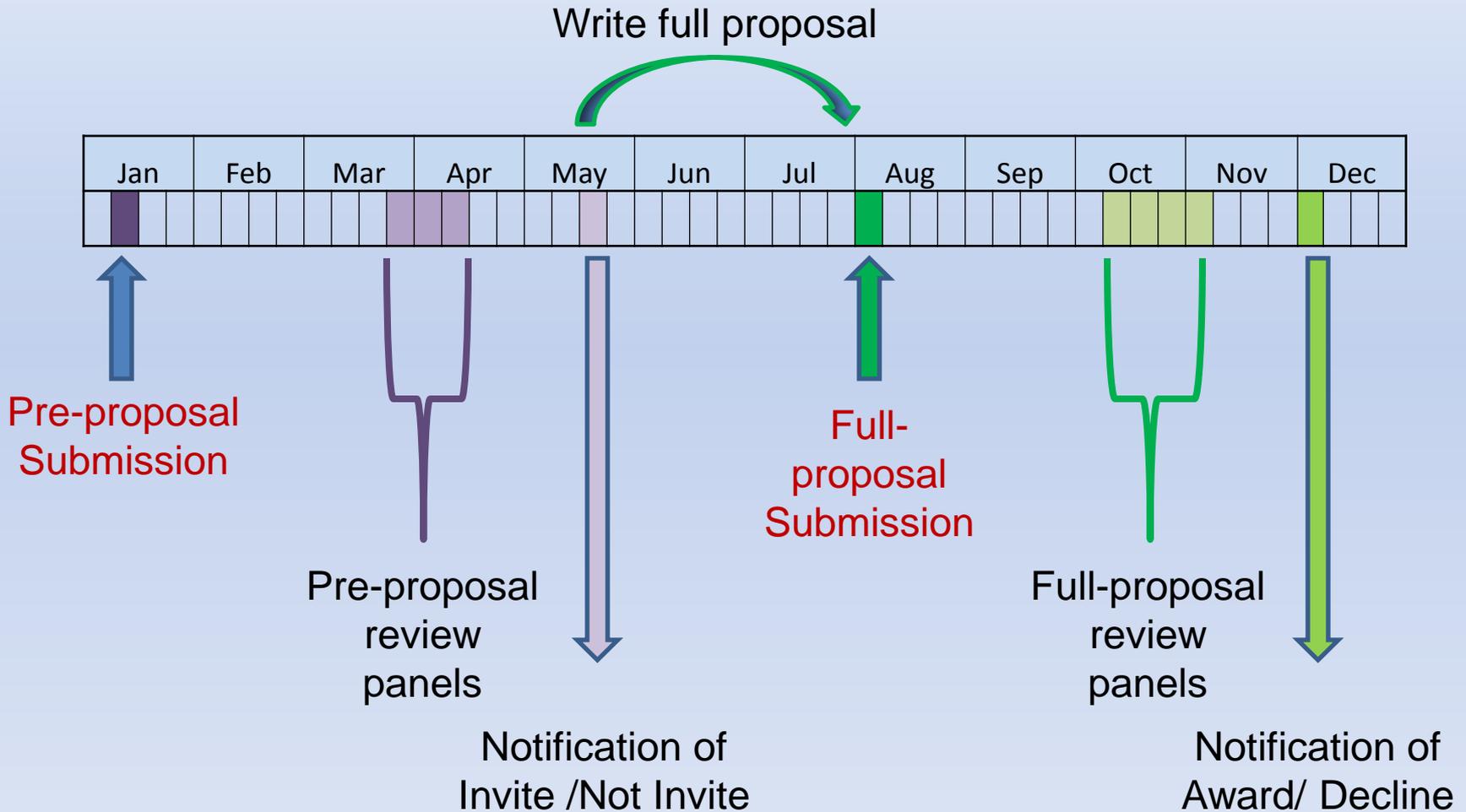
- **Changes:**

- Preliminary proposal deadline in January
- Binding Invite/Do Not Invite decision
- Full proposal deadline in August
- Funding decision in December
- Limit of two pre-proposals per Division per PI
- RUI and Long Term Research in Environmental Biology (LTREB) proposals must also adhere to these deadlines





The New IOS & DEB Annual Cycle





What Did Not Change?



Solicitations Not Affected

- All Programs in DBI
- Plant Genome Research Program (PGRP)
- CAREER
- Research Coordination Networks (RCN)
- Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants (DDIG)
- Assembling the Tree of Life (ATOL)
- Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems (CNH)
- Dimensions of Biodiversity
- Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases (EEID)
- Opportunities for Promoting Understanding through Synthesis (OPUS)



All programs will continue to accept at any time:

- Conference and workshop proposals
- EAGERs
- RAPIDs
- Supplements to existing awards
- CREATIVs



Outreach

- Updates on BIO web site
- Notification in Program Director email signature blocks
- Mass mailings to PIs and reviewers
- Updates to scientific societies
- Outreach talks at meetings, conferences and workshops
- Conversations with review panels in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012
- Webinars



DEB & IOS Webinars

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Biological Sciences (BIO)

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Event
DEB Core Programs Solicitation Webinar

Online Presentation and Question Session-

September 12, 2011 1:45 PM to
September 12, 2011 3:00 PM
Online via WebEx

This event took place on September 12, 2011. Please see the links under "Core Attachments" and "Relevant Documents" below to access recorded material from the event and other documents describing the DEB Core Programs Solicitation.

The Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) has initiated new procedures for the submission and review of regular research proposals to the core programs within the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB), Division of Environmental Biology (DEB), and Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS). The changes for MCB were previously announced in a new solicitation (NSF-11-545). Effective immediately, DEB and IOS will both implement an **annual cycle of preliminary and full proposals** beginning in January 2012. Preliminary proposals will be accepted in January. New Solicitations NSF 11-572 for IOS and NSF 11-573 (for DEB) provide further details.

This webinar, hosted by program staff from the four clusters in the Division of Environmental Biology, will consist of two parts:

- an overview of how these changes impact submissions to DEB programs
- audience question and answer session

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Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS)

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Event
IOS Core Program Solicitation Webinar

Online Presentation and Question Session

September 30, 2011 2:00 PM to
September 30, 2011 3:30 PM
Online via WebEx

This event took place on September 30, 2011. Please see the links under "Core Attachments" below to access recorded material from the event and other documents describing the IOS Core Programs Solicitation.

The Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) has initiated new procedures for the submission and review of regular research proposals to the core programs within the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB), Division of Environmental Biology (DEB), and Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS). The changes for MCB were previously announced in a new solicitation (NSF-11-545). Effective immediately, DEB and IOS will both implement an **annual cycle of preliminary and full proposals** beginning in January 2012. Preliminary proposals will be accepted in January. New Solicitations NSF 11-572 (for IOS) and NSF 11-573 (for DEB) provide further details.

This webinar, hosted by program officials in the Division of Integrative Organismal Systems, will consist of two parts:

- an overview of how these changes impact submissions to IOS clusters (Behavioral Systems, Developmental Systems, Neural Systems and Physiological and Structural Systems)
- audience question and answer session

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Anticipated Benefits

- **Benefits to PIs**
 - Shorter format so less time invested up front
 - Still get feedback early on
 - Higher success rates for invited full proposals
- **Benefits to the Community**
 - Fewer review requests as only full proposals will receive *ad hoc* reviews as well as panel reviews
- **Benefits to NSF**
 - More manageable workflow
 - Improved proposal quality
 - Higher panelist/*ad hoc* reviewer acceptance





Managing Impacts

- NSF and community workload is being monitored in IOS and DEB core programs
- Cyber tools were developed for managing pre-proposals
- Panel surveys were conducted
- IOS and DEB invite/not invite decisions were monitored to avoid impacts on specific groups, for example:
 - Beginning investigators
 - Underrepresented groups
 - PUIs and RUI investigators





Outcomes



Workflow

- The workload is higher in the first six months but lower in the last six months of the year but is more manageable overall
- The changes made promoted adoption of standard operating procedures and templates across the Division
- The new workflow provided opportunities for administrative staff to learn new skills



Cyber Tools

- Customized compliance checker reduced the time to check ~1840 actions to about 6 hours
- Custom form allowed accelerated review analysis preparation and review by DD/DDD prior to upload in eJacket
- RA_Post was developed to automatically upload all review analyses in a form into eJacket



Automated improvements to checking...

Designed by Steve Ellis



What is checked?

	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>FY2012</u>
1) Project Summary	Staff	Automated
2) Project Description	Staff	Automated
3) Supplementary Documents	Staff	Staff
4) Biographical Sketches	Staff	Automated
5) Font Size and Margins	Staff	Staff
6) Check boxes on Cover Page	Staff	Automated
7) Postdoc Mentoring Plan	Staff	Automated
8) Data Management Plan	Staff	Automated
9) Comprehensive COI List	Staff	Staff

Automated steps reduced 2 weeks of work to 4 days of work!

Cluster Assignments

Across Division



Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sa
FY2012				Proposals due	Get proposals Auto	Auto
Auto	Manual check Manual check	Manual check PO check	Manual check	Manual check Mail merge	Manual check Email out	
	Manual check	Manual check	Manual check	Manual check	Manual check Revs due	
	PO check			Mail merge	Email out 	
					Revisions due	



Proposal ID: PI:

Title:

Institution: State:

PI Details: Beginning PI URM PI MSI Female PI EPSCoR

Review Ratings: Panel Placement:

Program Recommendation: Potentially Transformative? (Panel Assessment):

Intellectual Merit: The panel discussed the intellectual merit, and judged that this pre-proposal project had significant shortcomings in one or more of the following areas: conceptual development of the project, the set of technical approaches and overall design, the feasibility of conducting the research. The assessment of intellectual merit by the panel took into account the relative quality of other pre-proposals.

Broader Impact: The panel evaluated the broader impacts, including education, training, mentoring, or outreach, and potential benefits of the proposed activity to society, and took into account the relative quality of them compared to other pre-proposals.

Program Rationale: Due to the deficiencies identified by the panel, and the relative superiority of other proposals considered by the same panel, the programmatic enthusiasm for this proposal was exceedingly limited.

Reviews Not Consistent with Program Recommendation:
 One reviewer rated the proposal as Excellent, but agreed to the rating of Low Quality after the panel discussion.

COI Issues:
 No COI issues were identified for this proposal.

PO/PD Comments

DD Review Comments

OK Revise Consult

Check Spelling

Previous R.A.
 <-----

Next R.A.
 ----->

Apply Changes to WorkSheet

Save WorkSheet

Copy R.A. to Clipboard (to Paste into eJacket)



Community Concerns



- One cycle a year could increase the time to getting an award
- The PI restrictions could stifle collaboration
- Pre-proposals could disproportionately impact beginning investigators who have less experience writing proposals
- Four pages is not enough space to give the necessary detail for reviewers
- The panels will not be qualified to review the breadth of science in a single program

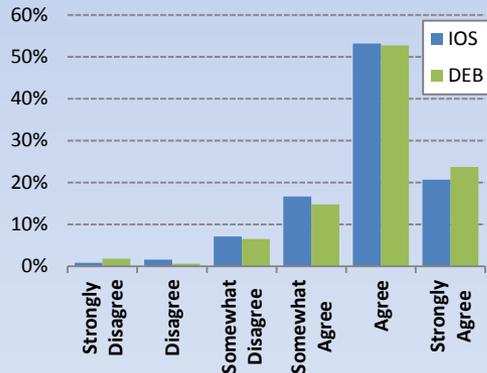


Panelist Surveys

- Are 4 pages enough to evaluate research projects?
- Is overall experience the same, better, or worse as a panelist?
- Is workload for panelists reduced or increased?

Q4. As a reviewer, I found the content provided by these preliminary proposals to be adequate for evaluation under the merit review criteria. *{Likert Scale}*

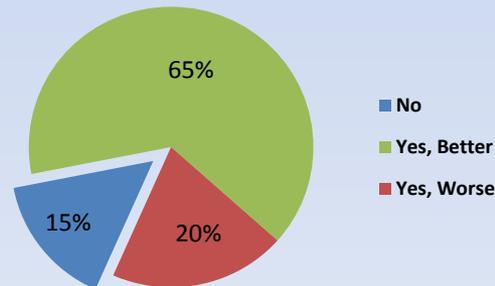
Q4. Adequate for Evaluation



Q5. As a reviewer, did you notice a change in the overall experience of the preliminary proposal panel review process (including reading proposals, writing reviews, attending panel, etc.) compared to previous BIO full proposal panels? *{Yes/No}*

If so, do you think the experience changed for better or worse? *{Better/Worse}*

Q5. Was there a change in overall experience?



Q6. As a reviewer, did you spend more time preparing for this preliminary proposal panel than you did for previous full proposal panels? *{Yes/No}*

Q6. Increased Panel Prep Time





Going Forward

- Revised Solicitation for FY 2013 and updated FAQs will be released in early October
- Webinars will be held in late November/early December
- A community comment portal will be set up
- An update will be provided to the community once a full cycle has been completed



Questions?