



Competition

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NSF Mission

- To promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense



Context

NSB-08-12

- Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the National Science Board (the Board) endorsed strongly the principle that all expiring awards are to be recompeted, because rarely will it be in the best interest of U.S. science and engineering research and education not to do so. Furthermore, the Board endorsed a recompetition policy for major facility awards which is transparent to the research community such that after construction of major facilities is completed, followed by an appropriate time period to bring the facility to sustainable operations, full and open competition of the operations award will be required. This position was based on the conviction that peer-reviewed competition and recompetition is the process most likely to assure the best use of NSF funds for supporting research and education.

The Board requested that the Director, NSF, take such steps necessary to ensure that all NSF practices embody this principle.

Periodic competition of operation and maintenance of NSF facilities is NSF policy



Context

Commerce, Justice, Science and related agencies appropriations bill, 2013, Report 112-463

- Management of scientific facilities.—It is the policy of the National Science Board (NSB) that all NSF awards should be made through peer-reviewed competition and recompetition in order to best serve the interests of science and education. The Committee understands, however, that the NSB has also endorsed a modified recompetition policy for major facilities awards that is intended to prevent the interruption of significant construction projects under-way at the time that an award expires. While the Committee supports this policy, it must be carefully exercised in order to ensure that noncompetitive award extensions are not overused in the name of programmatic continuity.



An opportunity

- Competition is a mechanism for refocusing your organization on current scientific questions and refining your operation to maximize the scientific return
- A well managed organization that is introspective and implements continuous improvement shouldn't worry about competition
- An organization that has failed to keep up with changes in science or implemented improvements in their operations and maintenance has reason to be concerned



● Competition works!



Operations reviews

- How do Operations and Management reviews relate to competition?
 - A poor review could trigger an earlier competition
 - A good performance review will not negate the requirement for competition
- Protein Data Bank is an example where a good awardee was replaced by a better awardee



Competitions

- NSF 12-107 (dear colleague), NSF 13-537 (solicitation), George E. Brown, Jr. Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation Operations FY 2015-FY 2019
- NSF 12-087 (dear colleague), NSF 13-047 (dear colleague), National Radio Astronomy Observatories



Competitions

- NSF 13-031 (dear colleague), Gemini Observatory
- NSF 13-057 (dear colleague), National Optical Astronomy Observatory



Summary

- Competition is NSF policy
- View competition as an opportunity
 - To review and refine your operations concept
 - To re-scope your effort to match the changing scientific needs of your field
 - To creatively restructure your operation
- NSF is working on standards for implementing competition
- We want your input – how can we create a fair and effective process?