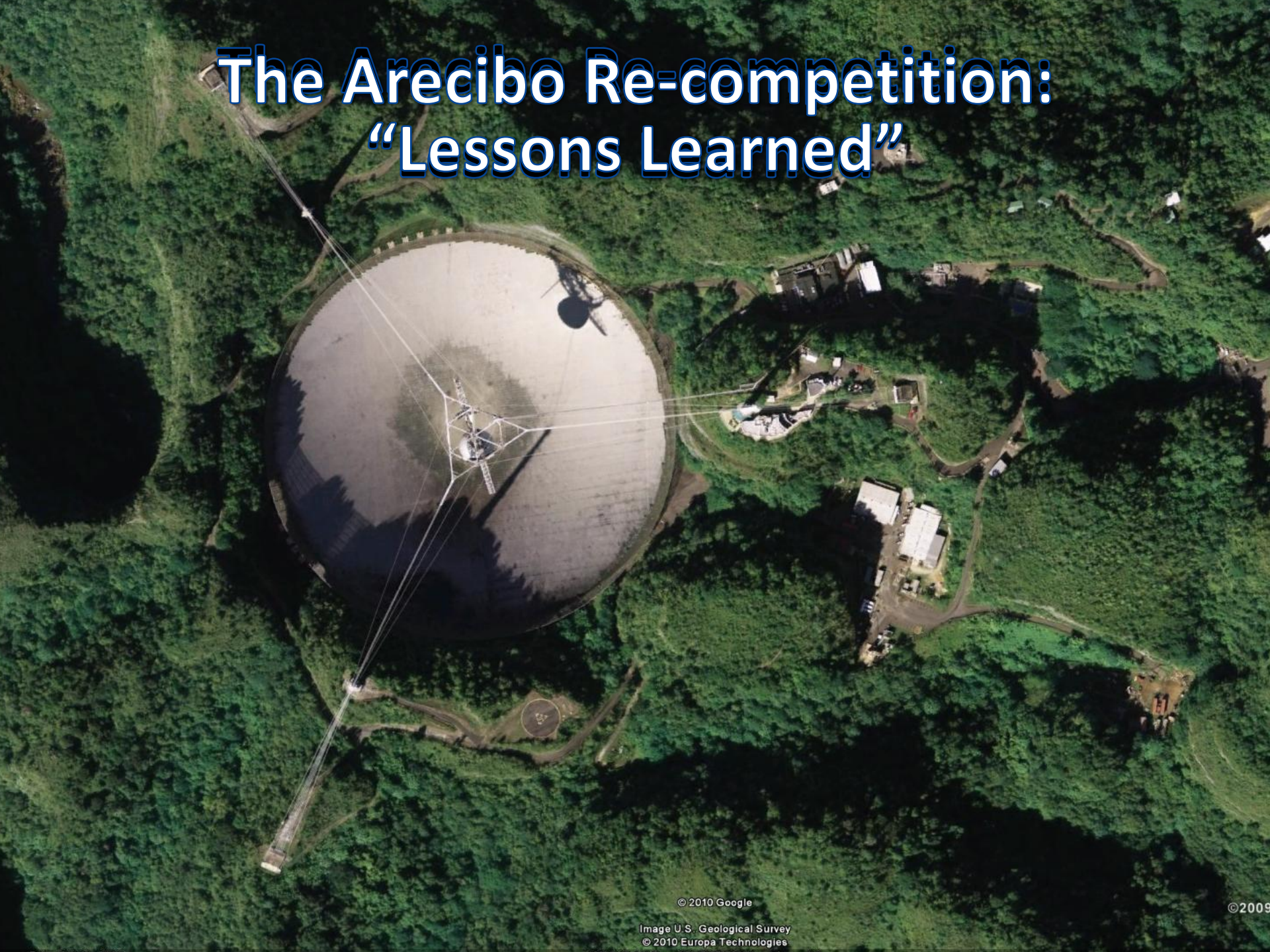


The Arecibo Re-competition: “Lessons Learned”



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Large Facility Re-competition

Outline

- Solicitation
- Proposal Evaluation/Selection
- Transition
- New Management
- Successful Re-competition?



The Solicitation

- **NSF Perspective**
 1. Attractive to Potential Bidders
 2. Accurate/Clarity
 3. Legal and Programmatic Issues
- **Facility Perspective**
 1. Facility staff anxiety
 2. Science continuity
- **Bidders Perspective**
 1. Necessary and sufficient information
 2. Investment
 3. Timeliness of release
 4. Appropriate NSF funding
 5. Access to key staff members
- **Incumbent Perspective**

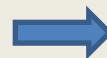
The Solicitation

NSF Perspective

1. Attractive to Potential Bidders



2. Accurate/Clarity



3. Legal and Programmatic Issues



Arecibo Case

1. Incumbent and only one Competing Bidder- Expectation?

2. Good solicitation except very little info on budget distribution-difficult to analyze and provide costing detail. Not clear on use of Visitor Center

1. Puerto Rico requirements (unclear)

1. Labor law issues
2. Taxes
3. Licenses - permits

The Solicitation

Facility Perspective

Timeliness of Solicitation

1. Facility staff anxiety



1. Multiple years from 'Dear Colleague' letter to release of solicitation.
Significant anxiety for staff

2. Science continuity



2. Less affect on science community.
Little or no discontinuity

The Solicitation

Bidder Perspective

1. Necessary and sufficient information
2. Investment
3. Timeliness of release
4. Appropriate NSF funding
5. Access to key staff members



Arecibo Case

1. Generally available
2. Significant but deemed acceptable
3. Proposal team becomes idle-cost
Potential loss of key personnel
4. The single most important issue. –
5. Incumbent staff are often prevented from discussions with potential new management

Proposal Evaluation/Selection

- **NSF Perspective**
 1. Issues regarding multiple Divisions
 1. Multiple science disciplines-mix of reviewers
 2. Proposal Evaluation leader(s)
 3. Decision-weighting?
 2. Auditable?
- **Facility Perspective**
 1. Timeliness
 2. Potential new management
- **Bidders Perspective**
 1. Timeliness
 2. Schedule
 3. Transition preparation
 4. Cooperative Agreement negotiation
- **Incumbent Perspective**

Proposal Evaluation/Selection

NSF Perspective

1. Multi-discipline aspects
 1. Multiple NSF Divisions/Programs
 2. Mix of Reviewers
 3. Review panel(s)
2. Auditable outcome



Arecibo Case

1. Funding provided by two NSF Divisions. Additional funding expected from NASA
2. Reviewers from above disciplines

Proposal Evaluation/Selection

Facility Perspective

- Timeliness
- Potential new management



Arecibo Case

- Further delays. Staff anxiety and some loss of staff.
- Employment status unknown. Different policies

Proposal Evaluation/Selection

Bidders Perspective

- Timeliness
- Schedule for site visits, Q & A
- Planning for transition
- Negotiating Cooperative Agreement



Arecibo Case

- Delayed announcement
- Acceptable
- Delay reduced the time for transition planning
- Negotiation was done without complete knowledge of NSF oversight requirements



Transition

- **NSF Perspective**
 - Transition budget
 - Transition of business systems
 - Schedule
 - Closeout existing projects
 - Documentation
- **Facility Perspective**
 - Staff concerns
 - Employment
 - Job security
 - Science support continuity
- **Bidders Perspective**
 - Mobilization
 - Team membership
 - Interaction with NSF transition team
 - Relationship with incumbent transition leader and staff
 - Hidden aspects
- **Incumbent Perspective**

Transition

NSF Perspective

- Budget
- BSR Issues
- Schedule
- Closeout existing projects
- Documentation



Arecibo Case

- Additional cost compared to Incumbent
- Hiring decisions, property etc.
- Uninterrupted data collection
- Incumbent residual funds?
- How to define the document set
 - What is required for oversight?
 - For legal compliance?

Transition

Facility Perspective

- Staff concerns
 - Employment
 - Job security



Arecibo Case

- Science support continuity



- Incumbent staff
 - Potential offers from three employers
 - Offers valid given “availability of funds” per cooperative agree/yr.
- No discontinuity

Transition

Bidders Perspective

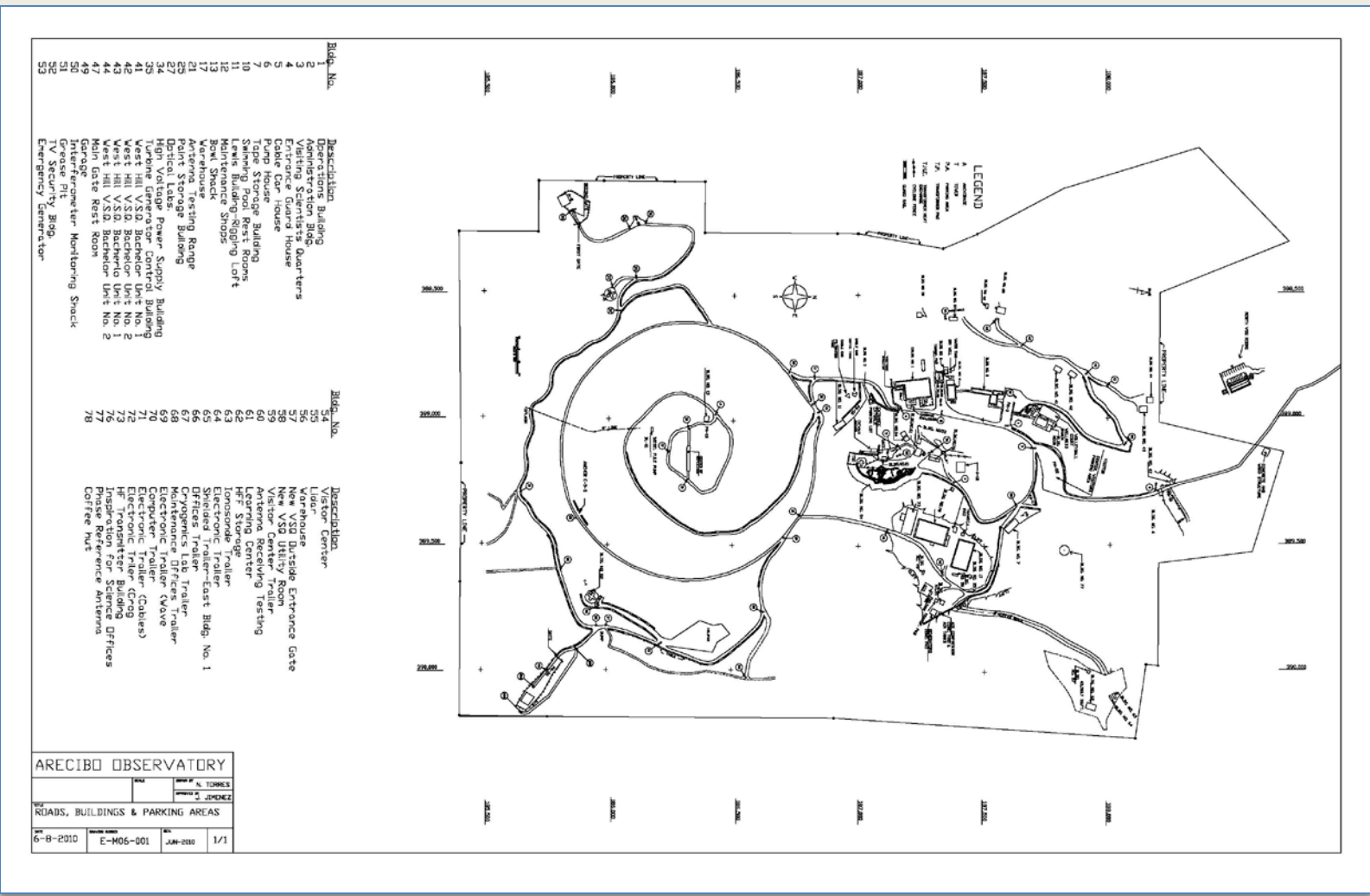
- New management transition team membership, use an existing transition team leader?
- NSF transition team
- Cooperation of Incumbent management, staff
- Hidden aspects, unfunded liabilities, historical issues



Arecibo Case

- New PI leads transition
- Good relationship. Some delay in resolution of liability due to possible severance
- No issues
- Poor documentation. Government requirements much different 30-50 years ago-

Master Site Plan





New Management

- **NSF Perspective**
 - Different management structure than incumbent
 - Existing relationships
 - Building new relationships
- **Facility Perspective**
 - Staff concerns
 - Employment
 - Job security
 - Science support continuity
- **Bidders Perspective**
- **Incumbent Perspective**

New Management

NSF Perspective

- Different management structure than incumbent
- Existing relationships
- Building new relationships



Arecibo Case

- Prime PI institution and two sub awards
- PI and Program Officers, contracts staff
- Changes to NSF personnel



New Management

Facility Perspective

- Continued employment for staff
- Effects of new management structure.
 - Policies
 - Chain of command
 - Employee benefits
 - Job security

An aerial photograph of a spiderweb stretched across a textured, light-colored surface, possibly a wall or ceiling. The web is intricate, with many radial and spiral threads. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery on the right side.

New Management

Bidders Perspective

- Awkward start with three member team
- Staff-Management relationships
- NSF-Management relations and communication



Successful?

NSF Perspective

- Two competing proposals received. Success-but not overwhelming.
- Competition held in spite of reduced NSF funding.
- Science support uninterrupted.
- Most of the staff retained, lowering the risk of costly severance compensation.
- Guidelines of NSB followed



Successful?

Bidder Perspective

- Academic interests realized
- Financial interests understood to be neutral or slightly negative
- Winning team includes fund raising talent – an absolute requirement in view of the NSF AST shortfall



Incumbent View

- Now we are the Incumbent:
 - Would we do it again?
- Next time we bid:
 - What would we do differently?
 - What would we want NSF to do differently?



Conclusion

- Cost can be \$1-2M and stress the NSF staff's bandwidth, facility staff, operations
- Re-Compete only to solve an issue (other than a guideline from the NSB)
 - *“The issue of recompetition should be explicitly addressed as a regular part of the decision process for every such award”*. (NSB Statement On Competition, Recompetition, and Renewal of NSF Awards)