



Consideration of Formation of a Subcommittee to Recommend Implementation of National Science Board (NSB) Recompetition Policy

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RESOLUTION

COMPETITION AND RECOMPETITION OF NSF AWARDS

WHEREAS, the Committee on Programs and Plans has reassessed, at its meeting of February 6-7, 2008, the major principles and key issues in a statement “Competition, Recompetition and Renewal of NSF Awards” (NSB/CPP-08-4) in the context of the various types of NSF awards. *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



More on NSB Recompetition in Feb. 2008 Board Statement:

- There are organizational and management issues involved with the operation of large facilities, and hence NSF finds it necessary to **conduct management reviews** (as distinct from science reviews) at regular intervals and to provide feedback to the managing organizations, which also conduct such reviews. **It is important that NSF provide proper guidance on how best to conduct these management reviews, along with defined review criteria and review forms. In particular, supplemental criteria addressing management issues should be used.** Further, the user community should be periodically surveyed about the level of satisfaction with the services the performing organization is providing. This can often be as important as good management, and the two such reviews can provide a more holistic view of the awardee.



Continuation of NSB Statement...

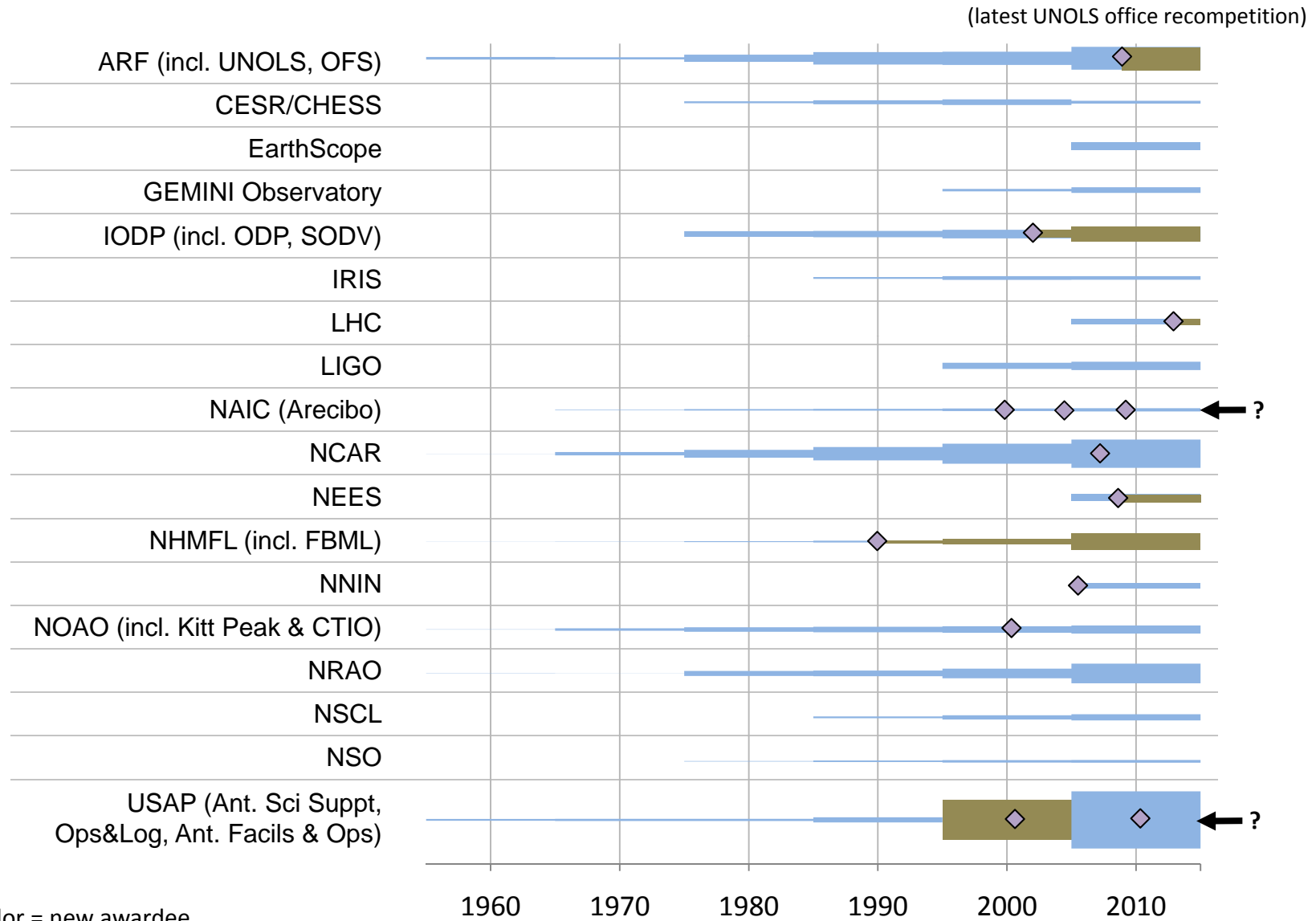
- Even in cases where the management has been explicitly and rigorously reviewed and found to be effective, the benefits of competition may outweigh any short-term disadvantages of recompetition. NSF must determine periodically whether there is a better approach to managing the facility. The issue of recompetition should be explicitly addressed as a regular part of the decision process for every such award.



Implementation of NSB Policy should confront several complex issues:

- Defining scope to be competed.
- How to encourage and leverage non-federal contributions within a recompetition environment.
- How to develop and maintain an intellectual center in an environment of frequent recompetition.
- Cost competition vs. deferred maintenance.
- How to incorporate input from user community.
- How to frame management reviews so that they inform NSF decisions about recompetition

Historical facility O&M funding, 10-year intervals with recent recompetitions



New color = new awardee

◆ Competition ←? Outcome not yet known



Business and Administrative Implementation

- Focus on facility-specific business and administrative considerations to be handled in a recompetition
 - Partnerships, property, international, labor, etc.
- Seek expert advice and lessons learned
- Provide guidance on conduct of management reviews to inform recompetition and strengthen NSF stewardship:
 - Defined criteria, supplemental management criteria, review frequency and forms
 - Receiving periodic inputs from user community regarding facility service



Process Overview - 1

- Formation of NSF internal organizing committee with representation from all Divisions served by NSF's major multi-user facilities
 - Biology, Ocean Science, Earth Science, Atmospheric Science, Astronomy, Physics, Condensed Matter Physics, Civil Engineering
- Subcommittee composition and criteria
 - 4-6 people, recommended by organizing committee
 - Prominent members of research communities utilizing NSF facilities
 - Former senior managers of facilities



Process Overview - 2

- Activities
 - Telecon briefing with NSF staff on site-specific issues and business practices
 - Separate group meetings between subcommittee and:
 - User community representatives, program advisory committees, and similar representatives that set the near-term scientific objectives and activities of the facility
 - Senior management of facilities and senior representatives of awardee institutions hosting NSF facilities. Principal Investigators of NSF facilities in planning and construction.
 - Representatives from other federal agencies
 - Solicit written input from participants for committee consideration
 - Follow-up meetings with NSF organizing committee
 - All group meetings to be open



Process Overview - 3

- NSF support
 - Administrative support: travel logistics, meeting set-up, note-taking
 - Travel support for committee and specific invitees
- Deliverables
 - Quarterly status reports of activities and progress
 - Final report < 3/31/12
 - Close-out presentation by subcommittee chair at May 2012 B&O Advisory Committee meeting



B&O Action

- Request Business and Operations Advisory Committee approve:
 - Formation of a subcommittee to advise it (and NSF) on implementation of NSB recompetition policy
 - Recommend site-specific actions and considerations for conduction recompetitions of current and future facilities
 - Approve the draft subcommittee charge
 - Provide a mechanism for approving subcommittee membership and receiving status updates