

Date of COV: July 17-18, 2007

Program: SciDAC-2

Office: ASCR

Agency: DOE

	Findings	Recommendations	Program Response	Action Plan
Call for Proposals	There is a lack of understanding of the distinction between Institutes, Centers for Enabling Technologies (CETs) and Science Application Partnerships (SAPs).	Future RFPs that offer funding for multiple, integrated activities should be corrected for ambiguities.	Accept – Science Applications (SAs), CETs and Institutes are meant to be long-term (5-yr) investments. The efforts of CETs and Institutes are meant to have broad applications. SAPs are more focused short term (3-yr) investments working on specific needs of a specific SA.	Clarify descriptions in future solicitations. About mid-point in an SA issue call for new SAP proposals focused on SA needs.
Call for Proposals	Emphasis on the petascale in applications is downplayed or lost. The review criteria are not clear and lack specificity.	More clear and specific review criteria needed. Petascale computing should be included in the review criteria for proposers and reviewers.	Accept – ASCR will clarify and strengthen language to emphasize capability computing including specific review criteria, as appropriate, in future solicitations.	Include in future solicitations and review criteria, as appropriate.
Call for Proposals	It is not clear whether accompanying computer science and math is embedded in the science application, and/or identified as a separate partnership (SAP).	Partnerships should be an integral part of applications.	Accept – in future solicitations, ASCR will specify whether proposed SAPs should be separate proposals or embedded in the Science Applications.	Include in future solicitations.

Call for Proposals	The distinction between Centers for Enabling Technologies (CET) and Institutes is unclear. The solicitation <i>suggests</i> that Institutes have an education and training component.	The distinctions between CETs should be clear. Training of graduate students should be a criterion for evaluating Institutes.	Accept – in future ASCR will post separate solicitations for CET and Institutes which will clearly delineate and emphasize the educational role of Institutes, including specific review criteria regarding the training of students.	Incorporate in future solicitations.
Call for Proposals		CET and Institute competitions should be delayed until after the SAs have been selected.	Accept – ASCR will extent the current portfolio of CETs and Institutes (subject to results of mid-point peer review) by approximately one year so that the re-competition of this portfolio will follow the re-competition of the Science Applications by about one year.	Extend meritorious CETs and Institutes to delay re-competition until after suite of Applications is known.
Review Process	ASCR received 350 LOIs in January, 2006. There are too many proposals to deal with.	A more detailed LOI should be requested that can be used to discourage proposals that do not address important aspects of the RFP and thus will not be competitive.	Accept – in future solicitations in which a large response is expected, ASCR will use more detailed pre-proposals instead of LOIs, with sufficient time for meaningful review, to discourage full proposals that would not be competitive and reduce the work for Peer panels.	Incorporate in future solicitations in which a large response is expected.

Review Process	<p>The consideration of petascale computing and computational science seems to have received inconsistent treatment.</p> <p>Since first round reviews are weak on computational needs/plans, it is difficult to assess that aspect of a proposed effort without reading the proposal.</p> <p>The yes/no designation given by program managers prior to the panel meeting causes confusion.</p>	<p>Additional panels should be convened to focus on computational science and petascale computing.</p> <p>A “petascale” panel should be introduced prior to the crosscut panel.</p>	<p>Partially Accept – Convening a separate Petascale review is inconsistent with the tenants of the SciDAC partnership. However, ASCR will insure that all future review panels include sufficient expertise in petascale computing and applied math. Staggering the re-competition of the portfolio will help to ensure that this is not unduly burdensome to individual reviewers or to the community at large.</p>	<p>Stagger future solicitations to ensure sufficient expertise on all review panels.</p>
Crosscut	<p>There is no advanced material made available.</p>	<p>Full information should be made available to the panel prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The yes/no designation should be eliminated or used to reduce the number of proposals under consideration.</p>	<p>OBE – A staggered portfolio renders obsolete the concept of a cross-cut panel. However, ASCR will conduct a cross-cutting review of ASCR investments about a year after the new portfolio is established to ensure that ASCR investments provide sufficient and comprehensive support of the Science Applications.</p>	<p>Cross-cutting review of ASCR investments within one year of awards.</p>
Review Process	<p>Proposals with a similar focus are not reviewed as a group which complicates comparisons.</p>	<p>Proposals with a similar thrust in a given sub-panel should be discussed.</p>	<p>Decline – this suggestion is inconsistent with DOE procurement and peer review policies.</p>	<p>ASCR program managers will ensure that similar efforts are compared on merits and potential</p>

				contributions to program goals.
Review Process	Specific information on the performance of SciDAC-1 activities that are re-competing is not provided to the reviewers.	Reviewers for future SciDAC competitions should be given access to reviews of existing efforts that are participating in the new competition.	Partially accept – ASCR's intent was a complete re-competition of the portfolio and renewals were not solicited. However, some of the applications, including successful applications, could reasonably be considered continuations of SciDAC-1 teams and efforts. In future solicitations, ASCR will include specific application and review criteria for projects meeting an established definition of "substantively continuing".	Define parameters which characterize a "substantively continuing" application. Develop application requirements and review criteria for "substantively continuing" including accomplishments. Include in future solicitations, as appropriate.
Selection Process	A compressed timeline stresses the selection process.	A timeline should be developed that addresses the following points while providing awards in a timely fashion: The preparation of an RFP that is a clear, concise statement of goals and objectives, the review criteria, the selection process, and the competition requirements. The selection of highly qualified panels of sufficient number that cover all aspects of the program. Changes that may need to be made after proposals are received. For example, the selection of	Accept - though externalities such as Continuing Resolutions or significant programmatic disagreements can always impact timeline.	Stagger the awards and build in more time throughout the process.

		<p>additional reviewers to cover a topic more effectively.</p> <p>A selection period that allows for the negotiations among program offices that must take place in order to select the most appropriate portfolio.</p> <p>Preparation of consistent, high quality selection and declination documentation.</p> <p>Negotiation of awards.</p>		
Award and Declination Documentation	The information in the jackets is not consistent across offices and even w/in ASCR. For awards, discussion of the decision process is spotty. There is no analysis of awards in which the PI is from a DOE laboratory.	Every jacket, both awards and declinations, with both lab and non-lab PI's, must have an analysis of the reviews that justifies the decision.	Accept – ASCR program manger handbook already requires lab selection statements to be the same as University documentation but this was not enforced. ASCR has already initiated program manger training to improve the quality and consistency of ASCR selection statements.	Continue program manger training. Add quality review within Research Division for all selection statements.
	The PI does not see an analysis of the reviews.	Reviews should be sent to all PI's whether the proposal is funded or not.	Partially accept – ASCR sent the reviews to all PIs for projects assigned to ASCR. However, across SC the policies vary.	ASCR will work with the SciDAC Working Group to establish a consistent policy for SciDAC.
	ASCR does not maintain a copy of every award jacket.	ASCR should maintain a copy of the jacket for every award regardless of what office has the lead role. Preferably this would be an electronic jacket available to	Uncertain – ASCR does not have the authority to demand copies of other programs' files. Electronic jackets are not available within SC corporate IT systems.	ASCR will work with the SciDAC Working Group to develop a reasonable approach to ensure full access to

		all participating offices.		records.
Management of Awards	A distinct need is required for tighter office management of the awards, and for annual reviews of the SAs.	ASCR should institute an annual review of the SAs, CETs and Institutes. Reviews of the SAs should include relevant SAPs; reviews of the CETs and Institutes should include relevant SAs. Given the severe staffing issues in ASCR, this could be organized and conducted by an independent contractor.	Partially accept – Given the size and complexity of the SciDAC portfolio, the suggestion for annual reviews is simply not feasible given current funding and other constraints. ASCR program managers are in regular touch with project PIs and with Science Applications through the working group and annual meetings. Formal annual reports are required and reviewed by program managers. Issues are discussed within the working group.	Mid-term external reviews are planned for all SciDAC project. More frequent reviews will be organized should circumstances require. SAs will be reviewed with relevant SAPs. The CETs and Institutes will be reviewed as a portfolio.