

BES Response to the Report of the BESAC Committee of Visitors (COV) Review of the Energy Frontier Research Centers (EFRCs) and Energy Innovation Hubs (JCAP and JCESR)

Date of COV: November 15-17, 2016

Date of Response: March 15, 2017

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	COV Recommendation	BES Response
1	The COV recommends that BES explore mechanisms to reduce the number of full EFRC proposals that must be evaluated simultaneously as the result of broad FOAs.	BES appreciates this recommendation and will evaluate possible mechanisms for reducing the number of simultaneous proposal evaluations, while still maintaining fair and open competitions.
2	The COV unanimously believes that the minimum time period for maximal output from the EFRCs is 5 years.	BES will look for opportunities to extend EFRC project periods beyond four years, taking into consideration Department policy and Congressional authorization and appropriations.
3	The COV recommends that a final 5-year summary, written in language that is widely accessible, be required at the end of a hub award, irrespective of renewal. The final report should focus on the “retroactive measure of transformational impact,” as urged in the SEAB Hubs+ report.	BES will incorporate this COV recommendation into the reporting instructions for the current Hub awards.
4	BES-DOE should develop a process to gauge the international standing of the hubs.	BES will ensure that assessment of international standing is part of the review criteria for annual reviews and renewal applications for the Hubs.
5	The COV recommends that the EFRCs, hubs and reviewers produce more concise and clear report and review documents, respectively. In particular, reports should include, for example, executive summaries and succinct descriptions of major accomplishments, and have page limits.	BES appreciates the merit of clear and concise reports and will revise the report guidance to include an executive summary with research highlights. BES will set page limits for report document as appropriate. Page limits for proposals have been and will continue to be included in the EFRC and Hub Funding Opportunity Announcements, as appropriate.
6	Currently, insufficient travel funds are available for BES program managers to attend site visits, to stay engaged with the community and to keep abreast of rapidly evolving fields. This issue must be addressed.	BES is very cognizant of the importance of travel by the program managers, particularly for the complex EFRC and Hub awards, and appreciates the recommendation by the COV. BES will continue to manage the limited travel resources to include site visits and conference travel in balance with other travel requirements.