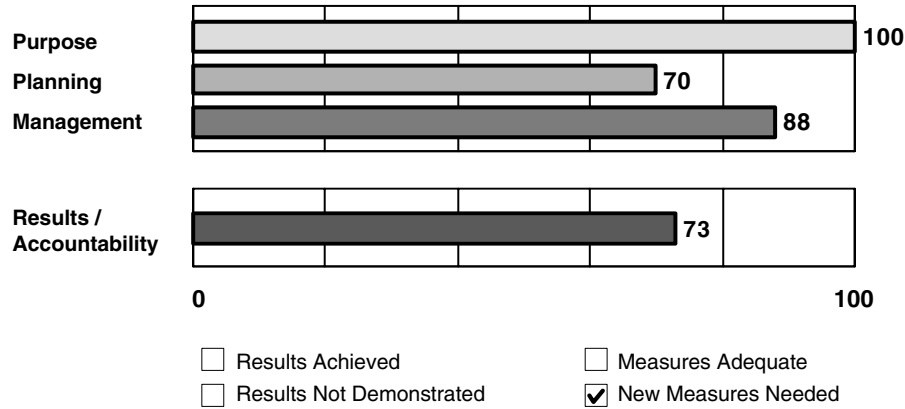


Program: Geosciences Directorate

Agency: National Science Foundation

Bureau:



Key Performance Measures

Year Target Actual

Long-term Measure: Discovery across the frontier of science and engineering connected to learning, innovation, and service to society Independent, external committees regularly assess NSF programs and the results of the awards made.	2001	Success	Success
	2002	Success	Success
	2003	Success	
	2004	Success	
Annual Measure: Partnerships connecting discovery to innovation, learning, and societal advancement Independent, external committees assess whether programs succeed in meeting goals based on a retrospective review of program awards and the results from those awards.	2001	Success	Success
	2002	Success	Success
	2003	Success	
	2004	Success	
Annual Measure: Percentage of program announcements available at least three months prior to proposal deadline	2001	95%	100%
	2002	95%	94%
	2003	95%	
	2004	95%	

Rating: Moderately Effective

Program Type: Research and Development

Program Summary:

Geosciences is a directorate at NSF that funds basic research, equipment, facilities, and education in the atmospheric, earth, and ocean sciences.

The assessment indicates that the overall purpose of the program is very clear, but that NSF's annual goals, applied to Geosciences for this assessment, are too broad to be useful in tracking how the program will improve scientific understanding and its application. Additional findings include:

1. The program is the principal source of Federal funding for university-based basic research in the geosciences, providing over half of the total support in this area.
2. The program conducts independent evaluations on a regular basis to identify needed program improvements and evaluate effectiveness.
3. The program uses a competitive process using peer-review to make awards--an efficient and effective management process.
4. Although annual external reviews indicate that NSF was successful in meeting its goals, there is limited information about the criteria the external panels use to make those determinations.
5. The program's budget is not aligned with goals in a way that allows one to determine the impact of funding on performance.
6. The definition of the Geosciences directorate as a program was not useful in making budget decisions, because such decisions were not made by directorate.

For this year, the PART score reflects acceptance of the performance measures and the results they indicate. It is particularly difficult to establish meaningful annual performance measures for basic research. NSF uses a non-quantitative process to measure its progress in achieving its long-term and annual goals.

Independent, external committees regularly assess NSF programs and the results of the awards made. In response to these findings:

1. The Administration will develop better annual goals for NSF programs as part of the agency's revision of its strategic plan and the development of the 2005 Budget.
2. The Administration will likely not use the "Geosciences" directorate as a program for future assessments.

[2003 funding includes \$74 million in transferred programs not re-proposed in 2004.]

Program Funding Level (in millions of dollars)

<u>2002 Actual</u>	<u>2003 Estimate</u>	<u>2004 Estimate</u>
609	691	688