OTHER INFORMATION

Management Reviews

Each quarter, NSF senior leadership reviews progress towards all performance goals of the agency in a data-driven review meeting led by the Chief Operating Officer and Performance Improvement Officer. The quarterly progress of the Agency Priority Goals (APGs) and performance goals are reviewed.

Alignment of Human Capital Efforts with Organizational Performance

In order to drive individual and organizational performance, NSF requires that the performance plans of all employees, executives, and the general workforce contain individual goals aligned with the agency's mission and strategic goals. NSF provides training and makes tools and templates available for all supervisors and employees on linking performance plans to agency mission, as well as providing assistance and training on the policies, processes, requirements, and timeframes for the development of performance plans and appraisals.

NSF also directly aligns its strategic human capital and accountability efforts to the agency goals identified in the NSF Strategic Plan. Agency performance goals currently outline specific human capital goals, and NSF uses HRStat as the agency reporting mechanism to articulate the nexus between NSF's strategic goals/objectives, including agency performance goals, and human capital initiatives at the agency. Senior leaders are briefed quarterly regarding the status of agency performance goals and the human capital initiatives aligned to those goals.

Strategies and Collaborations

No one standard strategy is used across NSF for achievement of goals. Goal leaders at NSF choose strategies tailored to their stakeholders' needs and their institutional capabilities. NSF goals often involve testing the impacts of new activities or new approaches to existing activities, so feedback mechanisms are built in. Use of analysis, evidence, and evaluation findings is also at the discretion of each individual goal leader, as is the decision to collaborate with other agencies or external entities or to invest in contract support for their activities. Performance at NSF is reviewed quarterly by NSF's Performance Improvement Officer, who reports on goal progress to NSF senior management.

Data Verification and Validation

It is NSF's practice to follow Government Accountability Office (GAO) guidance and engage external contractors to conduct an independent validation and verification (V&V) review of its annual performance information, data, and processes. The guidance from GAO indicates that agencies should "…describe the means the agency will use to verify its performance data…" and "…provide confidence that [their] performance information will be credible."[1] In FY 2020, NSF contracted with Nexight Group to perform the independent verification and validation. Nexight assessed the validity of NSF data and verified the reliability of the methods used to collect, process, maintain, and report that data. Nexight's FY 2020 report concluded that "NSF relies on sound data collection practices, internal controls, and manual checks of system queries to ensure accurate performance reporting. Based on the V&V assessment, the Nexight Team has confidence in the systems, policies, and procedures used by NSF to calculate results for its performance

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[1] GAO, The Results Act: An Evaluator's Guide to Assessing Agency Annual Performance Plans, GAO/GGD-10.1.20 (Washington, D.C.: April 1998), pp. 40-41.

measures[2]."

The data and information required to measure progress towards NSF's performance goals fall into three broad categories.

1. <u>NSF automated administrative systems</u>. Performance monitoring can be a valuable secondary function of such systems. Reporting can include data from systems that:
   - Store and approve publications such as solicitations announcements, and Dear Colleague Letters;
   - Collect transactional data about proposal and award management;
   - Perform financial transactions;
   - Store human resources data; or
   - Permit keyword search of abstract or full texts of proposals and awards.

   The data were used either directly or for achieving milestones that involve the writing of a report. While not all goals require a high level of accuracy, data from these systems are highly reliable.
2. <u>Data requests of external parties</u>. Qualitative or quantitative information is solicited directly from awardees.
3. <u>Reports on internal activities</u>. Milestone achievement is often determined from review of records of certain activities and events. Records of this sort tend to be compiled from review of the evidence provided by goal leaders.

Lower-Priority Program Activities

The President's Budget identifies the lower-priority program activities, where applicable, as required under the GPRA Modernization Act (31 U.S.C. 1115(b)(10)). The public can access the volume at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget.

Use of Non-Federal Parties

No non-federal parties were involved in preparation of this Annual Performance Report.

Classified Appendices Not Available to the Public

None.

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[2] Nexight Group with Energetics Incorporated, *National Science Foundation Performance Measurement Verification and Validation Report, Fiscal Year 2020 Report*. December 2020.