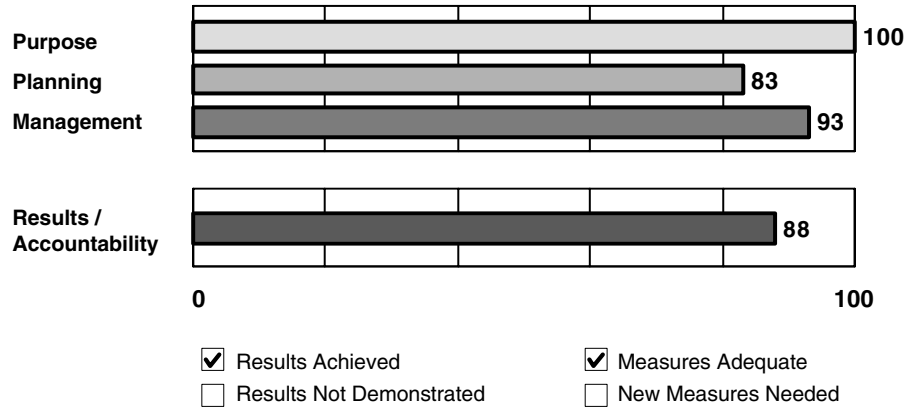


Program: NSF Research Tools

Agency: National Science Foundation

Bureau:



Key Performance Measures

Year Target Actual

Long-term Measure: NSF provision of broadly accessible, state-of-the-art research and education tools Independent, external committees annually assess the significance and results of NSF awards for "Tools".	2001	Success	Success
	2002	Success	Success
	2003	Success	
	2004	Success	
Annual Measure: Percent of facility projects in which construction and upgrade cost and schedule are kept within 10 percent of project plan (replaces existing cost-based measure)	2001	90%	96%
	2002	90%	93%
	2003	90%	
	2004	90%	
Annual Measure: Percent of facilities in which operating time lost due to unscheduled downtime is less than 10 percent of the total scheduled operating time	2001	90%	86%
	2002	90%	84%
	2003	90%	
	2004	90%	

Rating: Effective

Program Type: Research and Development

Program Summary:

"Tools" is one of NSF's three strategic mission categories. This portfolio provides funding for research equipment and for construction, upgrade, and operation of research facilities. Just under 25 percent of NSF's budget supports the "Tools" portfolio.

The assessment indicates the overall purpose of the program is clear and that the program is meeting the majority of its annual goals. Additional findings include:

1. The program conducts independent and quality evaluations on a regular basis to support program improvements and to evaluate effectiveness.
2. The program uses a competitive process using peer-review to make awards. This is an efficient and effective management process.
3. The program's budget is not aligned with goals in a way that allows one to determine the impact of funding on performance.
4. NSF's priority setting process for large facility construction is not readily transparent, making it difficult to discern the program's priorities.
5. Although "Tools" received a positive assessment, budget decisions are made at lower levels within the "Tools" portfolio, limiting the linkage between the "Tools" assessment and budget decisions.

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 qualitative process to assess progress toward its long-term and annual outcome goals. Independent, external committees annually assess the significance and results of NSF awards for "Tools." In response to these findings:

1. NSF will provide with the budget a rank ordering of all large facility construction projects and a discussion of how these projects were selected, approved, and prioritized.
2. For future budgets, the Administration may separate the "Tools" category into at least three subcategories and undertake program assessments at those levels to better link those assessments with budget decisions.

(For more information on this program, please see the National Science Foundation chapter in the Budget volume.)

Program Funding Level (in millions of dollars)

<u>2002 Actual</u>	<u>2003 Estimate</u>	<u>2004 Estimate</u>
1,112	1,122	1,333