

Introduction

- NSF uses prize competitions as an option, in addition to contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements, to advance the Nation's competitiveness and to increase interest in and awareness of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) research and education. This is consistent with NSF's mission to stimulate innovation within the Nation's research and education activities.
- NSF has authority to conduct prize competitions through the following:
 - NSF Act of 1950 (42 U.S.C. 1861 et seq), as amended
 - Title IV of the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (P.L. 114-329)



Challenges

- Exploring how to use the price competition mechanism to effectively advance our agency's mission
- Effectively using prize competitions to incentivize basic research
- Developing guidelines to aid staff's decision making process



General Procedures

Step 1

- In the beginning:
- Determine the purpose/goal of the Challenge.
 - What do you want to learn/get from the submissions?
 - Who is your audience? Who are your ideal submissions coming from?

Step 2

- Engage internal stakeholders:
- Consult with various offices (Legislative & Public Affairs, General Counsel, Integrative Activities) about competition idea.
 - Determine if there is a public promotion component – is there public voting or is this appropriate to share social media/public website?
 - Determine if external stakeholders should be engaged – does it make sense to have an external partner or judges.

Step 3

- Financial process
- Depending on the Competition's purpose, follow the established financial guidelines.



Reference Problem: The Challenge

BEFORE you decide to run a Challenge/Competition

- What is your goal?
- What other mechanisms can be used?
- Who is your audience?
- What is the incentive to participate?
- What are there sensitivities?



Reference Problem: The Setup

AS SOON AS you decide to run a Challenge/Competition

- Determine:
 - Who is in charge?
 - Who needs to approve it?
 - Who designs the Challenge?
 - How and When do you define the rules?



Reference Problem: The Implementation

AFTER the Challenge/Competition is Approved- BUT BEFORE LAUNCH

- Determine:
 - How will you implement the Challenge?
 - How will Agency Staff be involved in the Challenge?
 - How will you evaluate submissions?
 - Who will evaluate submissions?
 - What kind of follow-up is required?



Questions?

