

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
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AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Super Science Initiative

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: BI-137

What criteria were used to select the individual projects that are being funded under the Government's Super Science initiative? And how was the selection process conducted?

What measures and milestones are being used to evaluate the success of the projects being funded under the Super Science initiative?

Are there any projects which are behind schedule or experiencing any other kinds of slippage? If so, which ones and how and why are they not on track?

ANSWER

Selection Process

The Super Science Initiative research infrastructure projects were considered as part of the proposal to address research infrastructure needs identified in the 2008 *Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure*. The criteria used by the Interim Education Investment Fund (EIF) Advisory Board to assess proposals were the:

- Extent to which the proposal addresses national priorities;
- Projected positive impact on enhancing capacity;
- Alignment of the project with the proponent organisation's priorities and strategic directions;
- Projects result in improvements consistent with the level of investment;
- Extent of co-investment and collaboration;
- Project quality and efficiency;
- Capacity of the organisation to support, maintain and integrate new infrastructure into ongoing business operations; and
- Project readiness.

The process to select projects comprised:

1. assessment of proposals by the Interim EIF Advisory Board as to whether or not they met the criteria; and
2. consideration and approval of funding by the government of proposals that met the relevant criteria.

Measures and Milestones

The measures and milestones that are used to evaluate the success of research infrastructure projects being funded under the Super Science Initiative are uniquely developed for each individual project - measures and milestones have to be different to suit the varied nature of the projects. Milestones are developed that reflect key points in the development and implementation of each project.

The measures for projects address the following areas:

Providing Research Infrastructure

Value of new infrastructure by location, and value of all infrastructure made available.

Performance against EIF Principles

Projects should:

1. address national infrastructure priorities;
2. demonstrate high benefits and effective use of resources;
3. efficiently address infrastructure needs; and
4. demonstrate they achieve established standards in implementation and management.

Meeting Researcher Needs

- number, type and location of applicants for each facility;
- number, type and location of users each facility;
- percentage utilisation of facilities; and
- measures of user satisfaction.

Quality of Research Infrastructure

Benchmark against other Australian and overseas infrastructure (benchmarking may include comparisons against specific facilities/instruments, or the use of independent reviews).

Collaborative Infrastructure Provision

Extent and duration of collaborative agreements/relationships established for managing and developing research infrastructure (type of agreement and parties involved are considered).

Fostering Collaborative and World-class Research

Number and nature of Australian research collaborations that involves use of the facilities (type of collaborative activity and parties involved are considered).

Number and nature of international collaborative research activities supported by the facilities (type of collaborative activity and parties involved are considered).

Progress

Currently, all Super Science Initiative research infrastructure projects are meeting their contracted milestones.