

SOUTH EAST REGION RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Program Review – March 10-11, 2008

Michael Matthews

Program review - purpose:

The purpose of this program review is to evaluate and improve projects under the SERRI program through a systematic, cyclical review process. The results are meant to be used as a tool toward continuous improvement for the Principal Investigator (PI) and his or her staff, as well as the local project management team at ORNL. This process helps to ensure the PI is on track and schedule with deliverables, milestones, budget, and an array of other related project criteria. The end goal is to provide the public with state-of-the-art products to help safeguard them from natural or man made disasters.

The Process:

The National Program Manager, Michael Matthews, worked closely with the ORNL team to ensure evaluators were cognizant of review requirements and expectations. He provided guidance on the entire end-to-end review process as well as various standardized templates to be used for maximum efficiency, consistency, and standardization. These were all used.

The Government Team:

The national program manager assembled a diverse team of independent evaluators to review, evaluate, and score the proposals. The evaluators were:

Dr. Mary Ellen Hynes	DHS, S&T IGD, Director of Basic Research
Milagros Kennett	FEMA, Architect/Project Manager Risk Management Series Mitigation Division, Building Science and Technology
Dr. John Fortune	DHS, S&T IGD
Will Laska	DHS, S&T IGD
Liz Filauri	DHS, S&T
Mike Matthews	DHS, &T IGD, Program Analyst/Meteorologist
Jennifer Blanton	DHS, S&T IGD

This panel of evaluators brought with them extensive backgrounds of knowledge to draw upon from their various government agencies. Additionally, a number of external observers from government agencies and the private sector were invited to learn about these projects and to provide comment and insights to the PIs. These participants shared their thoughts and recommendations and in some cases were able to provide a wider

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landscape assessment of similar projects and provide opportunities to leverage like projects with complementary technologies.

Scoring The Projects:

The evaluators were provided with advance copies of:

- The original funded proposals
- The project abstracts
- The current power point presentation showing current status and progress

These documents enabled them to compare the project's initial deliverables with the current state of progress and direction. Armed with this information and evaluation sheets, they scored each project independently using the five criterion of:

- Execution
- Technical quality
- Progress
- Coordination
- Project management.

After the review, the program manager collected all of the scoring sheets and comments and scored the projects using standardized categories. The scores are attached to this report for review, recommendation, and action where necessary.

Score	Narrative
1	No progress
2	Poor progress
3	Progress but there are concerns
4	Making satisfactory progress
5	Good progress – no real concerns
6	Excellent progress

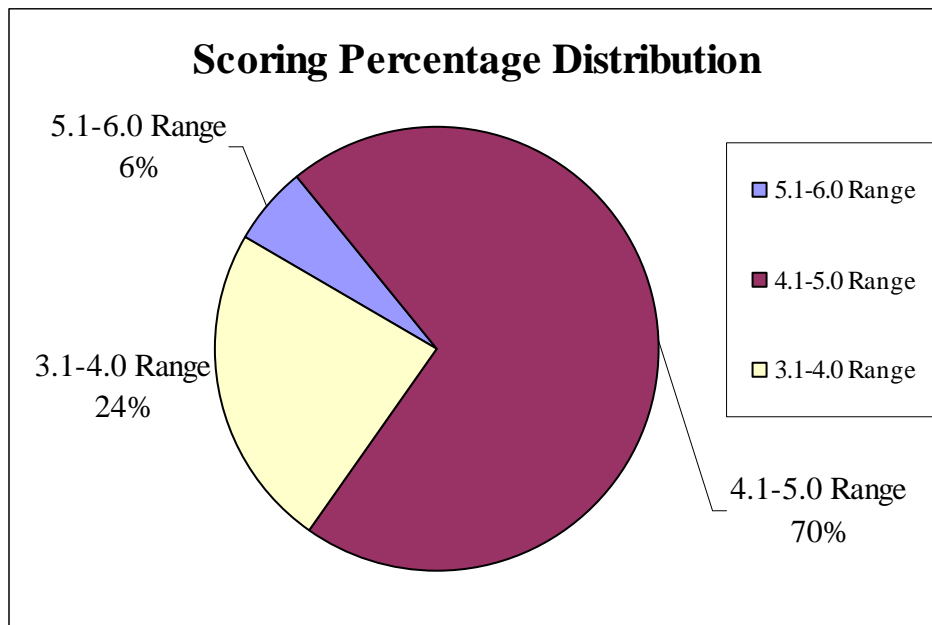
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Project Assessment:

This program review served its initial purpose in evaluating the health of the projects:

Of the projects briefed, scores ranged across the five categories - from (3.6 to 5.1).

- Seventy percent (70%) of the scores ranged in the 4.1 to 5.0 range (satisfactory to good progress),
- Twenty four percent (24%) ranged in the 3.1 to 4.0 range (progress with some concerns to satisfactory),
- Six percent (6%) ranged above 5.0 (good to excellent progress).



Because the review shows 70% of the projects performing in the satisfactory to good range, the program's projects are predominantly performing well. Nevertheless, there are small weaknesses that can be improved upon. There are also clear weaknesses in the remaining 24% that need to be corrected.

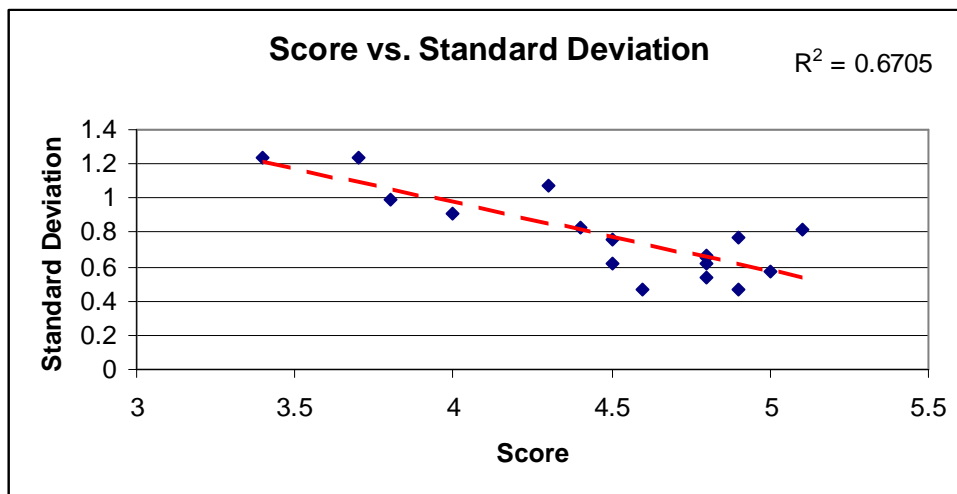
Having addressed this, the focus of the local management team should not solely be on the projects in obvious need of assistance, but all projects and especially on projects that have demonstrated potential to deliver useful products in the "near" future - if provided additional support and leadership to accelerate their progress.

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Recommendations:

In assessing the performance of the projects evaluated in this program review and related report, it is clear that nearly all of the Principal Investigators (PIs) were executing their projects in a timely manner, in accordance with their budgets, and delivering what they said they would deliver in their original proposals. The dedication and enthusiasm by these PIs for most of the projects was also evident. Scores from this review were very similar to the last review.

This report will use, for the first time, standard deviation qualifiers for project scores in order to show the variance between the individual reviewers. Of significance is the relationship and correlation between higher standard deviations and lower rating scores - as shown below.



Looking forward, I will be working with the ORNL SERRI manager in the coming months to evaluate existing projects for potential future funding. I will likely lean toward projects that have had the highest performance scores, that show promise, and those with deliverables that fit into future homeland security needs.

Overall, the assessment of this program review finds SERRI in good health.