**OECD Global Science Forum**

**International Worklshop on**

**“Effective Operation of Competitive Funding Systems”**

**12 October 2016**

#### OECD, Paris

#### DRAFT AGENDA

#### (as of 21 September 2016)

**Background and objectives of the workshop**

Much public, NGO, and indeed some private science, funding, is distributed via competitive mechanisms. These competitive mechanisms have been adopted to promote scientific excellence and efficiency. They are associated in many countries with an overall shift from institutional core funding to project funding. They have a number of common features: a call for proposals, a panel assessment, peer review, scoring, award of funding for a limited time, and follow-up. Awards may be to individuals or projects and can be of variable size and length.

A small but growing body of empirical research suggests that some stages of assessment and award processes are not efficient, or do not necessarily lead to more effective decisions, in addition to potentially contributing to a trend towards conservatism in the decisions made. The reliance of competitive systems on peer review relates to more general concerns about the robustness and validity of peer review processes in assuring the quality of science. In response to these concerns, some funders have adopted random, lottery, or other alternative determination processes for awarding competitive funding.

Competitive funding processes are also comparatively costly, both to awarding agencies and research providers (the latter in time spent preparing applications). Achieving the optimal balance of high-quality decision making and cost (given that resources expended on assessment or preparation of applications could be redirected to the conduct of research) is of critical importance in the design of research funding systems.

The OECD Global Science Forum initiated in 2016 an activity to analyse existing competitive funding mechanisms and their effectiveness, considering whether contextual factors make different components of these mechanisms more or less appropriate. Contextual factors include specific policy goals, the characteristics of different national science systems, and the field or focus of the research funding.

It will also gather and synthesise available qualitative and quantitative evidence on impacts for different competitive systems, and consider whether such evidence lends itself to a reliable international analysis (considering the available performance indicators).

The objective of this international workshop is to present and discuss preliminary feedback obtained by the GSF expert group through a questionnaire survey, and seek suggestions and comments for the later phase of the activity

***Meeting organisation***

The meeting will take place at the OECD Headquarters, 2 rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris, room.

Information on the logistics (list of hotel suggestions, map etc.) can be found here: <http://www.oecd.org/site/conferencecentre/gettingtotheoecd.htm>.

***Draft agenda***

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| 9:00 | Introduction on the activity and objectives of the workshop (*Adam Jaffe + OECD Secretariat)* |
| 9:10 | ***Session 1 : Current situation and challenges***  This session will help set the scene for the workshop participants.   * Short introduction, Adam Jaffe (Motu University, New Zealand) * Context, content and effects of competitive funding mechanisms: Jochen Gläser (Technischen Universitat Berlin) * Discussion * Presentation of preliminary results from a questionnaire survey by the GSF Secretariat * Q/A |
| 10:40 | Coffee break |
| 11:00 | ***Session 2: Can funding processes be made more efficient?***  This session will focus on discussing existing challenges faced by competitive funding mechanisms in their process cycle (request for proposal, evaluation, success rate…) to achieve their policy objectives. The goal is to examine what are the advantages and disadvantages of different modalities and what could be the most appropriate competitive funding modality to use in a particular context.   * Short introduction, Kei Kozumi (OSTP, US) * Case study   + The National Science Foundation of China (Shi Xiaoyong, Head of Department of Innovation Strategy Evaluation and Research, National Center for Science and Technology Evaluation (NCSTE))   + The French National Agency for Research (ANR), Yves Fort, Director for scientific operations (TBC) * Discussion |

12:45-14:15 lunch

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| 14:15 | ***Session 3: How to anticipate the potential impact of proposals?***  This session will address the challenging issue of evaluating impact of funding mechanisms. Expert panels must often evaluate ex ante the potential impact of research proposals, and funders also need to assess whether funding programmes fulfil expected objectives. This task is complex as impact may be understood in different ways (impact on the science funding system, on the quality/excellence of the scientific output, on the scientific system, on the socio-economic ecosystem...) and timeframes.   * Short introduction, Tateo Arimoto (GRIPS, Japan) * Case study   + US National Institute for Health case and beyond: Daniele Li (Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School)   + Irish Science Foundation case: Mark Fergusson Director General of Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Advisor to the Irish Government (TBC) * Discussion |
| 15:45 | Coffee break |
| 16:15 | ***Session 4: Is the traditional peer-reviewed evaluation process the best or only way to select the best projects?***  Current competitive funding mechanisms are largely based on established but complex peer review-based processes, that do not always lead to the most efficient or optimal results; This session will investigate whether new innovative mechanisms might be used for selecting/evaluating scientific proposals which may be better adapted to specific policy objectives.   * Short introduction, Luis Sanz (CSIC, Spain) * Case study   + Alternatives to peer review: novel approaches to research evaluation: Andrzej Jajszczyk, vice president of the Foundation Kyoto-Krakow (TBC)   + ESRC Transformative Research Scheme: Peter Kolarz, Technopolis (TBC) * Discussion |
| 17:45 | **Conclusions** (Co-Chairs) |
| 18:00 | End |