

## THE PART QUESTIONNAIRE

Key Questions For Every Program	Description
<p><b>PROGRAM PURPOSE &amp; DESIGN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the program purpose clear?</li> <li>• Does the program address a specific interest, problem or need?</li> <li>• Is the program designed to have a significant impact in addressing the interest, problem or need?</li> <li>• Is the program designed to make a unique contribution in addressing the interest, problem or need (i.e., is not needlessly redundant of any other Federal, state or, local or private effort)?</li> <li>• Is the program optimally designed to address the national interest, problem or need?</li> </ul>	<p>This section examines the clarity of program purpose and how the program is designed. In answering questions, all factors including those the program may not control, such as legislative mandates and constraints, are considered. Potential source documents and evidence for answering questions in this section include authorizing legislation, agency strategic plans, annual performance plans, and other agency reports. Options for answers are Yes, No or Not Applicable.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGIC PLANNING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the program have a limited number of specific, ambitious long-term performance goals that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program?</li> <li>• Does the program have a limited number of annual performance goals that demonstrate progress toward achieving the long-term goals?</li> <li>• Do all partners (grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, etc.) support program planning efforts by committing to the annual and/or long-term goals of the program?</li> <li>• Does the program collaborate and coordinate effectively with related programs that share similar goals and objectives?</li> <li>• Are independent and quality evaluations of sufficient scope conducted on a regular basis or as needed to fill gaps in performance information to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness?</li> <li>• Is the program budget aligned with the program goals in such a way that the impact of funding, policy, and legislative changes on performance is readily known?</li> <li>• Has the program taken meaningful steps to address its strategic planning deficiencies?</li> </ul>	<p>This section focuses on program planning, priority setting, and allocation of resources. It assesses whether the program has adopted adequate performance measures and a limited number of ambitious, but achievable, goals. Without adequate measures, a program is unlikely to be able to demonstrate it is getting results. This section assesses whether the program incorporates flexibility in the planning process to address problems identified through performance data and periodic monitoring. Potential source documents and evidence for answering questions include strategic planning documents, agency performance plans and reports, reports and submissions from program partners, evaluation plans, budget submissions and other documents. Options for answers are Yes, No or Not Applicable.</p>

<p><b>PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the agency regularly collect timely and credible performance information, including information from key program partners, and use it to manage the program and improve performance?</li> <li>• Are Federal managers and program partners (grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, etc.) held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results?</li> <li>• Are all funds (Federal and partners') obligated in a timely manner and spent for the intended purpose?</li> <li>• Does the program have incentives and procedures (e.g. competitive sourcing/cost comparisons, IT improvements) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution?</li> </ul>	<p>This section tests whether agencies can show that the program is effectively managed to meet program goals and objectives. Key areas include financial oversight, evaluation of program improvements, performance data collection, and program manager accountability. There are a wide range of potential source documents and evidence for answering questions in this section including financial statements, GAO reports, IG reports, performance plans, budget execution data, IT plans, and independent program evaluations. Options for answers are Yes, No or Not Applicable.</p>
<p><b>PROGRAM RESULTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term outcome goal(s)?</li> <li>• Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals?</li> <li>• Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies and cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?</li> <li>• Does the performance of this program compare favorably to other programs with similar purpose and goals?</li> <li>• Do independent and quality evaluations of this program indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?</li> </ul>	<p>This important section considers whether the program can show it is meeting its long-term and annual goals. In general, a program cannot show this if it has not already established adequate measures and goals. It also assesses how well the program compares to similar programs and its effectiveness based on independent evaluations. Potential source documents and evidence for answers include annual performance reports, evaluations, GAO reports, IG reports and other agency documents. Assessments of program results are based on the most recent reporting cycle or other relevant data. Answers in this section are rated as Yes, Large Extent, Small Extent, and No.</p>

The PART filters the variety of mandatory and discretionary programs the federal government operates through seven categories. In addition to questions which apply to all programs, each section includes those that have been tailored for a particular type of program. A complete list of these questions can be found at the OMB website. The accompanying table describes the program categories:

### THE PART, BY CATEGORY

Program Type	Description	Examples
Competitive Grant Programs	Programs that distribute funds to state, local and tribal governments, organizations, individuals and other entities through a competitive process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Start</li> <li>• Weed and Seed</li> </ul>
Block/Formula Grant Programs	Programs that distribute funds to state, local and tribal governments and other entities by formula or block grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational Ed State Grants</li> <li>• Native American Housing Block Grants</li> </ul>

Regulatory-Based Programs	Programs that employ regulatory action to achieve program and agency goals through rulemaking that implements, interprets or prescribes law or policy, or describes procedure or practice requirements. These programs issue significant regulations, which are subject to OMB review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Safety and Health Admin.</li> <li>• Food and Safety Inspection Service</li> </ul>
Capital Assets and Service Acquisition Programs	Programs where the primary means to achieve goals is the development and acquisition of capital assets (such as land, structures, equipment, and intellectual property) or the purchase of services (such as maintenance and information technology) from a commercial source.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign</li> <li>• DoD - Shipbuilding</li> </ul>
Credit Programs	Programs that provide support through loans, loan guarantees and direct credit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Electric Utility Loans and Guarantees</li> </ul>
Direct Federal Programs	Programs in which support and services are provided primarily by federal employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coin Production</li> <li>• National Weather Service</li> </ul>
Research and Development Programs	Programs that focus on creating knowledge or the applying it toward the creation of systems, devices, methods, materials, or technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar Energy Program</li> <li>• Mars Exploration</li> </ul>

### Problems and Revisions

Soon after release of the 2003 Budget, work began on the PART and involved collaboration among a number of parties inside the government and out.

An original, draft version of the PART developed last spring was tested on 67 programs and revised based on the results as well as feedback from agencies and other groups. For example, those commenting were concerned that the "yes-no" format for responses did not distinguish adequately between the performance of various programs, especially in the results section. Another issue was that "yes" and "no" were not objective, and would not be applied consistently when evaluating outcomes. In response, the PART was revised to include four choices in the results section.

Many believed certain questions in the PART were too subjective. For example, responses to a question that asked, "Is the federal role critical?" could vary depending on philosophical or political viewpoints. As a result, this question was eliminated. Additional steps, including clarifying guidance and providing additional training for evaluators were aimed at increasing the consistency of reviews and increasing evaluators' discipline with respect to the evaluation process.

### Possible Areas of Improvement

This first-year experience has provided many lessons and extensive feedback, which will be considered as the PART is fine-tuned for use in the 2005 Budget. Although not perfect, the PART has proved useful to the 2004 Budget process by adding a performance accountability tool to the budget policymaker's toolkit. In addition to economic conditions, national needs, and policy

interests, the PART analysis provides important information to be considered during the course of budget debates.

Still, the PART has several shortcomings that OMB will be working to remedy in the coming months. For instance, because PART answers reflect the judgment of individuals, there was some inconsistency in the standards applied by different evaluators. If current performance goals were found inadequate, most evaluators gave little credit to the program for achieving results. Other evaluators, however, did give some credit when faced with the same situation. Consistency will need to be improved through modifications to the PART, clarifying guidance and training of evaluators.

Many programs evaluated are, at present, unable to demonstrate any results because they do not have adequate data or measures to gauge their performance. Fifty percent of programs evaluated were rated "Results Not Demonstrated," because they did not have adequate performance goals or had not yet collected data to provide evidence of results. With the new measures developed during the PART analysis, this situation should be remedied in the years ahead.

The public is encouraged to provide suggestions for improving the PART. Comments can be e-mailed to [performance@omb.eop.gov](mailto:performance@omb.eop.gov) or mailed to the Office of Management and Budget/PART Comments, Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Room 350, Washington, D.C. 20503.

### **PART Summaries and Management Write-ups**

The PART summaries, by department or agency, for the programs rated this year are presented in this volume. The summary sheet displays a description of the program, the findings from the PART, and the resulting recommendations. It also displays a graph illustrating the score results for each PART section. Key performance measures are presented, along with program funding levels. Check boxes for results and measures are also included. Programs are rated on a four point scale from Effective to Moderately Effective to Adequate to Ineffective. A fifth rating possibility comes into play with Results Not Demonstrated if adequate measures or data to gauge the program's performance were not available.

Many summaries highlight the agencies' inability to explain the link between a program's performance and its level of funding. This is referred to as lack of "alignment" or "integration" of budget and performance. Additionally, there are frequent references to inadequate "performance measures," which are essentially gauges or milestones that indicate how well a program is doing.

#### **Criteria for Check Boxes**

- Results Achieved –**  
Results Section score is 80+
- Results Not Demonstrated –**  
No progress in achieving long-term or annual performance goals.
- Measures Adequate –**  
Ambitious long-term goals and limited number of annual performance goals.
- New Measures Needed –**  
No ambitious long-term goals or too many annual performance goals.

An index of PART-assessed programs broken down by department or agency concludes this reference.