

Scientific Management Review Board

Approaches to Assess the Value of Biomedical Research Supported by NIH

CHARGE TO THE SMRB

BACKGROUND

NIH is entrusted with the Nation's largest investment in biomedical research and, as such, the Agency should ensure that these funds are invested in ways that yield tangible value for the public. While NIH certainly plays a significant role in advancing knowledge, improving health, creating jobs, and increasing economic activity, assessing NIH's *specific* contributions to these outcomes remains a real challenge. For this reason, it is essential to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of methods used in assessing the value of biomedical research. Optimal strategies for measuring the value of biomedical research should employ methodologies that are sufficiently analytical and comprehensive in order to capture the full range of outcomes related to NIH activities.

As part of its mission, the NIH Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB) has been tasked with reviewing the biomedical research landscape "in order to determine the progress and effectiveness and value of the portfolio and the allocation among the portfolio activities of the resources of NIH." The unique composition of the SMRB affords NIH an excellent opportunity to engage in a transparent discussion of the value of investing in NIH and creates a forum for identifying ways in which this value can be assessed. In doing so, this group can provide invaluable assistance to the NIH and assist the Agency in fulfilling its role as a steward of the Nation's investment in biomedical research.

CHARGE

The Value of Biomedical Research (VOBR) Working Group of the SMRB is charged with:

- Undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the methods and strategies used in assessing the value of biomedical research;
- Defining the fundamental principles that should underpin any strategy used in assessing the value of investing in NIH; and
- Identifying strategies used in assessing the value of NIH that are scientifically sound and reflect the diverse outcomes related to this investment.

PROCESS

The VOBR Working Group will:

- Analyze studies assessing the value of biomedical research across nations and sectors in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. This analysis may also include relevant examples from other scientific disciplines;
- Define a range of diverse outcomes that are or may be attributable to NIH activities—including improvements in human health, advances in knowledge, technological innovations, economic benefits, etc.;
- Identify strategies for assessing the value of biomedical research and articulate the rationale for their selection;
- Seek input from the general public and stakeholders in the biomedical research community, as well as from individuals with expertise in assessing public health, scientific, technological, economic, and broader societal impacts of publicly funded research and development in the U.S. and abroad;
- Hold deliberations in conjunction with the full SMRB; and
- Report recommendations to the full SMRB.

DELIVERABLES

The VOBR Working Group is asked to consider optimal strategies for use in assessing the value of investing in NIH. The Working Group is not charged with conducting new analyses. The VOBR Working Group will present to the full SMRB:

- A comprehensive analysis of extant methods used in assessing the value of biomedical research detailing the strengths and limitations;
- A report outlining the fundamental principles that should underpin any attempt to assess the value of investing in NIH; and
- Recommended strategies to use in assessing the value of NIH, as well as the rationale for selecting these recommendations.

The VOBR Working Group will present its findings and recommendations to the full SMRB in a timeframe that positions the full Board to complete its deliberations on this matter by fall 2013.