1872.403–3 Government evaluation process.

(a) The Program AA may, in accordance with NMI 1150.2, appoint one or more full-time Government employees as subcommittee members of the Program Office Steering Committee to evaluate and categorize the proposals.

(b) Each subcommittee member should be qualified and competent to evaluate the proposals in accordance with the AO evaluation criteria. It is important that a subcommittee's evaluation not be influenced by others either within or outside of NASA.

(c) The subcommittee members will not contact the proposers for additional information.

(d) The subcommittee members will classify the proposals in accordance with the four categories indicated in 1872.403–1(e)(1). Each categorization will be supported by an appropriate rationale including a narrative of each proposal's strengths and weaknesses.

1872.404 Engineering, integration, and management evaluation.

(a) The subcommittee responsible for categorization of each proposal in terms of its scientific applications, or technical merit should receive information on probable cost, technical status, developmental risk, integration and safety problems, and management arrangements in time for their deliberations.

(b) This information should be provided at the discretion of the Headquarters Program Office by the Project Office at the installation. This information can be in general terms and should reflect what insights the Project Office can provide without requesting additional details from the proposers. This limited Project Office review will not normally give the subcommittees information of significant precision. The purpose is to give the subcommittee sufficient information so it can review the proposals in conjunction with available cost, integration, and management considerations to gain an impression of each investigator's understanding of the problems of the experiment and to permit gross trade-offs of cost versus value of the investigation objective.

(c) Following categorization, the Project Office shall evaluate proposals in contention, in depth, including a thorough review of each proposal's engineering, integration, management, and cost aspects. This review should be accomplished by qualified engineering, cost, and business analysts at the project center.

(d) In assessing proposed costs, the evaluation must consider:

(1) The investigation objective.

(2) Comparable, similar or related investigations.

(3) Whether NASA or the investigator should procure the necessary supporting instrumentation or services and the relative cost of each mode.

(4) Total overall or probable costs to the Government including integration and data reduction and analysis. In the case of investigations proposed by Government investigators, this includes all associated direct and indirect cost. With respect to cooperative investigations, integration, and other applicable costs should be considered.

(e) The Project Office, as part of the in-depth evaluation of proposals that require instrumentation or support equipment, will survey all potential sources for Government-owned instrumentation or support equipment that may be made available, with or without modifications, to the potential investigator. Such items contributed by foreign cooperating groups which are still available under cooperative project agreements will also be considered for use under the terms and conditions specified in the agreements. As part of the evaluation report to the Program Office, the availability or nonavailability of instrumentation or support equipment will be indicated.

(f) Proposals which require instrumentation should be evaluated by project personnel. This evaluation should cover the inter-faces and the assessment of development risks. This evaluation should furnish the selection official with sufficient data to contribute to the instrument determinations. Important among these are:

(1) Whether the instrument requires further definition;

(2) Whether studies and designs are necessary to provide a reasonably accurate appreciation of the cost;

(3) Whether the investigation can be carried out without incurring undue cost, schedule, or risk of failure penalties; and

(4) Whether integration of the instrument is feasible.

(g) In reviewing an investigator's management plan, the Project Office should evaluate the investigator's approach for efficiently managing the work, the recognition of essential management functions, and the effective overall integration of these functions. Evaluation of the proposals under final consideration should include, but not be limited to: workload—present and future related to capacity and capability; past experience; management approach and organization; e.g.:

(1) With respect to workload and its relationship to capacity and capability, it is important to ascertain the extent to which the investigator is capable of providing facilities and personnel skills necessary to perform the required effort on a timely basis. This review should reveal the need for additional facilities or people, and provide some indication of the Government support the investigator will require.

(2) A review should be made of the investigator, the investigator's institution, and any supporting contractor's performance on prior investigations. This should assist in arriving at an assessment of the investigator and the institution's ability to perform the effort within the proposed cost and time constraints.

(3) The proposed investigator's management arrangements should be reviewed, including make or buy choices, support of any co-investigator, and preselected subcontractors or other instrument fabricators to determine whether such arrangements are justified. The review should determine if the proposed management arrangements enhance the investigator's ability to devote more time to the proposed experiment objectives and still effectively employ the technical and administrative support required for a successful investigation. In making these evaluations, the Project Office should draw on the installation's engineering, business, legal, and other staff resources, as necessary, as well as its scientific resources. If further information is needed from the proposers, it should be obtained through the proper contacts.

1872.405 Program office evaluation.

(a) A Program Office responsible for the project or program at Headquarters will receive the evaluation of the proposals, and weigh the evaluative data to determine an optimum payload or program of investigation. This determination will involve recommendations concerning individual investigations; but, more importantly, should result in a payload or program which is judged to optimize total mission return within schedule, engineering, and budgetary constraints. The recommendations should facilitate sound selection decisions by the Program AA. Three sets of recommendations result from the Program Office evaluation:

(1) Optimum payload or program of investigations, or options for alternative payloads or programs.

(2) Recommendation for final or tentative selection based on a determination of the degree of uncertainty associated with individual investigations. A tentative selection may be considered step one of a two-step selection technique.

(3) Upon consideration of the guidelines contained in 1872.502(a)(3), recommending responsibility for instrument development.

(b) The Installation Project Office evaluation is principally concerned with ensuring that the proposed investigation can be managed, developed, integrated, and executed with an appropriate probability of technical success within the estimated probable cost. The Headquarters Program Director, drawing upon these inputs, should be mainly concerned with determining a payload or program from the point of view of programmatic goals and budgetary constraints. Discipline and cost trade-offs are considered at this level. The Headquarters Program Office should focus on the potential contribution to program objectives that can be achieved under alternative feasible payload integration options.

(c) It may be to NASA's advantage to consider certain investigations for tentative selection pending resolution of uncertainties in their development.