compact development process. Capacity constraints may impact the timeline for the compact development process.

Sierra Leone is a post-conflict country that has undergone dramatic reforms over the past several years. Many of these reforms are reflected in the FY13 scorecard, which Sierra Leone passes for the first time, after notable improvements in all scorecard categories. Sierra Leone recently held its third democratic election since the end of its civil war, which was widely recognized as peaceful, transparent, and participatory. It has strengthened its anti-corruption commission, provided free health care to children under five and pregnant and lactating women, expanded vaccine coverage, improved access to credit, and lowered trade barriers. The Government of Sierra Leone's policy reforms, direct engagement with MCC's indicator institutions and now passing scorecard illustrate the strength of the MCC's incentive effect. Scorecards for Sierra Leone can be found here: *www.mcc.gov/scorecards.* Capacity constraints may result in a longer compact development process.

Tanzania is a democratic nation experiencing economic growth and working to reduce one of the highest poverty rates in the world. In FY13, Tanzania passed the indicator criteria for the eighth consecutive year. Scorecards for Tanzania can be found here: *www.mcc.gov/scorecards.* Tanzania is one of only four countries to be included as a pilot country for the U.S. Partnership for Growth (PFG) initiative. Tanzania's role as a pilot PFG country makes it uniquely situated to utilize compact resources effectively. In 2011, under the PFG initiative, Tanzania completed a constraints to growth analysis. There is an engaged MCA team already in operation, and the Government of Tanzania and U.S. Government have, through the PFG, both committed to focusing efforts towards combating specifically-identified constraints to growth. Tanzania's current compact, which will close in September 2013, is investing in roads, access to potable water, and improving the energy sector.

With this selection decision, MCC looks forward to increased competition during compact development among those countries already selected. The agency believes that a deeper pool of qualified contenders competing for scarce budget resources will reinforce the importance of maintaining strong performance on the policy indicators and can inspire a more efficient, high-quality compact development process.

Countries Re-Selected To Continue Compact Development

Four of the countries selected as eligible for MCA compact assistance in FY13 were previously selected as eligible. Reselection allows them to continue compact development and access funding from FY2013. These countries include Benin, El Salvador, Georgia, and Ghana.

The Board reselected these countries based on their continued performance since their prior selection. The Board determined that since their initial selection, there has been no material change in their performance on the indicator criteria that indicates a serious decline in policy performance. All four countries pass the scorecards.

Countries Newly Selected for Threshold Program Eligibility

For FY13, the Board selected Guatemala as eligible for threshold assistance. This selection is consistent with the recently re-designed threshold program. Under the re-designed concept, the new threshold country programs will no longer focus explicitly on trying to move indicator scores. Rather, the program will allow countries to diagnose binding constraints to economic growth and demonstrate the capacity and political will to make difficult policy reforms in partnership with MCC. This will contribute directly to the Board's understanding of a country's capacity to undertake the type of policy reforms typically required to enable a compact investment to have maximum sustainable impact.

Guatemala passes 10 of 20 indicators on the scorecard, including both Democratic Rights indicators, and performs on the median on Control of Corruption. Guatemala's government has engaged on a series of reform to improve the fight against corruption and strengthen the rule of law.

Countries Re-Selected To Continue Developing Threshold Programs

Two countries selected as eligible for threshold assistance in FY13 were previously selected as eligible. Reselection allows them to continue developing threshold programs and access funding from FY2013. These countries are Honduras and Nepal.

The Board reselected these countries based on their continued performance since their prior selection. The Board determined that since their initial selection, there has been no material change in their performance that indicates a serious decline in policy performance.

Ongoing Review of Partner Countries' Policy Performance

The Board also reviewed the policy performance of countries that are implementing compacts. These countries do not need to be re-selected each year in order to continue implementation. Once MCC makes a commitment to a country through a compact agreement, MCC does not consider the country for reselection on an annual basis during the term of its compact. The Board emphasized the need for all partner countries to maintain or improve their policy performance. If it is determined that a country has demonstrated a significant policy reversal, MCC can hold it accountable by applying MCC's Suspension and Termination Policy.

Selection to Initiate the Compact Process

The Board also authorized MCC to invite Liberia, Morocco, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania to submit a proposal for a compact, as described in section 609 of the Act (22 U.S.C. 7708).

Submission of a proposal is not a guarantee that MCC will finalize a compact with an eligible country. Any MCA assistance provided under section 605 of the Act (22 U.S.C. 7704) will be contingent on the successful negotiation of a mutually agreeable compact between the eligible country and MCC, approval of the compact by the Board, and the availability of funds.

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NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period: Request for Comments (RFC)—Federal Cybersecurity Research and Development Strategic Plan

AGENCY: The National Coordination Office (NCO) for Networking Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD), NSF.

ACTION: Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period: Request for Comments (RFC).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tomas Vagoun at *vagoun@nitrd.gov* or (703) 292–4873.

DATES: To be considered, submissions must be received by January 11, 2013.

SUMMARY: National Coordination Office (NCO) for Networking Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) has extended the public comment period for its Request for

Comments (RFC)—Federal Cybersecurity Research and Development Strategic Plan [**Federal Register** Volume 77, Number 227, Doc No: 2012–28481, November 26, 2012] to January 11, 2013. Comments are to be submitted to *cybersecurity@nitrd.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This Request For Comments (RFC), originally published in the **Federal Register** on November 26, 2012 [FR Volume 77, Number 227, Doc No: 2012–28481] is issued by the Cyber Security and Information Assurance Research and Development Senior Steering Group (SSG) of the Federal Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) Program. The SSG is preparing a report to provide an update on technological developments in Federal cybersecurity research and development since the release of the 2011 Federal Cybersecurity Research and Development Strategic Plan (the strategic plan). Also, in light of the ever evolving technological landscape of cybersecurity, and as input to its follow-on report, the SSG seeks comments on the progress over the past year in the research areas identified in the strategic plan, the strategic plan's impact in orienting private sector cybersecurity research and development activities, the successes and challenges in achieving the technological objectives outlined in the plan, and on any nascent or emerging areas in cybersecurity research and development that warrant further focus. Additionally, the comments will be used by the SSG in its assessment of future needs and directions in Federal cybersecurity research and development.

Continued cybersecurity research and development is critical to ensuring that we are on track as a Nation to develop innovative tools and capabilities to address cybersecurity threats. In December 2011, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released the ''Trustworthy Cyberspace: Strategic Plan for the Federal Cybersecurity Research and Development Program,'' a framework for a set of coordinated Federal strategic priorities and objectives for cybersecurity research. (*http://www.nitrd.gov/Publications/PublicationDetail.aspx?pubid=39*)

The strategic plan was developed under the leadership of the Cyber Security and Information Assurance Research and Development Senior Steering Group (SSG) of the Federal Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) Program. It identifies key cybersecurity research and development themes that are shaping and facilitating a coordinated Federal research and development agenda to engender game-changing technologies. With this overarching template, the federal scientific community has been focusing on a common set of problems. The strategic plan is being executed by all of the agencies conducting and funding Federal cybersecurity research, including DARPA, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Energy, IARPA, National Institute of Standards and Technology, National Security Agency, National Science Foundation, and the Department of Defense. Input from industry, academia, and other stakeholders during the development of the strategic plan contributed greatly to the formulation of Federal research directions in cybersecurity. Guided by this plan, many research activities, initiatives, and solicitations have already been launched by Federal agencies in all areas defined by the plan.

In an effort to continue to evolve Federal strategic directions in cybersecurity research, the SSG seeks comments to gain a better understanding of the plan's impact. Furthermore, the SSG seeks input regarding prospective areas in cybersecurity research and development that might benefit from coordinated support by Federal agencies. To assist with its report, the SSG is requesting that interested parties submit written comments. We welcome comments from all interested parties, including, but not limited to, academia, private industry, and all levels of government. We seek comments on the following questions in relation to the strategic plan:

(1) Research Themes of the Strategic Plan:

(a) Do the research themes need to be refined or enhanced? If so, in what way?

(b) What are the research, development, implementation, transition-to-practice, or other challenges that need to be overcome to achieve the goals under each theme?

(c) Are there areas in cybersecurity research not addressed by the strategic plan that should be? If yes, what are they, why are they important, and what advances in such areas are needed to improve the security, safety, and trustworthiness of cyberspace?

(2) Activities that Advance the Strategic Plan:

(d) What activities are you or your organization undertaking that support the objectives of the strategic plan? Please include a brief description of initiatives, use-cases, capabilities, technologies, and/or achievements.

(e) How might your organization utilize the research outcomes?

(3) Sustainable Progress:

(f) What interactions, relationships, campaigns, or targeted assistance would support a sustainable process to drive changes envisioned by the research themes?

(g) What engagements among Federal agencies, government labs, industry, and universities are particularly effective in enabling rapid progress in the development of solutions?

To further enhance discussions related to cybersecurity research and this RFC, the Government held a session on Federal cybersecurity research and development during the National Science Foundation's Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace Principal Investigators Meeting. The session took place on November 27, 2012. The webcast of this session is accessible at: *http://www.tvworldwide.com/events/nsf/121127*. Additional information about the National Science Foundation's meeting is at: *http://cps-vo.org/group/satc*.

Submission Instructions

Submission email: submit your comments to *cybersecurity@nitrd.gov*.

Submission deadline: to be considered, submissions must be received by January 11, 2013.

To the extent applicable, when addressing a particular question included in this request for comments, comments should reference the relevant number associated with the question. Comments submitted will be made available to the public online or by alternative means. For this reason, do not include in your comments information of a confidential nature, such as sensitive personal information or proprietary information. In accordance with FAR 15.202(3), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFC.

Submitted by the National Science Foundation for the National Coordination Office (NCO) for Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD).

Dated: December 21, 2012.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,

Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation.

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