NASA Lessons-Learned Workshop-2
Cost & Schedule

Showing the Schedule:
Do the Answers Match the Questions?

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Why Show Schedules in Proposals?

- Project schedule is a framework for explaining how the project will work: start, middle, end
- Goal is to tell the project story and facilitate a fair evaluation
  - AO should require details that advance that goal, not require details that don’t
- Recent AOs have not been too specific about what level of detail is helpful to reviewers – Does that mean we are doing the right thing?
Step 1 Proposal Schedules

- Show the start-to-finish project schedule at a high level
  - “High level” is in the eye of the beholder
- Add detail where it helps to tell the story, omit everything else
  - Many different opinions about more vs. less detail at Step 1
- Schedule is the framework for the budget (they had better match)
- Schedule is a picture of the management plan
Key Features 1

• Probable start date, feasible development times, identified launch date all must make sense together

• Constraints on the launch date should be discussed in the text
  – Schedule can add credibility to team’s ability to make the date

• Identification of mandatory milestones and decision points proves that you can read 7120.5 and other program docs
  – SMEX General Project Plan, for instance

• Personal bias: the more details a Step 1 schedule shows, the more it’s wrong
Key Features 2

• Show funded reserve periods
  – Placement and duration lend credibility (or not) to the overall plan

• Will AOs continue to consider funded schedule reserve to be a part of the overall cost reserve?
  – This is a mixed blessing – it’s not clear (to me) that combining funded schedule reserve with other cost reserves is less complicated than keeping them separate
I&T Planning

• Schedule in proposal can show I&T at a high level but the important things to reviewers should be a good plan and experienced people

• I&T schedules are highly dynamic at the day-to-day and hour-to-hour level; flow diagram is probably more useful than schedule dates

• At the proposal level just need to show:
  – Adequate total time
  – Key milestones
  – Generous planned reserve periods
Critical Path

• In Step 1 (and Step 2) proposals the critical path comes from the team’s analysis; it’s not an output of the scheduling software

• Describe the critical path, then show a schedule that will let you control it
Conveying Information (or not)

- From the reviewers’ point of view, what style of schedule picture is the most helpful?

- Are some of us (proposers) doing things that are counterproductive for the reviewers?
  - E.g. far too much or far too little detail, or overly complicated pictures of the schedule

- “Margins, reserves, resiliency”: how are these best shown, and how are they evaluated?