

**Focus Group Protocols**  
**NSF's Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI) program**  
**PI and Managing Director Convening**  
**September 24, 2018**

Consent statement

- My name is [FIRST AND LAST NAME] and I am a researcher at [NSF/NSF CONTRACTOR].
- *For Center Directors:* The goal of this focus group is to help NSF better understand how the CCI community selects important chemistry challenges, what is the best way to identify and approach these types of challenges in the future, and your center's efforts and needs related to monitoring and/or evaluation.
- *For Managing Directors:* The goal of this focus group is to help NSF better understand how the CCI community selects broader impact activities, which center activities are best addressed through a coordinated effort such as CCI, and your center's efforts and needs related to monitoring and/or evaluation.
- Our collection of information through the focus group have been reviewed and approved under OMB Control Number 3145-0215.
- We expect the focus group to take about 45 minutes.
- We will aggregate the information that you provide for NSF and you will not be quoted by name or in any other way that can identify you. However, since your group is small, there is some chance that NSF might be able to infer who you are based on your answers
- Please keep the conversation in the room confidential and not to share what you've said or heard to others who are not in this group
- Please feel free to ask for a clarification or to not answer any question
- Do you have questions for me before we proceed?

Questions for Center Directors

1. The goal of the CCI program is to "support research centers focused on major, long-term fundamental chemical research challenges." How did your center select your challenge?
2. What are the most important current or emerging fundamental challenges in chemistry?
3. Are these problems best approached through coordinated efforts such as the CCI program? What are other approaches that could be considered to support the research efforts to address these challenges?
4. What can NSF do to build the research community's capacity to respond to these types of challenges without significant new funding?
5. For future program planning, what are other ways, in addition to a competition solicitation, to engage the community in identifying important chemical challenges?
6. What does your center currently do to monitor performance toward proposed goals? [For those who appear to do evaluation] Do you see your approach as effective? How have you used the evaluation findings?

7. Do you think the centers such as CCI should include an internal evaluation component? If yes, what types of resources or activities could help the centers implement this type of performance monitoring?  
Probe: For example, a website containing evaluation tools and program-related results

#### Questions for Managing Directors

1. How did your center select the activities to meet the “broader impact” goals of the grant?
2. Have you experienced challenges implementing these activities? What were they and were you able to resolve them?
3. What are the center activities which could be best accomplished through coordinated efforts of the CCI community?
4. What does your center currently do to monitor performance toward proposed goals? [For those who appear to do evaluation] Do you see your approach as effective? How have you used the evaluation findings?
5. Do you think the centers such as CCI should include an internal evaluation component? If yes, what types of resources or activities could help the centers implement this type of performance monitoring?  
Probe: For example, a website containing evaluation tools and program-related results