

Finding from MEPAG Virtual Meeting VM6
August 28, 2019

This document is posted at: <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm?expand=vm6>

1. **Finding:** The question of whether and how a candidate list for New Frontiers (NF) Announcements of Opportunity should be maintained is being debated in the science community. In support of the wider AG community discussion, MEPAG took the opportunity at its [6th Virtual Meeting \(August 28, 2019\)](#) to discuss this issue. While open competition can respond to rapidly changing priorities, NF proposals require significant time and resources, including extensive technical and financial scoping that can be provided by only a handful of institutions. In practice, this could lead to the choice of missions to be proposed being down-selected internally by the key NASA centers, based on their perception of success, rather than on more science-driven factors. A prioritized NF list enables the Decadal Survey to set scientific priorities across the most expensive classes of missions (NF and Flagships), while retaining many advantages of open competition. Additionally, it was broadly recognized that there should be a clear and fair method for evaluation/revision of the list between Decadal Surveys, so as to respond to new discoveries. While no Mars candidate is in the present NF list, MEPAG is confident that there are Mars missions which will be competitive in this class in future Decadal Surveys.

MEPAG supports the current process in which the Planetary Decadal Survey creates a New Frontiers Candidate List, and encourages NASA to clearly communicate the process for adding new candidates to this list between Decadal Surveys.