

PreApp Evaluation Feedback to Applicants

Many applicants have expressed a desire to receive some general feedback on why a PreApp was not invited for review or, if invited, feedback on improving the full application. Most queries are generally sufficiently addressed by discussing them with the CIRM review officer. However, we have implemented a system in the last two PreApp competitions (Tools and Technology II and Early Translational II RFAs) that provides applicants with a sense of the evaluation without imposing on PreApp reviewers the need to submit a written critique or slowing down the process.

To accomplish this, PreApp reviewers are asked to provide a numerical rating of the PreApp proposal against each of the review criteria pertinent to the RFA. In addition, reviewers have a comment box where they are encouraged to provide any comments that might provide clarification or recommendations to the applicant. This information is compiled for each application and an average rating for each criterion is provided along with any comments from reviewers. An example of the *Summary of Review* that is sent to an applicant at the PreApp stage is shown below. In the example, the scores reflect a proposal that might have been thought to be generally feasible but not responsive to the RFA objectives and perhaps not impactful.

Applicants receive notice by email that their PreApp is either invited for submission of a full application or not. In both cases, a Summary of Review is included in the email, which also describes the process used for review. As always, applicants are encouraged to speak with the CIRM review officer if they have questions.

EXAMPLE:

Summary of Review

The goal of the PreApp process is to identify proposals that are the most responsive to the RFA objectives and likely to be competitive. For this competition we received 226 PreApps. The process was designed to handle a large volume of proposals and to ensure a rapid turn-around on the review. Therefore, assigned reviewers do not provide written critiques but in the interest of providing feedback to you, we do ask reviewers to rate the proposal against each criterion on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is most meritorious). Reviewers have an optional comment box to provide a brief recommendation or explanation, if necessary. Each reviewer assesses approximately 15-20 PreApps within their area of expertise and for each votes "yes", "maybe", or "no" to invite a full application. Reviewers also designate which PreApps are the "top" 2 or 3 in their assigned group. CIRM invites the most highly ranked and responsive PreApps as determined by the external scientific reviewers and CIRM science officers.

The summary below shows the average ratings given to your PreApp by reviewers against each review criterion. The ratings are meant to help you understand what

aspects of your PreApp were judged most and least meritorious. Please note that the final recommendation is not determined by the sum of the individual category scores. For example, some proposals may have been judged to be highly significant and feasible, but yet not responsive to the RFA and therefore not invited to submit a full application.

(Scale: least meritorious is 1 and most meritorious is 5)

1. Impact: 3.00

2. Design and Feasibility of the Research Plan: 4.00

3. Responsiveness to the RFA: 2.33

Comments (if any):

The proposal does not address a translational bottleneck and would be more appropriate for a Basic Biology competition.

The focus of the study is good, but the strategy for getting there is not well developed.