

Executive Summary

Updated application selection process

This document summarizes CIRM's transition from preference-based filtering of applications for Discovery (DISC4), Preclinical Development (PDEV), and Clinical Trial (CLIN2) application to a new process that uses guiding principles across program design and review to identify applications that best support CIRM's goals.

The full details of the transition are in the [Board Memo](#). Other resources available include [CIRM's Board Presentation Deck](#) and the [YouTube Recording of the Application Selection Process Changes Presentation](#).

Key Themes

- Transition from a preference-based scoring approach to guiding principles.
- Updated program guiding principles for CLIN2, PDEV, DISC4.
- Enhanced review and volume control process centered around scientific value.

Guiding Principles

CIRM had previously used a preference-based scoring approach to identify pre-applications (DISC4 and PDEV) or qualify applications (CLIN2) for scientific merit review. On March 26, 2026, CIRM's Board approved eliminating the preference-based filters and replacing them with program-specific guiding principles applied across the entire application lifecycle. These guiding principles translate the high-level impact goals under the Strategic Allocation Framework (SAF) into specific program objectives and are built into the application lifecycle from volume control, through scientific review, and CIRM Team recommendations to the Application Review Subcommittee (ARS).

Program Guiding Principles

- **CLIN2:** Focus on the transformative impact of therapies, patient access, and broad disease representation in CIRM's portfolio.
- **PDEV:** Emphasis on cutting-edge therapeutic technologies to improve patient outcomes, barriers to patient access, and broad disease representation in CIRM's portfolio.
- **DISC4:** Multidisciplinary research approaches, collaboration and network synergy, and alignment with organizational priorities.

Implementation Plan Across the Application Lifecycle

- **Volume Control (Updated):** A new GWG selection process for identifying applications for full review based on scientific value.
 - Key Features
 - GWG conducts an initial scientific-value assessment using a set of criteria derived from program-specific guiding principles.
 - Reviewers select and rank applications to identify those advancing to full review.
 - Process operates on full applications (PDEV, CLIN2) or on pre-submissions (DISC4).
- **GWG Merit Review (Unchanged):** Retains full scientific review based on established criteria.
- **Funding Decisions (Updated):** Following the GWG Merit Review, the CIRM Team will prepare guiding principles summaries to support funding recommendations, which are provided to aid ARS decisions.
 - Key Features
 - Complements GWG feedback.
 - Compares applications to active portfolio and external landscape.
 - Provides consistency across programs.

