

Key Facts Regarding Application Review at CIRM and NIH

AGENDA ITEM # 10- SUPPLEMENT FOR
2/3-4/10 ICOC MEETING

Standard Processing of R01 Research Applications at NIH

~50,000 Applications per Year



~250 Study Sections for Review



~250 Applications/Study Section



Each Study Section Meets 3 Times/Year



About 60-90 Applications Reviewed per Round
(~50% or more may be triaged; i.e., not discussed)

Comparison of NIH and CIRM Reviews

	NIH Study Section	CIRM GWG
Reviewers	20 scientific members on average plus ~4 ad hoc scientists	15 scientific members, 7 patient advocates, ~10 ad hoc scientists
Number of Applications Reviewed	~60-100 (R01 type)	~45-60 (Basic Research)
Number of Applications Discussed	~30-50 (with 50% triage encouraged)	~45-60 (no triage, all discussed)
Number of Reviewers per Application	3	3
Average Number of Applications Reviewed per Reviewer	7-10	10
Duration of Review Meeting	1-2 days	1.5-2 days

Comparison of NIH and CIRM Reviews

	NIH Study Section	CIRM GWG
Summary Statements	Confidential statements produced for all applications (triaged are abbreviated)	Public summary statements are produced for all applications
Scope of Review	Scientific Merit Review Only	Scientific Merit and Programmatic Review
Review Outcomes	Priority Score (triaged applications are not scored)	All applications scored for merit, ranked, and funding recommendation made
Timeframe from application due date to award	11 months	7 months (9 months with PreApp)

CIRM's Capacity to Process Applications

- An open call focused on human stem cell studies (e.g. Basic Biology Awards) can produce 250-300 applications
- The GWG can reasonably review approximately 60 applications per review meeting
- Review of 250-300 applications would require about 4 to 5 GWG meetings
- Based on average workloads, NIH would rely on 1 study section over one year to accomplish the review of 250 applications and perhaps 2 study sections for additional applications (i.e., 300+).

CIRM's Capacity to Process Applications

- GWG can reasonably conduct up to 5 review meetings per year
- CIRM can reasonably process about 300 applications (i.e., R01-like research proposal) per year
- Four core RFAs (Disease Teams, Early Translational, Basic Biology, Tools/Technologies) could produce about 800-900 applications per year in open calls

Managing Application Review

In order to adequately review multiple and varied rounds of research proposals with a broadened RFA solicitation, mechanisms for effectively managing applications is required.

Many options utilized by various funding organizations have been considered.

Possible Mechanisms for Managing Applications

- Triage
- Limitations on submissions
- Strict eligibility criteria
- Pre-application process (trial report available)
- Apply by invitation only (not an option for CIRM)
- First-come, first serve (not an option for CIRM)

NIH Triage

NIH triage reduces the number of applications that are scored and discussed during review meetings. NIH encourages study sections to triage 50% or more of the applications reviewed.

- Triage does not reduce the number of applications that are reviewed or processed
- Summary statements are still produced for triaged applications (except that they do not include a score or budget information)
- The benefit of triage is an expedited review meeting
- A detriment is that it does not increase the capacity to review more applications beyond what can be handled by a typical study section or GWG

Limitations on Submissions

- Limits can be set for the number of applications accepted from an institution or organization
- Limits vary and are set based on the anticipated response and complexity of application to be reviewed
- Limits have the benefit of setting a fixed standard across institutions and permitting institutions to select their best candidates
- A detriment is that some investigators may not be provided the opportunity to compete due to status or other non-scientific reasons

Strict Eligibility Criteria

- Eligibility criteria can be set to allow a narrower pool of applicants to compete
- Criteria can be set on a multitude of factors that align with the intent and objectives of the RFA
- The benefit is increased likelihood of receiving submissions that are responsive to an RFA
- A detriment is the breadth of scope of most CIRM RFAs and the difficulty in defining eligibility criteria that would sufficiently limit the response

Pre-Applications

- Pre-applications or pre-proposals are utilized by many organizations to identify potential proposals that are best aligned with the objectives of the solicitation
- Permits an open solicitation but limits the information provided by applicants
- Initial review is focused on essentials rather than fine details of a proposal
- An important benefit is an increased capacity to process more proposals but a detriment is that applicants receive less feedback on strengths and weaknesses than for a full application