

**THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDING (GRANTS REVIEW)  
WORKING GROUP OF  
THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE**

**Agenda Item 4:**

**Consideration of the process for conducting review of grant applications.**

As part of the By-Laws (agenda item 3), we have given a brief description of how the Grants Review Working Group (GRWG) will operate. The first step is the evaluation of scientific merit of grant applications, which is to be made by the 15 scientific members of the GRWG with all members of the Working Group present and participating in the discussion, as appropriate. To accomplish this step, we propose the following procedure. After receipt of applications, CIRM staff, with consultation with the Chair as necessary, will assign each grant application to a primary and two secondary reviewers, according to expertise and with appropriate consideration of conflict of interest issues. Prior to the meeting, the primary reviewer will be asked to write a brief description of the grant (guided largely by the abstract provided by the applicant), and all three reviewers will be asked to write a one to two page review that addresses the application's strengths and weaknesses in light of the criteria for review (to be discussed below). A draft of each reviewer's comments will be submitted to CIRM staff at least 3 business days before the meeting for circulation to the other reviewers of the application.

At the meeting, the Chair will preside over the scientific evaluation of each application submitted. For each application, the reviewers will summarize their evaluation of the grant, followed by discussion by the GRWG. The fifteen scientific members of the GRWG will then in secret ballot assign each grant a score of between 1-100, with 100 representing the best score of scientific merit. The average numerical score will represent the scientific score for each grant application. When all applications have been scored, CIRM staff will present them in rank order of scientific merit. Since the budgets for each application are known, the staff will then present to the WG the number of grant applications that would receive funding if they were funded in order of scientific merit and score. This first stage will thus identify the "payline" which marks the border between applications that could be funded, and those that will not based on funds allocated for the particular RFA under discussion.

In a second stage of review, to be presided by the Vice-Chair, the full GRWG will consider whether any grant proposals below the payline should be moved above it, based on the review criteria established by CIRM (to be discussed below); this action will result in displacing one or more grant applications that had previously been just above the payline. As a result of this discussion, the applications will be defined into two or three groups:

1. Recommended for Funding - Highly meritorious grant and loan applications that are recommended for funding to the ICOC.
2. Recommended for Funding Pending Available Funds - Meritorious grant and loan applications that are recommended to the ICOC for funding pending available funds.
3. Not recommended for Funding - Grant or loan applications that are not recommended for funding *at this time*.