

EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

Late Updated: March 4th, 2024

Note: This document is subject to change

1. EVALUATION METHOD

This Request For Solutions (RFS) is a competitive solicitation seeking solutions for innovative technologies that address the topic areas. The government will evaluate all Solution Summaries against the criteria stated in this RFS. Each Solution Summary will be judged on its own merit. **ARPA-H is under no obligation to respond to every submission, proceed with any Solution Summaries/Pitch, or select any specific number of Solution Summaries/Pitch in each topic.** ARPA-H may also elect to fund several or none of the proposed approaches to a given topic. Proposed approaches of merit, but not selected for funding may be placed in the "Submissions Library," as outlined in Section 1.1.4. During the evaluation process, submissions may be handled by support contractors for administrative purposes and/or to assist with technical evaluation. All support contractors performing this role are expressly prohibited from performing ARPA-H-sponsored technical research and are bound by appropriate non-disclosure agreements (NDAs).

1.1 Evaluation Process

1.1.1 Solution Summary

ARPA-H will review the submitted Solution Summary based on the evaluation criteria below. The Solution Summaries must clearly align to the RFS topics and comply with all requirements detailed in this RFS. A subset of submissions will be invited for a subsequent in-person pitch session. An ARPA-H program manager (which is a federal employee) will be the sole evaluator/decider for each Solution Summary but may rely on additional insights from ARPA-H contracted XIR/EIR, support contractors, or systems engineering and technical advisory (SETA) contractors. **Due to expected volume of submissions, proposers will only be notified about whether they advance to the Pitch phase. Please note that they WILL NOT RECEIVE FEEDBACK on their individual submission.**

ARPA-H reserves the right to limit the number of proposers invited to pitch. As such, a proposer's Solution Summary may be evaluated to be of merit, but not invited to pitch and subsequently placed into the "Submissions Library," as outlined in Section 1.1.4 of this RFS.

1.1.2 Pitch

During the in-person pitch sessions, the proposing team will present their ideas to the ARPA-H team in a slide deck format, with a Question and Answer (Q&A) session following the pitch. The in-person pitch sessions will allow ARPA-H to evaluate the submissions quickly and efficiently. As needed, ARPA-H reserves the right to ask pitch participants for additional information. ARPA-H will review the pitches based on the evaluation criteria below. An ARPA-H program manager (which is a federal employee) will be the sole evaluator/decider for each pitch but may rely on additional insights from ARPA-H contracted XIR/EIR, support contractors, systems engineering and technical advisory (SETA contractors, or other subject matter experts. **Due to the expected volume of submissions, proposers will be notified about whether they advance to Invitation for Collaboration & Negotiation (IC&N). Please note that they WILL NOT RECEIVE FEEDBACK on their individual submission.**

The Government will not pay proposers for costs associated with pitches, unless otherwise stipulated.

ARPA-H reserves the right to limit the number of proposers invited to the Invitation for Collaboration & Negotiation (IC&N) Phase. As such, a proposer's Pitch may be evaluated to be of merit, but not invited to IC&N and subsequently placed into the "Submissions Library," as outlined in Section 1.1.4 of this RFS.

Note: Templates will be provided to those selected for the Pitch Phase.

1.1.3 Invitation for Collaboration & Negotiation (IC&N)

After evaluating all the pitches, the ARPA-H team will select a subset of offerors to proceed to the IC&N Phase. Proposers will be notified after their pitch if they are selected or not selected to move onto IC&N. ARPA-H reserves the right to limit the number of proposers invited to IC&N. Those not invited to IC&N Phase will be notified via email.

The first step in IC&N is Scope of Work (SOW) Collaboration. The selected proposers will work with the PMs to collaboratively develop the following items:

1. SOW
2. Technical Milestones
3. Project Timeline (or Period of Performance)
4. If Applicable - Government Furnished Property (GFP) / Government Furnished Information (GFI)

The second step in IC&N is negotiation of the following documents:

1. SOW (to include milestones, timeline, GFP/GFI)
2. Intellectual Property
3. Costs

The Government will not pay proposers for costs associated with IC&N (e.g., proposal development, negotiations), unless otherwise stipulated.

After the IC&N Phase an award will be issued to the selected proposer. Awards will be made in the form of Technical Direction Letters (TDLs) from the Agreements Officer (AO) to the Investor Catalyst (IC) Hub Consortium Management Firm (CMF). The TDL triggers the CMF to issue a subaward to the selected proposer. Each TDL will incorporate the collaborative SOW (e.g., milestones, timeline, GFP/GFI, IP, costs) and all TDLs will be governed by the CMF's Base OT Agreement, unless otherwise noted in the AOI.

Note: Templates will be provided to those selected for IC&N.

1.1.4 Submissions Library

The Submissions *Library* is the repository of highly rated technical submissions available for future selection. Only Consortium Members who are approved spokes may have their submissions placed into the Library. Proposers that are not selected but demonstrate technical merit will be placed in the *Submissions Library*. This *Library* will be maintained by the CMF, through coordination with the cognizant AO and Agreement Specialist (AS). Proposer's submissions that are placed in the Library will be valid for 18 months from date of submission.

Note: By submitting a Solution Summary the proposer agrees that if their submission is placed in the Library, it may be shared with other federal agencies for award.

1.2 Evaluation Criteria

ARPA-H will use the same evaluation criteria to evaluate the Solution Summaries and Pitches. ARPA-H will use the criteria to determine overall if the submission is Selectable or Not Selectable. Even if the submission is deemed Selectable, ARPA-H reserves the right to not invite the proposer to the next phase and place them in the Submissions Library.

For both funding opportunity tracks, technical merit takes precedence in the evaluation process and will be assessed first. Solution Summaries and Pitches lacking technical merit will not be evaluated further. Solution Summaries and Pitches demonstrating technical merit, will be evaluated based on the remaining criteria listed below. Solution Summaries and Pitches will be evaluated on the basis of the

merit of the proposed concept in addressing the Topics, not against other proposed solutions submitted in response to the same Topic.

If an organizational conflict of interest (OCI) presents itself during the Evaluation, ARPA-H will assess the OCI and decide if the potential OCI can be avoided or mitigated. If a potential OCI cannot be avoided or mitigated, ARPA-H will remove the proposer from further consideration. All support contractors (e.g., XIR/EIR, SETA, etc.) supporting ARPA-H are expressly prohibited from performing ARPA-H-sponsored technical research and are bound by appropriate non-disclosure agreements (NDAs).

ARPA-H will use the following criteria to evaluate Solution Summary s and pitches:

- 1. Technical Merit:** The proposed solution identifies clear, measurable goals that have a reasonable chance of meeting the topic objectives. The potential of the proposed solution for technological innovation – whether the end-product or technology proposed would offer significant advantages over existing approaches, methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions currently used in research or clinical practice. Further, the proposed solution should align with the [ARPA-H mission](#).
- 2. User Experience:** The proposed solution contemplates the end user, first by understanding for whom the solution solves. For example, who will use this? Second, the solution meets the needs of the end user, whether patients, providers, health systems, or payers. For example, how would this solution fit inside the current clinical workflow? Or, how will this be accessible to users in all geographies, and at an affordable cost?
- 3. Commercial Viability:** The potential of the proposed solution for commercial application and proposed methods of overcoming potential barriers to entry in the competitive market landscape include factors like whether there is an existing market for the solution, the size of the market, viable regulatory pathway, reimbursement, pricing strategy, competitive landscape, cost of production, business model, and revenue potential.
- 4. Team:** The qualifications of the proposer team in terms of technical expertise and commercial acumen include the makeup of the leadership team and the key personnel and take into account their approach: designated roles and responsibilities, governance, and organizational structure, as well as that of their supporting staff, consultants, advisors, and partners.
- 5. Pricing:** For Solution Summary and Pitch Phases: Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) pricing that describes the basic unbundled prices. It shall encompass all known costs associated with the proposed effort. Will be evaluated for affordable /non-

affordable (if provided or if not). For the IC&N Phase: ARPA-H will evaluate pricing for reasonableness.