

## EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

*Last Updated: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024*

*Note: This document is subject to change*

### 4. EVALUATION METHOD

This Request for Solutions (RFS) is a competitive solicitation seeking solutions for innovative technologies that address the topic areas under Section 3. The government will evaluate all Solution Summaries and Pitches against the evaluation criteria stated in this RFS Section 4.2. Each Solution Summary and Pitch will be evaluated 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 4.1.4 of this RFS. 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).

#### 4.1 Evaluation Process

##### 4.1.1 Solution Summary

ARPA-H will review the submitted Solution Summary based on the evaluation criteria stated in this RFS Section 4.2. The Solution Summaries must clearly align to the RFS topics (Section 3) 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 PM (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, do not advance to the Pitch phase, or are placed in the Submissions Library (in accordance with Section 4.1.4). Proposers WILL NOT RECEIVE TECHNICAL 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 4.1.4 of this RFS.

### 4.1.2 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 PM (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, 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), do not advance to IC&N, or are placed in the Submissions Library (in accordance with Section 4.1.4). Proposers WILL NOT RECEIVE TECHNICAL 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 4.1.4 of this RFS.

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

### 4.1.3 Invitation for Collaboration & Negotiation (IC&N)

After evaluating all the pitches, the ARPA-H team will select a subset of proposers 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 Technical Collaboration. The selected proposers will work with the PMs to collaboratively develop the following items:

1. Scope of Work (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
4. Pricing structure

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

*Note 2: It is not required to have a [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or CAGE Code to apply, however, to be eligible for a TDL, proposers are required to have an UEI and be registered in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov).*

#### 4.1.4 Submissions Library

1.

1. The Submissions *Library* is the repository of Selectable submissions available for future selection. Only Consortium Members who are approved spokes may have their submissions placed into the Library. Proposers that are evaluated as "Selectable" but not invited to Pitch (or IC&N) 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.

2.

3. *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.*

4.

#### 4.2 Evaluation Criteria

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

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).

##### 4.2.1 Solution Summary Evaluation Criteria

ARPA-H will review all conforming Solution Summaries and make an overall determination of “selectable”, “not selectable”, or “Submissions Library” based on the following criteria.

1. Relevancy to the proposed topic area in Women’s Health
2. Technical Merit, which is based on how the Solution Summary addresses the following Heilmeier Questions (HQ):
  - HQ #1: What health problem are you trying to solve?
  - HQ #2: How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
  - HQ #3: What is new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
  - HQ #4: Who cares? If you succeed, what difference will it make? What Health Outcomes are you accelerating?
3. **FOR LAUNCHPAD ONLY:** Commercial viability - the proposed solution shows promise of commercial viability

ARPA-H is anticipating receiving more Solution Summaries than has resources to award. All submissions will be fairly evaluated. The government reserves the right to limit the number of proposers invited to pitch. As such, a proposer’s solution may be determined selectable, but not invited to pitch. Solution Summaries that are selected for the Pitch Phase will be notified in writing as soon as practicable.

#### 4.2.2 Pitch Evaluation Criteria

**SPARKS ONLY:** Evaluation for Spark Pitches will be based on an integrated assessment of the following criteria: Technical Merit, Team, and Price. **LAUNCHPAD ONLY:** Evaluation for Launchpad Pitches will be based on an integrated assessment of the following criteria: Technical Merit, Team, Price, User Experience, and Commercial Viability.

For both Sparks and Launchpad Pitch submissions, technical merit takes precedence in the evaluation process and will be assessed first. Pitches lacking technical merit will not be evaluated further and determined “Not Selectable.” Pitches with technical merit will be reviewed based on the following criteria.

The below technical criteria will be considered in the evaluation of the Pitches to determine whether or not a Pitch is “selectable”, “non-selectable”, or placed in the “Submissions Library”:

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 and address the following HQs:
  - HQ #1: What health problem are you trying to solve?

- HQ #2: How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
- HQ #3: What is new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
- HQ #4: Who cares? If you succeed, what difference will it make? What Health Outcomes are you accelerating?
- HQ #5: What are the risks?
- HQ #6: How long will the program take?
- HQ #8: What are the mid-term and final exams to check for success?
- HQ #9: To ensure equitable access to all people, how will cost, accessibility, and user experience be addressed?
- HQ #10: How might this program be misperceived or misused (and how can you prevent that from happening)?

2. **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.

3. **Price:** 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) and HQ #7. For the IC&N Phase: ARPA-H will evaluate pricing for reasonableness.

- HQ #7: How much will the program cost?

4. **FOR LAUNCHPAD ONLY - 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?

5. **FOR LAUNCHPAD ONLY - 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.