

TPO AND GPC

Review and Awards Guide

For Belmont Forum and BFgo



TPO and GPC Review and Awards Guide for Belmont Forum and BFgo

Revisions

Revision	Date	Notes	Owner
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Prepared by Lux Consulting Group, Inc. 2020

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1. Introduction

This guide provides a detailed overview of the call application review and awards processes using the Belmont Forum Grant Operations (BFgo.org) system and the Belmont Forum website (www.BelmontForum.org). The intended audience for this document is the Thematic Program Office (TPO) and Group of Program Coordinators (GPC) personnel.

After consortium leads submit their application, the proposals are reviewed to aid in award determination. The Eligibility and Compatibility Checks, External Reviews, and Panel of Expert Reviews all drive Belmont Forum funding decisions. The TPO and GPC are critical to these review and award processes. The BFgo system facilitates the application review process.

BFgo is compliant with the European Union (EU)'s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2016/679) and EU-United States (US) and Swiss-US Privacy Shield Frameworks.

2. Roles

Partner/Funding Organizations (POs): A Partner Organization (PO) is a funding organization that participates in a Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Action (CRA). POs do not have to be Belmont Forum member organizations. The PO conducts a review of applications requesting funding from the organization.

Group of Program Coordinators (GPC): The Group of Program Coordinators (GPC) is the body responsible for the practical implementation of the call. It is composed of one mandated representative from each PO participating in the call that provides overall responsibility for her/his organization's involvement in the call. The GPC is coordinated and supported by the Thematic Program Office (TPO).

Thematic Programme Office (TPO): The Thematic Programme Office (TPO) works with the GPC to implement the review plan, hosts the review panel(s), supports the participation of a neutral panel chair(s), coordinates the funding of recommended projects, and distributes decline letters and reviewer feedback to non-selected projects. The TPO obtains "Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Declaration" forms from all Panel of Experts (PoE) members, External Reviewers, and GPC members prior to providing them access to proposals.

Secretariat Coordinator (SEC): The Secretariat Coordinator (SEC) serves as the principal point of contact between the Secretariat and other actors, including Belmont Forum Partners, GPC, TPO, and the BFgo Provider.

BFgo/BelmontForum.org Provider (BFgo Provider): The BFgo Provider configures, maintains, and updates the Belmont Forum Grant Operations system (BFgo). The BFgo Provider sets up review templates and documents. The BFgo Provider provides technical support, via a help desk, to applicants, GPCs, TPOs, the Secretariat, and SEC during the review process.

Consortium Lead (CL): The Consortium Lead (CL) of each project is responsible for submitting the application on behalf of all principal investigators and, should it be funded, leading the project.

External Reviewer: An External Reviewer is an external expert who provides a written peer review of a proposal. External Reviewers work independently in their personal capacities and do not represent any organization.

Panel of Experts (PoE) Reviewer: The Panel of Experts (PoE) is a committee composed of relevant scientific experts that evaluates proposals per the agreed upon review criteria for the call. The Panel is led by a neutral Chair, or Chairs, whose travel is supported by the TPO. The Chair has a broad knowledge of the CRA theme(s) and is not a resident or native of any of the countries represented by the PO.

Panel Lead: The Panel Lead leads the PoE and is usually the Summary Statement Writer.

Summary Statement Writer: The Summary Statement Writer synthesizes the PoE comments into a summary appropriate for sharing with the applicant. The Panel Lead usually fulfills this role.

3. Timeline

Each review process consists of three steps: 1) the Eligibility and Compatibility Checks, 2) an optional External Review, and 3) a PoE review.

If the CRA incorporates a two-stage process, two reviews will be held: the Registration Review and the Full Proposal Review. For one-stage proposals, only the Full Proposal Review will be held.

Organization of Reviewers

Approximate timeline: 2 - 3 weeks

Note: The TPO should begin reviewer organization before the application closes.

Eligibility and Compatibility Check

Approximate timeline: 2 - 3 weeks.

Registration Review

Approximate timeline: 6 - 10 weeks.

Note: The PoE should have 2 - 4 weeks to read the proposals before the PoE meeting.

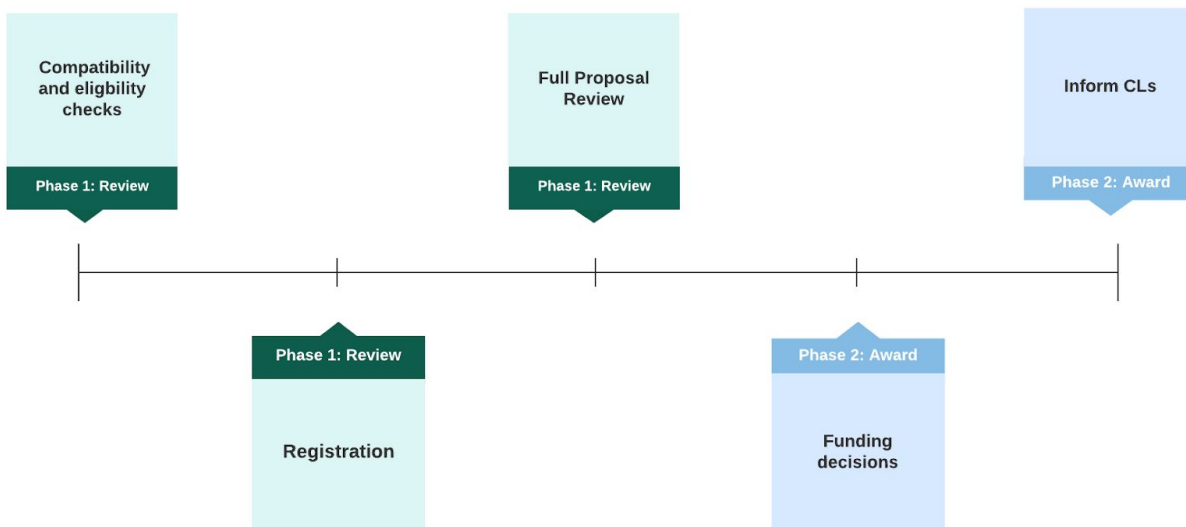
Full Proposal Review

Approximate timeline: 6 - 10 weeks.

Note: The PoE should have 2 - 4 weeks to read the proposals before the PoE meeting.

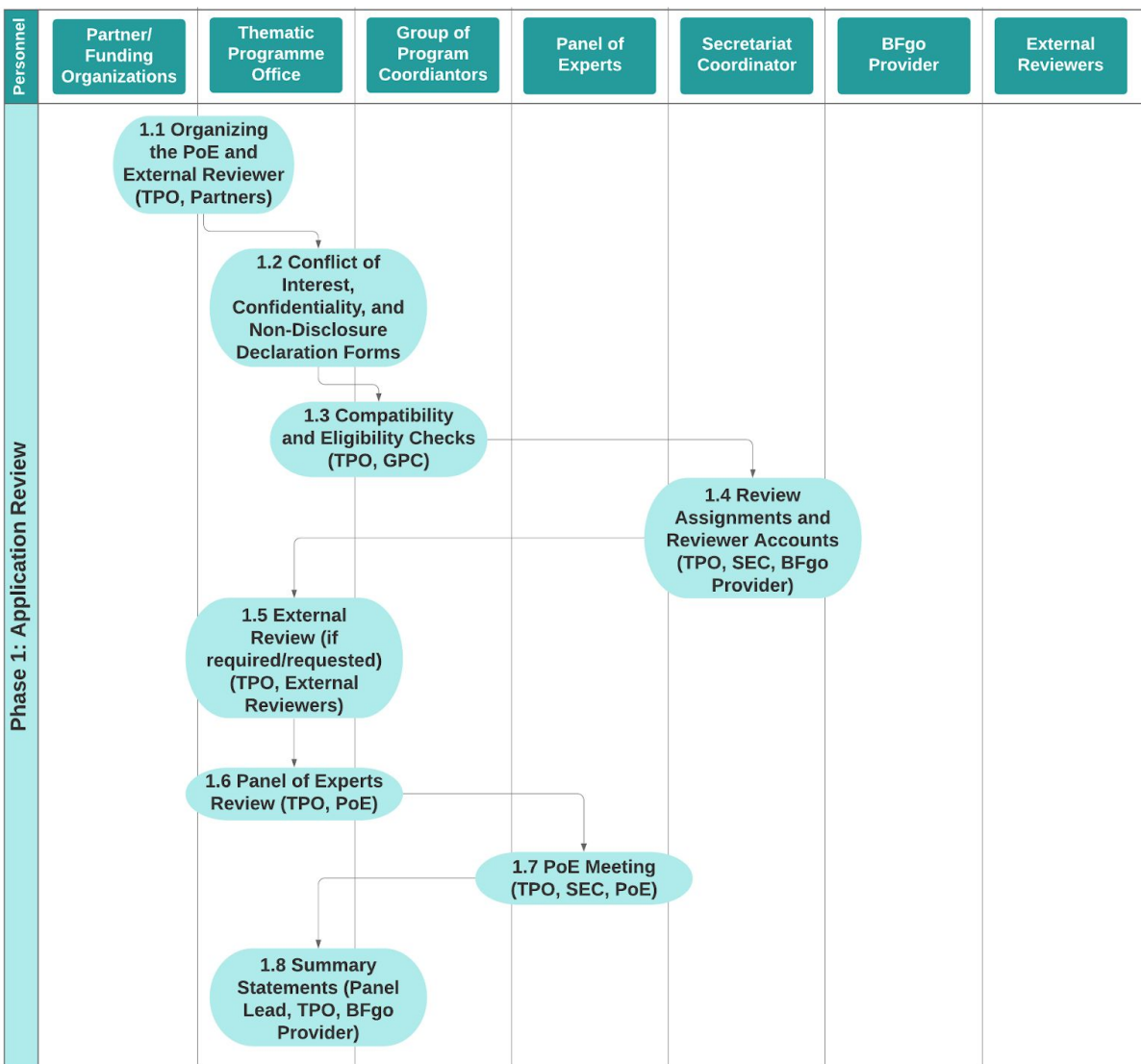
During the Award Phase, the TPO and GPC will use the feedback from the reviews in their funding decisions and will notify both successful and unsuccessful CLs.

Timeline for Review and Award Process



4. Process

Phase 1 - Application Review



During the creation of the CRA, the TPO may elect to have either a one or two-staged application process. In a two-stage application process, the TPO uses a “Registration Review” to determine eligibility and appropriateness to the CRA’s objectives. The TPO invites successful applicants to submit a full proposal. The Full Proposal Review evaluates these applications and assists the TPO and GPC in making funding decisions.

The Belmont Forum Review process applies to both Registration Reviews and Full Proposal Reviews. After application close, the TPO and GPC conduct an eligibility check to ensure subsequent reviews only consider eligible applications. This is followed by an optional External Review and a required PoE Review. The GPC determines if an external review is required during the CRA development process.

Step 1.1 - Organizing the External and PoE Reviews (TPO, Partners)

The process starts with an organization of reviewers (usually done during the application process).

The TPO asks each GPC member to nominate one person for PoE Chair. Ideally, the Chair should not be a resident or native of any of the countries participating in the call. The TPO also asks GPC members to nominate 3-5 potential panelists for the PoE. The TPO and GPC ensure the panel size is manageable and conducive to efficient and fruitful review of proposals.

Based on the GPC's nominations, the TPO invites panelists, usually two, from those recommended by each agency, creating a balanced panel with representation from the natural and social sciences and end-users/stakeholders. Although GPC members should contact their nominees to ensure willingness and availability, the TPO sends the final invitations. GPC members are responsible for compensating their panelists according to their agency's regulations. The TPO compensates the Chair.

By the closing date of the call, the TPO should have appointed the Chair. However, the TPO may wait until a few weeks after the submission deadline to appoint the rest of the PoE. This ensures that the range of expertise on the PoE matches the breadth and depth of the proposals. Additionally, it allows the TPO to avoid choosing panelists who have conflicts of interest with many proposals.

Relevant BFgo Reports

- [Suggested Reviewer Report](#)

[BFgo.org > Reports > Applications > Suggested Reviewers](#)

This report shows a list of potential reviewers as identified by the applicant. This report is only populated if the TPO has elected to include the "Potential Reviewers" question as part of the application.

Step 1.2 - Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Declaration Forms

The TPO obtains signed "Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Non-Disclosure Declaration" from all PoE members, External Reviewers, and GPC members.

Step 1.3 - Compatibility and Eligibility Checks (TPO, GPC)

Each GPC member must conduct an eligibility check for all applications that request funds from their organization. This should take no more than two to three weeks.

The TPO checks that all applications fulfill Belmont Form requirements.

If a GPC member decides that a proposal is ineligible to receive funding from his or her agency and if this decision places the proposal below the 3-country/agency requirement, the proposal is ineligible. Ineligible proposals will not proceed to the peer-review process.

Relevant BFgo Reports

- Personnel Report

[BFgo.org > Reports > Applications > Personnel](#)

This report lists application personnel, funding agency, funding request, and qualification. This report can be filtered by Personnel Type.

- Budget Report

[BFgo.org > Reports > Applications > Budget](#)

This report contains a breakdown of each application's funding request per funding agency.

The screenshot shows the BELMONT FORUM website interface. In the top navigation bar, the 'REPORTS' link is circled in red. On the left sidebar, the 'PERSONNEL' link is also circled in red. The main content area is titled 'APPLICATION PERSONNEL' and includes a 'FILTERS' section with dropdown menus for 'CRA*', 'Application Step*', 'Submitted*', and 'Personnel Type*'. Below the filters, there are links for 'CSV' and 'Excel'. At the bottom, a table header is visible with columns: 'CRA', 'Pre/Full', 'Decision', 'AppID', and 'Short'.

Step 1.4 - Review Assignments and Reviewer Accounts (TPO, SEC, BFgo Provider)

The TPO designates Panel Leads, assigns reviewers to applications, and sends this information to the SEC and BFgo Provider via the "Reviewer Assignment Sheet," which is included in the boilerplate document the TPO receives from the SEC at call initiation. The TPO should also designate personnel to review all DDOMPs or instruct reviewers to assess the DDOMPs as part of the review process.

Reviewer Assignment Sheet

The Reviewer Assignment Sheet is a Microsoft Excel document that provides a standard way for the TPO to assign reviewers, leads, and note conflicts of interest. The BFgo Provider imports this spreadsheet into BFgo and double checks that the sheet matches the reviews in the system.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1																				
2	AppID	Acronym	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Reviewer 4	Reviewer 5	Reviewer 6	Reviewer 7	Reviewer 8	Reviewer 9	Reviewer 10	Reviewer 11	Reviewer 12	Reviewer 13	Reviewer 14	Reviewer 15	Leads	Reviewers	COIs
3	1	Project-1	COI		R					COI		L		R				1	3	2
4	2	Project-2		L			R				R							1	3	0
5	3	Project-3			R					COI	L				COI	R		1	3	2
6	4	Project-4	R	L				R										1	3	0
7	5	Project-5	R				L	COI			COI						R	1	3	2
8	6	Project-6	COI		COI		R			R	L			COI				1	3	3
9	7	Project-7			R	COI						L				R		1	3	1
10	8	Project-8		R						L			R					1	3	0
11	9	Project-9					L					R		R				1	3	0
12	etc	etc																		

To complete the Reviewer Assignment Sheet, the TPO should:

1. Erase the sample data prior to filling out the sheet.
2. Enter AppID and Project Acronyms in Columns A and B.
3. Enter Reviewer Names in Row 2 (across the top).
4. Where the Application Row and Reviewer Column cross, enter one of the following:
 - **R:** the Reviewer provides an evaluation of the proposal, but is not the Lead.
 - **L:** the reviewer is the Lead and provides both an evaluation and a Summary of the proposal. The External Review does not have/need a Lead Reviewer.
 - **COI:** The Reviewer has a Conflict of Interest with that Proposal.
 - **Leave blank:** if the Reviewer doesn't provide an evaluation for that proposal.
5. Enter Reviewer Names (again) and email addresses in the second tab of the spreadsheet
6. Send the completed assignment sheet to the SEC and BFgo Provider.

The BFgo Provider creates reviewer accounts and sends BFgo system introductions to reviewers. The TPO should supplement this with the specific review instructions and logistics information.

Step 1.5 - External Review (if required/requested) (TPO, External Reviewers)

After the Eligibility and Compatibility check is complete, the External Reviewers conduct their preliminary review. This step does not apply to calls. The Implementation Plan should specify if external reviewers will be used in addition to the PoE.

Proposals are assessed against five sets of criteria: 1) quality and intellectual merit, 2) fit to the call objectives, 3) personnel and quality of the consortium, 4) resources and management, and 5) an overall assessment. All criteria will be taken into consideration and will be given equal weight.

Relevant BFgo Reports

- Evaluation Details (Table):
[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Evaluation Details \(Table\)](#)
 This report provides each reviewer's scores and comments for a proposal on a single row.
- Evaluation Details (Printable):
[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Evaluation Details \(Printable\)](#)
 This report is a printer-friendly version of the Evaluation Details. It provides scores and comments for each application by the evaluator.

Step 1.6 - Panel of Experts Review (TPO, PoE)

After the external review is complete, the PoE review begins for the final submissions. The PoE has access to all the proposals and external reviews through the BFgo Evaluation Details reports.

PoE members evaluate applications based on their expertise and with the help of the External Review evaluation reports. The result of the evaluation, and recommendations for funding, are forwarded to the TPO.

Relevant BFgo Reports

- Evaluation Details (Table):
[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Evaluation Details \(Table\)](#)
 This report provides each reviewer's scores and comments for a proposal on a single row.
- Evaluation Details (Printable):
[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Evaluation Details \(Printable\)](#)
 This report is a printer-friendly version of the Evaluation Details. It provides scores and comments for each application by the evaluator.
- Scores Only:
[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Scores Only](#)
 This report shows the full score for the five grading criteria for each application by reviewer.

- Summaries for Applicants:

[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Summaries for Applicants](#)

This printer-friendly report is appropriate for sharing with applicants. It does not include reviewer names and provides review summaries for each grading criterion (Quality/Intellectual Merits, User Engagement and Societal/Broader Impact, Transdisciplinarity and Personnel/Quality of the Consortium, Resources and Management) and an Overall Assessment summary.

Step 1.7 - PoE Meeting (TPO, SEC, PoE)

The TPO organizes and manages the PoE meeting and ensures PoE members have access to External and PoE reviews prior to the meeting. During this meeting, members of the PoE will present their assessment. The PoE will recommend a short list of proposals for funding. The TPO keeps minutes of the proceedings.

Step 1.8 - Summary Statements (Panel Lead, TPO, BFgo Provider)

Panel Lead, in conjunction with the TPO, prepares Panel Summaries for each proposal based on the PoE meeting discussions of its strengths and weaknesses. The Panel Lead submits the summary statements through BFgo. The TPO reviews, approves, and disseminates the statements. The CL's PO communicates summaries to applicants.

Relevant BFgo Reports

- Summaries for Applicants:

[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Summaries for Applicants](#)

This is a printer-friendly report appropriate for sharing with applicants. It does not include reviewer names and provides review summaries for each grading criterion (Quality/Intellectual Merits, User Engagement and Societal/Broader Impact, Transdisciplinarity and Personnel/Quality of the Consortium, Resources and Management) and an Overall Assessment summary.

Phase 2 - Awards

Personnel	Group of Program Coordinators	Thematic Programme Office	Panel of Experts	Partner/ Funding Organizations
Phase 2: Awards		<pre> graph TD A([2.1 Post-Review Meeting (TPO, GPC, PoE)]) --> B([2.2 Funding Decisions (POs, GPC, TPO)]) B --> C([2.3 Inform Consortium Leads and Provide Summary Statements (POs, TPO)]) </pre>		

Step 2.1 - Post-Review Meeting (PRM) (TPO, GPC, PoE)

The TPO organizes and manages the Post-Review Meeting (PRM) of the GPC and Panel Chair(s). This meeting is to discuss the PoE results, focusing primarily on budget constraints. In a two-stage CRAs, in the first stage, the PRM produces a final list applicants to invite to submit full-proposals. For the second-stage, or one-stage CRAs, the PRM produces the final list of proposals recommended for funding.

Selection is based on:

- A short-list of proposals recommended for funding provided by the PoE.
- Financial considerations, including the availability of funds from the contributing POs for selected Full Proposals and any required adjustment of requested budget.

GPC members are individuals representing the POs contributing to the call. As such, they are aware of the budgetary constraints and able to make decisions on budgetary aspects. Their organisation will have the overall responsibility for administration and management of the projects chosen for funding. The following guidance is recommended for this process in the PRM:

- Top priority group should be considered first and only proceed to the next category if there are no more projects that could be financed as requested.
- Maintain minimal requirement of three partners from three different partner countries per application.

The final recommendation will be forwarded to the national PO for further action.

Step 2.2 - Funding Decisions (POs, GPC, TPO)

The GPC and TPO inform POs of the outcome of the PRM.

The final funding decision on recommended proposals rests with the POs that contribute funds to the call. The outcomes of External Review, PoE Meeting, and PRM steps must remain confidential until ALL concerned POs have taken their national funding decision, although there is an initial, confidential notification to Consortium Leads from the TPO.

The funded PI's will then enter into the administrative process with their corresponding national POs.

Step 2.3 - Inform Consortium Leads and Provide of Summary Statements (POs, TPO)

The POs inform CLs of all funding decisions or invitations to submit full proposals (if using a two-stage review process) and provide a summary of the reviewer comments developed in the PoE Meeting Step.

BFgo Report

- Summaries for Applicants:
[BFgo.org > Reports > Evaluations > Summaries for Applicants](https://bfgo.org/reports/evaluations/summaries-for-applicants)
 This is a printer-friendly report appropriate for sharing with applicants. It does not include reviewer names and provides review summaries for each grading criterion (Quality/Intellectual Merits, User Engagement and Societal/Broader Impact, Transdisciplinarity and Personnel/Quality of the Consortium, Resources and Management) and an Overall Assessment summary.

5. Summary of BFgo Reports

Below is a description of each of the Application and Evaluation Reports in the BFgo System, followed by common filters and the associated options.

Reports

Dashboard:

The main reports dashboard shows application counts by stage and review counts by assignments and review type.

[Filters: CRA](#)

Applications:

This report lists decision, project title, funding request, duration, consortium lead name and email, themes, and time submitted.

[Filters: CRA, Application Step, Submitted, Decision](#)

Applications > App Details:

This report lists project title, funding request, duration, keywords, and project summaries.

[Filters: CRA, Application Step, Submitted, Decision](#)

Applications > Personnel:

This report lists application personnel, funding agency, funding request, and qualification.

[Filters: CRA, Application Step, Submitted, Personnel Type](#)

Applications > Budget Report:

This report contains a breakdown of each application's funding request per funding agency.

[Filters: CRA, Submitted](#)

Applications > Suggested Reviewers:

This report shows a list of potential reviewers as identified by the applicant. This report will only be populated if the TPO has elected to include the "Potential Reviewers" question as part of the application.

[Filters: CRA, Application Step, Submitted, Decision](#)

Applications > DDOMP:

This report shows the Data and Digital Objects Management Plans (DDOMP) application fields. It includes the project title, expected outputs, policy conformance, plan personnel, output protection, post-project data management, restrictions, preservation of restrictions,



HOME
- DASHBOARD
+ APPLICATIONS
+ APP DETAILS
+ PERSONNEL
+ BUDGET
+ SUGGESTED REVIEWERS
+ DDOMP
+ EVALUATIONS
+ SUMMARIES FOR APPLICANTS
+ EVAL DETAILS (TABLE)
+ EVAL DETAILS (PRINTABLE)

documentation and metadata for reuse and long-term support costs.

[Filters: CRA, Application Step, Submitted, Decision](#)

Evaluations:

This report shows each assigned review, including the review type, the application ID, the completion status, the reviewer's name and email, and the date the reviewer last logged in.

[Filters: CRA, Evaluation Type, Reviewer Type](#)

Evaluations > Summaries for Applicants:

This is a printer-friendly report appropriate for sharing with applicants. It does not include reviewer names and provides review summaries for each grading criterion (Quality/Intellectual Merits, User Engagement and Societal/Broader Impact, Transdisciplinarity and Personnel/Quality of the Consortium, Resources and Management) and an Overall Assessment summary.

[Filters: CRA, Summary Type](#)

Evaluations > Evaluation Details (Table):

This report provides each reviewer's scores and comments for a proposal on a single row.

[Filters: CRA, Evaluation Type](#)

Evaluations > Evaluation Details (Printable):

This report is a printer-friendly version of the Evaluation Details. It provides scores and comments for each application by the evaluator.

[Filters: CRA, Evaluation Type](#)

Evaluations > Scores Only:

This application shows the full score for the 5 types of grading criteria for each application by reviewer.

[Filters: CRA, Evaluation Type](#)

Filters

CRA: Filters based on the CRA.

- *Options based on the TPO / GPC User's rights*

Application Step:

- **Any:** Show any application, regardless of stage
- **Registration:** Show Registration applications
- **Full Proposal:** Show Full Proposals applications

Submitted:

- **Any:** Show any application, regardless of if it has been submitted
- **Submitted:** Show submitted applications

Application Decision:

- **Any:** Show any application, regardless of decision
- **Undecided:** Show applications for which a decision has not been made
- **Send to Full Proposal:** Show applications sent to the Full Proposal stage
- **Send to Panel:** Show applications sent to PoE Review
- **Decline:** Show declined applications

Personnel Type:

- **Any:** Show all personnel
- **All PIs:** Show consortium leads and partner PIs
- **Consortium Lead:** Show consortium leads
- **Partner PI:** Show partner PIs (receive funds from a CRA funding agency)
- **Team Member:** Show team members (non-PIs receiving Funding Agency funds)
- **In-Kind Collaborator:** Show in-kind collaborators (receiving in-kind support from a CRA funding agency)
- **Fully Self-Financed Collaborator:** Show fully self-financed collaborators (receiving no funds or in-kind support from CRA funding agencies)
- **Stakeholder Representative:** Show stakeholder representatives
- **Postdoc:** Show postdoctoral researchers
- **Graduate Student:** Show graduate students
- **Undergraduate Student:** Show undergraduate students
- **Contractor:** Show contractors

Evaluation Type:

- **Full Proposal:** Show full proposal evaluations
- **Full Proposal Summary:** Show full proposal summaries
- **Pre/Registration Proposal Evaluation:** Show registration evaluations
- **Pre/Registration Proposal Summary:** Show registration summaries
- **Any Evaluation:** Show any evaluation
- **Any Summary:** Show any summary
- **All:** Show all evaluations and summaries

Summary Type:

- **Full Proposal Summary:** Show full proposal summaries
- **Pre/Registration Proposal Summary:** Show registration summaries
- **Any Summary:** Show any summary