

Nature Computes Better - Round 1 - General feedback on applications

Following the review of all applications received for Round 1 of Nature Computes Better, the reviewers noted common themes and areas for potential improvement against the [evaluation criteria](#).

Comments for applications that were determined as *out of scope*:

- + A number of applications were identified as out of scope, and therefore did not progress to full review. Proposals may have been determined as out of scope for any of the following reasons:
 - They did not show how the idea *either* aligns with *or* challenges the assumptions of the Summary, Beliefs, or Observations in the [opportunity space document](#), or,
 - The idea was undifferentiated or is likely to happen without ARIA support, or,
 - The application requested funding for a commercial or close-to-commercial stage product.

Comments against criterion one: *Importance and vision of the proposal*

- + Applications that clearly stated what they are proposing to do within their answer to the first question built a stronger case against this criterion.
- + While some of the ideas described in the proposals showed strength, they often did not make the case strongly enough for how the idea could change scientific consensus or open up new research paths. Higher scoring proposals included evidence to support how the idea being proposed could have a transformational impact beyond the research focus.

Comments against criterion two: *Our confidence that the individual or team can deliver on the proposal*

- + Proposals that included a well-considered plan that was clearly explained were given higher scores, as they helped reviewers build confidence that the individual/team could deliver on the proposal. Proposals that scored highly in this area included details of the first experiment or step they were planning to do/take.
- + While it was helpful to see the skills and knowledge the applicant has built in their career and how these would directly support the project, reviewers also wanted to see detail of the applicant's intrinsic motivations for wanting to work on the proposed idea. For example, is this project a new departure from their existing research, in a direction unlikely to be supported outside of ARIA.

Comments against criterion three: *Relevance to ARIA*

- + Particularly for proposals in areas of research where there are existing, alternative funding streams, reviewers needed to see more evidence of why the proposals were differentiated and therefore relevant to ARIA.
- + Applicants would have benefited from illustrating a transformational impact or a significant shift in conventional thinking that would be catalysed by the proposed idea, and explain why the conventional thinking in their field makes it difficult for them to attain funding from other funders.

For more information on ARIA's review and selection process for opportunity seed applications, please see [here](#).