

FY11 CFLRP Proposal Evaluation Procedures

- Feb 18: Proposals are due to USFS.
- Feb. 28: Proposals arrive in hard copy to the Panel's given address by Feb. 28, along with:
- Overall instructions
 - A table summarizing proposals, prepared by USFS staff
 - A copy of the Pre-Meeting Proposal Scoring Sheet for each proposal (for panel member use)
 - Pre-Meeting Evaluation Spreadsheet to enter strengths, weaknesses and scores for each proposal (this will be returned to the USFS staff)
 - Information about levels of continued funding for FY10 projects
 - The Conflict of Interest form
- Mid-Feb:
- Email proposal authors date and location of CFLRP meeting; inform them of Panel's request to have a project contact person available during specific hours (e.g., before lunch or before adjournment) to answer questions of clarification that may arise; contact person may attend in person if they so choose.
 - Convey to the public (e.g., when notice of meeting is published in the Federal Register) the opportunities and constraints associated with making public comment at Panel meetings so they can make informed choice about whether to attend or not.
- March 14 Questions of clarification about specific proposals are due from Panel to USFS. Questions are due early in order to allow ample time for USFS staff to obtain answers before pre-meeting scores are due. Questions should be submitted via email to Susan Balint at shbalint@fs.fed.us
- March 30 USFS returns answers for submitted questions to the Panel via email.
- April 7 Panel's strengths, weaknesses, and pre-meeting scores entered for each proposal into the Pre-meeting Evaluation Spreadsheet are due to Susan Balint via email. Any second round clarification questions are due to the USFS via email; USFS may or may not be able to get answers back to Panel before meeting due to time constraints.
- Mid/Late April USFS staff sends the Panel the CFLRP Panel Pre-Meeting Initial Scoring Report. For each project, the Report will have a section showing all Panel members reported strengths and weaknesses on each of the seven evaluation topics, any clarifying questions asked and their answers if available, the number of reviewers who gave the proposal an overall categorization of high, medium, or low, and the individual and average numerical scores for each evaluation topic and for the project overall. No Panel member names or identifiers will be included in this report.
(See CFLRP_Panel_Pre-meeting_Initial_Scoring_Report.doc.)
- Early May The CFLR Advisory Panel Meeting
1. The USFS staff will share with the Panel the aggregated overall pre-meeting scores for each proposal (projected onto screen but clearly labeled as "initial" or "interim"). These scores will match the scores sent out in the Panel Pre-Meeting Initial Scoring Report¹. The spreadsheet showing pre-meeting scores will also show the Panel

¹ In compliance with FACA, all documents shared with the Panel and/or used at the meeting have to be made available to the public; regardless of how they are shared, pre-meeting scores must be available to the public if they are available to the panel.

members' individual scores by evaluation topic with no name attached; these individual scores by evaluation topic will be hidden unless the Panel requests to see them.

2. Drawing upon the CFLR Panel Pre-Meeting Initial Scoring Report for each proposal and fact sheet provided for each proposal by its authors, the Panel discusses whether they want to eliminate any proposals from further consideration. The Panel must come to a consensus decision about removing any proposals.
3. The Panel discusses each remaining proposal. The discussion focus is on the areas where reviewers' pre-meeting assessments seem to diverge.
4. The Panel can pose questions of clarification to proposal contact(s). It is up to the collaborative groups to decide whether to send a representative in person or answer questions via speaker phone, but the question and answer exchange will be real time in a manner that the full Panel can hear the answers for themselves. Each collaborative is encouraged to identify 1 USFS contact and 1 non-USFS contact to be available for this purpose.
5. Public comment opportunity will be provided, per FACA².
6. During a break in the meeting, the Panel will have an unhurried opportunity to update their individual responses (strengths, weaknesses, and scores) for each of the proposals still under consideration (perhaps late afternoon / early evening of Day 2). They will submit these updates to the USFS staff via an updated Evaluation Spreadsheet.
7. USFS staff will re-tabulate the Panel's updated scores strengths, and weaknesses.
8. The Panel reviews results of the updated Panel scoring. These scores represent the default recommendation (see CFLRP_Funding_Recommendation_Procedures.doc for more information), but the Panel has the opportunity to modify it by consensus.
 - The Panel charter explicitly notes that the Panel will provide consensus direction.
 - Consensus refers to Panel commitment to try to develop recommendations that meet all Panel members' interests;
 - Consensus is here defined as "all Panel members can live with it."
 - Any Panel member, facilitator, or the DFO may ask for a "straw vote" to get the "sense of the group," but voting itself is not intended to serve as the decision-making procedure.
9. As feedback, each proposal will receive³:
 - Each reviewer's individual updated Evaluation Spreadsheet for the proposal with scores, strengths, and weaknesses (with names removed) and
 - The meeting summary, including discussion of proposal strengths and weaknesses.

² The DFO and Committee members can decide when public comment is heard during a meeting. The DR 1041-001 states that ...[DFOs] ...are responsible for the following:

1. Holding the meetings at a reasonable time....
2. Good size room....
3. Any member of the public shall be permitted to file a written statement.....
4. Interested persons may be permitted by the committee Chair to speak at the meeting in accordance with procedures established by the committee.

³ This feedback proposal is based on the feedback procedures for several other large grant programs.

