

APPENDIX C

Evaluation of Infrastructure Components and Core Laboratories

Major factors to be considered in the evaluation of each infrastructure component and/or core laboratory include:

- Rationale and need for the resource to achieve institutional RCMI goals, including the potential for developing a high-quality research program
- Importance of the facility to the collaborative research of the faculty, including RCMI-supported pilot projects and research by Center faculty that is supported from other sources
- Number and qualifications of investigators utilizing the core facility
- Number of projects or protocols that utilize the core facility, including the demonstrated need for current or requested equipment (the existence of a current and/or projected user community is critical)
- Adequacy and appropriateness of administrative and scientific leadership for implementing and managing the resources, including collaborative and consultative arrangements
- Qualifications of the director of the core facility
- Appropriateness of the plan for the resource, including objectives, implementation strategy and timetable
- Reasonableness of plans to institutionalize support for this resource over time
- For competing continuation and supplemental requests, the assessment of progress toward original goals for the infrastructure component is an essential element in the review

Evaluation Collaborative Pilot Projects

The review of collaborative pilot projects is not based solely on the traditional considerations used for peer evaluation of scientific merit. Reviewers also take into account the preliminary nature of the proposed studies and, in a broader sense, the extent to which the research activity will contribute to the goals of the RCMI Program. To the extent appropriate, all pilot research activities will be evaluated according to NIH review guidelines for scientific projects, i.e., the five criteria used for scientific merit review: significance, approach, innovation, investigator, and environment. Additional RCMI considerations will also be used.

Major factors to be considered in the evaluation of pilot and developmental projects include:

- Significance and relevance of the proposed research problem
- Potential of the research to advance the concepts or methods that drive the field and scientific knowledge in general
- Approach, including appropriateness of research plan, specific aims, experimental design, methodology, consideration of alternatives, data analysis, scope, and timetable
- Innovation is a significant consideration in some, though not all, types of research projects. Innovation is characterized by novel concepts, approaches, or methods; original and innovative aims; development of new methodologies, or paradigms challenged
- Investigator training and qualification, and the appropriateness of the research to the experience level of the Principal Investigator and other personnel
- Environment in which the research will be performed
 - adequacy of resources
 - availability of any specialized facilities needed
 - institutional support for the protocol
 - extent to which the research takes advantage of any unique features of the scientific environment or employs productive collaborative arrangements
- Relevance of proposed project to the institutional plan for expansion of biomedical/biobehavioral research capacity and enhanced opportunities for collaboration.