# Panel Discussion: What Reviewers Consider When Evaluating Grant Proposals

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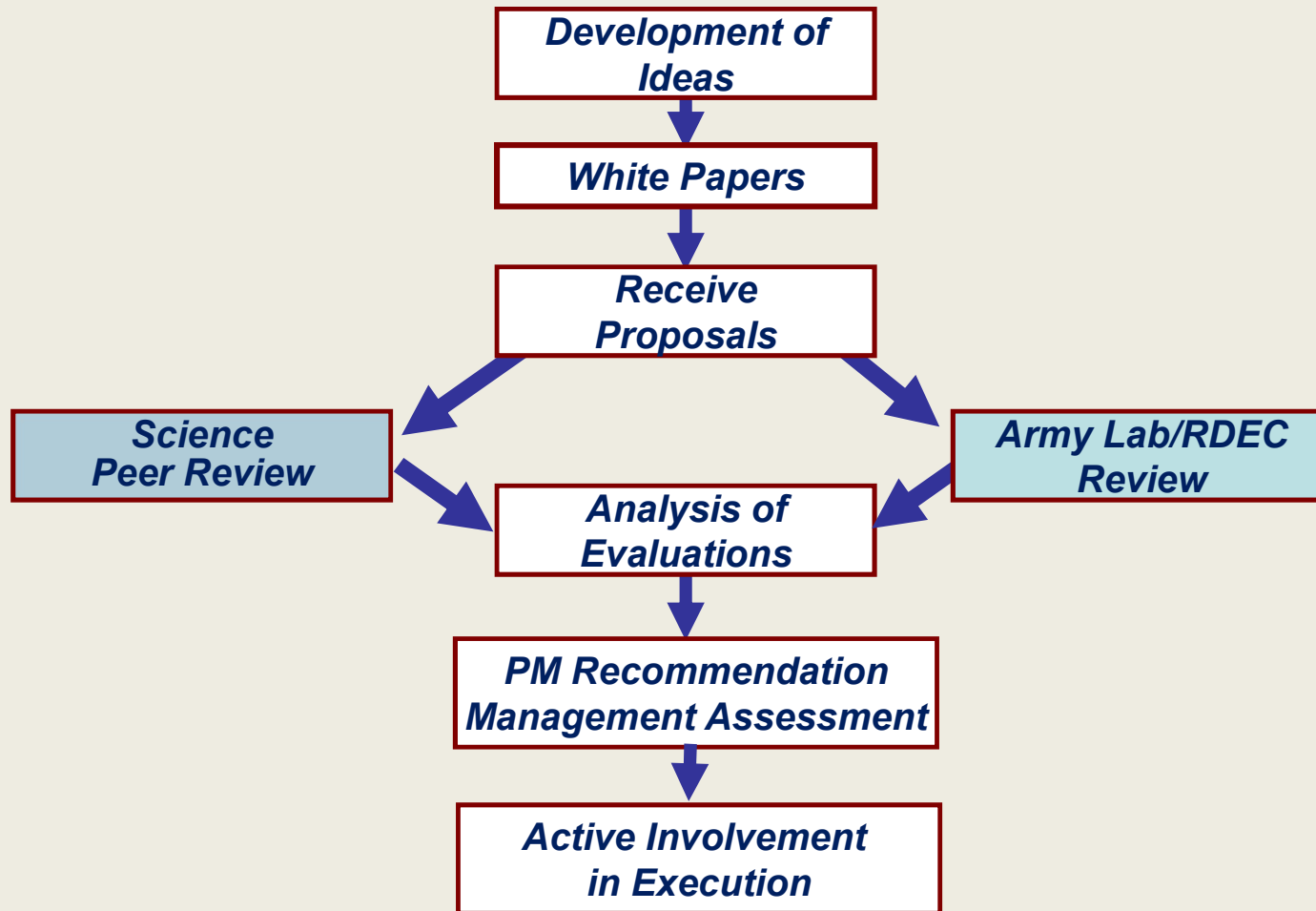
# Proposal Review and Selection Process

**Development of Ideas**

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**White Papers**

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**Receive Proposals**

**Science Peer Review** → **Analysis of Evaluations** ← **Army Lab/RDEC Review**

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**PM Recommendation Management Assessment**

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**Active Involvement in Execution**

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# 12 Questions with Program Mangers

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## To Promote Successful Applications/Proposals

| Development of Ideas | White Papers & Proposals | Evaluation of Proposals | Managing Active Grants |
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**Development of Ideas**
- How do Principal Investigators (PIs) get their foot in the door? What's next?
- What is the best way to contact Program Managers (PMs)?
- What is the PM Engagement Process?

**White Papers & Proposals**
- What is the PM's White Paper Process?
- How do PMs engage with PIs during the White Paper Process?

**Evaluation of Proposals**
- What are PMs looking for in a successful proposal?
- What raises red flags?
- What are the biggest challenges PIs face when PMs review their proposals?

**Managing Active Grants**
- How do PMs manage active grants & what are some challenges PMs face?
- How do PMs manage PI expectations, even in a positive environment?
- What questions should PIs ask if they're unsuccessful (i.e., how to improve my chances)?
- Who is the grant with (PI vs. school) & how is it closed out?

DISCOVER INNOVATE TRANSITION

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**U.S. ARMY RDECOM** **Evaluating Proposals: Evaluators Comments** **ARL**

## Examples of Evaluator's Comments from DECLINED proposal submissions

- "Overall too applied."

- "This is an excellent proposed effort, but the realism & cost effectiveness of the application budget prevents me from making a positive recommendation for support. If the team would consider these comments and provide a revised budget which reflected consideration of the recommendations, I'd be more than willing to recommend acceptance of this proposal."

- "Overall, a strong research plan but limited DoD relevance. The proposal is mostly aligned with [other agency] missions but the proposer could align this effort better to DoD in a re-submission to future REP funding opportunities."

- "Strong support for students, but doesn't seem to constitute the type of broad impact (both scientific & STEM) envisioned by the program."

- "The research objective(s) discussed in this proposal are excellent goals AND I encourage the PIs to stay on course w/this line of research. What would help is more details on the approaches planned & how this will potentially advance the state of the art."

- "[Research] may lead to knowledge of benefit to national defense but is unlikely to develop new, or enhance existing, research capabilities at the institution."

- "The proposal didn't effectively present an organized & cohesive research program designed to address the stated goal. The proposal also doesn't adequately explain how the proposed research will specifically contribute to the advancement of the research area & positively impact the research mission of the DoD."

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# Evaluating Proposals: Evaluators Comments

## Examples of Evaluator's Comments from ACCEPTED proposal submissions

- "The reviewer highly recommends this proposal for funding. The PI clearly articulates each technical problem, followed with proposed approaches and rationales for using them."

- "Overall, a very good proposal with strong DoD relevance. The effort even leverages prior REP instrumentation investment. A reasonable plan is in place to achieve the proposed research objectives, train students, & develop infrastructure across campus to attract future funding opportunities to maintain this research area."

- "I strongly recommend accepting this proposal. Both the research plan & the educational plan are very well thought out & there is a high likelihood the project will be successful from the technical perspective as well as in supporting students & the undergrad, masters, and PhD levels. The proposers have had success increasing under-represented minority involvement at the undergrad level & it's likely that w/this plan they can accomplish the same at the graduate level."

- "Overall a strong proposal with highly innovative & relevant research. Student impact is high, the science is very strong & funding is highly recommended."

- "Overall a strong technical proposal in an exciting new area. The proposed area of research is in line with DoD missions & needs."

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