



FONDAZIONE REGIONALE PER LA RICERCA
BIOMEDICA

Code of Conduct for Reviewers

This document is intended to help scientific experts to understand the importance of their code of conduct while performing their activity of scientific revision. It outlines the responsibilities of reviewers and the rules they should follow with regard to independence, impartiality and confidentiality.

Independence

The reviewer works independently, in a personal capacity, and not on behalf of any organisation.

The reviewer must:

- o Evaluate each proposal in a confidential and fair way;
- o Assist Fondazione Regionale per la Ricerca Biomedica (hereafter FRRB) to the best of their abilities, professional skills, knowledge and applying the highest ethical and moral standards;
- o Follow any instructions and time-schedules given by FRRB and deliver consistently high quality work.

Moreover, the reviewer is not allowed to delegate another person to carry out the work or to be replaced by any other person.

If a legal entity or a Principal Investigator (hereafter PI) involved in a proposal approaches the reviewer during the evaluation of a proposal, she/he must immediately inform FRRB Scientific Office (scientific.office@frrb.it).

Impartiality

The reviewers must perform their work impartially.

In order to do this, they have to:

- o Inform FRRB of any conflicts of interest arising in the course of the evaluation process;
- o Confirm the absence of any conflict of interest for each proposal she/he is evaluating.

A conflict of interest may arise when:

- o The reviewer was involved in the preparation of the proposal.
- o The reviewer benefits directly or indirectly if the proposal is recommended for funding.
- o The reviewer has a close family or personal relationship with any person involved in the proposal.
- o The reviewer is, in any way, involved in the management of an applicant legal entity.
- o The reviewer is employed or contracted by one of the applicant legal entities or any subcontractors.
- o The reviewer has (or has had) during the last five years, a scientific collaboration with the Principal Investigator of the proposal.

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- o The reviewer has (or has had) a relationship of scientific rivalry or professional hostility with the Principal Investigator of the proposal.
- o The reviewer has (or has had in the past), a mentor/mentee relationship with the Principal Investigator of the proposal.
- o The reviewer has submitted a proposal as a Principal Investigator or a team member, under the same Call.

IF ANY OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST LISTED ABOVE ARISES, THE REVIEWER WILL BE IMMEDIATELY REPLACED.

Confidentiality

The reviewer undertakes to observe strict confidentiality in relation to her/his work.

To this end, the reviewer:

- o must not use confidential information or documents for any purpose other than fulfilling their obligations under the Contract;
- o must not disclose, directly or indirectly, confidential information or documents relating to proposals or applicants;
- o must not discuss any proposal with others, including other reviewers or contracting party or relevant service staff not directly involved in evaluating the proposal, except during the Consensus Meeting;
- o must not disclose any detail of the evaluation process and its outcomes or of any proposal submitted for evaluation for any purpose other than fulfilling the obligations under the Contract;
- o must not give her/his advice to the contracting party or relevant service on any proposal to the applicants or to any other person (including colleagues, students, etc.);
- o must not disclose the names of other reviewers participating in the evaluation process;
- o must not communicate with Principal Investigators, potential Team members involved in the proposal or any person linked to the applicant legal entity on any proposal either during the evaluation process, or after the evaluation and before the final list is made public.

While performing the remote revision, the Reviewer will be personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files received from FRRB, and for returning, erasing or destroying all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation as instructed.

These confidentiality obligations are binding on:

- o FRRB which is the contracting party;
- o The reviewer during performance of the Contract and for five years starting from the date of the evaluation submission, unless the contracting party agrees to release the expert from the confidentiality obligations earlier, the confidential information becomes public through other channels or disclosure of the confidential information is required by law.