From LOI to successful Pilot Application

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CCTS Pizza and Pilots
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Outline:

- LOI Statistics & Logistics
  - Significance
  - Innovation
- Outline of Approach
- Investigators
LOI Statistics

13% pay line

Junior Investigators:
30 LOIs submitted
9 Selected full review
4 Will be funded

Senior (High Impact) Investigators
24 LOIs submitted
6 Selected for full review
3 Will be funded
LOI Logistics

Investigator submits
   2 page document*
   NIH biosketch
*Violators are almost always disqualified

Pilot Review Committee:
   2 reviewers per LOI (sometimes 3 when an expert opinion is sought)

Panel of 16 reviewers discuss and then re-score the top half of pre-scored LOIs (with some exceptions) in a 3 hour meeting
Majority of panel members have NIH Study Section experience
Review Criteria: Significance

Translational studies score better especially if

- Involves lab (mechanisms) and humans (translation)

- Should be in line with the priorities of the CCTS (and special calls):
  - emphasis in last round:
    - informatics, behavior, epidemiology, public health

- State clearly how a successful full project will advance the field

- Most reviewers are not experts in your field so write the Significance section of the LOI (and full application) clearly; do not assume knowledge on the part of the reviewers
Review Criteria: Innovation

LOIs score better if:

High risk / high reward with a strong rationale for the study
(senior investigators extending current funded or submitted studies fair poorly)

Novelty alone will not suffice:
will the novel therapy make a difference?

Good idea that impresses reviewers: state what it is we know and what it is that works; tie that into what we do not know and how this proposal will bridge the gap
Approach: Not a LOI review criteria but it gets plenty of attention

Negatives:

- Ambitious project for a pilot
- Lack of focus
- Conflicting / preliminary data
- Aim 2 highly dependent on Aim 1
- To be named co-investigators
- For re-submissions: failure to address prior concerns
Approach: Not a LOI review criteria but it gets plenty of attention

Positives:
Machinery to conduct experiments and experience with it is a plus

Progress on SA 1 impresses reviewers

Make it clear all personnel needed for the project are in place before submission

If a community study, demonstrate access to influential groups outside UK
Review Criteria: Investigator

Strong publication record with first authored manuscripts.

State plans for publishing the pilot project

Can this investigator compete successfully for an extramural grant? Be as specific as possible (name funding agency and timeline for submission)

Junior investigator: show evidence that your chosen mentor is committed to your project.
Our apologies

LOI Review system is not perfect (constantly improving)

It is biased toward refunding of the CCTS which tends to be an ever changing landscape

Some rejected LOIs go on to receive extramural funding

Please start early and seek input (BERD is available as are others in the CCTS)
If selected for a full application

There will be 3 reviewers of your application (at least one repeat from the LOI)

Respond to each comment made by the LOI reviewers

Be as specific as possible on your approach & future activities

Write clearly

Do not hand in an RO# application: likely too technical