



FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD CANCER

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. In terms of the program scope for this funding call, are there examples of specific research activities that would be responsive?

Some examples of alternative methods that could be part of a responsive proposal include, but are certainly not limited to:

- microphysiological systems (MPS), including co-culture systems that integrate immune cells and models of the tumor microenvironment;
- in vitro models that could replace xeno-graft animal models;
- in vitro models for drug development or personalized treatment;
- computational models that simulate relevant processes or identify biomarkers.

2. In terms of eligible projects, are proposals using embryos or invertebrates eligible for funding? What about proposals using non-human animal cell lines?

Any use of live, intact, non-human vertebrate or invertebrate animals (including embryos) is prohibited for ARDF-funded research. Note that this definition is more expansive than the U.S. regulations or policy regarding animal research and includes all non-human metazoans at all stages of life. However, the use of non-human animal cell lines is generally permitted. If a proposal includes the use of non-human animal cells, a description of sourcing is required. Applicants are encouraged to contact ARDF with any questions regarding the use of non-human animal-derived cells.

3. How will proposals be assessed by the scientific reviewers?

Proposals will be evaluated based on the five evaluation criteria in the application guidelines. Additional explanatory details for each criterion are below:

- **Scientific and technical merit**
 - Some considerations for this criterion include whether the project is well designed to answer the research question, whether the project is technically feasible, and the quality of the data analysis plans
- **Significance and innovation**
 - This criterion includes the novelty of the approach and/or project's potential to significantly accelerate progress in the area of study (note that either or both of these features can contribute to the proposal's significance). This criterion also includes the likelihood for the work to have an impact outside of the applicant's own research program and potential for adoption of the study findings by others.

- **Potential to improve understanding or treatment of childhood cancer**
 - This criterion will assess whether the study outcomes will be translatable to childhood cancer, which can be broadly understood as either improving the understanding of underlying mechanisms or improving/refining diagnostic or treatment options.
- **Potential to demonstrate the value of non-animal approaches in this field and/or replace animals in research**
 - Demonstrating the value of non-animal approaches in this field could include providing a new model or method that has not yet been successfully developed in, or performs better than, animal models. This criterion could also include consideration of the project's potential impact (e.g., reduction, replacement) on current or future use of animals in biomedical research.
- **Experience, training, and qualifications of the research team**
 - Some considerations for this criterion include whether the PI and the research team have the complementary expertise and experience to successfully complete the project and whether they have access to the facilities necessary to succeed. This can also include consideration of the appropriateness of the budget.