HFSP POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS 2028
Assessment Criteria and Scoring Guide

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria to assess	Considerations for assessment
Research plan	
Importance of the fundamental life science question	• Does the project address an important new problem or a barrier to progress in an established field? • Are the results likely to make an impact beyond the immediate field?
Novelty & innovation of approach	• Is the proposal and approaches novel, original, risky and ground-breaking? **Specific criteria for CDFs:** • Does the proposal combine life sciences and non-life sciences in a unique way?
Potential to push frontiers or shift paradigms	• Does the proposal challenge existing paradigms and could it disrupt the current way of thinking? • Is the proposal at the leading edge of the life-sciences? Is it likely to be a trailblazer for future discoveries?
Applicant	
Shift in research direction for the applicant	• Will the applicant be exposed to new theories, methods and ideas and will they use new approaches? • Is the project a significant departure from the applicant's previous research?
Host laboratory and host supervisor	
Applicant's unique contribution to the host lab	• Does the applicant bring unique ideas and expertise to the project, that would expand the scientific scope of the host lab?

SCORING GUIDE FOR FULL PROPOSALS

Review Committee members should use the whole scale of scores from 1 to 10, in steps of 0.5, according to the criteria listed below. **Scores of 7 and above are fundable**.

Score	Indicators
Truly Frontier **9.0–10.0** (fundable)	Research Plan • Addresses an important new problem or proposes to overcome a barrier to progress in the field • Very likely that results will have an impact beyond the immediate field • Proposes novel approaches and methods • Is at the frontier of life science research and likely to lead to future discoveries Applicant • Clearly eager to learn new theories, methods and approaches and embrace risk • Will go beyond the scope of their previous expertise, leave their comfort zone, and is very likely to succeed in doing so Host Lab • Applicant's expertise will significantly expand the scientific scope of the host laboratory, and the development of proposal is mostly driven by applicant • Host laboratory is an ideal environment in which to carry out the project
Outstanding **7.0–8.5** (fundable)	Research Plan • Many aspects of the problem addressed are novel or address critical barriers to progress, however certain elements are less groundbreaking • Certain aspects might be very impactful for the immediate field, but somewhat less likely to be paradigm shifting • Most approaches and methods are novel • Likely to lead to future discoveries but somewhat less frontier or risky Applicant • Will be exposed to some new theories, approaches and methods and will embrace some risk • Provides some evidence for their willingness to leave their comfort zone and for their ability to succeed with the new challenges Host Lab • Applicant's expertise will expand the scientific scope of the host laboratory and development of proposal is driven by applicant and host to a similar extent • Host laboratory is an excellent environment in which to carry out the project

(continued on next page)

Excellent (but not within the realms of HFSP) **5.0–6.5** (non-fundable)	<u>Research Plan</u> • Excellent science, but question addressed is less novel • Impact beyond the immediate field is likely to be minor and outcomes would be less likely to change current ways of thinking <u>Applicant</u> • Seems to be somewhat risk-averse, and less likely to embrace a completely new research area • Proposes to use established methods and approaches that they may have been exposed to before <u>Host Lab</u> • Unique contribution of the applicant to the host lab is and project development is unclear • Host laboratory is a good environment in which to carry out the project
Less competitive **3.0–4.5** (non-fundable)	<u>Research Plan</u> • Solid science, but mainstream • No paradigm shifts or major impact expected <u>Applicant</u> • No or little change in research direction for applicant • Proposes to use only methods and approaches that the applicant is familiar with <u>Host Lab</u> • No or little unique contribution of the applicant to the host environment or project development • Host laboratory not necessarily suited to the project
Poor **< 3.0** (non-fundable)	<u>Research Plan</u> • Project is mainstream • Scientifically flawed <u>Applicant</u> • No change from applicant's previous research • Only proposes established methods and approaches previously used by the applicant <u>Host Lab</u> • No unique contribution of the applicant to host environment or development of the project • Host environment not suitable for the project proposed