Pilot & Feasibility FAQs

Proposal Details:

- Q: **What technology should I propose to use in my P&F application?**
  - A: Don't worry about writing lots of details about the technology in your grant proposal. If your proposal is selected, SECIM will help determine the best technology to move forth with.
- Q: **How much money should I ask for in my proposal?**
  - A: The maximum allowable funding for a single project is $50,000, strong justification is required for a the maximum allowable budget.
- Q: **How in-depth do I need to go when describing future aims or directions in the "Plans for Future Funding" section of the application?**
  - A: This section is very important. You need to be concrete, thought-out, and well-planned in your future funding requests. You should be as detailed as possible when explain your plans for future research funding.
- Q: **What sort of research is preferred by the P&F Review Committee?**
  - A: SECIM and the NIH Common Fund do not hold a bias toward one particular sample type. The research parameters for allowable funding are broad, as the NIH and SECIM are not just focused on human disease or animal samples. Plant proposals are welcome and encouraged. Investigators seeking future USDA or NSF grant funding are still strongly encouraged to apply for the SECIM/NIH-supported P&F project funding. Make sure to identify the data used to justify your sample choices.
- Q: **Can we compare SECIM untargeted analyses with previously analyzed data recorded by external institutions?**
  - A: All analyses, sample preparation, standard operating procedures, and recording methods done by a center are relative to that particular center. In order to get the most effective data, you need to control samples as much as possible, so comparing current data to old data from another center is discouraged.
- Q: **Will summarizing other already-existing preliminary data help strengthen my proposal?**
  - A: Yes, tell us about the existence of any preliminary data you may have, and why that leads you to want to move forward with further testing.

SECIM-Specific Details:

- Q: **What sort of metabolites and compounds can SECIM identify?**
  - A: There is no perfect answer to this. At this point, SECIM can routinely identify ATP, ADP, lipids, and many unidentified small molecules through NMR, and acylcarnitines, amino acids and organic acids in cellular extracts, plasma or tissue using mass spectrometry.
- Q: **How much data analysis can I count on receiving from SECIM?**
  - A: SECIM will work with all investigators to ensure a successful project outcome. We are setting aside funding for SOME data and statistical analysis to ensure the success of our pilot award recipients.

Sample-specific Details:

- Q: **How small of a sample volume can we provide SECIM?**
  - A: It depends upon which core you will be working with. Generally more volume is required for NMR, then targeted LC-MS analysis and the least for Global LC-MS.
- Q: **What is an appropriate sample size for analysis?**
  - A: It's relative to every project. It depends on the sample type, where, and how the samples will be attained.
- Q: **How specific should I be about my sample preparation?**
  - A: Very specific. Make sure to describe your sample handling procedures in detail. If you have not gathered your samples to this point, describe how you will in the future.
- Q: **How should I extract my samples?**
  - A: If your proposal is accepted, you will then need to work with the corresponding core (Mass Spectrometry, NMR, or Advanced Mass Spectrometry) to determine the extraction protocol. For application purposes, explain your sample collection plans or how you have already collected your samples.
- Q: **How many sample types should I look to gather preliminary data from?**
  - A: The simpler the better. You should focus on gathering preliminary data from one sample type rather than multiple types for the P&F studies. Animal samples will be easier than human samples to control for P&F purposes, and can provide data to move forward in larger grant applications. Human samples are not discouraged, but it should be understood that they will be harder to control. Choose samples that will provide the best data for analysis. It is best not to suggest studies using multiple sample types (e.g. human & animal).
- Q: **How ambitious should my proposal be in terms of sample type and quantity?**
  - A: Simplify your samples. Make your samples as straightforward as possible in order to make sure to see an effect during testing. Your proposal is for a Pilot and Feasibility study, not a full-blown RO1 grant, so complex analysis is not as important at this stage. If possible, try to focus your samples down to sets of controls and extremes in one sample type.