

Dual-anonymous proposal review in ALMA Cycle 8

ALMA is strongly committed to ensure that the proposal review process is as fair and impartial as possible. Analysis of the proposal rankings in previous cycles has identified systematics that may signify the presence of biases in the review process (see [Systematics in the ALMA Proposal Review Rankings](#)). To reduce any biases as much as possible, ALMA will use a dual-anonymous proposal review process starting in Cycle 8. In a dual-anonymous review, the proposal team does not know the identity of the reviewers and the reviewers do not know the identity of the proposal team. While proposers will still enter their names and affiliations in the ALMA Observing Tool (OT), this information will not appear on the proposal cover sheet, nor in the tools used by the reviewers. It is the responsibility of the proposers to ensure anonymity is preserved when writing their proposals.

Guidelines are provided below on how to write proposals in an anonymous fashion. Most of the changes are in the style. Proposers should remember to make the relevant changes especially when resubmitting a proposal from a previous cycle.

General guidelines pertaining to all proposals

- Do not identify the PI or any of the co-PIs or co-Is in the proposal. This includes, but is not limited to, the abstract, figures, footnotes, and tables, as well as the technical justification.
- Proposers should use third person or neutral wording when referencing their own work. For example, instead of
In Smith et al. (2018), we demonstrated...
proposers can write
Smith et al. (2018) demonstrated...
- Do not refer to data from ALMA or other observatories in an identifying fashion. If the data have not been published, it can be referenced by the project code. For example, instead of
Figure 1 shows the image from our Cycle 7 ALMA program (2019.1.02045.S, PI Smith).
proposers can write
Figure 1 shows the image from the Cycle 7 ALMA program 2019.1.02045.S.
- Software and datasets that are available in a public repository (e.g., GitHub) or in a public paper can be referenced per normal practices. If the software or data are not public, it can be referenced as “obtained in private communication” or similar language, but a name should not be specified since it could strongly imply who may be an investigator on the proposal.
- Do not include references and links to papers in preparation or submitted that are stored on personal web pages. References to submitted papers on public archives (e.g., arXiv) are acceptable.
- Do not include acknowledgements or the source of any grant funding.

- While proposers may note if they are resubmitting an ongoing Cycle 7 proposal, they should not indicate the proposal code and investigators of the previously accepted proposal. For example, instead of

This is a resubmission of our ongoing Cycle 7 program 2019.1.02045.S (PI: Smith). Half of our targets have been observed and we are resubmitting the proposal to obtain the remaining half.

proposers can write

This is a resubmission of our ongoing Cycle 7 program. Half of our targets have been observed and we are resubmitting the proposal to observe the remaining half.

Resubmissions that present unpublished data in a figure may reference the project code using the example presented above.

Example text

Here is an example text that would need to be modified according to the guidelines, with the text to be changed in bold:

We propose to perform a multi-band, beam-matched spectral scan of the central molecular zone of the nearby starburst galaxy NGC 253 in order to obtain the first template of extragalactic molecular complexity and calibrate extragalactic molecular diagnostics. To sample a wide range of molecular excitation states, we will scan the full ALMA bands 3, 4, 6, and 7. **From our** previous ALMA observations (Mangum+2015), we estimate that in band 6 and 7 we will obtain confusion limited spectra in most of the central region. **Our pioneering studies of** multi-band spectral scans (e.g., Costagliola+2015) show that the combined effect of more optically thin tracers and proper treatment of molecular excitation can lead to a tenfold increase in the sensitivity of molecular diagnostics to the physical properties of the ISM.

Here is the same text revised according to the guidelines:

We propose to perform a multi-band, beam-matched spectral scan of the central molecular zone of the nearby starburst galaxy NGC 253 in order to obtain the first template of extragalactic molecular complexity and calibrate extragalactic molecular diagnostics. To sample a wide range of molecular excitation states, we will scan the full ALMA bands 3, 4, 6, and 7. **Based on** previous ALMA observations (Mangum+2015), we estimate that in band 6 and 7 we will obtain confusion limited spectra in most of the central region. **Previous studies with** multi-band spectral scans (e.g., Costagliola+2015) show that the combined effect of more optically thin tracers and proper treatment of molecular excitation can lead to a tenfold increase in the sensitivity of molecular diagnostics to the physical properties of the ISM.

Guidelines pertaining only to Large Programs

Proposals for Large Programs will now consist of two parts.

1. The first part contains the scientific justification that must be prepared following the dual-anonymous guidelines above. The scientific justification should motivate the proposed science and observations, describe the data products that will be delivered, and present the publication plan. The scientific justification is allowed to be 6 pages maximum and is submitted in the usual manner through the ALMA Observing Tool (OT).
2. The second part consists of a one-page statement that contains the management plan, the available computing resources, and an assessment of the scheduling feasibility. This statement must be sent to the ALMA Proposal Handling Team (pht@alma.cl) by email and received before the proposal deadline, or the proposal will be rejected. Proposers can include names and affiliations in this one-page document.

Large Programs will be assessed initially based on the scientific justification only. After the scientific evaluation has been completed by the review panels and the ALMA Proposal Review Committee (APRC, which is composed of the panel Chairs), the APRC will review the management plans, computing resources, and scheduling feasibility. The scheduling feasibility will be used to determine which proposals can fit into the observing queue given the scientific rankings of the Large Programs and the time available. After reviewing the management plans and computing resources, the APRC may recommend to the ALMA Director that a proposal be rejected only if they feel the proposal team is not qualified to carry out the program or does not have the necessary computing resources. However, the scientific rankings of the proposals will not change. The ALMA Director will make the final decision on which proposals are accepted.

Compliance

PIs are required to anonymize their proposals. PIs who do not anonymize their proposals in accordance with the guidelines may have their proposal rejected. In some cases, a proposal may be very specialized and the identity of the proposal team may seem obvious to the reviewers even after the text is anonymized. As long as the guidelines to anonymize the proposals are followed, the proposal will not be considered in violation.