Questions on The JRR Solicitation

1. **Does NIH have a target launch date or anticipated publication date for the inaugural JRR issue?**

   Understanding the desired launch timeline would help us develop a realistic implementation plan and appropriately sequence activities such as editorial leadership recruitment, governance development, focus groups, workflow design, product development, and launch support. If a target date has not yet been established, we will make reasonable assumptions in our proposal.

   Response: We expect the inaugural issue of JRR to be posted in the second half of 2027, likely no later than September 1, 2027. Our goal is to have key positions staffed ahead of that launch to maximize the impact of launching the new brand, but sufficient time will be given to recruit the appropriate candidates and develop the policies necessary to successfully launch the new journal.

2. **Should offerors assume that NIH will procure the publishing platform and manuscript submission/peer review system separately, or would NIH welcome objective recommendations regarding platform selection and implementation as part of this engagement?**

   We recognize that this solicitation is focused primarily on strategic, operational, and advisory services. Clarification on this point would help us appropriately scope our proposed approach. If these technologies will be procured independently, we will tailor our proposal accordingly. Alternatively, if NIH would find value in an objective, technology-agnostic assessment and recommendations based solely on NIH's requirements and long-term objectives, we would be pleased to incorporate that expertise into our proposed approach.

   Response: Advising on the procurement of a submission, review, and publication platform is outside the scope of this solicitation, and offerers should not plan to include such materials in their response. Please focus the response only on the Task areas explicitly stated in the Performance Work Statement.

3. **Is there an anticipated funding range, estimated level of effort, or other budget guidance available for this requirement?**

   We fully appreciate that best overall value will be a key consideration in the evaluation. If any budgetary guidance can be shared, it would help us calibrate the level of effort, staffing model, and scope of our proposed solution so that it aligns as closely as possible with NIH's expectations while delivering the strongest possible value.

Response: The vendors should provide the best possible value, not just aim for a price range we estimated for the project. The offerors should base their proposals on the tasks outlined in the Performance Work Statement, and how they align their cost to the tasks outlined is strictly up to the contractors. It is our opinion, stating a price range has a negative effect when contractors keep within the price range stated and it does not always reflect what could be the true cost of a project over its life span.