

IMPACT COLABS - Project Vetting Guidelines

Version 1.2

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	August 5 2021	MO first draft
1.1	August 18 2021	MO edits, including changes suggested by Charles

Vetting Mechanisms

Project Acceptance: Before projects are visible on the website, a member of the “Evaluation Committee” will review whether the project can be posted. The Evaluation Committee will be composed of committed Impact Projects team members that are core Effective Altruists and have experience in leading projects, risk management and/or important cause areas. The Committee Member will verify a project against the “Inclusion Criteria” and “Exclusion Criteria” within 24-48 hours of submission. If clarification from the Project Leader is needed, this period might be extended until the clarification is provided.

Project Approval: For a period of up to 2 weeks after posting, the project will be live on the website but with an “Under Review” status. During that time, an “Evaluation Commission” of 1-3 people will evaluate the project according to the “Approval Criteria”. If the Evaluation Commission is uncertain or does not have the required expertise to evaluate a project, they will rely on an “Advisory Committee”, composed of EA leadership, subject matter experts and risk-management experts, to guide them to a decision. The Evaluation Commission will ultimately decide whether the project is “Passed Review”, “Rejected” or “Requires Further Information for Approval”, the latter being applied when the commission is unable to make a decision with the information provided to date. If a Project has been accepted it will be tagged with “Passed Review”.

Pre-Approvals and Banning: A list of pre-approved Project Leaders will be used to expedite the approval process. The list will include any person that has worked at an EA-affiliated organization or non-profit. Users will be able to submit a request to be pre-approved by providing required information (typically their LinkedIn page). Project leaders that are banned for actively pursuing harmful ends, running a for-profit project disguised as a nonprofit project, scamming users in any other way, or repeatedly violating our Terms Agreement and Community

Guidelines, will be added to a Banned list. Banned people will not be able to submit new projects.

Tagging: Approved projects, in addition to the “Passed Review” tage, will be able to be tagged during the approval process or at any point, by the Evaluation Commission and by the Advisory Committee, with additional tags according to the Tagging Criteria. Tags include but are not limited to: “Recommended Project”, “Highly Recommended Project”, “Has Risks”, “Has Significant Risks”, “EA-Affiliated Organization”, “Charity Entrepreneurship-Affiliated Organization”, “GiveWell Recommended Organization”, “Animal Charity Evaluator Recommended Organization”, “Open Philanthropy Foundation Grantee” and more.

Re-Approvals, Shelving and Removals: Existing projects will be re-evaluated on a semi-routine basis (i.e. every 6-12 months) by Evaluation Committee Members, or if they are flagged by Advisory Committee members, pre-approved Project Leaders or (a sufficient number of) users of the website. Users will be able to flag projects by submitting a feedback form under the category “Project Concerns” and detailing their reasoning, or adding a comment to a project’s comment section. If the committee member decides that new information since the previous approval warrants a re-evaluation, they will escalate the project to the Evaluation Committee, to be assessed at the earliest opportunity. The committee will decide whether the project should be removed, whether to request information from the project leaders to address certain concerns, whether the project should be shelved due to inactivity or whether the project should continue. If the project is shelved, it will be frozen, removed from search results/lists and tagged with “Inactive” until a Project Leader provides a project update and requests a re-activation or until 3 months have elapsed at which point it will be removed. If the project is removed, the project will remain on the website but will be frozen, removed from search results/lists and tagged with “Removed by Moderators”. It will be completely removed from the website (or moved to the Archive category) when either the Project Leaders remove it, or after 3 months have elapsed. Project Leaders will be able to appeal a removal once every 3 months.

Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

1. Project Leader must be at least 16 years old.
2. Project Leader must have accepted the Terms Agreement and the Responsibility Waiver (acknowledging that he has considered all the possible risks and hazards of his project to the world). <not yet implemented>
3. Project Leader must have filled out all necessary sections of the application form with sufficient level of detail (i.e. multiple, full sentences).
4. Project must have a defined deliverable(s), such as a post, a research paper, a website, an intervention or a service, or be requesting volunteers for a volunteer role in an organization that will have many undefined deliverables or that will have an impact on the organization’s deliverables via other means.

5. Project's intent must be to improve, directly or indirectly, the lives of at least 20 other, existing or future sentient beings, ideally improving the lives of a much larger number of beings.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Project Leader had more than 3 projects previously removed from the platform (unless they have at least 1 ongoing or successful project) or been banned.
2. Project has obvious risk(s) of harm to others.
3. Project has obvious risk(s) of being an information hazard.
4. Project has obvious risk(s) of being a reputational hazard to this website or Effective Altruism
5. Project has physically impossible goals.
6. Project is for-profit without any possibility improving the lives of other beings (e.g. Public Benefit Corporations are allowed).
7. Project is materially identical to an existing project in a zero-sum market, unless project leaders of the current solution(s) agree to waive their rights.
8. Project's name and branding is attempting to appear like an existing project or organization's project in order to confuse users.

Approval Criteria

1. Project must aim to address a problem that is important (i.e. if the problem was solved it would improve the lives of many beings), tractable (i.e. if the project has a chance of helping to solve it) and neglected (i.e. there aren't already many other people working to solve this problem).
2. Project is for-profit but with a core, intrinsic goal to improve the lives of other beings (e.g. Public Benefit Corporations are allowed).
3. Project does not have probable (>10% chance) risk(s) of harm to others without a much greater (>50%) chance of offsetting benefits.
4. Project does not have probable (>10% chance) risk(s) of being an information hazard without a much greater (>50%) chance of offsetting benefits.
5. Project does not have probable (>10% chance) risk(s) of being a reputational hazard to this website or Effective Altruism without a much greater (>50%) chance of offsetting benefits.

Tagging Criteria

1. Recommended: Project has a 80% or greater chance of being in the top 20% most impactful projects
2. Highly Recommended: Project has a 90% or greater chance of being in the top 5% most impactful projects
3. Has Risks: Project has harm, information hazard or reputational hazard risks (>0% but <5%) with offsetting benefits, according to the best estimate of the Evaluation Commission.
4. Has Significant Risks: Project has harm, information hazard or reputational hazard risks (>5% but <10%) with offsetting benefits.

5. EA-Affiliated Organization: Any organization on this [list](#).
6. Charity Entrepreneurship-Affiliated Organization: Any organization on this [list](#).
7. GiveWell Recommended Organization: Any organization on this [list](#).
8. Animal Charity Evaluator Recommended Organization: Any organization on this [list](#).
9. Open Philanthropy Foundation Grantee: Any organization in this [database](#).