



ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL R&D&I



GENERALITAT
VALENCIANA





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1. LEGAL AND COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

Law 5/2006 of 25 May, passed by the Regional Government of the Valencian Community establishing the Valencian Agency for Assessment and Foresight, assigns to it, amongst other things, the function of “...assessing technology, research and innovation programmes” (Article 3.1.b).

In accordance with Article 4 of Decree 7/2024 of 9 January of the Consell, approving the Regulations of the Valencian Agency for Evaluation and Foresight (AVAP), *“in order to fulfil its aims and functions, the AVAP shall act in accordance with the principles of independence, objectivity, excellence and transparency, and in accordance with international quality assurance standards and guidelines”*, all within a framework of agile management and efficient use of public funds, which AVAP aims to incorporate into all its activities.

The aim of this document is to set out the rules governing evaluation activities.

2. EXPERTS

Law 5/2006 provides for the creation, within AVAP, of standing or ad hoc committees. In carrying out their functions, AVAP's technical committees operate within their respective fields with adequate guarantees of technical independence and professionalism (Article 9). For its part, Article 18.4 of AVAP Regulations (D 7/2024) stipulates that, depending on the nature of the functions assigned to the various temporary and permanent committees that may be established, AVAP shall define the requirements to be met by the members of those committees in terms of teaching and/or research activity; and in Article 19, that in order to carry out each of the evaluation functions assigned to AVAP, experts shall be selected who will participate anonymously during the evaluation procedure and who, as a general rule, shall not be practising their profession in the Valencian Community.

The selection of experts will be based on their recent scientific track record, taking into account the number of officially recognised research levels in the various fields of knowledge.

The allocation of experts to successive evaluation processes shall be governed by a principle of rotation, wherever possible.

Experts proposed to participate in an evaluation process must:

- Formally declare their acceptance of the Agency's code of ethics, as set out in Article 21 of AVAP Regulations.
- Undertake in writing to maintain the confidentiality of all information made available to them during the evaluation process.

Their work will be remunerated in accordance with the system of allowances and expenses set out in Article 20 of AVAP Regulations.

3. ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES

Seven Assessment Committees are established by macro-area, following criteria similar to those of the State Research Agency (AEI). Each committee will have a chairperson, a secretary (a member of AVAP's technical staff) and the remaining members will be committee members, ensuring that all reasonable subject areas are covered.

In order to determine the number of members and assessment committees based on criteria of thematic consistency, and with the aim of standardising and simplifying the terminology relating to the subjects to be evaluated—as used by all those involved in the evaluation process—the nineteen areas of the State Research Agency have been taken as a reference. A criterion of thematic proximity has been applied to these areas in order to establish a small number of Assessment Committees:

- **Art and Humanities Committee:**
AEI areas involved: Studies of the Past: History and Archaeology; Educational Sciences; Mind, Language and Thought; Culture: Philology, Literature and Art.
- **Social Sciences Committee:**
AEI areas involved: Law, Social Sciences and Economics.
- **Medical and Health Sciences Committee:**
AEI areas involved: Biomedicine and Psychology.
- **Life Sciences Committee:**
AEI areas involved: Agricultural and Agri-Food Sciences, Biosciences and Biotechnology, and Environmental Sciences and Technologies.
- **Engineering and Architecture Committee:**
Relevant AEI areas: Industrial Production, Civil Engineering and Engineering for Society, Energy and Transport.
- **Technology Area Committee:**
Relevant AEI areas: Information and Communication Technologies, Materials Science and Technology.
- **Sciences Committee:**
AEI areas involved: Chemical Sciences and Technologies, Physical Sciences and Mathematical Sciences.

The tasks of the members of the Assessment Committees shall be, upon receipt of the applications from the areas assigned to them:

- To select, for each application, two external experts responsible for its evaluation.
- To review the assessment reports and determine the corresponding evaluations.
- To ensure, throughout the assessment process, the correct application of the regulatory standards, both for the call for applications in question and for the process itself.
- To ensure the consistency of the assessment process in relation to the criteria applied in the evaluation of applications and the marks awarded.
- To deal with any complaints submitted and refer them to the Research Committee.

The Assessment Committee for the sub-programme for the promotion and revitalisation of science parks (PPC) is established due to the specific nature of the actions under assessment.

Its structure is similar to that of the other committees: a chair, a secretary (held by technical staff from AVAP) and the remaining members acting as assessors.

The tasks of the members of this Assessment Committee shall be:

- To draw up evaluation reports on the files assigned to them by AVAP. Each file will be evaluated independently by two experts.
- To review the assessment reports and make the corresponding assessments of the applications assigned to them for this purpose.
- To ensure, throughout the evaluation process, the correct application of the regulatory rules, both for the call for applications in question and for the process itself.
- To deal with any appeals that are lodged.

4. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Research Committee is made up of the chairpersons of each of the seven Assessment Committees. One of them will be appointed as chair, whilst the secretariat will be provided by technical staff from AVAP.

This Research Committee will establish the common criteria to be applied in the assessment of the various programmes within a call for applications. It will ensure consistency in the assessments and deal with any appeals.

5. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Definitions:

- **Call for applications:** a set of terms and conditions or regulatory rules defining the procedure for awarding a grant through a competitive selection process.
- **Applicants:** natural or legal persons applying for a call for grant applications or financial assistance.
- **Experts:** independent individuals selected on the basis of their research and/or teaching track record, with no conflict of interest and bound by a confidentiality undertaking, who assess the quality of the applications.
- **Evaluation Committees:** their members draw up the final evaluation report for their subject area based on the evaluation reports issued by the experts.
- **Research Committee:** responsible for coordinating the entire evaluation process.

Procedure:

The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the criteria and in compliance with the requirements set out in the call for applications for the grant or funding in question in each case. All applications are categorised by subject area and forwarded to the members of the relevant Assessment Committees.

The assessment will be carried out by two experts for each application, who will be appointed by the committee member responsible for the relevant field of knowledge; this member will draw up the final report based on the reports prepared by the selected experts.

The final score for the assessments will be based on the sum of the different marks awarded for each of the aspects assessed. The reports drawn up will include, in addition to the sections containing the numerical assessment of the various assessed areas, qualitative comments which must be consistent with the score awarded. The qualitative assessment is mandatory and may be used to explain the scores obtained to the applicants.

6. AVAP R&D ASSESSMENT PLATFORM

AVAP staff will provide committee members and experts with all the supplementary information necessary to carry out the evaluations at the start of the assessment process.

Assessments are carried out using the AVAP R&D online platform, via personal login details. The expert responsible for the evaluation, via a specific web page and using a username and password, has exclusive access to the applications previously assigned to them by AVAP's technical services, based on their expertise in the applicant's field of knowledge. The expert can access the full application file and the assessment form that they must complete for each file.

Following a protocol with similar technical specifications, members of the Assessment Committees will be able to access the applications assigned to them.

7. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

AVAP, as an evaluation agency, may establish contacts and propose collaboration with other institutions dedicated to the assessment of scientific research, both national and international. This collaboration should serve to agree on mechanisms, procedures or criteria, or to cooperate on all matters that help to improve the current evaluation system (for example, sharing databases of experts). Such collaboration and/or coordination may take the form of creating and participating in forums for debate, establishing agreements between institutions, etc.