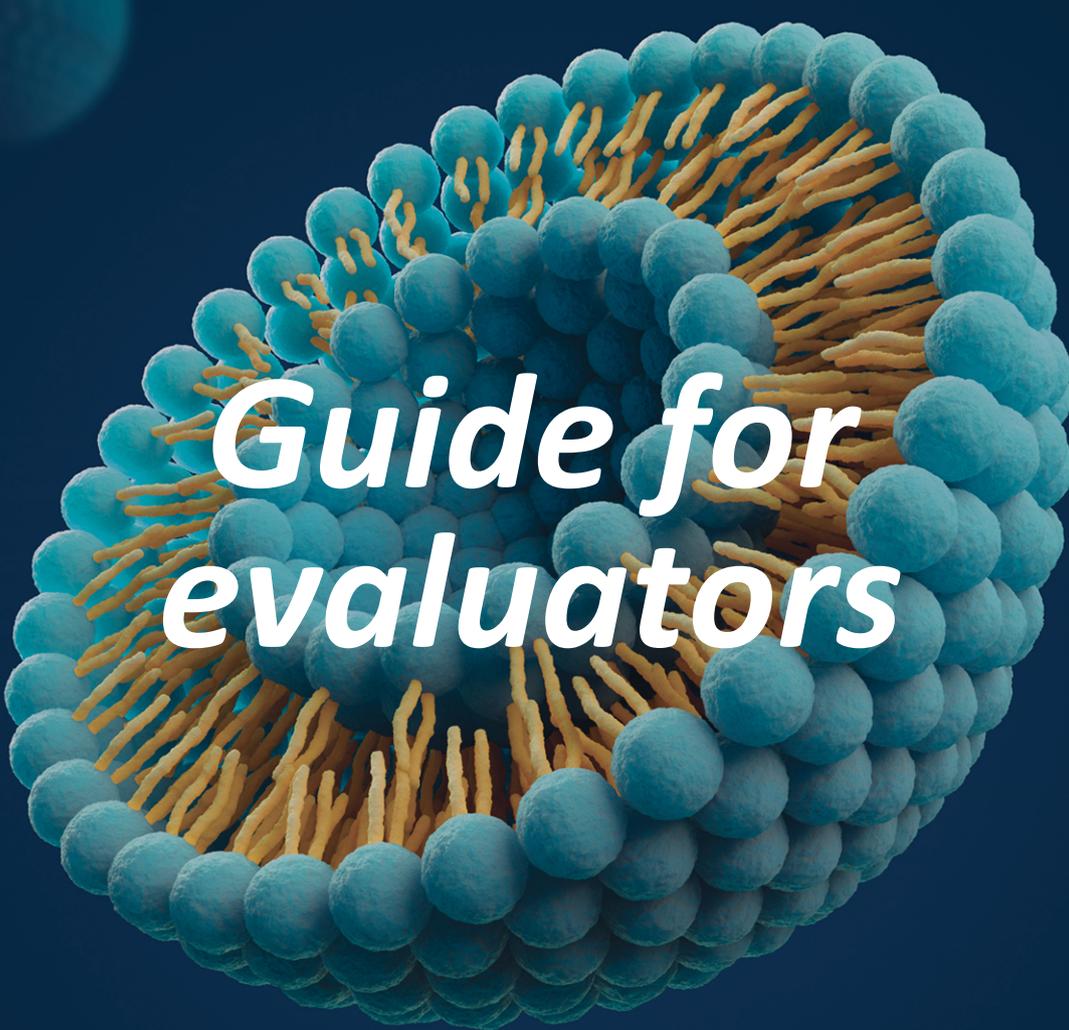


# CaixaResearch



## *Guide for evaluators*

*Validate*

2022



"la Caixa" Foundation

**CONTENTS**

---

- 1. **Introduction** ..... 2
- 2. **Eligibility check**..... 3
- 3. **Pre-selection process**..... 7
- 4. **Selection Panel**..... 9

## 1

## Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to describe and detail the selection process for applications to the CaixaResearch Validate call. The principles that govern the evaluation and selection process are as follows:

**EXCELLENCE.** The ultimate goal of the selection process is to ensure that the projects selected are not only the best from among those presented (in accordance with the programme's principles and selection criteria), but also that they have a level of excellence within their area and sector. As such, it is possible that if the applications do not meet the required standards of excellence, places will remain vacant in the programme. The quality of the proposals will be assessed based on evaluations made by specially chosen experts, who will evaluate the proposals using rubrics that prevent the application of personal criteria and protect them from possible conflicts of interest.

**IMPARTIALITY.** All presented proposals will be evaluated following the same processes, based on the same criteria and for their own merits, regardless of any other factor. Evaluation procedures will guarantee that the evaluators access the information necessary for the impartial evaluation of the applications and identify potential conflicts of interest.

Evaluators involved in the process must give formal notice of any existing conflict of interest with regards to the proposals under evaluation or to the programme in general. Evaluators may not evaluate any application in which they have any type of conflict of interest.

**TRANSPARENCY.** Candidates, evaluators and the general public have access to the basic principles that govern the processes of evaluating and selecting candidates and to the procedures followed for these purposes. In addition, candidates will receive information regarding the status of their application at each stage of the process.

**CONFIDENTIALITY.** All proposals, data and related documents will be handled with confidentiality by the agents involved in the selection process.

A single-blind system will be used in the evaluation process. Under this system, evaluators will be informed of who the applicant is (in order to identify possible conflicts of interest), but not of who the other evaluators are. The applicant will not be informed of who is evaluating their proposal.

**QUALITY.** The processes, procedures and selection criteria will be documented and communicated to all interested parties.

The evaluation and selection of applications will be carried out according to the recommendations of the *European Science Foundation*, as published in the *Peer Review Guide*.

The software used for the presentation and evaluation of applications will ensure confidentiality. Access will be restricted through usernames and passwords.

Evaluators will sign an agreement that will include, in addition to any aspects related to the selection process and criteria, the obligation to state any existing conflict of interest and to ensure appropriate confidentiality of the information provided when carrying out their task.

Evaluators will receive a Code of Conduct, which define the relevant ethical aspects that govern the evaluation and selection process. This Code of Conduct shall govern the execution of the activities carried out by the evaluator in the framework of CaixaResearch Validate call.

An internal audit of the process will be performed every year to verify that the established procedures are being applied and are effective, identifying therein any possibilities for improvement.

## 2

### Eligibility check

For each application presented within the established time frame, the Programme Office of the CaixaResearch Validate call shall verify its compliance with the requirements for participation specified in the terms and conditions.

More specifically, this office guarantees that the applications sent to the evaluators are eligible with regards to ensuring that:

- » The applicant is a public or non-profit organization.
- » The applicant is a Legal entity from Spain and Portugal
- » The applicant is the owner or co-owner of the protected or protectable asset resulting from the research to be valorized.
- » The mandatory documentation for the project has been presented.
- » The project has not been previously awarded by the CaixaResearch Consolidate Call

Applications that fail to comply with any of the Rules for Participation will be excluded from the process. Applicants will be informed of said exclusion and the reasons for it.

Therefore, evaluators must formally consider all applications assigned to them for evaluation and rating as being eligible.

### Classification of the application

Applications that meet the requirements of the call, and which therefore pass the eligibility stage, proceed to the initial evaluation stage.

Applications are distributed in groups according to subject area. Applicants select the subject area that best fits their project on the application form. The list of areas is as follows:

<b>1</b>	<b>Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry</b>
1_1	Molecular interactions
1_2	General biochemistry and metabolism
1_3	DNA synthesis, modification, repair, recombination and degradation
1_4	RNA synthesis, processing, modification and degradation
1_5	Protein synthesis, modification and turnover
1_6	Lipid synthesis, modification and turnover
1_7	Carbohydrate synthesis, modification and turnover
1_8	Biophysics (e.g. transport mechanisms, bioenergetics, fluorescence)
1_9	Structural biology (crystallography and EM)
1_10	Structural biology (NMR)
1_11	Biochemistry and molecular mechanisms of signal transduction
<b>2</b>	<b>Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology</b>
2_1	Genomics, comparative genomics, functional genomics
2_2	Transcriptomics
2_3	Proteomics
2_4	Metabolomics
2_5	Glycomics
2_6	Molecular genetics, reverse genetics and RNAi
2_7	Quantitative genetics
2_8	Epigenetics and gene regulation
2_9	Genetic epidemiology
2_10	Bioinformatics
2_11	Computational biology
2_12	Biostatistics
2_13	Systems biology
2_14	Biological systems analysis, modelling and simulation
<b>3</b>	<b>Cellular and Developmental Biology</b>
3_1	Morphology and functional imaging of cells
3_2	Cell biology and molecular transport mechanisms
3_3	Cell cycle and division
3_4	Apoptosis
3_5	Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
3_6	Organelle biology
3_7	Cell signalling and cellular interactions
3_8	Signal transduction

3_9	Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology
3_10	Cell genetics
3_11	Stem cell biology
3_12	Morphology and functional imaging of cells
<b>4</b>	<b>Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology</b>
4_1	Organ physiology and pathophysiology
4_3	Endocrinology
4_4	Ageing
4_5	Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism related disorders
4_6	Cancer and its biological basis
4_7	Cardiovascular diseases
4_8	Non-communicable diseases (except for neural/psychiatric, immunity-related, metabolism-related disorders, cancer and cardiovascular diseases)
<b>5</b>	<b>Neurosciences and Neural Disorders</b>
5_1	Neuroanatomy and neurophysiology
5_2	Molecular and cellular neuroscience
5_3	Neurochemistry and neuropharmacology
5_4	Sensory systems (e.g. visual system, auditory system)
5_5	Mechanisms of pain
5_6	Developmental neurobiology
5_7	Cognition (e.g. learning, memory, emotions, speech)
5_8	Behavioural neuroscience (e.g. sleep, consciousness, handedness)
5_9	Systems neuroscience
5_10	Neuroimaging and computational neuroscience
5_11	Neurological disorders (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease)
5_12	Psychiatric disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, autism, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive compulsive disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)
<b>6</b>	<b>Immunity and Infection</b>
6_1	Innate immunity and inflammation
6_2	Adaptive immunity
6_3	Phagocytosis and cellular immunity
6_4	Immunosignalling
6_5	Immunological memory and tolerance
6_6	Immunogenetics
6_7	Microbiology
6_8	Virology
6_9	Bacteriology
6_10	Parasitology
6_11	Prevention and treatment of infection by pathogens (e.g. vaccination, antibiotics, fungicide)
6_12	Biological basis of immunity related disorders (e.g. autoimmunity)

<b>7</b>	<b>Diagnostic Tools, Therapies and Public Health</b>
7_1	Medical engineering and technology
7_2	Diagnostic tools (e.g. genetic, imaging)
7_3	Pharmacology, pharmacogenomics, drug discovery and design, drug therapy
7_4	Analgesia and Surgery
7_5	Toxicology
7_6	Gene therapy, cell therapy, regenerative medicine
7_7	Radiation therapy
7_8	Health services, health care research
7_9	Public health and epidemiology
7_10	Environment and health risks, occupational medicine
7_11	Medical ethics
<b>8</b>	<b>Applied life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology</b>
8_1	Applied genetic engineering, transgenic organisms, recombinant proteins, biosensors
8_2	Synthetic biology, chemical biology and new bio-engineering concepts
8_3	Food sciences

This self-classification will be respected as far as possible, in order to match the Evaluator expertise with the self-classification of the projects.

### Registry of evaluators

The CaixaResearch Programme's Office will hold a registry of experts. These experts have expressed their willingness to be part of the team of evaluators and their suitability for the evaluation of specific disciplinary fields. The evaluator profiles will be collected and stored in the application online platform, in order to assign the projects to be evaluated.

Programme organisers will rotate experts in and out who form the team of evaluators. In general, no expert may participate in more than three calls over the course of six years. The organisation will also make an effort to ensure that at least one-third of the pool of evaluators that took part in the previous selection process is renewed each year.

Evaluators who participate in the selection process must sign an agreement whereby they agree to maintain the confidentiality of applications evaluated. Furthermore, these experts agree not to use the information to which they have access for any purpose other than the examination and evaluation of applications.

### Evaluation of an application

Each application will be evaluated by two experts, who will independently examine and rate the application without any type of contact or discussion between themselves.

The evaluation process will be carried out on an online platform expressly designed for this purpose. Each expert will have access only to the information and documentation of the applications assigned to him or her.

The evaluation of the applications will be done based on an evaluation table that lists the criteria to be rated, their weight, as well as the associated description of the different obtainable scores for each criteria (from 1 to 8).

For each application, experts will have to justify the reasons for his/her evaluation and the overall impression of the application in a brief and concise text.

Using the scores given by the experts and the respective weighting, a final score will be obtained, which will be the expert's evaluation of the application.

The final score for an application is the average of the scores from the two evaluators.

The evaluation of applications in the short-listing process is done based on an evaluation table that lists the criteria to be rated, their weight, as well as the associated description of the different obtainable scores for each criteria.

Each of these aspects has a different score and is rated according to the evaluation table provided in the following section.

Generally speaking:

- » A 1 is given to a candidate who has not provided the required information for evaluation of the criteria or if the information provided cannot be rated, as it is irrelevant or inappropriate.
- » Each criterion is rated on a scale of 1 to 8. The scores that should be given are described in the Evaluation table.

Each expert must justify, with a brief and explanatory text, the overall opinion of the rating of each application evaluated.

Final score will be given on a scale 1 to 8.

Criteria		Sub Criteria		Weight
Quality of science and the Asset	25%	1	Scientific feasibility	10%
		2	Intellectual Property Protection	5%
		3	Level of development	10%
Transfer & Implementation capacity	24%	4	Profile of the project leader and expertise	10%
		5	Motivation and commitment of the project leader	5%
		6	Existence of a support team complementary of the members	9%
Valorisation project	15%	7	Definition of objectives	7%
		8	Correct identification, structure and focus of the actions to be carried out in the valorisation proposal, cost dimensioning and schedule	8%
Market potential	24%	9	Identification of the need or problem to be solved	8%
		10	Value proposition	10%
		11	Identification of the potential user, client or market	6%
Social Impact and responsible innovation	12%	12	Social relevance and benefits for society of the asset and level of contribution to improving quality of life of citizens, social progress and human development	6%
		13	Responsible innovation process. Research and innovation covers wide social needs. Existence of mechanisms of participation and involvement of the different social stakeholders	6%
				<b>100%</b>

**Recommendations for the evaluator**

- » Before beginning to evaluate an application, it is advisable to be familiar with the criteria and definitions in the Evaluation Table and the overall functioning of the process.
- » Before starting to rate the application, evaluators should examine several applications so that they have an idea of the information submitted and of the correspondence between the information contained in each application and the factors defined in its evaluation.
- » Before concluding the evaluation, the first applications evaluated should be reviewed to ensure that there is no bias in the scores.

Once the initial evaluation period has concluded, the Programme Office will verify that all of the applications have been rated by the assigned evaluators and that they have finished the evaluation task.

## Review

The Programme Office, which is the body responsible for ensuring the correct functioning of the selection process, will review the consistency of the evaluations between the experts who evaluated the same applications, taking into account the average score from each expert with regards to the total number of applications evaluated.

In case that the difference between the experts' scores persists, a third evaluator will be assigned to the application. The final score for the application is the average of the scores from the three evaluators .

Programme Office is responsible for short-listing the applications that will present to the Selection Panel and will also settle any issues that may arise during the process. When making short lists of applications, those with the best scores in the overall ranking, the best scores in each disciplinary field and the best scores in each group will be identified. Up to 40 applications will be short-listed.

However, based on principles of excellence, if the quality of the applications justifies it, the Programme Office can select a greater or lesser number of applications.

The short list of applications will be included in the Programme Office Minutes.

Applicants will be notified as to whether or not their applications have been short-listed.

## 4

### Selection Panel

Applications that have been short-listed will then proceed to the final stage of the process, consisting of a personal interview in which the applicant can defend his or her project before the Selection Panel, consisting of a committee of experts.

The experts that form part of this panel will have access to the information regarding the applications.

The general aim of the interviews is to assess more precisely the consistency and soundness of the projects proposed by the short-listed candidates and the suitability of the application with regards to the objectives of the programme.

An interview will typically last no more than 15 minutes and will follow the structure described below:

- » A representative of the programme welcomes the candidate.
- » The candidate will give a brief summary of the project (no longer than 5 minutes).
- » The committee members will ask whatever questions they deem appropriate to assess the holistic quality of the project and of the candidate (no longer than 10 minutes)

The programme representative will ensure that the interviews are held in accordance with the planned schedule, and candidates must be as punctual as requested.

There are no specific guidelines as to how the interview should be performed. It is the prerogative of the members of the panel to establish the dynamics, tone, depth and scope of questions posed to each candidate.

In general, questions should be short and the candidate should be the one who speaks most of the time.

Not all members of the panel need to ask the candidate questions. In fact, turns for questioning should be distributed evenly throughout the whole interview stage.

### Preparing the interview

Experts will receive information about the candidates they must interview sufficiently in advance so as to be able to prepare the interviews correctly.

The experts must carefully examine the information in each application and prepare a list of possible questions to be put to the candidates.

### Recommendations for the evaluator

- » Ideally, the interviews should be scored as the interviews are held, although once a certain number (around five) have concluded, the initial scores should be reviewed and adjusted, taking into consideration the development of the evaluation.
- » Similarly, notes should be taken during each interview, as they may be necessary to recall the presentation by the candidate during commission discussion.
- » Whether or not they are deemed necessary in certain cases, conventional questions or questions that candidates may typically expect in the interview should be avoided. On the contrary, questions should be posed that could provide insight into aspects to be evaluated in this stage of the process (presentation quality, viability of the proposal and suitability to the reality of the estimated impact, effect of participation in the programme and on the trajectory of the project, etc.).
- » All candidates should be treated the same regardless of the disciplinary field of the project, even if the evaluator may be more familiar with it. The depth and scope of the questions posed should be similar for all interviewees.
- » Questions which can be answered from the information provided by the candidate in the application should not be asked.
- » However, questions should be posed that result in more in-depth information about the application being obtained or clarification of aspects that, in the evaluator's opinion, are not sufficiently explained in the documentation.
- » The interview should be held in English.

### Evaluation of the final candidates

Experts involved in the evaluation of the interviews must give the applications an overall score, taking into account the following four aspects (1 being lowest and 5 being highest for each):

- » The asset's **potential for transfer to market**, particularly as a new business (30%)
- » The **social impact** of the project, broadly understood to be the ability of the project to contribute to improving the quality of life of people and society in general, all while respecting human rights and ethical principles (14%)
- » The **capability and motivation of the participant** to lead the definition and implementation of the valorisation and commercialization plan (26%)
- » The **significance and the impact** that participation in the programme will have on the project, and its full implications for the valorisation and transfer of the asset (30%)

### Evaluation protocol

At the end of each interview, the experts must give a score for each candidate according to the points described above. Panel members must not try to agree on or discuss their given scores as the interviews progress. Each member must individually assign his or her evaluation of the candidate examined according to his/her own impressions of the interview. Each expert must justify, with a brief and explanatory text, the overall opinion of the rating of each application evaluated.

The evaluation process will be carried out on an online platform expressly designed for this purpose. Once all of the candidates have been interviewed and all of the scores collected, the programme representative will draw up a provisional classification.

Taking this classification into consideration, the experts may discuss the appropriateness, reviewing notes and assessing the arguments that other experts may provide with the aim of revising one or several of the scores.

The above notwithstanding, it is at the committee's entire discretion to establish its own dynamics and determine the procedure it considers most suitable to reach an agreement as to the final list of participants.

### Aspects to be considered

- » The final list of candidates must be obtained without considering any other aspect that has not been explicitly established for the evaluation of an application.

- » In this regard, accidental factors must not be taken into account to determine the final list of candidates. In particular, the following should be avoided:
  - Consideration of geographical origin, centre of origin or any other aspect that may not be linked to an evaluation performed exclusively according to criteria of excellence.
  - Any type of corporate bias, either to favour or to penalise candidates, which in some way can be associated to members of the panel, due to their disciplinary field, specific subject of the project, etc.

