



Code of conduct for evaluators

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Introduction

This document sets out the general principles that evaluators should follow when examining and rating applications that are submitted for evaluation in the CaixaImpulse programme's selection process. These are common sense considerations, in general practiced widely by experts involved in selection processes.

These principles, which aim to guarantee the observance of requirements such as transparency or equal treatment of all applications, are included in this document for the dual purpose of divulging:

- A formal list that can be used as a reminder by the experts.
- The principles that govern the selection processes for this programme that will be published and made available to all applicants.

This document also includes a second section that describes situations in which a possible conflict of interest may arise.

General Principles

- Evaluators must complete the tasks assigned, upholding confidentiality and examining each application fairly, impartially and equally, in accordance with the evaluation guidelines provided by the promoters and organisers of the programme.
- Evaluators carry out their tasks as independent observers. They do not represent any organisation, region, country, group or discipline.
- If an evaluator were to have a direct or indirect interest in the evaluated application, or any personal or familial connection with the applicant, the Secretariat of the programme must be notified immediately (see "Conflicts of Interest").
- Evaluators must not discuss the contents of the application with anyone, least of all with the applicant.
- Evaluators who participate in the independent evaluation processes (short-listing) and who evaluate the same applications must not contact each other with regards to the applications examined.
- Similarly, evaluators must maintain the confidentiality of the process and avoid contact, with regards to the applications examined, with people who may have written letters of recommendation for the applicants being evaluated or with doctors or researchers leading their theses or research projects.
- Experts must not notify anyone of the names of other participating experts or those who have participated in the committees or panels until the selection process has concluded and the names of the selected participants have been made public.
- Experts should ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the documentation they have been given access to through online channels and ensure that it is not accessible

to third parties who may or may not be interested in the evolution of the selection process.

- The documentation provided is used exclusively for evaluating the applications. Therefore it must not be used for any other purpose.
- Hard or electronic copies, notes and documents obtained by or provided to the evaluator during the independent evaluation or participation on panels must be destroyed or returned to the Secretariat of the programme once the selection process has concluded.
- It is of utmost importance for each call that the deadlines established for the tasks assigned are met. Subsequent stages of a selection process cannot commence if preceding stages have not been completed. For this reason, the failure of one single evaluator to meet deadlines compromises the work of everyone else.
- Compliance with commitments undertaken with regards to a call is an exercise of respect and responsibility.
- The programme's Secretariat will contact, sufficiently in advance, experts who will take part in the initial evaluation and comprise the panel of experts who will interview applicants for each call. Acceptance of participation in the process implies that the Secretariat has covered this position. From that moment on, should an evaluator renounce his or her participation, the management of the selection process would be seriously hindered, especially when this occurs closer to the end of the process.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is the possibility of an unsuitable use or abuse (whether real, apparent, perceived or potential) of the trust that the general public, applicants and the promoting and organising entities of the programme have placed with the experts who will evaluate the applications. Therefore, experts must determine which applications are accepted into the programme.

A conflict of interest is a situation in which financial, personal or professional considerations could compromise or bias the neutrality, impartiality and objectivity of an individual whose position is susceptible to affect, directly or indirectly, the result of a selection process.

Evaluators must immediately notify the programme secretariat should a possible conflict of interest arise during the development of his or her task in the selection process.

Conflicts of interest will be handled in the same way that agencies in other countries and the European Commission handles them.

A conflict of interest exists when:

- The evaluator has actively intervened in the preparation of a candidate's application.
- The evaluator has a familial connection with the candidate (close connection).

- The evaluator has actively intervened in the development of the asset that is the subject of the application.
- The evaluator has been recused by one of the applicants or has a clear friendship or enmity with any of the applicants.

A conflict of interest could exist when:

- The evaluator is the applicant's doctoral thesis director (defended in the last 10 years)
- The evaluator has collaborated on publications or patents in the last 5 years
- The evaluator has had a contractual relationship or shared funds or research projects in the last 3 years
- The evaluator has or has had a close personal or professional relationship with the candidate.
- With regards to the application or the applicant, the evaluator finds him or herself in any other situation that, in his/her opinion or that of a third party, could compromise his/her ability to examine the application with neutrality.

The existence or possibility of a conflict of interest does not imply that the evaluator cannot complete the evaluation of the application. The Selection Committee must determine, according to the particular circumstances of each case, whether or not the conflict compromises the activity of the evaluator.

If the Selection Committee and the evaluator resolve that the potential conflict of interest does not compromise the evaluator's task, effective and reasonable controls will be established to guarantee that the scores have not been affected in any way.