

## **Evaluation of Consolider Programs: Procedure and General Criteria**

In accordance with points 5 and 7 of Appendix II of the 2008 Call for Applications, and notwithstanding any future modifications or additions to be established by the CONSOLIDER Scientific Committee (Article 8, section 1.b.), the Consolider Programs application evaluation and selection criteria may be summarized as follows.

### **Application selection and evaluation procedures**

In keeping with the competitive nature of the Consolider Program and with its commitment to providing a public, transparent, egalitarian and impartial selection process based in internationally-recognized methods of scientific and technical research evaluation, the application assessment and grant awarding procedure for Consolider Program will have two consecutive phases:

- a. During **phase one** (pre-screening), each application shall be subjected to a scientific and technical screening procedure in which particular attention will be paid to the professional histories of participating researchers and the degree to which the proposed research program is seen to fulfil a strategic need. The research program itself should be written in a clear and concise manner. All applications shall be considered pre-applications until they are advanced to the second phase of the screening process.

A number of factors shall be considered during this phase, including the level of excellence and overall capabilities of the participating research teams; the degree of international recognition attained by individual team members; their leadership and experience; and the viability, novelty and importance of the proposed research program. Preference shall be given to research programs that both fulfil the stated application requirements and present a work plan in which collaboration between participating teams is deemed to contribute added value to activities previously performed independently.

- b. During **phase two**, each of the proposed research programs will be rigorously evaluated. Each candidate team selected during the initial pre-screening phase will be allowed to complete its dossier at this point by presenting a definitive, more detailed proposal and all other required documentation. The formal application takes on a critical importance during this second phase of the screening process. Particular attention will be paid to: (b,1) The timeliness and

scientific/technological relevance of the proposed activity plan, the specific details provided by the team regarding the development and execution of this plan and its potential impact on the advancement of research; (b,2) The program budget and, when relevant, the variety of funding sources and projected program timeline; (b,3) The functional structure of the team, the areas of investigation to be explored by participating researchers, and the added value that this cooperation between team members will bring to the R+D system, to the team's competitive status at an international level and especially within the European Union, and to its sustainability or future growth, as stated in the proposal; (b,4) The coherency of the structures or elements necessary to the coordination and smooth functioning of the team.

The Consolider grant competition is supported by several administrative organs specifically appointed for this purpose. These include:

- a. The CONSOLIDER Administrative Committee (Comisión Gestora Consolider). Under the authority of the Secretary General of Science and Technology, this committee passes on grant award resolutions to the designated administrative organs, which are responsible for publishing the information contained in these resolutions during each stage of the selection process. The Committee also accepts any proposed modifications to the research Program and, in collaboration with the Scientific Committee and the Monitoring Committee, carries out the mid-term (third year) evaluations of the various research Programs.
- b. The CONSOLIDER Scientific Committee, whose basic mission shall be to evaluate and assess the participating research teams and the proposed research Programs. Made up of internationally-ranked scientists and technologists, the Committee includes representatives of the ANEP as well as a number of third-party, independent evaluators, all of whom shall be designated by the Secretary General of Scientific and Technological Politics. There should be a tendency to appoint equal numbers of male versus female committee members, and their names shall be published on the Ministry of Education and Science website. During each phase of the application selection process, the CONSOLIDER Scientific Committee shall pass along the results of their evaluations to the CONSOLIDER Administrative Committee for the latter to review and, if appropriate, revise.

- c. The Monitoring Committee, whose membership and functions shall be laid out in the Execution Agreement, shall supervise the development of the each **individual research program** under the direction of the CONSOLIDER Administrative Committee.

### **Evaluation Criteria (Appendix II, section 7)**

Candidate research teams shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- a. The level of excellence represented by the professional record of the Coordinating Investigator. The overall scientific and/or technological and professional experience of team members, and their recent key contributions to the areas of investigation described in the proposed research activity program.
- b. The number of researchers on the applicant team, and their real and potential critical mass.
- c. The international scope of the scientific and/or technological activities carried out by applicant team members.
- d. The degree of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary reflected by the research program.

Candidate research programs shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- a. The attractiveness and importance of the qualitative leap in science and/or technology which the research program purports to achieve.
- b. The novelty, viability and timeliness of the research program and the appropriateness of the proposed methodology; the research activity plan and the proposed timeline for its completion.
- c. The degree to which the proposed program can be seen to complement existing research projects or other actions funded by the National Plan for R+D+r or the European Union Framework Programme.
- d. The predicted impact of the proposed activities and their expected contribution to science and/or technology.
- e. The existence of private or public co-funding obtained by the proposed research program, and/or of funding contracts or project evaluations sponsored by the European Union Framework Programme.

- f. The degree to which the proposed program offers a coherent plan that is appropriate to the team's resources, skills and objectives.
- g. The existence of an adequate and sufficient plan for the transfer and dissemination of technologies and outcomes.
- h. The presentation of a rigorous evaluation scheme that includes pre-determined criteria for the ongoing assessment of the proposed program and its outcomes.

In general, priority shall be given to those research programs with the greatest perceived potential to advance scientific or technological knowledge and/or skills, that are of potential benefit to Spain's key productive sectors (those sectors that have the greatest impact on the Spanish national economy), and that possess a critical mass of appropriate size, quality and scope.

6. The total applicable value of the aforementioned criteria shall be 100 points.

7. In accordance with its objectives, each team must provide a demonstrable estimate of the results it expects to have obtained at the end of the specified funding period (five years). Particular weight will be placed on the number of new publications to be generated by the team during the aforementioned period, which must be accompanied by a formal ranking index (or its equivalent); the number of patents that it expects to obtain after three and five years of funding; and whether or not it plans to participate in any of the European Union Framework Programme grant competitions.

The proposed research program should also allow the team to attain meaningful partial results that can be evaluated after three years of activity. This goal should not impede the team's ability to justify its work in mandatory annual reports, each of which is to be compiled from the results of a formal evaluation of the team's scientific, technical and financial activities. These periodical evaluations shall be carried out by the designated administrative organ, as per current Program rules.