



AGENCIA
ESTATAL DE
INVESTIGACIÓN

Annual Action
Plan of the State
Research Agency
for 2018



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1. PRESENTATION

Royal Decree 1067/2015, of 27 November, created the State Research Agency (hereinafter, the Agency) and approved its statutes. It was effectively constituted on 20 June 2016, by means of the incorporation meeting held by its Governing Body.

The Agency was created with the mission of contributing to the promotion of scientific and technical research in all areas of knowledge through competitive allocation of public resources, monitoring of the financed actions and their impact, and consultancy in planning actions or initiatives through which the R&D policies of the General State Administration are instrumented.

The Royal Decree for the creation of the Agency provided that until approval of the Management Contract by means of the joint ministerial order of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and Treasury and Public Administrations, the actions of the Agency would be implemented in accordance with the criteria and guidelines of the Initial Action Plan which is included in the Report referred to in Article 3 of Law 28/2006, of 18 July, as well as the actions to be implemented derived from the approval of the scientific and technical and innovation research plans in accordance with the provisions of Law 14/2011, of 1 June and its corresponding annual action programmes.

In accordance with transitional provision 5 of Royal Decree 1067/2015, of 27 November, the Agency should submit to the Governing Body its Management Contract within three months of its constitution, with a view to it being submitted to subsequent approval by the joint ministerial order of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations and Economy and Competitiveness.

In 2017, the Agency began preparing the Management Contract, a process that is expected to be completed in 2018. However, approval of the Management Contract shall be subject to the rules which, where appropriate, may be established by the Ministry of Finance and Public Service as a consequence of the change in legal regime of public agencies that has led to entry into force of Law 40/2015, of 1 October, on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector. The aforesaid Law suppresses State Agencies, which have three years to amend their Articles of Association and constitute themselves as autonomous bodies.

In turn, in accordance with Article 23 of the Articles of Association, the Annual Action Plan for 2017 was to be submitted for approval by the Governing Body before 1 February 2017. Hence, without prejudice to what may result from the approval of the Management Contract of the Agency, on 30 January 2017, the Governing Body prepared and approved the Annual Action Plan for 2017; this covered the new actions to be performed during this year, providing continuity to the activities of the Initial Action Plan.

It is now time to proceed with the approval of the Annual Action Plan for 2018, which covers the new actions to be carried out this year, providing continuity to those gathered in the Initial Action Plan and in the Plan for 2017.

The Annual Action Plan is configured as the planning instrument of the Agency. On the basis of available resources, it gathers together the activities to be carried out during the corresponding year to achieve its objectives. Its regulation is implemented through Article 15 of Law 28/2006, of 18 July, on State Agencies for the improvement of public services and Article 23 of the Articles of Association, according to which:

The annual action plan will include, among others, the following activities:

- a) Those of a nature involving training, methodology and identification of management indicators of the activities that correspond to the Agency.
- b) Those entailing the management, monitoring and control of the actions which insofar as scientific, technical and innovation research correspond to the Agency in accordance with its purpose and functions.
- c) Those pertaining to the organisation and management of the scientific and technical evaluation of the proposals which require funding charged to the programmes and instruments assigned to the Agency or as a result of collaboration agreements.”

In this document, the Annual Action Plan is structured around six main lines of action, describing the activities through which the functions of the Agency will be implemented and therefore its objectives will be achieved, as well as the indicators that will enable their degree of compliance to be quantified.

This Annual Action Plan for 2018 has been approved by the Governing Body of the Agency, as set forth in Article 23 of its Articles of Association, in its session held on 30 January 2018.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with Article 2.1 of the Articles of Association, “the purpose inherent to the Agency comprises financing, evaluating, managing and monitoring the scientific and technical research activity aimed at the generation, exchange and exploitation of knowledge that is fostered by the General State Administration on its own initiative or in concurrence with other Administrations or entities in Spain or other countries, as well as, international organisms.”

For its part, Article 2.2 establishes that “the Agency’s purposes include the promotion of scientific and technical research in all areas of knowledge through the efficient assignment of public resources, the promotion of excellence, fostering collaboration among agencies within the System and supporting the generation of high-impact knowledge of scientific and technical, economic and social impact, including those aimed at the resolution of society’s great challenges, and the monitoring of financed activities as well as the necessary advice to improve the design and planning of actions or initiatives through which the R&D policies of the General State Administration are instrumented”.

2.2 FUNCTIONS

Article 5 of the Articles of Association of the Agency establish that “for the fulfilment of its purpose and objective, the Agency shall perform the following functions:

- a) Management of the programmes, instruments and actions that are assigned within the framework of the National Plans for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation, any other expressly assigned by the General State Administration or those deriving from the collaboration agreements concluded with other entities or from other actions, through the objective and impartial allocation of the available resources.
- b) The organisation and management of the scientific and technical evaluation before and after the proposals, actions and initiatives where it is appropriate to use evaluation criteria based on internationally recognised scientific and technical merits and any other criteria established through the corresponding calls.
- c) The subsequent verification, monitoring and evaluation of the activities financed by the Agency and their scientific, technical and socio-economic impact, as well as control of the justification regarding fulfilment of the conditions and objectives of the grants received.
- d) Communication and dissemination of the results of the evaluations carried out.
- e) Monitoring the management, financing, justification and results of all the actions that are directly implemented by the Agency, as well as providing consultancy on these.
- f) Participating in meetings and national and international forums related to the matters inherent to its purpose and objectives, and the representation in RDI policy forums when so determined by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness. The actions of the Agency in international forums will take place in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Cooperation when deemed necessary.

- g) Dissemination and communication of the results of its activities and the results of the research financed by the Agency.
- h) Management of actions to foster collaboration, exchange, circulation, dissemination and exploitation of scientific and technical knowledge among the agents within the System.
- i) The performance of the activities or the provision of the services which are commissioned by the General State Administration or, by virtue of contracts, agreements and in general legal business, by other entities.
- j) Management of the R&D actions financed with European funds and those resulting from the Spanish participation in international programmes.
- k) The economic and budgetary management and economic and financial control of the instruments and actions that correspond.
- l) Any other duties entrusted to the same.

2.3 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ACTION

The Agency shall observe the principles of general interest that should govern the actions of the Public Administrations. In the exercise of its specific functions, the Agency will also be governed by the following basic principles in accordance with Article 6 of its Articles of Association:

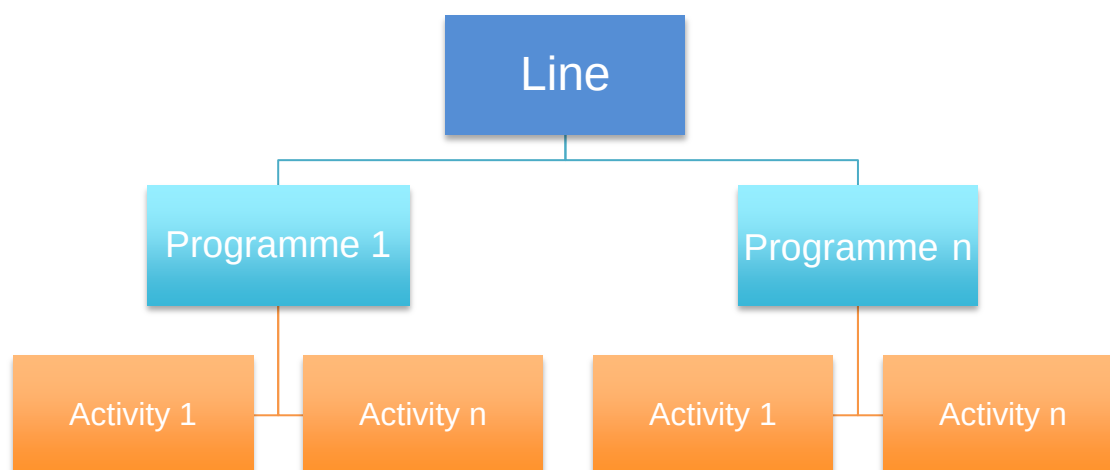
1. Autonomy, understood as the ability of the Agency to manage the resources made available for achieving the objectives committed to.
2. Technical independence, based on the training, specialisation, professionalism and individual responsibility of personnel working for the Agency, who shall observe the values of competition, professional ethics and public accountability which are applicable.
3. Objectivity in the evaluation of scientific, technical and innovative merit in all their actions, which shall be carried out using previously established criteria, known to all and based on international standards which are commonly accepted.
4. Transparency in all administrative activities and compliance with good governance obligations by the public actors of the Agency, as well as accountability and commitments to provide precise and complete information regarding all the results and procedures used in management.
5. Effectiveness in actions carried out, investing all the means necessary to implement the objective and purpose defined in its Articles of Association.
6. Efficiency in the allocation and use of public resources and continuous evaluation of the quality of the management processes and action procedures, which will be carried out according to the criteria regarding legality, speed, simplification and electronic accessibility and without prejudice to the necessary rigour.

7. Inter-agency cooperation, understood as the principle that seeks synergies in collaboration with other Administrations, agents and institutions, public or private, national and international, for fostering knowledge in all areas.

8. Gender equality, promoting a gender perspective and a balanced representation of women and men in their bodies, councils and committees and activities in accordance with the provisions set forth in Statutory Law 3/2007, of 22 March, for the effective equality of women and men, and additional provision thirteen of Law 14/2011, of 1 June.

3. THE SIX LINES OF ACTION

The Agency's programming has been divided into six lines of action; for each of these several main activities have been defined, most of which are generally grouped into programmes. Each of the activities is made up of different phases and tasks, in accordance with the following diagram.



Each of the defined activities has been associated to an indicator and, whenever possible, an estimate of the actual workload for each of these indicators has been established, as well as a value, in percentage, for the purpose of effective compliance with the indicator on the actual workload defined.

Each programme includes a table containing the following information:

Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
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The column *Estimated workload* indicates the real workload for the defined activity. Depending on the activity in question, this value may include both the workload from the powers and functions subrogated from the former General Directorate of Scientific and Technical Research and General Directorate of Innovation and Competitiveness of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (additional provision one of Royal Decree 1067/2015, of 27 November), with those corresponding to the powers and functions inherent to the Agency as of the time it came into operation, or the sum of both.

All the indicators are defined in a relative manner, that is, referenced to a real estimated workload.

The column *Objective* indicates the degree of compliance in percentage which is expected to be achieved in 2018 for the indicator.

In some programmes, the Objective is not defined as a percentage of compliance of the actual workload of the activity, but as an absolute form. In these cases, the Estimated workload is dispensed with and the information indicated per programme is:

Activity	Indicator	Objective
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3.1 LINE 1. CONSOLIDATION AND STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGENCY.

Programme 1. Approval of the Management Contract

The Agency's most relevant purpose from the point of view of its consolidation and structural development, is the drafting and approval of its Management Contract.

The Management Contract must include the content referred to in Article 21 of the Articles of Association and its approval will be provided in accordance with the procedure regulated in Article 20.

Approval of the Management Contract shall be subject to the rules which, where appropriate, may be established by the Ministry of Finance and Public Service as a consequence of the change in legal regime of public agencies that has led to the entry into force of Law 40/2015, of 1 October, on the Legal Regime of the Public sector. The aforesaid Law suppresses State Agencies, which have three years to amend their Articles of Association and constitute themselves as autonomous bodies.

The purpose is the approval of the Management Contract in 2018, the work for which has commenced, although it was not completed during 2017.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Preparation and approval of the Management Contract of the Agency	Preparation of the Management Contract	1

Programme 2. Adaptation of spaces and material resources.

The Annual Action Plan for 2017, provided that, after having established the organisational and functional structure of the Agency and the resources corresponding to personnel and material means corresponding to each division and subdivision, it would be necessary to conduct a study on the degree of adequacy of the distribution of spaces and material resources available.

The aforesaid study would take as reference the starting point, analysing in detail the characteristics demanded by the new structure and the adequacy of the material resources available, in a bid to achieve a redistribution which is as efficient as possible.

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This plan for the adaptation of spaces and material resources would contain at least: (a) a description of the spaces to be occupied by the Agency; (b) the distribution of these according to the divisions and subdivisions integrating its structure; and (c) the list of resources -file, furniture and computer and communications equipment- available for performing its functions.

After having defined the plan, the next step would be to perform the adaptation of the spaces and the physical relocation of people and equipment in cases where this is necessary, while ensuring that the transfer is carried out in a manner that interferes as little as possible in the Agency's work.

Therefore, during 2017 a plan for the adaptation of spaces and material means has been prepared jointly with the Undersecretary of the Department, although the aforesaid adaptation of spaces and the transfer could not be made effective. This was to the need for prior approval of the legal framework of common services between the Department and the Agency, which was completed in the last quarter of 2017.

Therefore, a specific objective for 2018 will be to adapt the spaces and the physical relocation of the people and equipment in cases where it is necessary.

Prior to this, an inventory of the elements assigned by the Department and made available to the various units of the Agency for the fulfilment of their purposes will be prepared.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Drafting of the inventory of items assigned by the Department	Drafting the plan	1
Adaptation of spaces	Implementation of the action	1
Physical relocation of personnel and equipment	Implementation of the action	1

Programme 3. Arrangement of the Human Resources.

After completing the assignment of personnel of the Secretariat of State for Research, Development and Innovation to the Agency and defining the structure and distribution of personnel into the different units, this programme aims to advance in the design of the general framework for action in the field of human resources which, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the article 3.7 of the Agency Law, focuses on the determination of the working conditions for public employees of the Agency, including aspects related to the organisation, structure and framework for action in relation to human resources, remuneration, etc., including the input from employee representatives and trade union organisations as appropriate.

The Activities envisaged within this programme are the following:

The Activities envisaged within this programme are the following:

- 1. Design and implementation of the general framework of labour relations.** Includes the design of the procedures and bodies for labour relations, labour representation, committees and systems of participation, as well as the identification and preparation of the instructions corresponding to the risk prevention systems and the identification of the matters that will be subject to social action.

2. **Preparation and implementation of the 2018 Training Plan.** A Training Plan will be prepared with the aim of improving the necessary skills for the correct functioning of the organisation and the effective delivery of services. The preparation of the Plan will be carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness and with the participation of the workers' representatives.
3. **Preparation and implementation of the 2018 Social Action Plan.** A social action aid plan will be prepared and implemented for the workers of the Agency corresponding to 2018. This will focus on individual measures (grants for employee training, health protection, descendants and ascendants, transportation, disability, gender-based violence and situations of an exceptional nature) and on measures of a collective nature (medical examinations, canteen allowances, etc.).
4. **Measures for the incorporation of new personnel to the Agency.** During 2018, a general competition and another specific one will be approved, published and resolved for the provision of job positions for civil servant personnel in the Agency, which will offer a minimum of 20 jobs positions which are currently vacant. Similarly, a study and proposal for job positions will be carried out for incorporating them into the Public Employment Offer for 2018.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Design and implementation of the general framework of labour relations	Preparation of the document	1
Preparation and implementation of the Training Plan	Approval and implementation of the plan	1
Preparation and implementation of the Social Action Plan	Approval and implementation of the plan	1
Measures for the incorporation of new personnel	Approval, publication and implementation of two competitions for transfers and preparation and presentation of a proposal for the Public Employment Offer.	3

Programme 4. Adaptation of the administrative, management and follow-up processes.

The Agency's highest priority is to substantially improve the efficiency and transparency of the comprehensive management procedures it uses for allocating public funds destined to R&D activities, for which it must address the simplification of procedures related to the implementation and follow-up of all its actions.

For this purpose, the programme includes as the main activity in 2018:

1. **Basic Procedures Manual.** This manual will include the catalogue of basic procedures of the Agency, and each one of them will describe, among other aspects, the activities it includes, the units involved, the computer tools to be used, the applicable regulations and the associated deadlines.

The manual should contribute to the efficiency, agility and simplification of procedures, as well as to ensure audit control. Equally, efforts will be made to achieve standardisation of the computer systems and the identification of indicators to enable assessment of the

achievement of objectives.

The manual will include the development of procedures in the following management areas:

- a. Procedures associated to the management of grants for RDI.
- b. Procedures for the arrangement of economic and budget management.
- c. Procedures for HR management.

The preparation of this manual, already included in the 2017 Annual Action Plan, is well advanced in terms of procedures associated to the management of aid for RDI.

During 2018, these procedures will be completed and work will focus on preparing the procedures related to the arrangement of the financial and budget management and HR management.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Basic procedures manual	Preparation of the document	1

Programme 5. Communication and visibility of the Agency's activities.

Governing Body held on 4 December 2017. That document reflects the communication and dissemination tools that will provide visibility to the activities and actions that the Agency performs externally and towards its employees. Likewise, it includes the lines of action that establish transparency in all administrative activities and compliance with the good governance obligations of the public actors of the Agency, as well as accountability and commitments to provide precise and complete information regarding the results and procedures used in management. The specific measures for the execution of this plan for 2018 are set out in Line 6.

Within programme 5 and as a necessary instrument for implementing the Communication and Transparency Plan, it is proposed that for 2018 a web portal of the Agency be designed and launched. During 2017 a specific space has been provided to the Agency on the website of the Secretariat of State for RDI, which has proved useful to communicate and provide visibility to its activities. However, it is considered essential that the Agency has its own website, one which is easy to access and which serves as a source of information and communication, as well as to strengthen the institutional image of the Agency.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Design and implementation of the Agency's website	Implementation of the action	1

3.2 LINE 2. MANAGEMENT of the financing instruments.

The Agency's functions include management of the programmes, instruments and actions that are assigned within the framework of the State Plans for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation, any other expressly assigned by the General State Administration or those deriving from the collaboration agreements concluded with other entities or from other actions, through the objective and impartial allocation of the available resources (Article 5.a of the Articles of Association).

Within the framework of the aforementioned State Plans, the Annual Action Programmes (hereinafter AAP) are the documents containing the scheduled actions for promoting and encouraging RDI, and the budgetary appropriations allocated for funding through various funding agencies including the State Research Agency, usually through competitive bids.

In turn, the Agency is responsible for the economic and budgetary management and economic and financial control of the instruments and actions that correspond (Article 5.k of the Articles of Association).

Therefore, the Agency's activity in this area has been subdivided into Programme 1: institution of the procedure for granting calls and into Programme 2: Economic and budget management. The indicators provided in these two programmes depend entirely on the actions scheduled in the AAP and on the available budget, due to which they have been estimated based on data from 2017.

Programme 1. Institution of the procedure for the granting of calls

This programme has been divided into four key activities, comprising different phases and tasks which are described below:

1. **Drafting and publication of the calls.** Including, in addition to the drafting of the texts of all the calls, the application of the requisite reports and authorisations, the signature and publications in the official gazette and in the BDNS (National Database of Grants).

Qualitatively, the aim is to achieve homogenisation in the drafting of calls and in the data that is recorded in the BDNS for facilitating the process carried out by potential beneficiaries when presenting grant applications and access to information.

2. **Instruction.** This activity comprises the processes of technological configuration of the communication interfaces with the beneficiaries and internal processing applications, the administrative review of applications, the correction and processing of possible discontinuance and the notification of the proposal of provisional and definitive resolution.

Qualitatively, the aim is to homogenise the notifications to beneficiaries, as well as to improve the procedures to shorten processing times.

3. **Maintenance of the entities system.** The Entities System is the repository where the entities applying for grants from the Agency must register by providing the necessary documentation to accredit their legal status, as well as the valid representation of the individuals who are appointed as legal representatives of the latter.

This repository is connected with all grant-processing systems; hence it is essential that all

information be kept up to date and it allows for a system that records the new entities.

4. **Advice to applicants.** During the entire process for submission of applications and instruction of the calls, it is essential that the entities receive correct advice in the field of configuration of the application reports, correct allocation of the eligible costs, statements of responsibility, hearing procedures, etc. This advice shall be provided by means of manuals and FAQ files posted on the institutional website, as well as through email accounts.

Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
Drafting and publication of the calls	21	No. of calls published	100%
Instruction	16,000	No. of cases processed	100%
Maintenance of the entities system	3,600	No. of applications for registering/withdrawing/modifications processed	100%
Advice to grant applicants	30,000	No. of emails answered	100%

Programme 2. Economic and Budget management

This programme has been divided into five key activities comprising different phases and tasks, which are described below:

1. **Fiscal control prior to the grant calls requiring it.** The number of calls subject to prior fiscal control by the Audit Office of the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness corresponds to those with budgetary chapter 8 available for funding.

For each of the different accounting phases necessary for implementing expenditure (referred to in point 4), this process comprises the preparation of the documentation that, with regard to the basic requirements for prior fiscal control, is included in the Council of Minister's Agreement of 30 May 2008.

2. **Review of the requirements for obtaining the status of beneficiary and for the payment of multi-annual grants.** This activity comprises both the review of the statements of responsibility and certificates provided by the applicants and, in the case of prior authorisation having been granted, verification via the web servers facilitated for compliance with the obligations undertaken with the Tax Agency and Social Security. This review is performed only once for each entity regardless of the number of grants approved.
3. **Issuance of accounting documents.** The necessary documents for processing the calls managed by the Agency are, depending on the stage of the procedure, the following

Type of accounting document	Call phase
RC	Credit retention document that accompanies the

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	expenditure proposal for its authorisation.
A	Expenditure approval document, once the call has been authorised and published.
D	Expenditure commitment, this document is used once the call has been resolved and the beneficiaries of the latter are known.
OP/OK	Acknowledgement of the obligation and payment of this or acknowledgement of the obligation and proposal for payment (depending on whether these are credits from budgetary chapters 7 or 8).

- 4. Payment of grants.** The payment of grants, as in all their economic management procedures, must be differentiated based on whether it is the Agency's own budget or the budget of the Secretariat of State, budgetary chapters 7 or 8, respectively.

In the first case and after having recorded the grants reflected in its respective OP document, this will be transferred to the unit responsible for managing the Agency's Treasury, to order the necessary transfers, albeit taking into account the situation of the Treasury.

In the case of budgetary chapter 8 operations, after the accounting document has been taxed by the Audit Office, the payment order will be issued to the Public Treasury, a process in which the Agency is not involved at any time.

All the aid granted, regardless of its form, must be registered in the National Database of grants (BDNS).

- 5. Advice to grant applicants.** Advice will be provided to beneficiaries, especially in relation to the presentation of guarantees and characteristics of the bank accounts. This advice will be provided using the email accounts available on the institutional website.

Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
Prior fiscal control of the calls requiring it	4	No. of controlled calls	100%
Review of the requirements for obtaining the status of beneficiary and the payment of multi-annual grants	7,000	No. of reviews	100%
Issuance of accounting documents arising from grant approval	21,675	No. of accounting documents issued	100%
Payment of grants	9,788	No. of transfers made	100%
Data loading in the BDNS	9,788	No. of concessions loaded	100%
Advice to beneficiaries	600	No. of emails answered	100%

3.3 LINE 3. Scientific and technical evaluation of the proposals.

The Agency is responsible for the organisation and management of the scientific and technical evaluation before and after the proposals, actions and initiatives where it is appropriate to use evaluation criteria based on internationally recognised scientific and technical merits and any other criteria established through the corresponding calls, as indicated in the Articles of Association (Article 5.b).

The scientific and technical evaluation of the proposals and their internationally proven development protocols are the fundamental pillars that guarantee the correct operation of the competitive process based on the criteria of excellence and the proper allocation of budgetary funds.

This line of action is divided into three activities programmes: the first programme includes the activities corresponding to the evaluations of the instruments included in the AAP, the second programme includes the evaluations corresponding to the collaboration agreements and to the order of public prices with other entities external to the Agency. Lastly, the third programme refers to the development of the protocols that will be used in the internal processes related to the evaluation and will be duly disseminated.

Programme 1. Annual Action Plan derived activities

This programme includes four activities:

- 1. Management of individual peer review evaluations.** This activity begins with a search for the best experts available in each of the thematic areas that correspond with the proposals, with the aim of obtaining a peer review evaluation for each of the applications. This process entails close monitoring of the implementation of the evaluations themselves and the reallocation of the proposals to new evaluators in those cases in which the evaluators initially assigned rejected it, or of discrepancy between the evaluations issued.
- 2. Management of the Technical evaluation commissions.** This activity includes tasks such as the designation of the members of the commissions themselves, as well as the organisation of the human and technical resources necessary for the implementation of the latter.
- 3. Drafting of the final evaluation reports.** This activity comprises generating the final reports which include the information obtained from all the applications submitted and from the technical reports produced via the peer evaluation and the technical commissions, all with the main objective of achieving final prioritisation of all the proposals.
- 4. Drafting allegation reports.** The possible allegations made by applicants relating to the scientific and technical evaluation of their proposals must be thoroughly studied by experts or external collaborators, and the pertinent technical reports must be issued.

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Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
Management of individual peer evaluations	30,000	No. of individual evaluations performed	100%
Management of the Technical evaluation commissions	150	No. of Technical evaluation commissions held	100%
Final evaluation reports	16,000	No. of final evaluation reports drafted	100%
Allegation reports	3,200	No. of allegation reports drafted	100%

Programme 2. External evaluation

This programme refers to the evaluations of external calls to the Agency, with public and private entities, with which a collaboration agreement has been signed to this effect or in application of the order of public prices for evaluation activities (See Line 5). Once these institutions have transferred to the Agency the projects or actions to be evaluated, the next step in the process is equivalent to that developed in the evaluations derived from the AAP indicated in programme 1, except for the development of the technical evaluation commissions, which normally correspond to the entities or bodies responsible for the funding of these calls, depending on the particular characteristics of each one.

Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
Management of individual evaluations by pairs	5,000	No. of individual evaluations performed	100%
Final evaluation reports	2,500	No. of final evaluation reports drafted	100%
Allegation reports	150	No. of allegation reports drafted	100%

Programme 3. Drafting protocols

In 2017, the drafting of the protocol for the selection of expert collaborators has been completed. Therefore, for 2018 this programme includes as main activity

1. **Update of the evaluation protocol for R&D actions.** This action was envisaged for the 2017 Annual Action Plan, but the definition of the new scientific and technical areas and the necessary consensus with the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Agency has delayed the update of the protocol. After defining these areas, the path is clear for reviewing and updating the evaluation protocols, which will be applicable for achieving their full adaptation to the best international practices in the field. The aim is to increase quality standards, increase the rigour and consistency of the results, and simplify procedures, all for the sake of greater process efficiency.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Update of the evaluation protocol of R&D actions	No. of protocols developed	1

3.4 LINE4. FOLLOW-UP of the grants.

The Agency's functions include monitoring the management, financing, justification and results of all the actions that are directly implemented by the Agency, as well as providing advice on this (Article 5.e of the Articles of Association).

In turn, the same Articles of Association provide that the Agency's functions will include the subsequent verification, follow-up and evaluation of the activities financed by the Agency and their scientific, technical and socio-economic impact, as well as control of the justification of the fulfilment of the conditions and objectives of the grants received (Article 5.c of the Articles of Association).

Therefore, the Agency's activity in this area has been subdivided into Programme 1 for scientific and technical monitoring of the implementation of the grants and Programme 2 for the economic monitoring of the implementation of the grants.

Programme 1. Scientific and technical monitoring of the implementation of the grants.

The grants approved after the evaluation processes of the proposals must be monitored to verify that they are effectively developed within the levels of excellence which justified their approval. In addition, the assessment of the development of the programmes included in the State Plans for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation should serve towards a progressively improvement of the definition of such programmes. For all these reasons, the scientific and technical monitoring tasks during the implementation of the grants are one of the key components of the Agency's activity.

This programme has been divided into six key activities comprising the different phases and tasks which are described below:

- 1. Management of the scientific and technical follow-up scheduled in each call.** This scientific and technical follow-up process contains tasks such as the preparation of computer applications for submission of performance reports by grant beneficiaries, claiming reports not received or the correction of incomplete reports, among others. Subsequently, these reports are to be made available to the external scientific and technological experts collaborators and finally, in the case of intermediate implementation reports, when the result of their assessment is favourable, the necessary certificates of conformity will be issued for the release of subsequent payments. Meanwhile, in cases where the assessment is unfavourable, the processing of the corresponding loss of entitlement to grant payments or the refund of the grants will be initiated, as appropriate. The final implementation reports are also made available to the collaborators for their assessment. The aforesaid assessment is transmitted to the IPs and may be taken into account when evaluating new applications submitted by the same IP or research group.
- 2. Assessment of grants in follow-up meetings.** This activity consists in the development of the face-to-face meetings for the intermediate follow-up of the status of implementation of the

funded activities The face-to-face follow-up sessions will be directed by the scientific and technological collaborators of the Agency and the experts who conducted the peer evaluation of the application may also attend to the meeting. The officials of the follow-up subdivisions (thematic or cross-cutting) will provide administrative support.

3. **Follow-up visits**, on site. When specified in a call, the scheduled inspection visits will be made.
4. **Resolutions for approval/rejection of modifications to grant conditions**. All applications for modification of grant conditions will be processed for approval when they are justified and appropriate for each case. To do so, the scientific and technological collaborators of the Agency will issue the technical reports to support the decisions of approval or rejection of the modifications of the initial concession resolution.
5. **Citizen information and relations with users**. Throughout the entire follow-up process of the scientific and technical implementation of grants it is essential for beneficiaries to be provided with correct advice with regard to filling in the implementation reports, remission of incidences, procedure questions, etc. This advice will be primarily provided through the email accounts created for this purpose.
6. **Improvement in the definition of target indicators**. A working group will be created with the General Directorate of Research, Development and Innovation Policies with the aim of improving the scientific and technical follow-up report models and the evaluation report models for the aforementioned reports, in such a way that they identify the achievement of objectives indicators in a clear and quantifiable manner.

Likewise, the proposal will include improvements to the computer applications which are necessary for the exploitation of the information on indicators and results, as well as improvements in the information systems which are necessary for the ex-post evaluation of grant programmes.

Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
Management of the scientific and technical follow-up of grants	18,730	No. of grants subject to follow-up	50%
Assessment of grants in follow-up meetings	3,095	No. of grants assessed in follow-up meetings	25%
Onsite follow-up visits	260	No. of onsite visits	25%
Resolutions for approval/rejection of modifications to grant conditions	7,850	No. of resolutions for modification to grant conditions	100%
Citizen information and relations with users	24,535	No. of emails answered over No. of emails received	100%

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Improvement in the definition of target indicators	Preparation of the document	1

Programme 2. Economic monitoring of grant implementation.

Within this programme, a total of eight main actions will be considered:

- 1. Administrative review of the supporting account and economic audit of the expenses** of all cases completed at 31 December 2017. The verification phases regarding the validity of the expenses charged by beneficiaries will depend on the type of supporting account, and may encompass from verification of the report issued by the ROAC auditor (Official Registry of Accounting Auditors) to thorough verification of all the documentary evidence of expenditure provided by the beneficiary and, where appropriate, the processing of the request for correction.
- 2. Follow-up visits.** When established thus in the calls of a general nature or the regulations of the European Structural and Investment Funds (EIE), the onsite verification will be carried out at the headquarters of the beneficiary institutions, in relation to the accounting and expenditure supporting documents provided, as well as, where appropriate, to the material fixed assets that have been funded. This activity is envisaged for the 2013 calls and onwards.
- 3. Refunds.** This procedure includes the issuance of the refund initiation agreement, opening of the hearing process, assessment of the allegations submitted by the beneficiary and notification of the definitive refund resolution. It includes issuance of the letters of payment of the AEI, in the case of grants, or the application of the payment document model 069 to the Audit Office when dealing with refundable loans and advances, and the corresponding transfer to the beneficiary.
- 4. Drafting report in relation to replenishment resources against refund resolutions.** Beneficiaries have one month from the day following notification for submitting a replenishment appeal against the refund resolutions. These appeals must be informed prior to their submission to the General Secretariat, along with a copy of the file, for the legal department to study them.
- 5. Maintenance of the National Database of Grants (BDNS).** The refund cases that are filed will necessarily have to be registered in the BDNS.
- 6. Cancellation of collateral and seizure of guarantees.** The procedure for cancellation of collateral submitted to the Spanish Government Depository includes issuance of the cancellation order according to the models of the Depository and its submission, as well as notification to the beneficiary indicating that said submission has been carried out in order for cancellation of collateral. The procedure for seizure of guarantees comprises notification to the beneficiary regarding initiation of the proceeding as well as the opening of the hearing process, the assessment of the allegations and, in the event of these being dismissed, issuance of the request for seizure and its submission to the Audit Office for its fiscal control and to the Government Depository.
- 7. Certification of European Structural Funds.** The certification of structural funds involves justification before the Managing Authorities of the European Regional Development Fund and of the European Social Fund of the eligible costs of co-financed projects to enable the European Commission to proceed to payment of the grant using those structural funds.

8. **Advice to beneficiaries.** Advice will be provided to beneficiaries at all stages of the procedure, particularly with regard to presentation of the supporting documents. This advice will be provided using the email accounts available on the institutional website.

Activity	Estimated workload	Indicator on real workload	Objective
Administrative review of the supporting account and auditing of expenses	56,040	No. of cases reviewed	25%
Follow-up visits	155	No. of visits made	100%
Refunds (*)	11,995	No. of refund resolutions	5%
Analysis of replenishment appeals	1,160	No. of reports submitted to the Secretariat General	52%
Maintenance of the BDNS	5,480	No. of refund updates	100%
Cancellation of collateral and seizure of guarantees	1,345	No. of collateral cancelled, fully, partially o seized	100%
Certification of EIE funds	7,750	No. of certified operations	100%
Advice to beneficiaries	14,000	No. of emails answered	100%

(*) There is currently no computer tool that allows control as of the date of notification of the resolution of whether payment has been made within the voluntary period and, if this is not the case, transmit to the AEAT the data of those records whose amount has not been paid voluntarily (mandatory collection).

Given the volume of records that are reviewed and due to using manual procedures, this entails errors and possible loss of traceability of the information.

So long as this tool is not available, the processing of refund resolutions is envisaged when there is a risk of a time bar, or when these are initiated as a consequence of IGAE controls, or when they only affect loans.

3.5 LINE 5. MANAGEMENT OF AGREEMENTS, MANAGEMENT DELEGATION AND PROVISION OF SERVICES.

The Agency will be responsible for the performance of the activities or the provision of the services which are commissioned by the General State Administration or, by virtue of contracts, agreements and in general legal business, by other entities (Article 5.i of the Articles of Association). In addition, in order to perform its functions, the Agency may conclude the agreements and management delegation as necessary (Article 24 of the Articles of Association).

The activities referred to in this Line are the following:

- 1. Collaboration agreements, management delegation and other legal instruments** with other public and private non-profit institutions.
- 2. Provision of services**, mainly in the field of scientific and technical evaluation of RDI activities of other institutions.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Signing of agreements, management delegation and other legal instruments	No. of instruments signed	20
Activities for the provision of services	No. of activities performed	30

3.6 LINE 6. COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND REPRESENTATION in R&D forums

One of the Agency's basic action principles is transparency in all its administrative activities, accountability and commitment to provide accurate and complete information about all the results and procedures used.

In turn, its Articles of Association establish as one of the functions of the Agency the management of actions aimed at fostering collaboration, exchange, circulation, dissemination and exploitation of scientific and technical knowledge among agents of the System (Article 5.h of the Articles of Association).

To respond to these requirements, this Line of action is divided into two distinct sets of activities: firstly, communication and dissemination; and secondly, representation at R&D meetings and forums.

Annual Action Plan of the State Research Agency for 2018

Programme 1. Communication and dissemination

The communication and dissemination activities aim to provide visibility and transparency to all actions carried out by the Agency through its directors' and technicians' participation in events, and through its presence in the media, including social networks.

In short, the aim is to disseminate the Agency's activities to improve the vision of its work among the scientific community and among Spanish society in its entirety, and to adopt the necessary measures to guarantee maximum transparency in the exercise of its functions.

Presence in the media:

Activity	Indicator	Objective
References in the media	No. of references	4
Press releases	No. of press releases	50
Social networks: AEI's activities	No. of content communicated via social networks	200
Social networks: Dissemination of RDI projects	No. of content disseminating projects funded by the AEI	200
Interviews in the media	No. of interviews	2

Events and briefings of the State Agency for Research in events aimed at the scientific community and to the management authorities of the beneficiary entities.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Active participation in events	No. of presentations and conferences	63
Workshops with the external scientific and technical collaborators of the different scientific areas	No. of working days	2
Scientific seminars	No. of seminars	12
Summer course	No. of courses	1

Transparency measures in accordance with section 4.2 of the Communication and Transparency Plan of the State Agency for Research.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Publicity on the website: update and inclusion of new content.	No. of publications	80
Publicity on the National Database of Grants	No. of publications	40
Translation into English of the relevant documents of the Agency's activity.	No. of documents	3
Translation into English of the excerpts of the calls.	No. of documents	21
Publication on the Transparency Portal of the relevant documents of the Agency's activity.	No. of documents	2

Programme 2. Representation in national and international forums.

Given the importance of maintaining and enhancing the national and international dimension of the Agency's own activities, representation activities will be carried out at meetings and national and international forums related to the matters within its sphere of action, as well as representation in R&D policy forums when so determined by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness.

The activities of an international nature mainly include participation in the governing bodies of the ERA-NETs and specialised working groups within the European Commission.

The national activities include boards of trustees, commissions, working groups and other specialised forums.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
Participation in international forums	No. of forums in which it participates actively	52
Participation in national forums	No. of forums in which it participates actively	49

4. HUMAN RESOURCES.

Below is an outline of State Agency for Research personnel at 1 January 2018:

Unit	Number of jobs		
	Filled	Vacancies	Total
Unidad de Apoyo	5		5
Secretaría General	28	12	40
División de Coordinación, Evaluación Y Seguimiento Científico y Técnico	3	2	5
Subdivisión de Coordinación y Evaluación	16	9	25
Subdivisión de Programas Temáticos Científico-Técnicos	30	3	33
Subdivisión de Programas Científico-Técnicos Transversales, Fortalecimiento y Excelencia	24	5	29
División de Programación y Gestión Económica y Administrativa	3	1	4
Subdivisión de Planificación y Gestión Administrativa	37	18	55
Subdivisión de Gestión Económica	15		15
Subdivisión de Seguimiento y Justificación de Ayudas	38	21	59
Subdivisión de Gestión de Ayudas de Fondos Europeos	14	3	17
TOTAL	213	74	287

5. BUDGETARY RESOURCES.

The Budget of the State Research Agency for 2017, extended for 2018, in accordance with article 134.4 of the Spanish Constitution, is as follows:

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Chapter 1 (Personnel)	9,909,310	Chapter 3 (Public fees and prices)	1,200,000
Chapter 2 (Current expenditure)	8,966,010	Chapter 4 (Current transfers)	17,735,320
Chapter 3 (Financial expenditure)	50,000		
Chapter 4 (Current transfers)	10,000		
Total current expenditure	18,935,320	Total current income	18,935,320
Chapter 6 (Actual investments)	322,000		
Chapter 7 (Capital transfers)	590,687,820	Chapter 7 (Capital transfers)	591,009,820
Total capital expenditure	591,009,820	Total capital income	591,009,820
Total expenditure	609,945,140	Total income	609,945,140
EXPENDITURE	INCOME		

6. BASIC REGULATIONS

The basic regulations applicable to process management at the State Agency for Research are as follows:

- Law 38/2003, of 17 October, General on Grants.
- Law 28/2006, of 18 July, on State agencies for the improvement of public services.
- Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation.
- Royal Legislative Decree 3/2011, of 14 November, enacting the consolidated text of the Law on Public Sector Contracts.
- Law 39/2015, of 1 October, of Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations.
- Law 40/2015, of 1 October, on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector.
- Royal Decree 1067/2015, of 27 November, creating the State Agency for Research and approving its Articles of Association.