

2023

PLAN ACCIÓN ANUAL



Agencia Estatal de Investigación



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I. PRESENTATION AND CONTEXT

Royal Decree 1067/2015 of 27 November 2015 created the State Research Agency (hereinafter the Agency) and approved its Statute. Its effective start-up took place on 20 June 2016, with the constitutive meeting of its Governing Council.

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

The Royal Decree creating the Agency envisaged that, until the Management Contract was approved by joint ministerial order of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, the Agency's activities would be carried out in accordance with the criteria and guidelines established in the Initial Action Plan included in the Report referred to in Article 3 of Law 28/2006, of 18th July, of State Agencies for the improvement of public services, as well as the actions to be carried out derived from the approval of the scientific and technical research and innovation plans as established by Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation, modified by Law 17/2022, of 5th September, which modifies Law 14/2011, of 1st June, on Science, Technology and Innovation, and their corresponding annual action programmes.

However, Law 40/2015, of 1st October, on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector, abolished the State Agencies, which had a period of three years from its entry into force to modify their statutes and become one of the entities that, in accordance with this law, were to constitute the new institutional public sector.

For this reason, and not having approved a management contract in view of the foreseen extinction of the legal regime of the State Agencies, and until the adaptation to Law 40/2015, of 1st October, the Agency has been approving an Annual Action Plan since 2017, in accordance with article 23 of its statute, thus updating year by year the strategic lines contained in its Initial Action Plan and in accordance with the state plans for scientific and technical research and innovation in force.

Law 11/2020, of 30th December, on the General State Budget for the year 2021, in its thirty-fourth provision, has modified Law 40/2015, of 1 October, recovering the state agencies as one of the legal figures of the institutional administration at state level.

The new article 108 ter, paragraph 2, of Law 40/2015, of 1 October, establishes that: "The actions of the State Agencies take place, in accordance with the annual action plan, under the validity and in accordance with the relevant multi-annual management contract (...).

In view of the new regulation and while the Agency processes its management contract, it is appropriate to approve the Annual Action Plan for the year 2023, which covers the new actions to be carried out in this year, giving continuity to those included in the Initial Action Plan and in the previous annual plans.

The Annual Action Plan is the Agency's planning instrument within the framework of the management contract, which sets out, on the basis of the resources available, the activities to be carried out in the corresponding year in order to achieve its objectives. It must be approved by the Governing Board before 31st January of the corresponding year and its content is developed in Article 23 of the Statute, according to which:

"The annual action plan shall include, inter alia, the following activities:

- a) Those of a formative and methodological nature and those for the determination of management indicators for the activities that correspond to the Agency.
- b) Those of management, monitoring and control of the actions that, in matters of scientific, technical and innovation research, correspond to the Agency in accordance with its purpose and functions.
- c) Those of organisation and management of the scientific-technical evaluation of the proposals that require financing charged to the programmes and instruments assigned to the Agency or resulting from collaboration agreements and conventions".

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

This Annual Action Plan has been approved by the Agency's Governing Board, in accordance with article 23 of its Statute, at its meeting of 31 January 2023.

CONTEXT

1.1 OBJECTIVE AND AIMS

According to Article 2.1 of the Statute, "The Agency's purpose is the funding, evaluation, management and monitoring of scientific and technical research activity aimed at the generation, exchange and exploitation of knowledge promoted by the General State Administration on its own initiative or in concurrence with other Spanish Administrations or entities or those of other countries or international organisations".

For its part, Article 2. 2 establishes that "The Agency's aims are the promotion of scientific and technical research in all areas of knowledge through the efficient allocation of public resources, the promotion of excellence, the encouragement of collaboration between the agents of the System and support for the generation of knowledge of high scientific and technical, economic and social impact, including those aimed at resolving society's major challenges, and the monitoring of the activities financed as well as the necessary advice to improve the design and planning of the actions or initiatives through which the R&D policies of the General State Administration are implemented".

1.2 CONTENT OF THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

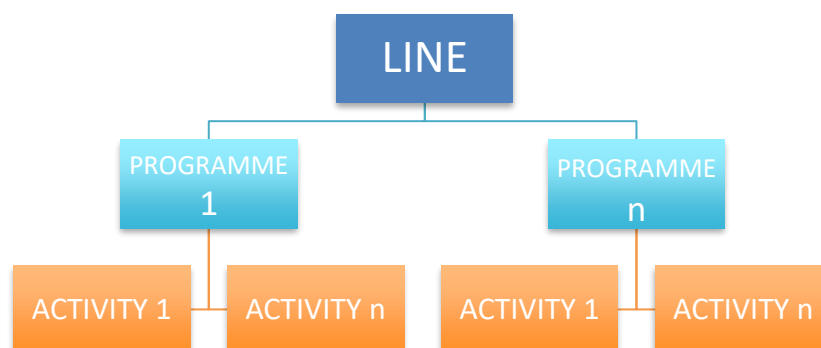
In accordance with the provisions of Article 23 of the Agency's Statute, the Annual Action Plan will include, among others, the following activities:

- a) Those of a formative, methodological nature and of the determination of management indicators of the activities that correspond to the Agency.
- b) Those of management, monitoring and control of the actions that, in matters of scientific, technical and innovation research, correspond to the Agency in accordance with its object and functions.
- c) That of organisation and management of the scientific-technical evaluation of the proposals that require funding charged to the programmes and instruments assigned to the Agency or resulting from collaboration agreements and conventions.

In order to comply with this, an Annual Action Plan has been drawn up based on the following axes:

- 1. Actions for the publication of calls for proposals and the awarding of grants.
- 2. Actions relating to the scientific-technical evaluation of internal and external calls for proposals.
- 3. Actions relating to economic monitoring relating to the scientific-technical monitoring of funded actions.
- 4. Actions relating to the management of agreements, management commissions and the provision of services.
- 5. Actions relating to communication, dissemination and participation in R&D&I forums.
- 6. Other transversal actions.

For each of the axes, a number of main activities have been defined, mostly grouped into programmes. Each of the activities is composed of different phases and tasks, as follows:



An indicator has been associated with each defined activity and, whenever possible, an estimate of the real existing workload has been established for each one of them, as well as a value, in percentage, for the objective of effective fulfilment of the indicator over the real defined workload. A table with the following information has been included in each programme:

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	Objective
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The column Workload estimate indicates the actual workload for the defined activity.

All indicators are defined in relative terms, i.e. referenced to the estimated actual workload. The Target column indicates the degree of compliance in percentage that is expected to be achieved by 2023 for the indicator.

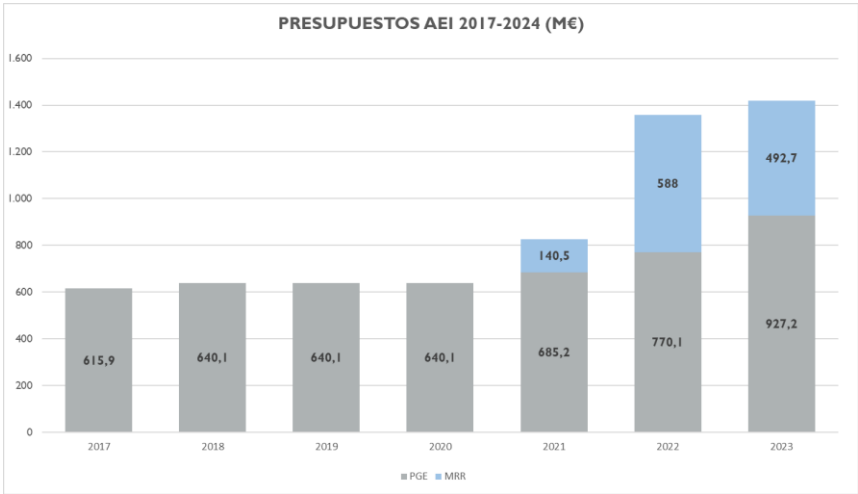
In some programmes the target is not defined as a percentage of compliance with the actual workload of the activity, but in absolute terms. In these cases, the parameter Workload estimate is omitted and the information indicated per programme is:

Activity	Indicator	Objective
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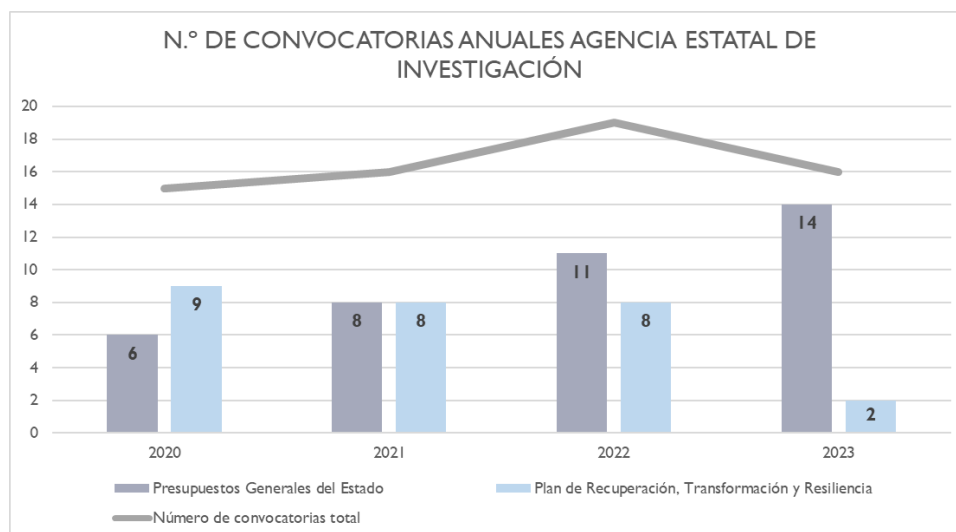
A unit activity is defined, the indicator to be checked (e.g. a report, a proposal, an approved standard, an agreement, etc.) is marked and the target is indicated by an absolute number, which is the number of units to be achieved.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022 we have executed the largest budget in the history of the AEI, including, together with the General State Budget (PGE), a practically total percentage of the Next Generation EU Recovery Funds (MRR), and reduced the remainders to a minimum. It has not been easy because there have been numerous changes in our calls for proposals, some of them a consequence of the new Law on Science, Technology and Innovation (new LCTI) that have allowed us to update, among others, aspects of equality in the calls for proposals; others, a product of our internal reflection. All of them with the will to endure and make the AEI a friendlier and more efficient institution.



This year starts with a slightly higher budget than last year, with some new calls. Among the new ones are the accreditation of R3 personnel, the actions derived from the "Plan de Atracción y Retención de Talento" and the new call for Strategic Lines framed in the "Plan de Transferencia y Colaboración", in collaboration with the Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCII) and with the Centro de Desarrollo Tecnológico e Industrial E.P.E. (CDTI). On the other hand, with the gradual disappearance of European funds from the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism (RRM), there are changes in some new actions that had been financed exclusively with the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan (RTRP), such as the calls for Proofs of Concept and Strategic Lines; others will continue, but with ordinary funding from the Agency; and others, such as the Ecological and Digital Transition, will not be called.



Another important novelty will be the agency's participation in the WEAVE initiative, led by a select group of European funding agencies, which will allow the evaluation and funding of international coordinated projects of high impact and interest. Our presence in this important project is an indicator of the quality of our procedures, which are perfectly comparable and will complement the extensive experience of the AEI in international joint programming programmes and projects.

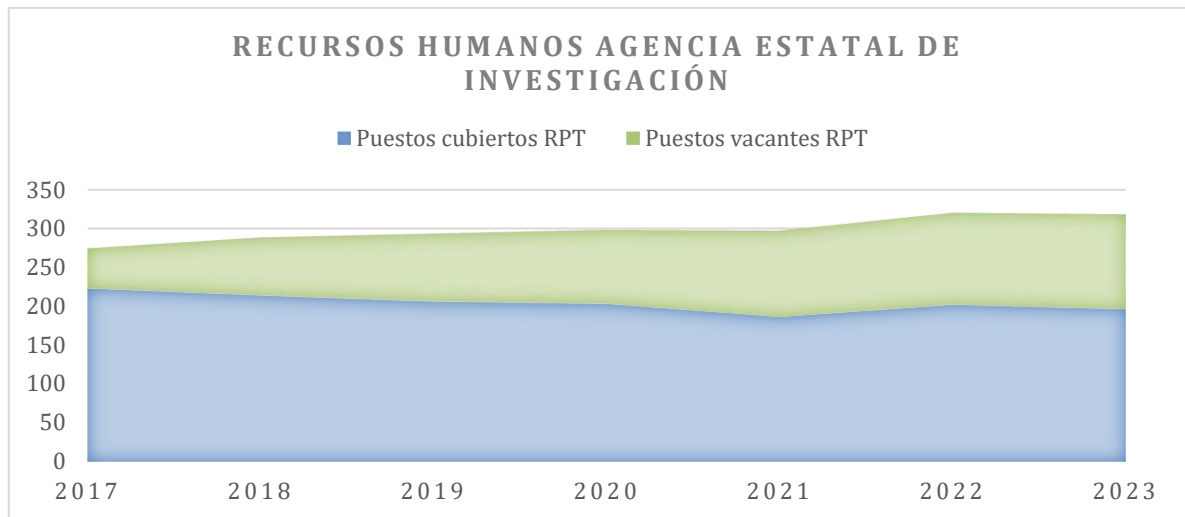
The new Law 14/2011 of 1 June 2011 gives an essential role to the Agency, which should strive in 2023 to further improve its performance, thus justifying the trust placed in us. As far as possible, some of the new actions will be redirected, as has already begun to be done, through specific modalities in existing calls, with the aim of tending towards simplification and concentration of calls.

The Agency's internal priorities for this year cover the improvement of core aspects that make it possible to streamline all processes linked to calls. This implies in particular shortening evaluation deadlines to better meet our timetable and, most importantly, continuing efforts to reduce the administrative burden of both technical scientific and economic monitoring.

The Agency is planning a number of internal changes. These include a change of statutes to adapt the structure of the Agency to reality and to simplify some administrative procedures. In addition, the management contract will be re-launched immediately and will be presented simultaneously with a plan to finally implement the Productivity for Objectives Achievement (PCO) staff bonus.

In addition, a future Equality Unit is in preparation and our external projection will be considerably reinforced with the incorporation of specialised staff through the Support Unit.

At the beginning of 2023, around a third of the Agency's posts are not filled, showing a trend since its creation towards a decrease in the number of occupied posts. For this reason, this plan also includes a proposal to attract staff to the Agency in order to improve its efficiency.



The following chart shows the highlights of the Agency's Annual Action Plan 2023.

Highlights



Financial resources

Biggest budget in the Agency's history

Fulfilment of Recovery Plan objectives



Staff improvements

Proposed productivity bonus

Creation of Equality Unit



Efficiency

Proposed management contract

Updating of statutes

Administrative simplification



Grants

Rationalisation of calls for proposals

Severo Ochoa/María de Maeztu upgrade

Stakeholder dialogue




Visibility

Institutional visits

New equipment

communication

 **AÑO CAJAL**



New calls for proposals

 **weave**
Research funding without borders

New calls ISCII, CDTI

Attracting established talent



Prioritising HR

More pre-doctoral grants

Wage improvements

Stronger Ramón y Cajal and Consolidation



Evaluation

Speeding up processes

DORA

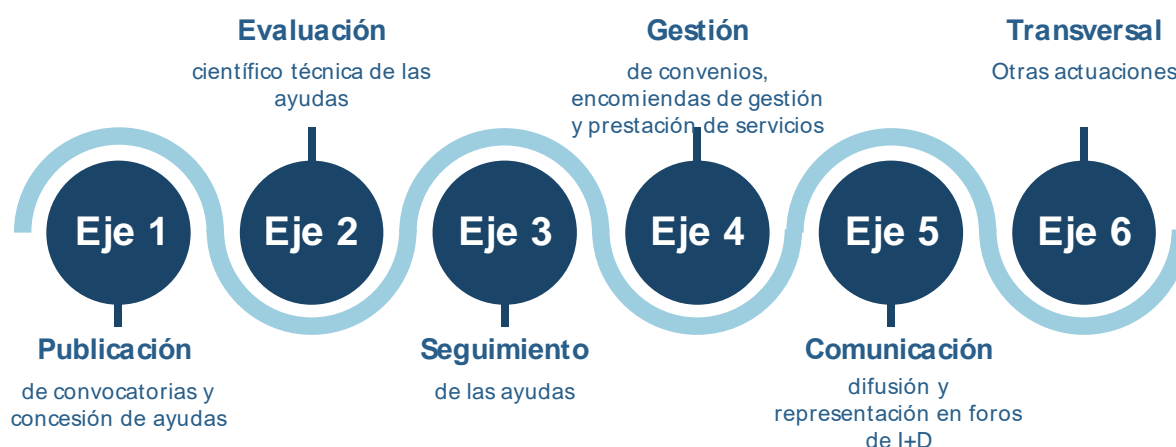


Equality

Implementation in all the Agency's activities.

3 MAIN LINES OF ACTION

The main lines of action of this annual plan are as follows:



3.1 LINE 1. PUBLICATION of calls for proposals and award of grants

This line comprises the set of actions aimed at complying with the actions programmed in the State R&D&I Plan and the Annual Action Programmes, for the promotion and impulse of R&D&I, for which the State Research Agency receives the appropriate allocation of budgetary credits.

These allocated credits are generally mobilised in the form of subsidies, which requires the publication of direct award procedures or competitive calls for applications and the awarding of grants, as well as the associated financial management.

The timetable for the resolution of the calls already published is as follows:

Call for applications	Opening of application	Granting resolution
Knowledge Generation Projects 2022	10 to 31 January 2023	October 2023
Public-Private Partnership Projects 2022	13 February to 7 March 2023	November 2023
Technical Support Staff Contracts 2022	26 January to 16 February 2023 -	November 2023
Torres Quevedo 2022 Contracts	31 January to 21 February 2023	October 2023
Pre-doctoral recruitment for doctoral training in companies - industrial doctorates 2022	2 to 23 February 2023	October 2023
Severo Ochoa and María de Maeztu Centres of Excellence 2022	February 2023	November 2023
Ramón y Cajal 2022 Contracts	19 January - 9 February 2023	September 2023
Juan de la Cierva 2022 Contracts	24 January - 13 February 2023	September 2023
Pre-doctoral recruitment for research staff training 2022	12 to 26 January 2023	June 2023

The 2023 calls for proposals to be published are as follows:

Lines of action to be published in 2023
Ramón y Cajal Contracts
Juan de la Cierva Contracts
Research Consolidation
Contracts Technical Support Staff
Torres Quevedo Contracts
Grants for the training of doctors in companies "industrial doctorates".
Knowledge Generation Projects
Projects in strategic lines
Public-private partnership projects
Europe Excellence Projects
European Project Management
Grants to Severo Ochoa and María de Maeztu Centres and Units of Excellence
R3 Accreditation
International Collaboration Projects
Talent Plan actions

To be highlighted in this line

New initiatives in:

WEAVE in R&D Projects 2023

Plan for Attracting Scientific and Innovative Talent

R3 Accreditation

This line is divided into the following programmes and activities:

Programme 1. Instruction of the procedure for the awarding of calls for proposals

This programme has been divided into 4 key activities consisting of the different phases and tasks described below:

1. Drafting and publication of the calls for proposals. This includes, in addition to the drafting of the texts of all calls for proposals, the request for the mandatory reports and authorisations, the signing and publication in the BOE (Official State Gazette) and in the National Grants Database (BDNS). It is especially important to adapt to the modifications introduced in Law 14/2011, of 1 June.

2. Instruction. This activity includes the technological configuration processes of the communication interfaces with the beneficiaries and internal processing applications, the administrative review of the applications, the rectification and processing of possible withdrawals and the notification of the provisional and final resolution proposal, and the resolution of the award of the call.

3. Maintenance of the system of entities. The entity maintenance system is the repository where the entities applying for grants from the Agency must register, providing the necessary documentation to accredit both their legal nature and the valid representation of the natural persons designated as their legal representatives.

This repository is connected to all the aid processing systems, so it is essential that all the information is kept up to date and that a system for registering new entities is allowed.

4. Advice to applicants. Throughout the entire process of submitting applications and the instruction of the calls for applications, it is essential to provide correct advice to the entities on the configuration of the application reports, eligibility requirements, correct allocation of eligible costs, responsible declarations, hearing procedures, etc. This advice will be provided through the manuals and FAQ files published on the institutional website, as well as through e-mail accounts.

5. Updating of the National Subsidies Database (BDNS). In order to guarantee the right of citizens to know about all public subsidies and grants and to contribute to the principles of publicity and transparency, the information on public subsidies and grants announced and awarded by the State Research Agency will be updated in the BDNS.

6. Definition and loading of information in CoFFEE-MRR. CoFFEE-MRR is the application that functions as the manager of the fulfilment of the milestones and objectives defined in the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan (PRTR) and concentrates all the information provided by the different bodies contributing to the PRTR. The Agency, as the managing body and executing entity of the different actions of the PRTR, will send information on the definition and execution of the measures in which it participates, with the frequency, procedure and format required by the authority responsible for the funds, for the appropriate monitoring of the execution of the projects in accordance with the European regulation of the funds.

Activity	Estimated workload (*)	Actual workload indicator	Objective
1.1.1 Drafting and publication of calls for proposals	16	No. of calls published	100%
1.1.2 Instruction	19,800	No. of files processed	100%
1.1.3 Maintenance of the entity system	2,300	No. of applications for registrations/deregistrations/modifications processed	100%
1.1.4 Advice to applicants for support	19,200	No. of emails answered	100%

1.1.5 BDNS Update	6,000	No. of calls for proposals and No. of awards to beneficiaries	100%
1.1.6 CoFFEE-MRR definition and loading	5,000	No. of calls financed with MRR funds. No. of beneficiaries financed with MRR funds.	100%

Programme 2. Economic and budgetary management

This programme has been divided into 5 key activities consisting of the different phases and tasks described below:

1. Prior audit of the calls for aid that so require. The number of calls for proposals subject to prior audit by the Delegate Auditor of the Ministry of Science and Innovation corresponds to those with chapter 8 available for funding.

This process includes, for each of the different accounting phases necessary to execute the expenditure (listed in point 4), the preparation of the documentation which, with regard to the basic requirements for prior audit, is set out in the Agreement of the Council of Ministers of 30 May 2008.

2. Review of the requirements for obtaining the status of beneficiary and for the payment of multi-annual aid. This activity includes both the review of the responsible statements and certificates provided by applicants and, in the event that prior authorisation has been given, verification of compliance with obligations to the Tax Agency and Social Security via the web servers set up for this purpose.

This review is carried out only once for each entity, regardless of the number of grants awarded.

3. Issuance of accounting documents. This includes the issuing, accounting and payment, if applicable, of all the accounting documents that, in accordance with each of the expenditure phases, are necessary to process the calls for proposals managed by the Agency.

4. Payment of grants. In the payment of grants, as in the entire financial management procedure, a distinction must be made between the Agency's own budget and the budget of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, i.e. Chapter 7 or 8. In the first case, once the aid reflected in the respective OP document has been accounted for, it will be transferred to the unit in charge of managing the Agency's Treasury, in order to order the necessary transfers, always taking into account the Treasury's situation. In the case of Chapter 8 operations, once the accounting document has been recorded by the Delegated Financial Controller, the payment order corresponds to the Public Treasury, a process in which the Agency does not intervene at any time. All aid granted, regardless of its form, must be registered in the National Subsidies Database.

5. Cancellation of Chapter 8 Repayable Advances granted under the FEDER and FSE. The procedure for the cancellation of repayable advances involves several bodies of the General State Administration, in particular the AEI itself, the FEDER and ESF Certifying Authorities (Directorate General for European Funds of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration and the ESF Administrative Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) and the General State Comptroller (IGAE). The AEI is responsible for relating each FEDER operation to each loan (registered in the PRESYA application by the IGAE).

Finally, for the 2014-2020 period, the Managing Authority's Funds 2020 application already requires, as information to be filled in, the loan number for each operation, so the AEI is uploading this information as the expenditure certifications are processed.

6. Advice to applicants for assistance. Advice will be provided to beneficiaries especially regarding the presentation of guarantees and characteristics of bank accounts. This advice will be provided through e-mail accounts available on the institutional website.

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	Objective
1.2.1 Ex-ante control of calls for proposals that require it	3	No. of calls audited	100%
1.2.2 Revision of eligibility requirements and payment of multiannualities	8,200	No. of revisions	100%
1.2.3 Issuance of accounting documents deriving from the concession	32,600	No. of accounting documents issued	100%
1.2.4 Payment of aid	17,900	No. of transfers made	100%
1.2.5 Cancellation of repayable advances	550	FEDER/FSE co-financed operations	100%
1.2.6 Advice to beneficiaries	900	No. of emails answered	100%

3.2 LINE 2. Scientific and technical evaluation of proposals.

The Agency is responsible for the organisation and management of the ex ante and ex post scientific-technical evaluation of proposals, actions or initiatives, where appropriate using evaluation criteria based on internationally recognised scientific and technical merits, as well as those criteria established in the corresponding calls for proposals, as set out in its Statute (Article 5.b).

The scientific-technical evaluation of the proposals and their internationally contrasted development protocols are the fundamental pillars that guarantee the correct functioning of competitive concurrence based on criteria of excellence and the correct allocation of budgetary funds. Although the implementation of the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) in the evaluation processes began

in 2021, when the Agency adhered to the San Francisco Declaration, for full implementation it is necessary to continue progressing in aspects such as reforms in the models of the documentation provided in the application, reports and other aspects related to the training of the Agency's collaborators and experts.

This line of action is divided into three programmes of activities:

To be highlighted in this line

Reduction of deadlines for evaluation processes.

Improved compliance with the calendar of calls for proposals.

Progress in the implementation of the DORA principles.

Programme I. Evaluations stemming from the Annual Action Plan

This programme has been divided into several key activities consisting of the different phases and tasks described below:

1. **Management of individual peer reviews.** This activity starts with the search for the best available experts in each of the thematic areas to which the proposals correspond, with the objective of obtaining a peer review of each of the applications. This process in turn involves close monitoring of the execution of the evaluations themselves and the reassignment of proposals to new evaluators in cases where the evaluators assigned in the first place reject the proposal, or where there is a 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 technical and human resources necessary for the holding of the commissions.

3. **Preparation of final evaluation reports.** This activity consists of the generation of the final reports that include the information obtained from all the applications submitted and the technical reports produced by the peer review and the technical committees, all with the main objective of achieving the final prioritisation of all the proposals.

4. **Elaboration of allegation reports.** The possible allegations presented by the applicants, related to the scientific-technical evaluation of their proposals, must be studied in detail by experts or external collaborators, and the corresponding technical reports must be issued.

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	Objective
2.1.1 Management of evaluations	18,900	No. of applications assessed	100%
2.1.2 Management of the Evaluation Technical Commissions	170	No. of technical evaluation commissions held	100%
2.1.3 Allegation and appeal reports	2,000	No. of allegation reports carried out	100%

Programme 2. External evaluations

This programme refers to the evaluations of calls for proposals external to the Agency, both with public and private entities, with which a collaboration agreement has previously been signed for this purpose or in application of the order of public prices for evaluation activities (See line 5). Once these institutions transfer the projects or actions to be evaluated to the Agency, the process followed is equivalent to that developed in the evaluations indicated in programme 1, except for the development of the technical evaluation commissions, which usually correspond to the entities or bodies responsible for financing these calls, according to the particular characteristics of each one of them.

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	Objective
2.2.1 Management of evaluations	5,700	No. of applications assessed	100%
2.2.2 Allegation and appeal reports	80	No. of allegation reports carried out	100%

3.3 LINE 3. MONITORING of aid.

The Agency's functions include monitoring the management, funding, justification and results of all actions directly implemented by the Agency, as well as providing advice on these actions (Article 5 e) of the Statute).

In turn, the same statute establishes that the Agency's functions include the verification, monitoring and subsequent evaluation of the activities financed by it and their scientific, technical and socio-economic impact, as well as the control of the justification of compliance with the conditions and objectives of the aid granted (article 5 c) of the Statute).

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

To be highlighted in this line

Reduction in the number of remedy requests.

Reducing the administrative burden for beneficiaries.

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

Grants awarded following the proposal evaluation processes must be monitored to ensure that they are actually being implemented at the levels of excellence that justified their award. Furthermore, the assessment of the development of the aid programmes must serve to progressively improve the definition of these programmes. For all these reasons, the scientific and technical monitoring of the implementation of aid is one of the fundamental components of the Agency's activity.

This programme has been divided into five main activities covering the phases and tasks described below:

1. Management of the scientific-technical monitoring programmed in each call. This scientific-technical monitoring process is carried out following two different protocols for the assessment of the scientific-technical reports, depending on what is indicated in each of the calls for proposals. In both cases there are common tasks such as: the design and preparation of the report formats, the preparation of the computer applications for the presentation of the execution reports by the beneficiaries of the grants, the claiming of reports not received or the correction of those that are not complete, among others.

Once the scientific and technical reports have been received, they are assessed using two different procedures:

- Reports are assessed by external scientific-technical collaborators and reviewed and validated by AEI staff.
- The reports are assessed by the technical staff of the AEI.

Once the report has been assessed and validated, the assessment information is sent to the beneficiary of the grant. In the case of interim reports, and depending on what the call dictates, as long as the assessment is favourable, the corresponding certificates of conformity necessary for the release of subsequent payments will be issued. On the other hand, in cases where the assessment is unfavourable, the processing of the corresponding forfeiture of the right to payment or the files for the reimbursement of the aid, as the case may be, will be initiated. In the case of final reports, failure to submit or negative assessment thereof shall give rise to the initiation of partial or total reimbursement of the aid. The evaluation of the scientific-technical monitoring may be taken into account in the evaluation of applications for actions presented by the same PI or research group.

2. Assessment of grants in monitoring meetings. This activity consists of the development of meetings for the presentation and intermediate monitoring of the state of execution of the funded activities under evaluation. The face-to-face monitoring meetings will be led by the scientific and technological partners and may be attended by the external experts who carried out the evaluation, as well as officials from the monitoring subdivisions (thematic or transversal).

3. On-site monitoring visits. When foreseen in a call for proposals, scheduled monitoring visits will be carried out. These actions are carried out by technical staff of the subdivisions in charge of scientific-technical monitoring.

4. Resolutions of authorisation/refusal of modifications to the conditions of the aid. Those requests for modification of the conditions of the aid contemplated in the call for proposals that are justified and appropriate in each case will be processed for authorisation. To this end, the collaboration of the scientific and technological collaborators may be requested, who will draw up the technical assessment reports that support the decisions to authorise or reject the modifications to the initial grant.

5. Information to citizens and advice to beneficiaries. Throughout the entire process of the scientific and technical implementation of the grants, it is essential that the beneficiaries are properly advised on the completion of the implementation reports, the submission of incidents, procedural doubts, etc. This advice will be provided primarily through e-mail accounts created for this purpose.

6. Ex-post evaluation reports of the actions financed The functions of the Division of Coordination, Evaluation and Technical Scientific Monitoring include the organisation, coordination, management and execution of the ex-post technical scientific monitoring of the actions financed by the Agency.

Cross-cutting Scientific and Technical Programmes, Strengthening and Excellence Branch

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	%
3.1.1 a) Management of the scientific-technical monitoring of grants	2,600	No. of aid monitored	100%
3.1.2 a) Assessment of aid in follow-up meetings	250	No. of aid assessed in follow-up meetings	100%
3.1.3 a) On-site monitoring visits	5	No. of on-site visits	100%
3.1.4 a) Decisions authorising/refusing modifications to the conditions of aid	1,200	No. of decisions modifying the conditions of aid	100%
3.1.5 a) Information to citizens and advice to beneficiaries	22,000	No. of emails answered over the no. of emails received	100%
3.1.6 a) Management of scientific-technical monitoring of grants	2,600	No. of aid monitored	100%
3.1.7 a) Assessment of aid in follow-up meetings	250	No. of aid assessed in follow-up meetings	100%

The subdivision participates in the drafting of calls for proposals related to its field of action and carries out the screening of Spanish proposals participating in international calls for proposals.

Scientific and Technical Thematic Programmes Branch

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	%
3.1.8 b) Management of the scientific-technical monitoring of grants	8,100	No. of aid monitored	100%
3.1.9 b) Assessment of aid in follow-up meetings	3,100	No. of aid assessed in follow-up meetings	20%
3.1.10 b) On-site monitoring visits	74	No. of on-site visits	25%
3.1.11 b) Decisions authorising/refusing modifications to the conditions of the assistance	5,600	No. of decisions modifying the conditions of aid	100%
3.1.12 b) Citizen information and advice to beneficiaries	10,000	No. of mails answered over the number of mails received	100%

The assessment of grants in follow-up meetings, as well as on-site visits, is carried out during the last year of grant implementation. Follow-up meetings are usually held for grants under the Knowledge Generation Project calls, while on-site visits are carried out in the case of the Collaboration Challenges or Public-Private Collaboration projects (depending on the year of the call). In this regard, the number of projects in their final year of execution in 2023 is 3,088. Given the high number of grants, it is not feasible to call all of them and therefore approximately 20% of the total grants that would correspond to them are called. Something similar happens in the on-site visits of the staff of the Scientific-Technical Thematic Programmes subdivision, who also collaborate in the organisation of the ex-ante evaluation (in coordination with SEVAL), in those calls that require a scientific-technical panel evaluation, which corresponds to them:

- validate the experts proposed (in coordination with SEVAL), to integrate the scientific-technical commissions.
- uploading the funding awarded in the calls for proposals monitored by STEM into the corresponding IT applications.
- review the reports produced by the Scientific and Technical Panels.

The staff of the Scientific-Technical Thematic Programmes subdivision also participates in the drafting of the calls linked to its field of action.

An analysis will be carried out of the scientific-technical results of calls whose actions have already ended, both in terms of Projects and Human Resources, on the basis of the scientific-technical monitoring indicators already defined.

The development of this activity will make it possible to evaluate the scientific-technical impact of actions financed by the Agency, both in calls for Projects and Human Resources.

There is no doubt that these analyses will make it possible to detect and improve our actions, which will be reflected in future calls for proposals. In 2023, the Transversal Scientific-Technical Programmes, Strengthening and Excellence Branch will draw up a report on the international programmes in which the Agency participates, with special attention to the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Programmes.

The State Research Agency has launched a plan to draw up reports analysing the results of its most relevant calls for proposals. The aim is to inform society as a whole, and especially the scientific community, of the results obtained through the calls financed by the State Research Agency in which they have participated. This is detailed in line 5.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
3.1.7 Ex-post evaluation of funded actions	Number of reports	2

Programme 2. Economic monitoring of the implementation of aid.

A total of eight main actions are considered under this programme:

1. Administrative review of the supporting account and economic audit of the expenditure of all files finalised by 31 December 2018. The phases of verification of the validity of the expenses charged by the beneficiaries will depend on the type of supporting account, and may include from the verification of the ROAC (Official Register of Auditors) auditor's report to the exhaustive verification of all supporting documents of expenditure provided by the beneficiary and, where appropriate, the processing of the requirement to rectify the situation.

2. Follow-up visits. When so stipulated in the general calls for proposals or in the regulations governing the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF), on-site verification shall be carried out, at the headquarters of the beneficiary entities, of the accounts and supporting documents for the expenditure provided, as well as, where appropriate, of the tangible fixed assets financed. This activity is envisaged for calls from 2013 onwards.

3. Reimbursements. This procedure includes the issuance of the agreement to initiate reimbursement, the opening of the hearing, the assessment of the allegations presented by the beneficiary and notification of the final reimbursement decision. It includes the issuance of the payment letters from the AEI, in the case of grants, or the request for the payment document form 069 to the Delegated Comptroller in the case of loans and repayable advances, and the corresponding transfer to the beneficiary.

4. Preparation of reports in relation to appeals for reconsideration against reimbursement decisions. Beneficiaries have one month from the day following notification to lodge an appeal for reconsideration against reimbursement decisions. These appeals must be reported prior to their referral to the General Secretariat, together with a copy of the file, for study by the legal department.

5. Maintenance of the National Subsidies Database (BDNS). In reference to calls for proposals registered in the BDNS, the payments and voluntary repayments made by the beneficiaries of the aid, as well as the reimbursement files that are initiated, shall be uploaded.

6. Cancellation of guarantees and seizure of guarantees. The procedure for the cancellation of guarantees presented to the Caja General de Depósitos includes the issuing of the cancellation order in accordance with the models of the Caja and the referral to the same, as well as the notification to the beneficiary that the referral has been made so that the latter may proceed to cancel the guarantee. The procedure for the seizure of guarantees includes notifying the beneficiary of the start of the procedure, as well as the opening of the hearing, the assessment of the allegations and, in

the event that these are rejected, issuing the request for seizure and sending it to the Delegated Comptroller for audit and to the General Depositary Fund (Caja General de Depósitos).

7. Certification of European Structural Funds. The certification of structural funds implies the justification before the Managing Authorities of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund of the eligible expenses of the co-financed projects, in order for the European Commission to proceed with the payment of the aids with said structural funds.

8. Advice to beneficiaries. Advice will be provided to beneficiaries at all stages of the procedure, particularly with regard to the presentation of the supporting account. This advice will be provided through e-mail accounts available on the institutional website.

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator	%
3.2.1 Administrative Review of the supporting account and audit of expenditure	46,000	No. of files reviewed	38%
3.2.2 Follow-up visits	190	No. of visits made	100%
3.2.3 Start-up Agreements	28,000	No. of start-up agreements	31%
3.2.4 Refund Decisions	28,000	No. of reimbursement decisions	34%
3.2.5 Analysis of appeals for reconsideration	450	No. of reports sent to the General Secretariat	100%
3.2.6 Maintenance of the BDNS. Payments	20,000	Number of updates per payment	N/A
3.2.7 Maintenance of the BDNS. Withdrawals	750	Number of updates by refund	N/A
3.2.8 Maintenance of the NSDB. Returns	6,000	Number of updates per return	N/A
3.2.9 Cancellation of collateral and seizure of guarantees	700	No. of collateral cancelled, partially cancelled or seized	100%
3.2.10 Certification of IEE funds	12,000	No. of certified operations	100%
3.2.11 Advice to beneficiaries	12,500	No. of emails answered	100%

In the sections "Administrative review of the supporting account and audit of expenditure" the "Estimated workload" is the total number of windows that will be justified in 2023, it being impossible to review all of them during 2023. For "Inception Agreements" and "Reimbursements" the "Estimated workload" is the reviews that will lead to them. They are currently at this stage and others will be depending on the outcome of the reviews in the previous section. In the case of "Follow-up visits" it has been decided to count them as the number of visits carried out for which an interim visit report has been issued. The objective of carrying out the on-site visit itself is expected to be met, as the scheduled visits are planned to be carried out, but it is estimated due to the workload that a very small number of them may not be able to issue the interim report this year.

In the case of the "Maintenance of the NSDB" the estimated number of payments to beneficiaries to be uploaded to the NSDB has been based on upload data from previous years. Regarding the uploading of refunds and returns to the NSDB, the year 2022 was the first year in which the task was carried out as it requires web services and support from the ICT area. The estimated number of refunds and returns has been estimated on the basis of the data uploaded the previous year, slightly increased as the review is carried out for more recent calls for which there was already an obligation to publish in the NSDB. It is not possible to estimate compliance with this section as data from previous years is still being uploaded due to the delay in the development of the ICT tool.

The reason for the percentage below 100% is that the target is in line with the estimated capacity, the medium-term objective being to increase this percentage and the large number of experienced staff performing this work who have left this year, the estimated learning period for the staff replacing them and the technical assistances supporting them.

The staff of the Grant Monitoring and Justification sub-division also carries out the following activities in the field of IEA grant management:

- Participation in the drafting of the calls for proposals linked to its field of action.
- Attention to the requests for information from the State Agency for Tax Administration related to the procedure of Apremio, as well as other requests from the Delegations of Economy and Finance related to the economic effects derived from the procedure of reimbursement.
- Ongoing coordination with the General State Administration Comptroller's Office in its responsibilities relating to financial control.

3.4 LINE 4. MANAGEMENT OF AGREEMENTS, ENTRUSTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES.

The Agency is responsible for carrying out the activities or providing the services entrusted to it by the General State Administration or, by virtue of contracts, agreements and in general legal transactions, by other entities [Article 5 i) of the Statute]. Also, for the exercise of its functions, the Agency may enter into the necessary management agreements and entrustments (Article 24 of the Statute).

To be highlighted in this line

Professionalisation of tasks including new and more specialised services

The activities contemplated in this Axis are as follows:

1. **Collaboration agreements, management entrustments and other legal instruments** with other public and private non-profit institutions.
2. **Provision of services**, fundamentally in the field of scientific and technical evaluation of R&D&I activities of other institutions.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
4.1.1 Signing of agreements, management entrustments and other legal instruments	No. of instruments signed	15
4.1.2 Activities for the provision of scientific and technical evaluation services	No. of activities carried out	80

3.5 LINE 5. COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION and REPRESENTATION IN R&D FORUMS.

The Agency's Communication and Transparency Plan was approved at the Governing Board meeting of 4 December 2017. This document sets out the communication and dissemination instruments that will make the Agency's activities and actions visible to the outside world and to its employees. Likewise, the Plan includes the lines of action that mark transparency in administrative activities and compliance with the obligations of good governance by the Agency's public officials, as well as accountability and commitments to present accurate and complete information on the results and procedures used in management. The specific measures for implementing this plan for the year 2022 are set out in line 6.

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

To be highlighted in this line

Increase in the number of actions and types of collaboration.
Institutional effort in visibility.

Programme I. Communication, outreach and dissemination

Communication, dissemination and outreach activities aim to give visibility and transparency to all the Agency's actions, to fulfil mandates of the funds obtained and to promote a culture of dissemination favourable to science. The public interested in the Agency's activities includes actors in the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System (SECTI), Spanish and foreign research personnel, the media, government ministries, society in general, etc. In short, the aim is to maintain open channels for exchange, helping to improve the vision of the work in the scientific community and in the rest of Spanish society, and to adopt the necessary measures to guarantee maximum transparency in the exercise of the Agency's functions.

The following actions are considered within this programme:

1. **Relations with the media.** A media agenda will be created, a press dossier will be created and press releases and information will be sent to the media and to the general public.
2. **Social networks.** A LinkedIn profile will be created and greater interaction on Twitter with users through the institutional profile.
3. **Webinars.** Webinars and the topics covered in them will be continued and increased, as well as improving accessibility to videos.
4. **Events.** Collaboration with SECTI agents will be strengthened by organising and participating in our own and joint events.
5. **Transparency measures.** In accordance with section 4.2 of the State Research Agency's Communication and Transparency Plan, the results obtained through the calls for proposals financed by the State Research Agency will be made known to society as a whole and especially to the scientific community.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
5.1.1 Media references	No. of references	10
5.1.2 Press releases	No. of press releases	30
5.1.3 Social networks: Activity	No. of content communicated	350
5.1.4.Social networks: Profiles	Creation of a LinkedIn network	1
5.1.5 Media interviews	No. of interviews	2
5.1.6 Webinars	No. of videos on Youtube	10
5.1.7 Organisation of own events	Number of events	2
5.1.8 Organisation of events in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Innovation	Number of events	1
5.1.9 Active participation in institutional events	No. of papers and conferences	10
5.1.10 Website advertising: updating and adding new content	No. of publications	25

Programme 2. Communication with SECTI actors

The following actions are considered within this programme:

1. **Meetings with the Agency's collaborating personnel** for the development and monitoring of the Agency's actions.
2. **Meetings with the Agency's strategic groups** to improve communication of activities, collect doubts, proposals and complaints, and provide feedback and improve the Agency's processes.
3. **Institutional meetings.** Representation activities will be developed in national and international meetings and forums related to matters within its scope of action, as well as representation in R&D policy forums when so determined by the Ministry of Science and Innovation and attendance at trade fairs involving SECTI actors.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
5.2.1 Workshops with the chairpersons and coordinators of the thematic areas	No. of days	2
5.2.2. Workshops with the chairpersons of the thematic areas	No. of days	4
5.2.3 Meetings of the chairpersons of the thematic areas and members of the Scientific Technical Committee	No. of days	1
5.1.4 Meetings of the Managers' Forum	No. of days	2
5.1.5 Meetings with the Beneficiaries' Advisory Committee	No. of days	2
5.1.6 Meetings with the Technology Platforms Advisory Board	No. of days	2
5.1.7 Participation in international fora	No. of forums in which active	65
5.1.8 Participation in national forums	No. of forums in which active	70
5.1.9 Participation in trade fairs with a stand	Number of own stands set up	1

Programme 3. Performance reporting and other publicity

The following actions are considered within this programme:

- 1. Results reports.** New reports will be added for the main calls for proposals, and collaboration with other Spanish reports will take place.
- 2. Abbreviated results reports.** More communications will be issued in small report format or infographics.
- 3. Other publicity measures** - The Agency's website and portals, as well as the Agency's information in other official bodies, are also constantly being kept up to date and modernised.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
5.3.1 Reports on the results of funded actions	Number of reports	5
5.3.2 Website advertising: update and inclusion of new calls for proposals	No. of publications	16
5.3.3 Publicity in the National Grants Database	No. of publications	17
5.3.4 Translation into English of documents relevant to the Agency's activity.	No. of documents	2
5.3.5 Translation into English of the extracts from the calls for proposals	No. of documents	18
5.3.6 Publication on the Transparency Portal of documents relevant to the Agency's	No. of documents	2
5.3.7 State Investigation Agency Annual Accounts	No. of documents	1

Programme 4. Internal communications and briefings

Finally, we must continue to make progress in involving employees in the Agency's activities and issues of common interest, either through corporate mailings and/or general meetings or by Units using internal channels such as mailing lists and intranet, as well as actively seeking staff's perception of their work and their wishes.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
5.4.1 Internal communications and briefings	Corporate mailings, intranet communications, noticeboards and meetings	10
5.4.2 Staff survey	Staff survey on internal communication	1

3.6 LINE 6. CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS

To be highlighted in this line

Approval of management contract.

Actions to attract staff to the Agency.

Strategy for professional improvement in equality.

Programme 1. Approval of the management contract.

During the year 2023, the Agency must undertake the preparation and approval of its management contract, through the procedure and with the content determined by article 108 ter of Law 40/2015, of 1 October, following the modification made by the thirty-fourth final provision of Law 11/2020, of 30 December, on the General State Budget for the year 2021.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
6.1.1 Drawing up, processing and approval of the Agency's Management Contract, in accordance with article 108 ter of Law 40/2015, of 1 October.	Approval of the management contract	I

Programme 2. Human Resources Management

This programme aims to advance in the design of the general framework for action in the area of human resources, which focuses on determining the working conditions of the Agency's public employees, including aspects relating to the organisation, structure and framework for action in the area of human resources, remuneration, etc., with the participation of the relevant staff representatives and trade union organisations.

The activities contemplated in this programme are as follows:

I. Elaboration, processing, approval and implementation of a system of Productivity by Fulfilment of Objectives.

During 2023, a proposal for meeting objectives will be drawn up in line with the content of the management contract proposal.

The aim of this programme is to incentivise the productivity and performance of the Agency's staff, which will favour the fulfilment of its objectives, rewarding effort and dedication.

It also aims to make jobs in the Agency attractive, so as to help fill current vacancies and retain qualified staff currently on secondment.

The PCO is based on the definition of objectives to be met and indicators of the achievement of these objectives and will be remunerated on a small part of the income generated annually from the reimbursement of grants and the provision of services.

The Agency aims for the proposal to be approved in 2023, enabling the generation of credit for productivity in 2024, based on the degree of achievement of objectives reached in 2023.

2. Development and implementation of the Training Plan 2023. A Training Plan will be drawn up to improve the skills necessary for the correct functioning of the organisation and the efficient provision of services. The Plan will be drawn up with the participation of workers' representatives. It is foreseen that 21 training courses will be provided.

3. Development and implementation of the Social Action Plan 2023. The social action aid plan for the Agency's employees for 2022 will be drawn up and implemented, covering both individual measures (aid for staff studies, health protection, descendants and ascendants, transport, disability, situations of gender violence and exceptional situations) and measures of a collective nature (medical check-ups, canteen aid, etc.).

4. Measures for the incorporation of new staff into the Agency. A general merit-based competition and a specific competition will be approved, published and resolved during the year 2023 for the provision of civil servant posts in the Agency, which will allow a minimum of 40 currently vacant posts to be offered. Likewise, a study and proposal of posts to be included in the Public Employment Offer for the year 2023 will be carried out.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
6.2.1 Approval and implementation of the OCP	Approval of the programme by the Ministry of Finance and implementation of productivity.	1
6.2.2 Development and Implementation of the Training Plan	Approval and implementation of the plan	21
6.2.3 Drawing up and implementing the Social Action Plan	Approval and implementation of the plan	1
6.2.4 Measures for the recruitment of new personnel	Approval, publication and implementation of two	3

Programme 3. Consolidation of common services.

In order to consolidate the services necessary for the Agency's operation, the following activities will be undertaken mainly in 2022:

1. Complete the implementation of the computing and storage infrastructures, and the associated support, security, backup and systems services, which are shared with the Ministry of Attachment.

2. Continue the implementation of a new IT system for aid processing, which has been commissioned to TRAGSATEC in 2021. The commissioning has started in 2021 and will be completed by the end of 2023.

While this study is being carried out and the new IT system is being developed and implemented, the current aid management software applications will be maintained jointly with the Ministry of the secondment.

Activity	Indicator	Objective
6.3.1 Implementation and consolidation of computing and storage infrastructures, and associated support, security, backup and systems services.	Complete implementation and consolidation	1
6.3.2 Continue with the implementation of the new computerised system for processing	Completion of the assignment	16

Programme 4. Equality actions

At the meeting of the Governing Board held on 20 January 2021, the 1 Gender Equality Plan 2021-2023 of the AEI for R&D&I funding activities was approved. The areas of action contemplated in this document refer to the R&D&I funding activities carried out by the AEI and will be complemented and coordinated with the objectives and measures of the AEI's Equality Plan, framed within the 3rd National Government's Equality Plan and currently being drawn up. This document describes the planning for its implementation until 2023.

Among these activities for 2023, the following are foreseen

1. Adaptation of the composition and functions of the Strategic Equality Group (GEI-AEI) to the equality activities of the AEI: those contemplated in this 1 Equality Plan for funding activities, and those derived from the GAA Equality Plan. This adaptation is done on an ongoing basis, but will be monitored with quarterly coordination meetings.

2. Creation of an Equality Unit in the State Research Agency, complying with the requirements of Royal Decree 259/2019, of 12 April, which regulates the Equality Units of the General State Administration.

Activity	Workload estimation	Actual workload indicator
6.4.1 Establishment of Equality Unit	Implementation	1
6.4.2 Alignment of the IEG with the equality activities of the EIG Equality Plan the IEE	Number of coordination meetings	3

4 HUMAN RESOURCES.

The staff of the State Investigation Agency as of 1 January 2023 is as follows.

Unit	No. of jobs		RPT
	Occupied	Vacancies	Total
Support Unit	10	1	11
General Secretariat	29	23	52
Division of Coordination, Evaluation and Scientific and Technical Follow-up	3	8	11
Coordination and Evaluation Branch	17	5	22
Scientific and Technical Thematic Programmes Branch	25	9	34
Cross-cutting Scientific and Technical Programmes, Strengthening and Excellence Branch	21	7	28
Division of Programming, Economic and Administrative Management	3	5	8
Planning and Administrative Management Branch	28	20	48
Economic Management Branch	15	3	19
Grant Monitoring and Justification Branch	32	33	65
European Funds Grants Management Sub-Division	13	8	21
TOTALS	196	122	318

5 BUDGETARY RESOURCES.

The budget of the State Research Agency for the year 2023 is as follows:

Summary of income and expenditure	
Revenues (thousands of euros)	
Concept	Amount
Fees, public prices and other revenues	1,100.00
Current transfer	29,984.02
Actual investments: Repayments on capital operations	30,000
Capital transfer	1,358,891.59
Financial assets	20.00
Total income	1,419,995.61
Expenditure (thousands of euros)	
Concept	Amount
Staff costs	12,345.37
Current expenditure on goods and services	19,002.35
Financial expenses	300.00
Current transfers	85.00
Real investments	70
Capital transfers	823,666.84
Financial assets	20
Real investments PRTR	2,500
Capital transfers PRTR	562,006.05
Total expenditure	1,419,995.61

6 BASIC REGULATION

The basic regulations applicable to the management processes of the State Research Agency are as follows:

- Law 38/2003, of 17th November, on General Subsidies.
- Law 28/2006, of 18th July 2006, on State Agencies for the improvement of public services.
- Law 17/2022, of 5 September, which amends Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation.
- Royal Legislative Decree 3/2011, of 14th November, approving the revised text of the Public Sector Contracts Act.
- Law 39/2015, of 1st October, on the Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations.
- Law 40/2015, of 1st October, on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector.
- Royal Decree 1067/2015, of 27th November, creating the State Research Agency and approving its Statute.

7 MONITORING OF THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The monitoring of the Plan will be carried out in the manner indicated in article 23.I of the Agency's Statute, through the preparation of an annual activity report, which must be drawn up by the Agency's Management and submitted to the Governing Board for approval within the first six months of the year following the year to which the Plan refers.

The general activity report includes, for each of the axes, programmes and activities, a detailed analysis of the degree of execution, as well as the associated objectives.

This is without prejudice to the efficiency control that may be carried out by the department of assignment, in the exercise of its competences.