

CaixaResearch

Code of conduct for collaborators

Validate

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"la Caixa" Foundation

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Introduction

This document sets out the general principles that evaluators should follow when examining and rating applications that are submitted for evaluation in the CaixaResearch Validate programme's selection process or when consulting and mentoring are provided to projects within the Accompaniment Programme. These are common sense considerations, in general practiced widely by experts involved in selection processes.

A CaixaResearch Validate collaborator is whoever participate in the evaluation, follow up or advice of projects within CaixaResearch Validate Programme. This includes, but is not restricted to, Remote evaluators, Panel evaluators, Mentors, Consultants, Coaches and Trainers.

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

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

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

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General Principles

- » Collaborators must complete the tasks assigned, upholding confidentiality and examining each application or project fairly, impartially and equally, in accordance with the evaluation guidelines provided by the promoters and organisers of the programme.
- » Collaborators carry out their tasks as independent observers. They do not represent any organisation, region, country, group or discipline.
- » If a collaborator were to have a direct or indirect interest in the evaluated application or project accompanied, or any personal or familial connection with the applicant or project leader, the Programme Office must be notified immediately (see "Conflicts of Interest").
- » Collaborators must not discuss the contents of the application with anyone, least of all with the applicant.
- » Evaluators who participate in the independent evaluation processes (short-listing) and who evaluate the same applications must not contact each other with regards to the applications examined.
- » Collaborators must not perform any commercial activity with regards to the applicants or project leaders (e.g. distributing visit cards). Direct contact with the applicants or

project leaders must be performed through the Programme Office or with Programme Office consent and knowledge (e.g. CC in all mailing contact).

- » Similarly, evaluators must maintain the confidentiality of the process and avoid contact, with regards to the applications examined, with people who may have written letters of recommendation for the applicants being evaluated or with doctors or researchers leading their theses or research projects.
- » Collaborators must not notify anyone of the names of other participating experts or those who have participated in the committees, panels or expert advice until the selection process has concluded and/or the names of the selected participants have been made public.
- » Collaborators should ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the documentation they have been given access to through online channels and ensure that it is not accessible to third parties who may or may not be interested in the evolution of the selection process.
- » The documentation provided is used exclusively for evaluating the applications or providing guidance to the projects. Therefore it must not be used for any other purpose.
- » Hard or electronic copies, notes and documents obtained by or provided to the collaborator during the independent evaluation, participation on panels or project mentoring or consulting must be destroyed or returned to the Programme Office of the programme once the process has concluded.
- » It is of utmost importance for each call that the deadlines established for the tasks assigned are met. Project development or subsequent stages of a selection process could be compromised if established deadlines are not met.
- » Compliance with commitments undertaken with regards to a call is an exercise of respect and responsibility.
- » The Programme Office will contact, sufficiently in advance, collaborators who will take part in the activities of CaixaResearch Validate Programme. Acceptance of participation in the process implies that the Programme Office has covered this position. From that moment on, should a collaborator renounce his or her participation, the management of the associated activities would be seriously hindered.

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Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is the possibility of an unsuitable use or abuse (whether real, apparent, perceived or potential) of the trust that the general public, applicants, project members and the promoting and organising entities of the programme have placed with the experts who will participate in CaixaResearch Validate Programme activities.

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

Collaborators must immediately notify the Programme Office should a possible conflict of interest arise during the development of his or her task.

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

A conflict of interest exists when:

- » The collaborator has actively intervened in the preparation of a candidate's application.
- » The collaborator has a familial connection with the candidate (close connection).
- » The collaborator has actively intervened in the development of the asset that is the subject of the application.
- » The collaborator has been recused by one of the applicants or has a clear friendship or enmity with any of the applicants.

A conflict of interest could exist when:

- » The collaborator is the project leader or any other team member doctoral thesis director (defended in the last 10 years)
- » The collaborator has collaborated on publications or patents with regard to the asset in the last 5 years
- » The collaborator has had a contractual relationship or shared funds or research projects in the last 3 years
- » The collaborator has or has had a close personal or professional relationship with the candidate.
- » The collaborator has or has had a close personal or professional relationship with a suggested third party advisor for the project.
- » With regards to the application, project, applicant or project leader, the collaborator finds him or herself in any other situation that, in his/her opinion or that of a third party, could compromise his/her ability to examine the application or provide project advice with neutrality.

The existence or possibility of a conflict of interest does not imply that the evaluator cannot complete the evaluation of an application, or that a project may not benefit from collaborator guidance. The Programme Office must determine, according to the particular circumstances of each case, whether or not the conflict compromises the activity of the collaborator.

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

