New call for research proposals in Biomedicine and Big Data opens today

The BBVA Foundation funds the cutting-edge projects of 15 research teams in Ecology, Economics and Digital Humanities

- Awardee projects will explore topics like the effects of climate change in the Mediterranean area, the ecological impact of invasive species across the Iberian Peninsula, the development of an app to monitor adolescents' mental health, and social networks and the spread of xenophobic ideologies

- Under the new call, grants will go to six teams working in Biomedicine and five in the area of Big Data. Submissions will be evaluated in a keenly competitive, open process in the charge of expert committees with membership in the public domain

- In the space of ten years, the BBVA Foundation has funded around a hundred multiyear projects in Ecology, Biomedicine, Digital Humanities, Economy and Big Data. In the last four years alone, it has disbursed roughly 7.5 million euros through its Grants for Research Teams

- The Foundation's suite of support schemes for knowledge generation is rounded off by the Leonardo Grants program, with funds to date going to 241 researchers and cultural creators in multiple areas of science, culture and the humanities.

Madrid, December 27, 2017.- How are Mediterranean ecosystems coping with the effects of climate change? Are social networks responsible for society's ideological polarization and the growth of support for nationalist parties? Can a mobile app installed in their phones monitor adolescents' state of mental health and detect their risk of suffering psychological disorders? These are just some of the questions to be broached in the 15 projects funded in the 2017 edition of the BBVA Foundation Grants for Scientific Research Teams in the areas of Ecology and Conservation Biology, Economy and Digital Society, and Digital Humanities.

The grants allocated in these three areas will now be joined by a further six for team projects in Biomedicine and five in Big Data. The submission period runs from today's date to February 28, in the case of Big Data, and to March 22 in Biomedicine. Call conditions and application forms are available on the BBVA Foundation website (www.fbbva.es).

For more than a decade, the BBVA Foundation has lent priority support to scientific research as part of its broad-ranging commitment to new knowledge generation. In 2014, this goal was pursued through two sets of competitive calls: the Leonardo Grants, funding the personal projects of researchers and cultural creators at the mid-stage of their careers; and Team Grants aimed at fostering basic, translational and applied research in areas of pressing social concern.

The rationale behind both schemes is to encourage excellence and innovative talent, selectively identified in a transparent, keenly competitive process by committees of experts in the subject area. The result is a Leonardo fellowship network that currently comprises 241 researchers and creative practitioners in multiple areas of science, humanities and cultural innovation; and a total of 77 scientific research teams in receipt of grants of up to three years' duration in the fields of Ecology and Conservation Biology, Biomedicine, Digital Humanities, Economy and Digital Society and Big Data, funded to date with over 7.5 million euros.

The Foundation's funding schemes for knowledge generation include accords with some of Spain's top biomedical research centers, including a recently renewed agreement with the Vall d'Hebron Instituto de Oncología (VHIO) to aid in the development of anti-cancer immunotherapy drugs.

In the area of Ecology and Conservation Biology, the BBVA Foundation has lent its support to the creation of scientific infrastructures, like the conversion of the Cap Salines lighthouse in Mallorca into a Coastal Research Station, as well as helping to generate a substantial body of research, much of it in partnership with centers like Doñana Biological Station or the Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Studies (IMEDEA).

Fifteen teams funded in 2017

In the 2017 edition of the Grants for Scientific Research Teams, recently decided in the areas of Ecology and Conservation Biology, Economy and Digital Society and Digital Humanities, fifteen projects were selected (five in each area) out of a total of 280 submissions, with each receiving up to 100,000 euros.

Successful projects vary widely in their subject matter: from the influence of social networks in garnering support for xenophobic movements and parties to the ecological impact of reservoirs or the damage caused by invasive species across the Iberian Peninsula, by way of the search for shipwrecks of great archeological value or a study of the dynamizing role of railway stations.

The projects will be carried out by multidisciplinary teams of between five and 20 scientists – 127 overall – led by 15 principal investigators, including five full and five associate professors, aged 50 on average and comprising one-third women. Considering all members of all research teams, women account for 42%.

By region, Cataluña has the largest number of successful projects (5), against the two each of Madrid, the Valencia Region and Andalusia, with the remaining four split between the Balearic Islands, Galicia, La Rioja and the Basque Country.

Research Team Grants are resolved in an open, highly competitive process in the charge of expert committees whose membership is publicly disclosed. In the three recently decided calls, their make-up was as follows:

Ecology and Conservation Biology:

The evaluation committee was chaired by **Pedro Jordano**, a research professor at the Estación Biológica de Doñana (CSIC). Its members were: **Marta Coll**, tenured scientist at the Instituto de Ciencias del Mar (CSIC); **Sergi Sabater**, Professor of Ecology at the University of Girona; **Regino Zamora**, Professor of Ecology at the University of Granada; and **Miguel Ángel de Zavala**, tenured professor in the Ecology Department at the University of Alcalá.

Digital Humanities:

The evaluation committee was chaired by **Violeta Demonte**, Professor of Spanish at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Its members were: **Carmen Aranegui,** Professor of Prehistory and Archeology at the University of Valencia; **Álvaro Baraibar**, Head of the GRISO Digital Humanities area in the Centro de Estudios Indianos of the University of Navarra**; Isabel Burdiel**, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Valencia; **Fernando Checa**, Professor of the History of Modern Art at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid; **José María Fernández Cardo**, Professor of French Philology at the University of Oviedo; **Alfonso García Suárez**, Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of Oviedo; **Elena González-Blanco**, Head of Artificial Intelligence Product Development at Minsait (INDRA); and **Sagrario López Poza**, Professor of Spanish Literature at the University of A Coruña.

Economy and Digital Society:

The evaluation committee was chaired by **Francisco Pérez**, Professor of Economic Analysis at the University of Valencia. Its members were: **María Jesús Casals**, Professor of Journalism at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid; **Teresa García-Milà**, Director of the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics; **Julio Iglesias de Ussel**, Professor of Sociology at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and a member of the Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas; **José Muñiz**, Professor of Methodology of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Oviedo; **Constanza Tobío**, Professor of Sociology at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid; and **Antonio Villar**, Professor of Foundations of Economic Analysis at Pablo de Olavide University.

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