



Fundación
BBVA

PRISMS & PROBLEMS
Program
2023 Call

INTRODUCTION

The BBVA Foundation supports both basic and applied research: the former through the **“Fundamentos” Program**, and the latter, addressing goals outside the realm of science, through **Prisms & Problems**, an interdisciplinary program that is also open to the participation of experts from public agencies and other organizations who contribute to analyzing and engaging with the focus issues in this call.

Prisms & Problems aims to capture and/or generate the best knowledge for input to novel approaches in dealing with issues of major social and environmental concern. In general, tackling complex social problems and systemic environmental challenges calls for multidisciplinary collaboration, and the wedding of academic research with the perspectives brought by the institutional agents intervening in their diagnosis and treatment. The intention is that projects should help to identify the main factors underlying the problem in question, while offering an analytical evaluation of the effectiveness of public policies and the actions of other social agents.

The Prisms & Problems Program seeks to provide society with practical, instrumental recommendations based on innovative analysis, robust empirical evidence and, in some instances, comparative analysis with other societies.

The issues proposed in the first edition of Prisms & Problems are:

- The water cycle in Spain: uses and management
- Conservation of critical ecosystems in Spain
- Artificial intelligence values, regulation and applications
- Digitalization and mobile devices in education
- Educational models and outcomes
- Young people: employability, access to housing and interpersonal relations
- Gender-based violence: comparative analysis
- Democracy and the rule of law in Europe

CALL CONDITIONS

1/ Object

The purpose of the call is to grant funding for the implementation of applied, interdisciplinary projects centered on the following issues:

- **The water cycle in Spain: uses and management**

Water scarcity has become a key global challenge in these times of climate change. One that affects the availability and efficient management of resources, cost and infrastructure optimization, water quality to protect public health and the environment, and even cybersecurity, given that water management systems are critical infrastructures.

A comparative analysis of the situation in Spain and other countries may be served by contributions from diverse knowledge areas, including Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Economics, Law, Public Health and Information and Communication Technologies.

- **Conservative of critical ecosystems in Spain**

Forest fires, droughts, soil erosion and desertification, pollution, overexploitation, and demographic and urban pressures are some of the main threats facing Spain's ecosystems, as climate change impacts make themselves felt.

Projects addressing these problems may incorporate the scientific perspective of fields ranging from Environmental to Social Sciences, in tandem with the prism brought by the managers of public agencies and conservationist organizations.

- **Artificial intelligence values, regulation and applications**

New-generation artificial intelligence, with convergent advances that mark a radical departure from the developments of two decades back, is now being rolled out across multiple fields, some of them critical, with at times significant performance advantages over human processors in the areas of data analysis and pattern recognition. Generative AI is a disruptive technology with potentially positive systemic effects, as well as significant risks, motivating regulatory efforts of dubious efficacy.

In fields like Philosophy, Law, Decision Theory, Computer Science, AI itself, Cognitive Science and certain subsets of Statistics, the meaning and scope of massive AI deployment has become an object of debate, particularly in areas of systemic impact. The projects submitted under this call should be interdisciplinary, and start from a thoroughgoing knowledge of the state of the art in AI.

- **Digitalization and mobile devices in education**

The digitalization of the classroom, once viewed as an important teaching improvement, is now subject to doubts and ambivalence in view of its possible linkage with low performance, learning difficulties, delayed language acquisition and concentration deficit. Various countries and educational models are considering retracing the path of digitalization, but there is a lack of scientific evidence on the real impact of digital devices and on the conditions and terms that should properly govern their use.

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This issue can be broached from disciplines like Cognitive Psychology, Neuroscience or Biomedicine, Legal Sciences, Economics, Sociology and Educational Sciences, ICT, Basic Sciences, Data Science and Social Work.

● **Educational models and outcomes**

Measuring the outcomes of different educational models, especially at non-university levels, is an essential means to identify the strengths and weaknesses of pedagogical models and approaches, the provision and efficiency of educational resources, the identification of best practices, and the performance contribution of factors such as family and social background.

● **Young people: employability, access to housing and interpersonal relations**

Young Spaniards' socioeconomic situation, characterized by high unemployment, job insecurity and difficulty finding affordable housing, even rented accommodation, has pushed back the age of leaving home.

Further, new ways of relating through technology and social media have brought with them generational changes whose effects, both positive and adverse, merit deeper analysis from the standpoint of a wide range of social-scientific disciplines.

● **Gender-based violence: comparative analysis**

Policy advances and increased social awareness have failed to curb cases of gender violence, unquestionably one of the most important social issues of the 21st century. It is of special analytical and practical interest to compare the situation of Spain with that of other European countries.

In this call, particular value will be set on comparative, interdisciplinary analyses and contributions from the academic world, as well as from social workers and other specialists from public agencies engaged in combating gender-based violence.

● **Democracy and the rule of law in Europe**

In advanced societies, democracy and the rule of law are interrelated institutional pillars, associated in Europe with the welfare state. Now, however, these pillars are being eroded by a series of factors and variables, including ideological and party polarization, the disinformation and emotional contagion facilitated by social media, confrontational leadership styles, the weakness of mainstream media, changes in the structure of the middle class, and campaigns to discredit institutions like parliament and the judiciary, as well as the weakening of axiological neutrality in the recruitment and practice of the administrative apparatus.

The Prisms & Problems call will privilege analysis of this phenomenon from an empirical, comparative and interdisciplinary standpoint by teams made up of specialists in Legal Sciences, Political Science, Sociology, Social Psychology, Philosophy and Information Sciences, amongst others.

2/ Funding

The global amount of funding under this call is set at **3 million euros**.

3/ Project duration

Projects submitted under this call will have a maximum execution term of **24 months** from the signing of the acceptance statement

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setting out the terms and conditions of the funding. The project must be completed by the end of this period.

4/ Applicants

Projects should be submitted by a single principal investigator, who will meet the following conditions:

- Spanish national or resident in Spain in the terms envisaged in these call conditions.
- In possession of a PhD at the time of submitting the application.
- Maintain a public service or contractual employment relationship with a university institution or public or private non-profit organization engaging in research, in every case headquartered in Spain. This relationship must persist through the period envisaged for the implementation of the project. Any transfer of the approved project to a different center due to a move by the principal investigator will require the express permission of the BBVA Foundation.

Remaining research team members may belong to public or private research institutions or centers in any country. In the event that the issue to be studied is within the remit of public agencies, the team should incorporate a member of the agency in question or, at least, include its analytical perspective in the methodological approach to the project.

Evaluation will take into account the adequacy of the team's composition for the goals being pursued.

Individuals participating in this call may only do so through a single project.

5/ Project requirements

Projects must be designed with an interdisciplinary perspective and an applied focus. Where pertinent, the inclusion of comparative analyses with neighbor societies and the incorporation of the practical perspective of public agencies with competencies in the area addressed will be especially valued.

Projects must be original, unpublished, and pursue the generation of new knowledge on the object of research. The project narrative should expressly state what it hopes to deliver in regard to the problem addressed, along with its applicability.

If other grants have been sought or obtained for the same project, this should be expressly stated, along with the amount and nature of the funding.

6/ How to apply

Applications should be submitted in **Spanish or English** by the principal investigator, with the prior permission of the organization or agency to which they are attached, using the online form available on the BBVA Foundation website: www.fbbva.es.

Besides the general details of the project, applicants must provide the following documentation via the online form:

- Copy of principal investigator's ID document or passport.
- If the principal investigator is a national of a non-European Union country, they should give proof of long-term residence in Spain by furnishing a copy of a current foreign national's identity card.

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- If the principal investigator is a national of another European Union member state, they should provide proof of having been resident in Spain for at least three years on the date of submitting the application, furnishing their registration certificate of Union citizen and a municipal certificate of residence attesting to their residence in Spain over the last three years.
- Project narrative, with format at the applicant's discretion but offering content under all of the following headings:
 1. Background and objectives.
 2. Research methodology.
 3. Experience and suitability of the research group.
 4. Expected results and applicability.
 5. Work plan and calendar.
 6. Results dissemination and utilization plan.
- Total gross budget, duly itemized including all applicable taxes and withholdings.
- A short curriculum vitae of all research group members (5 pages max.).

On submitting their application, applicants will receive a confirmation message from the BBVA Foundation with a reference number that they should quote in any subsequent correspondence.

7/ Submission period

The submission period will run from **January 15, 2024 to April 30, 2024**, at 12 noon (Spanish standard time).

The completed application must have been received in full no later than the above date and time.

If rectifiable errors are detected, the BBVA Foundation will inform the applicant to this effect, giving a non-extendible period of 10 calendar days as of this notification in which to correct them, so the application may enter the evaluation and selection process.

8/ Selection process

The evaluation process will take into account the originality, analytical significance and applicability of the project, as well as the suitability of the CV profiles of the principal investigator and remaining team members.

The selection of awardee projects will be in the charge of experts in the issues set out in section 1 of these call conditions, who will arrive at their decisions impartially, after joint deliberation, relying on the best metrics of the specialist field and with measures in place to prevent conflicts of interest.

All deliberations will be kept confidential.

9/ Resolution

The resolution of the call will be publicly announced **no later than July 31, 2024**. The call may be declared wholly or partially void and the award decision will not be open to appeal.

The resolution will be posted on the BBVA Foundation website, www.fbbva.es, with details of the awardee projects.

There will be no further correspondence or communication with applicants whose projects were not among those selected.

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No itemized or individual information will be provided on the submissions received or the subsequent deliberations.

10/ Formal documentation

The organization to which the principal investigator of the selected project is attached will sign an acceptance statement with the BBVA Foundation setting out the conditions of the funding, which will cover at least the following points:

- Amount of funding and form of payment.
- Presentation of progress reports on project milestones and final outcomes.
- Utilization, dissemination and publication rights in respect of project results.
- Arrangements for cases of non-compliance.

The signing of this statement will be a nonnegotiable pre-condition for release of the funding.

Selected projects must have their starting dates **no later than September 30, 2024**.

11/ Project monitoring

The principal investigator must provide the BBVA Foundation with an **interim report** on the project's implementation and budgetary execution using the template facilitated for this purpose.

At the project's conclusion, the principal investigator will submit a **final report** using the template provided by the BBVA Foundation.

The report should cover the activities carried out, the results obtained and a statement of total expenditures, signed off by the

organization to which the principal investigator is attached.

The interim and final reports on the project will be assessed by a committee of experts appointed by the BBVA Foundation. This committee may request written clarifications and, where appropriate, call the principal investigator and/or other team members to meetings to further the performance of its review.

Any significant change to the approved project must be notified to and expressly authorized by the BBVA Foundation.

12/ Payment

The funding awarded will be paid to the account of the organization to which the principal investigator is attached in various installments, according to the milestones of the research project. Ten percent of the total funding will be released after the delivery and favorable assessment of the research project's final report.

13/ Research project results and dissemination

Results of the projects will be in the public domain and will be assured the widest possible dissemination to society through diverse channels (publications, lectures and meetings).

The BBVA Foundation reserves the right to publish and/or disseminate the results of the

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selected projects in the form of working papers, electronic documents or books, under

its own publishing imprint or in collaboration with academic publishers, provided that this does not affect publication in scientific journals of the researchers' own choice, which must state the support received as follows: "Title of the project - BBVA Foundation 2023 Prisms & Problems Program."

The BBVA Foundation may request the collaboration of researchers in activities to disseminate the project's results. Schedules in such cases will be arranged by mutual consent.

14/ Acceptance

The act of participating in this call signifies the acceptance of its conditions and resolution, which will not be open to appeal, and the renunciation of any claim in its respect.

Exceptionally, the BBVA Foundation reserves the right to make changes in the wording of these conditions, for duly justified reasons, for the sole purpose of clarifying their content, without such changes in any case implying a substantial or arbitrary alteration of the same. The text of the conditions will be available for the duration of this call on the BBVA Foundation website:

www.fbbva.es.

More information:

FUNDACIÓN BBVA
Edificio San Nicolás
Plaza de San Nicolás, 4
48005 Bilbao
Spain

Palacio del Marqués de Salamanca
Paseo de Recoletos, 10
28001 Madrid
Spain

www.fbbva.es
ayudas-investigacion@fbbva.es