

Connect Call (5th edition)

Rules for participation

17 February – 22 April 2026



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1. Definitions

Consortium: A temporary or contractual association between two or more entities – among which include the Practice Coordinating Organisation and the Research Coordinating Organisation – that come together with the aim of fulfilling the requirements of this Call and, where applicable, executing the project covered by it.

Agreement: This refers to the agreement entered into by the "la Caixa" Foundation, the Research Coordinating Organisation and the Practice Coordinating Organisation to develop a proposal selected for the grant, under which are defined payment, monitoring, submitting reports and reimbursement of the grant, as well as other specific terms and conditions.

Research Coordinating Organisation: This is the entity in the research sphere that leads the project jointly with the Practice Coordinating Organisation (as defined below).

Practice Coordinating Organisation: This is the entity in the practice sphere that leads the project jointly with the Research Coordinating Organisation.

Organisation Manager: This refers to the person designated by the Research Coordinating Organisation to carry out procedures on behalf of his/her institution. This includes submitting the necessary documents to accredit the institution on the platform and approving the proposal before submission.

Organisation Representative: The person designated by the practice entities to accept their participation in the proposal. The person must be empowered to accept the proposal on behalf of the entity, although he/she does not have to be the individual who will lead the execution of the project.

Project Leader: This refers to the person responsible for directing the selected project. He/she will be linked to the Research Coordinating Organisation that submits the proposal through the platform and will lead its execution if the project is funded. The Project Leader does not necessarily have to be the main researcher of the group, but rather the person who agrees to direct the selected project and, where applicable, to participate in the mandatory activities developed within the framework of the call. The Project Leader must hold a PhD.

Proposal: The proposal will be understood as that submitted by the Project Leader within the framework of this call through the designated platform.

Platform: This is the platform through which applications and proposals must be submitted. It can be accessed at the following URL:

<https://convocatorias.fundacionlacaixa.org/>

2. About Connect

a. Aim

Connect is one of the social science research calls created and funded by the Social Observatory of the "la Caixa" Foundation.

The Social Observatory is a space for analysis, debate and reflection that examines the changes taking place in society and disseminates social science knowledge in order to foster an enriching and informed public debate.

The aim of the Connect Call is to promote collaboration between the spheres of research and practice as well as to increase the impact of both on society. The aim of the Connect Call is therefore to fund research projects designed and developed by organisations in partnership between these two spheres.

b. Amount

Projects that carry out a **diagnosis of a social need** can request a budget of up to €50,000.

Projects that carry out an **evaluation of a social intervention**, however, can request a total budget of up to €100,000.

Includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxes • Indirect costs • Fees (if any) • All necessary costs directly related to the research, such as staff costs (including, where applicable, project coordination), data collection and processing, travel, allowances and accommodation or infrastructure, etc.
Not funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with implementing interventions

Each entity may include indirect costs in its budget. They can be used to cover structural costs of the entities without having to detail each item individually.

Indirect costs per entity cannot exceed 10% of the total direct costs allocated in the budget. In other words, by way of example, the indirect expenditure of the entity cannot exceed €2,000 if its total direct expenditure is €20,000.

c. Subject

Proposals can examine any aspect of the social reality in Spain from a social science perspective.

The Connect Call does not fund research in strictly clinical, methodological or technological spheres.

3. Target audience

a. Who can participate

Connect is aimed at:

1. entities in the research and practice spheres,
2. non-profit (except private universities),
3. based and operating in Spain, and
4. that **form a consortium** to jointly promote a social science research project in Spain in order to generate a positive social impact.

Entities in the research sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public or private universities • Non-profit organisations linked to a university or recognised as research centres. • Organisations registered as research centres in any public register: For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) ◦ Technological Centres and Technological Innovation Support Centres ◦ CERCA Institution: Research Centres of Catalonia ◦ Register of Researchers, Research Teams and Research Centres of the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands ◦ Register of Agents of the Riojan Innovation System • Organisations whose statutes specify that they carry out research tasks autonomously and directly
Entities in the practice sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third social sector organisations, also including second tier or higher level organisations (see the definition of third social sector in the law governing this sphere) • Public administrations or other local, supra-municipal, regional or national public bodies

How to form a consortium

In order to participate, the consortium must be formed by:

- **minimum one entity per sphere (2 in total) and maximum 4 entities** in total. The composition is flexible.

For example, the research sphere may include 3 entities and the practice sphere 1, or 2-2, or 1-1, or 2-1...

- If there is more than one entity for each sphere, the consortium must appoint a **research coordinating entity** and a **practice coordinating entity**. There must always be one coordinating entity for each sphere.

Project team

Research sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each entity must provide at least one researcher with a PhD degree. • There must be one accredited Organisation Manager on the platform (administrative profile). • There must be one Project Leader: a researcher from the entity coordinating the research.
Practice sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each entity will have one representative. This person must have the necessary powers of representation to act on behalf of his/her institution and thus be able to agree to participate in the project. The person does not necessarily have to be the individual who will lead the execution of the project within the entity. • This person must be accredited on the platform.

Entities and work teams

Research sphere	<p>Entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coordinating entity for the research • Possibility of additional research entities <p>Work team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Leader: researcher of the entity coordinating the research, must hold a PhD • Organisation Manager of the entity coordinating the research • At least one researcher per entity (with a PhD degree)
Practice sphere	<p>Entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coordinating entity for the practice • Possibility of additional entities from the practice sphere <p>Work team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of the practice entity/entities

Role of these individuals

Research sphere	<p>Project Leader: creates and manages the proposal on the application platform and invites the other team members</p> <p>Organisation Manager: accepts the project on behalf of the Research Coordinating Organisation on the platform</p> <p>Other researchers: one person for each additional research entity must accept the invitation on the application platform</p>
Practice sphere	<p>Representative: accepts the invitation on the application platform</p>

Shared leadership + Collaboration

It is important that the project leadership is shared and that all entities collaborate in carrying out the research.

b. Projects that can be presented

Eligible	<p>The project may fall into either of these categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosis of a social need in order to improve knowledge of the problem and make informed decisions. This category may also include the conceptualisation of a new intervention. These projects may request a total budget of up to 50,000 euros. 2. Evaluation of a social intervention (this may be an implementation evaluation or an impact evaluation). These projects may request a total budget of up to 100,000 euros. <p>The project must generate quantitative evidence and may provide additional qualitative evidence.</p> <p>Both primary sources (data generated by the research per se) and secondary sources (surveys, administrative records, etc.) may be exploited.</p>
Ineligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of social interventions. • Clinical interventions and treatments, whether pharmacological or non-pharmacological. • Validation of scales, questionnaires or other psychometric instruments. • Testing of prototypes. • Evaluations of interventions that have not been piloted previously.

c. Duration

The project's development must be completed in 24 months.

The deadline will commence from **15 December 2026**. All phases of the project have to fall within these 24 months: from inception to delivery of results.

4. When and how to submit proposals

a. Estimated timing

Online information session	Submission period for proposals	Evaluation of applications	Resolution of the call
21 October 2025	17 February – 22 April 2026 (before 2 pm)	April 2026 – July 2026	September 2026

b. Application process

The application process is carried out on the online application platform. All proposals must be submitted via this platform at the link below:

<http://grants.lacaixafoundation.org/>



Please note that...

We will only accept projects submitted through this platform. We will not accept applications received through other channels.

Contents of the proposal

Please refer to the separate document entitled 'Contents of the Connect Call proposal', which includes the following details:

1. the steps you must follow to submit the proposal on the platform (registration on the platform, acceptance, etc.),
2. an advance of the contents that the proposal will have to contain (general interest of the research, research design, budgets, etc.), and
3. a checklist so that you do not forget any steps.

The language of the proposal must be Spanish or Catalan. The contents of the proposals must be translated if the language does not match the language of the evaluators.

c. Acceptance of the rules

Participation in this call implies acceptance of the rules.

Proposals that do not comply with all the requirements defined in these rules will be ineligible and may therefore be rejected at any time during the process.

5. Evaluation of applications

a. Selection criteria

The criteria that will be used by the evaluators to select the proposals are as follows:

Phase 1

Evaluators for research sphere	Evaluators for practice sphere
Contribution to literature (20%)	Social relevance of the issue (40%)
Design of research (70%)	Potential usefulness of the project's results in the social sphere (50%)
Involvement of stakeholders (practice entities and relevant groups) (10%)	Involvement of stakeholders (practice entities and relevant groups) (10%)

Phase 2

Evaluators for research sphere	Evaluators for practice sphere
Contribution to literature (15%)	Social relevance of the issue (30%)
Design of research (50%)	Potential usefulness of the project's results in the social sphere (40%)
Involvement of stakeholders (practice entities and relevant groups) (20%)	Involvement of stakeholders (practice entities and relevant groups) (15%)
Feasibility and contingency plan (15%)	Feasibility and contingency plan (15%)

b. Selection process

The selection process of the Connect Call has two phases:

Phase 1: Remote evaluation

Each proposal will be evaluated by 3 experts (2 from the research sphere and 1 from the practice sphere) according to the selection criteria. Each expert evaluates specific criteria according to his/her profile. Approximately 25 projects will be shortlisted after this first evaluation.

Phase 2: Interviews

A multidisciplinary selection committee consisting of 10 experts (5 from the research sphere and 5 from the practice sphere) will interview the shortlisted project teams.

These will be online interviews and a maximum of one person per entity participating in the proposal can be connected. If any of the participants have special needs, we will make arrangements to facilitate his/her participation in the interview.

The evaluators will score all the interviewed projects. The ranking of the projects according to the score will be final and cannot be appealed.

Phase 1	Group of 3 evaluators	2 from research sphere
		1 from practice sphere
	Review of all proposals	
	25 shortlisted projects	
Phase 2	Selection committee (10 experts)	5 from research sphere
		5 from practice sphere
	Online interviews	Max. 1 person per entity
	Resolution	

An email will be sent to the 25 shortlisted projects informing them of the resolution of the call with the funded projects approximately 8 weeks after the interviews.

All proposals evaluated will receive a feedback report approximately 8 weeks after each evaluation phase has concluded.

6. Selected projects

a. Obligations

The selected projects will have to comply with the following obligations:

1. **Sign an Agreement** to regulate the awarding of the grant. The coordinating organisations undertake to sign a joint Agreement in Spanish between themselves and the "la Caixa" Foundation to regulate this grant. The signing of the Agreement is a mandatory requirement for receiving the funding, and it will indicate the starting date of the project.
2. **Compliance with ethical standards and conditions:** The people who make up the work team undertake to comply with the ethical, social, economic, human resources and contractual standards established by the collaborating organisations to which they are assigned during the planning and execution of the funded project. Furthermore, they also undertake to comply with the regulations applicable to their activity.
3. **Proof of execution of the project:** The execution of the project is justified by means of two reports:
 - A. **Report on the research results:** This report may be evaluated by experts in the research sphere.
 - B. **Report on the application of the results in practice,** detailing the changes generated or likely to be generated in the organisation of the practice sphere based on the project's results. This report must include a plan for the application of the learning with a forecast of the changes that will continue to be generated in the short and medium term. This report may be evaluated by experts in the practice sphere.

We also reserve the right to request financial reports in order to ensure that the budget is being properly used.

b. Responsibilities and guarantees

The Project Leader, coordinating entities and other participating entities are responsible to the "la Caixa" Foundation for the project's contents and results, including any documentation and information associated with it, without prejudice to the methods used for its substantiation (for example, artificial intelligence tools). In this respect, they guarantee:

- compliance with all applicable regulations in force,
- non-infringement of third party rights of any kind, and
- the application of best ethical practices.

Likewise, and within the framework of this call, they exempt the "la Caixa" Foundation from any liability to third parties arising from non-compliance with the aforementioned.

Moreover, the Project leader, coordinating entities and other participating entities declare that they have not been sanctioned by means of a final ruling for any infringements of third party rights or for the commission of offences that may lead to criminal liability of legal entities and/or natural persons.

c. Payment process

The grant will be paid in two instalments:

70%	Upon signing the agreement
30%	When the completion of the project is proven

Payment will be made within 60 days at the latest after we receive the payment requests from the coordinating entities.

We will divide the payment into two parts:

- the part of the budget related to the practice sphere will be paid to the Practice Coordinating Organisation, and
- the part of the budget related to the research sphere will be paid to the Research Coordinating Organisation.

This will be done in accordance with the details of the agreement to be signed by both organisations. Each collaborating organisation undertakes to comply with the corresponding part of the budget presented and both will be responsible for distributing it among the other organisations, if any, always in accordance with what they presented in the budget.

d. Leave of absence during the project

If the coordinating person of the project from any the entities falls ill or takes a leave of absence, he/she may request an extension to the project for the duration of that absence in terms of months.

Situations to be considered:

- Illness (more than three months)
- Maternity or paternity leave
- Leave of absence to care for a family member (more than three months)

In order to request this extension, the Project Leader must submit an official document justifying their withdrawal and outlining their plans for the extension, as well as a declaration confirming that the available funds are adequate. Express approval of the request by the "la Caixa" Foundation is required.

e. Support

We will organise a number of training and networking sessions to promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices among the work teams during the development of the projects.

f. Dissemination of results

There is the possibility at the end of the project that the Social Observatory and the beneficiary entities may be able to establish new collaborations in other activities, such as the publication of articles, organising an activity, etc.

The results obtained as part of the call for proposals will also be open to the public and may be disseminated and made available in future projects and research, both our own (for example, in future calls of the Social Observatory) and those of third parties.

7. Incompatibilities, acceptance of policies and privacy

a. Incompatibilities with other projects

Incompatibilities	<p>The Project Leaders of the projects selected in this call may not submit new proposals to any of the Social Observatory's calls until the project has ended.</p> <p>In turn, the projects selected in this call cannot benefit from any other financial aid, in terms of research expenses, from third parties or from the "la Caixa" Foundation.</p>
Compatibilities	<p>But the entities can indeed choose to participate in obtaining financial aid from the Calls for Social Projects of the "la Caixa" Foundation or other entities to fund the implementation of social interventions.</p>

b. Acceptance of the rules and policies

Submitting an application for this call implies the express acceptance by all applicants of these 'Rules for participation', as well as any criteria or decisions that may be adopted by the "la Caixa" Foundation if any doubts arise regarding the interpretation of the requirements and conditions set out in this document.

The organisations must also comply with:

- the ["la Caixa" Foundation research results management and open access policy](#)
- the ["la Caixa" Foundation's research integrity policy](#)
- the ["la Caixa" Foundation's principles of responsible research and innovation](#)
- the "la Caixa" Foundation's [Code of ethics and principles of conduct](#)

c. Personal data protection

As part of the application process, applicants will be duly informed about the processing of their personal data, as well as about the exercising of their rights with regard to personal data protection in accordance with the provisions of Article 13 and following of the European General Data Protection Regulation.

Likewise, the Fundació Bancaria Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona, "la Caixa", with registered address at Plaça de Weyler 3, 07001 Palma (Balearic Islands), Spain, is responsible for the processing of personal data in order to resolve any doubts and queries in this call. The legal basis for this processing is the execution of a contract, at the request of the applicant.

The personal data will be stored until the end of the applicable statute of limitations. The data will only be transferred for the purpose of complying with legal obligations, as well as to third party providers acting in their capacity as processors. Access to said data by technology providers located outside the European Economic Area is subject to all the required legal guarantees.

You may request more information or exercise your rights of access, rectification, suppression, limitation, portability and opposition before the Data Protection Officer of the "la Caixa" Banking Foundation at Avinguda Diagonal 621-629, 08028 Barcelona, or by writing to dpd@fundacionlacaixa.org. Complaints may also be made to the Spanish Data Protection Agency (www.aepd.es).

8. Questions and contact



Please write to us if you have any questions:

observatoriosocial@contact.fundacionlacaixa.org



You can also visit our website:

<https://elobservatoriosocial.fundacionlacaixa.org/es/inicio>