

Flash Calls

Evaluation quick guide



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1. Features of the Flash Calls

Flash Calls aim to support excellent projects and ideas, based on research proposals that are original, innovative, and robust. We want them to provide relevant knowledge to policy makers, professionals in the social sector and journalists, among other social agents.

Flash Calls are focused on quantitative surveys, as we want to encourage the generation of useful data about current social phenomena.

Research design must be centered on the deployment of a meaningful survey, and it must consider relevant aspects about budget, design of the questionnaire and the sampling, data collection and analysis, or ethical and legal implications.

1.1. Anonymous proposals

To avoid bias and ensure that the process is fair, the evaluation team will not have any information about the authors or their affiliation. Evaluators must report any breach of this condition and must also report conflicts of interest.

1.2. Triple blind

Reviewers do not know the identity of the applicants.

Applicants do not know the identity of the reviewers.

Reviewers do not know the identity of the other reviewers.

1.3. Fast calls

The essence of the Flash calls is to offer relevant information about current reality. This creates a need for dynamic calls, where proposals are short, and evaluation is fast. As a side effect, the evaluation is based on limited information. Therefore, we recommend that applicants use clear, direct language in their proposals: clarity plays a key role in the evaluation process.

2. Evaluation guidelines

2.1. Phases

The evaluation is carried out in two consecutive phases, each two weeks long.

1. During the **first phase**, each proposal is evaluated by **three experts**.

[If there are fewer than 40 eligible proposals, only the second phase will be carried out.]

2. The highest scoring projects advance to the **second phase**, in which **five experts** evaluate each proposal. The highest scoring projects in the second phase will be selected to be supported by the Call's funding.

Phase 1	3 experts evaluate each proposal.
Phase 2	5 experts evaluate each proposal.

2.2. Rating

Based on the evaluation criteria, and in both phases, each of the three main sections of the proposal (Social Problem, Background and Innovation, and Methodology) is rated as:

A	Excellent, it meets the evaluation criteria and is of a high standard.
B	Good, it meets the evaluation criteria, but it is not outstanding.
C	Poor, it does not meet the criteria adequately or it is not especially relevant to the Call.

Flash Calls aim to promote excellent projects and ideas, so A qualifications must only be given to sections and proposals that are outstanding.

Additionally, in Phase 2, evaluators must offer their comments on the strengths of the proposal and recommendations for improving the proposal. These comments are part of the feedback given to projects that have reached this stage, and therefore they must offer valuable and actionable information in a professional and respectful tone.

After evaluation, the A/B/C ratings are converted into numerical values to prepare the corresponding rankings.

2.3. Criteria

The evaluation criteria in both phases are three. Evaluation criteria correspond, roughly, to the main sections in the proposal, but all three criteria will be considered when assessing a given section.

When considering the three main criteria for evaluation, reviewers must bear in mind questions like the ones we show here. Please note that this is not an exclusive nor a comprehensive list of sub-criteria that must be fulfilled, just a set of guiding questions.

1. **Social relevance and interest** of the problem or phenomenon analysed.
 - a. Is the research relevant to the current social context?
 - b. Does the proposal address an issue that affects a significant segment of the population?
 - c. Would the results generated by this proposal provide new information for decision-making and policies in the social sector and public administrations?

2. **Original, innovative** nature of the research that is proposed.
 - a. Does the project fill a gap in current knowledge?
 - b. Does the project use new approaches or questions, or other innovative elements to achieve its goal?
 - c. Does the proposal have the potential to offer new insights into the understanding of the topic?

3. **Technical quality of the methodology and data analysis**, including appropriateness of the budget.
 - a. Is the methodology sound and robust?
 - b. Is the project feasible within the constraints of the call? (€35K, 12 months)
 - c. Will it produce reliable, high-quality quantitative data and results?

- d. Is the proposed budget adequate for contracting the survey out to a professional company?
- e. Does the target population justify the choice of the type of survey?
- f. Is the proposed sample representative of the population under study? Is it adequately justified?
- g. Is the emphasis on randomised, stratified samples?
- h. Are the proposed instruments (e.g. scales) validated for the population under study?
- i. Is there a data analysis fit to answer the research questions?
- j. Does the proposal consider the ethical implications of the project?

2.4. Which projects are eligible and not eligible

Eligible proposals

1. Study society as a whole in addition to the social impacts of a given phenomenon.
2. Propose original and innovative quantitative surveys in any of the disciplines pertaining to the social sciences.
3. The research projects based on these surveys can complete the entire journey from hypotheses to conclusions in a period of less than 12 months.
4. The research should prioritise the creation of quantitative evidence. Complementary qualitative data that can enrich the research is encouraged if the survey format and budget allows.
5. Data can be collected through a telephone, online or face-to-face survey. The research proposals may also include data from other available sources in addition to the data obtained from the survey.
6. The data obtained through surveys (regardless of format) must be collected by polling companies that meet the requirements outlined in rules for participation.
7. Original research on contemporary society.

Not eligible proposals

- Proposals dealing with clinical research, therapeutic interventions, validation of scales or questionnaires, individual psychology, or model or prototype testing are not eligible for funding.
- Projects whose main aim is to exploit existing data are also ineligible, as original and innovative surveys are encouraged.
- Projects dedicated to evaluating public policies are explicitly excluded from this call.

When reviewers consider that a project does not meet these criteria, they must select **NO** in the following evaluation question: *Does this project fit with the theme and focus of the call?*

2.5. Conflicts of interest

If you we detect a conflict of interest, it must be declared through the platform. A member of the Social Observatory team will review the declaration.

3. Questions

If you require any further information about the process, please do not hesitate to contact us at observatoriosocial@contact.fundacionlacaixa.org.