

Social Research Call

Rules for participation

Call for proposals



TheSocialObservatory

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IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE APPLYING TO THE 2022 SOCIAL RESEARCH CALL

Please **read the entire rules** for participation document before submitting your application.

Proposals that do not fulfill the research **requirements** and format criteria will be rejected.

Decisions made in the evaluation of this call cannot be appealed so we recommend you review these rules carefully.

Preamble

Social research is a driver of human progress and it plays a powerful role in broadening our understanding of society, improving the lives of individuals and communities and informing political decision-making. As a society, we are facing many urgent, complex, systemic, and highly interconnected challenges. In order to tackle these challenges, we need conceptual clarity and evidence-based analysis, together with open-mindedness and originality.

"la Caixa" Banking Foundation (hereinafter, "la Caixa" Foundation) is committed to fostering the role of research to improve our understanding of current and emerging social challenges and provide reliable knowledge for policy-makers and civil society. With this in mind, the Social Observatory of "la Caixa" Foundation has designed an open and competitive call **to fund high quality, innovative and socially-orientated research projects, based on robust quantitative methodologies**. We are particularly interested in projects with a two-way public engagement plan involving non-academic stakeholders from the very beginning.

In order to pinpoint the most innovative projects that address social concerns and priorities, we have adopted a novel approach. Our selection process aims at bridging the gap between research and society. As such, it includes a panel of social stakeholders from NGOs and the public sector who will assess the social relevance of the project proposals and a panel of international academic experts who will evaluate their scientific excellence, originality and feasibility

Furthermore, in order to promote diversity and keep the value of the research ideas at the core of the evaluation, an innovative triple-blind multi-phase selection process has been designed to ensure biases related to gender and other factors play no role. The process is set up so that i) applicants remain anonymous until the final stage of the selection process, ii) research proposals and researcher profiles are reviewed separately, iii) researchers are assessed only after the evaluation of the proposal is complete and iv) the evaluation of the researcher is reduced to a binary judgment as to whether or not they have the expertise and resources to implement the proposed research.

We strongly encourage talented researchers who are moved by the desire to shed light on challenging social issues to participate in the Social Research Call 2022. We hope you will join us in our endeavour to use research as a tool to improve our society and find solutions to the great challenges of our time.

1 Objectives and scope of the call

The Social Observatory of "la Caixa" Foundation has launched this call for **high-quality social research** projects that produce **robust quantitative data** as a basis for evidence and insights about current and emerging **social challenges in Spain and Portugal** through an **original and innovative approach**.

This call will fund social research projects that propose sound **quantitative data analysis to produce reliable evidence** for policy makers and practitioners, thereby building bridges between research and society.

With this in mind, applicants are encouraged to **think outside the box** in the project conception, execution and data management, including the exploitation of existing data sources and/or the generation of new data. Projects are expected to have an original perspective, use novel concepts, methodologies and approaches and/or to be groundbreaking in the management of data.

In this edition of the call, **"la Caixa" Foundation will support social research projects of up to 24 months in duration**. Successful applicants will receive a maximum of **EUR 100,000 each**. The call is intended to support high quality research that delivers outstanding, high-impact contributions to the scientific community. As such, the selected projects are expected to deliver results through at least one scientific publication, a short dissemination article and one knowledge-brokering activity.

2 Call timeline



3 Requirements for eligibility

All requirements listed in this document are considered obligatory. Applications that do not fulfill these eligibility requirements will be rejected.

Proposal

3.1 Data-driven methodology: This call will fund data-driven research projects that help us to broaden our understanding of current and emerging social challenges using **quantitative methods**. The projects funded by this grant must generate new evidence-based knowledge. Specifically, the research must involve either existing data (including longitudinal, cross-national, administrative data); new data generated by this research project and/or new forms of data (such as internet data derived from social media and other online interactions or geographical information systems).

3.2 Innovative proposals: The call encourages pioneering proposals introducing **innovative approaches** in terms of a) the proposed methodology, b) the production or re-use of quantitative data and c) the social challenge to be analysed.

3.3 Defined scope: Projects submitted to this call can address any issues that are socially relevant to the context of **Spain and/or Portugal**.

3.4 Social research: Social challenges are complex and require converging spheres of knowledge to provide comprehensive and innovative answers. As such, this call is open to proposals from **all disciplines in social sciences and humanities**. The research needs to be **socially-driven**: the core of the analysis must concern current or emerging social challenges, shedding light on social phenomena and providing a better understanding or assessment of social issues.

3.5 Public engagement: We are looking for applicable research that can be used to address social challenges. As such, a well thought out two-way public engagement plan involving non-academic stakeholders (including experts from outside of academia and/or those affected by the issue you are studying) is essential. **Public engagement activities should aim to incorporate knowledge from relevant stakeholders throughout the project in addition to dissemination initiatives for research results.**

Where appropriate, successful applicants will be able to utilise "la Caixa" Foundation's venues (i.e. Cosmo Caixa and CaixaForums) for public engagement activities.

3.6 The following proposals are excluded from this call:

- Social research projects without an empirical approach based on real data.
- Literature reviews.
- Purely theoretical approaches.
- Social intervention projects (unless the intervention(s) itself constitutes the research object of a quantitative analysis).
- Design of courses and materials and any other proposals that differ from drawing up a research question(s) and testing hypothesis.
- Proposals that imply the continuation of an ongoing project, or subsequent phases of projects whose results have already been totally or partially disseminated.
- Proposals dealing with clinical research or therapeutic interventions.
- The PLs of selected projects will not be allowed to submit new proposals in subsequent calls organised by the Social Observatory of the "la Caixa Foundation" during the time the funded project is still being executed, except during the final year of completion of the project.
- Projects that have already received funding (either from "la Caixa" Foundation or any other third-party grants) will not be considered eligible at the time of submission and may give rise to rejection during the life cycle of the granted project.

Project leader

3.7 The call aims to support proposals led by **project leaders** ("PLs") of any nationality who conduct their research activity at a public or private university or research centre legally based in Spain or Portugal.

A project leader is the principal investigator from the host organization, responsible for presenting the proposal to the call and coordinating the overall execution of the project.

3.8 The call is open to researchers who can demonstrate **research independence and evidence of prior achievements**.

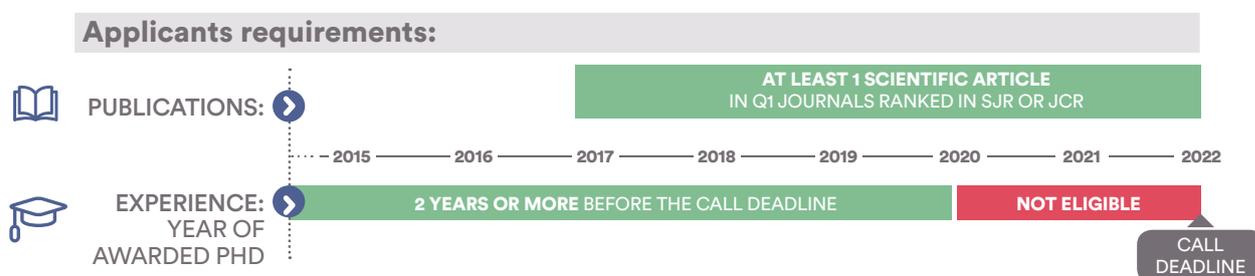
For this reason, project leaders (PLs) need to meet the following requirements:

» **In the 5 years before the closure of the call** (i.e. between 1 January 2017 and 25 January 2022), **applicants must have published at least 1 scientific article** in Q1 journals according to the rankings of Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) from Scopus or the Journal Citations Report (JCR) from Web of Science. For the latter, only indexes Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) are considered.

The journal must have been ranked as a Q1 in the year the article was published (or the previous year if not yet published).

Papers that have been accepted but have not yet been published are also valid. The date of acceptance will be taken into account for the calculations of the eligibility. The author must provide supporting documentation when requested by "la Caixa" Foundation.

» **Applicants must hold a PhD awarded more than 2 years before the call deadline** (i.e. before 25 January 2020).



3.9 Applicants whose research activity was interrupted in the 5 years before the closure of the call (i.e. between 1 January 2017 and 25 January 2022) are entitled to request an extension to the period considered for the publications' requirements. The following causes are applicable in these cases:

» **Illness or accident** that led to sick leave of three months or more. An extension equivalent to the period of sick leave can be requested in these cases.

» **Maternity or paternity leave.** An extension of 1 year can be requested for each child.

» **Full-time care of first degree relatives that led to a leave of three months or more.** An extension equivalent to the leave period can be requested in these cases.

The extension must be duly justified by means of supporting documentation when requested by "la Caixa" Foundation.

3.10 Within the same call, **each applicant (PL) can only submit one proposal**. Likewise, each proposal can only be submitted by one applicant.

Similar proposals submitted by different applicants and applicants attempting to submit more than one proposal will be rejected from this call and the applicants concerned will not be allowed to participate in future calls and fellowships from "la Caixa" Foundation.

3.11 Projects can only have one project leader. It is not possible to have co-project leaders for projects in this call.

3.12 **The PLs of selected projects will not be allowed to submit new proposals in subsequent calls of the grant** during the time the funded project is still being executed, except during the final year of completion of the project.

3.13 Applicants whose short proposal **obtains a 'C' score from 3 or more of the 5 evaluators and no 'A' scores in phase 1.1** will not be able to submit a new proposal in the

next edition of the call. For more information about the scoring scheme read the assessment of proposals guide available on the programme website.

Host organization

3.14 The host organization (the "HO") must be a non-profit research-performing organization: a public or private university or research centre legally based in Spain or Portugal. The HO will sign **the grant agreement** with "la Caixa" Foundation, together with the applicant, as PL of the project. As such, the PL needs the agreement of the HO to be able to submit the proposal. This endorsement process will be completed online on the "la Caixa" Foundation's call online management system.

An Organization Manager is the person appointed by the Host Organization as their representative. The Organization Manager will upload and verify documentation, and accept the submission of proposals on behalf of the HO on the "la Caixa" Foundation calls online management system.

3.15 Specifically, the **validation by the HO's OM** will certify their endorsement of the proposed project and their commitment to sign the grant agreement with "la Caixa" Foundation, should the project be funded.

3.16 The HO is required to offer the PL **independence to manage the project**. The HO must be willing to support the PL and the team members, if necessary, throughout the project period, providing an appropriate scientific and administrative environment for the project to be conducted.

3.17 Should the project be awarded the grant, the **PL must be legally linked to the HO**, either by statute, work contract or another type of collaboration by the time the project starts and throughout the whole duration of the project.

Expertise documents

3.18 Applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal will have to submit a **research expertise** document and a **public and social sector expertise** document. The latter must contain **at least one advisor from outside of academia**, linked to public and/or social sector entities, who will be involved in the research project. This document must also explain the PL and research team's **previous experience working with organizations outside of academia and how the research results will be communicated and implemented outside of academic circles**.

4 Submission of proposals

4.1 In order to optimize the workload of applicants and evaluators, the submission of proposals is structured incrementally in a **two-stage procedure**:

- » **Phase 1:** a short proposal must be submitted within the established deadline through "la Caixa" Foundation's call online management system available on the programme website.
- » **Phase 2:** successful preselected proposals are invited to submit a full proposal, budget, work plan, and two expertise documents (research and public/social sector) for the PL (and team if applicable).

 **Proposals selected in phase 1 that wish to withdraw from the selection process (and hence not be taken into account in phase 2) must notify the withdrawal to "la Caixa" Foundation within 48 hours of being notified. Failing to do so will prevent the concerned applicants from submitting a proposal in the next edition of the call.**

PHASE 1

- » **Short proposal (3 pages):** Pitch your research question and hypothesis. Outline the objectives of the project, its scope and social challenge(s) addressed. Describe why your project is innovative and original. Briefly define the quantitative data used and methodology behind. The short proposal should not contain references and must be anonymous.



IMPORTANT: *The short proposal must be written for a **non-specialized audience**. The selection process will incorporate stakeholders from outside of academia.*

- » **Host organization’s agreement:** online endorsement by the HO’s Organization Manager on the call system.

Please note that no feedback will be provided for short proposals that are not selected for Phase 2.

PHASE 2

To proceed to the second stage, successful preselected proposals will be required to submit:

- » **Full proposal (15 pages):** Describe your research project in detail. Define the objectives of the project, its scope and social challenge(s) addressed. Explain in detail why your project is innovative and original. Trace with precision the research question(s) that your project is answering, describing the quantitative data and methodology you will use. The full proposal should not contain references and must be fully anonymous.
- » **Research expertise:** Demonstrate the experience and suitability of the PL, HO and the research team (if applicable) to carry out the project successfully. Consider any potential cooperating organizations if pertinent. Explain synergies as well as individual performance.
- » **Public and social sector expertise:** Describe the links that the PL, research team and HO have with relevant organizations outside of academia (public sector, social entities, etc). Explain how these stakeholders will inform the research project and how, when the project is finished, the research will inform and positively impact upon these organizations.

- 4.2** Both short and full proposals will be **blind-reviewed**, therefore the short and full proposals must be **anonymous** and **must not contain any information by which the identity of the applicant (PL), research group or affiliation can be recognized**. This includes references to bibliography and/or previous research projects.

Proposals containing any information or references by which the identity of its members can be recognized will automatically be rejected.

- 4.3** All documents submitted to this call must be written entirely in **English**. The whole process of submission and selection of applications, including the interview, will be carried out in English.

- 4.4** **Templates** for each form will be available at the online submission platform as well as on the programme website. Proposals must strictly comply with the **format criteria** indicated in the templates.

Proposals not abiding by the format guidelines will automatically be rejected.

- 4.5** Proposals must be complete and include all relevant information. All requested documents must be submitted before the closing date of the call.

Incomplete proposals and/or proposals not complying with all requirements stated in these rules will automatically be rejected.

- 4.6** At the request of ”la Caixa” Foundation, the selected applicants will need to certify, with original or certified documents, the files and documents included in the application. Likewise, ”la Caixa” Foundation may request the original certificates of any data mentioned in the application.

Failing to provide such documents will automatically make projects ineligible even if they have successfully completed the entire selection process.

By applying for this grant, applicants acknowledge and accept the content of these rules for participation in full.

5 Evaluation process

5.1 Evaluation panels will be **multidisciplinary** and will be formed by independent experts combining both international and national profiles. With the aim of promoting social research that builds bridges between science and society, **non-academic experts (stakeholders)** will be incorporated in the first and final stages of the evaluation process.

EVALUATION PROCESS:



5.2  Decisions made in the evaluation of this call cannot be appealed. The selection process will not be subject to redress nor will the technical and scientific assessment of the evaluators be called into question. The evaluation and selection processes themselves guarantee the independence and objectivity of the evaluation.

6 Funding and payments

- 6.1** The grant will be awarded to the host organization, which will be responsible for distributing the budget and justifying the destination of the funds received by "la Caixa" Foundation. No funding will be granted to an individual.
- 6.2** The grant will fund projects for up to EUR 100,000 each (see section 7.4). Applicants are allowed to use the grant in a flexible way as long as the expenses are incurred by the beneficiary and the funds are used to cover costs directly derived from the project.
- 6.3** The payment schedule will be as follows:
- » 50% of the grant at the start of the project. The starting date will be the date of the signing of the Grant Agreement with the HO.
 - » 30% of the grant at the midline stage of the project, further to a follow-up report submitted to the Programme Office of "la Caixa" Foundation.
 - » 20% of the grant after delivery of all the outputs described in section 7.1. Hence, the final payment will be released after submission of the scientific article to the corresponding indexed journal, approval of the dissemination article by "la Caixa" Foundation, participation in one knowledge-brokering activity led and organised by "la Caixa" Foundation, justification of all the project's expenses and approval of the final report by "la Caixa" Foundation.

7 Responsibilities and project implementation

Output delivery

- 7.1** The funding scheme is highly focused on outputs that provide returns to society and research and that are of public value. Therefore, applicants who are awarded the grant are expected to commit to three main outcomes:
- 1. Scientific article:** The results of the project must be published in the form of, at least, one scientific article in an ranked journal. Only journals ranked in Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) from Scopus or in the Journal Citations Report (JCR) from Web of Science will be considered for this purpose. For the latter, only indexes Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) will be considered.
 - 2. Dissemination article:** In the form of a short article for lay audiences (Working Paper/Pre-print) that must be submitted to the Programme Office of "la Caixa" Foundation at the end of the project. "la Caixa" Foundation will be granted the right of publication of the dissemination article on the "la Caixa" Foundation website and/or newsletter and/or any other dissemination channels of "la Caixa" Foundation activities (see sections 7.12 and 7.13 for further details).
 - 3. Knowledge-brokering activity:** Applicants are expected to contribute to and participate in one knowledge-brokering activity led and organized by the Social Observatory of "la Caixa" Foundation. The implementation of such activities will be decided ad-hoc towards the end of the project. The aim of this activity encompasses two dimensions: first, knowledge brokering brings the results of research to practitioners, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in order to help them make informed decisions. Secondly, it helps researchers to discern and drive research priorities towards the challenges that are shaping society.

Use of the grant

- 7.2** The grant can be used in a flexible way, as long as it is fully allocated to cover costs directly derived from the project.
- **Eligible direct costs:** costs which are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the development of the project and which can therefore be attributed to it directly. The grant allows for coverage of the employment costs of the PL, researchers and other staff, travel expenses, goods and services, subcontracting (services that could be performed by the HO but are outsourced to another institution) and equipment. Within these eligible direct costs, a maximum of 10% of the grant can be used as additional remuneration for the PL. All staff costs should be clearly described, including the number of weekly hours and the hourly rate of the person hired.
 - **Eligible indirect costs:** up to 10% of the total direct costs requested can be assigned to overheads.
- 7.3** The PL must provide a scientific-technical summary and justification of the costs incurred as well as any other additional information that "la Caixa" Foundation may request, if deemed necessary, from the PL or the HO, who will authorise each other for this purpose.
- 7.4** **In no case will the grant exceed the total costs of the project actually incurred by the HO.** Therefore, at the end of the project, "la Caixa" Foundation will calculate the balance and issue the payment, if due, of any remaining amount of the grant. **Accordingly, if the costs actually incurred in the project were below the amount of the grant received, the HO will reimburse the amount paid in excess.** If the costs incurred in the project were above the amount of the grant, no increase of budget will be granted by "la Caixa" Foundation.
- 7.5** "la Caixa" Foundation may request HOs to provide an **audit report and/or statement** at any moment, as well as any additional information, documentation and/or clarification that the "la Caixa" Foundation may deem pertinent to allow its auditors and/or advisors to evaluate the correct allocation of the grants awarded. The cost of this audit report and/or statement will be paid by the "la Caixa" Foundation, subject to prior approval of the corresponding budget, unless irregularities are detected as a result of it, in which case the HO would bear the cost.
- 7.6** Should the project require funding in excess of 100,000 euros, applicants must submit a full budget and clearly indicate which parts of the budget will be covered by the Social Research Grant. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate they have sufficient co-funding to cover the other costs should they receive the Social Research Grant.

Applicable policies and regulations

- 7.7** "la Caixa" Foundation fosters the principles of **Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)**. These principles take into account gender equality in research and innovation (R&I), as well as other inclusion issues; open access to scientific results, ethics and research integrity and the engagement of social stakeholders in the design and performance of R&I.

- 7.8** Any cases of **scientific misconduct** that may arise during the evaluation of a proposal and throughout execution of the project and the project outputs delivery, must be communicated immediately by the Host Organization to ”la Caixa” Foundation.
- 7.9** ”la Caixa” Foundation supports the principles of **open access**, following the principle of “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”. With regard to scientific publications, HO and PL must follow the [open access policy of the ”la Caixa” Foundation](#).

Acknowledgments and dissemination rules

- 7.10** In all dissemination and communication of the project, ”la Caixa” Foundation will be mentioned as the funding organization of the project. This applies, wherever possible and unless ”la Caixa” Foundation requests otherwise, to all dissemination and communication actions, disclosures and activities, as well as to all equipment, infrastructure and main results funded by the grant. Communication and disclosure materials must be submitted to ”la Caixa” Foundation for prior review and approval in writing.
- 7.11** Scientific articles and any other scientific communication published as a result of the grant must include the following text “*This research was funded by ”la Caixa” Foundation’s Social Research Call 2022 under the project code <CODE ASSIGNED TO AWARDED PROJECTS>*”. PLs must notify ”la Caixa” Foundation in advance of the publication of any such articles.
- 7.12** The logo of ”la Caixa” Foundation and the reference to the contribution of ”la Caixa” Foundation must appear in a way that is easily visible to the public and is sufficiently prominent (also taking into account the nature of the activity or the object). This is always subject to the prior revision and approval of ”la Caixa” Foundation in writing. For this purpose, ”la Caixa” Foundation authorises the use of the logo and may provide it in a digital format upon request.
- 7.13** ”la Caixa” Foundation reserves the right (but shall not be bound) to publish and disseminate the results generated under the projects awarded with the grant and, in particular, the dissemination article mentioned in section 7.1.2. In any case, the publication or dissemination carried out by ”la Caixa” Foundation will observe the right of the authors to be acknowledged as such.
- 7.14** In order to enable the publication and dissemination referred to in sections 7.1.2 and 7.12 above, the grant agreement will include the granting of exploitation rights in favour of ”la Caixa” Foundation to the extent necessary for publishing, disseminating and translating the dissemination article through the Social Observatory of ”la Caixa” Foundation website and/or newsletter and/or any other dissemination channels of ”la Caixa” Foundation activities, with no time limitation and on a worldwide basis.
- 7.15** Before applying for the grant, the PL must ensure that there are neither prior commitments nor third parties’ prior rights impeding compliance with this dissemination policy and, in general, with these rules for participation.

Allowances for long-term leave

- 7.16** If the project leader is affected by one of the following situations during the 24 months of their project an extension may be requested for the number of justified months.
- a) Sick leave of three months or more
 - b) Maternity or paternity leave
 - c) Leave to care for first degree relatives of three months or more

In order to be eligible for this extension, the PL must submit official documents certifying that they are on leave from work, at the beginning of the leave period.

8

Confidentiality. Privacy and data protection

- 8.1** The applicants authorize "la Caixa" Foundation to access, use and share the information of the proposals, including any and all documents referred to therein, whether submitted at the time of the application or at a later stage, for the purposes of this grant and to the extent necessary, including, but not limited to, the evaluation, selection and monitoring of the projects. The applicants confirm to "la Caixa" Foundation that such information and documentation can be shared and used for these purposes.

To the extent that the identifying and/or professional details of natural persons linked to the projects is provided in the application form and supporting documents, the applicants shall be understood to have informed those individuals regarding the information indicated in this clause and, where applicable, to have obtained the necessary consent of those persons for their inclusion in the proposals.

- 8.2** "la Caixa" Foundation fully complies with the legislation in force in the field of personal data protection.
- 8.3** Any and all personal data collected within the framework of this call (including data submitted in the proposal) will be processed for the purpose of managing the participation of applicants in it, the basis of such processing being the management of the resulting relationship, and such data will be stored until the end of the applicable statutory limitation periods.
- 8.4** Personal data will only be communicated if required to comply with legal obligations. "la Caixa" Foundation uses service providers (of technological and evaluation services) located outside the European Economic Area, with all those guarantees required by the applicable regulations. Data subjects can ask for more information and/or exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, restriction, portability and objection before the Data Protection Officer of "la Caixa" Foundation at the postal address Avinguda Diagonal 621 – 629, 08028 Barcelona, or at the e-mail address dpd@fundacionlacaixa.org. Data subjects are also entitled to lodge a complaint before the Spanish Data Protection Agency.

9 Additional remarks

- 9.1** All applicants (including, but not limited to, selected applicants) guarantee that the projects (including, without limitation, the scientific and dissemination articles) comply and will comply with the applicable regulations and that they do not infringe nor will infringe any rights of third parties, including, but not limited to, intellectual/ industrial property rights and/or prior commitments or agreements. In this regard, all applicants will hold the "la Caixa" Foundation harmless from and against any damages resulting from any breach of this guarantee.
- 9.2** The submission of an application for this call implies all the applicants' express acceptance of these rules for participation as well as of the criteria and decisions that may be made by "la Caixa" Foundation should questions arise on how to interpret the terms and conditions.
- 9.3** The PL shall ensure that any parties (legal or natural) involved in the projects are informed of these rules for participation and respect them to the extent applicable to them (e.g. the dissemination policy must be communicated to co-authors of the dissemination article, if any).
- 9.4** The detection of non-compliance with these rules for participation, regardless of when they occur and the status of the application within the grant awarding process or the execution of the project, will entitle "la Caixa" Foundation to reject the application or withdraw the grant awarded.
- 9.5** Should the grantee not comply with the obligations established above, or with any other obligation included in these rules for participation, "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to act as it may deem appropriate, which may include requesting reimbursement of the grant amounts.
- 9.6 Successful applicants will be invited to join "la Caixa" Foundation's Social Research Talent Network.**

The aim of this network is to facilitate collaboration among researchers by organising events and training sessions for the exchanging of knowledge and best practices. The activities organised within this framework will be focussed on important aspects of the researchers' ongoing and future projects, including specific training in dissemination and public engagement, with the ultimate goal to increase the impact of their research on policy decision making.