

## ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: Spain

1. Which organization(s) are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

### National Government

- The National Biomedical Research Network is coordinated and funded by the [Instituto de Salud Carlos III](#).
- [Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación](#). The Royal Decree 404/2020, of 25 February 2020, which sets out the basic organizational structure of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, establishes the following organizations: The Minister of Science and Innovation; the General Secretariat for Research, with the rank of Under-Secretary, which includes the Directorate General for Research Planning; the General Secretariat for Innovation, with the rank of Under-Secretary, and the Under-Secretariat of Science and Innovation, which includes the Technical General Secretariat.
- [Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico Industrial \(CDTI\)](#) is a public business entity answering to the Ministry of Science and Innovation, which fosters the technological development and innovation of Spanish companies. It is the entity that channels the funding and support applications for national and international research and development (R&D) projects of Spanish companies or in collaboration with them.
- [Boletín Oficial del Estado](#) publishes all national governmental grants.
- [Agencia Estatal de Investigación](#) (AEI). The mission of the AEI is to promote scientific and technical research in all areas of knowledge through the efficient allocation of public resources, the promotion of excellence, the promotion of collaboration between the agents of the System and support for the generation of knowledge of high scientific and technical, economic and social impact, including those aimed at solving the great challenges of society, and the monitoring of financed activities as well as the necessary advice to improve the design and planning of actions or initiatives to which the R&D policies of the General State Administration are implemented.
- [Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas \(CSIC\)](#). The Spanish National Research Council is the main agent responsible for implementing the Spanish

System for Science, Technology and Innovation. To undertake this mission, it is capacitated to carry out activities aimed at:

- The generation of knowledge through scientific and technical research.
- The transfer of research results to promote and create technology-based enterprises.
- The provision of expert advice to public and private institutions.
- The delivery of highly qualified pre-doctoral and post-doctoral training.
- The promotion of scientific culture in society.
- The management of large facilities and unique scientific and technical infrastructures.

### **Local/Regional Governments**

- Local governments also offer grants in various Regional Ministries, including Education, Health and Industry.

### **Private Foundations**

- [Obra social Fundación “la Caixa”](#)
- [Fundación BBVA](#)
- [Fundación Mapfre](#)
- [Fundación Mutua Madrileña](#)
- [Fundación Ramón Areces](#)

### **Industry/Pharmaceutical companies**

- No official grants.

### **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Charities**

- [Federación Española de Enfermedades Raras \(FEDER\)](#)
- [Fundación ONCE](#)

### **European Funding Opportunities in Spain**

- [European Reference Networks \(ERN-EYE\)](#) aims to provide the best care to patients with rare eye diseases across the European Union (EU), improving diagnostic tools, harmonizing clinical and pre-clinical research, and bringing best practices and training for rare eye diseases. It involves four thematic working groups: rare diseases of the retina, neuro-ophthalmology rare diseases, pediatric ophthalmology rare diseases, and rare anterior segment conditions and six transversal working groups. Research, innovation and knowledge generation are key elements of the ERN-EYE.

- [European Funds from the EU Framework Program 2021-2027 Ministerio de Hacienda y Función Pública](#). Financial relations between Spain and the EU manifest themselves in a series of two-way flows. This section contains information on how the practice of these relations comes about: a brief review of the community budget and its method of financing, an analysis of the part corresponding to Spain regarding this financing.
- [European Research Council \(ERC\)](#) is a public body for funding of scientific and technological research conducted within the EU. Researchers from any field can compete for the grants that support pioneering projects.

## 2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?

What are the criteria the funding/policy organization(s) use to make their decisions?

Each funding opportunity will have its own policies and pathways for approval. All official programs and grants are developed under the umbrella of the *Estrategia Española de Ciencia y Tecnología y de Innovación (EECTI)*. The current EECTI 2021-2027 is structured in two state plans, the 2021-2023 State Plan and the 2024-2027 State Plan. These plans include national grants for research, development and innovation (I+D+I).

For specific health-related research, there is a [Strategic Health Action \(Acción estratégica en Salud, AES\)](#)

Is peer/scientific review involved in the funding-decision process?

Yes, peer review is the common practice for most funding opportunities. Applicants will have calls with necessary offices, e.g. human resources, infrastructures, networks, etc. Calls are evaluated by the [National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation \(ANECA\)](#), which is an autonomous body.

Similarly, there are local agencies for Spanish regions such as [Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Castilla y León \(ACSU-CyL\)](#) or [Asesores y Consultores en Administraciones Públicas \(ACAP\)](#) for Madrid.

## 3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?

### National

- [Federación Española de Enfermedades Raras \(FEDER\)](#)

- [Federación de Asociaciones de Distrofias Hereditarias de Retina de España \(FARPE\)](#)
- [Asociación Española del síndrome de Sjögren \(AESS\)](#)
- [Asociación de pacientes de Uveitis \(AUVEA\)](#)
- [Aniridia Spain](#)
- [El Observatorio Nacional de Enfermedades Raras Oculares \(ONERO\)](#)
- [Asociación KIF1A España](#)
- [Asociación de miopía magna con retinopatías \(AMIRES\)](#)
- [Asociación de glaucoma para afectados y familiares \(AGAF\)](#)
- [Leber Optic Nerve Atrophy Association \(ASANOL\)](#)
- [Asociación de niños con retinoblastoma \(AENAR\)](#)

### European

- [Retina International](#)
- [Aniridia Europe](#)
- [Eurordis](#)

Do they partner with researchers to promote research funding and policy?

FARPE offers research grants that are evaluated by the national agency of research and have their own scientific advisory board.

#### 4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy?

- [Institutos Biosanitarios de investigación Programa de Evaluación, Acreditación y Seguimiento de IIS](#). Accredited Health Research Institutes are oriented to individual health needs and from the perspective of society. They have an effective governance to guarantee the necessary resources and capacities, to fulfill the mission of generating scientific knowledge, whose translation produces an impact of improvement in the individual and society. All this, within the framework of Responsible Research and Innovation and Open Science, in compliance with the recommendations of the EU.
- [Centro de Investigación Biomedica en Red \(CIBERISCI3\)](#).
- The [Results-Oriented Cooperative Research Networks in Health \(RICORS\)](#) are structures constituted by a set of research groups that have a common, concrete

and achievable research objective. These multidisciplinary groups belong to a variable set of biomedical research centers, dependent on the different public administrations or the private sector and belonging to a minimum of ten autonomous communities.

## 5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

Evaluation commissions – Researchers are part of evaluation commissions at both state and regional levels. All evaluations are conducted by peer review.

The [National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain \(ANECA\)](#) is the body responsible for the assessment, certification and accreditation of the Spanish university system with the aim of its continuous improvement and adaptation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). There are also regional evaluation agencies in all the autonomous communities.

## 6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

- National Research Plan – every 4 years
- AES – annually
- Regional plans – every 4 years

In general, the priority lines and plans are in line with the guidelines of EU programs.

## 7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

Can scientists invite decision makers to their lab/institution to see their work firsthand?

Yes, during various scientific conferences, meetings and in the official collaborative networks, like RICORS, CIBER, and so on. There are also advisory groups of the regional plans in the different autonomous communities.

Do the funding/policy organizations hold open meetings or solicit comments from the public that researchers can participate in?

Yes, before national or regional plans are confirmed.



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