

At this stage of the selection process, candidates receive information about the eligibility of their proposals, and they may be contacted by VHIO Academy during the process if any information included in the application needs to be clarified, added, or amended.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Researchers may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for **more than 12 months in the three years** immediately before the call deadline. Short stays for holidays, compulsory military service, or under the Refugee Convention 1951 are excluded.
- Researchers must be in **possession of a doctoral degree** at the deadline of the programme's call. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered eligible.
- Applications submitted online must include **all the information and details** requested in the application form.
- Each applicant must submit **one application in English** containing all required information and documents to the [VHIO online application system](#).

Each application will be carefully reviewed by the VHIO Academy against the mobility, credentials and experience criteria. After Phase 1 is completed, all eligible applications will move forward to Phase 2.

Phase 2: Evaluation of Merits

Structure of the Remote Evaluation Committee:

Applications reaching Phase 2 will be evaluated through a peer-review process by a group of **international independent experts from outside the partnership (Remote Evaluation Committee, REC)**. The committee members are external experts from VHIO's internal database of evaluators, institutional networks and academic and industrial partner organizations who will be selected according to candidates' profiles and relevant previous experience in evaluation processes. **These committee members will have an adequate gender balance, as well as relevant scientific expertise and research experience to assess the candidates.**

All members of the REC will be aware in advance of the evaluation procedure, evaluation criteria, and their responsibilities, and will receive from VHIO Academy a list of guidelines to ensure a transparent and fair selection process.

Evaluation of the Candidates:

To learn about VIDA's recruitment practices, the candidates will receive a 'Guide for Applicants' from VHIO Academy, and the 'Guide for Evaluators' will be made

available on the programme's website. REC will be in charge of evaluating the *curriculum vitae*, scientific track record, motivation letter and referee feedback for all eligible applications.

Candidate's application documents will be scored by the REC according to a set of **well-established and transparent criteria, which must be summarized on a report template provided by VHIO Academy that includes the candidate's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as space for short, concise individual feedback from evaluators**. Below is a summary of the evaluation criteria and respective weight in the selection process:

| Criteria | Description | Weighting |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Research and working experience | Participation in projects | 30% |
| | Publications | |
| | Attendance to conferences and events | |
| | Research skills and competences | |
| | Technology transfer activities and patents | |
| | Support letters | |
| Other | Mobility (research stays) | 10% |
| | Supervision and mentoring | |
| | Public awareness | |
| | Non-academic/Industrial experience | |
| | Suitability of the profile to the programme | |
| Total Score | | 40% |

As VIDA is an open call for experienced researchers, bibliometric indicators will be evaluated during the selection process together with the candidate's scientific/technical involvement in research projects and their portfolio of transferable skills and competences such as teaching, supervision, mentorship, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management/leadership experience, and public awareness activities, in line with the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](#)).

In addition to the evaluation criteria described above and in line with [The European Charter for Researchers](#), a return after a career break will not be penalized, but rather be regarded as a career evolution. Applicants will be requested to indicate any career break in their CVs. Any mobility experience (geographical, intersectorial, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility) will be regarded as a valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers and will be positively considered. Furthermore, an equal opportunity policy regarding recruitment will be followed, without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence.

VHIO Academy will review the reports and ask the evaluators for additional information, if needed. A minimum of 12 candidates will move forward to the next selection phase.

Phase 3 & 4: Project Evaluation and In-Person Interviews

Short-listed candidates in Phase 2 of the selection process will be invited to present a scientific project proposal aligned with one of the research topics available, followed by an in-person interview process. Candidates unable to attend onsite interviews might be offered the possibility to conduct interviews online. Candidates will only be offered the opportunity to participate in an interview (either in person or remote) after submission of their research projects.

VIDA will ensure that all the projects within the postdoctoral programme comply with the ethical principles of Horizon Europe.

Structure of the In-Person Interview Panel:

In-Person Interview Panel members with broad expertise will be selected from VHIO's internal database of evaluators, institutional networks and academic and industrial partner organizations to cover the scientific background of all applicants. This gender-balanced panel will be composed of 3 to 5 members with international and intersectorial professional experience, as well as previous experience in researchers' selection processes.

Evaluation of the Candidates:

Personal data of evaluators will remain confidential during the entire selection process. All evaluators will sign an appointment letter, including a confidentiality and conflict of interest statement, and will be provided with the call documents, the *European Charter & Code for Researchers*, as well as the *Guide for Evaluators*.

All members of the selection panel will be aware in advance of the evaluation procedure, evaluation criteria, and their corresponding responsibilities, and will receive a training session to enhance their recruitment skills. Panel members will have access to the candidate's application documents and projects to review in advance. Communication with prospective supervisors is forbidden to ensure ethical standards in the selection process.

Short-listed candidates after the *Evaluation of Merits* phase will attend an in-person interview with the following structure:

- *Morning session - Part 1:* Introduction & oral presentation of the candidate merits, including the research proposal submitted as part of the application.
- *Afternoon session - Part 2:* Interactive Q&A session to assess additional aspects from the applicants (interest in the

programme, level of independence, potential as future leading researcher, self-identification of strengths and weaknesses, etc.).

The selection panel will prepare an individual report for each interview. Candidates will be scored according to a set of **well-established and transparent criteria, which must be summarized on a report template provided by the VHIO Academy that includes the candidate's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as space for short, concise individual feedback from evaluators explaining the reasoning behind each evaluation.** Below is a summary of the evaluation criteria and respective weight in the selection process:

| Criteria | Description | Weighting |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| Research proposal | Description, innovative aspects, alignment with programme thematic areas, work plan and expected results. | 30% |
| Interview | Research skills: Scientific excellence, level of independence, motivation and potential as a future lead researcher, scientific quality of the presentation and answers during the Q&A session | 15% |
| | Interpersonal skills: Professional attitude, team player, reliability & motivation | 10% |
| | Communication skills: English skills and oral communication | 5% |
| | Total Score | 60% |

Phase 5: Final Scoring

VHIO Academy will proceed to prepare the final ranking using evaluations and scorings from Phases 3 (50% scoring weight) & 4 (50% scoring weight). The selection panel will prepare a consensus report collaboratively justifying their final decisions in detail. VHIO Academy will proceed to invite fellows ranking favorably to the recruitment/negotiation stage.

VHIO Academy will prepare an Evaluation Summary Report to be sent to all the applicants participating in Phases 3 & 4 including funding decision (recommended, reserve list, not funded, rejected), and summary of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses as identified by the evaluators. The report will not only inform the applicants of the final decision of the selection process, but it will provide the candidates with useful feedback to incorporate in future job applications.