

Advanced technology to bring administration closer

The University and Research Funding Management Agency (AGAUR) was created in 2001 to manage aids and grants for students, researchers and organisations, with the explicit aim of modernising administration and making it more flexible. From the very beginning, management was envisaged to be based on state-of-the-art technologies, especially in the intensive use of IT, and the possibilities offered by the legal format of an agency as compared to classical administration, a longstanding concept in advanced European countries.

At the heart of management lies the Funding Management Back-Office (BOGA), a computer application including the main operations to manage calls: electronic admission of applications through web or PDF forms, file processing, evaluation of research applications (through peer review, for which evaluators from all over the world intervene by electronic means), statistic data collection and subsidy payment (already processed electronically). There is also progress to facilitate the follow-up of the file status on the internet. However, as long as electronic ID of citizens is not common as an alternative to hardcopy signature, it will not be possible to unfold all BOGA potentialities.

The effort to simplify bureaucracy is remarkable. Information on funding is formally posted on the announcement board, with a copy on the website and an electronic alert system for beneficiaries.

Requirements for calls are verified, if possible, by consulting public authorities owning data (Catalan government, universities, city councils, tax authorities etc.) to spare the applicant with paperwork. AGAUR fully participates in the PICA project by which all databases of the Catalan government shall be linked with each other. If this is not possible, documents only need to be produced after concession, thus avoiding unnecessary efforts for those who are eventually denied funding. In especially problematic cases (e.g. funding for third country citizens), provisional resolutions are passed before applicants can prove faithfully their identity once they arrive.

Complete information on all activities with integrated consultation tools on the web facilitate the one-stop concept for consultation and management.

Time and paperwork shall thus be spared to applicants while reducing management time and payment deadlines, without forsaking accuracy during the process and security for citizens provided by legislation.

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