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This English translation of the original document Spanish document, relating to the 2025 “César Nombela” Talent Attraction Call of the Community of Madrid, has been prepared to help non-Spanish speakers understand it. This translation is unofficial and does not replace the original Spanish version, published on the Community of Madrid's electronic headquarters and in the Official Gazette of the Community of Madrid. In the event of any discrepancy or legal interpretation, the original Spanish version shall prevail.

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2025 CALL FOR TALENT ATTRACTION GRANTS “CÉSAR NOMBELA”

0. Introduction

The Community of Madrid is the main hub for research and development in Spain. To maintain this position, it is essential to attract excellent research talent to the region through initiatives that enable the recruitment of top researchers with international professional experience to research groups and institutions in the Community of Madrid. This strengthens their capabilities and creates collaboration networks with research entities worldwide.

These grants are named after the distinguished researcher Prof. César Nombela in recognition of his outstanding professional career in the field of microbial molecular biology and biotechnology.

On 26 July, the Regional Ministry of Education, Science and Universities approved the regulatory basis for the 'César Nombela' research talent attraction grants by Order

2755/2023. Order 1447/2025 of 4 May, also from the Regional Ministry of Education, Science and Universities, amended Order 2755/2023 to simplify the grants' funding mechanisms.

All research activities carried out under this call must adhere to fundamental ethical principles, including those set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Charter for Researchers, and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This ensures respect for and protection of human dignity and life, gender equality, privacy, and adherence to international principles and current regulations on bioethics, animal experimentation, biosafety, biological safety, environmental protection, natural heritage and biodiversity, and data protection. Beneficiary entities are responsible for ensuring compliance.

1. Purpose and Objective of the Call

The purpose of this call (2025), is to grant public aids for attracting research talent through a competitive process based on the principles of publicity, transparency, objectivity, equality, non-discrimination, efficiency, and effectiveness in allocating and using public resources.

The objectives of these grants are:

- To promote the hiring of PhD researchers who have worked abroad for a certain period of time, and to encourage their integration into the research groups in the Community of Madrid.
- To promote the scientific careers of PhD researchers by encouraging them to acquire the skills and competencies needed to obtain a stable position in a research organisation in the Community of Madrid, and by helping them to attain the R3 certificate.
- To promote the mobility of PhD researchers and encourage their active participation in regional, national and international networks and consortia.

2. Type and amount of the call

The funding for this call is 22,000,000.00 euros.

Funding will be provided for both the expenses associated with hiring PhD research personnel and an additional grant for conducting research activities related to the scientific and technical areas of interest to the region, as indicated in Annex I. This additional grant will be a maximum of €220,000 per application over five years.

Year (euros)				
2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
5.324.000,00	4.169.000,00	4.169.000,00	4.169.000,00	4.169.000,00

3. Characteristics of the grants

The grants provided for in this call will take the form of subsidies. The awarded grants will have an execution period of five years, starting from the date on which the hired research staff member joins the research institution.

PhD research staff should preferably be hired under the contract modality established in Article 22 of Law 14/2011, although any hiring modality may be used according to the legislation in force at the time of contract formalisation.

Since the end of the third year of the contract (or the second year in the case of contracts made under Article 22 of Law 14/2011), the hired research staff may undergo an evaluation of their research activity. If this evaluation is positive PhD researchers may obtain R3 certificate.

Funding will be provided for both the expenses associated with hiring PhD research staff and an additional grant for conducting research activities. The grant resolution will indicate the annual funding granted for hiring PhD research staff and implementing R&D activities. This will be broken down into direct and indirect costs. The latter will be calculated as 21% of the former. This annual distribution cannot be altered. The total amount granted for direct costs may be distributed among the eligible expenses and its distribution may occur throughout the grant's execution period, without necessarily matching the payment schedule established in the grant resolution.

Throughout the grant's execution period, the hired PhD research staff must submit at least one application to a call issued by the European Research Council.

Applications must fall within the scientific and technical area that is closest to their field of activity, as defined in Annex I.

4. Grant execution

The activity will begin on the date that the PhD joins the beneficiary entity (always on the first day of the month). It will end when the contract is terminated or the grant is waived by the beneficiary entity.

Losing the employment relationship with the beneficiary entity means losing both the grant linked to the hiring and the grant for R&D activities. However, this does not apply if the person has obtained a permanent position with the same entity. In this latest case, stabilisation will involve waiving the grant intended to fund the PhD researcher's contract but the grant awarded for R&D activities may be maintained and continued until the maximum execution date initially planned, which cannot be extended.

5. Beneficiary Entities

Entities that meet the requirements established in Article 4 of Order 2755/2023 may qualify as beneficiary entities (universities, public research centers, ...) *Please, refer to the list in Order 3755/2023.*

6. Requirements for PhD Research Personnel.

Candidates must meet the following requirements to be hired:

a) Hold a PhD obtained between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2022. For the purposes of this definition, the date of obtaining the PhD shall be understood as the date on which the doctoral thesis was defended and approved. In the case of PhD researchers holding more than one doctoral degree, the above requirements shall refer to the first degree obtained.

If any of these situations occur between the date of obtaining the PhD degree and the application deadline, the lower limit date of 1 January 2015 may be extended.

1. Maternity or paternity leave, including periods dedicated to enjoying leave, licences, reduced working hours and absences due to pregnancy, childbirth or the birth of a child.
2. Adoption.
3. Custody for adoption or foster care purposes.
4. Risk during pregnancy.
5. Risk during breastfeeding of a child under nine months.
6. Temporary incapacity during pregnancy due to related causes.
7. Temporary incapacity for reasons other than those mentioned above, for a period of at least two consecutive months.

An extension equal to the justified leave period shall be applied, rounded up to full months. In the cases of interruption established in sections 1, 2, and 3, the date of birth or, where applicable, the judicial or administrative resolution must have occurred between the date of obtaining the PhD degree and the application deadline. The interruption period considered for these situations shall be one year per child, starting from the date of birth or the judicial or administrative resolution.

In cases of interruption as defined in sections 4, 5, 6 and 7, the interruption period shall be equal to the justified period, provided that, in cases of reduced working hours, it is calculated as the equivalent of full working days.

All these exceptional situations must be duly indicated and documented at the time of submitting the application.

b) Have had a paid professional relationship with foreign research institutions for at least two years within the last five years. This period will be calculated on the basis of the closing date for applications and shall be determined by the total period of time spent on

predoctoral and/or postdoctoral stays at R&D centres located outside of Spain. This must be documented in the application and only paid contracts and/or fellowships will be considered.

c) Researchers from Modality 2 of previous Research Talent Attraction Grants of Community of Madrid can apply for these “César Nombela” grants without meeting the requirements established in sections a) and b). This is provided that they have completed their four-year contract, or are in their fourth year in 2025. In any case, the evaluation will be in accordance with the competitive nature of the grants.

7. Eligible Expenses

For a more detailed and official definition, please refer to Article 9.2 of Order 2755/2023

a) Hiring costs

Eligible expenses for the hiring of PhD research personnel will include salary payments, Social Security contributions by the contracting entity and severance payments, except in cases of unfair dismissal. Non-salary compensation will not be considered an eligible expense. The aid for hiring PhD research personnel will have the following characteristics:

As established in Article 11 of Order 2755/2023, the salary costs generated by the hired person may not be less than €50,000.00 per year.

During the first three years, or until the R3 certificate is obtained (if applicable, the grant provided to cover salary costs will be €61,000, of which at least €45,000 will be allocated to salary. During the last two years, the annual aid granted to the beneficiary entity for each contract will be 67,000 euros, with a minimum of 50,000 euros for salary. If the person hired does not obtained the R3 certificate, only salary costs up to a maximum of 61,000 euros will be considered eligible. If the R3 certificate was obtained within the last two years, only the remuneration of the person hired from the month after the certificate was issued will be considered eligible.

In addition to funding to hire PhD researchers, a grant of up to €220,000 per contract will be provided to cover research-related expenses during the grant period.

b) Direct costs

- Expenditure on newly recruited R&D support staff (research, technical and management roles). The recruitment of these staff will be in accordance with the current labour legislation. Eligible costs include salary costs, employer contributions and severance payments resulting from termination of contract, excluding those resulting from unfair dismissal. Non-salary compensations will not be considered eligible expenses.
- Equipment. The amortisation of scientific and technical equipment used for activities, including data processing equipment and specific software, will be financed. The

beneficiary entity must provide documentary evidence demonstrating that the equipment is dedicated to the activity. No type of civil engineering work will be eligible for funding.

- Costs of acquiring consumable materials, supplies and similar products. Office supplies and IT consumables are not eligible expenses.
- Costs of application or acquisition of patents, or use of licensed patents, at market prices.
- Consulting and technical assistance. These are service provisions that do not constitute part of the subsidised activity and are therefore not subject to subcontracting. Examples include technological assistance, technology transfer services, consulting on the use of standards, market research, the use of databases and technical libraries, and advice on preparing international proposals.
- Training: This covers the costs of specific and necessary training for hired PhD research staff and R&D support staff assigned to the grant. General or formal training expenses will not be eligible.
- Publication and dissemination of results, including open access, editing and linguistic revision of publications. Funding will be available for costs related to posters and publicity on websites and other communication and dissemination media.
- Cost of inscriptions for conferences, seminars, technical workshops and similar events for contracted research and R&D support staff assigned to the grant.
- Mobility. Travel that is strictly related to the subsidised activity is only permitted for contracted research staff and R&D support staff assigned to the grant. Travel and per diem expenses are subject to the limits set out for Group 2 in Royal Decree 462/2002.
- Compensation costs for experimental subjects who are not employed by the beneficiary entity. This compensation will be paid by bank transfer, except for individuals at risk of social exclusion. In-kind compensation is not permitted.
- The costs of central services provided by the beneficiary entities, if their rates are public and calculated according to cost accounting.
- Costs related to the use and access to large national and international scientific facilities (including ICTS).
- Subcontracting: The value of subcontracted activities must not exceed 50% of the grant awarded for research expenses.

b) Indirect costs

General costs which by their nature cannot be charged as direct costs. They shall be calculated, without the need to provide supporting documents, by applying a flat rate of max. 21%.

8. Submission of Applications (only the documentation to be provided by the candidate is described.) *For a more detailed and official definition, please refer to Article 13 of the call.*

Applications must be submitted by applicant entities within fifteen days of the day after the publication of this call in the Official Gazette of the Community of Madrid. A candidate can only be included in the application submitted by one applicant entity.

Applications and the documentation must be submitted via the General Electronic Registry of the Community of Madrid, accessible at the following electronic address: sede.comunidad.madrid.

The following documentation must be provided for each candidate:

- a) The abbreviated curriculum vitae (hereafter referred to as the 'CVA') of the candidate in the standardised format available on the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology's (FECYT) website, using the 'abbreviated CV generation' option. The CVA may be submitted in English.
- b) A report on the candidate's research career, which may be submitted in English.
- c) A report on the proposed research line, including all R&D activities and the financial report, to be carried out during the grant period. This report may be submitted in English.
- d) A copy of the doctoral degree or academic certification explicitly stating the date on which the degree was obtained. If the document is not written in Spanish or English, a translation is required.
- e) Document or documents proving the period of research activity abroad, including details of affiliation and duration with an R&D institution located outside Spain. If the documents are not in English or Spanish, a translation is required.
- f) Proof of any periods of interruption that affect the calculation of deadlines.

The applicant entity shall be responsible for the prior verification of the submitted documentation to ensure compliance with the requirements established in this call.

9. Evaluation and criteria. *For a more detailed and official definition, please refer to Articles 17 and 18 of Order 2755/2023.*

The Directorate-General for Research and Technological Innovation will appoint experts to conduct the scientific and technical evaluation of the applications. The necessary evaluation reports will be requested.

For the purposes of the evaluation process, only the information contained in the CVA and the reports for the research line and the research trajectory at the time of the application submission will be considered. It will not be possible to update this information afterwards.

Applications will be evaluated according to the following equally weighted criteria: Each application will be scored from 0 to 100 points based on the following:

a) Applicant's curricular merits (0–50 points):

a.1) Scientific-technical trajectory (0–20 points): relevance of scientific contributions (e.g. publications in scientific journals, books or book chapters); contribution to knowledge generation; achieved results; granted or licensed patents; and any other contribution that allows evaluation of different aspects of research, including management and transfer of scientific-technical results.

a.2) Participation in international research activities (0–25 points): Postdoctoral contracts in national or international excellence programmes (evaluated based on the prestige of the host institution); contributions to the work lines of international centres and groups; and collaborations related to international projects and programmes.

a.3) Other curricular merits (0–5 points): Any other contribution not included in a) or b), including scientific dissemination activities, teaching, R&D&I management, etc.

b) Leadership (0–20 points): Ability to lead the proposed research line based on professional experience and independence in one's scientific career. Aspects as the following will be evaluated: supervision of research work; knowledge and relevance of the research line; ability to obtain resources; and any other aspect that allows evaluation of merits related to independence, relevance and leadership.

c) The scientific-technical interest of the R&D activities to be carried out, and their economic feasibility (0–30 points): Originality and degree of innovation of the proposed activities; relevance of the proposed activities; expected results and their potential impact. The appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed budget.

In order to be eligible for funding, an application must achieve a total score of at least 85 points.

Approved grants will be distributed by scientific-technical area, based on the applications submitted. Therefore, the minimum score required for funding may vary from one area to another.

The criteria used to determine the amount of funding for R&D activities are as follows:

a) The feasibility and scientific and technical interest of the proposed R&D activities.

b) The economic feasibility of the funding proposal for each application, taking into account the requested budget and the means available to achieve the expected objectives and results.

c) Budget availability.

ANEXO I

Scientific-Technical Areas

A. Human and social processes.

- a.1) Welfare state.
- a.2) Creative industry: innovation and artistic/cultural production.
- a.3) Geography; demographic and social change; spatial planning; inclusive societies in a global world.
- a.4) Scientific culture.
- a.5) Management, conservation and dissemination of historical, artistic, linguistic, musical, natural and audiovisual heritage, in relation to tourism and the development of the Community of Madrid.

Purposeful and impactful innovation. Importance of the human and social dimensions in designing, implementing, deploying and exploiting technology.

Attracting capital and employment: new models for the economy, business and innovation.

B. Communications and Digital Transformation.

- b.1) Quantum Communications.
- b.2) Industry 4.0: Industrial digitization, robotics, automation.
- b.3) Development of inclusive applications and content adapted to the diversity of people in society.
- b.4) Infrastructure, networks and communication systems.
- b.5) Systems for computing and information processing.
- b.6) Applied modelling and simulation.
- b.7) Security of software, networks and information systems, including advanced threat detection and attribution systems and novel applications of artificial intelligence in cybersecurity for civil society, infrastructure and industrial applications.
- b.8) Consumer and professional electronics and microelectronics equipment
- b.9) ICTs for industry and citizens.
- b.10) Virtual reality systems and digital twins.
- b.11) Protection of users and citizen privacy.

C. Advanced Enabling Technologies.

- c.1) Nanoscience, Advanced Materials, and Photonics. Two-dimensional materials.
- c.2) Nanomaterials for ICT: Neuromorphic computing, spintronics, storage, and low power consumption.
- c.3) Technologies applied to heritage conservation.
- c.4) Development of instrumentation, microsystems and sensors, including multi-sensor platforms, multifunctional sensors and lab-on-a-chip developments
- c.5) Industrial technologies and applied robotics.
- c.6) Technologies for accessing space and scientific research in outer space.
- c.7) Techniques, equipment, advanced instrumentation, onboard systems and satellite monitoring
- c.8) Development of applications based on satellite information.

D. Ecological Transition.

- d.1) Technologies for the sustainable use of natural resources, the restoration of the natural environment, and the conservation of biodiversity.
- d.2) Waste, discharge and emissions management: Microcontaminants, emerging pollutants, bioremediation, the reuse and elimination of waste materials, energy recovery and CO₂ technologies.
- d.3) Renewable and sustainable energy sources.
- d.4) Energy storage systems and new energy vectors, hydrogen technologies.
- d.5) Smart electrical grids, distributed generation, and system efficiency.
- d.6) systems, traffic control and transport safety, as well as connected mobility and the application of ICT technologies (Big Data, AI and 5G) to smart mobility. Mobility as a service.
- d.7) Design, development, and manufacture of propulsion systems and auxiliary systems for transport vehicles.
- d.8) Water: Wastewater treatment technologies and the recovery of products such as nutrients and metals, as well as energy.

E. Global Health.

- e.1) Biomedical engineering and instrumentation; information and communication technologies in biomedicine; new diagnostic systems; lab-on-a-chip devices.
- e.2) Technologies for developing new drugs and vaccines, including bioinformatics, nanomaterials, cell therapies, tissue engineering and the creation of artificial tissues and organs.
- e.3) Omics technologies.

- e.4) Clinical and translational research.
- e.5) New and advanced therapies: Immunotherapy, gene therapy, oligonucleotides, siRNAs, aptamers.
- e.6) Neuroscience: Brain electrical activity and biomarker mapping to improve cognitive function, design of materials to cross the blood-brain barrier, genetically modified devices.
- e.7) Mental health.
- e.8) Medical robotics, assistance for people with special needs, active rehabilitation, AI-based diagnostics.
- e.9) Technologies for monitoring and enhancing sports performance.
- e.10) Research into using physical activity as a tool for preventing and intervening in pathologies.

F. Biotechnology and Agri-Food

- f.1) Production of fertilisers and sustainable food for everyone.
- f.2) Applied biotechnology.
- f.3) Functional foods and foods for specific applications, such as hospital food, as well as technologies related to the processes of dysphagia and dysgeusia.
- f.4) Personalised nutrition: nutraceuticals and nutrigenomics.
- f.5) Production of new catalysts and polymers (bioplastics).
- f.6) Biorefineries that can be adapted to existing agri-food industries.
- f.7) Precision agriculture: use of autonomous systems to reduce fertilizer, automatic harvesting.
- f.8) Improving agricultural and livestock production processes.