

CERCA Evaluation Guidelines 2025-2028

**Version 3
Update 2026**

Table of contents

1. BACKGROUND: EVALUATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT FOR THE CERCA SYSTEM	3
1.1. Legal framework	3
1.2. Previous assessment cycles	4
1.2.1. 1st cycle: 2012-2015	4
1.2.2. 2nd cycle: 2016-2019	4
1.2.3. 3rd cycle: 2021-2024	5
2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT	6
3. SPECIFIC GOALS OF CERCA EVALUATIONS	6
4. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS	7
4.1. Documents produced during the evaluation	7
4.1.1. Self-assessment form	7
4.1.2. Peer review reports on publications and projects	8
4.1.3. Final evaluation report	8
4.2. Participants in the evaluation process	9
4.2.1. Evaluation committee	10
4.2.2. External reviewers	10
4.2.3. CERCA Institution personnel	11
4.2.4. Evaluation Process Advisory Committee	11
4.3. Knowledge areas	11
4.4. Evaluation period	12
4.5. Evaluation calendar	12
4.6. Evaluation process	12
4.6.1. Before the site visit	12
4.6.2. During the site visit	13
4.6.3. After the site visit	14
4.6.4. Exceptional modifications to the evaluation calendar	14
5. EVALUATION COSTS	15
6. LANGUAGE	15
Annex 1 – Self-assessment form model	16
Annex 2 – Document specifications	22
Annex 3 – CERCA centres acronyms	23

1. BACKGROUND: EVALUATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT FOR THE CERCA SYSTEM

1.1. Legal framework

The CERCA system, which comprises the CERCA centres (currently 42) and the CERCA Institution, was first defined by Act 7/2011, of 27 July, on fiscal and financial measures. In articles 64.4 and 64.5, that Act already established that the CERCA centres, in order to maintain their recognition as such, had to undergo periodic external scientific assessments, which had to be carried out in accordance with international quality standards.

In the same spirit, the Catalan Agreement on the Knowledge Society, of 2020, in its “Agreements. A leap forward in the knowledge system” also emphasised the need to “establish periodic assessments of the quality of research and transfer activity” at the Catalan level.

The coming into force of the Catalan Science Act (9/2022) consolidates, in line with what was established by Act 7/2011, the recognition of the CERCA system of research centres as entities with their own legal personality, non-profit in nature, based in Catalonia, whose main objective is excellent research and its impact on society, and which have been internationally recognised as a model of cutting-edge research; and reaffirms their autonomy and protective measures. In its article 41, the Science Act states that the CERCA centres “must carry out scientific activity whose level of impact is comparable, on a global scale, with their benchmark centres of excellence”.

To ensure compliance with this responsibility of excellence not only by the CERCA centres, but by the entire research, development and innovation system in the public sector of the Government of Catalonia, the Science Act already establishes, in article 6 of its preliminary title, that “independent external assessment, transparency and accountability” must be among the guiding principles that govern the activity of the agents in this system.

Likewise, article 11 of the first title states that “The Administration of the Generalitat, through the Inter-ministerial Research and Innovation Commission, must promote regular evaluations of the research, development and innovation system, with the aim of guaranteeing the required degree of quality and making the necessary adaptations to maintain and increase its international competitiveness and the transmission of knowledge to society, respecting the specific system of evaluation this Act establishes for CERCA centres and those that may be approved for specific research, development and innovation plans and programmes”. The objective of these evaluations is to “help promote centres and areas of research, knowledge transfer and innovation with excellent results, identify their shortcomings and offer them support for improvement”.

In section three of chapter two of the Science Act, which covers “Recognition as a CERCA centre”, article 57 states that, for research, development and innovation centres, the achievement of this recognition is contingent on “successfully passing an external and independent scientific assessment process to ascertain the potential for excellence and international impact [...] For a centre to be recognised as a CERCA centre, the assessment must consider it to have achieved excellence in its scientific activity.” This assessment “should follow the parameters used in assessing research centres internationally with similar characteristics in their field.” Article 59 establishes that maintaining the status of CERCA centre also requires undergoing “an external scientific assessment of their activity, at the frequency determined by the ministry responsible for research and universities, in agreement with the Institution of Research Centres of Catalonia Foundation”, using the same parameters.

Finally, the Science Act establishes that the CERCA Institution is the body that “coordinates the assessments, at the request and with the support of the ministry responsible for research and universities, as well as any other ministries represented on the Inter-ministerial Research and Innovation Commission, where appropriate.”

These guidelines therefore aim to define an evaluation system that fulfils the responsibility entrusted to the CERCA Institution of organising an assessment process that ensures the maintenance and enhancement of excellence in the CERCA centres, and that itself meets the international quality standards required by the Science Act. Its ultimate goal is to continue contributing to the excellence of the entire research, development and innovation system in Catalonia.

1.2. Previous assessment cycles

1.2.1. 1st cycle: 2012-2015

In compliance with Act 7/2011 mentioned above, the CERCA Institution launched the CERCA evaluation program in 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, all CERCA centres were evaluated by external evaluation committees.

In this first cycle, the evaluations did not result in an overall score. The main outcome was more than 500 valuable recommendations for the directorates of the CERCA centres. Some of the institutions from which the CERCA evaluators came included the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM), and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS); the Max Planck Society, Huawei, the Fraunhofer Institute, and the German Archaeological Institute (DAI); European institutions such as the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), CERN, the European Space Agency (ESA), and Fusion for Energy (F4E); Tel Aviv University; Telecom Italia; the ALBA Synchrotron, the Spanish National Cancer Research Centre (CNIO), Tecnia; the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL); the Roslin Institute, Imperial College London, and the University of Oxford; the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the universities of Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, and California.

1.2.2. 2nd cycle: 2016-2019

The second cycle of CERCA evaluations covered the period between 2015 and 2019. A final score for each centre was introduced as part of the evaluation methodology. In this cycle, 22 centres were placed in the top assessment tier, 15 in the middle tier, and 3 in the lowest tier.

A total of 228 evaluators took part in the evaluations, of which 156 (68%) were affiliated with foreign institutions. 69 of these evaluators were women researchers, representing 30% of the total. The main institutions of origin of the evaluators (with 3 or more evaluators) were:

Max Planck Society	10
Univ. Cambridge	7
Univ. Oxford	7

CSIC	6
Univ. California	4
Univ. Harvard	4
Imperial College	4
MIT	4
IMDEA (Madrid)	3
KU Leuven	3
Teagasc (Ireland)	3
UCL	3
VIB (Leuven)	3

1.2.3. 3rd cycle: 2021-2024

Between 2021 and 2024, the third evaluation cycle was conducted (in 2020, due to the pandemic, no regular evaluations took place). The same evaluation questionnaire was used, with minor modifications.

A total of 146 evaluators took part (204 including members of the evaluated centres' external scientific advisory boards), of whom 134 (91.8%) came from foreign institutions. Among all evaluators, 45 were women, which represents 31% of the total. The main institutions of origin of the evaluators (with 3 or more evaluators) were:

University of Cambridge	12
Max Planck Society	11
Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas Sols-Morreale	6
Imperial College London	4
Netherlands Cancer Institute	4
Universität Zürich	4
Københavns Universitet	4
University of Oxford	3
ETH Zürich	3
University College London	3
Agence de l'Innovation en Santé	3
Inspired outcomes	3
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin	3
Institut Pasteur	3
Zentiva	3
Uppsala University	3

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

There are several international benchmark models that the CERCA Institution has taken into account when designing this evaluation process. There are also some national assessment models that are particularly relevant for the CERCA centres. The main among these models are:

- **Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2028, Netherlands.** Evaluates the scientific quality, social relevance, and viability of the research activities conducted by Dutch universities and research institutions.
- **The evaluation procedures of the Max Planck Society.** Ensures research quality and accountability across the entire Max Planck network of centres.
- **Centros de Excelencia Severo Ochoa y Unidades María de Maeztu (Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades).** Evaluates the proposals of public research institutes, centres or units in all scientific fields that apply for this seal of excellence, based on their international scientific impact and leadership, and their active collaboration with their social and business environment.
- **Research Excellence Framework (REF) UK (2014 and 2021).** A system for assessing the quality of research at UK academic institutions.
- **Programa de Evaluación, Acreditación y Seguimiento de Institutos de Investigación Sanitaria (ISCIII).** Designed for research institutes connected to hospitals, it evaluates their capacity to generate scientific knowledge that translates into improvements for individuals and society, within a framework that considers open science and responsible research and innovation.

3. SPECIFIC GOALS OF CERCA EVALUATIONS

As established in the first section of these guidelines, CERCA evaluations primarily aim to comply with the requirement set out in the Catalan Science Act to follow the parameters used in the evaluation of comparable research centres at the international level, thereby contributing to the excellence of the entire Catalan research, development and innovation system. This general objective is articulated through a series of specific goals:

- Each CERCA centre has a defined mission and vision in its bylaws that guide its overall scientific activity. Measuring the extent to which the centre achieves the objectives set out in this mission (or, where applicable, transforms them) is the main purpose of the CERCA evaluation at the institutional level.
- The CERCA evaluation aims to determine the extent to which each centre realises its potential for excellence and international impact and thus assess whether it operates at a level comparable to international benchmark institutions in its field or, if it does not reach this level, whether it is comparable to leading centres at the European or state level.
- The evaluation process itself has been adapted from the one applied during the second and third cycles (2016–2024). This adaptation intends to reflect the commitments undertaken by the CERCA Institution that affect the parameters and procedures used in the evaluations of CERCA centres, particularly DORA and CoARA.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation methodology for the CERCA system for the 2025–2028 cycle retains several of the main features that have characterized previous cycles, which are:

- (i) The centre under evaluation must complete a self-assessment form and provide any appropriate additional documentation (see Section 4.1.1).
- (ii) The CERCA Institution will appoint an evaluation committee for each evaluated centre. The composition and functions of this committee are described in Section 4.2.1.
- (iii) The CERCA Institution will appoint external reviewers with a high level of expertise, selected according to the research and activity areas relevant in each case, as described in Section 4.2.2. Their role will be to issue reports on some of the scientific aspects of the centre. This evaluation will take place as the first step of the process and will be conducted remotely. It will be based on the documents submitted by the evaluated centre. Evaluation committees will take these reports into consideration in the overall assessment process.
- (iv) The evaluation committee will make an on-site visit to the evaluated centre. The details of the organisation and development of this visit are laid out in Sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2.

The CERCA Institution will continue to collaborate with UNEIX, CORA, the Portal de Recerca, and the relevant bibliometric analysis entity to ensure transparency throughout the process relating to the handling of the data that conform the tables that are part of the self-assessment form. These tables must be included in the self-assessment form.

4.1. Documents produced during the evaluation

During the evaluation process, the following documents will be produced:

4.1.1. Self-assessment form

Core evaluation document prepared by the CERCA centre. The document consists of two sections and several annexes.

- **Section 1: General Description of the centre**

Includes mission and vision, governance structure, staff figures, main objectives, programmes and strategies, SWOT analysis, comparison with three international benchmark institutions, narrative of the evolution of the centre and executive summary of its strategic plan.

- **Section 2: Contributions of the centre**

Includes a selection, made by the centre, of the most relevant publications, projects, and other research, knowledge transfer and innovation results (from the list in Annex 1) during the evaluation period.

- **Annexes**

The following documents may be included as annexes to the self-assessment form:

- Reports issued by the SAB during the evaluation period.

- Evaluation or follow-up reports related to the Severo Ochoa, María de Maeztu or ISCIII awards received during the evaluation period (if the centre holds any of these accreditations).
- Centre strategic plan in force at the moment of the evaluation.

The document must not exceed 35 pages in length, excluding annexes, as detailed in Annex 2 of this document.

The CERCA Institution will provide the centre with a template for drafting the self-assessment form, which is included in this document as Annex 1.

4.1.2. Peer review reports on publications and projects

The external reviewers (see Section 4.2.2.) will evaluate the publications and projects that the centre lists as 'Contributions of the centre' in section 2 of the self-assessment form. As a result, they will individually issue a single report for each evaluated item. The report will be based on the degree of quality, originality, innovative character, potential impact for pushing the knowledge area forward, international recognition and, if appropriate, leadership. The reviewer will assign a score to each report as detailed in Table 1.

A	The evaluated item is highly prominent at the international level
B	The evaluated item is prominent at the international level
C	The evaluated item is prominent at the state level
D	The evaluated item is not prominent at the state level

Table 1 - Descriptors of the ratings in peer evaluation reports

4.1.3. Final evaluation report

The evaluation committee members will take into account the evaluation reports described in section 4.1.2, as well as the following elements:

- Alignment of the mission and strategy of the centre with the goals that drive excellent research at the global level in the centre's area of knowledge.
- Capacity to fulfil objectives.
- Excellence in governance and management.
- Managing and fostering scientific talent.
- Internationalisation, knowledge transfer and innovation.
- Relevance and visibility of the activity of the centre in diverse scientific areas and in society.
- Future potential.
- Multi-disciplinarity and impact.
- Leadership capacity of the research groups, participation in networks and international recognition.

As the final result of the evaluation process, the evaluation committee will draft a final evaluation report that will include:

- The elements that the evaluation committee wishes to highlight about the CERCA centre.
- A set of recommendations for the CERCA centre, aimed at improving its scientific performance.
- An overall, reasoned qualification of the centre, as detailed in Table 2.

A	The centre's activities, contributions, and recognitions are highly prominent at the international level, are proof of international leadership and of a positive progression from the last evaluation. It corresponds to scores 9 and 10, out of 10.
B	Some of the centre's activities, contributions, and recognitions are prominent at the international level, are proof of some international leadership and of some progression from the last evaluation. It corresponds to scores 7 and 8 out of 10.
C	The centre's activities, contributions, and recognitions are not prominent only at the international level, are not proof of international leadership, but are proof of some national or regional leadership and some progression from the last evaluation. It corresponds to score 6 out of 10.
D	The centre's activities, contributions, and recognitions are not prominent at the international level, neither they are proof of any leadership at international, national or regional level, nor any progression from the last evaluation. It corresponds to scores under 6 out of 10.

Table 2 – Descriptors of the ratings in final evaluation reports

Centres being evaluated with the purpose of becoming a CERCA centre will receive one of the following qualifications:

PASS	The centre has successfully passed the assessment to become a CERCA centre.
NO PASS	The centre has not passed the assessment to become a CERCA centre.

Once the final evaluation report has been drafted, it will be sent to the directorate of the evaluated CERCA centre, which will have up to 7 days to respond, solely for the purpose of correcting factual errors or possible inaccuracies. After this period, the report will be translated into Catalan.

All trustees from the centre's highest governing body, along with the centre's directorate, will receive both versions (i.e. in English and Catalan) of the final evaluation report. Once this evaluation cycle is complete, all reports will be made public.

4.2. Participants in the evaluation process

The CERCA Institution will ensure transparency and adequacy of the evaluation process of CERCA centres. It will therefore always guarantee the absence of conflicts of interest among all

individuals involved in the procedure, including both external reviewers and members of the evaluation committee.

All participants will commit *a priori* to maintaining the confidentiality of the data and discussions to which they have access throughout the evaluation process. Furthermore, efforts will be made to ensure the highest possible gender balance in the composition of both the evaluation committees and the group of scientific experts.

4.2.1. Evaluation committee

The evaluation committee will consist of four individuals with complementary profiles, proposed by the CERCA Institution:

- Two scientific experts.
- One expert in knowledge transfer and/or open science.
- One expert in the management of research institutions.

Each year an evaluation committee will be appointed by the CERCA Institution based on the knowledge areas of the CERCA centres to be evaluated that year, in accordance with the calendar set out for the fourth evaluation cycle (see section 4.5). There will be no limit on the number of evaluation committees an individual may participate in throughout the evaluation cycle.

The committee's mission will be to evaluate the CERCA centre.

To conduct this evaluation, all committee members will receive a document with guidelines provided by the CERCA Institution.

The evaluation committee will participate in the in-person visit organized by the I-CERCA. The committee will act collectively and will aim to reach agreement of all its members on the evaluation result; otherwise, decisions will be made by majority.

To carry out its mission, the evaluation committee will have access to:

- (i) The self-assessment form, duly completed by the centre being evaluated, along with its annexes.
- (ii) The reports of the external reviewers (see section 4.1.2).
- (iii) Information gathered during the in-person visit.

The members of the evaluation committee will be responsible for reading all submitted documentation, interacting with the directorate and other participants during the in-person visit, discussing all evaluable aspects, and issuing recommendations that can be implemented in the following evaluation period.

4.2.2. External reviewers

External reviewers are external, independent experts in the centre's knowledge area, who are not part of the evaluation committee described in the previous sub-section. The procedure to identify them will be the following:

The centres to be evaluated will suggest between 20 and 30 experts in the knowledge areas covered by the centre. The centre must be able to prove their independence and absence of conflict of interest.

The CERCA Institution will select individuals from this list to conduct the peer-reviews of the publications and projects listed as 'Contributions of the centre' in section 2 of the self-assessment form. The CERCA Institution may appoint additional experts if necessary.

4.2.3. CERCA Institution personnel

CERCA Institution personnel will handle administrative management, coordinate the evaluation process, and select the evaluators, both external reviewers and members of the evaluation committees.

During the site visit, CERCA Institution personnel will participate in the presentation, discussion, and deliberation phases as required by their role as *rapporteurs* of the evaluation process.

4.2.4. Evaluation Process Advisory Committee

The CERCA Institution will appoint an advisory committee whose role will be to respond to the queries that the CERCA Institution may address to it during the rollout of the 4th cycle of evaluation of the CERCA centres. The committee will comprise between 2 and 4 members. The only publicly known identity within the advisory committee will be that of its chair. In 2025, Dr. Marta Sanz-Solé, in her capacity as vice-president of the Board of Trustees of the I-CERCA, is appointed chair of the committee.

4.3. Knowledge areas

For the creation of evaluation committees, 6 knowledge areas are defined, as described below:

- **Medical and health sciences (15 centres):** I3PT, IDIBAPS, IDIBELL, IDIBGI, IGTP, IRB CatSud (previously IISPV), IJC, HMRIB, IRB Lleida, IRHSCSP, IRSICAIXA, IRSJD, ISGLOBAL, VHIO and VHIR.
- **Biomedicine (3 centres):** CRG, IBEC and IRB Barcelona.
- **Earth sciences (5 centres):** Agrotecnio, CRAG, CREAM, CTFC and IRTA.
- **Basic sciences and mathematics (8 centres):** CRM, ICIQ, ICFO, ICN2, ICP, ICRA, IEEC and IFAE.
- **Engineering (5 centres):** CIMNE, CVC, CTTC, I2CAT and IREC.
- **Humanities and social sciences (6 centres):** CED, CREI, IBEI, ICAC, ICRPC and IPHES.

4.4. Evaluation period

The evaluation period will always cover the four calendar years immediately preceding the year in which the evaluation takes place. The documents included as annexes to the self-assessment form may correspond to the year in which the evaluation takes place.

4.5. Evaluation calendar

The following evaluation calendar is established, in line with the knowledge areas defined in Section 4.3.

Year	Medical and Health Sciences	Biomedicine	Earth Sciences	Basic sciences and mathematics	Engineering	Humanities and social sciences
2025*	HMRIB ISGLOBAL		CREAF CTFC	CRM ICN2 ICRA		
2026	IRB CatSud (prev. IISPV) IRB Lleida IRHSCSP VHIO	CRG IRB Barcelona IBEC		ICFO	CIMNE CVC	IBEI CED CREI ICAC
2027	IDIBELL IDIBGI IJC VHIR			ICIQ ICP IFAE	CTTC I2CAT	
2028	I3PT IDIBAPS IGTP IRSICAIXA IRSJD		IRTA Agrotecnio CRAG	IEEC	IREC	ICRPC IPHES

Table 3 – Evaluation calendar 2025-2028

4.6. Evaluation process

The evaluation process comprises 3 stages:

4.6.1. Before the site visit

The CERCA Institution will inform the centre of the date of its evaluation and will send the documents to be completed during the month of February of the year in which the evaluation is scheduled according to the evaluation calendar (4.5). This communication will include the deadlines for all the submissions to be done by the CERCA centre.

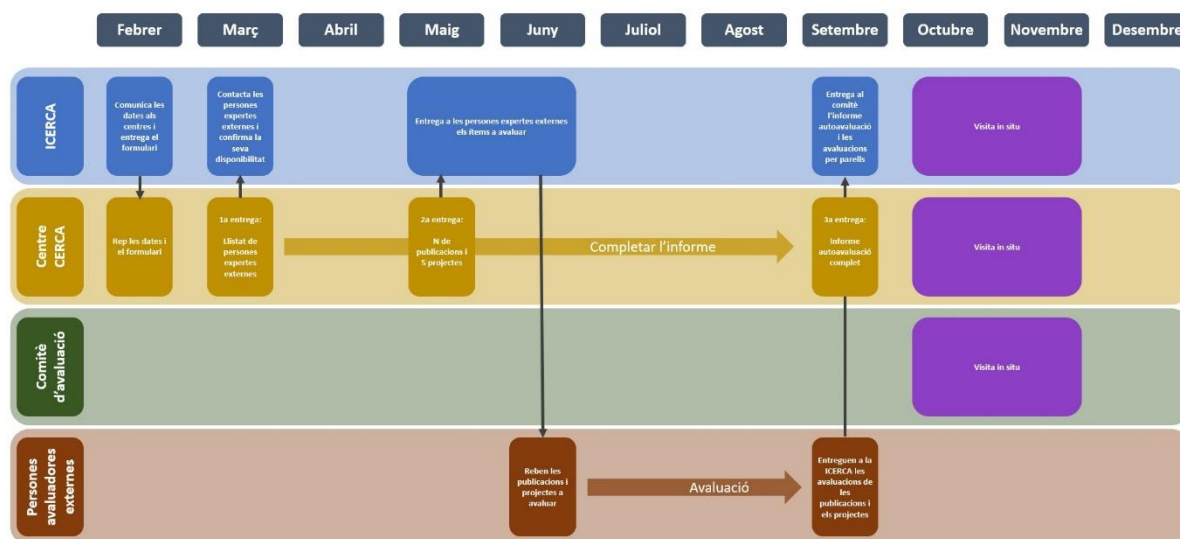
The CERCA centre will submit all the documents to the CERCA Institution in 4 different submissions, the dates for those submissions will be informed to the centre with the necessary advance notice:

- 1st submission: proposal of a minimum of 20-30 experts in the knowledge field of the centre for the peer review evaluations.

- 2nd submission: 10 articles (section 2.1) and 5 projects (section 2.2) to be evaluated by peers.
- 3rd submission: the self-assessment form completed, including the 10 articles and 5 projects from the 2nd submission.
- 4th submission: days before the site visit, the centre directorate will send to the CERCA Institution the preliminary version of the presentation and a proposed itinerary for the premises tour (up to 30 minutes), for them to be shared with the evaluation committee.

When proposing the dates for every of these submissions, the CERCA Institution will ensure that:

- The CERCA centre is given at least 1 month to provide the list of experts for the peer reviews.
- The CERCA centre is given at least 2 months to select and submit the publications and projects to be peer reviewed.
- The CERCA Institution is given at least 3 weeks to assign the publications and projects to the external experts for peer review.
- The evaluation committee is receiving the self-assessment form completed and the peers' evaluations at least 3 weeks before the site visit to the CERCA centre.



4.6.2. During the site visit

The following persons will attend the site visit:

- The members of the evaluation committee.
- Persons to be determined by the centre, including a representation from the SAB if deemed appropriate.

- (iii) Persons representing the ministry or ministries of the Catalan Government that are represented in the centre's highest government body, whenever possible.
- (iv) The director of the CERCA Institution, whenever possible.
- (v) The CERCA Institution personnel appropriate to document and report the evaluation process.

The indicative agenda for the site visit will be as follows:

- Introductions and welcome.
- Presentation by the CERCA centre's directorate and session with questions from the evaluation committee to the directorate (up to 3 hours, including a pause); during this section of the site visit the evaluation committee will inform the premises they seek to visit on top of the centre's proposal, and the positions or individuals they intend to interview.
- Visit to the premises (30 minutes).
- Interviews to the positions or individuals suggested by the evaluation committee (30 minutes, in case the committee suggests it).
- Evaluation committee internal working session, including lunch. This discussion session shall be attended solely by the members of the evaluation committee and the CERCA Institution personnel appropriate to document and report on the discussion.
- Preliminary presentation of the observations made and agreed by the evaluation committee and final qualification, with an option to respond by the directorate of the CERCA centre.

4.6.3. After the site visit

The evaluation committee will hold a final consensus meeting to assign the overall score to each centre within their knowledge area once all the site visits scheduled for that calendar year have been completed. After this final consensus meeting, all evaluated centres will be informed of their overall score.

In the weeks following the site visit, the CERCA Institution and the evaluation committee will draft the final report of the evaluation. As described in section 4.2.3, this report will be made available to the directorate of the CERCA centre and to the members of the centre's Board of Trustees.

4.6.4. Exceptional modifications to the evaluation calendar

The CERCA Institution will be entitled to adjust the calendar and procedures of the evaluation process, provided that any issue relating to the required documentation, requested communications, the on-site visit, or any other element necessary for the proper conduct of the evaluation is duly notified and justified with sufficient advance notice. Such flexibility shall be exercised only insofar as the quality, consistency and rigour of the evaluation process can be ensured.

Where unjustified delays, lack of information, or the absence of any essential element prevent the evaluation from being carried out under the established conditions and within the

prescribed time limits, the evaluation of the centre shall be suspended and shall be automatically rescheduled for the following evaluation cycle. Furthermore, failure to comply with the essential procedural requirements shall result in the centre being assigned a “C qualification” until the corresponding evaluation is carried out within the next evaluation timeframe (in the subsequent cycle or as otherwise determined).

Centres may request clarifications, submit observations or provide additional justification concerning their situation. Following formal notification of the suspension, rescheduling or modification of the rating, only requests containing substantively new information or objective elements enabling a reconsideration of the decision shall be considered. In the absence of such new elements, the decision shall be considered final for the relevant cycle.

5. EVALUATION COSTS

The costs related to the evaluation process will be covered by the CERCA Institution's own budget. As a reference, the indicative cost of the evaluation of one CERCA centre may reach 10,000 euros. The CERCA Institution will not cover travel costs of any individuals appointed by the evaluated centre to attend the site visit.

The costs of the evaluation of centres being evaluated with the purpose of becoming a CERCA centre will be covered by the centre.

The individuals that take part in the evaluation, both the external reviewers and the members of evaluation committees, shall be remunerated in accordance with the CERCA Institution stipends policy.

6. LANGUAGE

These guidelines for the 4th cycle of the CERCA evaluation have been prepared by the CERCA Institution in Catalan and translated into English. Likewise, the self-assessment report has been prepared by the CERCA Institution in Catalan and translated into English. In case of discrepancy, the versions in Catalan shall always prevail.

The CERCA centres must submit the completed self-assessment form entirely in English.

The CERCA centres will be required to provide a translation into Catalan of the first section of the self-assessment report in the year following their evaluation.

The procedure of the site visit will be conducted in English, including the presentation by the centre, the visit to the premises and the interviews to the members, if any.

The final evaluation reports will be drafted by the evaluation committees in English. The CERCA Institution will translate these reports into Catalan. In case of discrepancy, the English version of these reports shall always prevail.

The evaluation peer-review reports of publications and projects will be drafted by the external reviewers in English, and will not be translated by the CERCA Institution.

Annex 1 – Self-assessment form model

1. General description of the centre

1.1. Mission, vision and overall objectives.

- 1.1.1. Mission of the centre according to its current legal documentation (e.g. its bylaws).
- 1.1.2. Mission and vision of the centre according to its current strategic plan and its webpage. Provide details on the adequacy and the actions undertaken to achieve the mission and vision of the centre.
- 1.1.3. Description of the governance structure of the centre.
- 1.1.4. Descriptive table of the centre's personnel:

Personnel of the centre in number of people							
Personnel	Female	Male	Local	International	Core staff	Affiliated staff	Total
R1 researchers							
R2 researchers							
R3 researchers							
R4 researchers							
Administrative staff							
Technical staff							
Directorate							
Total							

Table 1: Personnel of the centre in number of people as of December 31 of the last year of the evaluation period

Personnel of the centre in Full Time Equivalents							
Personnel	Female	Male	Local	International	Core staff	Affiliated staff	Total
R1 researchers							
R2 researchers							
R3 researchers							
R4 researchers							
Administrative staff							
Technical staff							
Directorate							
Total							

Table 2: Personnel of the centre in Full Time Equivalents during the last year of the evaluation period

- 1.1.5. Brief description of the relevance and originality of the main work focus of the centre, presenting its main goals and programmes. Explain how the scientific, knowledge and technology transfer and management strategies (and any other relevant strategy) contribute to the centre's work focus and its goals and programmes. Indicate any possible change of focus in recent years, or whether the centre is currently working on a new strategic plan.

- 1.2. **SWOT Analysis: summary or table of the centre's Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities.**
- 1.3. **Analysis of the impact of the activity of the centre on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**
- 1.4. **Comparative analysis: present a selection of three research institutions (preferably international) that the centre regards as comparable to its own profile and activity.**
 - 1.4.1. Names and persistent identifiers of the three institutions (ROR, PIC, others).
 - 1.4.2. Brief description of the three selected institutions, and the reasons why they are considered comparable to this CERCA centre.
 - 1.4.3. Narrative comparison. It is suggested to add a table of the funds attracted from EU framework programmes:

#	Indicator	CERCA Centre	Centre 1	Centre 2	Centre 3
10	Total number of H2020 projects as per EU Dashboard				
11	Total amount of H2020 funds raised as per EU Dashboard				
12	Total number of HE projects as per EU Dashboard *				
13	Total number of HE funds raised as per EU Dashboard *				
14	Total number of MSCA awards from H2020 and HE *				
15	Total amount of MSCA funds raised from H2020 and HE *				
16	Total number of ERC grants from H2020 and HE *				
17	Total amount of ERC funds raised from H2020 and HE *				
18	Total number of EIC projects from HE programme *				
19	Total amount of EIC funds raised from HE programme HE *				

* Indicate date of retrieval

Table 3: Funds attracted from EU framework programmes

- 1.5. **Narrative analysis of the evolution of the CERCA centre covering the previous and the current evaluation cycles. This section will not be included in the evaluations of new CERCA centres.**
- 1.6. **Currently active strategic plan executive summary. The full strategic plan can be added as an annex.**

2. Contributions of the centre

2.1. Publications: select up to 10 of the centre's most relevant publications from the evaluation period. The publication year, according to the journal's official record, must fall within the evaluation period, and the centre's affiliation must be identifiable among the lead authors.

2.1.1. Indicate the full reference, including the DOI, and highlight in bold the authors affiliated with the CERCA centre.

2.1.2. Provide a brief summary.

2.1.3. Indicate what makes the publication relevant.

2.2. Projects: present a selection of up to 5 competitively funded projects considered most relevant within the evaluation period. The projects must have either been active during part of the evaluation period, or have been officially awarded during that period, even if their official start date is after the period. It is recommended that the centre can demonstrate a certain degree of leadership in these projects.

2.2.1. Provide the full reference, including the persistent identifier if available, the title, the acronym, the funding agency, the number of partners (if applicable), the total funding awarded to the project, the funding obtained by the CERCA centre, the role of the centre in the project, and the main web pages providing access to the project, if applicable.

2.2.2. Provide a brief summary of the project.

2.2.3. Indicate what makes the project relevant in the evaluation period.

2.3. Other research and innovation outputs. Present a selection of up to 10 outputs from the list in Section 3 of this document of other possible outputs of the activity of the centre. The output must have been generated or transferred during the evaluation period. For each one of them:

2.3.1. Identify the output, provide its DOI or any other persistent identifier available, the name, the entities to which it is connected, and any other relevant and/or identifying data on the output.

2.3.2. Provide a brief summary of the output.

2.3.3. Indicate what makes the output relevant in the evaluation period.

2.4. Funds attracted for innovation and knowledge transfer activities.

2.4.1. Table with the funds attracted for innovation and knowledge transfer activities, provided by UNEIX:

Funds attracted for innovation and knowledge transfer activities					
Category	Year 1 of the evaluation period	Year 2 of the evaluation period	Year 3 of the evaluation period	Year 4 of the evaluation period	TOTAL
Companies Sector					
Public Sector					
Private Non-profit Institutions					
Universities					
Total global					

Table 5: Funds attracted for innovation and knowledge transfer activities

2.4.2. Description of the table

3. Other possible outputs from the activity of the centre

- 3.1. Severo Ochoa, María de Maeztu or Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII) awards.
- 3.2. Clinical practice guidelines and other clinical translational research outputs.
- 3.3. Clinical trials initiated by the CERCA centre.
- 3.4. Open data bases generated by the CERCA centre.
- 3.5. FAIR data sets.
- 3.6. Leadership in citizen science initiatives.
- 3.7. Open source code created by the CERCA centre.
- 3.8. Development of own dissemination channels or other outreach initiatives.
- 3.9. Organisation of scientific events such as open days, workshops, thematic schools, conferences, seminars, etc.
- 3.10. Patent families and their exploitation.
- 3.11. Citation of work by the CERCA centre in national and/or international patents or other types of industrial property.
- 3.12. Collections of discoveries or creations protected by tools different from patents.
- 3.13. Design, formulation and/or execution of solutions to address societal challenges.
- 3.14. Spin-off creation, including jobs created or funds raised during the evaluation period.

- 3.15. Development of cultural products.
- 3.16. Musealization of spaces or objects.
- 3.17. Societal impact narratives.
- 3.18. Participation in the drafting of Catalan, state-level or European legislation.
- 3.19. Leadership in networks or other international collaboration initiatives.
- 3.20. Collaboration with other institutions of particular relevance.
- 3.21. Participation in international evaluation panels.
- 3.22. Leadership in initiatives to foster scientific vocations and scientific talent.
- 3.23. International prestige awards obtained.
- 3.24. Internal doctoral or postdoctoral training programmes.
- 3.25. Scientific infrastructures.
- 3.26. Number of holders of ICREA positions or ERC awards, and programmes to attract them to the centre.

Annex 2 – Document specifications

Annex 1 contains the self-assessment form template for CERCA centres.

The CERCA institution will provide this document to the CERCA centres.

The centre shall submit the completed self-assessment form to the CERCA institution.

The document submitted by the centre shall not exceed 35 pages in length, excluding annexes, distributed as follows:

Section	Section name	pages
1.	General description of the centre	9
1.	Mission, vision, and overall objectives	2
2.	SWOT analysis	2
3.	Analysis of the impact of the centre's activities on the SDGs	1
4.	Benchmarking analysis	2
5.	Narrative analysis of CERCA centre's evolution and development	1
6.	Executive summary of the CERCA centre's current strategic plan	1
2.	Centre contribution	26
1.	Publications (10)	10
2.	Projects (5)	5
3.	Other research and innovation outputs (10)	10
4.	Funds secured through innovation and knowledge transfer activities	1
		35

Table 4: maximum length of the sections of the self assessment form

It is not mandatory to retain the headings of the different sections; however, their numbering must be maintained. Centres are encouraged to preserve the minimum wording from the original headings necessary to enable the members of the Evaluation Committee to interpret the information correctly.

The document shall be prepared using Arial or a similar typeface, with a font size of at least 10 points. A minimum font size of 8 points may be used in tables. Line spacing shall be at least single (1.0). Document margins shall be at least 2 cm on the left- and right-hand sides and 1.5 cm at the top and bottom. The document should include a footer indicating the name or acronym of the CERCA centre and the page numbering.

Annex 3 – CERCA centres acronyms

ACRONYM	CENTRE
AGROTECNIO	AGROTECNIO (FUNDACIÓ UdL-IRTA)
CED	CENTRE D'ESTUDIS DEMOGRÀFICS
CIMNE	CENTRE INTERNACIONAL DE MÈTODES NUMÈRICS EN ENGINYERIA
CRAG	CENTRE DE RECERCA EN AGRIGENÒMICA
CREAF	CENTRE DE RECERCA ECOLÒGICA I APLICACIONS FORESTALS
CREI	CENTRE DE RECERCA EN ECONOMIA INTERNACIONAL
CRG	CENTRE DE REGULACIÓ GENÒMICA
CRM	CENTRE DE RECERCA MATEMÀTICA
CTFC	CENTRE TECNOLÒGIC FORESTAL DE CATALUNYA
CTTC	CENTRE TECNOLÒGIC DE TELECOMUNICACIONS DE CATALUNYA
CVC	CENTRE DE VISIÓ PER COMPUTADOR
I2CAT	INTERNET I INNOVACIÓ DIGITAL A CATALUNYA
I3PT	INSTITUT D'INVESTIGACIÓ I INNOVACIÓ PARC TAULÍ
IBEC	INSTITUT DE BIOENGINYERIA DE CATALUNYA
IBEI	INSTITUT BARCELONA D'ESTUDIS INTERNACIONALS
ICAC	INSTITUT CATALÀ D'ARQUEOLOGIA CLÀSSICA
ICFO	INSTITUT DE CIÈNCIES FOTÒNIQUES
ICIQ	INSTITUT CATALÀ D'INVESTIGACIÓ QUÍMICA
ICN2	INSTITUT CATALÀ DE NANOTECNOLOGIA

ACRONYM	CENTRE
ICP	INSTITUT CATALÀ DE PALEONTOLOGIA
ICRA	INSTITUT CATALÀ DE RECERCA DE L'AIGUA
ICRPC	INSTITUT CATALÀ DE RECERCA EN PATRIMONI CULTURAL
IDIBAPS	INSTITUT D'INVESTIGACIONS BIOMÈDIQUES AUGUST PI I SUNYER
IDIBELL	INSTITUT D'INVESTIGACIÓ BIOMÈDICA DE BELLVITGE
IdIBGi	INSTITUT D'INVESTIGACIÓ BIOMÈDICA DE GIRONA
IEEC	INSTITUT D'ESTUDIS ESPACIALS DE CATALUNYA
IFAE	INSTITUT DE FÍSICA D'ALTES ENERGIES
IGTP	INSTITUT D'INVESTIGACIÓ EN CIÈNCIES DE LA SALUT GERMANS TRIAS I PUJOL
HMRIB	INSTITUT MUNICIPAL D'INVESTIGACIÓ MÈDICA - HOSPITAL DEL MAR
IPHES	INSTITUT CATALÀ DE PALEOECOLOGIA HUMANA I EVOLUCIÓ SOCIAL
IRB Barcelona	INSTITUT DE RECERCA BIOMÈDICA
IRB CatSud (IISPV)	INSTITUT DE RECERCA BIOMÈDICA CATALUNYA SUD (IRB CATSUD), previously known as Institut d'Investigació Sanitària Pere Virgili
IRB-Lleida	INSTITUT DE RECERCA BIOMÈDICA DE LLEIDA
IREC	INSTITUT DE RECERCA EN ENERGIA DE CATALUNYA
IR-HSCSP	INSTITUT DE RECERCA DE L'HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU I DE SANT PAU
IRJC	INSTITUT DE RECERCA CONTRA LA LEUCEIMA JOSEP CARRERAS
IRSICAIXA	INSTITUT DE RECERCA DE LA SIDA
IRSJD	INSTITUT DE RECERCA SANT JOAN DE DÉU
IRTA	INSTITUT DE RECERCA I TECNOLOGIA AGROALIMENTÀRIES

ACRONYM	CENTRE
ISGlobal	INSTITUT DE SALUT GLOBAL
VHIO	VALL D'HEBRON INSTITUT D'ONCOLOGIA
VHIR	VALL D'HEBRON INSTITUT DE RECERCA