

INTERNAL REGULATIONS OF THE AGROTECNIO CENTER

ARTICLES

1. SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

a. Scientific Strategy and Management Committee (SSMC)

It shall be composed by the Head of each Group, the Director of AGROTECNIO and other senior researchers who participate as advisors but without vote on an ad hoc basis. The Committee shall discuss and implement decisions on strategic, organizational and structural matters as well as the scientific policy related to postdoctoral staff, PhD students and core facilities on a monthly basis. It shall be convened and chaired by the Director of AGROTECNIO. Decisions will be taken by consensus. When this is not possible decisions will be taken by a simple majority vote of the Heads of Group or their designated representatives. The Chair of the SSMC will have the customary casting vote. The SSMC may also be convened at the request of at least 25% of the Heads of Group of AGROTECNIO.

b. Graduate Committee

A Head of Group, assisted by a second Head of Group, shall assume the roles of chair and vice chair, respectively, in charge of this committee. Their tenure shall be one year and the vice chair will assume the role of chair for the subsequent year, necessitating the appointment of a new vice chair. The Committee will be in charge of organizing training activities addressed to predoctoral staff as detailed in article 5.

2. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The work carried out under AGROTECNIO shall be organized in the following categories:

- a. Thematic Areas. They have essentially a scientific mission and are defined following recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of AGROTECNIO. Comprising a minimum of two Groups (see 2.b). There are currently three different Thematic Areas:

- i. Crop and Environmental Sciences
- ii. Animal Science
- iii. Food Sciences

Any change affecting the number and scope of the Thematic Areas shall be approved by the Director of AGROTECNIO and the SSMC.

- b. Research Group. A Group is integrated into a Thematic Area. It must be composed by a minimum of two staff researchers at full time or equivalent working in the same field. The Head of Group is responsible for its economic and research management.

3. PROFESSIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

The staff governed by these regulations shall belong to one of the professional groups as follows:

- a. Research staff
 - i. Head of Group (or AGROTECNIO Principal Investigator, PI): Responsible for the Group's research activities within AGROTECNIO. Full scientific freedom in line with AGROTECNIO's strategic objectives. Management of the budget of the Group. Responsible on behalf of the Group to provide information requested by AGROTECNIO for specific tasks such as external evaluations, project applications, communication with third parties (see also article 21), website, etc. Also responsible for relationships between group researchers and AGROTECNIO governing bodies and committees.
 - ii. Staff scientist: PhD holding a position and integrated in a Group, eligible to apply for external grants to contribute towards the activities of the group in line with AGROTECNIO's strategic objectives.
 - iii. Postdoctoral fellow: supported by internal or external funds, eligible to apply for external grants to contribute towards the activities of the group in line with AGROTECNIO's strategic objectives. They must be included in one Group.
 - iv. Predoctoral student: registered in a PhD program at any University but developing the research for the thesis within a Research Group of AGROTECNIO and under the supervision of Research staff of the Center; usually supported by 3-4-year fellowship / contract (according to current regulation) from internal or external funds.

- b. Specialized and Research Technicians supported by internal or external funds. They support the research performed by the Group or the common research conducted by AGROTECNIO. These positions are defined by the SSMC, except in those cases in which they had been assigned to Groups before the start of AGROTECNIO activities.
- c. Administrative staff, including an Administrative Manager, supported by internal or external funds. The Administrative Manager shall undertake tasks related to the operation and management of the institution, including resource planning and execution monitoring, staff recruitment and production of management reports and indicators, and contribute towards competitive grant applications, strategy development and implementation, and communication with funding institutions and stakeholders. The Administrative staff shall support the administrative tasks of the Center according to an established ratio to be determined based on CERCA rules and following AGROTECNIO's evaluation in 2014. The Director of AGROTECNIO defines these appointments in consultation with the Heads of Group.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CAREER

The criteria, requirements and process for the management of the evaluation and tenure-track promotion of researchers at AGROTECNIO shall conform to the corresponding Standard Operating Procedures of CERCA (Annex 1). The following tenure-track categories are included at AGROTECNIO under the more general category of 'Staff scientist', as described in article 3 of this document.

- a. Assistant Scientist. After having completed the appropriate postdoctoral period, candidates in this category are expected to work towards complete independence, obtain independent funding, establish and lead their own research group, supervise PhD students, and publish in leading journals as senior author.
- b. Associate Scientist. Candidates in this category are expected to reach full independence and show a good record of competitively funded projects, competence as group leader, successful experience as mentor and a well-established record of publications as senior authors in major general journals or leading specialty journals.

- c. Research Professor. Candidates in this category are expected to have successfully completed at least 10 years of independent research, exhibiting an outstanding record of original and relevant research publications and recognized as international leaders in their field. Candidates should also demonstrate an equivalent level of excellence in teaching activities when applicable.

The process for evaluation and promotion of researchers shall include three steps:

1. Initiation of the process, either directly by the direction of AGROTECNIO or upon request by the researcher. Indicative periods for considering evaluation and promotion are described in the tenure track outline in Annex 1.
2. External evaluation performed by AGAUR, following standard international peer review practices. The final report produced by AGAUR will be sent to the SSMC.
3. Review of the evaluations. The SSMC will inform about the quality of the evaluations and provide advice on how to implement the evaluations. In case of negative reports, recommended strategies may include establishing a period to address the relevant weaknesses before re-evaluation (at least two years) or actions to relocate his/her research to another institution.

Final decision and implementation shall rest with the SSMC.

5. MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCHERS

AGROTECNIO shall record all the staff of the Center (including researchers from third institutions developing research activities at AGROTECNIO): affiliations, academic degrees, accreditations, professional situation and participation in contracts and projects. This will be the responsibility of the Administrative staff of AGROTECNIO.

Working relationships

The center shall oversee the professional relationships among researchers. The decisions regarding any type of unsatisfactory relationships (e.g. unethical behavior, misconduct or violation of confidentiality) are endorsed by 'Sindic de Greuges' of University of Lleida with the consent of the UdL.

Training

AGROTECNIO has PhD students and postdoctoral fellows. Although PhD students must defend their thesis in a particular university (mainly, but not necessarily, the UdL), the Center shall participate actively in their training and professional development. In cases of conflict between the PhD student and the thesis supervisor, the Graduate Committee of the UdL will attempt to mediate and resolve such conflicts.

The AGROTECNIO Graduate Committee shall organize a set of activities for PhD students and postdoctoral fellows, beyond those organized by their supervisors to comply with the specific research, which must be approved by the Director. These activities will necessarily include a bi-annual research presentation by each PhD student and postdoctoral fellow. These mandatory presentations will be held on years 1 (presentation of research hypotheses and methodology to be implemented) and 3 (advanced results). Comments and suggestions following these presentations will be discussed between the presenter(s) and their supervisor(s) and remedial action taken as appropriate.

Professional ethical conduct

The SSMC shall be responsible for upholding internationally defined ethical standards in research. The Ethics Code of the UdL will be used as background document (Annex 2). When an ethics violation is identified the Committee will investigate within the legal and ethical frameworks and implement commensurate and proportionate corrective measures. If necessary the Committee will seek advice and input from the UdL's legal department.

6. RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS

The policy for recruitment of AGROTECNIO researchers adheres to the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers adopted by the European Commission (2005). When an RDI activity has sufficient resources for contracting a new researcher or AGROTECNIO budget is allocated for this purpose, the individual(s) responsible of the activity shall request the launch of a public call to the Head of Group that shall regulate the recruitment of qualified staff in a transparent manner. An ad hoc committee shall be formed consisting of three members (the Director of AGROTECNIO, the Head of Group and the staff member responsible for the activity) and chaired

by the Director of AGROTECNIO. The desired candidate profile must be agreed upon and approved by the selection committee prior to advertising the position in the appropriate fora. For pre-doctoral contracts, the profile of candidates shall meet the requirements for admission as provided in Article 6 of RD 99/2011 of the Spanish law, which regulates the access to official doctorate studies. The ad hoc committee shall evaluate the academic record of the candidates, the scientific articles and presentations at scientific conferences and other outputs demonstrating previous involvement and track record in research. For post-doctoral contracts, candidates shall be evaluated according to criteria of academic excellence and innovative and effective research with a good publication record. The committee shall also consider the ability to work both independently and as active, motivated member of a research team, good communication skills (both orally and in written English), and publications in leading journals and invited presentations in international meetings.

After the selection process, the committee shall issue a reasoned report justifying the score given to each applicant, in accordance with the general evaluation criteria defined in the call, and recommend a candidate. Unselected applicants may submit an appeal to the director of AGROTECNIO within one month from the public announcement of the selected candidate.

7. PRIORIZATION OF PROJECTS AND PhD STUDENTSHIPS

Projects funded by public or private institutions and also internal AGROTECNIO funded projects and PhD students funded by competitive grants are included in this article.

In those calls in which only one project or position could be eligible by the applying institution, the corresponding internal AGROTECNIO regulations for each call shall define the prioritization of Groups after discussion and agreement by the SSMC.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF ORGANIZATION

The administrative staff shall be organized as follows: administrative workers and administrative assistants under the supervision of the administrative manager of AGROTECNIO. They shall support the administrative task of each Group or Thematic Area according to an established ratio. This ratio shall be proposed by the SSMC and the Director of AGROTECNIO.

9. REGIME FOR USE OF WORKPLACES

Spaces assigned by the member Institutions of AGROTECNIO appropriated for agricultural, animal and food research are considered as research workplaces of AGROTECNIO. AGROTECNIO shall keep an up-to-date register of their workplaces. The origin of the space occupied by researchers in AGROTECNIO in the ETSEA Campus may be:

- 1) Space directly allocated by UdL-ETSEA, IRTA or any other institution to each Research Group or Research Group researchers.
- 2) Space allocated by UdL-ETSEA, IRTA or any other institution to AGROTECNIO Center as a whole.

The space allocated by UdL, IRTA or any other institution to AGROTECNIO Research Groups should not be re-allocated to other uses by AGROTECNIO except with the agreement of Research Groups and this will be communicated to the vicerrector responsible for scientific affairs of the UdL.

Potential future AGROTECNIO workplaces will be of use by the Research Groups established according to the definitions of this document (article 2.b), and could also be assigned to common areas for research shared by all or part of the Research Groups. The management and organization of these spaces will be the responsibility of the SSMC.

10. COMMUNAL EQUIPMENT

Communal equipment shall be considered all equipment owned by AGROTECNIO and obtained in public or private research calls, where AGROTECNIO is the grant holder institution. Communal equipment will be of common use by all research staff assigned to AGROTECNIO. In the case of co-financing being needed as a requirement to apply to the call, the SSMC shall determine a particular co-financing amount for each of the Research Groups of AGROTECNIO depending on availability of funds generated through overheads or through core funding by CERCA or other third party.

11. REGIME OF THE SPECIALIZED UNITS FOR SUPPORT OF RESEARCH

These are research units usually holding a complex technology relevant to AGROTECNIO activities that may need some very specialized staff. Each unit shall have a researcher in charge named by the SSMC. These units shall have the following aims:

- a) Provide support to the Research Groups of AGROTECNIO
- b) Provide technical advice in the areas of each specialized unit
- c) Ensure the maximum efficiency and rational use of all the research equipment

Their function shall be guided by the following principles:

- a) The AGROTECNIO Research Groups shall have priority use over external users
- b) The specialized Units shall propose rates for their services which shall be approved by the Scientific Strategy and Management Committee.
- c) Financial management shall be carried out by the administrative staff of AGROTECNIO with the assistance of the researcher in charge of the Unit.
- d) The specialized Units shall make available to potential users a guide with technical facilities, charges and services.

12. INVENTORY OF EQUIPMENT

AGROTECNIO equipment for research may be available in the following situations:

- a. Equipment acquired by AGROTECNIO through their own funds or through institutional support; thus, they are under its full responsibility.
- b. Equipment acquired by the researchers of the Research Groups with personal funding achieved through competitive calls where AGROTECNIO is the applicant organization
- c. Equipment handed over by other institutions or organizations. This equipment will be responsibility of these third parties, but AGROTECNIO shall ensure its proper use.
- d. In case of AGROTECNIO dissolution, the equipment acquired from calls applied by AGROTECNIO will belong to the institution of the applicant Head of Group.

Additionally to its own inventory, AGROTECNIO will keep an up-to-date list of all available equipment, including that transferred by third parties.

13. MANAGEMENT OF PROJECTS

Operationally, two different types of research projects are distinguished. Their management shall conform to the principles regulating the relationships between UdL and AGROTECNIO:

- a) Research projects granted to Heads of Group or staff scientists. This includes projects funded by public or private organizations in competitive calls. In the application process, the proposal shall be preferably presented to the administrative staff of AGROTECNIO in advance of the deadline for an administrative review. In any case, the administrative staff shall maximize the period required by the researcher to conclude the proposal, which will help to register the proposal and collect the necessary signature(s) from the legal representative(s) of the named institution in the grant application. When a project is funded, the Head of Group will notify the administrative manager of AGROTECNIO about the resolution of the funding agency. From this time on, the administrative staff shall take charge of the administrative management of the project. In case of staff being contracted by the project, the contracting procedure will be done through the administrative staff of AGROTECNIO. The SSMC will follow the progress of the project by being copied on the annual reports of the Head of Group to the granting agencies, unless the project is funded by AGROTECNIO internally in which case short reports will be presented annually to the SSMC.

- b) Institutional projects. These are projects addressed to the institution as a whole and, generally, these projects may need co-financing by the beneficiary organization. The application and administrative management of the project shall be delegated to the administrative staff of AGROTECNIO under the responsibility of the SSCM. The Committee shall prioritize the proposals in case of more than one potential application and shall also prioritize the infrastructures/equipment requested in case the potential demand by the Center exceeds a limit given by the call. To do so, the Committee shall follow the principles outlined in the Strategic Plan of AGROTECNIO. AGROTECNIO shall take on the co-financing costs. In the case of lack of funds for this purpose, the co-financing shall be taken on by the Research Groups directly benefiting from the project or, alternatively, by the Research Groups providing support to the application.

14. MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTS

AGROTECNIO shall promote the establishment of contracts with private and public institutions for research, development and innovation. AGROTECNIO management (Administrative staff and Director, with input from SSMC as needed) will determine the procedure for processing and formalizing the contracts involving external organizations through discussion and engagement with the relevant Heads of Group.

15. EXPLOITATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The corresponding agreement between AGROTECNIO and UdL shall determine the procedure for the exploitation of research results. In the first instance AGROTECNIO will rely on the corresponding UdL office for this activity. After AGROTECNIO passes its evaluation this issue might be revisited and appropriate changes/adjustments implemented.

16. INCORPORATION OF NEW GROUPS INTO AGROTECNIO

The incorporation of new groups into AGROTECNIO shall follow the criteria and procedures detailed in the Statutes of the Center (Annex 'AGROTECNIO agreement', section 5). The incorporation of researchers to existing Research Groups shall take place after acceptance by the Head of Group and shall be also subject to approval by the SSMC.

17. RESEARCH GROUPS LEAVING AGROTECNIO

Research Groups shall be subjected to periodic evaluation by the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of AGROTECNIO. In the case that a particular Group fails to maintain the criteria for excellence for two consecutive evaluation periods, the SAB shall recommend corrective measures and, eventually, suggest the need for the group to leave AGROTECNIO. The SAB's recommendations will be discussed with the AGROTECNIO Director who will be ultimately responsible in implementing the SAB's final recommendation in close consultation with the SSMC. Research staff who voluntarily resigns his/her position must inform the SSMC in writing, with a notification period of 3 months.

Individual researchers of the different Groups will be subjected to bi-annual evaluations by an *ad hoc* committee of 3 members named by the SSMC. This committee will inform the SSCM in cases in which there is an unsatisfactory evaluation through a reasoned report and the SSMC shall recommend corrective measures and, eventually, suggest the need for the researcher to leave AGROTECNIO. The Director will be ultimately responsible for implementing the SSMC's recommendation.

18. HEADS OF GROUP'S PROJECTS IN THE NAME OF AGROTECNIO

It is expected that all Heads of Group will be PIs on at least one active project with AGROTECNIO as the host institution. This requirement is consistent with the criteria for admitting new groups as well as individuals into AGROTECNIO and it is also mandated implicitly by CERCA. The formal requirement for Heads of Group to maintain their status as full members of AGROTECNIO is to comply with this by-law over a period of 5 years.

19. REVIEW PROCEDURE

The internal regulations of AGROTECNIO shall be revised at least every five years or when the SSMC shall deem this to be appropriate at an earlier point in time.

20. BUDGET AND ALLOCATION OF AGROTECNIO RESOURCES

The Administrative manager and the Director of AGROTECNIO, with input from the SSMC, shall prepare annually a draft budget that, after approval by the SSMC, will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees to be placed on the agenda for formal approval by the Board.

21. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THIRD PARTIES INCLUDING THE PRESS

Third parties include the UdL, IRTA, CERCA and all relevant agencies of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Spanish government departments and agencies, EU and international organizations, public and private institutions (academic or otherwise) and administration, professional organizations, all AGROTECNIO stakeholders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), consumers, legislators, politicians, regulators, individuals, the press and others.

All members of AGROTECNIO shall engage and interact with third parties in a professional, ethical and responsible manner consistent with the statutes and the bylaws of AGROTECNIO. In particular when an intended interaction with a third party might have consequences on any and all AGROTECNIO activities it is advisable that such proposed activity be discussed with the Director and the SSMC as appropriate. All AGROTECNIO staff shall exercise their judgement in deciding how best to handle such interactions. The intent is to project the best possible image of AGROTECNIO without compromising its standing or reputation within the scientific community, government and society at large.

All those to whom the AGROTECNIO's policy applies need also to be aware of, and comply with, the requirements of external/third party affecting their research activities (e.g. any conflict of interest). Potential conflicts of interest situations need to be discussed and resolved with the Director of AGROTECNIO and the SSMC as appropriate.

22. AGROTECNIO AFFILIATION AND LOGO USAGE

The use of AGROTECNIO affiliation and logo shall be considered as mandatory in all formal and invited presentations or written documents by AGROTECNIO research staff, without prejudice of the use of additional affiliations and logos stating link to other institutions different than AGROTECNIO.