

Science4Policy-23 (S4P-23) Report

Executive Summary

The Science4Policy (S4P) call for funding is a PlanAPP and FCT joint initiative, to support the production of studies that contribute to decision making by supporting the design and implementation of public policies informed by evidence. The project also seeks to involve different government areas, thus promoting capacity building in Public Administration aligning with the objectives outlined in the RRP investment.

The first edition, S4P-23, opened 22 thematic lines framed within the Thematic Agendas of the Portugal 2030 Strategy, selected after consultation with the Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network, REPLAN.

The present progress report refers to the period between June and December 2023, and considers: (1) the process of defining thematic lines; (2) the process of launching the call for applications; (3) the evaluation of applications. In addition, the report lays the foundations for (4) the preparation of the next S4P call (S4P-24).

The collaboration between PlanAPP-RePLAN and FCT proved fruitful in defining the thematic lines, as well as in defining members for the evaluation panels, and in collaborating to publicize the initiative. This collaboration must therefore be replicated in 2024.

Nevertheless, a few recommendations are made. The application form should be simplified and better adapted to the objectives of S4P funding calls. In addition, to monitoring and evaluating these calls short-term results (outputs), a system should be devised to monitor and evaluate the initiative's desired longer-term impacts (outcomes) detailing its success (or failures). Desirably, such system would allow us to assess the level of use of policy briefs by public institutions (the level of appropriation of the results produced by each study financed under the calls). In addition, such system would verify whether the implementation of studies resulted in closer relationships between centres and institutes of the National Science and Technology system and Public Administration entities involved in Public Policy design and implementation.

The S4P calls are still ongoing. Upcoming activities, including evaluation results for S4P-23, will allow us to deepen this report's conclusions and suggestions contributing to improve the project's role of contributing to quality public action, by supporting the development of public policies informed by evidence.

Projects next steps (1st trimester of 2024):

S4P-23 call

- Up to the end of March: conclude the evaluation process (evaluation panel meetings scheduled for February 2024; final decision expected by the end of March at the latest).
- From March onwards: Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators attend a “How to prepare a policy brief” workshop, to be organized by PlanAPP in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission.
- From the end of March/early April onwards: initiate contract procedures in coordination with SGPCM (Presidency of the Council of Ministers General Secretariat); initiate research projects.

S4P-24:

- January: initiate the S4P-24 call procedures (thematic lines definition; revise application form, and the call notice terms).
- From late January/early February onwards: approve final list of thematic lines, in collaboration with the Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network (RePLAN); work with the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) to publish the call opening notice and open the call.