

Audit report on the 2017-2020 plan for the promotion of reading

Compliance

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[FULL REPORT \(ES\)](#)



[SUMMARY \(ES\)](#)



What we assessed and why

The Ministry of Culture launched the 2017-2020 plan for the promotion of reading (PFL) in May 2017. One of its purposes was to increase interest in books among children and young people, people with disabilities and segments of society with difficulties to access reading.

Given that several national plans to promote reading have been adopted in recent years, but not reviewed, we checked with our audit that the measures carrying out the strategic direction of the 2017-2020 PFL, including monitoring and evaluation, were in line with the targets set by the Ministry of Culture.

What we found

The 2017-2020 PFL was implemented through contracts, grants and agreements.

We identified 15 contracts with a total of more than €250 000. There were three in 2020 that were relevant to the context of COVID-19. These were the acquisition of 10 000 reusable masks for promotional purposes, three advertisements in the national co-official languages to highlight the benefits of reading during the pandemic, and the dissemination of 12 videos in the co-official languages related to the three advertisements. These three contracts cost €18 148.79, €13 249.50 and €17 908 respectively (19 % of total expenditure).

There were eight different grants with recognised liabilities of more than 17 million euros between 2017 and 2020. Out of this sum, more than 2 million was earmarked in 2020 as exceptional aid to support the book sector and bookshops' adjustment to the negative impact of COVID-19 (12 % of total expenditure).

We included the analysis of grants supporting the plan's goal to promote reading. The recognised liabilities for the grant for the promotion of reading and Spanish literature came to more than 3.5 million euros (22 % of total expenditure).

During 2020, due to the exceptional situation caused by COVID-19, deadlines regarding the grant for the promotion of reading and Spanish literature were extended, affecting the time frame for both carrying out and providing proof of the activities.





In 12 cases, beneficiaries paid back grant money voluntarily for projects which were not carried out amounting to around €53 000 (including principal and late payment interest). The beneficiaries' main reason for returning the grant was that the conditions caused by COVID-19 made fulfilling the grant's purpose impossible. There were four other repayments where proof was missing, or the intended objectives were not met, amounted to more than €25 000 (principal and late payment interest).

With regard to calculating the late payment interest, we noted that the third additional provision of Royal Decree 463/2020 of 14 March, concerning the suspension of deadlines, was not applied to six grant repayments, four of them being the voluntary ones. Nevertheless, the overall amount was considered insignificant.

What we concluded

Due to the health crisis, three promotional contracts related to COVID-19 worth close to €50 000 in total were carried out in 2020 as part of the 2017-2020 PFL. Additionally, exceptional aid amounting to more than €2 million was arranged to support the book sector and bookshops' adjustment to the negative impact of COVID-19.

The specific circumstances brought about by the pandemic also meant that administrative deadlines were suspended for 79 days in 2020 under Royal Decree 463/2020. This suspension was not taken into account when calculating the late payment interest of six reimbursements, four of them being voluntary ones, concerning the grant for the promotion of reading and Spanish literature. However, the difference was not significant.