# AIReF ACTION PLAN 2020



### **CONTENTS**

1.	INTRODUCTION	. 4
2.	AIReF ACTIONS IN 2020	. 5
1.	Reports, opinions and studies planned for 2020	. 5
2.	Other actions planned for 2020.	8

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the first quarter of each year, the Independent Authority for Fiscal Responsibility (AIReF) must prepare and publish an Action Plan in accordance with article 5 of its Organic Statute. In addition to mandatory reports, the Plan includes opinions, any requested studies and other actions intended to improve its work. The Action Plan therefore represents the Authority's public commitment to society with respect to its activities during the year.

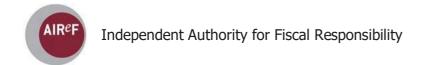
The 2020 Action Plan has been developed and published at a critical moment, due to the COVID-19 crisis. This means that AIReF, while complying with the legal obligation to publish the plan in the first quarter of the year, will necessarily have to adapt its execution to the exceptional circumstances.

In addition, the preparation of this Plan marks a turning point for the institution as it coincides with the recent appointment of the AIReF's new president, Cristina Herrero, who will be at the head of the institution over the next six years. In her appearance before the Congressional Treasury Committee on 25 February, before the COVID-19 crisis began, the then candidate for AIReF presidency declared her intention to develop and publish a new Strategic Plan in September, establishing AIReF's strategic aims for the coming years.

In this difficult context, the new president considers it appropriate to publish a 2020 Action Plan, in continuation of the aims established in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan that guarantees, in any case, the institution's normal activity at this temporary and exceptional time. Regarding the temporary situation, once the strategic lines have been established in the new Strategic Plan, it will be assessed and decided whether a new Action Plan that complements the presently published one should be created or whether the current Plan should be maintained for 2020. Regarding the exceptional circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic that will inevitably affect our activity to a greater or lesser extent, it is possible that the development of some of the actions identified below may be affected by this exceptional situation; certain activities may be forced to be prioritised and other activities to be postponed, as indicated in AIReF's statement of 20 March 2020¹.

The 2020 Action Plan was approved by AIReF's President on 20 March 2020, following deliberation and endorsement by AIReF's Steering Committee.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Link to AIReF's statement of 20 March 2020



## 2. AIReF ACTIONS IN 2020

AIReF will assess compliance with this Plan, in implementation of the Strategic Plan, the results of which will be summarised in the 2020 Annual Report, due to be published in the first guarter of 2021.

**This 2020 Action Plan will be continuously monitored.** Every six months, the Steering Committee will appraise its degree of implementation and will review those aspects that require updating. This evaluation will take into account the exceptional circumstances of 2020.

#### 1. Reports, opinions and studies planned for 2020

- 1. Reports originally planned for 2019 that are expected to be prepared in 2020, provided that the corresponding budgetary milestones motivating their issuance materialise and their production is viable and economically sensible:
  - Report on the macroeconomic forecasts of the Draft General State Budget for 2020.
  - Report on the main budgetary lines and draft budgets of the Public Administrations:
     Draft GSB for 2020
- 2. Reports planned for 2020 on the budget cycle that will be prepared, provided that the corresponding budgetary milestones motivating their issuance materialise and their production is viable and economically sensible:
  - Report on the initial budgets of the Public Administrations. 2020.
  - Report on the 2020-2023 Stability Programme Update.
  - Report on expected compliance with the budgetary stability target, government debt target and expenditure rule for 2020.
  - Report on the setting of individual targets for the Regions.
  - Report on the macroeconomic forecasts of the Draft General State Budget for 2021.
  - Report on the main budgetary lines of the Public Administrations 2021.
  - Report on the macroeconomic forecasts of the 2021 budgets of the Regions.

- 3. AIReF is also responsible for drafting reports concerning the application of the preventive, corrective and coercive measures envisaged in the LOEPySF. These reports are not periodic but rather depend on whether or not the circumstances envisaged by legislation materialise. Among them, the reports on the Regions' Economic-Financial Plans (EFPs) can be expected. The issuance of these reports must be adapted to the exceptional circumstances in 2020 and decisions on the implementation of the national fiscal framework that are being adopted.
- 4. Studies started during 2019 within the framework of the Spending Review and for which everything possible will be done for their delivery in 2020:
  - Tax Benefits;
  - The National Health System's hospital expenses: pharmacy and investment in capital goods;
  - Hiring incentives;
  - Transport infrastructure
- 5. Studies commissioned by Territorial Public Administrations started in 2019 and aimed to be delivered between 2020 and 2021:
  - Study commissioned by the Regional Government of Andalusia on Universities;
  - Studies proposed by the Region of Castile and Leon: a study on the institutionalisation of the assessment and four specific assessments (institutional communication, active employment policies, scholarships and universities, and industrial policy)
  - Start of work on the possible commissioning of studies by the Region of Valencia, Region of Aragon and the City Council of Madrid.
- 6. Opinion on the re-use of administrative microdata for research. Once AIReF completed the first public Spending Review in Spain, one of its main conclusions was the enormous difficulty of accessing the data and registers held by Public Administrations for research purposes by the administrations themselves, as well as for research. International experience shows the importance of establishing methods and protocols for secure access to and use of this type of data and the advantages that its use for research can bring. Throughout 2019, AIReF carried out a series of work and consultations with researchers, academics and staff from the Administration with the aim of publishing an Opinion in 2020 which will be sent in advance to the Government.
- 7. Opinion on Fiscal Transparency. Improving the quality and transparency of public

finances is one of AIReF's strategic objectives. Firstly as a means to promote fiscal sustainability and secondly as an instrument for improving the efficiency of public expenditure. In this sense, fiscal transparency refers to the clarity, reliability, frequency, timeliness, relevance and accessibility of information on the activities of public authorities in fiscal matters. While preparing its reports, opinions and studies, AIReF has noted limitations and areas for improvement in relation to this issue. As a result, this opinion will include an evaluation exercise, in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) methodology, on fiscal transparency in the *Administración Central* (Central Administration) and the Regions.

Depending on all the other work to be done and the needs that are identified over the course of the year, the Steering Committee may consider issuing an opinion on other important matters during the year. Organic Law 6/2013, of 14 November, under which AIReF was created, empowers the institution to issue opinions on matters relating to the budgetary stability and financial sustainability of the Public Administrations on its own initiative.

In addition, the implementation of this Action Plan should be adapted to the exceptional circumstances of 2020.

## 2. Other actions planned for 2020

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020
1	CONTRIB	UTE TO BUDGETARY STABILITY
a	Monitoring and analy	sing the economic and budgetary situation
		1. Continue with the work of modelling the main macroeconomic variables: a. Integrated short-term forecast model (MiPred) dynamic factor model (q+1 and q+2) b. Short-term GDP forecasting model and Bayesian vector autoregressive models with exogenous variables (BVARX, q+3 to q+4) c. MetCap Model: early estimates of quarterly regional GDP d. Medium-term forecasting model based on error correction equations.
		2. Use of AIReF's quarterly model (AQM): demand, prices, expenditure, income and wealth and credit and interest rates linked to fiscal variables
i	Develop models to forecast and project macroeconomic and budgetary variables	3. Updating of cadastral data (continuous process) and continued modelling of the income tax on real estate at the local level
		4. Exploitation of an integrated system for forecasting the main tax figures that include error correction models of the main tax bases with macroeconomic anchor, their translation to amounts in accrual and cash through their breakdown of collection mechanisms. ESA adjustments for the translation of the cash amount to national accounts are also incorporated into the system
		5. Expansion and maintenance of an internal database
		6. Incorporation of microdata with updating until 2018 Development and exploitation of microsimulators of the main taxes that quantify the impact of tax measures

#### **2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **PROPOSALS FOR 2020**

1	CONTRIBUTE TO BUDGETARY STABILITY	
a	Monitoring and analysing the economic and budgetary situation	
		7. Expanding the analysis models to include benchmarking related to the fiscal pressure on real estate tax among urban units of similar local corporations.
		8. Maintenance and improvement of forecasting models for health and educational expenditure in the Regions.
		9. Design a model to characterise the estimated impact of measures taken by the Regions on a specific tax
i	Develop models to forecast and project macroeconomic and budgetary variables	<ul> <li>10. Maintenance and estimate of the forecast models for short-term social contributions and unemployment benefits.</li> <li>A. Development and maintenance of quarterly social contribution models in national accounting terms.</li> <li>B. Preparation of monthly social contributions models in cash terms according to type of regime.</li> <li>C. Estimate of quarterly unemployment benefit models, distinguishing between contributory and non-contributory.</li> <li>11. Review and improvement of regional</li> </ul>
		expenditure: employee compensation, intermediate consumption and contributions to the EU, among others, in national accounting terms for the Administración Central
		12. Complete expenditure disaggregation and make progress in the separate estimation of the deficit of the State and CA bodies.
ii	Develop data bases and establish and maintain budgetary execution data monitoring and early-warning systems for possible imbalances in each of the PAs.	Integration between the different institutional sectors:     a. Reconciliation of macroeconomic and fiscal variables     b. Reconciliation of financial and non-financial variables     c. Application of shocks through elasticities     d. Improvement of sector distribution methods

#### 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

#### **PROPOSALS FOR 2020**

CONTRIBUTE TO BUDGETARY STABILITY	
Monitoring and analy	sing the economic and budgetary situation
	2. Simulation tools: components of GDP on the demand side, pension expenditure, public consumption
	3. Revise the methodology used to assess uncertainty
	4. Update and improve the Local Corporation database with variables that are not strictly economic
	5. Analysis of the fiscal rules determining the aggregate of the sub-sector from individual data communicated by all LCs.
Develop data bases and establish and maintain budgetary execution data	6. Update the databases on the Regions with the information available for the analysis of computable expenditure for the purposes of the expenditure rule
warning systems for possible imbalances in each of the PAs.	7. Use the database of Regional budgetary rules
	8. Determine and design the main sustainability indicators that enable the risk situation of each of the Local Governments to be assessed.
	9. Continuation of the work to design a database on the LCs' EFPs
	10. Continuation of the work on designing a database of the number of staff at the service of the Territorial Administrations.
	11. Expansion of the databases on the Regions with additional elements relevant for analysis
Identify relevant budgetary stability issues to be specifically analysed in reports, or a more in-depth analysis in the form of working papers (WP)	1. Continue with the assessment of the in-depth analysis of the sustainability of certain LCs with structural problems, identifying risks and promoting lines of action. Continue to expand the subjective scope and the indicators for the individual assessment of sustainability risks
	2. Incorporation of the impact of COVID-19 on the macro-fiscal situation
	Develop data bases and establish and maintain budgetary execution data monitoring and early-warning systems for possible imbalances in each of the PAs.  Identify relevant budgetary stability issues to be specifically analysed in reports, or a more in-depth analysis in the form of

#### **2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **PROPOSALS FOR 2020**

1	CONTRIBUTE TO BUDGETARY STABILITY	
a	Monitoring and analysing the economic and budgetary situation	
		1. Continuation and improvement of the system for evaluation and analysis of the deviations and difficulties in the fiscal forecasts made throughout the year: analysis and redefinition, if appropriate, of the criteria and variables applied, by analysing the deviations, expanding this analysis to a monthly frequency
iv	Self-assessment of the quality of the macro-fiscal forecasts made in the short and medium term	2. Development of tools to breakdown certain factors in AIReF forecast trends (update macro outlook, economic policy measures, data reviews, etc.) identification of biases and their monitoring
		3. Develop a methodology for self-assessment of internal macroeconomic forecasts including a real-time database and the publication of an analysis/working paper in this regard
		4. Develop systems to assess macro forecasting models for the Regions
	Incorporation of benchmarking techniques into the analysis of the PAs' economic and budgetary situation.	1. Improve the presentation and selection of new non-financial variables for the LC database for use in benchmarking analyses
٧		2. Continue and publish the benchmarking analysis on the effective cost of the LC services. Improvement and extension to other services
		3. Comparative analysis of Regions based on benchmarking techniques
b	Help to enforce and improve the design of national and EU fiscal rules.	
i	Internally develop the necessary capacities to estimate the variables used	1. Maintain and update the output gap model
1	in determining fiscal rules, especially the structural balance and the output gap	2. Participation in the Working Group of the European network of IFIs on output gap

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020
1	CONTRIB	UTE TO BUDGETARY STABILITY
b	Help to enforce and imp	rove the design of national and EU fiscal rules.
ii	Analyse the application of fiscal rules, the consistency and compatibility between EU and national rules, and, if	1. Continue and improve the analysis of changes in the EU fiscal rules
	appropriate, propose methodological improvements	2. Continue to monitor the average payment period of the Territorial Administrations
	Collaborate with the major international economic iii institutions and with the IFIs network to improve the evaluation of fiscal rules	<ol> <li>Participate in the meetings and activities in the EU IFIs, the OECD and the COM's networks</li> <li>Maintain collaboration with other IFIs</li> <li>Provision of information to DG ECFIN and the EFB</li> </ol>
iii		2. Participate in the activities of the EU IFIs' network such as the biannual publication of the European Fiscal Monitor
		3. Participate in the consultation provided for by the European Commission on the revision of the Six Pack and Two Pack
2	FOSTER THE FINA	NCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS
a		bility of public finances and relevant impacts of certain public policies
i	Monitor and analyse the debt sustainability of each of the	1. Develop long-term projections by identifying the most significant long-term fiscal risks and monitoring these through the biannual update of the Debt Monitor.
	PAs	2. System for periodic updating of detected liabilities and development of a methodology for the identification and quantification of contingent liabilities of the PAs
ii	Systematise medium-term fiscal forecasts and their connection with economic trends	1. Incorporate medium-term forecasts in the analysis
iii	Construct and publish synthetic and easy-to-understand indicators to raise awareness of the importance of long term sustainability	1. Expand the sustainability risk indicators and estimate the type-S2 synthetic indicators for the GG sector.

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020
2	FOSTER THE FINA	NCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS
а		bility of public finances and relevant impacts of certain public policies
		1. Continually update the process of estimating pension expenditure (distinguishing between Social Security and Civil Servants).
		2. Develop sensitivity analysis of pension expenditure for reforms of the pension system.
:	Analyse the Social Security system from the standpoint of long-term sustainability	3. Make progress in sensitivity analyses of pension expenditure for changes to the demographic and macroeconomic scenarios
iv		4. Make progress in micro-simulation techniques for calculating the entry pension and modelling retirement decisions.
		5. Review, automate and simplify the demographic forecast model (mortality, migration and fertility models)
		6. Publish the update of the main results of the demographic and pension models
		1. Continuously improve the estimation processes for the variables relevant to the sustainability of expenditure associated with ageing
V	Analyse trends and long- term dynamics of the main expenditure components: pensions, healthcare, education and social services, among others	2. Analyse the impact of changes in the variables that define healthcare and education expenditure
		3. Continue to improve the regional healthcare and education forecast model based on information exchanges that are established, if appropriate, with the Regions or other administrations, institutions and agencies involved

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020
3		CY OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND BUDGETARY IE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
a		nts, figures and recommendations to aid in the ecision-making and in the design of legislative initiatives.
		1. Complete the work of the second stage of the Spending Review, initiated in 2019, corresponding to the evaluation of tax benefits, hiring incentives, expenditure on hospital pharmacy and high technology and transport infrastructure
		2. Analysis of tools for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations made in the Spending Review and the other evaluation studies
i	GG Spending Review (SR) based on strategy, procedure, efficiency and effectiveness evaluations	3. Preparation of the Action Plan for the GG spending review corresponding to the third phase of the Spending Review:
		4. Study on Universities commissioned to AIReF by the Regional Government of Andalusia
		5. Studies being commissioned by the Region of Castile and Leon: a study on the institutionalisation of the assessment and four specific assessments (institutional communication, active employment policies, scholarships and universities, and industrial policy)
		6. Start of work to develop possible studies commissioned by the Regions (such as the Region of Aragón and the Region of Valencia) or LGs. (City Council of Madrid)
ii	Analyse and provide technical support to the PAs in macro budgetary matters within its competence	1. Provide technical support to PAs whenever deemed appropriate

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020
3		CY OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND BUDGETARY HE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
b	-	arency of the Public Administrations in the agement of their resources
		1. Continue the analysis and proposals for improvements in the economic and budgetary information published and provided
i	Identify gaps in the existing economic and budgetary information and help to standardise, simplify and disseminate said information	2. Develop an opinion on the assessment of fiscal transparency in the PAs.
		3. Promote access to data and administrative records for research purposes and, specifically, with respect to cross-checking data from different registers, and publishing an opinion in this regard
ii	Publish the data from the PAs that contribute to better knowledge	1. Improve the presentation on the website of the evolution of the economic and financial information of the LCs as well as their service costs
"		2. Make progress in work for creating a database of economic-financial data published by the Regions and display and analysis with Tableau
С		rocesses and foster the application of the framework in budgetary planning
i	Analyse and diagnose improvements for results-based budgeting and other performance indicator systems	1. Analysis of the budgetary structure by programme
ii	Analyse and make proposals for applying a multi-year budgetary planning framework.	1. Continue studies on medium-term budgetary frameworks

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020		
3		ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND BUDGETARY PRACTICES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS		
С		rocesses and foster the application of the framework in budgetary planning		
iii	Promote and help estimate and publish the short, medium and long-term economic and budgetary effects of the reforms undertaken by the PAs	<ol> <li>Monthly publication of monitoring in terms of national accounts of the GG and each of the subsectors with risk assessment of non-compliance with the stability target and, at the Regional level, with the expenditure rule. This analysis is completed with the main tax figures and social security contributions in terms of cash on hand. This monitoring and publication is in addition to the assessment made in the reports.</li> <li>Publication of macro-fiscal historical series for Spain in AIReF DataLab</li> <li>Continue to review and improve the impact of the SSF measures in terms of contributions</li> <li>Keep an up-to-date database of measures with regulatory impact</li> </ol>		
4	HELP SPANISH SOCIETY TO PERCEIVE THE BENEFITS OF BUDGETARY STABILITY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY			
a	Define and implement a communication strategy			
i	Define and roll out a global communication strategy including the website, media and social networks	1. Progress the strategy defined in the 2017-2019 Strategic Communication Plan in the following areas: - Strengthen relationships with journalists and opinion leaders - Reinforce our image in the media with the furthest social reach, such as TV and radio - Strengthen our activity on social networks		
ii	Easy access for society to the work done by AIReF (website)	1. Improvements in the design of the web page		

2015	-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN	PROPOSALS FOR 2020
4	HELP SPANISH SOCIETY TO PERCEIVE THE BENEFITS OF BUDGETARY STABILITY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	
a	Define and implement a communication strategy	
iii	Appearances before Parliament	1. Publication on the website of the President's appearances and informing the media
	Participate in discussion forums to explain AIReF's iv work, promoting its work at the sub-national and international level	1. Meetings with the TAs, international agencies and other institutions
iv		2. Support the organisation of forums and debates and publicise AIReF's participation where appropriate
b	Promote fiscal awareness in society as a whole	
i	Strengthen the informative nature of AIReF's documents to make them more	1. Continue to develop more dynamic informative tools (infographics and videos) Preparation of an infographic on topics considered to be of interest
ı	accessible to the general public	2. Development of different news capsules, where appropriate, with the most relevant parts of the reports and publications, expanding the tools used
ii	Organise seminars and conferences on budgetary stability and financial sustainability	1. Possible hosting of seminars and conferences on topics of interest
с	Promote economic research in the field of fiscal policy	
i	Publish working papers on matters within AIReF's scope of action	Complete work initiated and prepare the following documents:     a. Working paper on self-assessment of the macroeconomic forecasts     b. Document on independent fiscal institutions

2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN		PROPOSALS FOR 2020
4		TO PERCEIVE THE BENEFITS OF BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
c	Promote econon	nic research in the field of fiscal policy
ii	Establish mechanisms for collaboration with universities and research centres, international institutions and other independent fiscal institutions to undertake research	<ol> <li>Participation in the technical working groups of the EU IFIs network</li> <li>New Call for with a special emphasis placed on its dissemination through diverse channels</li> </ol>
5	CREATE AN EF	FICIENT AND TRANSPARENT AIREF
a	Design and draw up reports, opinions and studies	
i	Provide more in-depth information with the greater use of graphic tools and	1. Publish and update the main macro-economic outlook equations: demand, prices, expenditure, income and wealth and credit and interest rates
	connections to AIReF's web platform	2. Develop interactive graphics to include in reports
ii	Prepare and publish the methodologies used in	1. Evaluate and adapt or upgrade, if necessary, the existing methodologies
П	reports and opinions	2. Publish the new methodologies as they are developed
iii	Advisory Board on economic, budgetary and institutional matters	1. Suspension of meetings until the new model of the Advisory Council has been defined

#### 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN **PROPOSALS FOR 2020** 5 **CREATE AN EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT AIREF** Substantiate the comply-or-explain principle and the duty of collaboration b for information referral 1. Quarterly publication of recommendation monitoring Adapt recommendations to each of the PAs and monitor in accordance with the comply-or-explain principle 2. Continue to develop and use the recommendations database Define, gather and monitor 1. Continue to publish the monitoring of requests for ii requests for information information made by AIReF needed to prepare reports 1. Promote the signing of memoranda of understanding (MOU) on information provision and Develop memoranda of exchange and the development of institutional understanding, agreements relations between AIReF and the MINHAC, the or procedures for the Ministerio de Asuntos Económicos y Transformación exchange of information and iii Digital (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital the development of Transformation), the Ministerio de Inclusión, institutional relationships Seguridad Social y Migraciones (Ministry of Inclusion, between AIReF and the main Social Security and Migration) and the *Ministerio de* agencies of the PAs. Trabajo y Economía Social (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy) Efficient and transparent management of human and financial resources C 1. Expand the staff establishment plan in order to obtain the appropriate staff to achieve AIReF's targets Consolidate and maintain a 2. Approve the Occupational Risk Prevention Plan i. competent team. Continuous staff training 3. Organise courses for staff in various matters related to their job positions

the mid-term external

evaluation

#### 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN **PROPOSALS FOR 2020** 5 **CREATE AN EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT AIREF** Efficient and transparent management of human and financial resources C 1. Procure services for the exploitation of the computing infrastructure 2. Implement projects (incident management system, monitoring system and design of document manager) derived from the consultancy carried out to define a new ICT organisational model Creating an independent 3. Integrate the application of management fees with ii administrative and AIReF's electronic headquarters management structure 4. Implement the External Audit recommendations on Data protection carried out in 2019 5. External audit on digital security 6. Continue with the activities carried out by the working group on objectives-based management of AIReF's human resources Establish an assessment and 1. Continuous monitoring of the Action Plan monitoring system for AIReF's activity, including iii

2. Continuous monitoring of the implementation of

recommendations made in external evaluations

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