



CaixaResearch Institute
"la Caixa" Foundation



2025-2027

Kick-off Plan of the

CaixaResearch Institute

“The impossible is just a little more
difficult than the *difficult things*”

Francesc Moragas, founder and CEO of "la Caixa" (1904-1935)

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Introduction

The creation of the CaixaResearch Institute is an extraordinary milestone in the history of the "la Caixa" Foundation. Born as a global institution that acts autonomously yet at the same time is integrated into our social work, the Institute promotes our commitment to biomedical research for the health and well-being of people.

It is clearly committed to the future. Only those thinking in the long term can understand an investment of this nature. Its impact will be measured first and foremost by the scientific excellence to be ultimately developed there. The Institute aims to attract and retain the best professionals from around the world so that they can work to understand the processes of the immune system in interaction with the most common diseases. In order to achieve this goal, the centre will have the most advanced technological equipment and state-of-the-art computational facilities.

Its results will also be determined by the ability to translate this new biomedical knowledge into new drugs, new diagnostics and new treatments to improve the lives of our fellow citizens. All in all, our hope is for the social impact generated by the Institute to be reflected in improved knowledge of the immune system and in the training of the best professionals in their fields of action.

This vision of the future and the long term is fully rooted in the institutional values that allowed the Caja de Pensiones para la Vejez y de Ahorros de Cataluña y Baleares, "la Caixa", to be created 120 years ago. From the very outset, the priority was to work towards social protection by promoting savings and the creation of an innovative pension insurance mechanism, which immediately became the seed for the creation of the Spanish pension system that has lasted until today.

Very soon, however, our founder, Francesc Moragas, also incorporated a commitment to health and biomedical research as the best way to complement and create the conditions of well-being he envisioned for our society, especially for the most vulnerable. First, with the launch of the Santa Madrona mother and child clinic, and years later, in 1932, with the creation of the Anti-Tuberculosis Institute, a biomedical research centre located in the heart of Barcelona.

Today, with the launch of the new CaixaResearch Institute and the presentation of its first strategic plan, which you are now holding in your hands, we pay tribute to all the people who have come before us in this drive for innovative social work that has allowed the "la Caixa" Foundation to become one of the most influential philanthropic organisations in the world.

Isidro Fainé
Chairman of the "la Caixa" Foundation
Chairman of the CaixaResearch Institute







1

CaixaResearch Institute's
Essence

CaixaResearch Institute's Essence

"la Caixa" Foundation's commitment to *health and biomedical research*

One of the four strategic areas of the "la Caixa" Foundation is research in health and biomedicine, where it offers structural support and collaboration to research institutions, as well as promoting different funding programs. Through this support the Foundation **identifies and promotes the most promising initiatives with the greatest scientific excellence** and the biggest potential value and social impact, whether in basic, clinical or translational research.

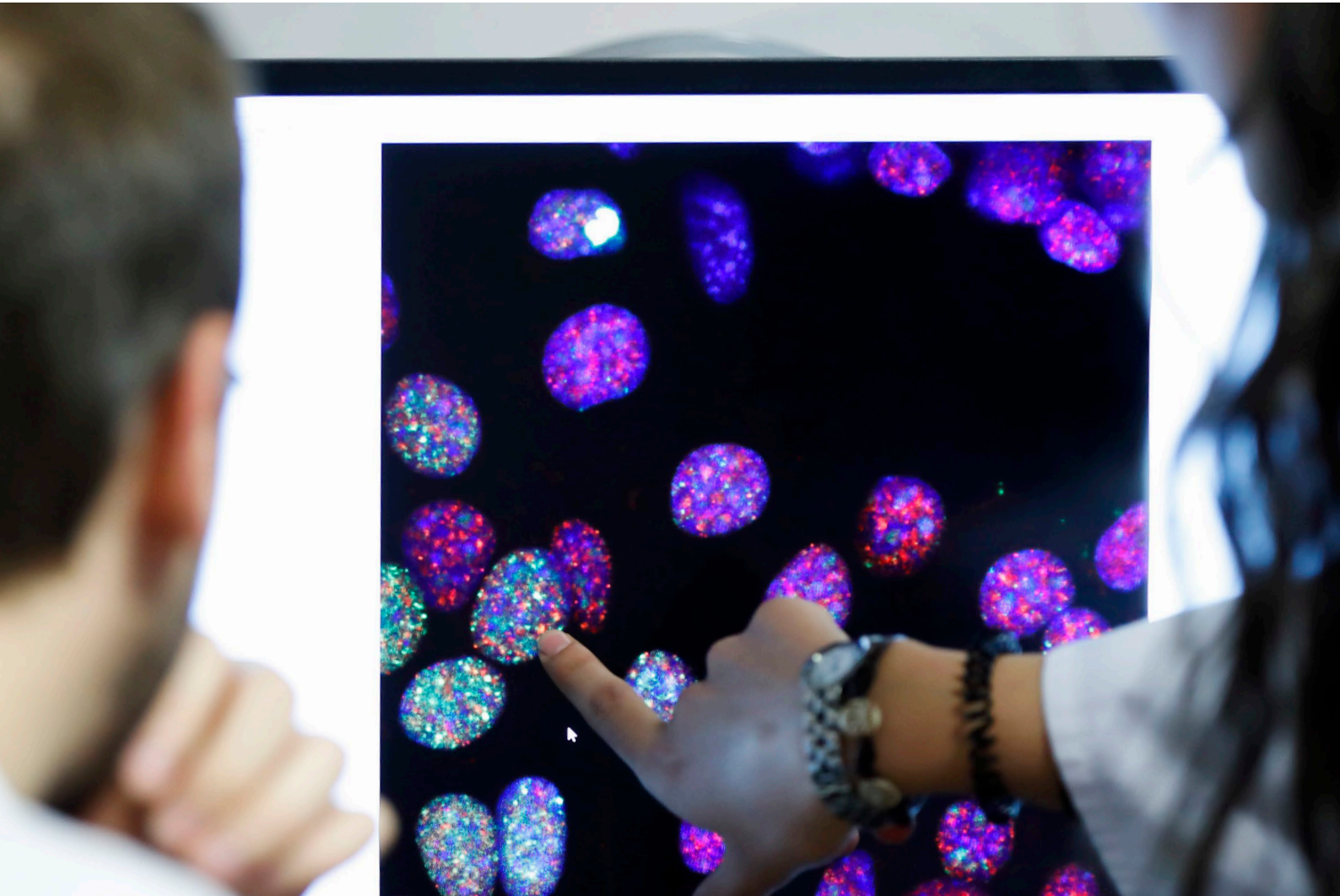
The **CaixaResearch Programme** includes various competitive calls that support excellent research in health and biomedicine carried out by scientists in Spain and Portugal, stimulating innovation and knowledge transfer in new treatments and solutions for patients.

The most impactful programs in this area are:

- **Doctoral INPhINIT fellowships** for talented young researchers who wish to pursue doctoral studies.
- **Postdoctoral Junior Leader fellowships** for researchers who wish to create their own research group.
- **CaixaResearch Health Call** for biomedical research projects on oncology, neurosciences, cardiovascular and infectious diseases and enabling technologies for these researches.
- **CaixaImpulse Call** to transfer scientific knowledge to society and encourage the creation of new treatments, products, services and companies related to the life sciences.

To consolidate and strengthen its support for research and innovation excellence in the life sciences sector, the "la Caixa" Foundation set up in 2023 the **CaixaResearch Institute, the first research centre in Spain dedicated entirely to the study of immunology, and located in a new building in Barcelona.**

This pioneering Institute is the most emblematic project of the "la Caixa" Foundation in the field of scientific research. Its aim is to contribute towards solving the major challenges facing health, both in the present and future, such as **infectious diseases, global health, cancer and neurological diseases, among others, through the study of immunology.**



CaixaResearch Institute's Essence

CaixaResearch Institute *Foundation*¹

The **CaixaResearch Institute Foundation** is a non-profit entity with its own legal personality promoted by the "la Caixa" Foundation. The **Foundation**, set up in 2023, is in charge of managing the **CaixaResearch Institute** whose purpose is to conduct, promote, disseminate, transfer, innovate and apply scientific and technological knowledge of excellence into biomedical research, particularly in immunology. It will also offer teaching and training in the field of health sciences, particularly in immunology of diseases.

The CaixaResearch Institute Foundation is represented by a **Board of Trustees** (BoT), the governing and administrative body that assumes all powers and functions necessary to achieve the foundation's objectives. It is a **collegial body** composed of individuals or legal entities, consisting of a minimum of three and a maximum of nine members who are appointed by the Fundació Bancaria Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona, "la Caixa".



Mr Isidro Fainé Casas,
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the "la Caixa" Foundation and Chairman of CriteriaCaixa. Numerary Member of the Royal Academy of Economic and Financial Sciences. Chairman of the World Savings and Retail Banking Institute (WSBI). PhD in Economics.



Mr Javier Solana Madariaga,
Board of Trustees Member

Chairman of the Scientific Committee of the "la Caixa" Foundation. Chairman of the Executive Committee of ISGlobal. Chairman of the ESADE Centre for Global Economy and Geopolitics. PhD in Physical Sciences.



Mr Josep Maria Coronas Guinart,
Board of Trustees Secretary and Member

General Manager and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the "la Caixa" Foundation. Lawyer and economist.



Ms Esther Planas Herrera,
Board of Trustees Member

Deputy General Manager of "la Caixa" Foundation. Economics graduate.

¹Listed in the Catalan Government Register of Foundations as the Fundació Institut de Recerca "la Caixa", with tax ID number G44983203 and register number 3336



Ms Carmen Vela Olmo,
Board of Trustees Member

Senior consultant of Gold Standard Diagnostics – Madrid, a biotechnology company. Former Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation of the Spanish Government. Graduate in Chemical Sciences.



Ms Marta Casals Virosque,
Vice-secretary (non-member)

Corporate Legal Director of "la Caixa" Foundation. Graduate in Law.



Dr Josep Taberero Caturla,
Board of Trustees Member

Director of the Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO) and head of the Medical Oncology Service at the Vall d'Hebron Hospital in Barcelona. Oncologist and PhD in Medicine and Surgery.



Dr Àngel Font Vidal,
Executive Director (non-member)

Assistant General Manager for Research and Fellowships of "la Caixa" Foundation. Chairman of Philea (Philanthropy Europe Association). Chemistry graduate with a PhD in Economics.

Figure 1. Composition of the Board of Trustees of the CaixaResearch Institute

CaixaResearch Institute's Essence

CaixaResearch Institute's *mission, vision and values*

The **CaixaResearch Institute** is set to become a **leading international research centre** in the translational study of **immunology** and the most prevalent diseases. The centre will conduct its own research focused on studying how the immune system works when it interacts with pathologies, such as neurological, oncological, metabolic and infectious diseases, as well as analysing related environmental factors.

The Institute's **mission** will be accomplished by prioritising a **multi- and interdisciplinary approach**, the **development of cutting-edge technologies** and the **transfer of results** to society.

The Institute will establish the necessary procedures to guarantee that all the activities carried out by its community will comply with the values of **transparency, accountability, scientific excellence, integrity and ethics, equity and inclusion**.



CaixaResearch Institute's Essence

CaixaResearch Institute's building: *a sustainable, advanced infrastructure*

A **new flagship building** will house the CaixaResearch Institute in Barcelona, next to the Science Museum CosmoCaixa to create the "**la Caixa**" **Campus of Sciences**.

The Institute is being built on the initiative of the "la Caixa" Foundation on land that has belonged to the institution's Social Projects for a century. The work has received support from the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** through a loan of 80 million euros that will be received by **CriteriaCaixa**, the holding company of the "la Caixa" Foundation that manages its business assets. Once the building is completed, its use will be transferred to the Caixa-Research Institute Foundation.

The building's net surface area will total approximately **20,000 m² housing state-of-the-art facilities** for scientific activities, such as wet and dry laboratories, scientific and technical services and areas for innovation. The building will also provide offices for management and administrative tasks as well as areas to receive and welcome visitors, in which events, training and networking initiatives will likewise be held.

To maximise the use of **space**, a **flexible configuration** of the laboratories has been adopted, which will be able to accommodate up to **700 people**.

COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CLIMATE

The CaixaResearch Institute is being constructed according to criteria that prioritise **sustainability** and the **environment**, with **renewable energies** ranging from **photovoltaic panels** and **geothermal** probes and it will include consumption monitoring systems. It is also planned to have rainwater collection methods for irrigation

and internal use in order to **achieve 38% energy savings and 40% water savings**.

In addition, the plan is to improve biodiversity through the expansion of green areas, green roofs and landscaping with native vegetation. Similarly, the improvement of indoor air quality

will be achieved by maximising air renewal and the use of non-toxic materials and CO₂ sensors.

Finally, by using **recycled and reused materials** and lessening construction waste, the CaixaResearch Institute will achieve a reduction in the consumption of material resources.

By implementing all these environmental measures, the building aims to obtain the Platinum seal of the **U.S. Green Building Council**.

Construction of the first module is expected to be completed by 2025, and the facilities will be fitted out for scientific purposes to accommodate the first research groups in Building A.

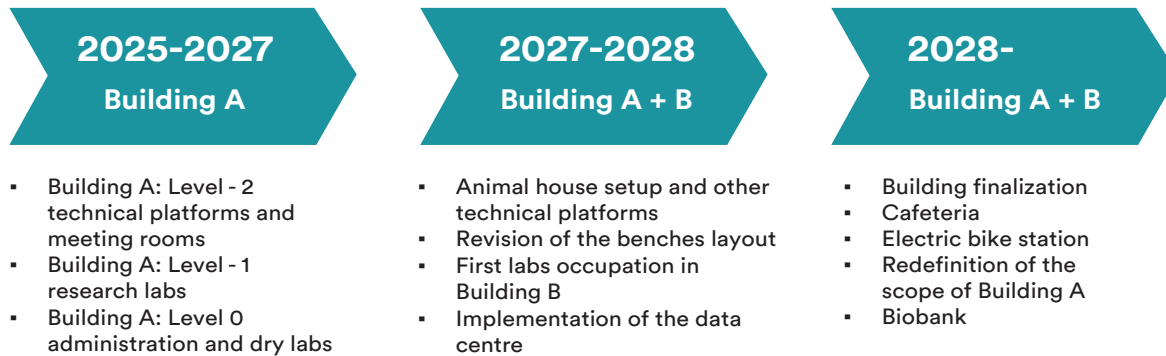


Figure 2. Plan of the building’s availability

”LA CAIXA” FOUNDATION CAMPUS OF SCIENCES

The close proximity of the building to **CosmoCaixa**, the science museum of the ”la Caixa” Foundation, presents an excellent opportunity to **enhance the Institute’s dissemination and outreach efforts**. Aligned with its mission to bridge the gap between science and society, collaboration with CosmoCaixa will be pivotal. The two institutions will work together to develop exhibitions and science dissemination initiatives, fostering greater public engagement with science and research.

Figure 3. The CaixaResearch Institute building



Building B



Building A



2

Framework of the
CaixaResearch Institute

Framework of the CaixaResearch Institute

CaixaResearch Institute *ecosystem*

LIFE SCIENCES ECOSYSTEM

Today, there is no doubt that public health and life sciences research are top priorities for governments, especially for the European Commission, but also for individual states and regional authorities.

Within this priority context, the CaixaResearch Institute aims to be **Spain's first research centre dedicated to interdisciplinary and applied immunology**, positioning itself as a European leader in the field.

The CaixaResearch Institute is also set to be a key player in the Iberian ecosystem, in particular in the life sciences and healthcare ecosystem, one of the most developed sectors with **high economic impact** in Catalonia.

According to the 2023 BioRegion of Catalonia Report,² the health innovation ecosystem in

Catalonia encompasses almost 1,400 companies and 91 research entities within the region. The economic impact of the health sector industry (4.1%), together with that of healthcare activities (3.8%), makes a substantial contribution to Catalonia's GDP (representing 7.9% of the total) and generates nearly **264,000 jobs** (6.5% of the employed population).

Moreover, **Barcelona is uniquely positioned to emerge as the European capital of health sciences**, thanks to a combination of strategic advantages and assets that make it a leader in this field.

² BIOCAT Report



These factors include:

- Renowned **research centres and universities** that attract top-tier researchers and foster first-class studies in biotechnology, genomics and public health.
- Strong **healthcare infrastructure globally recognised for its excellence**, with cutting-edge hospitals and medical centres that provide a strong foundation for clinical trials, patient care and health innovation.
- **Dynamic biotech and pharmaceutical ecosystem**, with international companies engaged in the development of new therapies, diagnostics and medical technologies. The city is also a leading hub for **start-ups** in the life sciences sector.
- **Strategic location and international connectivity** that enhances its ability to attract talent, conferences and collaborations from around the world, making it a global meeting point for health sciences.
- **High quality of life, cultural richness and vibrant lifestyle** make it a desirable destination for global talent.

The Institute is therefore positioned to be a highly competitive environment that will enable it to **develop successfully, promote synergies** and **establish strategic collaboration** with high-level partners. The strength of its ecosystem will act as a catalyst for the Institute's activity, helping to improve its activity **results, visibility** and **impact**. Additionally, the Institute will play a key role in enhancing the competitiveness and global visibility of its entire ecosystem.

COOPERATIVE FRAMEWORK

The CaixaResearch Institute will follow the values of **collaborative working** and **social commitment** and establish agreements with **stakeholders** among the following groups: **hospitals, research centres, unique scientific infrastructures, universities, schools, entrepreneurial ecosystem, funding agents and social/civic foundations, among others**. These partnerships will strengthen existing collaborative efforts and foster new synergies, both nationally and internationally. The Institute will also offer its partners access to its extensive potential and advanced technical resources.

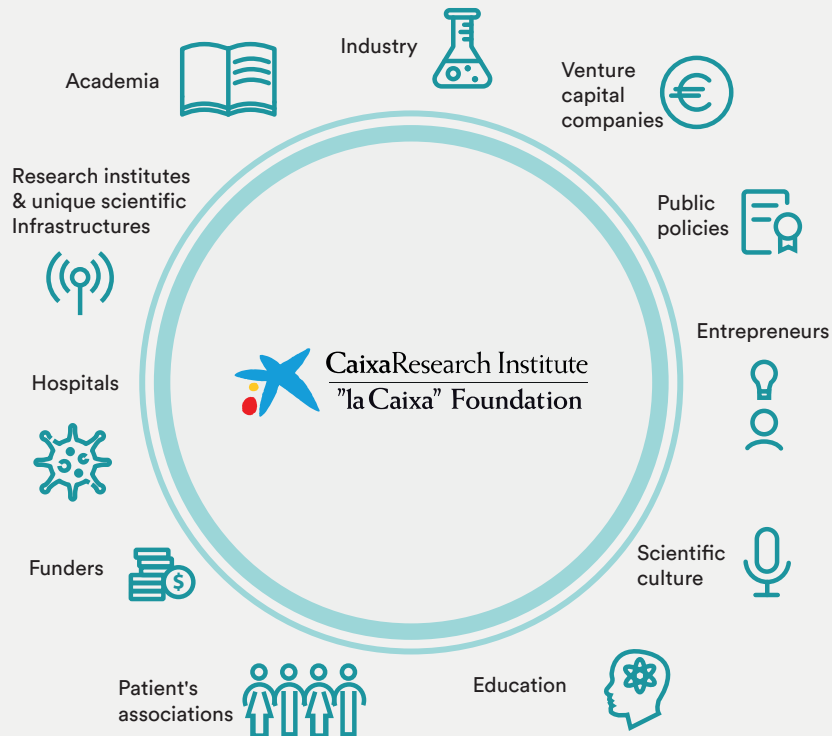


Figure 4. The CaixaResearch Institute's relational model with ecosystem stakeholders





Figure 5. The network of CaixaResearch Associated Centres

Framework of the CaixaResearch Institute

CaixaResearch *Associated Centres network*

In line with its mission to contribute to the advancement of research and innovation in the life sciences, "la Caixa" Foundation directly provides organisational and financial support to a network of research institutions known as CaixaResearch Associated Centres, in which research on the immunological system is a central focus. These centres work in collaboration and complementarity with the CaixaResearch Institute. These Associated Centres are currently:

Immunopathology Research Institute - Caixa (IrsiCaixa), focused on emerging infectious diseases and immunity, based at the Germans Trias i Pujol Hospital in Badalona.

Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), working on tropical diseases and environmental epidemiology. ISGlobal is housed in two different facilities: Campus Mar and Campus Clínic.

BarcelonaBeta Brain Research Center (BBRC), committed to research into the prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO), is a reference centre for personalised medicine in oncology created in 2006, based at the Vall d'Hebron Hospital Campus.

Institut de Recerca Sant Joan de Déu (IRSJD), focused on paediatric rare disease research, based in Esplugues de Llobregat-Barcelona.

Gulbenkian Institute of Molecular Medicine (GIMM), a basic translational research institute located in Lisbon, the result of the merger of two leading institutes: the Gulbenkian Institute of Science and the Institute of Molecular Medicine.

The ecosystem created by all these centres provides a unique structure that will **multiply** the Institute's **results** and allow a more complete understanding of topics ranging from **autoimmunity** to **emerging infectious diseases** due to global warming and human migration.

The CaixaResearch Institute and the CaixaResearch Associated Centres network offer an excellent opportunity to combine and share fundamental services in a unique way. This collaboration will specifically cover the following areas:

- **Innovation and technology transfer**
- **Computer science, biomedical data management and bioinformatics**
- **Bringing science and society closer**
- **Boosting talent and people**

CaixaResearch Institute's *ten-year roadmap*

The **2025-2027 Kick-off Plan of the CaixaResearch Institute** presented in this document sets the priorities and describes the Institute's **organizational model** for this initial period. In the coming years, the Institute will define and implement its **scientific strategy** as well as provide the **necessary structure, resources and facilities** to enable the research activities of the first research groups recruited.

The Institute is committed to becoming an **international benchmark research centre** specialised in immunology through the application of a **multi- and interdisciplinary** approach, the development of **cutting-edge technologies** and the **transfer of results to society**. The Institute's long-term vision is focused on **improving human health and addressing global health challenges**.

In order to fulfil this ambitious vision, the Institute's Board of Trustees approved in 2023 a **ten-year roadmap** aligned with the CaixaResearch Institute Scientific Plan created by the Internal Scientific Committee.

This **long-term strategic plan** comprises four distinct phases: **Incubation Phase (2023-2024)**, **Launch Phase (2025)**, **Growth Phase (2026-2033)** and finally **Full Capacity Phase (beginning in 2034)**. Upon reaching full consolidation, the Institute is projected to **encompass around 45 research groups and**

units, with more than 500 professionals, including 425 scientists.

Even if this long-term plan is guiding the implementation of the Institute, more **specific planning is required**. The **2025-2027 Kick-off Plan of the CaixaResearch Institute** outlines the main strategies and priorities that will guide the launch of the Institute.

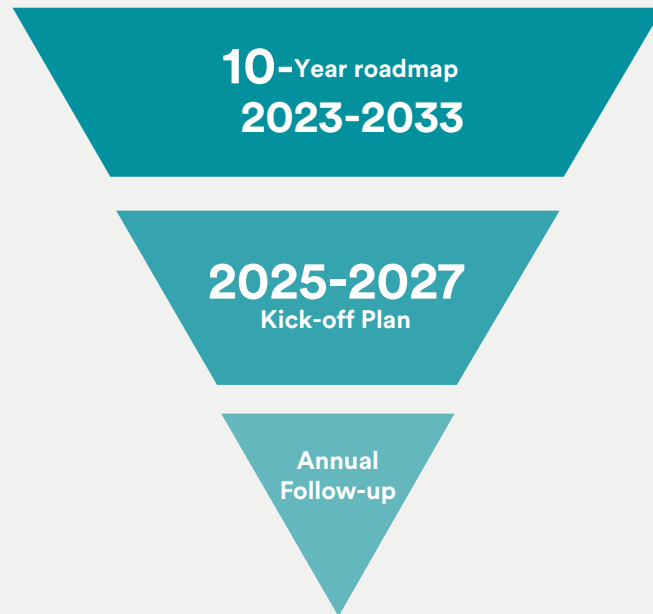


Figure 6. Three-tier planning model of the Caixa Research Institute's strategy



3

Strategic Objectives: *Defining Priorities*

Strategic Objectives: Defining Priorities

The **four main pillars of action** of the Institute during the period 2025-2027 will be as follows:



PILLAR 1

Scientific excellence and generation of new knowledge in disease immunology

- Consolidation of **scientific leadership** with national and international experts in immunology to boost the Institute's scientific quality.
- Initiate the establishment of the **Institute's first research groups**.
- **Promote the scientific production** of the Institute's research groups.
- Become an **institute driven by excellence** and aspire to obtain the best accreditations in the sector.



PILLAR 2

Innovation and knowledge transfer to benefit society

- **Establish an innovation culture** to support technology transfer to researchers and foster entrepreneurship.
- Create an **Innovation Hub** and launch financing programmes to validate the transfer of potential assets derived from research activities.
- Connect the **Institute's scientific and technological expertise with the industry** and facilitate the exchange of ideas aimed at valorising and commercialising research results.
- **Provide society with the scientific and technological knowledge** to promote scientific vocations and engage stakeholders.



PILLAR 3

Deployment of cutting-edge technologies and first-class facilities

- Recruit **highly skilled staff** aligned with the mission of the **technical platforms** in order to make the most of investments in equipment.
- Availability of **premises** prepared for the future, with space and **flexibility** to adapt to own or emerging needs.
- Ensure a workspace in **compliance with integrity and ethical research**.
- Foster a **findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR)** data mindset and provide tools to reach that goal.



PILLAR 4

Establish a flexible and efficient organisational model focused on talent management

- **Develop policies related to people management** in order to address aspects such as recruitment, training, diversity, gender balance, equity or inclusion.
- **Ensure resources** to allow the CaixaResearch Institute's activity.
- Implement a **governance structure geared towards decision-making** and apply a streamlined, flexible, dynamic and digital **management model**.
- Drive initiatives to create a **cohesive internal community**.



4

2025-2027
Kick-off Plan of the
CaixaResearch Institute

2025-2027 Kick-off Plan of the CaixaResearch Institute

Identifying the main priorities for the setting-up phase of the CaixaResearch Institute led to the establishment of an action plan for 2025-2027 based on four pillars to address the following areas: **Scientific Excellence, Innovation & Outreach, Technology & Operations and Organisational and Management Model.**

Pillar I: Scientific excellence and generation of new knowledge in disease immunology

CONSOLIDATION OF SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS IN IMMUNOLOGY TO BOOST THE INSTITUTE'S SCIENTIFIC QUALITY

The **Institute's Internal Scientific Committee (ISC)** is the body that develops its research strategy and oversees all of the Institute's activities. The members of the ISC are prestigious professionals in the biomedicine field.

The ISC must guarantee the quality, accuracy and authenticity of the Institute's research results. The ISC is also in charge of selecting the principal investigators (PI) of the research groups hosted by the Institute.

Josep Taberero, Doctor of Medicine, is the **Chairman of the Internal Scientific Committee** and is Responsible for the CaixaResearch Institute's scientific project.

He serves as the Head of the Medical Oncology Department at Vall d'Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona and is the Director of the Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO). Taberero is actively involved in various international oncology organisations and has served as Chairman of the European Society for Medical Oncology. His leadership and expertise continue to drive advancements in oncology, benefiting patients worldwide.



The members of the ISC are currently:

Quique Bassat (Doctor of Medicine)

Managing Director of the Barcelona Institute of Global Health (ISGlobal) since January 2024.

He is also ICREA Research Professor and Head of the Malaria and Neglected Parasitic Diseases Programme. His main area of interest has been the prevention and treatment of malaria in childhood, with a particular focus on understanding the clinical overlap of malaria and other common paediatric conditions.

Bonaventura Clotet (Doctor of Medicine)

With a career dedicated to HIV/AIDS, he led the HIV Unit of the Germans Trias i Pujol University Hospital (1987-2015) and set up the Fight Infections Foundation in 1992. **Since 1995 he heads the Immunopathology Research Institute - Caixa (IrsiCaixa)** and is Director of Infectious Diseases for the Barcelona Northern Metropolitan Area of the Catalan Health Institute.

Joan Comella (Doctor of Neuroscience)

Degree in Medicine and Surgery and PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Barcelona. From September 2009 to September 2022, he directed the Vall d'Hebron Hospital Research Institute (VHIR) and was the head of research at the Vall d'Hebron Hospital Campus. He has been **Director of the Sant Joan de Déu Institute of Research since February 2023.**



Arcadi Navarro (Doctor of Biology)

Professor of Genetics and lecturer and researcher at ICREA in its Department of Experimental and Health Sciences at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra. In January 2016, he was appointed Secretary of Universities and Research in the Department of Knowledge and Business of the Government of Catalonia, a position he held until July 2018. He has **led the BarcelonaBeta Brain Research Center since March 2019.**

Maria Mota (Doctor of Molecular Parasitology)

PhD in Molecular Parasitology from University College London. She was Director of the IMM from 2014 to 2024 and has been **Director of GIMM since 1 October 2024.** She is the leader of a research group focused on studying malaria and addressing the most fundamental and conceptually innovative questions of Host-*Plasmodium* interactions.

The Institute's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) is responsible for **advising** both the **Board of Directors** and the **Scientific Committee** on the Institute's **scientific strategy**. The SAB will be composed of up to 10 members, all of whom have an international background and a world-renowned career in the field of immunology.

Former Chairman of the **American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)**, **Antoni Ribas**, Doctor of Medicine, is the **Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the CaixaResearch Institute** and a **Professor of Medicine, Surgery and Molecular and Medical Pharmacology at the University of California, Los Angeles**. He has pioneered the development of inhibitors for cancer immunotherapy, benefiting patients globally. He continues to mentor and guide the next generation of researchers in oncology and immunology.



INITIATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTE'S FIRST RESEARCH GROUPS

The Institute's research will be based on **three pillars**, building on the best practices and successful models of research centres such as the La Jolla Institute for Immunology (US), the Pasteur Institute (France), the Francis Crick Institute (Wellcome Trust) (UK), the Broad Institute – MIT (US), Harvard University (US) and Johns Hopkins University (US). These frameworks will be carefully adapted and developed to fit the unique scope and research ecosystem of our Institute.

These 3 pillars will be fed and supported by 5 transversal core areas that will serve as the backbone for the research undertaken, while also enabling the Institute to rapidly form task forces in response to emerging societal needs, such as upcoming disorders, health paradigm shifts or global pandemics.

Figure 7. The CaixaResearch Institute's scientific plan structure

Immunology & Diseases

Exposomic Sciences

- Exposoma, Molecular Epidemiology
- Metabolome
- Environmental Health
- Toxicology & Toxicogenomics
- Microbiome
- Systems Approaches

- Cancer Immunology & Immunotherapy
- Immunology of Infectious Diseases
- Neuroimmunology & Neuroinflammation
- Autoimmunity
- Systemic Immunology & Immunometabolism
- Computational Immunology & Machine Learning
- Vaccine Development & Mechanism of Protection

Life Sciences Technologies

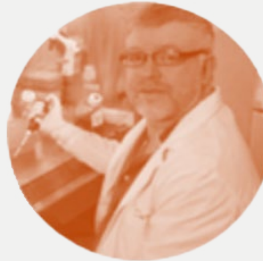
- Immuno-imaging
- New Experimental Models
- Monoclonal Ab Development Platform
- Immunoengineering & Nanotechnology
- High-throughput Technologies
- Translational Informatics & Data Analysis

In order to achieve the figures envisaged in the ten-year strategic plan, significant recruitment work is required in the initial phase. In coming years, priority will be given to the **excellence of the candidates** and their ability to apply for research grants as competitive funds. Hiring the most talented scientists is going to **increase the Institute's prestige and attractiveness**.

Two research group leaders have currently been recruited for the Institute: **Josep Dalmau, MD, PhD**, from 2024 with dual affiliation with Hospital Clinic – IDIBAPS, and **Gabriel Rabinovich, BSc, PhD**, who will start his affiliation with the CaixaResearch Institute in 2025.



Josep Dalmau (Doctor of Medicine), has held academic and clinical positions at prestigious institutions. He is particularly renowned for his discovery of several autoimmune encephalitis syndromes. Dr Dalmau has published extensively throughout his career in top medical journals and received many awards for his contributions to neurology and neuroscience.



Gabriel Rabinovich (Doctor of Chemical Sciences). His groundbreaking research is focused on the role of galectins in immune regulation. One of his notable discoveries is the role of galectin-1 in promoting immune tolerance, which has implications for cancer and autoimmune treatments. Dr Rabinovich has published many influential papers and received multiple awards throughout his career.

At this present moment, at the end of 2024, the Institute is in the process of selecting **3 or 4 more principal investigators** from around 100 candidates, who should join the Institute as early as 2025. During the three-year period of 2025-2027, further calls for group leaders should enable the Institute to have **12 research groups**.

PROMOTE THE SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION OF THE INSTITUTE'S RESEARCH GROUPS

Scientific publications are going to play a vital role in the Institute's research activities, serving as a key indicator for excellence and progress. They will also provide a platform for international collaboration, helping to address complex scientific challenges and establishing partnerships with stakeholders, among them industry. As a centre of **international standing**, these publications are essential for maintaining and strengthening the Institute's reputation and influence within the global scientific community.

In addition to publishing, the CaixaResearch Institute's research groups will seek **competitive funding** from international research and

innovation programmes, with a particular focus on **European Commission initiatives**. These programmes will enhance collaboration with other peer centres and amplify the **global impact of the research**.

Other funding sources, such as fellowships and grants, like the **ICREA programme from the Government of Catalonia** or those from the **European Research Council (ERC)**, will also be actively pursued. The ERC supports investigator-driven frontier research across all fields, promoting research excellence. These programmes will also be included in the Institute's strategy to attract the **most talented scientists**.

BECOME AN INSTITUTE DRIVEN BY EXCELLENCE AND ASPIRE TO OBTAIN THE BEST ACCREDITATIONS IN THE SECTOR

The Institute views the pursuit of **excellence awards and international accreditations** as a key objective in its quality strategy. These awards, given to the institution, its teams or individuals, acknowledge the **outstanding contributions** to research, innovation and scientific progress. They may be granted by governments, academic institutions, international organisations or industry associations, recognising excellence in various areas of research. The awards or accreditations will reinforce the CaixaResearch Institute's commitment to contributing to international knowledge of immunology and serving as benchmarks of quality and impact.



2025-2027 Kick-off Plan of the CaixaResearch Institute

Pillar 2: Innovation and knowledge transfer to benefit society

ESTABLISH AN INNOVATION CULTURE TO SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO RESEARCHERS AND FOSTER ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The aim of innovation activities is to increase the adoption and dissemination of the CaixaResearch Institute's research discoveries and intellectual properties and to leverage its research and innovation assets to benefit society. To accelerate the impact of the Institute's research and innovation, it will be necessary to **build a culture of innovation** within the Institute by engaging researchers in talks, training and events, contacting the key figures behind success stories and providing support, procedures and expertise to ensure success.

The CaixaResearch Institute will provide researchers with advice and support on any matters concerning the commercialisation of research and throughout all the steps of the innovation process.



This support for knowledge and technology transfer includes:

- Helping to **identify** and assess the **market potential** of innovations, discoveries and inventions made at the Institute.
- Securing any **intellectual property** rights.
- Identifying **strategic partners and collaborators** to complement and further develop results with market potential.
- **Marketing and licensing know-how, technologies and any research results with market potential through technology transfer partnerships** as consultancy projects, co-development, joint ventures and joint labs, for example.
- **Providing training and experts on innovation** and knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship and stimulating a culture of innovation within the Institute's community.
- Encouraging new ideas or results to become new **ventures** by supporting the creation process and providing a dedicated space in the future.

In addition to all this personalised support, the CaixaResearch Institute will provide a valorisation fund to the early-stage, market-oriented transfer and innovation activities of its research. This **Proof of Concept Fund** will excellently complement other innovation instruments deployed by the Institute. The fund aims to enable **researchers to initiate or boost projects** with transfer potential, engage in additional risk-taking or exploratory processes to unlock innovation and develop entrepreneurship based on knowledge and research results.

CREATE AN INNOVATION HUB AND LAUNCH FINANCING PROGRAMMES TO VALIDATE THE TRANSFER OF POTENTIAL ASSETS DERIVED FROM RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The **Innovation Hub** is a strategic initiative of the CaixaResearch Institute, working in collaboration with other CaixaResearch Associated Centres to create a collaborative environment. The goal is to elevate the **strategic importance of innovation** activities in these institutes and **maximise the impact** of their research on society. This project, which began in 2024, aims to strengthen and support the transfer activities of each centre through the implementation of the following instruments:

- **Capacity building**, stabilising and reinforcing innovation capabilities within each institute through a financial contribution.
- Developing **awareness-raising** and delivering **training activities** to acquire innovation skills, both for the centre's innovation support staff and researchers.
- Offering **personalised support** for these activities with necessary **experts**.
- Providing **funding** for ideas to validate the potential transfer of assets derived from research activities in the various institutes through a selection process for the projects with the greatest potential.

Capacity building



Create and/or consolidate existing units of innovation, through:

- Support for the sustainability of human resources.
- Support to the formalization of necessary internal processes.
- Other identified needs.

Awareness and training



Events, training programme and networking:

- Bring transfer activities closer to a bigger number of researchers and contexts.
- Create a community of interested people that is connected.

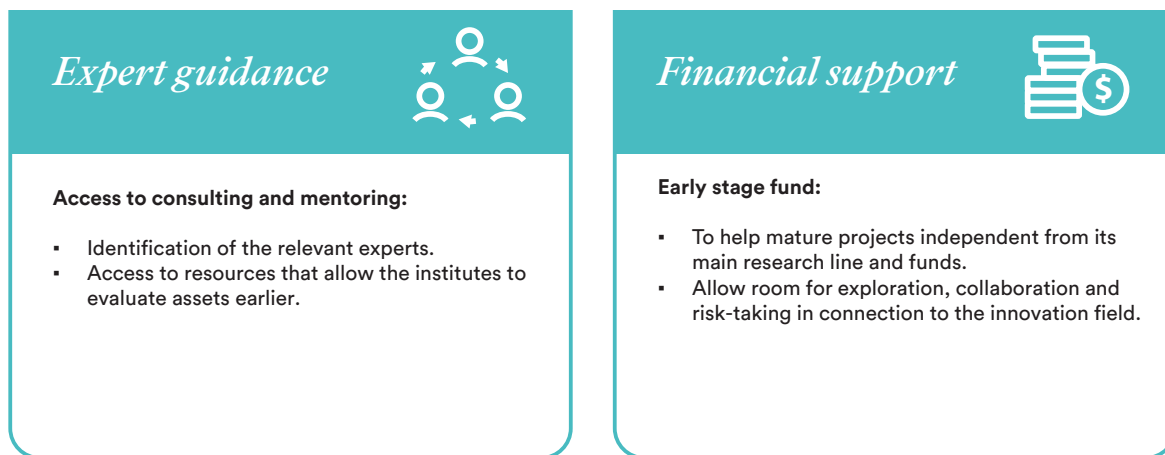


Figure 8. Main instruments of the Innovation Hub

CONNECT THE INSTITUTE'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERTISE WITH THE INDUSTRY AND FACILITATE THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AIMING AT ENHANCING AND COMMERCIALISING RESEARCH RESULTS

The CaixaResearch Institute aims to excel in **technology transfer** and **industry engagement** and also become a preferred partner for immunology research and the commercialisation of intellectual property. In order to achieve these goals, the Institute will build a valuable and durable innovation ecosystem made up of investors, companies and entities pertaining to the whole value chain: hospitals, universities, research centres, patient associations and other stakeholders.

This ecosystem will facilitate the **translation of research results** into society and complement the research and knowledge generated at the Institute by providing a better understanding of the **immunology market** (growth and trends, regulatory aspects, operating and business models, or valorisation and commercialisation strategies, among others).

An annual calendar of events will connect researchers and their latest findings to the partners and collaborators that are needed to transform results into solutions. The calendar will include, for example, initiatives such as an **Investors & Industry Day**, Conferences and Knowledge Transfer Community events.

To strengthen this connection with the industry and benefit from the support of renowned experts in strategic decision-making, the CaixaResearch Institute plans to establish an **Industrial Advisory Board (IAB)**. Its goal will be to connect the scientific and technological expertise of the Institute with the industry and facilitate the exchange of ideas between its members and the Institute's scientific staff.

PROVIDE SOCIETY WITH THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC VOCATIONS AND ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

The CaixaResearch Institute's **science communication** and **dissemination** activities, public engagement actions and outreach initiatives aim to provide society with the scientific and technological knowledge generated by it and to make immunology more accessible by promoting scientific vocations and the engagement of stakeholders: industry, patients, doctors, public entities and society in general.

In order to meet this goal, the Institute will lead three broad set of activities: **science communication and dissemination, public engagement and outreach and strategic alliances.**



Science communication and dissemination proposals:

- Support scientists in their direct exchange with the public and other stakeholders.
- Identify suitable contacts and collaborations to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from academia to the public, enabling technologies, processes and methodologies to reach the market.
- Assist researchers in effectively communicating the results of their research to the public and media, improving the communication of the added value of valorisation projects in financing proposals and shaping a compelling discourse to build partnerships with stakeholders, investors or institutions of interest.

Public engagement and outreach activities:

- Organise public engagement activities, such as school activities, connecting with patient associations, conferences and other events open to the public.
- Collaborate with museum activities, in particular with those from CosmoCaixa.

Build **strategic and consolidated partnerships with stakeholders**, both national and international, focusing efforts on understanding their needs and reaching mutual agreement:

- The Institute will engage in collaborative research projects to broaden its activities and explore synergies with other research centres. In this regard, the Institute will encourage its research groups to participate in **strategic partnerships or consortia, particularly in international contexts**.
- In addition, the Institute will also collaborate with various partners not only to conduct research and innovation projects, but also to have a **greater social impact**.
- Build relationships with key policymakers to develop a strategy for advocating the Institute's interests when needed.

All these activities will **bridge the gap between researchers, society and other stakeholders**, as well as serve and support the Institute's core activities. Additionally, these activities will help to **strengthen the national and international recognition of CaixaResearch Institute** as well as support its Research Groups in **attracting talented** future researchers.

Pillar 3: Deployment of cutting-edge technologies and first-class facilities

RECRUIT HIGHLY SKILLED STAFF ALIGNED WITH THE MISSION OF THE TECHNICAL PLATFORMS IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF INVESTMENTS IN EQUIPMENT

The CaixaResearch Institute is committed to building a robust programme of technical platforms to support its research groups. To achieve this, we will **prioritise hiring top-tier professionals** in their respective fields, enabling the development of **bespoke applications** tailored to the needs of researchers. This approach will **maximise** the impact of our substantial **investments in equipment and infrastructure**, ensuring that our science stays at the cutting edge of technical innovation and driving scientific progress.

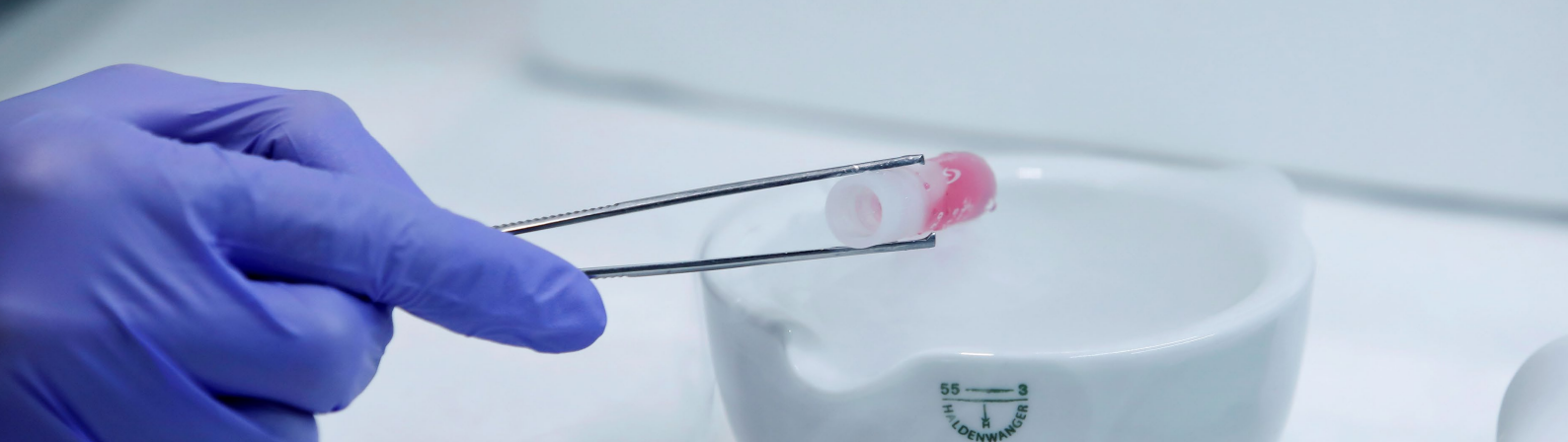
The technical platforms will operationally adhere to **five core principles**:

- Equitable access for all researchers
- Comprehensive training to enhance user expertise in technology
- Automation to streamline workflows
- Implement approaches driven by data reusability
- Continuous development of applications

The Institute will similarly instil a **cost-effective mindset** from the outset, recognising that these infrastructures can quickly become a **financial burden if not managed efficiently**.

The implementation of technical platforms will be gradual, based on the number and scope of the group leaders involved. At this stage, we anticipate establishing **three technical platforms within the next three years**: cytometry, genomics, and animal house, alongside support from the **Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC) through the Biomedical Data Hub**.

However, in addition to the effort to rationally implement this, the Institute will instill a cost-effective mindset from the outset to ensure the long-term sustainability of these infrastructures.



AVAILABILITY OF PREMISES PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE, WITH SPACE AND FLEXIBILITY TO ADAPT TO OWN OR EMERGING NEEDS

Technologies are becoming increasingly specialised, yet more interconnected. This trend must be reflected in the design and distribution of scientific platforms, which can no longer function as isolated silos. Instead, they need to **foster strong interactions with their peers**.

Additionally, certain equipment and biological models, such as rodents, require specific environmental conditions – such as low structural vibrations, absence of light and highly controlled clean environments – to ensure optimal functioning.

Over the past few months, we have **gathered valuable input** from both the internal and external scientific community. This process has led us to propose a refined platform distribution system that not only **addresses the current needs of group leaders**, but also **anticipates future requirements**.

The Institute will also create the **Nexlab**, a dedicated space to support the following initiatives:

- Technology-based pilot experiments, aimed at leveraging external funding.
- Experimental development to help technical-dependent application to advance to market readiness.
- Experimental innovation management, by co-financing long-term equipment demonstrations of current and emerging technologies.

ENSURE A WORKSPACE IN COMPLIANCE WITH INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL RESEARCH

The research activity carried out in the Institute will respect its values and maintain high ethical standards and principles of research integrity. Standards for scientific activity are going to be set by a **Code of Good Conduct**, a document that will bring together a set recommendations and commitments of the governing bodies. This code, based on the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity³** will ensure that the methods, processes and reporting of research are **honest, transparent and free from bias or misconduct**. It includes adhering to guidelines on **data collection, analysis, publication practices** and the **treatment of partners and participants**.

It will also form an **Ethics Committee** to be responsible for ensuring that all the CaixaResearch Institute's research is developed according to best practices.

Additionally, the **CaixaResearch Institute** will align with national regulatory frameworks from the outset, particularly regarding animal welfare, by adhering to the national implementation of **EU Directive 2010/63/EU**.

This directive emphasises alternative models, the reduction of animal use and ensuring the welfare of animals. Accordingly, our ethics committee will be empowered to make recommendations prior to the submission of grant proposals to funders.

At the laboratory level, while we will not operate high safety-level laboratories, our lab management and platform staff will receive training in **biosafety** and other relevant areas, such as **laser safety**, when necessary. This approach ensures that research groups follow best practices for **personal protective equipment** and other safety measures, without imposing unnecessary burdens that could hinder research productivity or competitiveness. Furthermore, we will provide tools to streamline the dissemination of **standard operating procedures** for equipment, along with responsible staff to oversee training and proper usage.



³ ALLEA (2023). The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – Revised Edition 2023. Berlin. DOI 10.26356/ECOC



FOSTER A FINDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, INTEROPERABLE AND REUSABLE (FAIR) DATA MINDSET AND PROVIDE TOOLS TO REACH THAT GOAL

FAIR data plays a crucial role in addressing the reproducibility crisis as ensuring that data is well documented, accessible and reusable across various scenarios is a key factor to help mitigate this challenge.

In order to lead this effort, the **CaixaResearch Institute** is establishing a **biomedical Data Hub** whose mission will be to create a unified research data management framework that aligns with open and FAIR data policies while ensuring data security and controlled sharing across CaixaResearch Associated Centres.

A paradigm shift will be established in the way this hub is managed by the end of 2024. While maintaining core principles, it will be driven by the needs of CaixaResearch's partner centres.

This shift will continue to benefit from the support of the **Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC)** and funding from the **European Genomics Archive** currently housed at the **Centre de Regulació Genòmica (CRG)**. The hub will be organised into three working groups focused on:

- Aligning data management and access policies across CaixaResearch centres.
- Defining best practices for metadata annotation.
- Providing the technical tools necessary to achieve these goals.



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Pillar 4: Establish a flexible and efficient organisational model focused on talent management

DEVELOP POLICIES RELATED TO PEOPLE MANAGEMENT IN ORDER TO ADDRESS ASPECTS SUCH AS RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, DIVERSITY, GENDER BALANCE, EQUITY OR INCLUSION

The Institute's strategy has been **talent-centred** from the outset, given that its biggest asset is undoubtedly its **community**. To achieve the Institute's goal of becoming a leading international research centre in translational immunology and disease studies, the Institute will require the contribution of **outstanding scientific teams, engineers, technical staff, medical doctors and managers**, among others.

Attracting, retaining and developing talent is critical for the Institute, especially in its early stages. The first key initiatives will focus on policies to achieve this goal. In this regard, the number of people recruited for the CaixaResearch Institute will grow significantly during the first stage, from 18 in 2025 to more than 70 in 2027. The community is therefore expected to **quadruple in size in three years**.

Accordingly, the CaixaResearch Institute will offer **scientific training and management development programmes** for its internal community. Special attention will be given to PhD students

and junior researchers, so that they can benefit from specific **mentoring programmes**.

It will also be essential to establish **performance management policies** in order to **evaluate** and **promote** all the Institute's professionals: administrators, managers, technicians and researchers. These policies will serve to **motivate professionals** and measure the **impact** and **relevance** of their contributions to the Institute.

Other key areas where policies will need to be developed are **diversity** and **inclusion** so that equal treatment and inclusion of all professionals is ensured, as well as **gender equality** procedures to have balanced gender representation among all staff.

Finally, the Institute will implement a comprehensive human resources policy tailored to its community, with particular emphasis on fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce. Efforts will be made to ensure that the Institute is going to be a **great place to work**.

ENSURE RESOURCES TO ALLOW THE CAIXARESEARCH INSTITUTE'S ACTIVITY

CaixaResearch Institute is responsible for its **operational** function and seeks to further develop the Institute's missions, mainly by providing **resources** (talent, funding, infrastructure), **professional support** (legal support, communication and dissemination activities, expertise in knowledge transfer), **identifying strategic alliances and opportunities for value-added collaborations**.

This area, which is clearly distinct from the scientific area, sets up the necessary units to

provide **specialised support** to the entire scientific community. The management structure will include traditional functional units such as **human resources, finance, communication, fundraising or social impact assessment**. These units will have a clear scope and mission to avoid overlap. The Institute will count on the support of some departments of the "la Caixa" Foundation.

IMPLEMENT A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE GEARED TOWARDS DECISION-MAKING AND APPLY A STREAMLINED, FLEXIBLE, DYNAMIC AND DIGITAL MANAGEMENT MODEL

The Institute, as the excellent research centre it must become, has to implement an approach to **leadership and organisational** functioning that emphasises **agile governance** and a **digital and easily adaptable management model** that takes full advantage of digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence.

This **governance model** supports **quick decision-making**, encourages innovation, adapts easily to change and enhances close collabora-

tion and fluent communication between the management structure and the Institute's scientific community. However, this needs to be framed within **data-driven** decision-making processes based on **key performance indicators** (KPIs). This model is particularly valuable for global institutions working in high-risk sectors such as scientific research, where agility and informed decision-making go hand in hand. KPIs can also be used to track the Institute's progress and assess how it positions itself among peers.



DRIVE INITIATIVES TO CREATE A COHESIVE INTERNAL COMMUNITY

As already mentioned, the CaixaResearch Institute is a **talent-centred** organisation, which means that taking care of its professionals is one of its priorities.

Soft activities unrelated to professional development are also important to ensure an optimal environment for all employees.

In this regard, the Institute will develop plans to foster a cohesive community within the organisation. The aim of these plans is to have an internal community where all members feel **connected and committed to the organisation's aims and values.**

Below are some of the actions the Institute will take to achieve this goal:

- Host social and networking events to enhance collaboration and interactions among the Institute's community.
- Create specific initiatives that introduce new employees to the community, helping them understand the culture and values of the Institute.
- Organise regular events where community members can network outside of their work environment. Establish and dynamise the CaixaResearch Institute Alumni Network to broaden the Institute's impact and engage former members in its continued growth and influence.
- Regularly gather feedback from employees through surveys or informal conversations in order to understand their needs, frustrations and ideas for improving community cohesion.
- Set up a relocation assistance service that includes specific onboarding (new employees and families) and off-boarding assistance (employment opportunities).



5

Kick-off Plan *Budget*

Kick-off Plan Budget

The budget presented in this final section of the Kick-off Plan provides a broad overview of how financial resources will be allocated to achieve the Institute's strategic goals over the next three years. The proposal includes operating expenses and capital investments.

Operating expenditure mainly involves the following costs:

- **People:** salaries of all the Institute's scientific, administrative and support staff.
- **Research:** material and services, agreements, facilities, lab management and ecosystem hubs.
- **Innovation and operations:** valorisation funds, patent attorney or running costs.

Capital expenditure refers to long-term investments in technological platforms and equipment.

Item Cost	Year		
	2025	2026	2027
Scientific staff	190	570	1,460
Administrative and support staff	715	1,090	1,395
Research costs	1,957	2,798	3,708
Innovation and operation costs	1,338	1,424	1,615
Total Operating Expenditure	4,200	5,882	8,178
Total Capital Expenditure	2,000	4,000	4,000
TOTAL	6,200	9,882	12,278

Figure 9. Total costs for the Kick-off Plan (values in k€)

Finally, for the income sources the major contribution in this initial phase will come from the "la Caixa" Foundation. The Institute is expected to obtain competitive incomes and other funding from external sources from 2026 onwards, for example donors or partners.

Concept Income	Year		
	2025	2026	2027
Competitive	0	500	900
Other		500	750
"la Caixa" Foundation	6,200	8,882	10,628
TOTAL	6,200	9,882	12,278

Figure 10. Total income for the Kick-off Plan (values in k€)





6

Kick-off Plan
Assessment



Kick-off Plan Assessment

The **evaluation** of this Kick-off Plan will be crucial to determine if the CaixaResearch Institute's direction, objectives and resources are effectively aligned with its long-term strategy. The Institute's Board of Directors, together with its executive team, will therefore establish a periodic evaluation of this Kick-off Plan. The evaluation will assess the Institute's performance and progress against its objectives. **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** will be identified and measured in order to do this.

This periodic monitoring process can also serve, if necessary, as a control tool to take corrective actions or make adjustments to the Plan. The Kick-off Plan must therefore be **flexible and adaptable, as scenarios different from those envisaged may arise.**

The following is a list of indicators to be used to evaluate the development of the Plan.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS LIST

Pillar	Indicator	Value expected in 2027
PILLAR 1 Science & Excellence	Number of research groups	12
	Number of researchers recruited	41
	Training & development actions for researchers	15
	Scientific publications	25
	Visiting researchers	2
	PhD candidates	20
	Members of the Scientific Advisory Board	10
	International certifications	2
PILLAR 2 Innovation & Knowledge Transfer	Research and Innovation policies initiatives	6
	Strategic partnerships with industry	4
	Strategic partnerships (in general)	30
	New discoveries identified	12
	Funding opportunities identified	30
	Success rate in competitive proposals (%)	20
	Communication and dissemination events (organised by the Institute)	3

Pillar	Indicator	Value expected in 2027
PILLAR 3 Facilities & Technologies	Techniques implemented	10
	Strategic equipment purchased	6
	User satisfaction of resources completely set (max. 10)	9
	Hours of technical training given	60
	Hours of technical training received	100
	Number of m ² of wet labs set	1500
	Technical platforms	3
PILLAR 4 Management & Organisation	Number of management and administration staff recruited	29
	HR policies in place	2
	Staff satisfaction with onboarding, in particular international staff (max. 10)	9
	Internal activities (non-scientific)	12
	Training actions in prevention and safety protocols	3
	Total number of employees (FTE)	70
	Media impacts	1800
	Social network followers (LinkedIn)	20000
	Percentage of women in the Institute	55%



CaixaResearch Institute

"la Caixa" Foundation