



LGBTQIA+ PLAN 2025 - 2028



Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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1. Introduction

Diversity and inclusion are fundamental values that sustain excellence in research and innovation, as outlined in the overarching objectives of the Strategy for Gender Equality in Science (EIGEC). The **Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia (IBEC)** is therefore firmly committed to ensuring a safe, respectful and discrimination-free environment for all, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression or sex characteristics.

The **LGBTQIA+ Plan** has been developed to promote equal opportunities, prevent all forms of discrimination, and foster an organisational culture grounded in respect and diversity. It also aims to establish concrete measures to ensure that all **LGBTQIA+** members of the IBEC community—including researchers, technical and administrative staff, and students—have equal opportunities and conditions to pursue their careers in a safe and inclusive environment. The plan will be implemented in line with existing legal and institutional frameworks that protect LGBTQIA+ rights. In this way, it addresses the need to create working and research environments where everyone feels free to express themselves without fear of discrimination or harassment.

By making this pledge, IBEC is taking a significant step towards becoming a leading institution in diversity and inclusion in research.

2. Regulatory framework

LGBTQIA+ plans in research centres and other institutions are framed within a body of regional, national and international regulations that set out the rights, protective measures and safeguards to ensure equality for members of this community. The main applicable regulations are outlined below:

- **Law 11/2014, of 10 October**, on guaranteeing the rights of LGBTI people and eradicating homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. This law establishes:
 - The obligation of government bodies and other institutions to ensure equality and non-discrimination for LGBTI people;
 - Specific measures in areas such as education, health, employment and research;
 - A system of sanctions in cases of discrimination and violence against LGBTI people;
 - The need for equality protocols and action plans in institutions and organisations, including research centres; and
 - The obligation of companies to provide equal treatment and opportunities for LGBTI employees and to adopt measures to prevent all forms of workplace discrimination. Such measures must be negotiated and, where appropriate, agreed upon with employees' legally recognised representatives (Article 20).
- **Law 4/2023, of 28 February**, on real and effective equality for trans people and the guarantee of LGBTI rights. This law establishes:

- The prohibition of any form of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; and
- The obligation of companies and institutions (both public and private) with over 50 employees to implement measures ensuring equality for LGBTI individuals.
- **Royal Decree 1026/2024, of 8 October**, lays out a series of measures to ensure equality and non-discrimination for LGBTI individuals in the workplace, in accordance with Article 15.1 of Law 4/2023. It specifies the required characteristics of equality measures within companies.

In addition to Catalan and Spanish legislation, various European Union (EU) and international frameworks promote LGBTQIA+ equality and non-discrimination. These include:

- The **EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025**;
- The **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU**, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation;
- The **Yogyakarta Principles and the YP+10 update**, which apply international human rights law to issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; and
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's cross-cutting principle, "leave no one behind", particularly encapsulated in **SDG 5** (gender equality) and **SDG 10** (reduced inequalities), which guide the adoption of specific measures for equality, protection and monitoring.

3. Conceptual framework

This section sets out key definitions relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, in line with current legislation. Together, they constitute a conceptual framework intended to support the LGBTQIA+ Plan.

- **Sexual orientation:** a person's physical, sexual or emotional attraction. This may include:
 - *Heterosexuality*: attraction to people of a different gender.
 - *Homosexuality*: attraction to people of the same gender.
 - *Bisexuality*: attraction towards more than one gender, not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, to the same degree or with the same intensity.
 - *Asexuality*: a partial or complete absence of sexual attraction; emotional attraction may still exist.
- **Gender identity:** a person's innermost sense of their own gender, which can be different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Gender expression:** the outward manifestation of a person's gender identity.

- **Trans person:** an individual whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Sex characteristics:** refers to intersex people, who are born with physical sex traits (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomes) that do not fit typical binary notions of male and female bodies.

4. Process and methodology

In order to develop and implement the different stages of the plan, IBEC established a Negotiating Committee and an LGBTQIA+ Working Group.

- **Negotiating Committee:** oversees the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan. It comprises two representatives from the Works Council and two from IBEC.
- **LGBTQIA+ Working Group:** carries out and follows up on the actions set out in the plan. It comprises several members of the Negotiating Committee, as well as additional volunteers.

The first meetings took place in December 2024. The Negotiating Committee was formally established in January 2025 and the LGBTQIA+ Working Group followed in March. Since then, both groups have met numerous times to carry out the relevant assessment and shape the plan's measures. During these meetings, they agreed to assess IBEC's current situation in relation to the LGBTQIA+ community. To do this, they used the questionnaire in the UN LGBTIQ+ Standards Gap Analysis Tool and feedback from a focus group open to the entire IBEC community. This approach helped to identify perceptions, good practices and areas for improvement.

The LGBTQIA+ Plan was negotiated and approved by IBEC's Negotiating Committee. It will run from September 2025 to June 2028, concluding at the same time as the IBEC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2024–2028).

5. Assessment

The assessment provided a solid grounding on which to develop measures that reflect IBEC's present situation. The process unfolded in three stages:

Stage 1: Planning. This stage involved IBEC's People Management Unit and Director of Management, as well as volunteers from the LGBTQIA+ Working Group. The entire IBEC community was informed about the start of the plan preparation process and invited to contribute by taking part in a focus group.

Stage 2: Gathering information. This stage began with the collection of relevant information

and documentation from across IBEC.

- On 12 May, the Working Group came together to carry out IBEC’s self-assessment using a questionnaire based on the UN LGBTIQ+ Standards Gap Analysis Tool (<https://lgbtiq.unglobalcompact.org/>). During this meeting, they also agreed on the questions to be explored in the IBEC-wide focus group.
- That focus group took place on 25 June 2025, bringing together volunteers from the IBEC community. It offered qualitative insights to complement the questionnaire results and opened up space for a deeper exploration of key issues. The session involved:
 - Reviewing the regulatory and conceptual sections of the plan;
 - Collecting anonymous responses through the digital tool Menti to identify people’s perceptions;
 - Discussing and reflecting on the responses;
 - Reviewing measures already included in IBEC’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan that apply to the LGBTQIA+ community; and
 - Brainstorming new measures for inclusion in the plan using a shared digital tool called Whiteboard.

Stage 3: Analysing the information. The information gathered in Stage 2 was analysed to highlight strengths and identify areas for improvement. These then informed the measures set out in the plan.

*United Nations Global Compact. (n.d.). UN LGBTIQ+ Standards Gap Analysis Tool. Available at: <https://lgbtiq.unglobalcompact.org/>

6. Measures

Drawing on the results of the questionnaire and focus group, the review of IBEC’s internal documentation, and the areas of action set out in Royal Decree 1026/2024, a set of concrete measures was developed for inclusion in the LGBTQIA+ Plan.

6.1. Equal treatment and non-discrimination statements

This measure involves formulating statements of principles to promote equal treatment and non-discrimination. The aim is to foster a positive environment for diversity and eliminate discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people. These statements explicitly refer not only to sexual orientation and gender identity, but also to gender expression and sex characteristics.

Measure 1	Formulate a statement of principles regarding the LGBTQIA+ community.
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Indicator/Output	Two published statements: • A statement from IBEC's Senior Management, published in the Gender & Diversity section of the IBEC website. • An updated inclusion statement in IBEC's recruitment announcements.
Timeline	Q4, 2025

6.2. Measures to ensure equal employment opportunities

These measures aim to establish clear, non-discriminatory recruitment criteria that ensure that candidates' qualifications and professional suitability are the deciding factors. Special attention will be given to trans people, who are recognised as a particularly vulnerable group.

Measure 2	Train members of selection panels on inclusive recruitment, focusing on recognising and preventing implicit bias related to the LGBTQIA+ community.
Indicator/Output	• Number of training sessions delivered. • Number of participants trained.
Timeline	Annually

Measure 3	Raise awareness and update recruitment policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure fully inclusive processes for LGBTQIA+ candidates. This will include: • Using the correct pronouns; • Respecting candidates' privacy (e.g. excluding checks of non-professional social media); and • Explicitly ruling out any consideration of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics during the evaluation process.
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Indicator/Output	Recruitment policies, procedures and guidelines reviewed and updated from an inclusion perspective.
Timeline	Q4, 2026

Measure 4	Register IBEC on an international talent platform for LGBTQIA+ people, and for all individuals committed to equal opportunities at work, in order to: • Provide a safe and trusted space for posting job offers; • Facilitate access to a global network of talent, good practices and equality training; and • Strengthen IBEC's position as an inclusive employer by offering candidates a respectful, discrimination-free environment.
Indicator/Output	• Platform contracted. • Number of job offers published on the platform. • Engagement and reach.
Timeline	Annually

Practices already in place at IBEC

- The recruitment and evaluation platform IBECNET JOBS allows applications to be anonymised, helping to improve the objectivity of assessments.
- The Gender Decoder tool is used to ensure that job postings are free from discriminatory or non-inclusive language.

6.3. Measures to ensure fair career progression and promotion

These measures are designed to establish objective criteria for career progression and promotion, ensuring equal opportunities and the absence of direct and indirect discrimination.

Measure 5	Review and update the “Research Career and Internal Promotion in the Research Area” policy to explicitly incorporate the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, or any other personal or social condition.
Indicator/Output	Policy reviewed and updated from an inclusion perspective.
Timeline	2026

Measure 6	Implement targeted mentoring and support programmes for underrepresented groups, including LGBTQIA+ staff.
Indicator/Output	CERCA REMA feminist mentoring programme, which is aimed at people who identify as women (including trans women) or as non-binary. Number of participants. Participant satisfaction with the programme.
Timeline	Q4, annually

6.4. Training and awareness-raising measures

These measures aim to provide training programmes for all staff, including managers and HR personnel, on LGBTQIA+ rights, equal treatment and anti-discrimination practices.

Measure 7	Deliver training and awareness sessions for all IBEC staff on LGBTQIA+ rights, diversity and inclusion, harassment and non-discrimination.
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Indicator/Output	Number of sessions delivered. Number of participants. Participant satisfaction.
Timeline	Q1, annually

Measure 8	Organise role model events that highlight underrepresented groups, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
Indicator/Output	Number of events organised and promoted. Number of IBEC participants. Participant satisfaction.
Timeline	Q3, annually

Measure 9	Promote and share educational materials to raise awareness of LGBTQIA+ realities and publicise IBEC's inclusion policies. (For example, a campaign on LGBTQIA+ scientists throughout history.)
Indicator/Output	• Awareness campaign developed and disseminated. • Number of educational materials distributed.
Timeline	2027

Practices already in place at IBEC

- Continuous updates to the welcome session for all new joiners, including content on inclusion, diversity and related topics.
- Guides and campaigns promoting inclusive language.

6.5. Measures to create diverse and inclusive work environments

These measures are intended to strengthen diversity within the IBEC community and ensure a safe workplace that is free from LGBTQI+phobic behaviour and serophobia. This will be achieved through specific protocols against harassment and violence.

Measure 10	Review IBEC's HR data management system (SAP) in line with Spanish and European legislation, in order to: • Incorporate non-binary gender options and thus reflect the diversity of gender identities; • Ensure that gender classification is inclusive, respectful and consistent with the principles of equality and non-discrimination; and • Guarantee compliance with requirements relating to voluntariness, legitimate purpose, proportionality, and the protection of personal data.
Indicator/Output	HR documentation and systems updated to include non-binary and inclusive classifications.
Timeline	Q4, 2026

Measure 11	Encourage the voluntary use of personal pronouns in professional and institutional contexts as a way to ensure respect for gender identity and foster inclusive communication across the IBEC community. Pronouns may be included in: • ID badges used at conferences and other institutional events; and • Institutional email signatures, using a corporate format provided by IBEC.
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Indicator/Output	- Percentage of IBEC events offering the option to include pronouns. - Corporate format made available for the voluntary inclusion of pronouns in email signatures.
Timeline	Q4, annually starting 10/2025

Measure 12	Collaborate with organisations and/or participate in events to highlight IBEC as a diverse and inclusive institution in relation to the LGBTQIA+ community. These collaborations aim to reinforce IBEC's visibility as an ally and promote safe, affirming spaces for all.
Indicator/Output	Number of IBEC-led or IBEC-participated events featuring collaborations with other organisations.
Timeline	Q4, annually starting 2026

Practices already in place at IBEC

- The annual Gender & Diversity Calendar highlights key dates related to these issues, including activities during specific months such as Pride Month.
- A diversity contest with an LGBTQIA+ perspective.

6.6. Leave and social benefits

These measures aim to ensure that all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, have equal access to leave, social benefits and other rights, recognising the diversity of family structures.

Measure 13	Provide access to mental health support resources that take an inclusive approach and are sensitive to the realities of the LGBTQIA+ community. This should include the option of professionals with specific expertise in sexual, gender and family diversity.
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Indicator/Output	Number of initiatives implemented. Communications delivered.
Timeline	2027

Measure 14	Design a protocol and/or guide to support individuals who are beginning or undergoing a gender transition. The aim is to ensure a safe, respectful and discrimination-free working environment, with appropriate and confidential communication at every stage of the process.
Indicator/Output	Protocol or guide produced.
Timeline	2027

6.7. Disciplinary measures

Any behaviour that undermines the sexual freedom, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression of employees will be treated as a very serious offence.

Measure 15	Develop a protocol to address harassment and violence against LGBTQIA+ people.
Indicator/Output	Protocol created. Communication to CoPTA Commission and the Health and Safety Committee. Number of cases recorded per year. Communications of measures applied annually.
Timeline	2026