



INSTITUTE
FOR RESEARCH
IN BIOMEDICINE



Internal Gender Equality Assessment

Institute for Research in Biomedicine in Barcelona



This research has been carried out by IRB in the context of CALIPER project through the funded European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation under Grant Agreement No 873134.

Executive Summary

In the context of the Horizon 2020 project, [CALIPER](#), the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB) has conducted an analysis to identify gender bias and inequalities inside the Institution.

This internal assessment followed the **three ERA priorities on Gender Equality** and examined them in the context of **specific activity/service areas** (e.g., human resources, institutional governance, institutional communication, research, teaching, student services, transfer to market, sexual harassment, intersectionality) inside IRB.

The assessment depicts the situation based on data collected from the previous three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2018-2020). IRB has carried out the research activities (surveys, interviews, focus groups, desk research), involving different stakeholders (high-, and middle-management level, professors, researchers, etc.), and collected their qualitative and quantitative data.

These findings may lay the grounds for the design of the IRB's Gender Equality Plan and its implementation and exploitation by the Institution as envisioned by the [CALIPER](#) project.



Introduction

Purpose & Scope

The internal assessment has been implemented by IRB as the first step towards structural changes. The core goal has been to identify the existing gender bias and inequalities in internal processes, practices and procedures. The further analysis has concluded on the exact situation of the organisation and on the measurement units useful to compare and monitor the progress.

The internal assessment analysis has involved all the ERA priorities on Gender Equality¹:

1. Removing barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers.
2. Addressing gender imbalances in decision-making processes.
3. Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content.

The above priorities have been addressed through the analysis of the following research institutions activity/service areas:

1. Human resources
2. Institutional governance
3. Institutional communication
4. Research
5. Student service
6. Teaching
7. Transfer to market
8. Gender/sexual harassment
9. Intersectionality

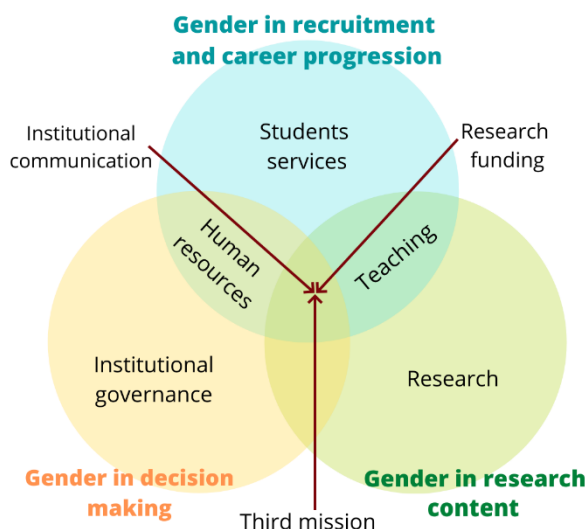


Figure 1: Connections between ERA priorities and research institutions activity/service areas

The matrix on the right represents how the 3 ERA priorities on gender equality in research touch upon the different activity- service areas/functions of IRB.

Institute for Research in Biomedicine (RPO)

The internal assessment of the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (herein referred to as IRB or the Institute) that follows stems from qualitative and quantitative data. The information has been collected by the working group responsible for the direct monitoring and implementation of the CALIPER project ("IRB CALIPER Core Group"), through desk research and policy analysis, interviews, surveys, and focus groups.

The results of the assessment have been included in the aggregate report, 'D1.2 - Internal Gender Equality Assessment Results' that has been submitted to the European Commission in accordance with the

¹ Communication of the European Commission of the 17.07.2017



implementation obligations of CALIPER project. The chapters below entail the results of the internal assessment of IRB following necessary amendments to enhance the comprehensiveness of the report by wider audiences.

Data validation

The data collection process

Source of data

The gender distribution of the responders shows that mostly females provided feedback through interviews and surveys while in focus groups the difference between male and female participants was much lower but reached a 40/60 female/male proportion in all cases.

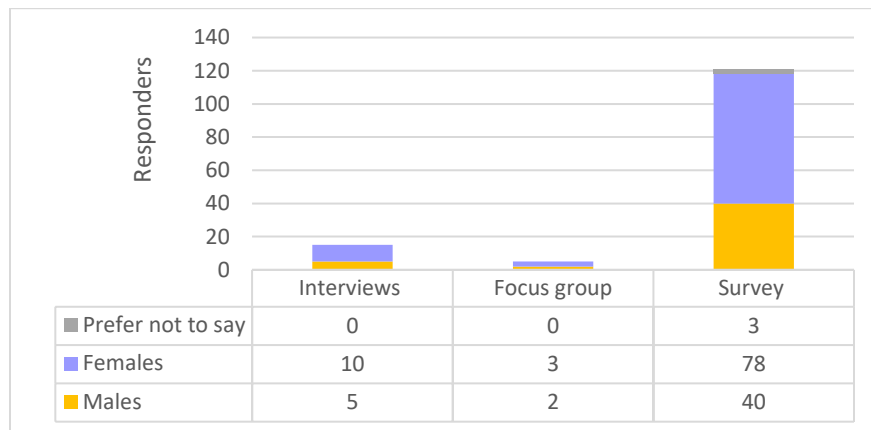


Figure 2. Gender distribution of responders at IRB

Regarding the professional profile of the responders, many high- and middle-level managers took part in the interviews, while some middle-level managers participated in the focus group.

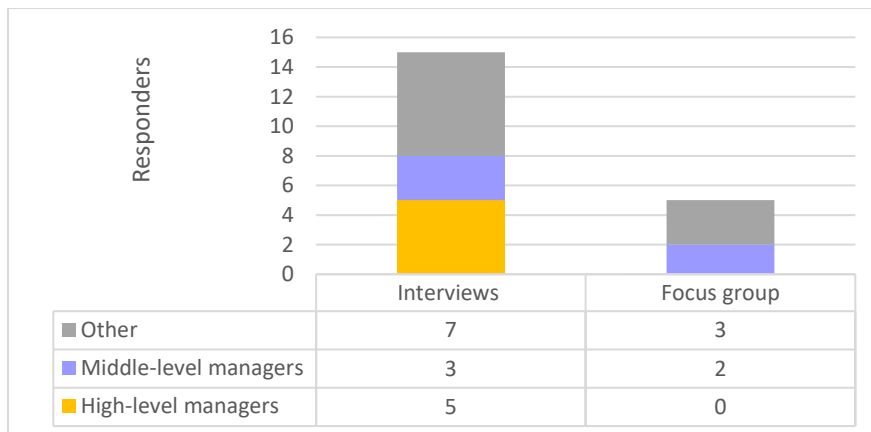


Figure 3. Position in the organisation of responders in IRB interviews and focus groups

The survey was completed mainly by post-doc researchers and administrative staff. Research assistants, predoc researchers, group leaders (GLs), etc account for a small percentage of the responses.



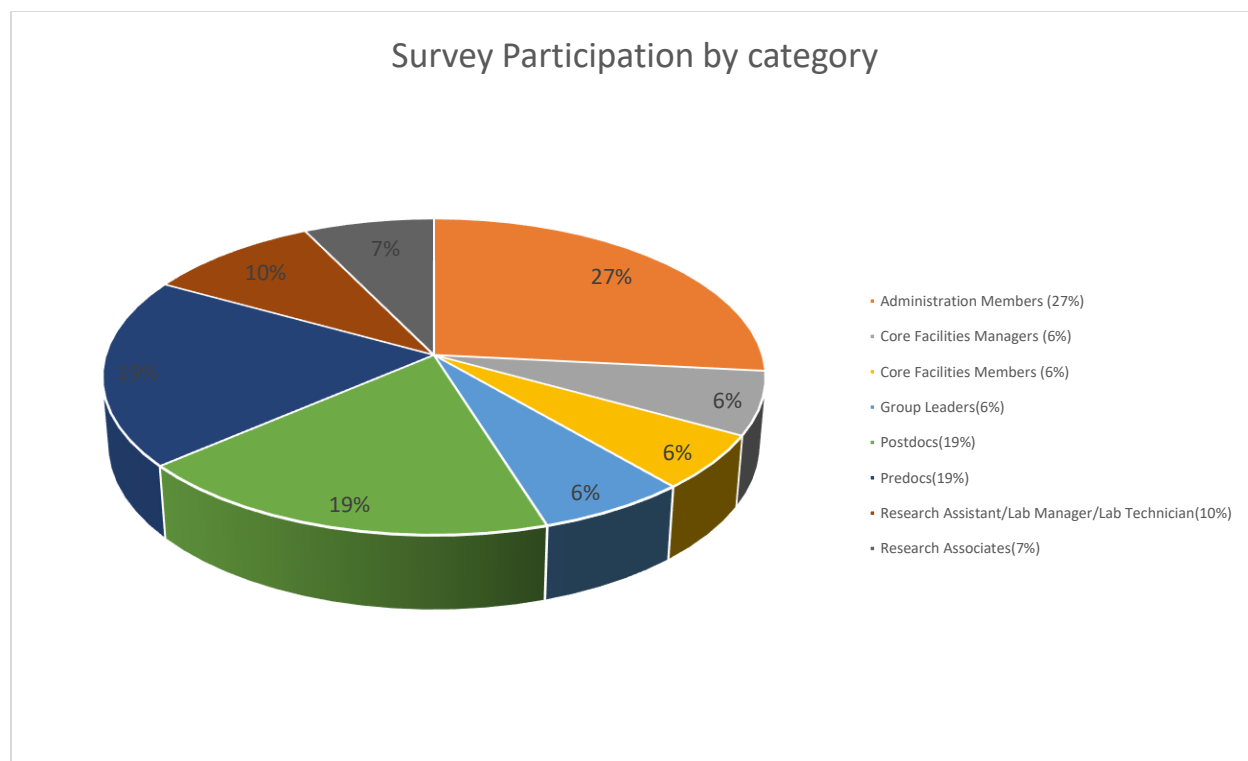


Figure 4. Survey Participation by category

1. Human Resources

Current status

In relation to **recruitment** at IRB, according to the desk research, the following recruitment and hiring procedures and protocols are being followed:

The Human Resources (HR) and Academic Affairs department comprises three large areas: Human Resources, Health & Safety, and Academic Office. The main functions of HR are related to personnel administration, recruitment, training, talent and development, international mobility, compensation & benefits, database and HR statistics, staff support, Labour Relations, and Gender Dimension (Equality and Diversity Committee and Caliper Project).

IRB has an established a recruitment policy that complies with the Organic Act 3/2007 of 22 March 2007 on effective equality of men and women, the Workers' Statute passed by Spanish Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015 of 23 October, and the European Directives provided by the ECC about non-discrimination.

On 9 December 2014, IRB was awarded the "HR Excellence in Research (HRS4R)" logo, as of today, the Institute is currently in the renewal phase, scheduled 2021. In this regard, the Institute fully endorses the requirements and principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and it applies Open, Transparent, Merit-based recruitment following the principals of the European Commission together with Equal Opportunities policies.

All open scientific positions are posted on prestigious scientific and biomedical websites with open access, such as Euraxess, SOMMA, Biocat, etc. IRB also works with specific websites, such as science4refugees, the European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS) and the Association for Women in Science (AWIS).



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The Institute actively encourages female applicants and also ensures that their merits are properly identified and appreciated. IRB understands non-discrimination as an essential value to follow and makes every effort to reach as many potential candidates as possible, in particular underrepresented minorities in the scientific field. For these reasons, all calls and positions are written with the same non-discriminatory standards.

IRB also seeks new recruitment portals and alliances to allow it to keep abreast of trending channels, and it is planning to reorganise the web display of the HR Strategies to gain visibility and to share relevant information for researchers. Furthermore, the HR department has launched a new recruitment portal (October 2020) to improve the current recruitment process and to extend it to all new openings.

To allow sufficient time to publicize job offers, the HR department encourages its members to plan a minimum of a month and a half before posting a job advert. This allows proper planning for dissemination and ensures a transparent and open recruitment process. At the end of the selection, the members of the department are required to write a selection report, as the official record of the selection process. The main purpose of the selection report is to convey the panel's recommendation and provide enough information for the Hiring Manager to make an informed and fair recruitment decision.

Recruitment process for PhD and Postdoctoral candidates: Organisation of selection processes at IRB (Predoctoral and Postdoctoral researchers)

The whole process is coordinated by the members of the Academic Office (AO) (with the supervision of the PhD Advisory Committee), who are highly experienced in managing IRB's undergraduate, predoctoral and postdoctoral calls. IRB GLs, external evaluators, among others, participate in one or more of the stages.

The application and selection processes are organised into various steps, which can be grouped into the following five stages:

1. Call opening and applications
2. Eligibility check
3. Remote evaluations
4. Interviews
5. Notifications of results and onboarding

Institutional policies are published on the website:

- Human Resources Excellence in Research
- Recruitment Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Code of Conduct

Other internal policies related to recruitment at IRB:

- Recruitment and Selection Procedure - R1 Procedure for recruiting and selecting Predoctoral researchers
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure – R2 Procedure for recruiting and selecting Recognised researchers (Postdoctoral researchers)



- Recruitment and Selection Procedure – R3 Procedure for recruiting and selecting Established researchers
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure – R4 Procedure for recruiting and selecting Leading researchers
- Guidelines to guarantee an unbiased Recruitment Process for Group Leaders
 - Topics detailed in the document are related to duties of the members, selection committee, panel composition, job description and advert, dissemination, eligibility check, selection processes and selection interview.
 - Composition of selection panels aiming to achieve a target of at least 70/30% men/women, and a proportion of shortlisted candidates aiming at least 75/25% men/women.

IRB is committed to providing a positive research environment that recognises diversity as an asset and source of creativity. The Institute takes specific measures to ensure that all researchers, regardless of gender, sexual identity or expression, national, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, social or economic condition, disability or age will have equal access to the research opportunities that it offers.

It is important to mention that **career breaks** can be understood in two possible ways: a) Personal reasons; b) Education/ Training. Both of these career breaks are regulated by Spanish labour law. In terms of sabbatical leave, some of the projects/grants in the Institute contemplate career breaks and IRB will adapt to these conditions. Regarding internal regulations, a career break/sabbatical leave has been developed for GL positions.

In terms of career progression, IRB works to ensure fair and transparent promotion processes, to foster equal opportunities, and to improve appraisal procedures. Every available position, whether new or covering a vacancy, is published publicly on the IRB website, thereby assuring a transparent process. All applications received during the recruitment process are analysed and the selected candidate is chosen on the basis of merit. Transversal promotion is encouraged, giving different and wider responsibilities to employees and reinforcing employability. Regarding vacancies in Administration, Core Facilities and technical roles in labs, most job positions have been covered through internal promotion. Regarding promotion in Research, career progression is determined by academic deadlines (thesis defence, end of research project, etc.) and this determines the high temporary nature of job positions like PhD and Postdocs. Protocols and guidelines in terms of gender perspective for career progression are not in place at IRB.

At an institutional level, IRB strives to ensure female representation on all its committees. (Governing Council, Equality and Diversity Committee, Research Integrity, among others).

IRB has supported and has been part of initiatives such as the “Mothers of Science”. Seeking to promote the career progression of talented female researchers working in BIST (Barcelona Institute for Science and Technology) centres, this programme includes a grant, as well as the opportunity to attend leadership and management activities (professional coaching).

Another important initiative is a mentoring programme targeted at female PI/GLs, set up in collaboration with other scientific institutions (IBMB, BSC and IBEC). A self-supporting peer mentoring group for females was created by and for female GLs in late 2019. This group currently comprises 10 members and provides



professional development and support for senior and junior female GLs. A mentoring programme for Postdocs was also set up in 2019 and women are the highest number of participants.

In the sub-area of career retention, every employee who leaves IRB goes through an “exit interview”. This interview is designed to understand the reason why the employee is leaving. To date, no common denominator has been found related to gender.

In the sub-area of work-life balance (WLB), this is a topic of constant work in progress at IRB. According to the desk research, the Institute follows national policies and procedures established by Spanish law and also regulated by agreement CVE-DOGC-B-20038084-2020. Covering measures in WLB in the following chapters:

- Chapter IV Working day (articles 30-34, working hours, work calendar, overtime, vacations and holidays)
- Chapter V (Permits and leaves of absence, voluntary leave and leave to care for minors and family members, suspension of the employment contract due to the birth or care of a minor, infant care leave, reduction in working hours for care).

Regarding internal measures and procedures, considerable efforts to preserve a WLB are constantly being made, some of these efforts are:

- A psychosocial survey performed in 2018, with 63.32% participation.
- Psychological support. IRB has reached an agreement with two psychologists, one English-speaking and the other Catalan/Spanish-speaking, who offer therapy sessions at a special discount to all IRB members and their relatives.
- Time Management Workshop

Some of the latest measures adopted as a result of COVID-19 outbreak are:

- Conciliation grants consisting of a 2-month grant to help families to support child care during the pandemic and workshops on time management. Open to all the entire IRB community.
- During the critical period of the pandemic “new normal” teleworking is encouraged, combining on-site and off-site working whenever possible (always with previous agreement of the supervisor).

In terms of **equal pay policies**, IRB’s remuneration system is determined as stated in the agreement: “Convenio colectivo de trabajo del sector de oficinas y despachos de Cataluña para los años 2019-2021” (código de convenio núm. 79000375011994). This document is of public access and can also be found on the IRB’s intranet. The remuneration system at the Institute works with an established salary table divided into categories.

The figures below show the current situation.



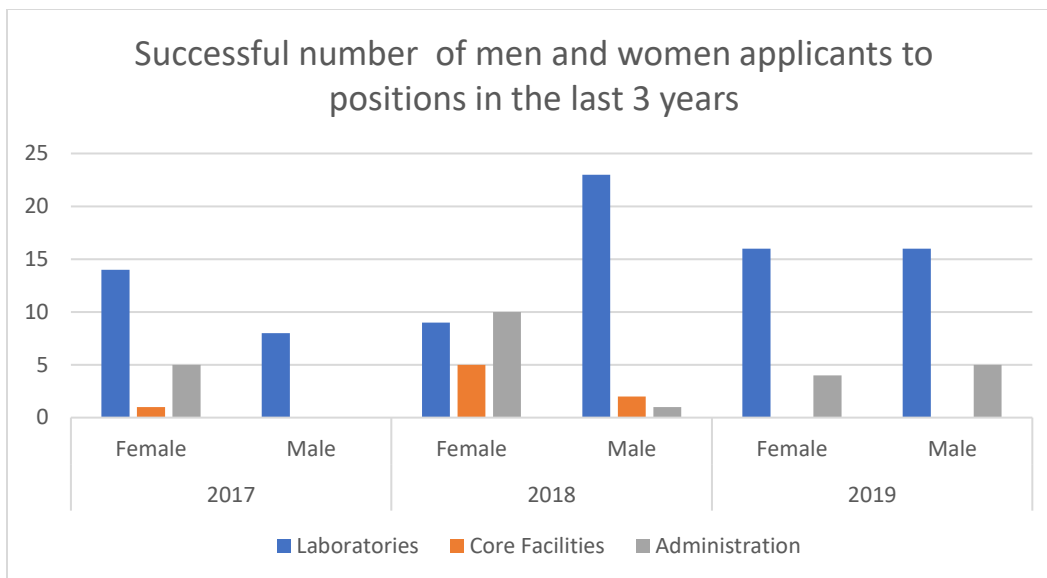


Figure 5. Successful number of men and women applicants to positions in the last 3 years

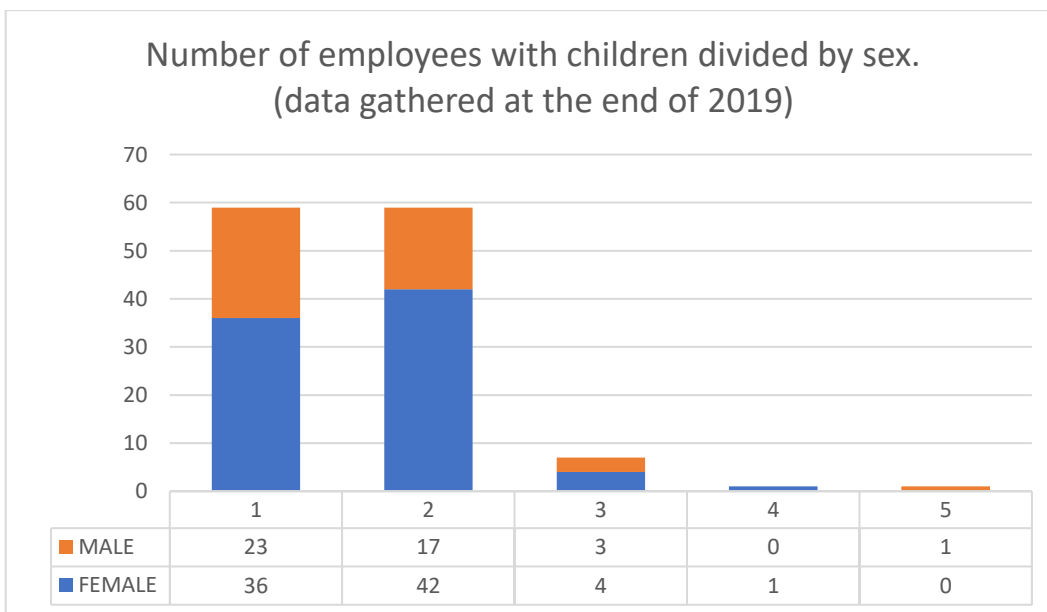


Figure 6. Number of employees with children divided by sex



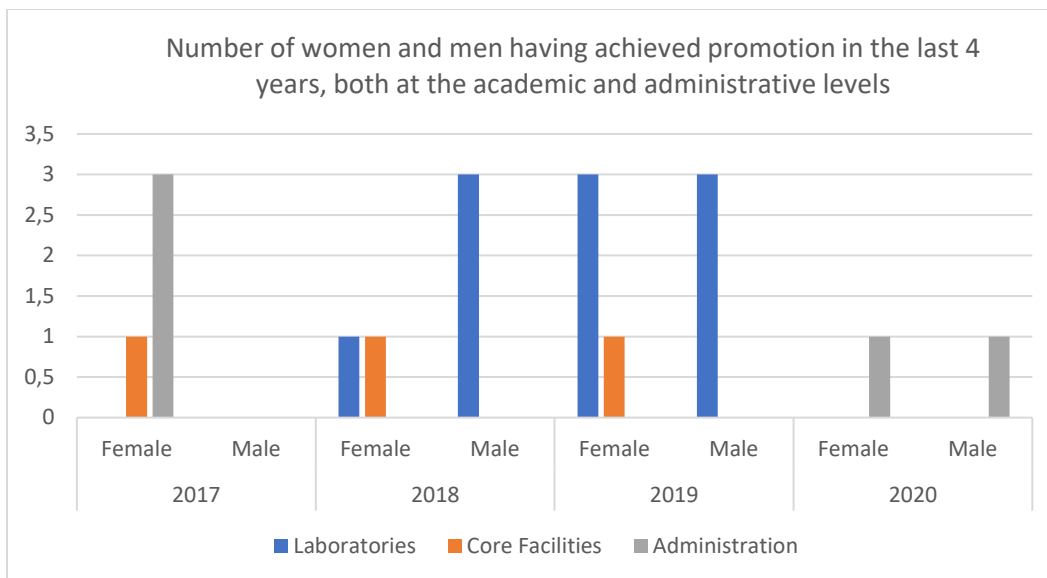


Figure 7. Number of women and men having achieved promotion in the last 4 years

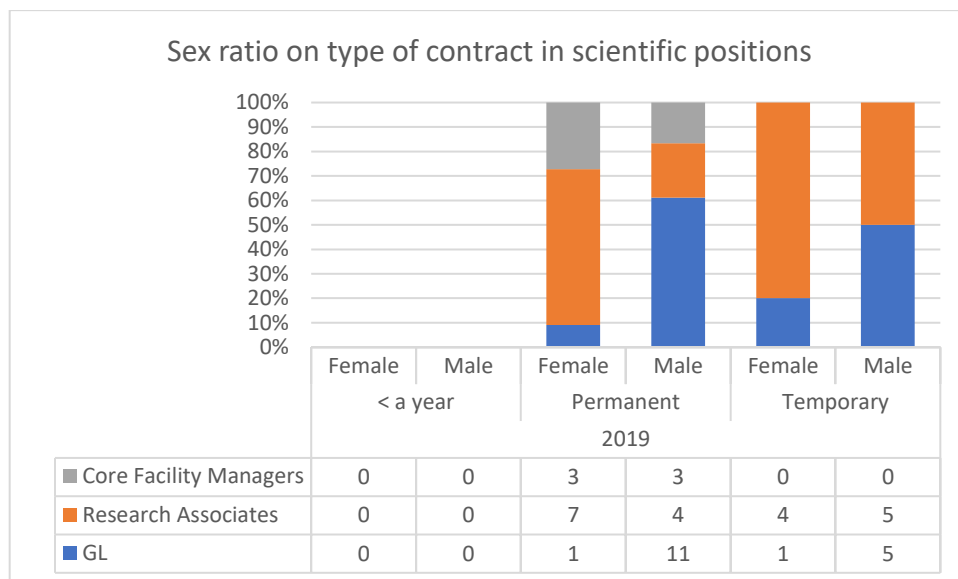


Figure 8. Sex ratio on type of contract in scientific positions



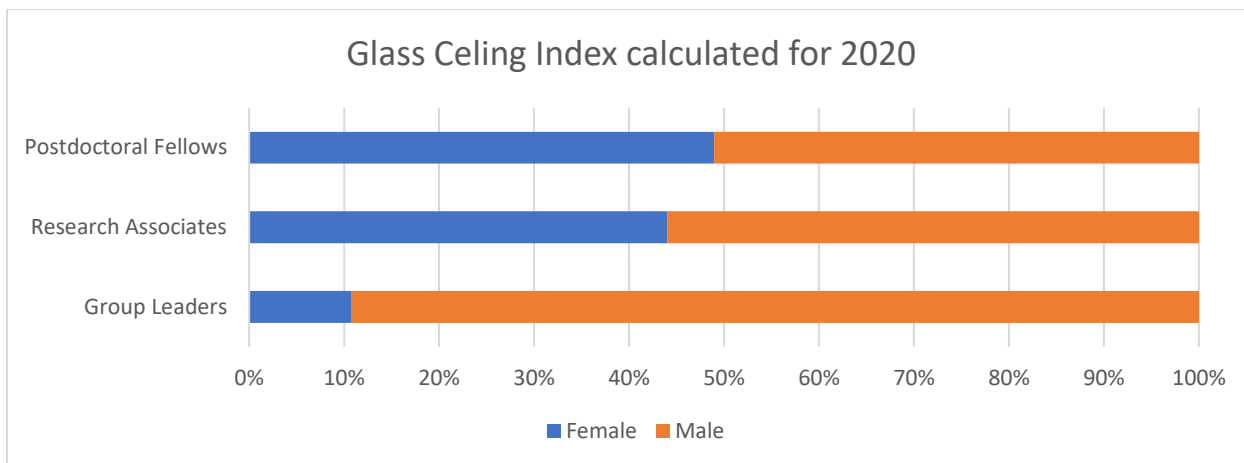


Figure 9. Glass Ceiling Index calculated for 2020

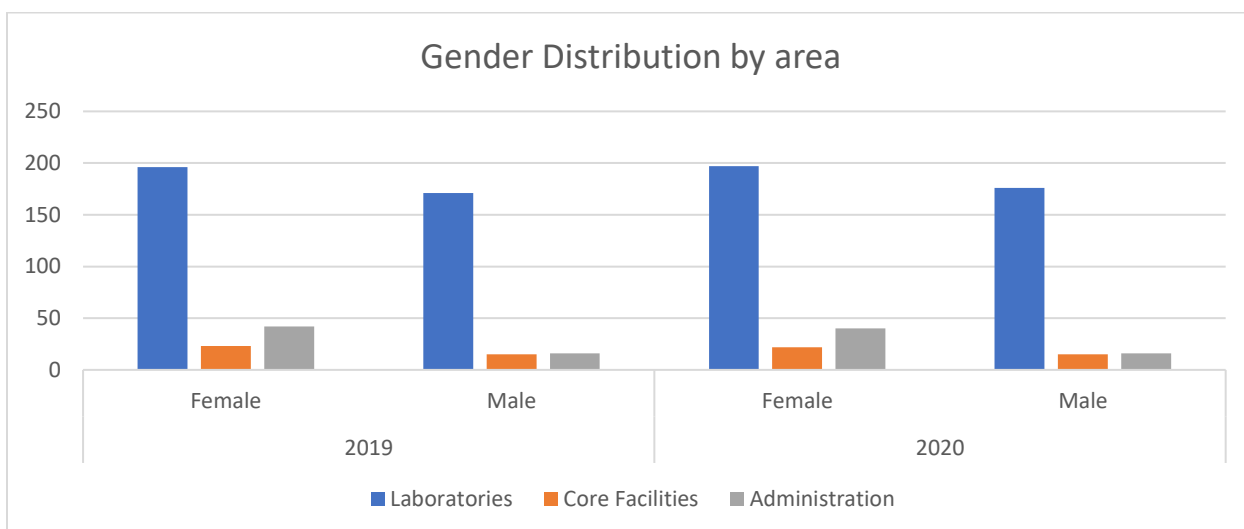


Figure 10. Gender Distribution by area



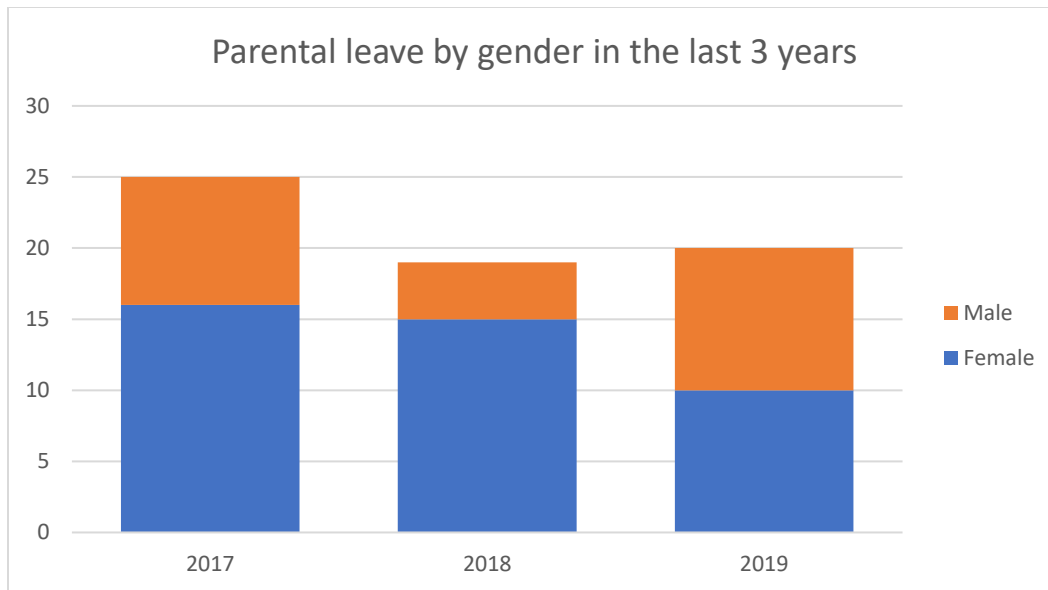


Figure 11. Parental leave by gender in the last 3 years

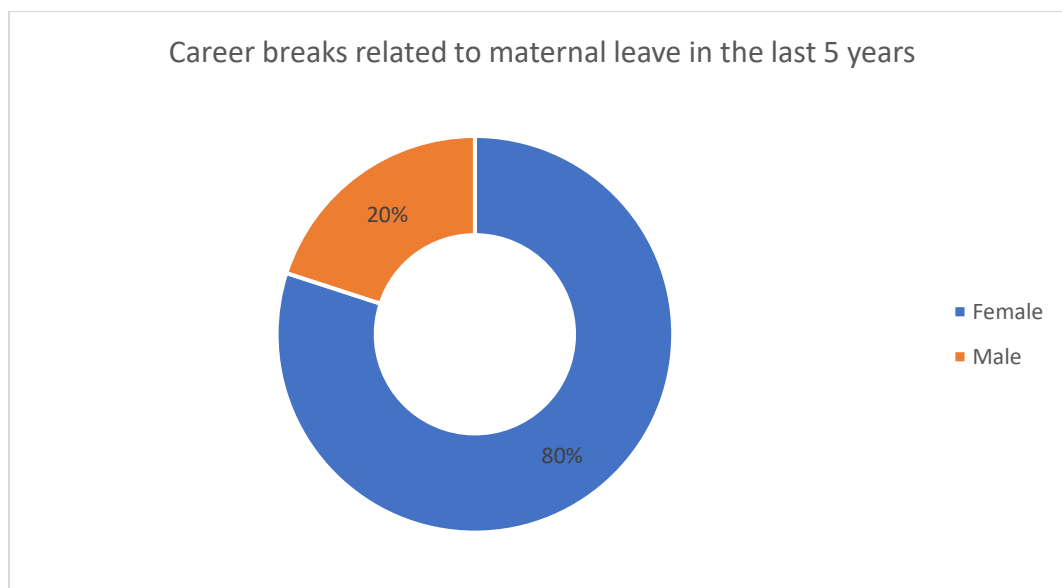


Figure 12. Career breaks related to maternal leave in the last 5 years

2. Institutional governance

Current status

Regarding **commitment to gender equality** and institutional governance, the current policies and procedures are regulated by “Convenio de Oficinas y despachos” CVE-DOGC-B-20038084-2020. Chapter VI, Equality. Articles 42-47 and la “Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres”.

Since its foundation, IRB has implemented measures designed to promote equal opportunities for men and women, based on an Institutional culture where raising equality awareness has always been a



prevalent theme. The first Equality Plan was implemented from 2011 to 2016. To promote this mindset, IRB created the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC). Currently formed by 11 members representing the administrative team, and scientific and core facilities, the EDC aims to ensure that the ideal of excellence through inclusion is embedded at the Institute.

The EDCs main mission is to develop strategies to promote and monitor equality and diversity issues and to provide support and guidance in the implementation of policies and actions. In compliance with IRB's Equality and Diversity Plan 2017-19, the EDC is committed to promoting these values at the Institute.

The committee meets formally every month. All the points and discussions developed during these meetings are summarised in the corresponding minutes, which are stored with other documents produced by the EDC. Every year a summary of all the main actions developed by the EDC is recorded and sent to the IRB governance bodies and made available to all IRB employees through the intranet.

Also, in 2012 saw the approval of the *"Protocol for dealing with, preventing and eradicating workplace harassment at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona)"*. This protocol was revised and updated in November 2018 and is available in both Spanish and English in the Health & Safety section on the intranet.

The Caliper Project symbolises the commitment of IRB.

In terms of **gender budgeting**, IRB allocates a specific budget to the EDC. Other actions that also take into account the gender topic are supported and financed by the budget of the HR department.

In relation to **gender-disaggregated data**, the gender dimension is embedded in the data collection of the HR department; all the quantitative data of the employees are disaggregated by gender and also by nationality. The HR department keeps strict control of the existing personnel. Once an employee/collaborator starts working at IRB, a profile of the employee is drawn up, keeping track of essential information, including gender and nationality. This information is updated every month, keeping control mechanisms such as monthly payroll and the exit interview process. The information is kept in files that are updated monthly and in the Institutes ERP tool.

Regarding **decision-making bodies** and gender equal representation, there is no specific policy with a gender perspective on this matter. All the internal committees have diversity and female representation but the low number of women in scientific leadership positions prevents several committees from being equally balanced.

In the sub-area of **gender equality policies/bodies**, IRB has a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). The latest plan started in 2017 and was intended to cover 3 years. The GEP is published on IRB's Intranet. The plan covers the following topics: Workforce distribution, Non-Discriminatory Language, Training, Recruitment-Promotion-Development, Remuneration, Work-life Balance, Sexual Harassment, and Working Conditions. An external consultant specialised in gender was contracted to develop the GEP. The current plan has been extended until a new GEP is set in place through the actions of the Caliper project.

The figures below show the current situation.



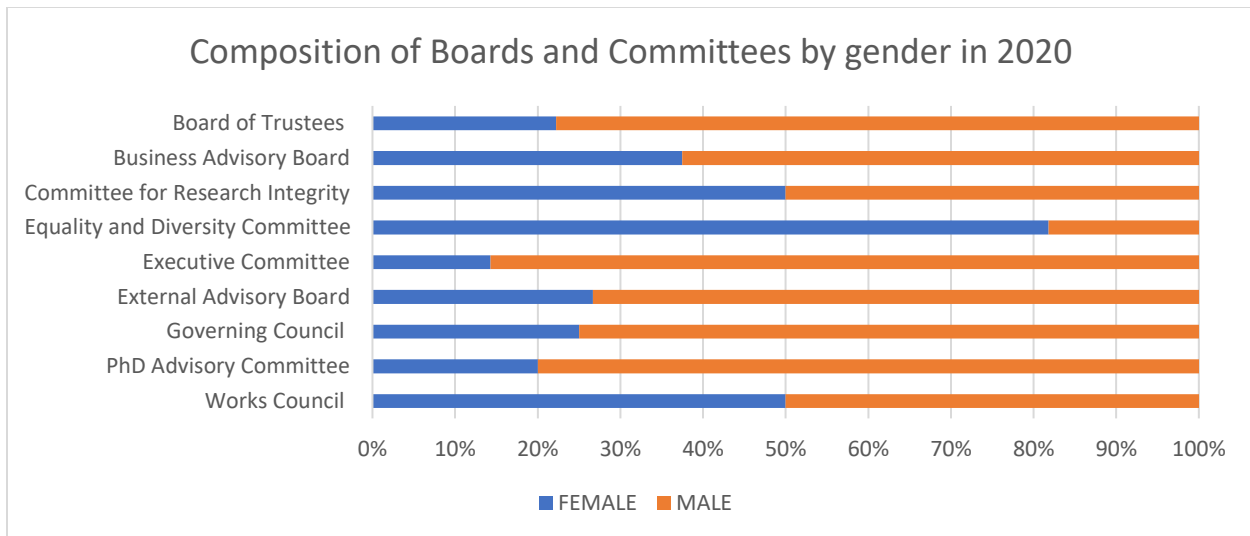


Figure 13. Committees

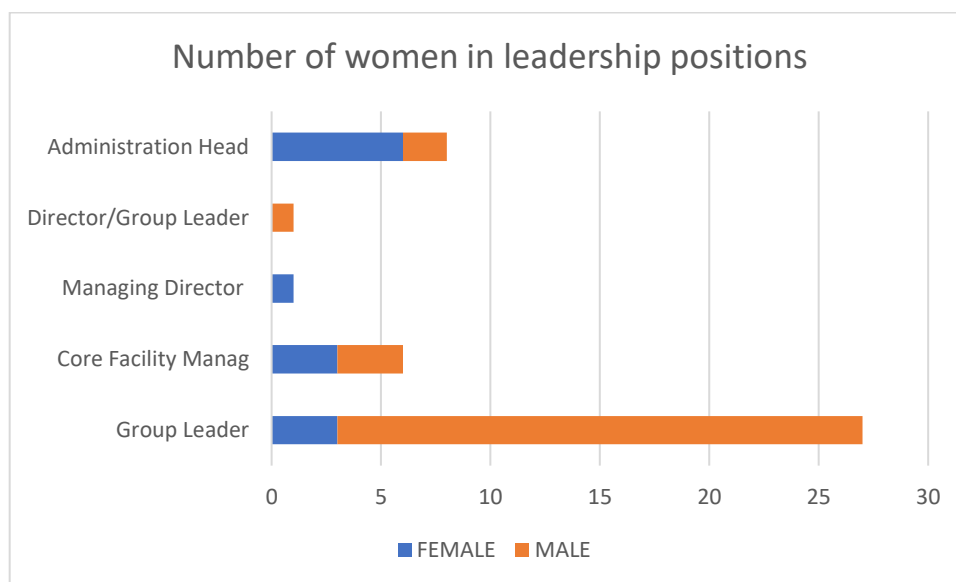


Figure 14. Number of women in leadership positions

3. Institutional communication

Current status

Regarding **external and internal communication**, there are no concrete policies or guidelines that consider gender sensitivity. However, some concrete actions have been taken such as the organisation of a seminar on inclusive language. The gender equality topic is becoming more and more present in the Communications department; an effort is made to embrace diversity and gender equality. The importance of gender-sensitive language and policies should be encouraged and implemented at the Institute. In addition to efforts to keep the website gender-equal in regards to images and the language used, a dedicated page addressing and referring to equality can be found in the website section of the EDC. This



section of the website is included in the Organisational Boards and Committees glossary. The section provides a brief summary of the role of the committee and indicates the members and contact information. The website can be found on the following link <https://www.irbbarcelona.org/en/about-us/organization/boards>.

4. Research

Current status

In relation to the **research content** sub-area, IRB research groups are aware of the gender perspective in the content of their research, as defined by funding agencies and scientific journals.

5. Student services

Current status

Regarding student services and more specifically the sub-area of gender-sensitive information for prospective students, no guidance is provided because there is a current gender balance between male and female students at MSc and PhD level. There are no specific initiatives aimed at guiding students in their professional development from a gender perspective.

Normal recruitment procedures following the guidelines explained on the HR section are followed. The HR department is in charge of giving an induction course to explain the rules, regulations, committees and protocols, among others, the ECD Committee and Health & Safety protocols to new employees. The Academic officer/ HR provides support to the PhD Student Council and the Postdoc Council, including gender or psychosocial matters, as well all academic subjects. Initiatives such as “Noies al lab” and “100tífiques” contribute to giving visibility to women in our research centre and encouraging young girls to follow STEM studies respectively. There are no initiatives aimed at counselling enrolled students with a gender-sensitive approach.

6. Teaching

Current status

IRB is a research center and teaching is not addressed at the Institute.

7. Transfer to market - external relation - third mission

Regarding the presence of collaborative research projects with a gender dimension, recently, calls for proposals for innovation projects have become aware of gender equality while some of them request for a gender-balanced team. In terms of gender-sensitive actions on enhancing the transfer of results to the market, there are no concrete guidelines to keep track of the participation of women in this transfer or the evolution of the participation of women.

The figure below shows the current situation.



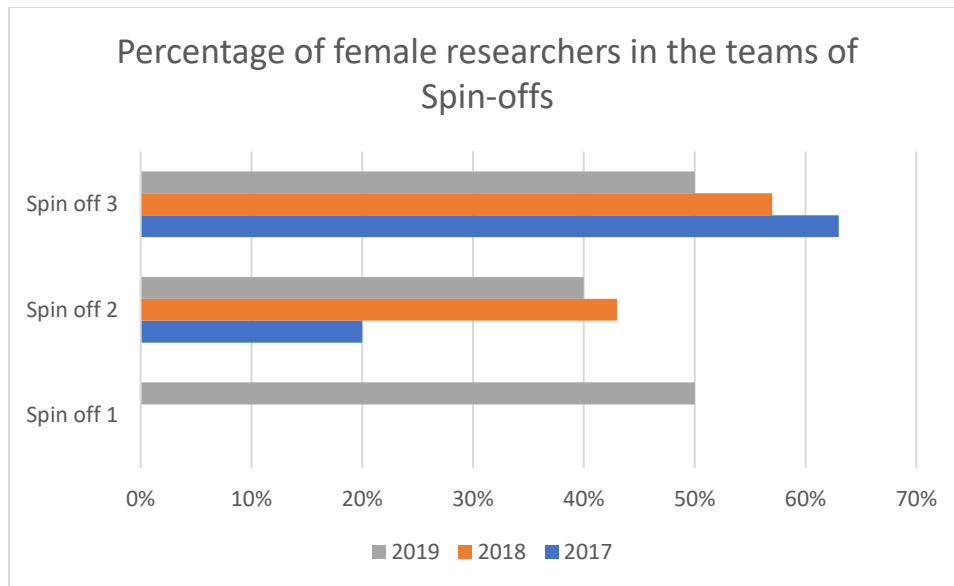


Figure 15. Percentage of female researchers in the teams of Spin-offs

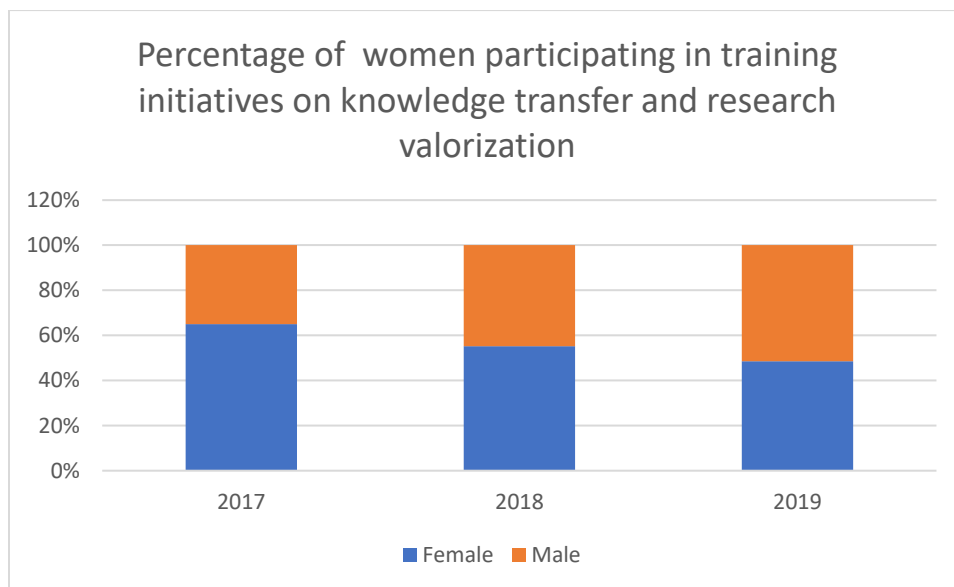


Figure 16. Percentage of women participating in training initiatives on knowledge transfer and research valorization

8. Gender/sexual harassment

Current status

IRB follows national policies and procedures established by Spanish law and also regulated by agreement CVE-DOGC-B-20038084-2020. Article 44 Protocol for the prevention and tackling of sexual and sex-based harassment. The Institute approved a protocol in 2012, *Protocol for Dealing with, Preventing and Eradicating Workplace Harassment at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona)*. This protocol was revised and updated in November 2018 and is available in both Spanish and English in the Health & Safety section of the intranet. The protocol includes detection, prevention, and intervention against harassment of all kind (work, psychological, and sexual). An evaluation of psychosocial risks was



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performed in 2018, and it included some questions to detect sexual harassment. The protocol describes and defines the representatives or departments to contact in case of harassment or to ask for help or counselling. IRB also has an agreement with external psychologists with special prices for its employees.

9. Intersectionality

Current status

The EDC has put into place different actions intended to encourage and support young scientists (PhD and postdocs) to develop their careers, taking into consideration gender in a binary perspective (men and women). With the experience gained in recent years, the EDC is evolving to a broader vision of equality in which intersectionality is considered as a way of taking into account other aspects that influence gender equality. Thus, starting in 2019, actions envisioned to include intersectional LGBTQ+ issues in the scientific community have been put into consideration through the support of the EDC to contribute a greater involvement of this community in scientific research. Other actions regarding disabilities will be also considered with the contribution of the HR department.

Assets and points worthy of attention

IRB has set up measures and protocols for **recruitment**, but according to the survey responders, it is necessary to better communicate these measures among the scientific community.

In terms of career, and specifically in the sub-area of **career retention**, most of the employees leave because of the specific time frame of their contracts (thesis defence, end of research project) and there are no indications about gender-related issues in the employee exit survey.

Regarding **career progression** with a gender perspective, no protocols and guidelines are in place. It is important to highlight that scientific positions are characterised by cycles involving mobility to different positions/organisations. In addition, and due to this evolution, it is difficult to provide permanent working contracts. Consequently, efforts must be made to implement mentoring and leadership programmes, especially those that support the career development of female researchers.

In the sub-area of well-being and **work-life balance**, the Institute follows the national laws and regulations, a psychosocial survey was performed in 2018 with 63.32% participation and during the COVID-19 outbreak some measures have been adopted. IRB strives to ensure a work-life balance.

At IRB, the main challenges of **institutional governance** lie in the decision-making bodies and specific policies for gender equal representation. In relation to the decision-making bodies, there is an underrepresentation of female participants because of the low number of female PIs.

IRB's committees take diversity into account and balance is pursued although it never reaches 50% due to the number of female PIs. It is important to point out that due to the emergence of gender balance issues and the idea of "having women involved", the few women available may carry a huge burden and be overloaded.

The gender equality topic is very important in **institutional communication**. More visibility of the actions related to gender equality should be given, especially on the institutional web/intranet. A training session on gender sensitive-inclusive language was implemented providing good recommendations and



guidelines. However, there is still room for improvement. For example, there are no concrete guidelines or protocols on the use of gender-sensitive language in administrative communication. Efforts are made to maintain language and communication material as gender-neutral as possible.

In relation to the **research** content sub-area, IRB groups are aware of the gender perspective in the content of their research, as defined by funding agencies and scientific journals.

In regard to the student services, there are some initiatives that contribute to giving visibility to women at IRB and to encouraging young girls to pursue STEM studies . At the moment, there are no initiatives aimed at counselling enrolled students with a gender-sensitive approach.

IRB has set up measures and protocols addressing sexual and gender discrimination, the main protocol (Protocol for Dealing with, Preventing and Eradicating Workplace Harassment at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona)) is available in Spanish and English to all employees on the Institute's intranet. Some of surveys the participants are not sure what is considered sexual harassment or gender offence, power abuse, etc. There are areas of improvement in regards focusing better on the communication path for reporting cases and developing training sessions including topics such as sexism, unacceptable conducts, among others.

IRB is channelling efforts into transferring research results into the market but currently there is no specific system to measure and monitor gender-related aspects. Other than efforts to monitor the evolution and results of women, the gender perspective in innovation programmes is out of the scope of IRB, understanding that internal decisions for each project do not depend on IRB.

At the time of this report, 3 out of the 6 spin-offs created at IRB have a female CEO. However, fewer female researchers are on the teams of IRB spin-offs than males, an aspect that cannot be regulated by IRB.

Finally, there is a general understanding of intersectionality, thus raising awareness about this topic among the members of IRB with specific training and communication campaigns would be beneficial.

