



INCLIVA | VLC
Biomedical Research Institute

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***SUPPORT PLAN FOR
RESEARCH STAFF
AND EMERGING GROUPS
2026–2030***

This document has been drafted and prepared by the Training Unit and approved by the INCLIVA Board of Governors by way of the minutes dated 29 September 2025.

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1. INTRODUCTION

INCLIVA Biomedical Research Institute, in line with its functions and objectives, has identified the need to encourage initiatives that promote an increase in the quality of research carried out by the professionals working there, thereby fostering competition within the system and promoting research of excellence.

For this reason, this document sets out the main measures designed to stimulate, invigorate and support the scientific activity of emerging researchers and research groups engaged in emerging research.

Before proceeding with the plan, and in order to understand the needs identified and the requirements set by the regulatory and funding bodies, the following provides a summary, organised into sub-sections, of the ISCIII's requirements regarding support for emerging researchers and emerging research groups; the specific actions set out in INCLIVA's new Strategic Plan 2025–2029 concerning emerging research groups and researchers; and the categories of emerging researchers and emerging research groups.

What does the ISCIII Technical Guide for the Accreditation Assessment of Institutes state regarding emerging researchers and emerging research groups affiliated with the institute?

- At least 15 per cent of the groups at the Institute must be emerging groups.
- The institute's training plan must include specific mentoring activities aimed at emerging research centres and/or groups that form part of the Institute or its wider research community.
- At least 30 per cent of the indirect costs received annually must be allocated to in-house initiatives aimed at supporting Institute researchers: such as capacity-building, training, **in-house calls for Institute-specific projects for emerging groups**, the cost of publishing in open-access journals, etc.

What does INCLIVA Strategic Plan 2025–2029 address in relation to emerging researchers and emerging research groups affiliated with the institute?

In drawing up INCLIVA's 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, numerous interviews were conducted with management and research staff, both external to and within the institution. Based on these interviews, it was concluded that efforts to consolidate emerging researchers and ensure generational renewal must take into account their experience and track record at an international level.

For this reason, INCLIVA's Strategic Plan 2025–2029 includes two key challenges relating to support for emerging researchers and emerging research groups and their internationalisation:

- **Strategic Challenge 4.1. Improving generational renewal.** Activity 3. Promoting the development of the Mentoring Plan for Emerging Groups, through the design and implementation of various initiatives: support in the preparation and submission of applications for international projects (including advice from senior groups with experience in developing projects in this field), the publication of specific internal grants for the recruitment of staff or the publication of articles in Open Access, etc. To meet this challenge, the following actions are defined:
 - To analyse INCLIVA's research groups to identify those facing the greatest challenges regarding **generational succession** in the short and medium term. To identify potential future leaders for these groups and disciplines, both internally and externally (for example, by recruiting research staff who have been awarded ERC grants).

- Implement measures to foster scientific vocations amongst clinical staff, particularly junior doctors: specific training in R&D&I methodology, encouraging placements at other centres, initiatives to incentivise clinical research, etc.
 - **Promote the development of the Mentoring Plan for Emerging Groups** through the design and implementation of various initiatives: support in the preparation and submission of applications for international projects (including advice from senior groups with experience in developing projects in this field), the publication of specific internal grants for recruiting staff or publishing articles in Open Access, etc.
 - Establish the role of Co-Coordinator for Cross-cutting Areas and Programmes, with specific responsibilities, to ensure the progress of INCLIVA's future leaders.
- **Strategic Challenge 5.1. Enhancing international activity.** Activity 1. Fostering interest amongst research groups, **with a particular focus on emerging groups**, in the development of international projects. Consulting research groups on their interests and barriers to participating in these international initiatives.
 - Encourage research groups—with a particular focus on **emerging** ones—to take an interest in developing **international** projects. Consult research groups on their interests and the barriers they face when participating in these international initiatives.
 - Introduce a programme of **sessions or seminars** in which senior researchers present success stories and key factors for improving the chances of success of their applications for international projects, as well as offering their support in helping new groups join international consortia and initiatives.
 - Draw up a call for internal grants to support the **drafting of applications** and participation in consortia by research groups taking part in international initiatives for the first time.
 - To train and develop both research staff to facilitate their participation in **proposals and consortia**, and those who have received funding for the first time through an international call for proposals. To train and develop the Unit's administrative staff to professionalise the support provided for the management of international projects.
 - Increase the **participation** of the Unit's research groups and staff in international initiatives of which INCLIVA is already a member (such as BDVA, i-Spaces, GAIA-X, EUOPENSREEN, EATRIS, EHDEN, etc.) and to identify COST actions and other international initiatives in which INCLIVA's research groups can participate, whilst offering support for their involvement and active participation.
 - To boost **INCLIVA's international visibility** through an active international communication policy (fostering a network of contacts on social media, increasing the dissemination of results and institutional information in English, etc.).

How does INCLIVA's Integration Plan define emerging research staff and emerging R&D&I groups?

Emerging researchers (R2B) at INCLIVA

These are researchers with the following characteristics:

- They may be clinical staff from the hospital itself with a recognised research track record.
- They are principal investigators (PIs) on projects or have been so in their previous research career.
- They are listed as senior authors on scientific articles.

Examples: Miguel Servet (ISCIII), Ramón y Cajal (MINECO), Marie Curie (EC)...

Postdoctoral researchers who meet these criteria may be recognised as emerging researchers and incorporated into INCLIVA, subject to an assessment of their merits by the Internal Scientific Committee. Preference for recognition as an emerging researcher will be given to research staff on the Miguel Servet, Ramón y Cajal, Joan Rodés, Plan GenT or equivalent programmes, in their first year of funding. They will be recognised on an individual basis but must maintain close links with an established group and must demonstrate a significant scientific output, the alignment of their research with the prioritised research areas, and the existence of collaborations with INCLIVA groups. Furthermore, they must commit to becoming an emerging group within a maximum of five years of their recognition. If, after five years, the emerging researcher has not been recognised as an emerging group, they will retain their affiliation with their original group.

INCLIVA's emerging groups

INCLIVA's emerging research groups are characterised by being led by researchers with I3 or R3 status, who have a proven track record and promising prospects for the future. However, they have not yet reached maturity in their scientific activity, either because they do not yet have the capacity to consistently secure funding from national or European sources, or because they do not have a consistent output over time, meaning the group has not yet achieved a consolidated standard of activity. The emerging group must demonstrate proven potential for scientific growth and have its own defined line of research, independent of its mentor group. To be classified as an emerging research group, and in accordance with the ISCIII Technical Evaluation Guide, the group must meet the following criteria:

- Have independently secured funding for their first project through competitive public calls for proposals at national level within the last three years.
- Demonstrate stable research activity and, within the last five years, have secured at least two research projects through competitive public calls at regional level, with authorship (as first, last or corresponding author) in publications of proven quality within their field of study.

Newly formed groups led by researchers who have primarily been recruited through calls for applications under programmes such as the Miguel Servet, Joan Rodés, Plan GenT, Ramón y Cajal or equivalent incorporation schemes will also be considered emerging groups. In order for these researchers to establish an emerging group recognised by the institution, they must: (1) have successfully completed their Incorporation Programme; (2) have obtained the R3 certificate from the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities; and (3) have received a positive evaluation from the institution's Internal Scientific Committee and External Scientific Committee. Meeting the ISCIII criteria to become a Principal Investigator (PI) of an emerging research group merely entitles the applicant to be assessed by INCLIVA committees. The Internal Scientific Committee (ISC) will assess the

strategic relevance of the new group's R&D&I, whilst the External Scientific Committee (ESC) will carry out a final overall assessment based on the group's strategic relevance and merits.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The main objective of this plan is to establish the necessary measures and mechanisms to stimulate, revitalise and promote research activity at INCLIVA amongst its staff holding the status of 'emerging' or 'emerging R&D&I group leader'.

To achieve this main objective, the following specific objectives are set out:

OE1. Guidance and support for early-career researchers throughout each stage of their research careers.

OE2. Attracting and recruiting emerging new talent.

OE3. Promoting leadership and academic careers amongst early-career researchers in order to foster the creation of new research groups and consolidate existing ones.

OE4. Review of the consolidated R&D&I groups affiliated with INCLIVA to ensure an appropriate generational transition

3. WHO IS IT AIMED AT?

This document is intended for those researchers and research groups at INCLIVA recognised/classified as 'emerging', with the aim of enhancing the quality of the research and innovation they carry out and fostering their development.

The characteristics and inclusion criteria for each of the categories and target groups covered by this plan are set out in the first section of this document and have been drawn from INCLIVA's Integration Plan.

4. ACTION PLAN

The support plan for emerging researchers and research groups comprises a set of actions, in line with the proposed objectives, the implementation of which is determined according to the specific needs of the research staff, as well as those of each emerging research group.

Some of these actions are not exclusive to emerging research staff or emerging groups at INCLIVA; rather, the institute carries them out on a regular basis through the various units of INCLIVA's management office. For this reason, those actions that are exclusive to the research staff covered by this Plan have been highlighted in bold.

OE1. Guidance and support

Advice and support

- INCLIVA's Scientific Directorate provides advice and support in: (1) the interim external evaluation processes for recruitment programmes (Miguel Servet, Joan Rodés or similar) and (2) evaluations carried out by INCLIVA's External Scientific Committee aimed at creating new emerging research groups or consolidating existing ones. In the case of (2), INCLIVA's Internal Scientific Committee also provides preliminary advice to ensure that the R&D&I research areas of the new groups are strategically aligned.

Seeking competitive national and international funding

- Support from INCLIVA's management office, specifically the National Projects Unit and the Internationalisation Unit, in identifying international, national and regional competitive programmes or grants, and in subsequently submitting applications in a timely and proper manner, in order to secure stable funding for the institution's research areas.

Advice on and review of project proposals to increase their success rate

- Free advice from INCLIVA's Biostatistics Unit on the experimental design of proposals to be submitted to competitive public or private calls for proposals, whether national or international
- Advice from INCLIVA's Research Committee on the scientific drafting of proposals for competitive national and international public and private projects
- In the case of international competitive projects, emerging researchers or emerging research groups will be offered advice from established groups with experience in this field or from specialist external consultancy firms.

Transfer and dissemination of results

- Support for the protection of results and/or their transfer/commercialisation by INCLIVA's Innovation Unit
- Support for the dissemination of results through outreach channels by INCLIVA's Communications Unit.

OE2. Attracting and recruiting new emerging researchers

Start-up Package for the new R2B

- **Creation of a 'start-up package'**, available from 2027, aimed at newly recruited R2B researchers at INCLIVA through the Ramón y Cajal, Miguel Servet, Plan GentT, ValER or similar programmes. This financial support is intended to facilitate the integration and development of the scientific activity of the new emerging researcher. Eligible expenses will include the following: the purchase of small-scale laboratory equipment, including apparatus and/or consumables; advanced training courses or specialist training; attendance at conferences; and the hiring of technical support staff or trainees. Priority will be given to those joining research groups facing difficulties with generational succession.

OE3 Promotion of leadership, scientific careers and opportunities for collaboration

Leadership

- **INCLIVA's Women's Leadership Programme.** Funded by Caixa Popular, it offers numerous training activities (drafting R&D&I projects, writing articles, scientific communication, good clinical practice, public engagement, amongst others) and an internal call for awards aimed at female researchers at INCLIVA. **This programme also includes a key component on leadership – the Futura Programme – which offers personalised leadership training (coaching) or online sessions on research team leadership and conflict management, aimed at early-career female researchers or coordinators of emerging research groups.**

Research Career

- **Prioritisation** of INCLIVA's internal grants for research visits
- **Support** with the proofreading of publications
- **Direct grants** for open-access publications, prioritising those published in Q1 or higher-ranked journals, arising from the results of competitive national or international public research projects
- **Availability of the Biorender** software for the creation of professional scientific figures
- **Co-funding for grants under recruitment programmes** (such as Ramón y Cajal, Miguel Servet, Joan Rodés, GenT, etc.)

Opportunities for collaboration through events organised by INCLIVA

- **Co-creation sessions** with other groups within the institute or with other institutions to develop collaborative R&D&I projects that address the needs of clinical practice
- **Promoting interaction** with established, emerging and associated clinical groups in the same or different scientific areas within the institute, through INCLIVA's Cooperative Scientific Project

OE4 Review of established R&D&I groups affiliated with INCLIVA to ensure an appropriate generational transition

According to INCLIVA's current Integration Plan, the 'Consolidated Group' category stipulates that the principal investigator is obliged to appoint a Co-PI at least six years before their retirement. During the transition period, this Co-PI must hold an R3 or I3 certificate and demonstrate independence.

Currently, INCLIVA has 39 established groups. Of these 39 groups, 26 have Principal Investigators (PIs) aged over 60. Of these 26 groups, only 4 have appointed a Co-PI to ensure succession. Of the remaining 22, 14 have active national and/or international public projects currently being managed by the institute. Given that these are groups with a proven track record of stable scientific activity over time, the institution must ensure their continuity. To this end, during the implementation of this plan, the Scientific Directorate will hold meetings with each of these groups to ensure the appointment of the most suitable Co-Principal Investigator. In cases where there is no suitable candidate within the group itself to act as Co-PI who meets the requirements of INCLIVA's Integration Plan, one of the following approaches will be adopted:

- 1) Recruiting emerging researchers newly joining INCLIVA to ensure the continuity of the group's scientific activity (see OE2).
- 2) Integration of the established group into another accredited INCLIVA R&D&I group with which it maintains a stable, long-term interaction through joint or complementary lines of research. In this case, the aim is to create larger groups with several principal investigators leading competitive public or private, national or international R&D&I projects.
- 3) Dissolution of the group due to the retirement of its coordinator. The remaining members of the group may apply to join another INCLIVA research group on an individual basis, if they so wish.

5. BUDGET

Item	Specific Objective	Annual amount (€)
Financial support (<i>Start-up Package</i>) for newly recruited R2B research staff at INCLIVA (from the 2027 financial year)	OE2 / OE4	50,000
INCLIVA Women Researchers' Leadership Programme. Includes the Futura Programme for early-career researchers or principal investigators of emerging research groups (funded by Caixa Popular)	OE3 / OE4	30,000 ^a
Grants for open-access publication	OE3 / OE4	20,000
Grants for training placements at prestigious institutions (priority is given to early-career researchers or principal investigators of emerging research groups)	OE3 / OE4	50,000 ^b
Support for <i>proofreading</i> publications	OE3 / OE4	15,000 ^c
Availability of <i>BioRender</i> software for creating professional scientific figures	OE3 / OE4	1,200 ^c
Co-funding of HR grants relating to recruitment programmes such as MS, RyC, PlanGenT or similar	OE3 / OE4	137,000 ^d
Training in research/innovation (priority given to early-career researchers)	OE3 / OE4	20,000 ^c
Support for drafting European projects	OE3 / OE4	20,000 ^e
TOTAL		343,200

^a The Leadership Programme is primarily aimed at early-career female researchers

^b For intramural grants for stays at prestigious centres in 2025 and subsequent years, being an early-career researcher or the principal investigator of an emerging research group will be viewed favourably

^c Initiative aimed at the entire INCLIVA scientific community

^d Approximate amount, depending on the number of researchers co-funded in the year

^e Approximate amount, depending on the proposals submitted by emerging researchers or principal investigators of emerging research groups

6. EVALUATION OF RESEARCH STAFF

Every five years, the Scientific Directorate evaluates the activity of the research groups that make up INCLIVA, with the participation of the Institute's Internal Scientific Committee and External Scientific Committee. The organisation has a five-year evaluation methodology for assessing the performance of emerging researchers or emerging and established research groups. This methodology takes into account the requirements of the ISCIII (number of competitive public research grants secured and their value, publications, results protected, transferred or commercialised, impact and dissemination, etc.). Furthermore, the CCE advises both emerging researchers and the coordinators of emerging groups during each of their transitions. Apart from the requirements of the ISCIII, this committee takes into account and views very positively the basic/clinical integration of emerging researchers or groups, their participation in international competitive projects, and the strategic value that the emerging researcher or group brings to the INCLIVA Institute.

7. MONITORING INDICATORS

To monitor the development and progress of emerging staff and groups, the following **indicators** have been defined; these will be collected **annually** and **their progress will be analysed over the five-year duration of the plan**:

Performance indicators for the 2026–2030 Mentoring Plan	Specific objective	INCLIVA Management Unit responsible for collecting the indicator
Number of meetings convened by the Scientific Directorate for emerging research staff to provide guidance or support during evaluations/transitions (at least 1 per year)	SO1	Attached to INCLIVA's Scientific Directorate
Number of project proposals from early-career researchers and principal investigators of emerging research groups that have been reviewed by the INCLIVA Research Committee during the year	OE1	National Projects
Number of proposals for international projects submitted by early-career researchers and principal investigators from emerging research groups that have received guidance from an experienced INCLIVA group or an external consultancy firm	OE1	Internationalisation
Number of competitive national or international public research projects applied for by early-career researchers and principal investigators from early-career research groups in the year	OE1	National Projects and Internationalisation
Number of innovation projects drafted by early-career researchers and principal investigators from emerging research groups, managed with the support of INCLIVA's Innovation Unit during the year	OE1	Innovation
Number of research/innovation outputs achieved by early-career researchers and principal investigators from emerging research groups, managed with the support of INCLIVA's Innovation Unit during the year	OE1	Innovation
Number of initiatives to disseminate results in the popular press carried out by early-career researchers and principal investigators of emerging research groups during the year	OE1	Communication

<i>Start-up Packages awarded during the year</i>	OE2	Deputy to the Scientific Director
Number of early-career female researchers or principal investigators from emerging research groups selected for the Futura Programme during the year	OE3	Attached to Scientific Management
Number of in-house grants for research stays awarded to early-career researchers or principal investigators of emerging research groups	OE3	Training and Mobility
Number of articles published openly during the year with direct funding from INCLIVA by early-career researchers and principal investigators of emerging research groups	OE3	Scientific Output
Number of articles by early-career researchers and principal investigators of emerging research groups that have been <i>proofread</i> with direct funding from INCLIVA during the year	OE3	Scientific Output
Number of co-funding grants for recruitment programmes during the year	OE3	Financial Management
Amount of co-funding grants for recruitment programmes during the year	OE3	Financial Management
Percentage of the institution's established research groups whose principal investigator is over 60 years of age and which have a co-principal investigator	OE4	Deputy to the Scientific Director

8. DISSEMINATION OF THE PLAN

In order to ensure the proper implementation of INCLIVA's Plan for the Support of Emerging Research Groups, it is essential to publicise its content, ensuring that it reaches the plan's intended recipients. To this end, the following dissemination channels, amongst others, are envisaged:

- Making it available on the Institute's intranet.
- Distribution via email mailing lists to Institute members.
- Through specific meetings organised by the Institute's Scientific Management with emerging research staff and those responsible for INCLIVA's emerging groups.
- Dedicated workshops at the centres that make up INCLIVA.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTATION

This Plan is closely linked to the following documents:

- INCLIVA Strategic Plan 2025–2029
- INCLIVA Integration Plan (last updated 2025)
- INCLIVA Membership Guide (last updated 2025)
- INCLIVA R&D&I Groups Evaluation Document (last updated 2024)
- INCLIVA HRS4R Human Resources Plan 2024–2026
- ISCI Technical Evaluation Guide 2025
- Appendix I: Criteria analysed during the ISCI's interim evaluation of researcher Joan Rodés (2025)

- Appendix II: Criteria analysed during the interim evaluation of Miguel Servet research staff by the ISCIII (2025).

ANNEX I – Criteria for the interim evaluation of researcher Joan Rodés by the ISCIII (2025)

- 1. Research areas pursued by Juan Rodés within the group. Degree of integration between research and clinical activity.** (For example, the establishment of specialised clinics with a research focus)
- 2. Analysis of the research group's environment and structure:** Highlight the added value to research and clinical care activities resulting from the individual's appointment at the institution, and the specific role of the clinician-researcher within the group.
- 3. Research projects applied for and/or funded in connection with the research area pursued.** For each project, the following must be indicated:
 - a. Project title
 - b. Role in the project
 - c. Funding body
 - d. Funding secured
 - e. Relation to your area of clinical expertise and/or needs identified in their local area
- 4. List of scientific publications since the start of the contract, indicating the signatory's position and lead authorship (first, last and/or corresponding author).** Highlight your name in a format that allows for easy identification: italics, red, underlined, etc. The publications must include objective indicators of scientific quality (the JCR for the year of publication may be used), relevance to the field of knowledge and the application of the results.
- 5. Transferability of the research carried out:** a list of clinical practice guidelines, registered patents (indicating whether or not they are currently being exploited), innovation activities, etc.; changes made to healthcare processes or diagnostic or therapeutic aspects as a result of the activity carried out.
- 6. Researcher training activities:** Supervised doctoral theses and final-year undergraduate or master's dissertations (TFG/TFM).
- 7. Dissemination of science to society.**
- 8. Critical analysis of their activity and risks regarding the viability of their scientific work in relation to clinical practice.**
- 9. Strengths and future plans.** Context of their long-term position whilst maintaining their clinical-research profile.

ANNEX II – Criteria for the interim evaluation of Miguel Servet research staff by the ISCIII (2025)

- 1. Structure of the research group** (including technical staff, pre-doctoral research fellows and postdoctoral research fellows) and the specific role of the researcher within the group. Identification of the group members.
- 2. Outline the group's lines of research and the funded research projects associated with each of them.** For each project, the following must be indicated:
 - a. Project title
 - b. Funding body
 - c. Funding obtained
 - d. Role of the researcher within the project (principal investigator, collaborator, etc.)
- 3. A list of scientific publications since the start of the contract, indicating the signatory's position and whether they are listed as the corresponding author** (highlight their name in a format that allows for easy identification: italics, red, underlined, etc.). The publications must include objective indicators of scientific quality (the JCR for the year of publication may be used), relevance to the field of knowledge and the application of the results.
- 4. Transferability of the research carried out:** list of clinical practice guidelines, registered patents (indicating whether or not they are currently being commercialised), innovation activities, etc.
- 5. Doctoral theses supervised:** a list of doctoral theses and Master's dissertations, and the specific role played by the researcher in their supervision.
- 6. Dissemination of science to society.**
- 7. Analysis of the research environment:** mobility, list of national (intra- and extra-institutional) and international collaborations, and available equipment and infrastructure.
- 8. Critical analysis of their research activity.**
- 9. Risks regarding the viability of their scientific activity.**
- 10. Strengths and plans for the future.**