



## PRESS RELEASE

# **BIST and UIC Barcelona recruit six researchers through the FBA Fellows programme, attracting scientific talent from the fields of health and the environment**

- **The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology (BIST) and the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC Barcelona) bring the FBA Fellows talent attraction programme to a close, backed by the Bosch Aymerich Foundation.**
- **The programme of the Bosch Aymerich Foundation is aimed at promoting outstanding scientific teaching and research.**

*Barcelona, 13 January 2021* - The **Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology (BIST)** and the **Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC Barcelona)** have each selected three fellows to teach and conduct research over the next three years. The incorporation of the six researchers marks the end of the **FBA Fellows programme** to attract scientific talent attraction, backed by the **Bosch Aymerich Foundation**.

The Bosch Aymerich Foundation, founded by engineer, architect and businessman Josep Maria Bosch Aymerich (Girona 1917 - Barcelona 2015) and his wife, Maria Rosa Escarpenter, has helped to promote the most recent FBA Fellows programme aimed at attracting scientific talent. The appointment of **FBA Fellows** intends to give special impetus to outstanding research and teaching in the fields of health (in particular, precision medicine) and the environment (in particular, sustainability and energy). Society today faces complex challenges in both these fields, a tragic example of which is the current healthcare crisis sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such issues require both a cross- and multidisciplinary perspective in order to drive pioneering research and improve how we educate and train new generations of researchers and professionals. The Bosch Aymerich Foundation wants to help generate these indispensable synergies.

An important part of BIST's research focuses primarily on two fundamental and interrelated global challenges faced by today's society: human health and environmental and energy sustainability. Through the application of genomics, bioinformatics, nanotechnology and other advanced experimental techniques, BIST aims to drive research in the field of **precision medicine** through in-depth studies of life-altering diseases such as cancer and metastasis, or those brought on by ageing, with a comprehensive and integrated approach towards the person and patient. BIST's contribution to the **environmental challenge** hones in on studying the causes of environmental degradation and climate change. They focus on four areas in particular: the direct conversion of sunlight into electricity using photovoltaic devices; artificial photosynthesis; new techniques for monitoring air, water and food quality; and carbon dioxide capture and utilisation.

For its part, UIC Barcelona has faculties in the field of health such as the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Dentistry. Some 54% of its student body is studying health sciences, and 11



of its 25 recognised research groups are also working in this field. Their research focuses on fields such as biomaterials, tissue regeneration, ageing, metabolism, physiotherapy and healthcare policies, among others. UIC Barcelona also has seven company-sponsored university chairs, through which they steer collaboration with the private health sector.

Additionally, conscious of the progressive and unsustainable urbanisation of the planet, UIC Barcelona School of Architecture is increasingly prioritising research into sustainability and resilience. The School is home to two research groups —the first in Genetic Architecture, and the second in Community-based Urbanism— and a research laboratory for Technological Innovation in Industrialised and Sustainable Construction. It is also planning to set up a Research Institute for Sustainable Architecture and Urban Planning. For UIC Barcelona, this collaboration presents a magnificent opportunity to attract the best research talent to join their outstanding teaching team in tenure-track positions.

The FBA Fellows were selected following two calls held by UIC Barcelona and BIST in May 2020. The six new fellows are:

At UIC Barcelona, **Osnat Hakimi**, expert in biomedicine, bioinformatics and bioengineering; **Conrado Aparicio**, researcher in dentistry and biomaterials, and **Lorenzo Chelleri**, expert in sustainability in architecture, construction and urban planning.

At BIST, **James Eills**, until recently researcher for the Division of Chemistry at the University of Southampton, who will join the IBEC; **Marion Salzer**, specialist researcher in cellular ageing using applications that study fertility, who will join the CRG as an FBA Fellow; and **Ekaterina Khestanova**, the newest FBA Fellow to join a multidisciplinary research project at the ICFO and the ICN2, who until recently worked at the Department of Physics and Engineering at ITMO University (Saint Petersburg, Russia).

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### About the Bosch Aymerich Foundation

The [Bosch Aymerich Foundation](#), founded in 1996 by Josep Maria Bosch Aymerich and his wife, Maria Rosa Escarpenter Fargas, aims to design, promote and organise activities in the fields of art, culture, science, health, sport, care for the elderly, youth, architecture and urban planning, preferably in Catalonia.

### About UIC Barcelona

The [Universitat Internacional de Catalunya](#) (UIC Barcelona) was founded in 1997 with the aim of offering outstanding university education and promoting research that benefits society. With strong ties to the world of business and a highly international profile, the institution offers 16 bachelor's degrees, 8 double degrees, around 30 international double degrees and a wide range of postgraduate programmes across both campuses, located in Barcelona and Sant Cugat del Vallès.



Barcelona Institute of  
Science and Technology



## About BIST

The [Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology](#) (BIST) is a multidisciplinary research institution that brings together seven Catalan research centres of excellence. BIST promotes and supports collaboration between members of its diverse scientific community with the aim of playing a leading role in expanding the frontiers of knowledge.

The centres affiliated with BIST are the [Centre for Genomic Regulation](#) (CRG), the [Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia](#) (IBEC), the [Institute of Photonic Sciences](#) (ICFO), the [Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia](#) (ICIQ), the [Catalan Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology](#) (ICN2), the [Institute for High Energy Physics](#) (IFAE), and the [Barcelona Institute for Research in Biomedicine](#) (IRB Barcelona).



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