

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

**APPROVED BY THE DIRECTION
COMMITTEE - 2019/10/10**

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01 Preamble

ISGlobal is a research, translation and education institution dedicated to global health, and holds an internationally acknowledged leadership position in the field. To make it possible, a wide range of prestigious public and private institutions in Catalonia and Spain agreed to share their vision, support and effort, with the decisive impulse from La Caixa Foundation. Our institute, located in two campuses (Campus Clínic and Campus Mar) hosts more than 400 people (80% dedicated to research) from 35 countries, and faces the future standing on solid institutional and scientific ground.

ISGlobal has a number of distinctive traits that make it an ambitious benchmark center in European science. It approaches global challenges by integrating research and innovation, translation and education to improve health and health equity worldwide. It has a broad portfolio in communicable and non-communicable diseases, including environmental and climate determinants, with special attention to poor and vulnerable populations and settings. ISGlobal's approach is transdisciplinary and bench-to-beside-to community in nature, ranging from the molecular level to the population level and including disciplines from health life and environmental sciences. ISGlobal is globally connected through its wide network of partners across more than 50 high-, medium- and low- income countries, including a long-term institutional partnership with the Fundação Manhiça – Centro de Investigaçao em Saúde de Manhiça (FM-CISM) in Mozambique, as well as in Bolivia and Morocco.

This thriving reality is not without significant challenges, and this is why the present strategic plan is particularly important. ISGlobal merger process was legally completed in June 2016. However, this process started in 2013 with the “Strategic Basis for the Alliance” which were deployed in 2013-14 and remained active during the complete merger period, up to 2016. At the end of 2016, most of the key actions were implemented (see: “Updated follow-up of the Strategic Bases actions”) and the new strategic cycle for the 2017-2020 period was initiated.

The ISGlobal's Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was formulated through a wide participative work and consultation, including several retreats and working groups. It included all ISGlobal areas: Research, Innovation, Policy and Global Development, Education and Training, Management and Governance.

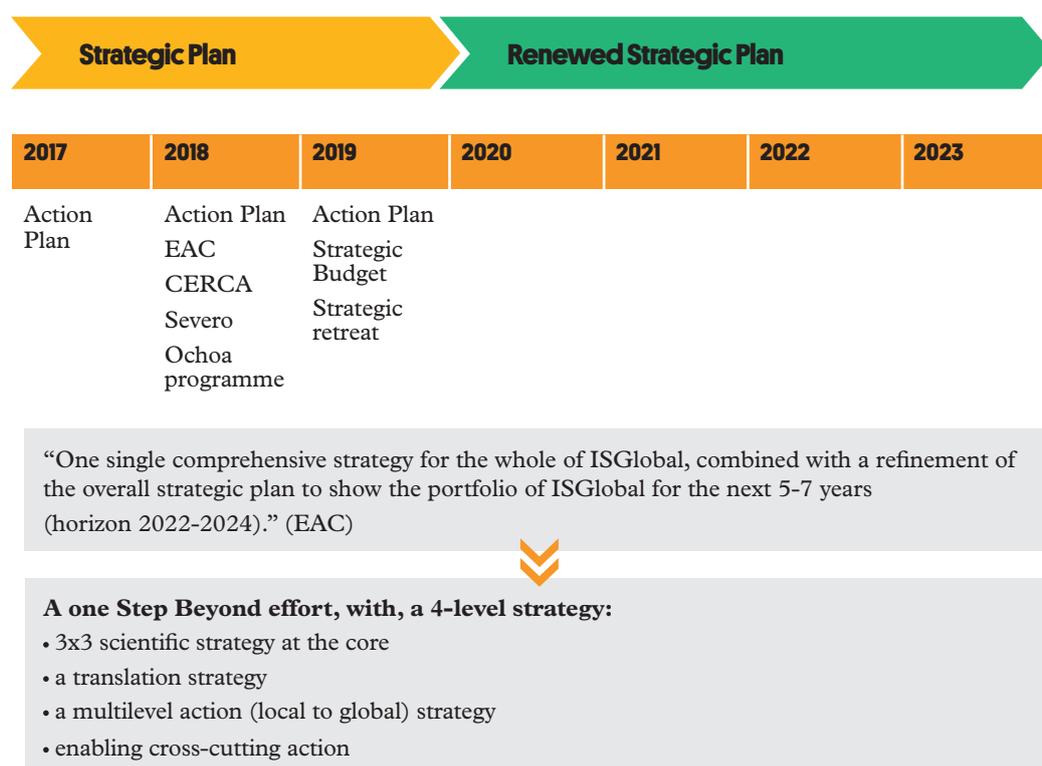
Our Strategic Plan 2017-2020 was approved by the Direction Committee on the 31st of October 2017. After the External Advisory Committee (EAC) and CERCA review visits in November 2017, a detailed analysis of the recommendations was done at the Direction and Scientific Committees and other targeted meetings,

within the framework of the Strategic Plan. One of the EAC recommendations was related to the long-term strategy of the institution, pointing at “*the need for one single comprehensive strategy for the whole of ISGlobal, combined with a refinement of the overall strategic plan to show the portfolio of ISGlobal for the next 5-7 years*”.

Accordingly, in 2018 our Board of Trustees supported our proposal that our long-term strategy should build on the core scientific and translational contents of the Severo Ochoa (SO) Programme as submitted to the SO call in January 2019.

The current Strategic Plan 2019-2023 is the result of a process of internal consultation and discussion at different levels of the organization, including a Strategic Retreat of the Direction Committee with other invited participants (May 2019), meetings with the Core and Campus Scientific Committees (June-September 2019) and an individual consultation to the entire ISGlobal staff, planned for September. The final internal approval is planned for the Direction Committee of October. The completion of the process (Figure 1) will entail the approval by ISGlobal’s Executive and Trustees’ Boards in November and December, respectively.

Figure 1 Summary of the process



02 Our renewed strategy

This is **One Step Beyond effort** has been developed as part of:

- **an evolving strategy** responding to the consolidation of our institution, with a fully completed merger and 3 years of positive trends in key activity and delivery indicators;
- **a renewed strategy**, taking into account the recommendations of our EAC and CERCA reviews at the end of 2017, as well as a revised SWOT in 2019; and
- **a funded strategy**, involving, among others, a newly created budgetary scheme, with an increasing yearly contribution for strategic actions up to 2022.

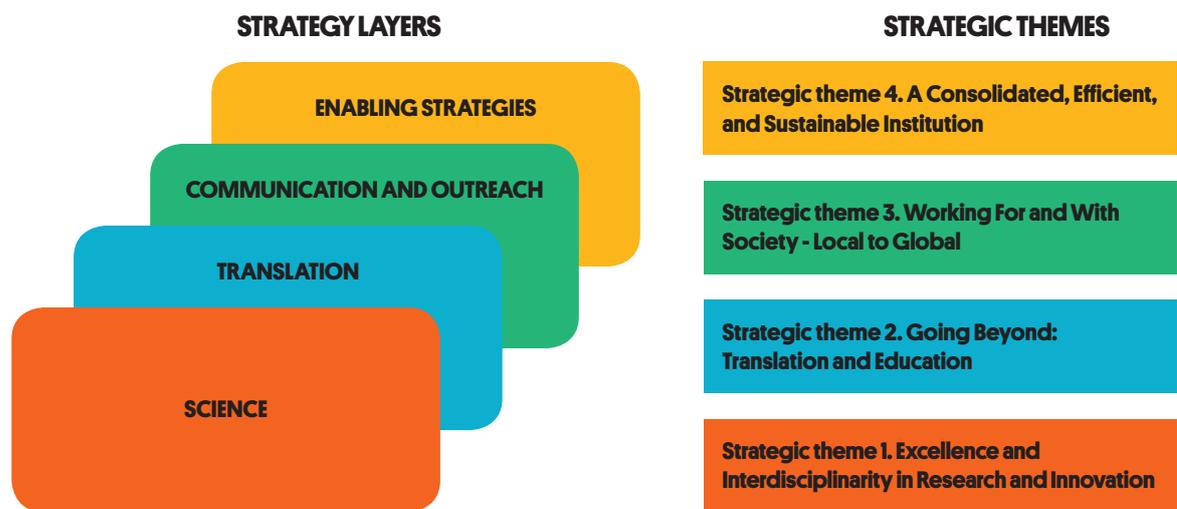
Such renewed Strategy involves **4 main strategic “layers”**, closely interconnected, including:

- **a 3x3 Research and Innovation strategy** at the core, focusing on areas of proven scientific excellence and interdisciplinary areas of future development, largely based on current and projected strengths, based on the Severo Ochoa proposal, covering from discovery to application;
- a **Translation strategy**, including our so-called Initiatives, as well as policy, development, advocacy, training and education activities;
- **Communication and Outreach**, involving from the local level to the regional and the global, the north and the south, and the different key stakeholders;
- an **Institutional structure strategy**, based on key cross-cutting areas of action, from governance to management and infrastructures, as well as partnerships and alliances.

The architecture of the Strategic Plan 2017-2020 has been remodeled for responding to our **renewed strategy with the 4 main strategic layers or strategic levels** (Figure 2), resulting in **4 main strategic themes**:

- Strategic theme 1. Excellence and Interdisciplinarity in Research and Innovation
- Strategic theme 2. Going Beyond: Translation and Education
- Strategic theme 3. Working for and with Society - Local to Global
- Strategic theme 4. A Consolidated, Efficient, and Sustainable Institution

Figure 2 Strategic layers and themes



Moreover, the renewed strategy **includes a timeline and systematic metrics**, for the deployment of actions and to assess the achievement of results and outcomes.

03 Mission, Vision and Values

The Mission, Vision and Values were defined in October 2013 as part of the Strategic Bases 2014-2016, and have been kept as they were for the Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

VISION

A world class research and translation centre in Global Health working towards a world in which all people can enjoy health.

MISSION

To improve Global Health and promote Health Equity, through excellence in research, translation and application of knowledge.

Values:

(The short explanations provide an overview of the chosen terms)

1. Excellence

We consider excellence in research and translation as a sine qua non condition to fulfil our mission. This must be achieved through innovative and competitive research, through national, international and multidisciplinary collaborations.

2. Commitment to Global Public Health

We view our research as a scientific area within Global Public Health and express our willingness and commitment towards contributing to Public Health actions to promote the health of populations.

3. Independence

We preserve our scientific independence by setting our own goals and through pursuing them accordingly.

4. Respect for Diversity

We develop projects and solutions aimed at meeting the challenges of Global Health, while respecting the diverse social and cultural context where they are implemented.

5. Highest Ethical Standards

We conduct our research following the highest ethical standards and applying existing codes of good scientific practice.

6. Creativity in a friendly work environment

We are committed to promoting respectful and productive workplaces. We honour personal and professional differences and strive to create an environment that allows balance between our professional and personal lives, and that creates a workplace that we can be proud of.

7. Fairness, Accountability and Transparency

We accept our responsibility to ensure that all our activities are open and transparent and that decisions are justified. Our staff members are responsible and accountable for the actions and decisions they make regarding management and research and for the resulting outcomes. We provide assurance that management and research undertaken are appropriate and that policy and legislative obligations are being met.

8. We work because work can be fun, fulfilling and exciting

We enjoy our work and appreciate the fun of being part of an organization that is working for the common global good. Having fun through work means knowing that what we each day can make a positive impact, while being inspired by what we do. We believe a workplace that supports respect for one another, teamwork and diversity of backgrounds and views is a fun workplace.

04 Our Shared Narrative

In parallel with the strategic planning process, we have developed a shared narrative as a process for finding the common denominator that all of us share. The Shared Narrative of ISGlobal has been developed as an exercise of collective intelligence with the participation of more than 80 people representing all the departments and areas of the institution. We have discussed which is the best of ISGlobal, what makes it unique, and which are our strengths.

The Shared Narrative has resulted in a transcendent purpose with its core elements:

1 Basic Concept:

Equity

3 Distinctive Arguments:

We think of everyone

We are all here

We all go for it

1 Transcendental Purpose:

We foster collective intelligence to transform global health and improve equity.

05 Distinctiveness

ISGlobal's distinctiveness is characterized by:

- Working on Global Health through the integration of research, innovation, translation and education to focus on improving health and health equity worldwide.
- Broad portfolio in communicable and non-communicable diseases and their environmental and climate determinants.
- A multidisciplinary faculty including disciplines from health sciences, life sciences and environmental sciences, from the molecular level to the population level, to bring evidence into action.
- A strong international, creative, talent-focused environment.
- Close links with two leading hospitals and two universities, which provides opportunities for both collaborating with clinicians and pre- and post-graduate teaching.
- Global reach and partnerships across high-, medium- and low- income countries, including a long-term partnership with the FM-CISM in Mozambique.
- Broad and strong institutional governance, with increased private participation that helps secure institutional and financial sustainability in a challenging economic and social environment.

06 Strategic Themes and Key Actions



Strategic Theme I: Excellence and Interdisciplinarity in Research and Innovation

Overall Aim: Develop **interdisciplinary science** to improve our understanding of complex global health problems, and to contribute to the urgent needs of implementing the SDGs agenda. This will facilitate development of cutting-edge science and innovation, and implementation of interventions and disease prevention.

We will follow a 3x3 approach (Figure 3) creating 3 new cross-disciplinary groups with strong focus on frontier methods and technologies to work interactively with existing research programmes in 3 major research areas in which we are known internationally.

The three new cross-disciplinary groups address current strategic challenges in research:

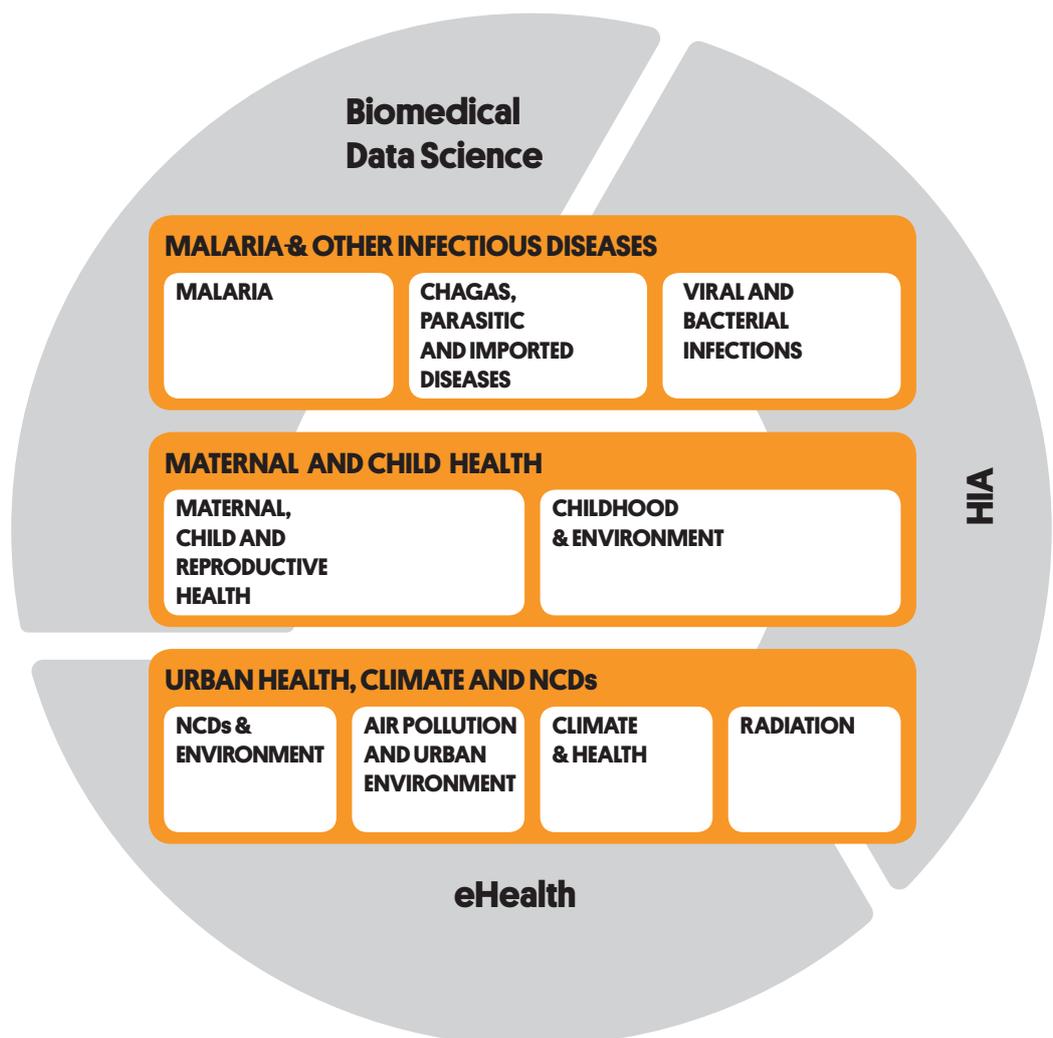
- 1) **e-Health:** focusing on point-of-care RDTs; wearable and smartphone-based technologies and per-sonal and remote sensing technologies.
- 2) **Biomedical data science:** prioritizing work on machine learning and artificial intelligence related to cross-omics data in infectious and NCDs studies from our own research and from consortia, environmental visualization data and large climate data sets.
- 3) **Health impact assessment:** integrating the effects of interrelated environmental, infectious and behavioral changes associated with specific interventions and potential policy scenarios.

We will prioritize the implementation of the new methods and technologies in three major research areas:

- 1) **Urban health, climate and non-communicable diseases (NCDs):** including the programmes of Air Pollution and Urban Environment; Climate and Health; NCDs and Environment and Radiation.
- 2) **Malaria and other infectious diseases:** including the following programmes: Malaria; Chagas and Imported Diseases and Viral and Bacterial Infections.

3) **Maternal and Child Health:** including the programmes of Childhood and Environment and Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health.

Each of the nine research programmes at ISGlobal converge in one or more of the 3 major research areas. By developing close interactions between the new cross-disciplinary groups on methods and technologies, and the groups in each of the major research areas, we will strengthen ISGlobal's excellence and at the same time promote synergies and integration.



Key actions:

1. Strengthen the scientific coherence and functionality of the scientific organization following the 3 x 3 approach.
The role of the research programmes should be strengthened according to the current policy on scientific organization. In the context of the 3x3 strategy, we will proactively pursue synergies between programmes. We will pay particular attention to the ERC Synergy calls. Other relevant actions will include reviewing and updating the non-tenure track policy and developing a postdoctoral programme.
2. Promote and reinforce the scientific excellence by strengthening our existing and new research lines taking into account: i) the 3 x 3 approach, ii) the external evaluation and advice, and iii) the funding opportunities. This will include recruiting new groups in the cross-disciplinary areas and recruit specialist PhD students and postdocs for the 3x3 strategy. We will continue to recruit new members via competitive fellowships, including ICREA. We will review and strengthen our current proactive policy to encourage and support ERC applications.
3. Guarantee the appropriate structural support to group leaders reinforcing the scientific career model based on international recruitment and continued external evaluation.
4. Develop a coherent and comprehensive core facilities strategy, including:
Biostatics and DM Unit, GIS, Bioinformatics, omics, Air Lab, Biobank, and other external facilities (at PRBB and Campus Clínic – IDIBAPS/UB/HClínic)
5. Implement a robust strategy and infrastructures to achieve high standards of quality for data management, storage, and high-performance computing, adopting widely accepted guiding principles on scientific data management, open data, and stewardship.
6. Extend our current innovation strategy, in line with the 3 x 3 approach.



Strategic Theme 2: Going Beyond: Translation and Education

Overall Aim: Consolidate the ISGlobal model on knowledge management and dissemination, by maximizing our capacity to effect change, and becoming a hub in global health education and training and for the SDGs 2030 Local Agenda implementation.

Key actions:

1. Expand ISGlobal's translational strategy in research, innovation and education by adopting the SDGs and Planetary Health Frameworks. The strategy will reinforce our collaboration with international institutions and stakeholders (like WHO, EC, and others), and improve our translational Initiatives, expanding their reach to NCDs, climate and environment. This include the development on new initiatives based on our expertise in Global Health in the context of SDGs, and Planetary Health.
2. Strengthen and expand the current education portfolio in Global Health in line with the 3x3 approach.
3. Expand our current education programmes with an online/digital component. Increase the attraction of our education programmes by also offering some of the current programmes also online/digital format, and creating new programmes.
4. Broaden the PhD programme by supporting PhD students' international mobility and access to training activities, both as participants and trainers.
5. Guarantee that ISGlobal training programme supports its staff in achieving their maximum professional development.
6. Intensify the capacity-building and knowledge translation activities of our staff in collaboration with our international partners.
7. Consolidate and expand our collaboration and activities as a University Research Institute affiliated with UPF and UB.



Strategic Theme 3. Working For and With Society - from local to global

Overall Aim: Engage ISGlobal in a creative and dynamic dialogue and interaction with the society identifying and developing best practices in science communication and outreach.

Key actions:

1. Consolidate the ISGlobal brand as an international global health center with a fresh presence and adapting our communication channels to the latest social trends.
2. Strengthen the ISGlobal's profile and visibility and develop innovative experiences in Open Science by involving key stakeholders and facilitating the engagement of researchers.
3. Grow our outreach activities in collaboration with local and international stakeholders.



Strategic Theme 4. A Consolidated, Efficient, and Sustainable Institution

Overall Aim: Develop ISGlobal as an international reference in research, translation, and education, based on an innovative partnership among private and public trustees. Implement a robust and innovative management and funding strategy to guarantee that all support services and processes are integrated, high quality, and efficient.

Key actions:

1. Strengthen the existing strategic partnerships with our private and public trustees in research, translation and education, working together to ensure that their continued support to ISGlobal is appropriately appreciated by society. We will also explore options for attracting new trustees. This is especially relevant to guarantee our close links with the two leading hospitals, Hospital Clínic and PS Mar, and universities, UB and UPF, and keep ISGlobal at the frontier of research and translation in Global Health.
2. Ensure a robust, effective, inclusive and transparent leadership model and develop a succession plan for key positions.
3. Guarantee the continuity of our high level external evaluation and recommendations from the External Advisory Committee and the International Global Health Partnership Board.
4. Embed our institutional commitment to gender equity in all activities and at all levels.
5. Explore new strategic international alliances to promote geographic expansion/diversity, and reinforce ISGlobal's network and regional presence. To do this we will seek new strategic local and international collaborations, and consolidate our current partnerships in Mozambique, Bolivia and Morocco.
6. Develop and implement a corporate risk management plan, including a corporate compliance programme and quality assurance plan. We will also build a system of Key Performance Indicators.
7. Promote talent as a central axis of our organization in line with the principles of our HRS4R certification to provide a stimulating and participative international working environment.
8. Consolidate a strategy for funding diversification including both public and private sources and institutions by i) increasing our capacity to advocate for and attract local and international funds through partnerships and alliances with key international actors; ii) review and updated our current fundraising efforts.
9. Consolidate the Projects Unit to deliver the best service to our researchers, departments and funders.

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10. Safeguard and reinforce our state-of-the-art information and communication technology infrastructure (ICT), guarantee its security and integrity, and facilitate management and decision-making.
 11. Continue securing the available space in both campuses, while developing the strategy towards acquiring an appropriate core building.
 12. Improve efficiency by ensuring the best procurement and financial management practices, and providing adequate financial indicators for decision making.

07 Implementation and Follow-up

To guarantee a successful implementation of this strategic plan, a yearly Action Plan will be developed by each area/department and discussed at the ISGlobal Direction and Scientific Committees, which will monitor, assess and report periodically its progress. In response to the integrative character of the strategic themes and key actions, all ISGlobal areas and departments will collaborate in the implementation of their specific actions.

The *Coordination and Research Management Office* of the Projects Unit will be responsible of assessing and monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan with special attention to the key outcomes / key performance indicators that will include: scientific impact, leadership, competitive funding, benchmarking with leading international institutions, positions and progress in international rankings, high level awards and distinctions, high impact translational activities, international attraction of talent among others.

The External Advisory Committee (EAC) will be periodically consulted and the Board of Trustees regularly informed of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

ANNEXES

Swot

The SWOT is the result of a progressive institutional exercise:

- 1- The first proposal was based on the strengths and needs/obstacles identified in the Research programmes and the STAC-SAC reports (2015, 2016). This first proposal was discussed at the Research Retreat of June 2016, and further reviewed at the Core Scientific Committee in Dec 2016.
- 2- This first proposal was completed with the contributions of all areas (Innovation, Policy and Global Development, Education and Training, and Management) for the Strategic Retreat of February 2017.
- 3- Afterwards, all attendees were requested to select the top five items of each area (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). We received response from 22 of the 30 attendees.
- 4- The SWOT was simplified for the Severo Ochoa Proposal on January 2019.
5. The SWOT was proposed to be updated within the review of the Strategic Plan to include the long-term strategy until 2023. For that, all participants at the Strategic Retreat of May 2019 were asked to review the SWOT and incorporate/remove current circumstances that are/are not or will/will not be relevant for the period 2019-2023.
6. The current proposal integrates the inputs from the Strategic Retreat (May 2019) and the Severo Ochoa version.

STRENGTHS

1. One of Europe's leading research centres in global health
2. Strategic international partnerships and worldwide alliances
3. Multidisciplinary expertise and international leadership in CDs, NCDs and its environmental and climate determinants
4. Innovative approach to translating research into action and policy
5. Private-Public partnership that strengthens our sustainability
6. Consolidated partnership with two top Spanish universities and sharing campus with two leading hospital-based health research institutes and SO/MdM centres
7. Solid and well recognized postgraduate education and training programmes
8. Strong communication capacities beyond scientific audiences, very active in social media
9. Laboratory and technical capabilities and resources both intramural and campus based
10. Alignment of scientific goals with the new 2030 agenda on sustainable development and planetary health

WEAKNESSES

1. Need to increase critical mass and expertise in key cross-disciplinary areas¹
2. Lack of sufficient strategy to engage groups and programmes in the two campus to work together
3. Need to reinforce support via structural funding to research groups
4. Space limitations (wet labs, offices) and bi-localization
5. Insufficient structural support for scientific services and facilities including the need to reinforce partnership agreements for specific infrastructures (phase I clinical trials unit and insectary)
6. Need to support the professional development of non-research staff
7. Need to continue supporting gender equality
8. Lack of a succession policy to deal appropriately with the aging of the faculty
9. Lack of a comprehensive strategy with the European Union
10. Weak system of KPIs both for management and administration and need of an institutional quality assurance and risk assessment methodology

¹ mHealth, Diagnostics and Exposure Assessment; Data Science and Big Data; HiA and Implementation Science

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a worldwide strategic agenda for global development, including NCDs and climate for the first time in the GH agenda
2. Social demand for quick, effective responses to environmental health crisis and epidemics
3. Increasing opportunities to access available databases – Big Data and Open Access
4. Social awareness of science importance, with a specific momentum in areas where ISGlobal is strong
5. Expanding our research expertise and institutional capacities to wide geographical areas
6. Increasing demand for online/digital education in Global Health
7. New Funding Opportunities including Horizon Europe
8. Marca Barcelona as one more incentive for talent attraction
9. Plan for a new research center developed by Fundació La Caixa and for a new campus expansion on planetary wellbeing at UPF
10. Increasing recognition of the value of digital interventions to improve health systems and global health

THREATS

1. Difficulties in attracting international talent due to relatively low salaries in Spain
2. Uncertainty in sustainable funding for strategic international partnerships in Low and Middle Income Countries
3. Funding limitations for national fellowships and international projects
4. Culture of health innovation still in early phases in Spain
5. New complex and rigid laws under development/implementation: transparency, public purchase, travel and migration permits, data protection...
6. Staling of international support to Global Health research and training specially in vaccines, climate...
7. Increasing risks including cyberattacks, data protection...

A partnership:

