



History of the IIMCB development

The International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw (IIMCB) was established in Poland in 1995 under an international agreement between the government of the Republic of Poland and UNESCO which was formally enacted by the Polish parliament on June 26, 1997. The provisions of these documents have secured the Institute's special status and independence since it started its operations in 1999. The unique and international character of the IIMCB follows the best examples of scientific research institutions across the world.

The IIMCB is a research institute in the field of life sciences, holding the highest scientific category (A+) based on a parametric evaluation of research entities in Poland that was conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science. With more than 250 staff members on board, the Institute consists of 14 laboratories, 6 core facilities and 10 research support units.

The IIMCB is directly overseen by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) who supervises the organization and activities of the Institute, as well as nominates the Institute's Director and members of the International Advisory Board (IAB). The IAB is composed of prominent scientists, with the majority of members coming from abroad. The Board, among other tasks, provides strategic advice on research and institutional directions of the Institute and approves financial reports and plans. After thorough assessment, they recommend candidates for the position of Director and Laboratory Leader. The IAB plays an essential role in evaluation of the scientific output of Laboratory Leaders.

Mission & goals

The IIMCB consistently strives to achieve its stated mission:

We support ambitious scientists of any nationality, driven by passion to pursue frontier research that aims to make a difference for society. We follow the principles of scientific freedom, integrity, and responsibility. We help researchers develop their careers through training and mentoring at all levels, and we encourage collaborations among them. We provide efficient administrative support that enables scientists to focus on their research.

The mission is fulfilled through the goals which have been defined in three areas:

Scientific quality:

- make important scientific discoveries and report them in high-quality publications;
- strive for scientific excellence in our research;
- achieve international recognition among the best research institutions in Europe.

Institutional development and partnerships:

- obtain a larger building and reach a critical mass of 20 research groups with complementary expertise, supported by professional state-of-the-art core facilities;
- increase internal synergies between research groups;
- build strong national and international networks of academic and industrial partners for intellectual exchange, collaboration, and training;
- improve the visibility of the IIMCB, also through enhanced activity in social media.



Organizational culture:

- give every staff member a sense of common mission and shared responsibility;
- ensure transparent internal regulations, including the principles of the equal treatment of all coworkers and stipulations of the HR Excellence in Research award;
- support the career development of all coworkers;
- provide a clear institutional structure, effective internal procedures, and the division of duties;
- lessen administrative duties for scientists;
- support collegiality at all levels of the Institute;
- foster a professional and friendly work atmosphere and effective internal communication among all staff members;
- care for the common property and areas of the Institute;
- adjust the organization and management of the Institute according to its growth and emerging needs.

Research

Within the IIMCB structure, there are 14 independent research groups headed by junior and senior Laboratory Leaders:

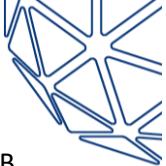
- ✉ Matthias Bochtler, Laboratory of Structural Biology
- ✉ Janusz M. Bujnicki, Laboratory of Bioinformatics and Protein Engineering
- ✉ Andrzej Dziembowski, Laboratory of RNA Biology - ERA Chairs Group
- ✉ Jacek Jaworski, Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology
- ✉ Aleksandra Kołodziejczyk, Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology
- ✉ Jacek Kuźnicki, Laboratory of Neurodegeneration
- ✉ Ewelina Małecka-Grajek, Laboratory of Single-Molecule Biophysics
- ✉ Marta Miączyńska, Laboratory of Cell Biology
- ✉ Gracjan Michlewski, Laboratory of RNA-Protein Interactions - Dioscuri Centre
- ✉ Katarzyna Mleczko-Sanecka, Laboratory of Iron Homeostasis
- ✉ Marcin Nowotny, Laboratory of Protein Structure
- ✉ Wojciech Pokrzywa, Laboratory of Protein Metabolism
- ✉ Cecilia L. Winata, Laboratory of Zebrafish Developmental Genomics
- ✉ Jan Brezovsky, Laboratory of Biomolecular Interactions and Transport AMU/IIMCB in Poznań

Generally, their research focuses on studying the molecular mechanisms of human diseases across the levels of biological organization from atoms to organisms (worms, zebrafish, mice).

Research at the IIMCB is supported by an annual statutory subsidy from the Ministry of Education and Science and a budgetary subsidy from PAS. Still, up to 70% of the yearly institutional budget comes from external competitive sources. Since 2000, our scientists have received 319 grants. Many prestigious ones come from European and other foreign sources, such as: the EU Framework Programmes (3 ERC grants, 1 EIC grant), Structural Funds through the Foundation for Polish Science, European Molecular Biology Organization, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Wellcome Trust, European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Grants, and the Polish-Swiss Research Programme. In 2023, the IIMCB will implement an institutional project entitled "*RNA and Cell Biology - from Fundamental Research to Therapies*" (RACE) selected for funding in the Teaming for Excellence programme under Horizon Europe.

The IIMCB researchers at different career stages also benefit from diverse grants offered by Polish sources: National Science Centre, National Centre for Research and Development, Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange, Polish Science Fund and Ministry of Education and Science.





Career & education

The environment of the Institute is international with English as the working language. The IIMCB implements the policy of (i) international competitions for all research positions, including PhD students, (ii) open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, and (iii) institutionalized support for foreign candidates, which has resulted in an increase in the number of foreign employees (currently approx. 30%). All laboratory leaders are selected in international competitions run by the IAB. Laboratory leaders may come from any country, they need to hold a PhD title, have a significant body of research to their credit and a bold and realistic vision of their own research in line with the mission of the IIMCB. Most laboratory leaders currently employed at the IIMCB (both Polish and foreign nationalities) were employed directly after their post-doctoral training.

Human resources are the most important assets, thus the IIMCB follows the rules put forward by the European Commission in the HR Excellence in Research programme, which the IIMCB joined in 2013. The HR Excellence in Research logo is an accreditation that identifies institutions as a stimulating and favorable working environment. Respect for the principles of equality and diversity is important to the IIMCB, therefore Gender Equality Plan has been recently implemented.

An important landmark in the development of the IIMCB is the right to confer PhD degree in biology that we were granted in 2019, upon introducing the new Law on Higher Education and Science in Poland. This enabled the IIMCB to establish, together with eight other research institutions, the Warsaw PhD School in Natural and BioMedical Sciences (Warsaw-4-PhD). This interdisciplinary school commenced its activities on October 1, 2019, to educate doctoral students in four scientific disciplines: biology, chemistry, medicine, and physics.

Partnership

To strengthen its international position, in January 2020, the IIMCB became the first Polish member of the EU-LIFE alliance of 15 independent research institutes from 15 European countries. This alliance is working towards excellence in life sciences, giving high regard to quality and responsible science, as well as shining the spotlight on issues related to European science policies.

As stated in the Mission, the IIMCB conducts fundamental research aimed at understanding human diseases at the molecular and cellular level which is a basis for creating innovative therapeutic and diagnostic methods. To ensure that the results of this research are translated into clinical applications, the IIMCB is open to cooperation with the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry, including sharing resources and expertise.

The Institute also supports social initiatives that serve groups of patients with diseases. To this end, IIMCB has fostered two patient support organizations: Polish Association Supporting People with Inflammatory Bowel Disease "J-elita" and Polish Ciliary Dyskinesia Society.

Outreach

Moreover, the IIMCB is also involved in various educational programs and popularization activities performed by the Centre for Innovative Bioscience Education (BioCEN), for which the IIMCB is a strategic partner. The Centre organizes laboratory workshops for elementary and high school students, practical courses for school teachers, scientific training for businesses, open lectures for broader audiences, scientific shows, and picnics for children. The IIMCB scientists frequently appear on radio and television programs, newspapers and participate in science festivals and science nights.

