

Una manera de hacer Europa



BUENAS PRÁCTICAS Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

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Programa Operativo de Cataluña

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Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional

The project titled “Expansion of the Animal Research Facility at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)” has been presented as Best Practice

The Animal Research Facility is a scientific-technical service provided by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) that is dedicated to the production and maintenance of experimental animals, as well as to the management of suitable spaces for procedures involving the use of these animals.

The aim of this project is to extend (840m²) and update these facilities by fitting out the areas for storage and services, biological safety, animal facilities and medical and technical psychology, with the aim of providing service to those groups and companies that may require it (and for whom, currently, this is not possible) and in order to comply with the requirements established by current legislation regarding centres using experimental animals, so as to achieve optimal conditions of prevention, safety and health in the workplace.



The project receives European funds from the Catalonia 2014-2020 ERDF Operation Programme. The project involves a total cost of €1,500,000, an eligible cost of €1,239,669.42 and an ERDF grant of €619,834.71 (ERDF contribution of 50%).

The number of researchers benefiting from the project will increase from 320 (180 women and 140 men) to 390 (210 women and 180 men); 3 new jobs linked to the project will be created.

This undertaking is presented as Best Practice because it meets the following criteria:

1. High degree of dissemination to beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries, and the public.

The operation has been adequately disseminated through the following communication actions:

A large placard prominently posted throughout the implementation of the work involved.



A definitive and permanent plaque installed on the new premises



Information of the operation on the UAB's Animal Research Facility website.



Information of the operation on the UAB Research Park website: at the termination of the project, information on the undertaking was disseminated through external media to reach other potential beneficiaries and also the general public as a means of highlighting the installation in an operational environment.

The screenshot shows the website header with the UAB Research Park logo and navigation links: 'Conoce el Parc', 'Servicios', 'Capacidades en I+D+i', 'Entorno', and 'Entidades'. The main content area features a red banner with the text 'La actualidad del Parc'. Below this, a news article is displayed with the title 'El Servicio de Animalario de la UAB se amplía y se renueva'. The article includes a date '14/10/2020' and a sub-headline 'El Servicio de Animalario de la UAB ha llevado a cabo una ampliación de 840 m2 dedicados, principalmente, a nuevos espacios de laboratorio'. The main text describes the expansion and the goals of the new facility, such as enhancing research excellence and talent. A red box highlights a specific detail: 'Con un coste total de 1.239.669,42 €, esta remodelación ha contado con la cofinanciación de 619.934,71 € del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional otorgado por el Departamento de Empresa y Conocimiento de la Generalitat.' To the right of the article, there are sections for 'Noticias relacionadas' (featuring a video thumbnail about audiovisual content), a 'Buscador de noticias' (news search bar), and 'Contacto' information for the UAB Research Park.

2. Incorporation of innovative elements

The design of the new facility has been carried out with the active participation of future users in order to respond to the real needs of the researchers who will work there.

The extension of the building and its facilities and equipment has been geared towards complying with the principles of good laboratory practice (GLP), which are used to carry out tests for obtaining data on the properties and risks for humans, animals and the environment of any chemical substance.

Compliance with GLP allows the substances studied to be submitted to the competent regulatory authorities for official registration, which is the first step before they can be placed on the market. This means a reduction in the time and investment required to carry out pre-clinical studies, an increase in receptiveness on the part of companies willing to become involved in the development of new biomedical products and, finally, the ability to compete with research produced by universities in the United Kingdom and the United States, which are the main competitors as providers of innovation.

3. Appropriateness of the results obtained from the operation with the established objectives.

The aim of the project is to extend the infrastructure of the Animal Research Facility, where work is carried out with live animals to undertake studies in animal models, with three main purposes.

The first is to apply new genetic-manipulation technologies, using viral vectors and pathogenic agents, for developing therapies with applications in many areas of study (neurosciences, neuropsychology, cancer, immunology, etc.).

Second, to promote research of excellence, that is multidisciplinary, translational (i.e., fulfils the need to strengthen links between basic and clinical research) and frontier-focused (research carried out at

the “frontiers of knowledge” in a specific area or field) by attracting and hosting new talent. Some aspects that characterise frontier research are, for example, addressing questions on which there is strong controversy within the scientific community in the ambit in which this is carried out, questions that are difficult to answer, or the use of methodologies and concepts that are atypical in their field.

And finally, to strengthen existing relations with the productive sector, increasing transfer capacities.

The extension and updating of the facilities will unquestionably enable the above objectives to be achieved.

4. Contribution to the resolution of a regional problem or weakness.

The co-funded project is in the Vallès Occidental region, in the province of Barcelona, within the so-called B-30 Axis. This is a geographical area with a high concentration of infrastructures and research centres such as the Institute of Neurosciences, the Institute of Biotechnology and Biomedicine or the Centre for Animal Biology and Gene Therapy, among others, many of which belong to the UABCEI Sphere (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona-Campus of International Excellence), of great relevance for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry.

The Animal Facility, with its new facilities, is the only platform on the UAB campus that provides service to all the research groups pertaining to the institutes and centres that are part of the UABCEI Sphere. This allows the optimising of resources and will significantly foster research capacity in the field of biomedicine.

5. Degree of target-population coverage

Research and innovation in the field of health are factors of economic, social and welfare development in Catalonia. For these to be possible, a multidisciplinary approach and interaction between basic and clinical research is required.

The research groups of the UAB Animal Research Facility, constituted over many years, have achieved a critical mass and a highly important potential and diversity, obtaining a solid level of interaction between the basic and clinical aspects of research, through contributions from cell and molecular biologists, physiologists, pharmacologists, biochemists, histopathologists, psychologists and psychobiologists, neurolinguists, bioinformaticians, neuropathologists, etc.

The studies carried out by these research groups will undoubtedly lead to fulfilling objectives that will benefit the Catalan population, and will thereby cover an even larger population in the future.

6. Compliance with horizontal principles (sustainable development; equality between men and women; principle of non-discrimination) and environmental regulations

Article 8 of the Statutes of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona provides for the promotion of equality between men and women. To guarantee compliance, the University’s Governing Council, in articles 1 and 2 of Agreement 3/2006, approved the creation of the UAB Observatory for Equality to provide technical support to the gender-equality policies developed by the university.

In 2008 the Observatory extended its field of action to those groups that may be subject to unfavourable conditions due to disability and economic or social situations. With the aim of extending the commitment of the UAB to groups subject to conditions that are unfavourable for their incorporation into the university, a section was created to provide greater visibility to the situation of people with disabilities, to their rights, and to the resources and measures of the UAB aimed at their full participation.

The UAB has always been a university sensitive to environmental issues and sustainable development. In 1994, it was the first Spanish university to create a vice-rectorate dedicated to these issues (Office of the Vice-Rector for Campus and Environmental Quality). This Office has been maintained to the current times, under slightly different names; it is now the Office of the Vice-Rector for Campus, Sustainability and Regional Integration. At the management level, an environmental office was created in 1995. As regards sustainability plans, an “Agenda 21” process was started in 1999, which led to the first “Action Plan for Sustainability, 2002-2010”. Since then, there has been a succession of action plans, all highly participative. In 2013, the decision was made to combine this with health-focussed aspects and the “Healthy and Sustainable Campus” initiative was created. The “Healthy and Sustainable Plan 2018-2022” is currently in force (<https://www.uab.cat/web/sustainability/sustainability-action-plan-1345812333694.html>).

Los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible en el periodo 1999-2012



In this context, this project complies with the principles of sustainable development and environmental regulations, and forms part of the commitments acquired by the UAB in this area.

7. Synergies with other public-intervention policies or instruments

The ultimate aim of the project is to adapt and reinforce the research and development infrastructure of the UABCEI Sphere (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona-Campus of International Excellence).

The Animal Facility is key to promoting scientific and technological excellence by supporting research, development, and technological innovation in areas of particular relevance to the challenges included in the European Research Strategy (H2020 and Horizon Europe) and in the research and innovation strategy for the smart specialisation of Catalonia (RIS3CAT). These areas include biotechnology, biomedicine and translational research, and their processes of valorisation and knowledge transfer, both in terms of their involvement with leading sectoral areas and with transversal enabling technologies.

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