

Prof Lluis Torner awarded the King Jaume I Prize

Prof Torner, founding director of ICFO, has been awarded the prestigious King Jaume I Prize in the Basic Research category.

June 08, 2026

The awardees of the 2026 King Jaume I Prizes, Spain's most prestigious scientific prize for activities conducted within the country, have been announced this week, recognizing six leading researchers and one entrepreneur for their contributions across a range of disciplines. The King Jaume I Prize was established in 1989 and its juries are composed of leading global figures. For the current edition, 25 Nobel laureates served on the panels. Professor **Lluis Torner** has been awarded the King Jaume I Prize for Basic Research, recognizing his research career in photonics, his numerous pioneering contributions to optical solitons, optical guided waves, and topological photonics, and a trajectory that has helped position the country at the forefront of frontier research. As stated by the jury, the prize not only recognizes his groundbreaking global discoveries in Photonics, but also his international impact, and his extraordinary scientific leadership, which has driven a profound transformation of research in the country. Torner holds a PhD in Physics from the UPC -

Polytechnic University of Catalonia - Barcelona Tech.

Since ICFO's foundation in 2002 under his leadership, and until 2024, Torner served as ICFO director. The institute started from scratch - during several months Torner was the only employee - and grew into a leading research institution in photonic sciences and technologies, where top global talent - group leaders, PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and operational teams - conducts advances in areas ranging from quantum technologies and nanomaterials to medicine and telecommunications. The King Jaume I award acknowledges not only Torner's scientific achievements but also his salient role in building a world-class research ecosystem in the country.

Alongside Torner's recognition, the 2026 King Jaume I Awards also recognize economist **Nagore Iriberri** (Economics), geneticist **Ben Lehner** (Biomedical Research), cardiologist **Borja Ibanez** (Clinical Research and Public Health), environmental scientist **Adolfo Saiz** (Environmental Protection), chemist and nanotechnology researcher **Samuel Sanchez** (New Technologies), and entrepreneur **Borja Vazquez** (Entrepreneurial Revelation).

About the King Jaume I Prize

The King Jaume I Prize was established with the goal of promoting scientific research, development, and entrepreneurship in Spain, and strengthening the bridge between science and society. The awards are granted annually to individuals whose work has had a major impact and has been carried out primarily in Spain. The award ceremony takes place each November in a solemn act presided over by the King of Spain at the Lonja de los Mercaderes in Valencia. The juries are made up of leading personalities in science and business from around the world, and more than 63 Nobel laureates have served on these panels over the years. Prizes are awarded across seven categories, including Basic Research, Economics, Biomedical Research, Clinical Research and Public Health, Environmental Protection, New Technologies, and Entrepreneurship.