



International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE)

Strategic Plan

2021-2025

Executive Summary

“At the highest level of vision, nimbleness is the presence of clarity and consensus on what will constitute success at a more discrete level of outcome-oriented goals.” This quote from *The Will to Govern Well* by Tecker et al. aptly describes what IBLCE’s strategic plan is designed to do to advance the global organisation that is the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners® or IBLCE®.

IBLCE is taking action and moving the organisation to the next level of growth and development. Through this plan, IBLCE can continue to grow and advance the lactation consultant profession and provide the gold standard of lactation and breastfeeding care to families around the world.

This plan serves, defines, and sets forth an aspirational path, with explicit strategies, that will advance IBLCE’s Vision and Mission. Additionally, this plan will help ensure fiscal responsibility and sustainability, as well as serve as the organisation’s roadmap to operate in a more proactive manner. Moreover, it defines how IBLCE will be an even more effective organisation in 2025 than it is today.

The aspirational and new compelling strategies of this plan include:

Languages Framework: In the past, IBLCE’s growth strategy was essentially country-focused, identifying specific countries for further growth and expansion. As IBLCE engaged in environmental scanning, it was clear that given IBLCE’s model, and given the rapid growth of technology and virtual work, a more effective strategy for IBLCE moving forward is a language-focused approach.

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Second Credential: With IBLCE’s continued focus on accessibility, IBLCE will pilot a second credential that will allow for the expansion of credentialed lactation professionals, which in turn can facilitate greater access to lactation support to families across the globe. While somewhat delayed due to challenges associated with the pandemic, IBLCE is now placing a renewed focus on this initiative.

Modified Structure: To enhance efficiency, increase nimbleness, and allow IBLCE to do more while preserving the integrity of the IBCLC certification programme, IBLCE plans to realign the organisation to create a Commission, a common structure for nonprofits engaged in credentialing. This will allow IBCLC volunteer leaders, as well as a representative of the public, to focus on essential certification activities of the IBCLC programme while the IBLCE Board of Directors will focus on broad policy decisions and issues.

The plan allows for a continued focus on the quality of the IBCLC programme and related processes, all the while supporting IBLCE’s people (Board, volunteers, stakeholders, and staff), as well as maintaining fiscal health and sustainability. Refining the mission and vision statements, to more explicitly express IBLCE’s focus and distinction in the lactation landscape, was also a key aspect of the strategic planning process.

How did IBLCE develop this plan?

IBLCE undertook a robust process, inclusive of soliciting feedback of IBLCE’s stakeholders in all seventeen (17) programme languages, supported by a professional strategic consulting firm, iBossWell, Inc.

An effective strategic plan for the future requires a solid level of understanding of an organisation’s current status and the environment in which it operates. Gathering and reviewing both qualitative and quantitative data are the fuel behind thoughtful, informed decision-making. This includes the gathering of opinions of stakeholders regarding direction and focus.

Initial work commenced with interviews of eleven Board Members as well as seven staff members & Directors of Promotion & Advancement.

During April and May 2020, IBLCE conducted a stakeholder survey in all 17 languages in which the IBCLC programme is offered. The purpose of this survey was to gain important insights from stakeholders around the globe, to help inform the strategic planning discussions and direction-setting. IBLCE received over 6,000 total responses from its stakeholders (an excellent response rate particularly given IBLCE’s stakeholders’ pivotal work during the global pandemic), providing a great deal of useful information.

The breakdown of responses by the three IBLCE Regions is as follows:

IBLCE Region	Total Responses	Percent
AMS—America & Israel	3,304	54.4%
EUME—Europe & Middle East	1,357	22.3%
APA—Asia Pacific & North Africa	804	13.2%
Unknown	611	10.1%
Total	6,076	100.0%

All of this input was compiled, analysed, and summarised. The information served to inform the strategic discussions, decision-making, and direction-setting. A series of meetings was held from April through December 2020 to discuss key strategic issues and opportunities and lay out a structured plan that will serve as IBLCE’s roadmap to guide the organisation on its focused path.

Additionally, as part of the process, IBLCE reviewed the [key findings of the IBCLC practice analysis](#) survey disseminated in 2020 with respect to the use of gendered language as well as how other global organisations address the use of gendered language. Of the over 4,000 responses received, 95% responded to this inquiry with 71.3% preferring the term “breastfeeding,” 6.9% preferring the term “chestfeeding,” with 21.8% indicating no preference. As part of the process, it was also noted that in global settings, the term “breastfeeding” typically is used, see, e.g., the [Global Breastfeeding Collective](#).

Also considered was the fact that IBLCE does reference both breastfeeding and chestfeeding in the [organisational bylaws](#), p. 2; in the [request for accommodations to take the IBCLC examination](#), page 14; and in the [procedures for breastfeeding during examination administration](#). It was noted that the context for both of these references is how individuals refer to their own lactation peer or leadership experience and their own individualised testing needs.

IBLCE considered all of these factors in crafting its new strategic plan and views the important periodic strategic planning process and unveiling as an opportunity to encourage the use of sensitive and inclusive language in one’s own geographic and cultural context, while also acknowledging that countries and cultures around the world vary in their use of language.

As part of the process, and in light of its increasing global presence as well as the environment in which it is operating, IBLCE refined its existing Vision and Mission and affirmed its existing Values.

IBLCE is pleased to share its updated Vision and Mission.

Vision

IBLCE is valued worldwide for advancing global public health and is the most trusted source for credentialing practitioners in lactation and breastfeeding care.

Mission

Serving the global public interest by advancing professional practice in lactation consultation and support through credentialing.

Values

***Excellence:** We strive for excellence*

***Diversity:** We value and respect different cultures, languages, and backgrounds.*

***Respect:** Our interactions are guided by respect for others.*

***Integrity:** We are honest and ethical.*

***Communication:** We believe open and timely communication is important.*

***Collaboration:** We work together to achieve the best results.*

Strategic Initiatives

- 1. Credentialing Advancement & Growth:** Ensure long-term sustainability of the global mission by monitoring the IBCLC uptake and primarily focusing our efforts and resources in language groups/areas where utilisation of the credential can best sustain the foundation of the mission, and secondarily (when resources are available) identify potential new/revitalised opportunities that promote further accessibility for the benefit of credentialing growth.
- 2. Credentialing Products & Services (Content & Quality):** Ensure we continue to support the provision of high-quality, relevant, standards-driven, and accessible credentialing programmes that align with, and sustain, our mission.
- 3. People & Operational Excellence:** Provide policies, structures, and processes, leveraging innovative best practices, which contribute to highly motivated and engaged Board, volunteers, and staff.
- 4. Fiscal Health & Sustainability:** Continue to grow and maintain IBLCE's financial health and sustainability, enabling advancement of our mission and goals.

IBLCE thanks its many stakeholders for playing an important role in informing the strategic plan and charting the future of the organisation.