



Declaration of the CSIC Ethics Committee in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic

This declaration aims to underline the value of ethics principles and integrity that should govern all scientific research, irrespective of the social, economic and political urgencies in these difficult times that we face.

We live in a world plagued by the ongoing and severe pandemic of COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. The commendable efforts of health professionals have saved many lives, although not as many as they would have wished.

To go beyond the current existing knowledge, it has been necessary to redouble the commitment to science. A multitude of scientific research projects have been implemented in response to the various calls for proposals launched by many institutions. At the CSIC, the Global Health Platform has managed to raise more than 12 million euros from donations of companies and citizens, which has allowed the financing of more than 60 research projects on various aspects of COVID-19. Many of these projects have been developed by researchers who have never worked together before, or on these issues. However, multidisciplinary scientific collaboration has arisen spontaneously and has been fostered institutionally to meet the enormous challenge posed by this pandemic.

All human action is subject to the norms that, as a society, we have established for ourselves. Equally, the operating framework of scientific activity is defined by a set of laws, regulations and recommendations that researchers must comply with responsibly, and which are in place to guarantee society's trust in science and respect for research subjects. Not everything is possible. Science also has limits that should never be exceeded, and which are defined to preserve the health and well-being of people, animals and, in general, the environment. Those charged with guaranteeing that all COVID-19 scientific projects are undertaken with absolute respect for ethical standards and requirements, and respecting national and international regulations, are the Ethics Committees, which have the responsibility of validating the various proposals presented in accordance with current legislation and the Institutional Code of Good Scientific Practices.

In this COVID-19 pandemic, ethics remains more important than ever. The development of effective treatments and vaccines must be weighed against the risks that all research entails, with due respect for humans, animals that may be needed, and the environment. Nothing justifies taking



shortcuts or skipping steps in established procedures. Integrity and responsible behavior, governed by ethical principles, must inform all the stages and dimensions of scientific activity (from the research approach to the dissemination of results). We cannot and must not allow cheating, plagiarism, stealing or the invention or exaggeration of results or conclusions to be used to unfairly obtain scientific privileges or notoriety through these unacceptable scientific misconducts. Nor should we express opinions without foundation or expert knowledge on the matter discussed, which risks undermining the trust that society places on its research professionals.

From the CSIC Ethics Committee, we call on all researchers of our institution, and in general all scientists, to face their work with ethical responsibility and integrity, particularly in everything related to this COVID-19 pandemic. Equally essential is the necessary coordination that must exist across the different levels of the scientific process to optimize resources and increase the efficiency of research. We will emerge from this global health crisis with the help of science. But not at any price.

Madrid, October 21st 2020.

