Statement on the use of animals in scientific research within CSIC

The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) has joined the Agreement on Openness on Animal Research.

CSIC is aware that the use of animal models in scientific research plays a fundamental role in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases in humans. CSIC is also convinced that the use of experimental animals becomes irreplaceable for the purpose of improving animals’ living conditions and welfare, as well as when pursuing species conservation and environmental protection.

The number of CSIC’s centres and institutes that use laboratory animals is close to thirty, namely associated to the fields of biology, biomedicine and natural resources.

Given its proven technical and scientific solvency, as well as the absence of any conflicts of interests, the CSIC’s Ethics Committee enjoys the status of authorized body for the assessment of research projects and procedures that involve animal experimentation.

The highest standards of animal welfare as well as the compliance with the established regulations are of paramount relevance for CSIC. Any research project involving animal experimentation must be screened by the Ethics Committee of the institute where it will be performed, but it also requires the further positive evaluation by the CSIC’s Ethics Committee, before being authorized by the regional competent authorities.

The evaluation process at the CSIC’s Ethics Committee guarantees that animals will be used only when strictly necessary and if alternative methods do not exist or are not appropriate for the particular research to be performed. On top of that, there is total adherence to the principle of the 3Rs: the use of methods to replace animals, reduce the number of animals to a minimum, and refine the experimental protocols, so that they cause the minimum pain and distress to animals. CSIC also ensures that all resources are provided to properly keep research animals in terms of facilities, husbandry, well-being and veterinary care. Additionally, the personnel involved in animal care and research must have the adequate education and training for these activities.

CSIC has also signed the Statement of Support to the European Directive 2010/63/UE concerning the protection of animals used for scientific aims. Furthermore, it is one of the signatory institutions of Basel’s Declaration.

The number of research projects involving animal experimentation assessed annually at CSIC average about 150. Their objectives and potential benefits speak in favour of the relevant contribution that animal research entails for the improvement of life conditions of both animal and human beings.