

CIC biomaGUNE CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

CIC biomaGUNE Code of Ethics and Conduct

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Responsible Department
General Management

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3		- Review of all sections and simplification of the content.
2	12/11/2024	- Revision of Values. - Inclusion of respectful treatment of the LGTBIQ+ community - Inclusion of Responsible use of generative AI in research (commitment 11) and renumbering of commitments 11-14. - Inclusion of whistleblower channel link in section V. - Revision of section VI.
1	22/11/2022	- Replaces the Code of Ethics
0	01/01/2017	Creation of the CIC biomaGUNE Code of Ethics

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I. Introduction and purpose of the Code

The Code of Ethics and Conduct (hereinafter, also the "Code") of the Association Center for Cooperative Research in Biomaterials - CIC biomaGUNE (hereinafter, "CIC biomaGUNE"), is the guide for ethical and responsible behavior of the people who work at CIC biomaGUNE in order to guarantee and consolidate in the association a culture based on ethics and the exercise of upright professional conduct, reinforcing the commitment to serving society.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics and Conduct is to reflect an ethically exemplary culture, as well as to expose the identifying values of CIC biomaGUNE, seeking to promote in the association an infrastructure based on a culture of compliance, both in the criminal and extra-criminal spheres.

Although it is not intended to be exhaustive and cover all situations that may occur, the Code provides us with guidelines for our professional behavior, which are intended to assist us in making lawful and ethical decisions, taking into account our nature as a private non-profit entity and the regulatory framework that applies to us.

The Code also expresses CIC biomaGUNE's commitment to its stakeholders (groups or people with whom we interact, including employees, client companies, suppliers, subcontractors or third parties) regarding the ethical model towards its management and efforts are oriented.

Thus, CIC biomaGUNE intends to work with the community in which it carries out its activity, fostering and ensuring the necessary balance between its values and social expectations, while also promoting economic development and social action within the Autonomous Region of the Basque Country.

II. Scope

The Code of Ethics and Conduct is applicable to all members of CIC biomaGUNE, in the fulfillment of their obligations and in their relationships with third parties, whatever their type of relationship, hierarchical or functional position, and especially to people who hold management positions and the people in charge of the different Research Areas and Groups.

Additionally, this Code is applicable to the companies and professionals that may be hired by CIC biomaGUNE, provided that the contractual activity is associated or relevant to their activities. In this sense, the said companies and professionals will be required, in the respective contracts, to demonstrate compliance with the appropriate measures in terms of criminal risk prevention.

Compliance with this Code is understood without prejudice to strict compliance with the provisions of the General Collective Agreement of the Chemical Industry, approved by

Resolution of the General Directorate of Labor on 7 July 2021 (hereinafter, Collective Agreement), which is applicable thereto.

III. Values

The ethical values of CIC biomaGUNE that must guide the actions of all its members are:

- INTEGRITY

The people who work at CIC biomaGUNE must manage the public resources available to us with integrity, transparency and efficiency to achieve the scientific goals that give our activity meaning.

- PROFESSIONALISM

Committing to the values of CIC biomaGUNE and continuously striving to increase our knowledge, skills and abilities are the foundations of excellent work. All of us who work at CIC biomaGUNE must be willing to improve our professional qualifications, working with rigor and dedication to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

- RESPECT

Recognition of the equal dignity of all people must be manifested in our daily dealings, and we should always treat other people with compassion and tolerance, just as we in turn would like to be treated. We also recognize our duty to respect the institution in which we work, maintaining a tactful and loyal attitude.

- RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility means anticipating and taking responsibility for the consequences of our actions and decisions. Responding to the legitimate expectations inherent in our professional performance and accounting for the commitments made by CIC biomaGUNE, beyond what is stipulated in the current legal framework, is part of our responsibility.

IV. Conduct commitments

1. Compliance with legal provisions and prevention of criminal behaviors

- Be familiar with the laws affecting your work, as well as the applicable protocols, institutional and internal regulations and conditions established by the different financing institutions, requesting, where appropriate, the necessary information through your direct manager.
- Respect current legislation and other pertinent regulations and contractual clauses regulating the work carried out at CIC biomaGUNE.
- Maintain a relationship with all the groups of interest linked to CIC biomaGUNE based on compliance with the law and on mutual respect and trust.
- In relationships with supplier companies, clients or public administrations, strictly comply with laws, regulations and procedures, ensuring neutrality, objectivity and non-discrimination.
- Do not knowingly collaborate with third parties to break the law, nor participate in any action that compromises respect for the principle of legality, even if the order was given by a hierarchical superior.
- Inform the pertinent Managers at the institutions of any action of which we are made aware that is contrary to professional ethics and current legislation.

2. Equity, diversity and respectful treatment of people

- All interpersonal relationships established at CIC biomaGUNE, both internally and externally, must be based on mutual respect, dignified treatment and non-discrimination.
- Respect equal opportunities, ensuring a work environment where trust, dialogue and mutual support are a reality.
- Promote a work environment that supports a healthy balance between professional and personal life, contributing to the overall well-being and development of CIC biomaGUNE employees.
- Know and apply the contents of [the CIC biomaGUNE Protocol against workplace, sexual or gender-based harassment](#) in situations of harassment and take the necessary measures to ensure compliance.
- No CIC biomaGUNE employee may carry out or allow degrading treatment against any other, regardless of the position they hold. Any behaviour implying contempt and/or

harassment of another person, whether this involves sexual harassment or for reasons of sex, morals, religion, ethnicity, race, nation, illness, disability or any other personal, family or social circumstance, is strictly prohibited.

- Ensure that in selection, hiring, remuneration, training and promotion policies are based solely on merit and ability. Uphold the principle of equal treatment for all professionals, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, ideology, nationality, disability, belief or any other personal, physical or social condition, while strictly prohibiting any form of discrimination.
- Do not take/share pictures of people without their consent.
- Be patient and allow time for colleagues to respond to emails. Research platforms and support units assist nearly 200 people.
- Respect colleagues' time and privacy in professional communication:
 - o Do not contact colleagues on their personal phones unless it is an emergency.
 - o Do not share a colleague's personal phone number without their permission.
 - o Avoid sending emails on weekends or holidays; schedule them instead.
 - o If emailing a colleague outside work hours, clarify that they should respond during their working hours.

3. Professionalism and integrity

- All employees must fulfill their assigned duties with responsibility, professionalism, and diligence, following the principles of good faith and adhering to the instructions provided by their direct manager.
- Maintain a neutral and professional attitude, ensuring objectivity and integrity in all actions. Avoid conflicts of interest or any circumstances that could compromise ethical decision-making. Follow the guidelines outlined in the [CIC biomaGUNE Protocol of Action in the Event of Conflicts of Interest](#), available on the intranet.
- Avoid involvement in decision-making, meetings, or accessing confidential information in situations where a conflict exists between personal interests and those of CIC biomaGUNE.
- Reject any form of favoritism, whether based on family ties, friendships, or any other circumstances, in hiring processes, promotions, and other actions related to the duties of each position.
- Avoid any behavior that could be seen as unprofessional and encourage personal responsibility and leading by example.

- Ensure the proper training of CIC biomaGUNE staff, contributing to their development at a professional and personal level.
- CIC biomaGUNE staff must continuously strive to maintain and enhance their professional competence, acknowledging the limits of their knowledge and seeking assistance from qualified personnel when needed.
- Ensure that CIC biomaGUNE personnel are evaluated fairly and based on their professional performance.

4. Fight against fraud

- Do not use the funds and resources of the CIC biomaGUNE for personal gain.
- Do not accept preferential treatment, derived from the professional position or post held, nor grant preferential treatment in favor of persons or institutions within the framework of client-supplier relations or in any other type of relationship in which you participate as a worker of the Center.
- Reject any gift, favor, service or economic benefit from suppliers, contractors and any other area that goes beyond the usual, social and courtesy customs, or that may influence decisions, avoiding any risk of bribery, corruption or other similar offenses.
- Do not deliver payments, gifts or other types of offers to public or private employees that may influence their decisions, avoiding any risk of bribery, graft or other similar offenses.
- Oppose all types of fraud and corruption in the exercise of functions, including practices related to money laundering, bribery or influence peddling, among other behaviors, both in relationships with providers and suppliers and with competitors and the Public Administration.
- Communicate any indication of fraud through the [Ethics Channel](#).
- Promote a culture that exerts a dissuasive effect for any type of fraudulent activity.
- Do not permit misleading, fraudulent or malicious conduct that involves undue or unfair advantages to be obtained.

5. Transparency, good use of public and private resources and control of financial information

- Provide accurate and reliable information to the public through the *Transparency Portal*, presenting a clear picture of CIC biomaGUNE's activities, strategy, and its economic, social, and environmental impact.

Adhere to proper tax practices, ensuring full compliance with tax regulations and avoiding any form of illicit gain, tax evasion, or failure to withhold required amounts.

When receiving public subsidies, deductions, or support, ensure the funds are used correctly and efficiently for their intended purposes, following guidelines for the proper management of both public and private resources.

- Use CIC biomaGUNE resources exclusively for work-related tasks, ensuring their responsible and efficient utilization.
- CIC biomaGUNE's financial information must always reflect the organization's true economic and financial situation, in line with generally accepted accounting principles and applicable international standards.
- No employee shall alter, hide or distort accounting records or financial reports; all records must be complete, accurate, and truthful.
- Ensure all funds or payments received are from lawful sources to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

6. Leadership Commitment (tone at the top & tone from the top)

People who hold leadership positions at CIC biomaGUNE:

- Serve as role models, promoting integrity, professionalism, and adherence to the institution's values in their daily actions. Their conduct should consistently reflect the principles outlined in this Code.
- They provide guidance and support to staff regarding the interpretation and application of the Code, working alongside the Compliance Committee. Under no circumstances should they issue directives that contradict the law or the Code's provisions.

7. Protect corporate image and reputation

- Represent CIC biomaGUNE with integrity in all professional activities, always reflecting our values and commitment to excellence.
- Act in the best interest of the center, helping to strengthen its reputation and the trust placed in us by our scientific community, partners, and society.

- Use CIC biomaGUNE's name responsibly. It should not be used for activities that fall outside our professional responsibilities within the center.
- Media interactions are handled only by authorized personnel. Only designated representatives may engage with the press or public platforms on behalf of CIC biomaGUNE.
- Keep personal affiliations separate. If you are involved with political parties or other external organizations, make it clear that these activities are personal and not linked to CIC biomaGUNE, which remains politically neutral.
- Be mindful of social media and public statements. When engaging in online discussions, forums, or blogs, always clarify that opinions expressed are personal. Acting or speaking on behalf of CIC biomaGUNE in these spaces is not allowed unless approved by your direct manager. If making statements in a professional capacity, ensure they align with our values and maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information.

8. Responsible use of information, IT resources and data protection

- **Respect confidentiality:** Handle personal data, research information, and any sensitive or privileged material responsibly, whether related to colleagues, collaborators, or external partners.
- **Ensure security:** Implement appropriate measures to protect confidential information from unauthorized access, alteration, or destruction—whether accidental or intentional.
- **Use information ethically:** Access and use CIC biomaGUNE's data in good faith, efficiently, and only for legitimate professional purposes. Exercise discretion and avoid misuse.
- **Protect research data and results:** Staff involved in research projects must safeguard CIC biomaGUNE's knowledge and intellectual property during collaborations or contracts. Clear agreements must define responsibilities, confidentiality obligations, ownership of results, and legal protection. These terms must be communicated in advance to all participants. In case of doubt please contact the TechTransfer Manager.
- **Preserve records and materials:** Documents, data, and research materials must be securely stored and properly transferred to the direct managers when necessary, ensuring traceability and long-term accessibility.
- **Follow scientific data management standards:**
 - o Retain research data for at least five years post-publication, with a recommended extension to ten years (or longer if required).

- o Maintain backups for electronically stored data.
 - o Whenever possible, integrate the data into public databases or registries, respecting their access policies. Contact projectoffice@cicbiomagune.es for support in using repositories.
 - o Store and process personal data in compliance with data protection laws.
- **Use IT resources responsibly:** Adhere to CIC biomaGUNE's IT policy, making appropriate use of computer systems, software, and communication tools. The IT policy is accessible on intranet: <https://intranet.cicbiomagune.es/content/1-it-policy>
- **Comply with data protection regulations:** Any staff member handling personal data must maintain strict confidentiality and follow the applicable data protection laws, including Organic Law 3/2018 and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

9. Responsible use of generative AI¹

Maintain Responsibility for the results

- Staff are responsible for the integrity of content generated by or with the support of AI tools.
- Always critically assess AI-generated output, recognizing limitations such as bias, inaccuracies, and hallucinations.
- Generative AI tools cannot be authors or co-authors. Authors must be human who take full responsibility for the work.
- Never use AI-generated material to falsify, alter, or manipulate (research) data.

Use Generative AI Transparently

- Clearly state which generative AI tools were used significantly in the work, including the name, version, date, etc.
- Disclose how AI tools impact the research process and make inputs (prompts) and outputs available where appropriate, in line with open science principles.
- Take into account the random (stochastic) nature of generative AI, which can produce different outputs from the same input. Disclose limitations and biases in AI-generated content and strive for reproducibility in research results.

Protect Privacy, Confidentiality, and Intellectual Property

- Be aware of privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property when interacting with generative AI tools.
- Avoid uploading sensitive, unpublished data to AI systems unless privacy guarantees are provided.
- Do not share personal data with generative AI tools unless explicit consent is obtained and compliance with EU data protection laws is ensured.
- Ensure understanding of the technical and ethical implications of using AI, including privacy options and the ownership of data input into AI systems.

¹ Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research developed by the European Research Area Forum from European Commission. Version March 2024: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/guidelines-responsible-use-generative-ai-research-developed-european-research-area-forum-2024-03-20_en

Comply with Legislation² and Ethical Standards

- Comply with applicable national, EU, and international laws, including those on plagiarism, intellectual property, and data protection, when using generative AI in research.
- Ensure proper citation of sources when using generative AI outputs that may be based on others' research, including text, code, or images.
- Handle any personal data output from generative AI responsibly, in compliance with EU data protection regulations.

Stay Updated and Share Knowledge

- Keep up to date with advancements in generative AI tools and best practices. Participate in training and share knowledge with colleagues to maximize the benefits of these tools.

Limit Use in Sensitive Activities³

- Avoid using generative AI tools in sensitive processes like peer review or evaluation of research proposals to prevent biases or unfair assessments.
- Safeguard unpublished work from being exposed to AI systems without consent, protecting intellectual property and privacy.

10. Facility and Resource Care

- Take care of CIC biomaGUNE's facilities, equipment, and resources by avoiding damage and only for professional purposes.
- Book equipment, meeting rooms, and lunch and common areas responsibly.
- Cancel reservations if they are no longer needed and always respect assigned time slots.
- Report any broken equipment or faulty installations to the maintenance team using the [job request form](#).
- In case of loss or theft of the center access card, report it immediately to the Maintenance Department.

11. Ensuring safety, health and environmental protection

- CIC biomaGUNE is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment by implementing effective risk prevention policies and promoting responsible environmental practices.

² In particular, the Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689), Official Journal version of 13 June 2024

³ For example, using generative AI to search background info for a review is not a substantial use, while delegating the evaluation or the assessment of a paper is a substantial use.

- All employees must follow workplace safety and health regulations to minimize risks and ensure a secure working environment.
- Proper use of equipment, tools, hazardous substances, and personal protective equipment (PPE) is mandatory, along with compliance with safety protocols.
- Any concerns regarding workplace safety should be reported to the direct manager or biosafety and radiation protection officer to implement necessary improvements.
- The consumption of alcohol and/or narcotic substances during working hours is strictly prohibited, and smoking is not allowed inside CIC biomaGUNE building.
- Employees must maintain proper hygiene and cleanliness in the workplace.
- Environmental impact should be minimized by following sustainability guidelines and reducing unnecessary energy and resource consumption.
- Unnecessarily spending energy and natural resources should be avoided, and we should use only those necessary to carry out our work.

12. Scientific Integrity

- **Uphold ethical standards:** Research must be conducted with integrity, transparency, loyalty, and good faith, ensuring research freedom while contributing to scientific progress.
- **Align with CIC biomaGUNE's strategic goals:** Research must be relevant, valuable, and aligned with our objectives and regulations. Secure all necessary authorizations before and during each project, and communicate any progress, delays, or issues.
- **Accurate data recording:** All research data, including preliminary, negative, or unexpected results, must be documented clearly and permanently to allow for external review and reproducibility.
- **Ensure data reliability:** Collect sufficient data and repetitions for valid statistical analysis and reliable conclusions.
- **No falsification or fabrication:** Never alter or invent data or results. Falsification involves modifying or misrepresenting data, while fabrication includes inventing experiments or findings.
- **Avoid misrepresentation of achievements:** Do not misrepresent your academic or research accomplishments, including inflating your CV with unearned titles or publications.

- **No plagiarism:** Using someone else's work without proper acknowledgment, is a serious offense that undermines the integrity of scientific research. Always credit original sources and avoid using others' work without acknowledgment.

13. Dissemination of results and protection of intellectual and industrial property rights

- **Ethical Duty of Dissemination:** Research staff have an ethical obligation to share research results, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and accountability in the use of public funds. Publishing results, both orally and in writing, is crucial to communicate findings to the global scientific community, enabling review and constructive critique. However, the publication of results must adhere to the requirements of protecting intellectual and industrial property.
- **Commitment to Transparency and Accuracy:** Research staff should publish their findings openly and accurately, including results that do not align with initial hypotheses.
- **Acknowledging Errors:** If errors are detected in published work, they must be corrected promptly, and in cases of serious errors, retraction may be necessary.
- **Authorship Criteria:** To appear as an author, individuals must have made substantial contributions to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the research, as well as to the preparation of the resulting publication. Those whose contributions do not meet these criteria should be acknowledged in the acknowledgments section.
- **Intellectual and Industrial Property Protection:** Legal protection for intellectual and industrial property must be ensured. No CIC biomaGUNE employee may independently dispose of CIC biomaGUNE's intellectual property without prior written consent from the Management or their superior.
- **Confidentiality before Protection:** If research results are eligible for intellectual or industrial property protection, they must not be disclosed until CIC biomaGUNE has had the chance to assess and protect them. Efforts should be made to minimize delays in disclosure while protecting the results.
- **Respect for Third-Party Intellectual Property:** Do not use or share third-party intellectual property, patents, or know-how without proper authorization. Presenting or reproducing research observations or experiments for validation is not considered a violation as long as proper reference is made and the actions are necessary for scientific progress.
- CIC biomaGUNE research staff shall refrain from engaging in the following behaviors:
 - o Distributing or plagiarizing copyrighted works without authorization.

- o Reproducing, imitating, or altering registered trademarks without consent.
- o Importing or using patented procedures or results without proper authorization.

14. Research with biological samples of human origin and/or animals used for experimentation

- Research staff working with human, animal or biological samples must strictly adhere to all relevant regulations.
- Explicit consent must be obtained from individuals participating in a research project or providing biological samples, or from their legal representatives when applicable.
- Any study involving animal experimentation must be approved by the Animal Ethics and Welfare Committee (CEEA) of CIC biomaGUNE, the authorized body (IIS Biogipuzkoa) and the Competent Authority (Regional Government). The authorization process and required forms are available in the CEEA section of the intranet: <https://intranet.cicbiomagune.es/ceea-information>.
- Staff involved in procedures requiring the use of experimental animals must have accredited training that qualifies them under Spanish and European legislation.
- Projects and procedures involving experimental animals must adhere to the **Three Rs Principle**:
 - o **Replacement**: Whenever possible, alternative methods should be used instead of live animals. If no alternatives exist, the necessity of animal use must be fully justified.
 - o **Reduction**: The number of animals used should be minimized to the essential minimum required to achieve research objectives.
 - o **Refinement**: Procedures should be designed to minimize or eliminate any potential harm to animal welfare.

V. Ethical Channel

All persons subject to this Code are obliged to report any fact that may contravene this Code, the internal regulations of CIC biomaGUNE or the applicable legislation.

To this end, CIC biomaGUNE has an Ethical Channel, accessible from the corporate website (<https://www.cicbiomagune.es/center/corporate-compliance>) through which possible breaches can be reported.

Communications made through the Ethical Channel shall be carried out confidentially, indicating the name and contact information or, if desired, 100% anonymously. In any case, the confidentiality of the complainant will be guaranteed; the absence of retaliation and the principle of contradiction, without prejudice to the obligation of communication to the judicial or administrative authorities that, where appropriate, correspond.

The management of the Ethical Channel is the responsibility of the Head of the Information System and the procedure for action before it is regulated in the *Policy of the Internal System of Information and Protection of the Informant*, in accordance with the provisions of the Law 2/2023 of February 20, regulating the protection of people who report regulatory infractions and the fight against corruption.

VI. Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee is responsible for ensuring the observance and effective fulfilment of the commitments and behavior guidelines contained in the Code, promoting awareness, dissemination and understanding thereof by all members of CIC biomaGUNE. Likewise, it shall be reviewed at least every two years and updated when appropriate in view of the concurrent circumstances.

Provided that the applicable legislation allows it, the Ethics Committee shall have access in a reasonable and proportionate manner to the information and documents of the association, its administrators, directors and employees of the association, including the minutes of the administrative, supervisory and control bodies, which may be necessary for the proper exercise of their functions.

CIC biomaGUNE shall provide the Ethics Committee with the necessary human and material resources to carry out its duties.

All persons subject to the Code must provide the Ethics Committee with the assistance required for the proper exercise of its functions.

VII. Commitments regarding the Code

- All CIC biomaGUNE employees must know, accept and comply with the content of the Code, as well as complete the appropriate training to become familiar with and understand it, in order that the Code produce all its effects, this document constituting a mandatory rule.
- Managers who are in charge of other CIC biomaGUNE employees must comply with and ensure that others comply with the Code, encouraging those acts, activities and actions that comply with the provisions thereof.

- CIC biomaGUNE will communicate and disseminate the Code among its staff by making the document available on the Intranet and corporate website. In any case, all staff must assume, in a manner that reliably confirms said acceptance, the commitment to comply with it.
- Any doubt about the interpretation of the Code of Ethics should be consulted with the direct manager or, where appropriate, with the Compliance Committee.

VIII. What happens if the Code is violated?

Failure to comply with the values or rules of conduct contained in this Code will be punishable in accordance with the provisions of Article 64.5 of the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement:

“(…) non-compliance with internal regulations when the worker has been previously informed of their existence and content. If this involves a manifest breach of discipline or has caused notorious damage to the company, it may be considered a very serious offense.

IX. Entry into force and validity of the Code

CIC biomaGUNE will take all necessary measures to ensure that all individuals subject to this Code are fully aware of its content and consistently apply its principles.

This Code shall come into effect upon approval by Management and shall be mandatory from that date forward.

The Code will undergo regular reviews and updates, as well as extraordinary revisions whenever there are changes to the organization’s strategic objectives or relevant legislation.

Any amendments or updates to this Code will be promptly communicated to all individuals subject to its provisions.