

Welcome
to the CNB

CNB DIRECTOR

Jose María Valpuesta Moralejo

The CNB during 2009-2010

Although our institution, the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), is going through a difficult period due to a decrease in the budget (around 15% last year), the Centro Nacional de Biotecnología (CNB) is enduring the economic crisis with a certain ease, thanks to the energy and dynamism of a scientific staff of 68 group leaders.

Over the last two years, this multidisciplinary group of people (working in the fields of Structural Biology, Cell Biology, Virology, Microbiology, Plant Biology, Immunology, Oncology and Systems Biology) have contributed to the publication of almost 400 ISI papers, have obtained 120 grants (20 from the EU VII framework program), have submitted 58 PhD theses and have taught more than 400 hours in master's degree programs and workshops in Spain and abroad.

This has served, among other things, to help in the training of 120 predoctoral students, 30 of which are funded by the "La Caixa" international fellowship programme. Likewise, the outreach effort of our scientists persists; the CNB has hosted 270 seminars and its scientists have organised 32

workshops in the centre. All this effort would not have been possible without the support of the excellent facilities at the CNB and the efficiency of the administrative staff.

As a biotechnological centre, there is a certain urge to translate the knowledge generated into something useful to society. In this line, during the past two years CNB scientists have applied for 12 patents (10 international), of which one has already been licensed, and have generated 58 contracts with private and public institutions.

This effort has not passed unnoticed to our Scientific Advisory Board, which last year subjected the centre, its departments and its scientists to a five-year evaluation. The results were in general excellent, although the SAB also detected problems associated with the persistent bureaucratic rigidity of the Spanish scientific system, and the shortage in the infrastructure and personnel provided by the CSIC. This latter problem could be at least partially solved by the establishment on the campus of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), where the CNB is located, of new technological platforms that should help strengthen the links between the UAM and the CSIC, and reinforce the ambitious plan of making the "UAM+CSIC International Campus of Excellence" one of the most important ones in the field of biology in Europe.

