

Researcher Adriana Rojas Cardona joins the X-ray Crystallography platform of CIC bioGUNE's Structural Biology Unit

Researcher Adriana Rojas Cardona has taken up appointment as manageress of the X-ray Crystallography platform of CIC bioGUNE's Structural Biology Unit, where she joins the four other crystallographers already working in the unit, Alfonso Martínez, Aitor Hierro, Nicola G. A. Abrescia and Lucy Malinina.

A physics graduate from the National University of Bogotá (Colombia), she received special distinction for her thesis, which characterised the first structure of a protein in Colombia. She worked for a year at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, and then won a scholarship to study for a PhD in Biophysics at the University of São Paulo in Brazil, where she spent 5 years. Before joining CIC bioGUNE, she worked for 4 years in the National Institutes of Health in the U.S.A. where in addition to her post-doctoral programme, she was responsible for maintaining the X-ray unit in Dr. James Hurley's laboratory and providing support to users.

Adriana Rojas joined this platform at the beginning of July, and will focus on maintaining and developing the platform by providing support to the centre's current crystallography groups. The platform also offers external users the opportunity to obtain structural information using crystallography techniques in their current projects. Services include advice various steps from preparing the sample through to the resolution of the structure.

Over and above the scientific challenge which joining this platform represents for her personally, Adriana Rojas considers that this new opportunity opens a door in terms of meeting her "social responsibility" towards Latin America – that is, a chance to give something back in return for the education she received at Latin American institutions. *"I am a product of public education in Latin America which, over there, is not a right, but a privilege. The Colombian government paid for my degree and the Brazilian government paid for my doctoral studies",* states Adriana.

Considering this, she feels her presence at CIC bioGUNE may enable her to help support the education of new researchers, and thus create a *"critical mass"* of national and international scientists. For this reason her aim is to establish *"a standard-setting school of crystallography that will support research groups and contribute to the scientific training of new researchers internationally"*.