

## **"La Caixa" Foundation Junior Leadership awarded to IGC researcher**

**April 2, 2020** - At a time in which borders are being closed, research brings us together in the quest for the unknown: "la Caixa" Foundation Junior Leadership call, an internationally competitive call aiming to attract and maintain internationally competitive researchers of any nationality to Portugal and Spain, has awarded one fellowships to the Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência group leader Elias Barriga.

This highly competitive call, with a success rate of 11.5%, in the case of Incoming fellowships selected a wide range of ambitious research projects, all proposed by young researchers.

Elias Barriga, head of Mechanisms of Morphogenesis research group at IGC, received an Incoming Fellowship, to study in deeper detail the collective cell migration (CCM) - coordinated motion of cell-clusters - an essential process for embryogenesis, tissue repair, and cancer metastasis. Until now, the understanding about mechanical cues in CCM, particularly in vivo, remains less studied. To tackle this, Elias will work across 3 scales: tissue, cellular and sub-cellular scale. The project will reveal details of the long-range mechanical interactions between tissues and provide sensor and effector molecules of these otherwise, understudied biophysical cues. To the researcher, "results have the potential to broaden our knowledge about the biophysics of cancer and birth defects-pathologies, with a major social relevance, and normally studied from a biochemical approach."

### **About la Caixa Junior Leadership Fellowships**

The Postdoctoral Junior Leader fellowships programme is aimed at hiring excellent researchers, of any nationality, who wish to continue their research career in Spain or Portugal. The objectives of this programme are to foster high-quality, innovative research in Spain and Portugal and to support the best scientific talent by providing them with an attractive, competitive environment in which to conduct excellent research.

Post doctorate Junior Leader – Incoming: 30 postdoctoral fellowships for researchers of all nationalities. They will be offered a three-year employment contract to conduct a research project at units evaluated as excellent by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia of Portugal and accredited centres with the Severo Ochoa or María de Maeztu excellence award, Institutos de Investigación Sanitaria Carlos III.