Index Publishing

Code of Ethics and Integrity Programme

Principles, commitments and procedures that guide the conduct of Index Publishing, S.L. and of everyone who works on its behalf.

Version:	Date of approval:	Programme Officer:
2.0	**1 September 2026**	**Adrià González Consuegra**

1. Purpose, scope and management commitment

Index Publishing, S.L. (hereinafter "Index") is a technology and editorial services company specialising in the management, production and publication of scientific and academic journals. It works mainly with scientific societies, healthcare institutions, universities and public bodies.

This Code of Ethics and Integrity Programme (hereinafter the "Code") sets out the principles and rules of conduct that must guide the actions of Index and the mechanisms for preventing, detecting and correcting possible breaches. It incorporates and develops the Index Statement of Ethical Principles, Values and Commitments (June 2025).

The Code applies to the partners, directors, employees and collaborators of Index, regardless of their type of contract or location. Index will encourage its suppliers, subcontractors and business partners to act in accordance with equivalent principles.

The management of Index makes an express commitment to compliance with this Code, provides the Programme with resources appropriate to the company's size and activity, and will not tolerate conduct contrary to the law or to the principles set out herein, even where it might appear to benefit the company.

2. Mission, vision and values

The mission of Index is to facilitate the rigorous, transparent and accessible dissemination of scientific knowledge by providing journals and institutions with technological tools and editorial services that improve the formal and technical quality of publications, reduce the operational burden on editorial teams and contribute to more open, equitable and sustainable science.

Index aims to be a trusted partner for scientific journals in European and Ibero-American languages, particularly in the field of health and the life sciences, and to contribute to an ecosystem in which scientific information is reliable, accessible and free from predatory or deceptive practices.

3. Ethical principles

All actions of Index and of the persons subject to this Code are governed by the following principles:

- **Transparency.** Clear and truthful information on the scope of services, their costs, limitations and timeframes, without opaque clauses or practices that create unnecessary dependencies.
- **Integrity.** Honest conduct in good faith; no promises are made regarding results that do not depend on Index, such as acceptance into particular databases or obtaining an impact factor.
- **Accountability.** Taking responsibility for one's own mistakes, diligently correcting any issues and being accountable to clients, staff and society.
- **Equality.** Respectful and non-discriminatory treatment of all persons, and promotion of equal opportunities and diversity.
- **Regulatory compliance.** Respect for the legislation in force in all countries in which Index operates and for internal rules, including those on public procurement, data protection, intellectual property, and employment and tax matters.
- **Editorial independence.** Responsibility for scientific content and for decisions on acceptance or rejection always lies with the journal and its editorial board; Index does not interfere with them or influence them for commercial reasons.

4. Prevention of corruption and fraud

Index applies a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption, bribery, influence peddling and fraud, in both the public and the private sector.

- It is prohibited to offer, promise, give, solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, payments, gifts, hospitality, commissions or any other advantage in order to obtain or retain business, influence a decision or secure favourable treatment.
- Only courtesy gifts or hospitality of symbolic value that are occasional, transparent and cannot be interpreted as an attempt to influence a decision are permitted. In case of doubt, the Programme Officer shall be consulted.
- Index does not make contributions to political parties or their representatives.
- Every transaction must be documented and accurately reflected in the accounting records. Unjustified cash payments, invoices that do not correspond to real services and any form of concealment are prohibited.

Public procurement

In procurement procedures with public administrations and public-sector entities, Index undertakes to:

- Respect the principles of free competition, equal treatment, non-discrimination and transparency, and the applicable regulations on public-sector contracts.

- Submit truthful and complete bids, and not participate in collusive agreements or in any exchange of information with other bidders that could distort competition.
- Not offer or accept advantages of any kind to or from the staff of contracting authorities or persons involved in the preparation, award or performance of contracts.
- Notify the contracting authority of any situation that may constitute a conflict of interest and refrain from using inside information.
- Perform contracts diligently, in accordance with the tender specifications and the bid submitted, and invoice only for services actually rendered.

5. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest exists when a personal, family, financial or professional interest of a person subject to this Code may influence, or appear to influence, the objective performance of their duties or the interests of Index or its clients.

- **Identification.** Each person must diligently assess whether their situation may give rise to an actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
- **Declaration.** Any conflict shall be reported in writing to the Programme Officer before taking part in the decision or project concerned. In public procurement procedures, the contracting authority shall also be informed where appropriate.
- **Management.** The Programme Officer shall adopt appropriate measures: recusal of the person concerned, reassignment of tasks, reinforcement of controls or, if necessary, withdrawal from the project.
- **Record.** Declarations and the measures adopted are documented and kept confidentially.

Index does not accept hidden commissions or incentives that could compromise its independence and, where there is a possible conflict with a client, it will make this explicit and, if necessary, decline the engagement.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

Index processes personal data and unpublished scientific content on behalf of its clients. It therefore makes the following commitments:

- To process personal data in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR), Ley Orgánica 3/2018 de Protección de Datos Personales y garantía de los derechos digitales (Spanish Organic Law 3/2018 on the Protection of Personal Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights) and other applicable regulations.
- To process data solely for the purposes agreed with clients, to enter into data processing agreements where applicable and to apply the principle of data minimisation.
- To apply appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information and to protect it against unauthorised access, loss or alteration.
- To maintain professional secrecy regarding the confidential information of clients, authors, reviewers and the company itself, including after the relationship with Index has ended.

- To report any security incident to the Programme Officer without delay, so that it can be managed and, where applicable, notified to the authorities and the persons affected within the legal time limits.

7. Publication ethics and research integrity

As a provider of editorial services, Index contributes to the integrity of the scientific system and undertakes to:

- **Respect editorial independence** and not intervene in scientific decisions or in peer review.
- **Preserve the confidentiality of manuscripts** and review reports: unpublished content is used only to provide the contracted service and is not shared with unauthorised third parties.
- **Respect the intellectual property** of authors and journals, content licences and third-party rights, and not incorporate protected texts or data without authorisation.
- **Promote good editorial practice**, such as that recommended by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE): clear policies on peer review, ethics, conflicts of interest, corrections and retractions.
- **Not collaborate with predatory journals** or with entities that falsify peer review, promise non-existent indexing or metrics, or conceal information about fees, ownership or governance.
- **Communicate truthfully**: Index does not guarantee indexing or impact results, which depend on external evaluators; its role is to prepare journals technically and editorially.
- **Use artificial intelligence responsibly**: as support for technical tasks and always under human supervision, without replacing editorial decisions or altering the integrity of scientific content.

Where Index detects signs of misconduct (plagiarism, duplicate publication, data manipulation or undeclared conflicts of interest), it will bring them to the attention of the editors so that they can act in accordance with their protocols.

8. Employment relations

- **Respect.** Professional relationships are based on respect, trust and dialogue, both within the team and with clients, suppliers and collaborators.
- **Non-discrimination and equality.** Any discrimination on grounds of sex, origin, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability, ideology or any other condition is prohibited in recruitment, remuneration, promotion and professional development.
- **Zero tolerance of harassment.** Index does not tolerate workplace harassment, sexual harassment or harassment on grounds of sex, or any form of violence or intimidation, and will handle any report in this regard diligently and confidentially.
- **Safe and healthy working environment.** Index complies with occupational health and safety regulations, including for remote work, and seeks to avoid unsustainable workloads and expectations of permanent availability.
- **Work–life balance and development.** Flexible working hours and remote working are encouraged where the nature of the tasks allows, as is the continuous training of the team.

9. Relations with clients, suppliers and society

- Relations with clients are based on trust, transparency and shared responsibility, with clear contracts and accessible channels for submitting complaints or suggestions.
- Suppliers are selected on the basis of objective criteria of quality, cost, ethics and sustainability, and collaboration with companies whose practices are contrary to human rights or the environment is avoided.
- Index promotes open access, the use of open and interoperable standards (DOI, JATS XML, ORCID, Crossref) and transparency in publication fees.
- Index seeks to reduce its environmental impact through digital workflows, reduced travel and the choice of technology providers with sustainability commitments.
- Index complies with its tax, employment and commercial obligations in all countries in which it operates.

10. Ethics reporting channel

Index makes available to its staff, clients, suppliers and any third party a channel for reporting, in good faith, possible breaches of this Code or of applicable regulations, and for raising questions about its interpretation.

- **How to report.** By email to contacto@index-360.com, stating "Ethics channel – Confidential" in the subject line, or by post addressed to the Programme Officer at the registered office of Index. Reports are forwarded exclusively to the Programme Officer.
- **Content.** It is recommended that the facts be described as precisely as possible and that any available documents or evidence be provided. Anonymous reports are accepted.
- **Confidentiality.** The confidentiality of the identity of the reporting person, of the persons concerned and of any third parties mentioned, as well as of the information reported, is guaranteed in accordance with data protection regulations.
- **Prohibition of retaliation.** Index prohibits any retaliation against anyone who reports a possible breach in good faith or cooperates in its investigation.
- **Handling.** As a guideline, receipt will be acknowledged within seven days and the outcome will be communicated within a maximum of three months. The investigation will respect the presumption of innocence and the right of defence of the persons concerned.
- **Measures.** If the breach is confirmed, the appropriate corrective and, where applicable, disciplinary measures will be adopted, and the facts will be reported to the authorities where required by law.

This procedure is inspired by the principles of Ley 2/2023, de 20 de febrero, reguladora de la protección de las personas que informen sobre infracciones normativas y de lucha contra la corrupción (Spanish Law 2/2023 of 20 February on the protection of persons who report regulatory breaches and on the fight against corruption). The foregoing is without prejudice to the right of any person to use the external reporting channels of the competent authorities.

11. Implementation, dissemination and training

To ensure that the Code is known, understood and applied, Index undertakes to:

- **Dissemination.** Publish the Code on its website, in all the languages in which it operates, and provide it to everyone who joins the company.
- **Acceptance.** Obtain from each person subject to the Code a signed declaration of awareness and commitment to compliance, which is kept in their file.
- **Training.** Provide training on the Code upon joining and at least once a year, with specific content on the prevention of corruption, public procurement, conflicts of interest, data protection and publication ethics.
- **Record.** Keep a record of dissemination and training activities (date, content, attendees and, where applicable, assessment) to demonstrate the training of staff.
- **Suppliers and partners.** Communicate the Code to relevant suppliers and collaborators and, where appropriate, include compliance clauses in contracts.
- **Disciplinary regime.** Breach of the Code may give rise to the disciplinary measures provided for in employment legislation and the applicable collective agreement, or to termination of the contractual relationship, without prejudice to other legal liabilities.
- **Review.** Review the Code and the Programme at least once a year and whenever there are significant regulatory, organisational or business changes, or significant breaches.

12. Programme Officer

Oversight of the operation of and compliance with the Integrity Programme is the responsibility of the Programme Officer, who acts with autonomy and independent judgement and reports directly to the management of Index.

> **Adrià González Consuegra**
> Philosopher and expert in Editorial Excellence
> Integrity Programme Officer

The Programme Officer's duties include, among others: ensuring the dissemination and application of the Code, answering queries on its interpretation, managing the ethics channel and internal investigations, maintaining the register of conflicts of interest and of training, and reporting to management and proposing updates to the Programme.

13. Approval, validity and version control

This Code has been approved by the management of Index Publishing, S.L. and enters into force on the date of its approval. It will remain in force until its amendment or replacement is approved.

Version	Date	Description
1.0	June 2025	Statement of Ethical Principles, Values and Commitments of Index Publishing.
2.0	1 September 2026	Approval of the Code of Ethics and Integrity Programme. Incorporates the Statement of Ethical Principles, Values and Commitments (June 2025).