

ACTION PLAN FOR THE RENEWAL-STAGE OF THE HRS4R AT ICFO

March 2021

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1. DESCRIPTION

ICFO is a center of research excellence devoted to the science and technologies of light with a triple mission: to conduct frontier research, train the next generation of scientists, and provide knowledge and technology transfer. Over 400 researchers in 26 research groups are dedicated to both fundamental and applied research programs that address standing issues such as health, renewable energies, information technologies, security and industrial processes, among others.

The Severo Ochoa distinction awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, as well as 14 ICREA Professorships and 40 European Research Council grants, demonstrate the center's dedication to research excellence.

In January 2014, ICFO endorsed a Declaration of Commitment to the Principles of the "Charter for European Researchers" and the "Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers". It also committed to work towards the implementation of an "HR Strategy for Researchers" to establish a framework and detailed action plan with the aim of improving the research experience at the center. Subsequently, a Core Committee was created to perform an internal analysis, and, following the EU recommendations, to establish a framework and detailed action plan for the implementation of the HR Strategy for Research at ICFO. The Core Committee was responsible for assessing and following-up on the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan.

In 2015, ICFO was granted the "HR Excellence in Research" award by the European Commission, to help promote ourselves as a provider of a stimulating and favorable work environment, and highlight our commitment to implement fair and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures for researchers. In 2018 we undertook the self-audit which allowed us to highlight our achievements and identify further actions to be strengthened in the following years. With this process we successfully passed the Interim assessment step.

We firmly believe on the benefits of the HRS4R to encourage institutions to implement the Charter & Code in their policies and practices. We trust that this will render us more attractive to researchers looking for new opportunities. We also recognize that this has been a key element for us to continuously enhancing our policies towards a full alignment with the 40 principles of the Charter & Code and to embed these practices in our institutional procedures.

In this line, we have now undertaken the internal process towards aiming at the renewal of "HR Excellence in Research" award. The present document summarize the actions to be accomplished between 2021 and 2023 that have been identified fruit of the internal audit accomplished involving relevant key actors within the institution

2. METHODOLOGY

Following EU recommendations for the implementation of HRS4R, the action plan should be based on an internal self-assessment involving key-players from different areas and professional levels.

At the beginning of the implementation of the HRS4R an ad-hoc Core Committee was created, responsible for assessing and following-up on the successful execution of the HRS4R Action Plan, and proposing adjustments where necessary. Additional to the Core Committee, and in line with the HRS4R at ICFO itself, dedicated work committees were launched, involving key actors with expertise/ suitable background and knowledge for the actions concerning their area/ field.

During the first 24 months of the HRS4R at ICFO, we successfully accomplished the initially identified actions. With this progress in mind, and aware of new milestones resulting from this first period, based on the directives of the European Commission, we formally evaluated the Action Plan, and established new actions to be tackled during the following 24 months. The revision of the action plan, and the HRS4R as such, was possible not the least thanks to the mechanisms for participation we implemented as part of one of the work packages, and which helped in the gathering/ compiling valuable information and feedback regarding the planned actions. Feedback mechanisms involved dedicated meetings with the participant committees, as well as questionnaires and input gathered from our stakeholders. Following the recommendations of the EC for the mid-term self-audit of the HRS4R, ICFO compiled the relevant data and information, and made a new GAP-analysis, comparing the key aspects initially targeted with the existing situation and status of implementation, which allowed us to identify actions that had been completed, altered, omitted or added, in order to define actions to be targeted in the upcoming term of the HRS4R at ICFO.

Now that we are working towards the renewal of the "HR Excellence in Research" award, the internal analysis has been undertaken again following the principles outlined above. Thanks to the initial actions, the committees launched for the implementation of the HRS4R now operate regularly at ICFO with a minimum of 4 meetings per year with the mandate of gathering feedback from all relevant stakeholders from the ICFO community; discussing, assessing and evaluating actions and programs; and setting action-plans and following their implementation in their area of influence. In addition, new committees have been established to address relevant themes identified during the internal analysis. The creation of new committees and expansion and consolidation of previous ones allowed more robust internal analysis and feedback, increasing the participation and consultation of all stakeholders, and ensuring that topics can be addressed by the relevant committee with corresponding responsibilities and expertise. Committees have been acquainted with all relevant information for them to be able to contribute with their input. Feedback received from EU at the mid-term review has also been carefully considered.

The committees that have participated in the review process are: the PhD Committee (PhDC) the Postdoctoral Committee (PDC), the Admissions and Research Recruitment Committee (ARRC), the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (DIC) and Ethics Committee (EC). The following working groups have also participated in the process: the Data Management WG (DM WG), the Health and Safety WG (H&S WG), and Management Unit Heads.

Lastly, a Direction Committee (COMDIR) has also been consolidated as an evolution of the previously existing Core Committee, which also operates now regularly at ICFO and assumed, among others, the responsibility of overseeing, assessing and following-up on the implementation of HRS4R ensuring with this that the HR Strategy is embedded into the institutional strategic objectives.

Hence, in line with the recommendations by EC, ICFO now presents its new HRS4R Action Plan 2021-2023, with its Work Packages, concrete actions, committees involved, and implementation calendar.

These actions have been ratified in each of the corresponding committees and the whole HRS4R Action Plan has been approved by the COMDIR.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

We hereby include the Strategic Objectives that were identified in the initial GAP analysis with the aim of streamlining improvements in key areas we identified to work on in the scope of the HRS4R at ICFO. These key strategic objectives remain valid, and remain in-place for this renewal-stage implementation plan and work packages:

- Continuous enhancement of the Recruiting & Hiring Life-Cycle, aiming to attract an increasing number of competitive and outstanding candidates for ICFO research positions, as well as to improve the hiring/onboarding experience of selected candidates.
- Continuous enhancement of the Career Development Plan for ICFO researchers, with the aim of
 offering the best opportunities for personal and professional growth and for boosting future careers
 both in the industrial and academic worlds.
- Continuous enhancement of Good Practices in Research at all levels, with the aim of improving the
 accomplishment of established ethical principles for each discipline, focusing research for the good
 of humankind and expanding the frontiers of scientific knowledge.
- Continuous enhancement of the Research Environment with the aim of providing the most healthy, safe, supportive, respectful, equitable, inclusive, stable, competitive and stimulating environment and thus provide the best possible conditions for top world-renowned research.
- Continuous improvement of the Information Channels and Admin Work-flows with the aim of
 ensuring that ICFO researchers have access to the necessary information in a reliable, professional,
 and user-friendly environment with optimized admin procedures, automatized as much as possible,
 making them time-, cost- and environmentally efficient.

4. ACTION PLAN 2021-2023

WP1: Continuous enhancement of the recruiting & hiring life-cycle

Action 1. Consolidate the OTM-R principles:

- o Publish the updated OTM-R document.
- Inform and train all people involved in recruiting about these principles.
- Refine and publish clear guidelines for appeals.
- Refine the ICFO Recruiting Policy to include guidelines for the composition of Selection Committees.

Action 2. Further development of the icfojobs online application interface

Action 3. Consolidate the selection process for postdoctoral researchers

INDICATORS

WP1.I1 OTM-R policy document publicly available.

WP1.I2 Guidelines for appeals publicly available.

WP1.I3 Updated ICFO Recruiting Policy approved.

WP1.I4 Guidelines of selection process for postdoctoral researchers approved.

TARGET

WP1.T1 100% of people involved in recruiting informed and trained on OTM-R principles.

WP1.T2 Improvements implemented at icfojobs that allow authomatization of the updated selection process for postdoctoral researchers.

CALENDAR

WP2: Continuous enhancement of the Career Development for researchers

- Action 1. Consolidate the Resilience & Well-being Program
- Action 2. Define and launch a mobility grants program
- Action 3. Define and launch an individual mentoring program for career transitions post-ICFO

Action 4. Refine and consolidate the periodic evaluation procedure:

- For PhD Students.
- o For Postdoctoral Researchers.

Action 5. Consolidate access to mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

- Action 6. Consolidate the Career Development Program for Postdoctoral Researchers
- Action 7. Consolidate the Feedback mechanisms for Postdoctoral Researchers

INDICATORS

- WP2.I1 Mobility grants program launched.
- WP2.I2 Mentoring program for career transition launched.
- WP2.I3 Standardized templates for the periodic evaluation procedure implemented.
- WP2.I4 Information about mentoring for Postdoctoral researchers included in Welcome Pack and intranet.

TARGET

- **WP2.T1** Expand the scope of current Resilience & Well-being program to other people at ICFO and offer training to Group Leaders.
- WP2.T2 Increase in number of Career Development opportunities offered to Postdoctoral Researchers.
- WP2.T3 Increase in number of activities/actions devoted to compile feedback from Postdoctoral Researchers.

CALENDAR

WP3: Continuous enhancement of Good practices in Research

Action 1. Expand and update Research Integrity training

- Expand existing Research Integrity training to the whole research community.
- Ensure all incoming researchers has appropriate information/training on arrival.
- o Update the content of the courses.

Action 2. Clarify responsibilities and procedures in case of ethical issues

- o Raise awareness about the role of committees as mediation bodies.
- Clarify key persons to be contacted for different types of ethical issues.
- o Clarify procedures that will be followed in case ethical issues arise.

Action 3. Consolidate procedures regarding Research integrity topics in project management

- Clarify expertise and responsibilities of specific units & personnel within ICFO with respect to different types of ethical issues.
- o Clarify the procedures that will be followed in preparing ethics-related topics in project proposals.
- Clarify the procedures that will be followed in reporting about ethics-related topics during the implementation of projects.

INDICATORS

WP3.I1 Information publicly available about key persons to be contacted and procedures to be followed in case of ethical issues arising

WP3.I2 Guidelines of procedures for research integrity topics in project management.

TARGET

WP3.T1 Increase the number of attendees completing the Research Integrity training.

WP3.T2 Provide a short versions of the Research Integrity training to all incoming researchers.

CALENDAR

WP4: Continuous enhancement of the Research Environment

Action 1. Implement the new ICFO Gender Equality Plan

Action 2. Consolidate the expansion of the previous Gender Committee to the Diversity & Inclusion committee

Action 3. Keep ensuring compliance with the data protection policy and implement updates when needed for specific confidential projects

Action 4. Maintain the current high standards in ICFO Health & Safety

INDICATORS

WP4.I1 Actions foreseen in the new Gender Equality Plan completed.

WP4.I2 Actions organized to raise awareness of the topic of ensuring an inclusive environment.

TARGET

WP4.T1 Include the necessary updates in the data protection policy for specific confidential projects.

WP4.T2 Maintain good evaluations in OSHAS audits.

CALENDAR

WP5: Continuous enhancement of the Information channels and Admin workflows

Action 1. Consolidate the Data Management Project

- o Finalize the audit of different data sources used in ICFO admin and technical units.
- Proceed with the normalization and consolidation of the different data sources.
- o Provide tools for extraction of this data with business intelligence.

Action 2. Improve the exchange of information between units and alignment of those with the aim of improving efficiency

INDICATORS

WP5.I1 Audit of the different data sources used in ICFO.

WP5.12 Actions accomplished with the aim of improving the proper exchange of information and alignment between units.

TARGET

WP5.T1 Data Management Project fully implemented in all Management Units.

CALENDAR

5. WORK-PACKAGES TABLES AND WORKPLAN

Action 3. Consolidate the selection process for postdoctoral

researchers

WP1- CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT OF THE RECRUITING & HIRING LIFE-CYCLE								
ACTION	COMMITTEE IN CHARGE	TIME FRAME						
Action 1. Consolidate the OTM-R principles	ARRC							
Action 2. Further development of the icfojobs online application interface	ARRC	Q1-Q8						

ARRC

WP2- CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCHERS **ACTION COMMITTEE IN CHARGE TIME FRAME** Action 1. Consolidate the Resilience & Well-Being Program PhD, PDC, EC PhD Action 2. Define and launch a mobility grants program PhD Action 3. Define and launch an individual mentoring program for career transitions post-ICFO Action 4. Refine and consolidate the periodic evaluation PhD, PDC procedure Q1-Q8 Action 5. Consolidate access to mentoring for Postdoctoral **PDC** Researchers Action 6. Consolidate the Career Development Program for **PDC** Postdoctoral Researchers Action 7. Consolidate the Feedback mechanisms for **PDC** Postdoctoral Researchers

WP3- CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT OF GOOD PRACTICES IN RESEARCH

ACTION	COMMITTEE IN CHARGE	TIME FRAME
Action 1. Expand and update the Research Integrity training.	PhD, EC	
Action 2. Clarify responsibilities and procedures in case of ethical issues	EC	Q1-Q4
Action 3. Consolidate procedures regarding Research integrity topics in project management	EC	

WP4- CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT OF THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

ACTION	COMMITTEE IN CHARGE	TIME FRAME
Action 1. Implement the new ICFO Gender Equality Plan	DIC	
Action 2. Consolidate the expansion of the previous Gender Committee to the Diversity & Inclusion committee	DIC	
Action 3. Keep ensuring compliance with the data protection policy and implement updates when needed for specific confidential projects	Management Unit Heads	Q1-Q12
Action 4. Maintain the current high standards in ICFO Health & Safety	H&S WG	

WP5- CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT OF THE INFORMATION CHANNELS AND ADMIN WORK-FLOWS

ACTION	COMMITTEE IN CHARGE	TIME FRAME
Action 1. Consolidate the Data Management Project.	Management Unit Heads	
Action 2. Improve the exchange of information between units and alignment of those with the aim of improving efficiency.	Management Unit Heads	Q1-Q12

	WORKPLAN	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q ₆	Q 7	Q (8	Q Q 9 1 0	Q 0	Q 2
	Action 1. Consolidate the OTM-R principles											
W P	Action 2. Further development of the icfojobs online application interface											
1	Action 3. Consolidate the selection process for postdoctoral researchers											
	Action 1. Consolidate the Resilience & Well-Being Program											
	Action 2. Define and launch a mobility grants program											
	Action 3. Define and launch an individual mentoring program for career transition post-ICFO											
w	Action 4. Refine and consolidate the periodic evaluation procedure											
P 2	Action 5. Consolidate access to mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers											
	Action 6. Consolidate the Career Development Program for Postdoctoral Researchers											
	Action 7. Consolidate the Feedback mechanisms for Postdoctoral Researchers											
	Action 1. Expand and update the Research Integrity training											
W P	Action 2. Clarify responsibilities and procedures in case of ethical issues											
3	Action 3. Consolidate procedures regarding Research integrity topics in project management											
	Action 1. Implement the new ICFO Gender Equality Plan											
	Action 2. Consolidate the expansion of the previous Gender Committee to the Diversity & Inclusion committee											
W P 4	Action 3. Keep ensuring compliance with the data protection policy and implement updates when needed for specific confidential projects											
	Action 4. Maintain the current high standards in ICFO Health & Safety											
	Action 1. Consolidate the Data Management Project											
W P 5	Action 2. Improve the exchange of information between units and alignment of those with the aim of improving efficiency											

TEMPLATE 3 – OTM-R Checklist

Case number: 2020ES511895

Name Organisation under review: ICFO

Organisation's contact details:

ICFO - The Institute of Photonic Sciences

Av. Carl Friedrich Gauss, n.3

08860 - Castelldefels (Barcelona), SPAIN

Phone number: +34 935534174 Email Contact: hr@icfo.eu

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 2021

DATE ENDORSEMENT CHARTER AND CODE: January 2014

OTM-R Checklist

OTM-R checklist for organisations	10:	T	N.O		
	Open	Trans- parent	Merit- based	Answer: ++ Yes, completely +/-Yes, substantially -/+ Yes, partially No	
OTM-R system					
1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and in English)?	x	x	x	Yes, substantially	Information about our recruitment policy, which is based in the OTM-R principles, is published in our webpage. Specifically, our online application interface ICFOjobs (http://jobs.icfo.eu/) provides general information about the different stages of the recruitment and hiring process at ICFO. We provide this information in English, given that this is the main working language at the Institute. The portal provides the list of openings available at each moment, and now includes a section about the 'Recruitment Process', as well as 'FAQs' with all detailed information about the application process. Additional to that, our homepage http://www.icfo.eu provides a brief description of the different types of positions available at ICFO, and the general selection criteria applicable to them. Finally, all openings include detailed information about the position, requirements & conditions as well as a description of the specific application process.
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x	Yes, partially	We have internal guides with clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all research positions s. In addition, we issue specific written guidelines to all selection committee / panel members, participating in undergraduate and PhD Students selection setting clear OTM-R procedures and practices.

3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	X	X	х	Yes, partially	ICFO management staff participating in recruiting (Human Resources and Education –HRE- and Academic Affairs) is sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R via their extensive expertise in managing selection processes for R+D positions as well as thanks to their participation in several specialized workshops and talks. In addition, before the launch of each call, participating external evaluators are trained in the principles of OTM-R. The same applies to the new Group/ Team Leaders joining the institution who received specific information and training in how selection process is organized at ICFO and, specifically, about the OTM-R principles.
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	х	х		Yes, substantially	Online application process is fully established at ICFO thanks to our in-house (non-commercial) erecruitment tool ICFOjobs, which has a front-end and a back-end. Via the front-end, all openings are listed and interested candidates may submit their application data and material. Via the back-end, tracking of applications is possible as well as communication with the participants in the different steps of the selection process. The ICFOjobs online application tool has been significantly improved in the recent years.
5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	х	х	х	Yes, completely	A dedicated ARRC (Academic and Research Recruitment Committee) is in place at ICFO, operating already from several years ago, with clear guidelines describing composition, obligations and responsibilities of the committee. Responsibilities of this committee includes defining the recruiting policies, overseeing the process and

					ensuring quality standards. The committee meets regularly at least four times per year, and the corresponding minutes are compiled.
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	х	x	х	Yes, completely	All available positions at ICFO are publicly and externally announced. ICFO publishes a large number of vacancies every year and according to the compiled stats, the vast majority of the applicants are external. In recent years we have improved the visibility of the organization thanks to the commitment to the OTM-R policy and good practices in recruiting.
7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	х	x	х	Yes, completely	All available positions at ICFO are publicly and externally announced. We have mechanisms in place to disseminate our opportunities both at a local level as well as internationally. Stats from 2020 show that we recruit 70% of researchers from abroad.
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	X	x	x	Yes, substantially	Our OTM-R is in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups. In line with our commitment with promoting and ensuring a working environment where individuals are treated with respect, equality and courtesy and with promoting diversity, efforts have been made to attract applicants from underrepresented groups in the calls of undergraduate and PhD students. In all calls we ensure that no additional barriers are placed for these applicants, we dedicate efforts in avoiding bias in evaluation and we also dedicate specific calls for women and minorities Information on these can be found at: https://www.icfo.eu/lang/about-icfo/gender-

					equality and https://www.icfo.eu/newsroom/news/4772-spie- announces-a-1-million-endowed-diversity-focused- chair-at-icfo
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers	х	х	x	Yes, completely	Our current OTM-R policy is in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers as is informed in our website: https://www.icfo.eu/lang/about-icfo/careers Great care is taken at ICFO to nurture optimal conditions for high quality research.
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?				Yes, substantially	Thanks to our e-recruitment tool ICFOjobs, we are able to gather standardized information on previous studies and experience of applicants among other information. This allows us to compile statistics to evaluate the impact of our calls, the suitability of applications received for each specific position as well as how applicants heard about the call they applied for, among others. As commented this is constantly tracked by dedicated staff in HRE and assessed by our ARRC committee.
Advertising and application phase					
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x		Yes, completely	Clear templates are in place at ICFO used for all positions advertised as can be observed on http://jobs.icfo.eu . Dedicated staff from HRE Unit manage all recruitment processes, ensuring the necessary standardization, and that the OTM-R principles are always followed.
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit?	х	х		Yes, substantially	Our job advertisements include all necessary information aiming at providing all relevant information and also be as concise as possible. In addition, links to more detailed information

					published in other pages of our webpage are also included.
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	х	X		Yes, substantially	As laid down above in n. 6 and n.7, the vast majority of the applicants are external and 70% of researchers join from abroad. As can be seen at Euraxess site: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs , more than 90% of our job adverts are posted on EURAXESS.
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	х	х		Yes, completely	ICFO makes use of a variety of tools/ channels to disseminate its opportunities apart from our erecruitment tool ICFOjobs: online advertising in targeted research portals, our corporate social media channels, targeted and strategic distribution of the calls amongst our International academic partners and top universities worldwide and attendance to relevant career fairs. Impact of those is constantly tracked via different mechanisms in place as well as via the information provided by applicants to how they heard about the opportunity.
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate?	x			Yes, completely	Candidates complete the application process entirely online, via http://jobs.icfo.eu . We have improved our online application interface ICFOjobs to keep the administrative burden to a minimum.
Selection and evaluation phase					
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees?		x	x	Yes, substantially	Ad-hoc selection committees are appointed for each call for undergraduate students. For PhD Student calls a standing committee is appointed with members serving for one year. Members of the standing committee are recommended by the ARRC committee, ratified by ICFO Director and then correspondingly implemented by specialized staff in HRE. Ad-hoc experts may also be appointed

				for specific calls. These experts are also recommended by the ARRC following clear guidelines, and ratified by the Director
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?	x	x	Yes, partially	We have clear internal rules concerning the composition of the selection committees that take-into-account the minimum number of members, gender balance, diversity of background and experience, and inclusion of external experts from different sectors and with relevant experience, among others.
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?	X	х	Yes, substantially	Yes, we make sure that the committees are gender balanced and that there is no less than a third of each gender on each committee.
19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help to judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?		x	Yes, completely	All selection is fully merit-based. Selection guidelines are handed out to the committee members, specifying the procedure, as well as the criteria to be applied for selection. Standardized committee forms are used during the evaluation.
Appointment phase				
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?	х		Yes, completely	At all stages, candidates are informed of the outcome in their case.
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?	x		Yes, substantially	We inform candidates of the outcome in their case, and answer inquiries for specific feedback on a personal basis. However, only a small percentage ask for specific feedback beyond the notification of rejection in their case.
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?	x		Yes, substantially	1-5% of candidates ask for specific reasons for rejection in their case. We respond to all candidates' requests of further feedback on demand.

Overall assessment			We have internal guidelines and published information for candidates regarding mechanisms for complaints and appeals.
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?		Yes, completely	Assessment regarding the OTM-R is with the ARRC Committee) in place at ICFO whose responsibilities includes defining the recruiting policies, overseeing the process and ensuring quality standards. The committee meets regularly at least four times per year and the corresponding minutes are compiled. The committee members include relevant stakeholders from different positions within ICFO. Mechanisms are in place to compile relevant data and statistics aiming at assessing our KPI in the area.