

**ACTION PLAN  
FOR THE SECOND-STAGE  
IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE HRS4R AT ICFO**

November 2017

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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 27 research groups and teams 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 Ministry of Industry, Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO), as well as 14 ICREA Professorships and 26 European Research Council grants demonstrate the centre'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 to be implemented at ICFO with the aim of improving the research experience at the centre. Subsequently, a Core Committee was created to perform an internal analysis, involving key-players 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 is 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 itself as a provider of a stimulating and favorable work environment, as well as to highlight our commitment to implement fair and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures for researchers.

The present document summarize the actions to be accomplished from 2017 to 2019, in the second stage of the implementation of the HRS4R at ICFO. The indicated actions are fruit of the internal audit of first stage actions accomplished.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

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

With this aim, a Core Committee for the implementation of the HRS4R at ICFO was created, responsible for assessing and following-up on the successful execution of the HRS4R Action Plan, as well as for 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 upcoming 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 committees involved, 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, accomplishing a new GAP- analysis, comparing the key aspects initially targeted with the current situation and status of implementation, which allowed us identifying those actions that have been completed, altered, omitted or added, in order to finally define those actions to be targeted in the upcoming term of the HRS4R at ICFO.

Hence, in line with the recommendations by EC, ICFO now presents its revised HRS4R Action Plan 2017-2019, with its Work Packages, concrete actions, committees involved, as well as the calendar of implementation.

The revised HRS4R Action Plan was ratified by the ICFO Core Committee and sent to the EC for approval.

### **3. HR 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 are therefore subject for this second-stage implementation and its work packages, too:

- 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 2017-2019**

### **WP1: Consolidation Work Committees and mechanisms for participation**

*Action 1. Consolidate the PDC (Postdoctoral), ARRC (Admissions and Research Recruitment) and PhDC committees, by updating the corresponding appointments periodically*

*Action 2. Continue providing mechanisms for participation*

### **WP2: Improvement of the recruiting & hiring life-cycle**

*Action 1. Implementation of an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy at ICFO*

*Action 2. Consolidate a code of best practices in recruitment at ICFO*

*Action 3. Further development of the ICFOJobs online application interface*

### **WP3: Assess the ICFO Career Development Plan (CDP) for researchers**

*Action 1. Consolidate the Career Development Plan*

*Action 2. Consolidate the mentorship and feedback mechanisms*

*Action 3. Consolidate the assessment on activities in teaching and coaching*

### **WP4: Good practices in research**

*Action 1. Compile a “Code of best practices in research”*

*Action 2. Communicate and raise awareness of the “Code of best practices in research”*

*Action 3. Consolidate and expand the Research Integrity Course offered to PhD Students and expand it to the whole research community*

### **WP5: Improve actions in the frame of Research Environment**

*Action 1. Consolidating the ICFO Gender Equality Plan*

*Action 2. Consolidating actions to ensure non-discrimination of disabled persons*

*Action 3. Data Protection Policy*

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

## **WP6: Improve information channels and admin work-flows**

***Action 1. Consolidation of the CRM.***

***Action 2. Consolidation of the Data Management Project.***

***Action 3. Optimizing onboarding protocol for newcomers.***

## **5. WORK-PACKAGES TABLES AND WORKPLAN**

### **WP1- CONSOLIDATION WORK COMMITTEES AND MECHANISMS FOR PARTICIPATION**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMITTEE IN CHARGE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Action 1. Consolidate the PDC (Postdoctoral), ARRC (Admissions and Research Recruitment) and PhDC committees, by updating the corresponding appointments periodically.	Core Committee	Q1-Q8
Action 2. Continue providing mechanisms for participation.	Core Committee	Q1-Q8

### **WP2- IMPROVEMENT OF THE RECRUITING & HIRING LIFE-CYCLE**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMITTEE IN CHARGE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Action 1. Implementation of an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy at ICFO.	ARRC	Q5-Q7
Action 2. Consolidate a code of best practices in recruitment at ICFO.	ARRC	Q5-Q7
Action 3. Further development of the ICFOJobs online application interface.	ARRC	Q5-Q7

### **WP3- ASSESS THE ICFO CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP) FOR RESEARCHERS**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMITTEE IN CHARGE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Action 1. Consolidate the Career Development Plan.	PhDC & PDC	Q2-Q7
Action 2. Consolidate the mentorship and feedback mechanisms.	PhDC & PDC	Q2-Q7
Action 3. Consolidate the assessment on activities in teaching and coaching.	PhDC & PDC	Q2-Q7

#### **WP4- GOOD PRACTICES IN RESEARCH**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMITTEE IN CHARGE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Action 1. Compile a "Code of best practices in research".	Core Committee	Q4-Q8
Action 2. Communicate and raise awareness of the "Code of best practices in research".	Core Committee	Q4-Q8
Action 3. Consolidate and expand the Research Integrity Course offered to PhD Students and expand it to the whole research community.	Core Committee	Q4-Q8

#### **WP5- IMPROVE ACTIONS IN THE FRAME OF RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMITTEE IN CHARGE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Action 1. Consolidating the ICFO Gender Equality Plan	Core Committee	Q3-Q7
Action 2. Consolidating actions to ensure non-discrimination of disabled persons	Core Committee	Q3-Q7
Action 3. Data Protection Policy	Core Committee	Q3-Q7
Action 4. Maintain the high standards in ICFO Health & Safety	Core Committee	Q3-Q7

#### **WP6- IMPROVE INFORMATION CHANNELS AND ADMIN WORK-FLOWS**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMITTEE IN CHARGE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>
Action 1. Consolidation of the CRM	Core Committee	Q8
Action 2. Consolidation of the Data Management Project	Core Committee	Q8
Action 3. Optimizing onboarding protocol for newcomers.	Core Committee	Q8



WORKPLAN		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
WP 1	Action 1. Consolidate the PDC (Postdoctoral), ARRC (Admissions and Research Recruitment) and PhDC committees, by updating the corresponding appointments periodically								
	Action 2. Continue providing mechanisms for participation								
WP 2	Action 1. Implementation of an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy at ICFO								
	Action 2. Consolidate a code of best practices in recruitment at ICFO								
	Action 3. Further development of the ICFOJobs online application interface								
WP 3	Action 1. Consolidate the Career Development Plan								
	Action 2. Consolidate the mentorship and feedback mechanisms								
	Action 3. Consolidate the assessment on activities in teaching and coaching								
WP 4	Action 1. Compile a "Code of best practices in research"								
	Action 2. Communicate and raise awareness of the "Code of best practices in research"								
	Action 3. Consolidate and expand the Research Integrity Course offered to PhD Students and expand it to the whole research community								
WP 5	Action 1. Consolidating the ICFO Gender Equality Plan								
	Action 2. Consolidating actions to ensure non-discrimination of disabled persons								
	Action 3. Data Protection Policy								
	Action 4. Maintain the high standards in ICFO Health & Safety								
WP 6	Action 1. Consolidation of the CRM								
	Action 2. Consolidation of the Data Management Project								
	Action 3. Optimizing onboarding protocol for newcomers								

ICFO – The Institute of Photonic Sciences  
Av. Carl Friedrich Gauss, 3  
08860 Castelldefels (Barcelona) - SPAIN  
[www.icfo.eu](http://www.icfo.eu)



# Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers

# OTM-R

## Checklist for Institutions

	Open	Transparent	Merit-based	Answer: <i>Yes completely/Yes substantially/ Yes partially/No</i>	Suggested indicators (or form of measurement)
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 partially	Our online application interface ICFOjobs 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. At <a href="https://jobs.icfo.eu/">https://jobs.icfo.eu/</a> , in addition to the list of current vacancies, we included a section about the 'Recruitment Process', as well as 'FAQs' for the application process. Additional to that, our homepage <a href="http://icfo.eu">http://icfo.eu</a> provides a brief description on the different types of the positions we are offering, and the general selection criteria applicable to all positions.
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 issue written guidelines to all selection committee / panel members, participating in general calls, for each edition.
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x	Yes partially	Human Resources Staff members participating and organizing recruitment processes are trained on a periodic basis, before the launch on each call. The same applies to the Group/ Team Leaders, who are called for periodic meetings in which upcoming calls and procedures are thoroughly explained. Additional to that, we brief all participating actors (staff, panels, Group Leaders) via email on each step of the processes.
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x		Yes substantially	Our in-house (non-commercial) e-recruitment tool ICFOjobs ( <a href="http://jobs.icfo.eu">http://jobs.icfo.eu</a> ) has a front-and back-end. Via the front-end, interested candidates find open positions, and may submit their application. Via the back-end, the hiring managers/ actors (HR staff, team/ group leaders) proceed with the evaluation of the received application material.

5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	x	x	x	Yes substantially	Quality control of all recruitment processes is with the ARRC (Academic and Research Recruitment Committee), as laid out in WP1.
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	x	x	x	Yes completely	Less than 1% of all our applicants are internal (only in occasions where general calls offer an improvement of contract/ fellowship conditions, as long as applicant eligible).
7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	x	x	x	Yes completely	Example: Indicator PhD General Calls: At least 90% of all applicants are international.
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	x	x	x	Yes substantially	Example: Indicator PhD General Calls: About 25% of all applicants are female graduates.
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	x	x	x	Yes completely	Our research positions are advertised, both on targeted portals such as Euraxess or ResearchGate (apart from journal portals, and alike), as well as within our network of partners and contacts in academia (incl. social media campaigns). The share on how candidates hear about ICFO or a specific general call is very high for online advertising sources, as well as web searches. For the PhD General Call, for example, 60% became aware of the opportunity because of these dissemination actions.  In general, 99% of all applicants apply from outside the institution.
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?				Yes substantially	So far, we gather information on background, degrees and providence (studies) of our applicants, as well as on how they heard about the call they applied for. This helps us to improve reaching our target audience for each call.

Advertising and application phase					
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x		Yes completely	All vacancies published follow the same general scheme, as can be observed on <a href="http://jobs.icfo.eu">http://jobs.icfo.eu</a> .
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit? [see Chapter 4.4.1 a)]	x	x		Yes substantially	<p>ICFO uses the Euraxess portal for announcing general calls, as well as group openings with EU-funding. The HR-logo is part of these advertisings, standing for our endorsement of Charter and Code.</p> <p>Charter and Code are also mentioned and linked in the section describing our recruitment process on <a href="http://jobs.icfo.eu">http://jobs.icfo.eu</a>, as well as in the Careers-section of the ICFO website.</p> <p>The general conditions applicable to our research positions are mentioned in each call/vacancy published.</p>
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	x	x		Yes substantially	80% of our vacancies are posted to Euraxess. 99% of our research vacancies are awarded to applicants from outside our organization.
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	x	x		Yes completely	<p>ICFO makes use of a variety of tools/ channels to disseminate its opportunities. For the PhD General Call figures on how they heard about the call, confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 60% via online adverts and web search, as well as social media</li> <li>- 39% via recommendations by professors of their home institutions (network ICFO, contact database ICFO), or talks given by ICFO researchers</li> <li>- 1% via other means, such as print advertising.</li> </ul>
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate? [see Chapter 4.4.1 b)]	x			Yes substantially	Candidate complete the application process entirely online, via <a href="http://jobs.icfo.eu">http://jobs.icfo.eu</a>

<b>Selection and evaluation phase</b>					
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees? [see Chapter 4.4.2 a)]		x	x	Yes substantially	Substantially, we comply with this criterion for the selection panels applied to our general calls. Clear rules are established for selection panels, for example at the PhD General Call level, where at least one out of 3 members should be female.
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?		x	x	Yes partially	Clear rules for our General PhD calls, where selection panels are appointed by consensus via the ARRC. Panels should have at least 3 members, out of which 1 should be external, and 1 female. Panels should cover the widest possible spectrum of expertise.
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?		x	x	Yes substantially	Yes. We usually aim at having selection panels of 3 members, out of which 1 shall be female (25%).
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	Committee guidelines are handed out to the panels, specifying the procedure, as well as the criteria to be applied for selection. Standardized committee forms are used during the evaluation.

<b>Appointment phase</b>					
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?		x		Yes completely	At all stages, candidates are informed of the outcome in their case.
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?		x		Yes partially	We inform candidates of the outcome in their case, and answer inquiries for specific feedback on a personal basis. However, only a small percentage (1-5%) 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.

Overall assessment					
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?				Yes substantially	Assessment regarding the OTM-R is with the ARRC (Academic and Research Recruitment Committee).