



Centre for Genomic Regulation

**HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)
Action Plan 2022-2024**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



Table of Contents

- 1. CRG HR Strategy for Researchers. Foreword 3**
- 2. Designing HRS4R Action Plan 2022-2024. The previous steps..... 5**
- 3. Action Plan 9**

1. CRG HR Strategy for Researchers. Foreword

The Centre for Genomic Regulation (CRG) is an international biomedical research institute of excellence, created in December 2000. It is a non-profit foundation funded by the Catalan Government through the Departments of Business & Knowledge, the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation & Universities, "la Caixa" Banking Foundation, and includes the participation of Pompeu Fabra University.

The mission of the CRG is to discover and advance knowledge for the benefit of society, public health and economic prosperity.

The *Charter for Researchers* and *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* were endorsed by CRG in 2008. Following this commitment, in 2011 CRG accepted an invitation by the European Commission to participate in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers initiative (third cohort) to make CRG a more attractive workplace for researchers at all levels. The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) is conceived by the Centre for Genomic Regulation (CRG) as of a methodology to put the principles of the *Charter & Code* into practice. To achieve this challenge, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) follows a cycle that iterates once the process is completed. The cycle can be described as follows:

- Internal Gap Analysis
- Strategy and Action Plan
- Revision and acknowledgment by the European Commission
- Self-assessment
- External Evaluation by the European Commission

Since its endorsement in 2008, CRG has been working on aligning their human resources policies to the 40 principles of the *Charter & Code*, based on a customized action plan/HR strategy. So far, the CRG has designed and executed three action plans. The present document outlines the main strategic lines of initiatives addressed for each action plan and introduces the new action plan (the fourth one) for the period 2022-2024.

The first action plan was designed for the period of 2013-2015 with the involvement of a Monitoring Committee, and an internal Working Group with representatives from all research professional communities and approved by the CRG Executive Board. The proposed HR Strategy was based on the HR Strategic Objectives 2013-2017 outlined below:

1. Promote and enhance recruitment policies to attract top talent and train the next generation of scientists.
2. Provide a positive work environment that builds on the principles of equal opportunities and work-life balance.
3. Support the talent through career development, including guidance to researchers looking for their next professional step inside and beyond the CRG.

4. Develop an integrated set of transparent HR policies and Code of Conduct to ensure ethical integrity at all levels throughout the CRG.
5. Deliver high quality and professional HR services to the CRG community.

On the 19th of November of 2013 CRG received the '*HR Excellence in Research*' award from the European Commission. This is a recognition of the institute's commitment in developing a Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), designed to bring the practices, policies and procedures in line with the principles of *Charter and Code*.

The second action plan was designed for the period 2016-2017, and was followed by 2018 midterm actions, before designing the current action plan for the period of 2019-2021. The main lines of action pursuing in the plan were:

- Design HR policies (recruiting and career development).
- Enhance promotion of gender balance and work-life balance.
- Further development of training activities.

The main midterm actions in 2018 can be summarised as follows:

- Increase awareness in gender bias and continue integrating specific actions in Recruitment, Career Development, Work-Life Balance, Sex-Gender dimension of Research and Management (within Gender Equality Plan – GEP).
- Expand our Training Portfolio, fostering Research Integrity and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) learning activities.
- Reinforce dissemination of *Recruitment Policy* and the Principles of the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*.

The third action plan lasted from 2019 to 2021 and was focus on the following strategic lines:

- Increase awareness and communication about CRG policies on ethics and good scientific practice, including the dissemination of the CERCA Code of Conduct.
- Reinforce the *Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Policy* for Researchers by establishing a mechanism for suggestions and complaints, monitoring quality of the process and creating specific guidelines for panel composition and selection of Group Leaders.
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion by designing and implementing an integrative *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan*, and executing the LIBRA sustainability plan in collaboration with EU-LIFE partners.
- Further support the talent through career development actions and activities, including mentoring programmes.

In April 2021, the HR Excellence in Research seal was renewed following a Remote Visit from assessors from the European Commission. The award gives public recognition to research institutions that have made progress in aligning their human resource policies with the forty basic principles of the *Charter and Code* set out by the Commission.

The assessors commended the CRG for its particularly impressive achievements in having an *Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Policy* for attracting highly talented researchers from all over the world, as well its efforts in training researchers, its gender equality, the comprehensive welcome services/package, the HR support staff initiatives and the development of a separate professional career policies dedicated to the technicians. The CRG's *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan* and its effectiveness in increasing the number of women in team leadership positions, as well as the support for grants targeted at women scientists were two elements that were both highly valued and considered good practices that other research institutions could learn from.

2. Designing HRS4R Action Plan 2022-2024. The previous steps

To design the new Action Plan 2022-2024 several steps were taken:

1. Initial meetings to design the New Action Plan

Several meetings were conducted with the members of the Monitoring/Working Group in order to:

- Analyse in depth the report written by EC Assessors as a result of the Remote Visit (April 2021) that includes mainly strengths and recommendations for the future plans of the Centre.
- Review the degree of achievement/execution of each action planned for the period 2019-2021.
- Agree on the methodology to prepare the new action plan 2022-2024.

2. Gap Analysis based on the Action Plan 2019-2021

An in-house gap analysis led by the Human Resources Department was carried out with the collaboration of the Monitoring Working Group, and key stakeholders/working group, to analyse strengths and weaknesses of the main areas that encompass the 40 principles of the *Charter & Code*: Ethical and Professional aspects, Recruitment, Working Conditions & Social Security, and Training and Development.

Considering the specificities regarding the internal structure of the centre, the major tools to perform the gap analysis were:

- 1) Focused meetings targeted the Representatives of different communities (PhD students, Postdoctoral Researchers, PIs...) to gather qualitative feedback on the past initiatives, practices and policies implemented against the 40 principles of the *Charter & Code* and the future needs.
- 2) Work sessions on different principles of the *Charter & Code* with key players and experts (identified and engaged to participate in the gap analysis) to collect technical and specialised input.

- 3) Outcome of the focus groups and sessions organised for the preparation of the New CRG Strategic Plan.
- 4) Data collection and evaluation to identify potential topics of the *Charter & Code* not covered so far.

Once the identification process of the strengths and areas of improvement was completed, a first draft report was written and shared with the stakeholders involved in the gap analysis to gather new contributions or amendments and promote synergies among the working group. This work plan allowed the collection and in-depth evaluation of the principles of the *Charter & Code* considering last actions plans and policies grades' of implementation.

The main gaps identified through the deep analysis can be summarised as follows:

- Ethical and Professional Aspects

CRG's ethical and professional aspects are credited in institutional and public documents, and they are informed/trained through several means. To ensure that our activities are carried out following ethical principles, CRG provides courses and workshops on ethics and research integrity. Additionally, the *Barcelona Biomedical Research Park's (PRBB) Good Scientific Practice Committee*, of which CRG is a member, works proactively in the continuous development of the *Code of Good Scientific Practice*. It establishes the need for all projects developed at the PRBB to comply with the ethical regulations and aims to create an environment conducive to high-quality research and prevent problems from arising in relation to the integrity of scientists in their work.

Regarding ethical and professional aspects in a wide and general sense, all newcomers are informed in the onboarding programme (in particular, in the welcome meeting) about policies and guidelines applicable throughout CRG. In addition, they are required to sign the acknowledgement that they have received, read, understood and will comply with the internal policies and regulations of the CRG that are applicable during the employment period.

According to the consensus report written by the EC assessors after the Remote Visit: *Research freedom, professional responsibility and attitude, good practice in research, dissemination & exploitation efforts and public engagement have been well addressed under the previous action plans by CRG. The remaining field of concern is raising the awareness about ethical research and research integrity and other policies among all level of researchers.*

Therefore, it is been identified the need to continue increasing awareness about CRG policies, especially on ethics and good scientific practice.

- Recruitment Area

CRG ensures adhesion to the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* by performing different initiatives, such as, dissemination of the *Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Policy*, informative/training sessions to hiring managers and chairs of the selection panels, guiding and monitoring recruiting processes with the aim of observing/applying the recruitment principles of the *Code*, preparing open, wide and international recruitment calls, among others.

In EC assessors' opinion, gathered in the consensus report, *solid fundamentals for an OTM-R policy are installed with well and fully described procedures. Some measures, undertaken to improve recruitment policies, were very ambitious (e.g. availability of female candidates for each position but they were consequently implemented and served their goals). Further progress is envisioned by the Action Plan especially in the area of selecting R3 and R4 researchers, by establishing a more specific procedure to be followed. Also, the complaints mechanism has been further reinforced*".

To continuously monitor and improve the quality and the effectiveness of the OTM-R policy, it is recommended to define some new indicators that show the success in attracting very talented researchers.

- Working Conditions and Social Security

CRG employers recognize researchers as professionals within a career path and treat them accordingly, applying the working conditions regulated at both national and international level.

The Centre provides improving working conditions and ensures a stimulating international scientific environment with access to cutting edge facilities, seminars, internal seminars, scientific training and training in transferable skills and career development. Additionally, CRG promotes a culture of participation in the decision-making bodies. Therefore, and regarding representation, researchers are represented in consultation to be able to protect their collective interests.

In EC assessors' feedback, written in the consensus report, it was highlighted that *CRG employees are focused on research and training and consider the working conditions of CRG as stimulating for their development. The institution's efforts so far have been successful in improving working conditions taking into account the needs of different stakeholder groups*.

In order to continue offering such good conditions targeted to different research communities, CRG will be over the next years further investing in working conditions by creating new initiatives focused on diversity and inclusion (strategic goal of the institute), well-being/ health & safety, internships, among others.

- Training and Development

CRG offers multi- and inter-disciplinary training for the next generation of scientists. CRG boasts an excellent comprehensive training programme that addresses the needs of the different professional categories at the Institute and prepares scientist for the next step in their professional career. The Centre provides a realistic view of how science works and offer courses that include science communication, experimental design, ethics, publication, funding, innovation and entrepreneurship workshops to enhance their scientific skills, like courses on statistics, microscopy and bioinformatics, among others.

In order to contribute to the career advancement, mentoring programmes and career development initiatives have been designed among research communities.

The EC assessors commented on this area that: *the offer of training for the stakeholders is very rich, combining scientific subjects, transferable skills and other supplementary training for the researchers. The welcome package is very comprehensive and handy, facilitating the mobility of foreign researchers.*

With the aim of continue providing a comprehensive training and development framework, CRG will consolidate the mentoring programme addressed to researchers at different stages of their career, will enrich the onboarding/welcome programme and will foster activities to help the transition to next career step.

3. Action Plan

The Remote Visit in 2021 help us to identify our strengths and areas for improvement after being implemented three consequent action plans and having renewed our HR Excellence seal successfully.

According to the report delivered by the European Commission assessors after the Remote Visit and the outcome of our internal gap analysis, the strategic lines of actions to follow in our 2022-2024 Action Plan are the following:

1. Raise and increase awareness focused on spreading knowledge and information on research integrity, ethics and good scientific practices.
2. Continue fostering recruitment procedures, which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable by reinforcing procedures, guidance and advertising campaigns.
3. Enrich the CRG's Equality Plan by creating collaboratively among the CRG communities a complementary plan particularly focused on Diversity and Inclusion to advance towards a consolidated culture based on equal opportunities, inclusion, respect for diversity and difference.
4. Enhance Health and Well-being by designing and fostering a Framework that covers the areas: workplace relationships, mental health, work-life balance, and health and safety at the workplace.
5. Further consolidation of onboarding programme, mentoring programmes and career development activities targeted to each CRG community collaboratively with other institutions and alliances groups, at both level national and international.

The actions proposed in the Action Plan 2022-2024 have been approved by the CRG Direction Board in September 2022. They have been grouped in four areas in alignment with the *Charter & Code*: Ethical and Professional Aspects, Recruitment, Working Conditions, and Training and Development. For each action has been identified the Charter & Code principle/s, the unit/s in charge, a timeframe, and corresponding indicator/s.

The CRG HRS4R Monitoring Working Group will assess the implementation of the Action Plan.

CRG HRS4R Monitoring Working Group takes this opportunity to thank all the stakeholders, key players and experts for their collaboration, contribution and support, and understands the subsequent Action Plan as a result of a collaborative effort.

September 2022

CRG HRS4R Monitoring Working Group



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

ACTION PLAN 2022-2024

Ethical and Professional Aspects					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. in charge	Timeframe	Indicator
1	Design the Ethics and Research Integrity framework and a communication strategy to raise awareness	2, 3, 4, 5, 7	ISA Comms TAO	Q1-2023 to Q4-2024	- Framework - Dissemination actions
2	Organise Research Integrity and Good Scientific Practices training targeted to different research communities, including Open Access publication (Open Science)	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	TAO ISA	Q-1 2024 to Q4-2024	- Number of participants - Survey results
3	Broaden the dissemination of the research results to the innovation community in order to increase visibility and take-up by the market of the research outputs of CRG	8	TBDO	Q1-2022	- Dissemination actions - Number of technologies published in Flintbox)
4	Continue fostering the CRG's public engagement programme activities aimed at disseminating research results to society at large	9	Comms	Q1-2022 to Q4-2024	- List of activities - Number of participants - Number of involved researchers
5	Develop and disseminate Research Data Management Guidelines to foster Open Access to Research Data (Open Science) practices	2, 6	ISA	Q1 to Q4-2023	- Document - Dissemination actions - Data sets in FAIR repositories

Recruitment					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. in charge	Timeframe	Indicator
7	Provide training/guidelines to people who participate in selection and hiring processes from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective with the purpose of eliminating stereotypes; detect abilities in the hidden circuit, use non-discriminatory interview techniques, etc.	14	HR	Q1-2023 to Q4-2023	- Number of staff receiving guidelines/training
8	Continue fostering recruitment procedures, which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable by reinforcing procedures and advertising campaigns	12	HR	Q1-2022 to Q4-2024	- Number of recruitment procedures of researchers conducted - Survey results - ERCs/ICREAs awarded

Working Conditions and Social Security					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. In charge	Timeframe	Indicator
9	Improve the <i>Parental Leave Guidelines for CRG employees</i> including: 1) advice on the first steps to be taken when having a baby in Spain, a) within the hospital b) once you are at home, and c) in the event you are single family, large family or other family composition; 2) providing the possibility to request an extension of the stay for the remaining period from the child's age at the moment of hire until the child is 1 year old	24, 25	HR Gender Balance Committee	Q1-2022 to Q3-2022	- Document - Number of staff applying and granted to extend their stay at the Centre
10	Carry out a participative diagnosis from CRG staff members regarding diversity and inclusion and, from there, improve and expand the equality, diversity and inclusion strategy by creating an action plan that promotes inclusion/diversity in a wide sense in the centre	27	HR Gender Balance Committee	Q1-2022 to Q4-2023	- Document approved - Number of actions implemented
11	Create a Well-being framework at CRG including the following areas of intervention: Well-being (workplace relationships, mental health, work-life balance) and Health and Safety (Risk prevention and management)	24	HR H&S CRG Representatives	Q1-2022 to Q4-2023	- Number of implemented initiatives
12	Carry out a psychosocial risk assessment and a proposal of measures to guarantee psychosocial health at CRG	24	H&S HR Comms	Q1-2022 to Q4-2023	- Assessment results - Proposal of measures
13	Raise awareness of the intellectual property rights of the scientists and the institution specifically to all newcomers (PhD students, Postdoctoral Researchers, new PIs...) by delivering topic targeted talks by internal and external experts	31	TBDO	Q4-2022 to Q4-2024	- Number of recipients
14	Create and consolidate the Health and Safety Committee	24	Direction H&S HR	Q4-2022	- Document of establishment - Minutes Meetings - Initiatives
15	Set and consolidate the Works Council in order to improve our working conditions and to set a space where to hear the voice of our staff through our CRG staff representatives	24	Works Council Direction HR	Q2-2022 to Q4-2022	- Initiatives implemented - Number of meetings organised

Training and Development					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. In charge	Timeframe	Indicator
16	Develop a CRG Training Policy for the different communities at the CRG	38, 39	HR TAO	Q1-2024 to Q4-2024	- Document - Number of dissemination actions
17	Launching the 'new' consolidated mentoring in collaboration with <i>Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology</i> (BIST) targeted to PhD students and Postdoctoral Researchers as mentees, and scientific staff and professionals (senior researchers, postdoctoral researchers, group leaders, administrative staff, and professionals working in public policy and social engagement, education, industry, or entrepreneurship) as mentors	37, 38, 39	HR	Q4-2022 to Q3-2023	- Number of mentees - Number of mentors - Survey results
18	Develop a new Programme "Mentoring for Innovators" (MENTT4INN) aiming at the engagement of the R1 and R2 researchers in innovation activities	37, 38, 39	TBDO	Q2-2022 to Q4-2024	- Number of participants
19	Enrich the Onboarding programme including training on "Active bystander" in order to provide skills to challenge unacceptable behaviours and to stimulate everyone to take an active role in the shaping of a culture of mutual respect and dignity	38, 39	HR	Q4-2022 to Q4-2024	- Number of participants - Survey results
20	Design and implement a training initiative targeted to PhD students in order to take care of their mental health and physical wellbeing as they work towards their PhD	38, 39	HR PhD well-being taskforce	Q4-2022 to Q4-2024	- Number of participants - Survey results
21	Organise a Career Fair Day in collaboration with the PRBB and BIST Research Centres, including several companies with job seekers, speed dating, and talks in order to orientate researchers (especially postdocs) towards their next career step	38, 39	TAO HR	Q4-2022	- Survey results - Number of participating companies

Acronyms

Q: Quarter of the year

Comms: Communications and Public Relations Department

H&S: Health & Safety

HR: Human Resources Department

ISA: International and Scientific Affairs

TAO: Training and Academic Office

TBDO: Technology & Business Development Office

