

HUMAN RESOURCES EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

AWARD RENEWAL

IDIBGI 2020-2023



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



**Girona
Biomedical
Research
Institute**

Girona, 10th November 2020

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. GAP ANALYSIS	3
2.1 ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION	3
2.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE.....	4
3. ACTION PLAN.....	15
4. IMPLEMENTATION	21

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 31st of March 2015 the Girona Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBGI) received the "HR Excellence in Research Award". This award and its logo reflect the IDIBGI's commitment to continuously improve its human resources policies and practices in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code).

The Charter and Code is addressed to researchers as well as to employers and funders in both the public and private sectors. They are key elements in the European Union's policy to make research an attractive career, which is a vital feature of its strategy to stimulate economic and employment growth.

The Girona Biomedical Research Institute endorsed the Charter and Code in May 2011, and joined the Fourth Cohort of the Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group in 2012, attending the Kick-off meeting of the group project in Brussels. Thereon the IDIBGI started implementing its own Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).

During 2014, the IDIBGI carried out an internal gap analysis and completed an action plan for the next 5 years identifying a number of key areas for change and further development. This process was completely open, with the active involvement of an internal Working Group formed by representatives from all IDIBGI professional categories.

IDIBGI Action Plan 2014-2018 aligned the HR institution strategy with the European Charter and Code principles. The plan was approved by the IDIBGI Board of Trustees on December 11th, 2014 and by the European Commission on March 2015.

On 2017 the IDIBGI Working Group updated the action plan after completing a self-assessment. At the same time, the recruitment procedures and practices in place at IDIBGI were reviewed according to the European Research Area recruitment policy (OTM-R, Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of researchers) and the OTM-R Checklist was filled in for the first time. The Interim Assessment was reviewed and approved by the European Commission on October 2017.

The HRS4R follows a cyclical approach of review, assessment and continuous progress towards improved quality. Therefore, on 2019, when the Action Plan 2014-2018 concluded, a new gap analysis and Action Plan for 2020-2023 was developed by the HRS4R Working Group. The OTM-R checklist was reviewed as well.

The same methodology of 2014 has been followed to develop the gap analysis with the aim to evaluate and compare the results and propose new actions to improve our human resources policies and practices in line with Charter & Code. The results of the gap analysis and the new action plan can be found in this document.

2. GAP ANALYSIS

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

STAFF & STUDENTS

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	81
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	4
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	37
Of whom are women *	59
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	5
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	9
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	18
Total number of students (if relevant) *	6
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	108

RESEARCH FUNDING (2019)

Total annual organisational budget: 6.290.070,08 €

Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research): 450.000 €

Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding): 2.162.258,04 €

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

The Girona Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBGI) was established in 1995 as a private foundation at the Dr. Josep Trueta University Hospital with the aim of being a vehicle for the research carried out by investigators, doctors and nurses. Since 2008, with the participation of the Generalitat of Catalonia in its government bodies, it has been a public institution. The culmination of this phase was the incorporation of IDIBGI to the **CERCA** network of research centres of the Generalitat of Catalonia.

IDIBGI is made up of research groups from the following **institutions**: Dr. Josep Trueta University Hospital of Girona, University of Girona, Institute of Diagnostic Imaging, Catalan Institute of Oncology, Institute of Primary Care/Catalan Institute of Health in Girona, Institute of Health Assistance, Blood and Tissue Bank and Health and Sports University School.

The **IDIBGI statutes** determine that its purpose is to promote, develop, manage and disseminate research, scientific and technical knowledge, teaching, and training in the field of life and health sciences in Girona.

2.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE

Revision of the strengths and weaknesses under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code:

I. Ethical and professional aspects

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Ethical & professional aspects principles were well evaluated, according to the priority index from the internal survey, which ranged between 1.04 and 1.17. IDIBGI employees and associated researchers considered that IDIBGI was ethically committed and that there was no discrimination in the institution.

Although there were already many IDIBGI practices and existing legislation related to the ethical and professional aspects, IDIBGI management considered relevant to develop written documents on ethical aspects, through the Code of Good Scientific Practice, and on non-discrimination aspects, through the Gender Equality Plan.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses provided in the initial submission, IDIBGI priorities in the short and medium term had not changed. We concluded that there were not any relevant legislation changes or new internal practices that had an impact on the action plan of the initial analysis. At this stage, ethical actions were concluded (Code of Scientific Research and the Gender Equality Plan).

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal)

Principles on ethical and professional aspects were well evaluated, according to the priority index from the internal survey done in march 2018. They ranged between 1.03 and 1.07. These aspects are the less prioritized from all the four areas evaluated.

IDIBGI's [Gender Equality Plan](#) was completed in 2014 and renewed in May 2018. An Internal Equality Committee is in charge of developing the actions contained in our plan.

IDIBGI's [Code of Good Scientific Practices](#) was completed in 2015. The document was disseminated among the IDIBGI community and placed on the website and intranet.

In 2019 the CERCA Institution (Institution comprising research centres belonging to the Catalan Government), to which IDIBGI belongs, presented a [Code of Conduct](#) applying to all research centres. In line with the European Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the

European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, setting out the general principles and requirements which specify the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as those of employers and/or funders of research, CERCA considered necessary to define a framework of good practice governing the scientific activities and management of the CERCA centres. The IDIBGI Board of Trustees approved the code, which was distributed to the IDIBGI community.

Moreover, in 2019 IDIBGI also completed its own **Code of Ethics and Conduct**, which applies to all the personnel related to the institution. This code was elaborated as a result of the implementation of a Compliance system in IDIBGI for the prevention of criminal risks. It contains policies and practices in force at IDIBGI related to the behaviour of its members and the institution itself. These two codes include a wide range of scientific and ethical principles that cover the ethical and professional aspects from the European C&C.

IDIBGI and its research groups are evaluated every 4 years by the CERCA institution through an external committee with international independent members and members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the institution.

IDIBGI obtained the [ISO 9001/2015](#) certification in February 2019. This certification outlines the standard of the services that IDIBGI gives to its researchers and guarantees that procedures are defined in the institution to implement good practices at work.

Although having fulfilled all these achievements in this area, the HRS4R commission has detected a lack of knowledge and awareness by the research community, hence there is the need to develop a structured internal communication that includes the dissemination of all the principles included in the IDIBGI codes.

Also, there is a lack of knowledge by the researchers on Open Access and Intellectual Property that needs to be addressed despite the fact that there is an internal policy available in Intellectual Property and personnel has already received some training on this matter.

Finally, the institution has made great efforts to update its internal **Data Protection policies** to the RGPD (UE) 2016/679, with the collaboration of IDIBGI's researchers. We are still working on the implementation of such policies and aspects related to ethical and practical evaluations required before launching a clinical study.

Remarks (Award Renewal)

From the strengths and weaknesses analysis several actions are identified:

First, the internal HRS4R commission considered that a Communication Department (Action 8) and a Communication Policy (Action 9) were of utmost importance. These actions were also identified in the [Strategic Plan](#) approved in January 2019.

The Communication Department was created at the end of 2019. Nowadays, this institution is working on its internal and external Communication Policy. This plan will take into account the internal communication needs regarding ethical and professional issues (e.g. Codes of conduct, Code of Good Scientific Practices, etc.), as well as the external communication aspects related to e.g. dissemination and exploitation of results and public engagement, among others.

The HRS4R commission also considers that at this moment it is necessary to disseminate the content of the above mentioned codes. It is required for IDIBGI staff to have a deep understanding of their specific contents by learning sessions and internal newsletters (Action 1

and Action 5). Moreover, the Welcome Manual provided to new employees should also include an overview of this information (Action 2).

IDIBGI is also developing its Training Plan. It will include regular specific training on Intellectual Property, Science Law, Open Access or Data Protection so that the needs on these areas are fully covered (Action 3, Action 6, Action 7).

Another relevant need that could have a greater impact on this area and has been identified by the Commission is the implementation of a research results registry for investigators, at all the stages of their careers (Action 4). As there is a great need to expand the dissemination of IDIBGI's research to the community (Action 10), local and worldwide, IDIBGI should develop an External Communication Policy and carry out activities to disseminate research results to the scientific community and to the society, through the press, social media, visits to the institution and other strategies.

II. Recruitment and selection

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Globally the survey results showed a higher priority index on the recruitment and working conditions & social security principles compared to the other areas.

Most recruitment principles had a priority index over 1.25, which translates into some concern from IDIBGI employees and associated researchers. This result was probably linked to the lack of a defined recruitment policy in the institution. Recruitment was at that moment done directly by the principal investigators, without a general policy definition of the different criteria and aspects to be taken into consideration and how the process had to be done.

This area required a global action, which was the development of a complete IDIBGI Recruitment Manual divided in different parts. The manual includes the different principles guidelines, which helped improve IDIBGI's performance and processes in this area.

It is important to highlight that IDIBGI did not have a HR Department able to implement all policies back in 2014. However the institution was fully aware of the significant need to involve HR personnel in the selection processes.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses provided in the initial submission, IDIBGI priorities in the short and medium term had not changed. We concluded that there were not any relevant legislation changes or new internal practices that had an impact on the action plan of the initial analysis.

The action plan defined at the end of 2014 gave priority to different areas in which we detected a lack of policy definition by IDIBGI. This is the reason why many of the selected actions were related to the development of the Recruitment Manual, which was essential to guarantee a more open, transparent and merit-based process. Our organisation entered the HRS4R process prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit. However, this tool became available just when we were beginning to develop all the actions related to the Recruitment Manual, so we took it into consideration when doing so. For this reason the Recruitment

Manual is according to the principles included in the OTM-R toolkit. The plan was finished in January 2017. There were no pending actions in this area.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal)

Recruitment aspects principles are currently evaluated much better than in 2014, when the first survey was done. According to the priority index from the internal survey done in March 2018, these principles range from 1.08 to 1.15, only the “recognition of mobility experience” has an index of 1.26.

The creation of the IDIBGI HR Department in 2016 had a big impact within the institution. At that moment, a part-time (20 h/w) person was in charge of this department until the end of 2017, when a full-time person was hired. Nowadays we have a full-time (40 h/w) HR manager in a technical category level and a part-time (20 h/w) person for administrative issues.

[IDIBGI’s recruitment manual](#) was completed by the end of 2016 and approved by the Board of Trustees on 20/01/2017. The report is fully aligned with the principles of the C&C and OTM-R. Its implementation has been progressive. First, it was disseminated among the IDIBGI Principal Investigators and a training session was organised for them. This implied a significant change in the institution that led to the progressive implementation of the new policies, mainly because of two reasons: the first one was that full implementation requires time from the HR person, but in 2017 we had only a person employed part-time. The second reason is the “cultural” baggage of this institution, which made it difficult to change the procedures at once. Despite the fact that implementation is now completed, we do believe that more training is needed to achieve a higher impact among the IDIBGI community. Moreover, we think that the three-year old manual needs to be reviewed, especially when the IDIBGI Scientific Career Plan has been approved too. The Career Plan takes into account aspects that were initially included in the recruitment manual and have been updated later. Last but not least, we have identified some small procedural aspects which need to be improved and aligned with current OTM-R policies.

Nowadays, the HR Department participates in the selection committees for job positions giving support to Principal Investigators to consider all aspects to be evaluated during the interview. This adds value to the recruitment process and provides some additional transparency, as years ago selection processes were made by Principal Investigators on its own.

IDIBGI has developed **Job Descriptions**, which involve a **Remuneration Policy** that has been approved by the Board of Trustees at the beginning of 2019 and is currently being negotiated with the Works Council, created at the end of 2018. IDIBGI will make the agreement public when finalized. Labour categories will be unified according to the Remuneration Policy definition.

The [IDIBGI Scientific Career Plan](#), approved at the beginning of last year, is going to be implemented this year 2020. The plan has been discussed in the Internal Scientific Committee and in the Works Council, reaching a great consensus on its contents. The plan is expected to give more certainty to the investigators about their expectations in the institution. The plan has created awareness on the procedures needed to move to a new position or switch category, including criteria for such evaluation.

Remarks (Award Renewal)

From the strengths and weaknesses analysis several actions are identified:

As mentioned above, the Recruitment Manual requires further revision (Action 12). When it was first written, the manual included some aspects that now are covered by the Scientific Career Plan. Furthermore, there are some issues to be improved as well, some of which need a better alignment with OTM-R policies. In order to assess how to improve the recruitment process, a systematic analysis of every process will be done by using a checklist. All the information will be assessed and analysed in the medium term (Action 17)

With regard to the implementation of the recruitment plan, we consider that periodic revision of job descriptions is required (Action 13). Such definitions need to be aligned with the Remuneration Policy categories and all different positions in IDIBGI must have one, including competences and minimum requirements for each position. In order to complete and define the recruitment process, it is of the utmost importance to improve our job vacancies and make them more attractive to potential employees (Action 14).

During the implementation of our Recruitment Manual, we experienced difficulties mainly related to the “cultural” baggage of the IDIBGI. Among the main goals of this new action plan is to implement more training to standardize the recruitment policy and procedures (Action 16). IDIBGI wants to make sure that everyone is engaged with the OTM-R policy and believe that this is the way through which the recruitment will bring the best employees to work with us.

Nowadays IDIBGI does not have a candidates’ registry for all the CVs received for each job offer. This issue needs to be overcome, e.g. by means of a web formulary, in order to prove the transparency and fairly merit-based recruitment process, analysing all data received and complying with the requirements of the HRS4R (Action 15).

After the approval of IDIBGI’s Scientific Career Plan, now it’s time for its implementation (Action 11). A Career Plan Committee has been approved, as well as a procedure of how this plan will be implemented. This year (2020) the committee will meet to evaluate the first candidates. The HRS4R Committee will survey proper and complete implementation.

III. Working conditions

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Globally the survey results showed a higher priority index on the recruitment and working conditions & social security principles compared to the other two areas.

Most working conditions & social security principles ranked over 1.23. It was important to point out that principles 23, 25, 28 & 29 were the ones with lower priority index in this area and that professional development, stability, research environment and mobility were the main worries of IDIBGI employees and associated researchers. Although in this area the institution already had implemented internal practices to improve those, there was a clear need to develop these aspects with more concrete actions.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses provided in the initial submission, IDIBGI priorities in the short and medium term had not changed. We concluded that there were not any relevant legislation changes or new internal practices that had an impact on the action plan of the initial analysis.

The departure of the former IDIBGI Director at the end of 2015 and incorporation of the new Director in February 2017 had a great impact on our activities. Although we continued developing the action plan, some actions were delayed, especially those related to Career Development, as they required the involvement of both the Director and the Internal Scientific Committee.

Some strategic decisions adopted the last years might have had a direct influence on the action plan. For instance, IDIBGI did not have a Collective Agreement back in 2014. In 2017 one of the goals of IDIBGI's management was to initiate the negotiations to have one in place. This initiative definitely had a positive impact for the development of the "Working conditions and Social Security" principles.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal)

Working conditions and Social Security principles have been better evaluated than in 2014, when the first survey was made. According to the priority index of the internal survey done in March 2018, most principles range from 1.13 to 1.19. Only two principles were on the top index priority (i.e. "professional development" and "stability and permanence of employment") with 1.36 and 1.35 priority index, respectively. The principle "Gender balance" is at the bottom of our ranking (priority index= 1.04).

By the end of 2015 new laboratory facilities were opened. This allowed having all IDIBGI's laboratory facilities to be in one single building and increased the number of researchers working at IDIBGI. Moreover, researchers were given the possibility of working in a research environment that fulfilled all their needs, fostering transversal interactions between research teams. Also the sense of belonging and the engagement to this common project has improved substantially. However, our laboratories are now at its full capacity due to the increase in the number of employees. It is urgent to extend the lab facilities in the coming years to be according with the needs and demands of the research groups.

After the **Works Council (WC)** was created by the end of 2018, the **Health and Safety Committee** has also been created, with three members of the WC and three members of the IDIBGI Administration, with the counselling to the labour prevention hospital service. The Health and Safety Committee has evaluated all procedures and protocols and has promoted the elaboration of a Biosafety Manual. In order to implement such procedures and protocols, the committee has recommended to hire a **Laboratory Manager position**. Until the date, IDIBGI has not had a Laboratory Manager position. This position was highly required, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a great impact on our working routines in the labs and has brought new and tighter biosecurity measures. This situation, combined with the increasing number of employees and needs that need to be covered in our labs has led to the recent employment of IDIBGI's Laboratory and Operations Manager. In addition to this, IDIBGI has the **labour risks documentation and plan**, which are reviewed with the labour prevention hospital service regularly.

Together with the Remuneration Policy, the Board of Trustees approved the **Job Category Inventory (RLT)**. This would be the list of positions that are considered structural and with continuity at our institution. This list includes administration and research support positions, but also other positions in the Service Platforms (Biobank, Statistics, etc) or research groups that are minimally required for research groups to be able to perform their basic work. With this Job Category Inventory and the possibility given by the 2018 Catalan Budget Law to stabilize those people who by the end of 2017 had been working more than three years with temporary contracts.

In summer 2016 IDIBGI started the **Fundraising Department**. This department is focused on creating awareness in the Girona area and population about IDIBGI and its research. Most importantly, the department aims to secure funding from companies, institutions and individual initiatives (i.e. peer-to-peer funding). This has given the possibility to find another way of funding projects, and launch internal grants to promote the research and cover labour costs, which are often difficult to obtain through competitive funds.

As mentioned before, IDIBGI's Gender Equality Plan has been implemented since 2014 and was updated in May 2018. The project contains an action plan to be developed during the period 2018-22. Also the IDIBGI Scientific Career Plan was approved at the end of 2019 and the forthcoming period will be dedicated to its implementation. The HRS4R Committee will monitor proper implementation of both policies.

With regards to the exploitation of the Intellectual Property Rights and compensation of the inventors (researchers), we experience the lack of a tool aimed to monitor the granting of exploitation benefits. So far, no licences have been extended to third parties, so no compensations have been granted to our researchers yet.

Regarding co-authorship, IDIBGI implemented a policy on **signatures of research publications** in 2014 and updated the instructions in 2016 and 2018. Specific and more frequent communication is needed to comply with our policy and to improve the correct references of this Institute in publications, taking into account the evaluation agencies policies.

Concerning the complains and appeals principle of the C&C, the CERCA institution has nominated an **Ombudsperson** for all institutions belonging to CERCA, including IDIBGI. Both, the CERCA Code of Conduct and the Ombudsperson have to be communicated to the IDIBGI research community.

Finally, it is important to highlight the impact of the recent COVID pandemic in the working conditions. Especially, the lack of remote work policies in place or the difficulties to have remote access to computer. Despite that, IDIBGI has booked very rapid progress in other areas: all new biosafety protocols have been developed and implemented in a short period of time

Remarks (Award Renewal)

From the strengths and weaknesses analysis several actions are identified:

As mentioned before, some actions have been developed in the last two years although they were not included in the previous HRS4R Action Plan. These actions have great impact in the HR policies such as the creation of the Works Council (Action 30), the creation of the Health and Safety Committee (Action 20), hiring a Laboratory Manager (Action 21) or the renewal of the Gender Equality Plan (Action 22).

The renewed Gender Equality Plan covers several C&C principles as well: the elaboration of a complete training plan, to provide training on time management, to communicate the existence of new measures to balance professional and family life, to provide training on joint responsibility and conciliation, to create a tool to collect and analyse the use of reconciliation measures, to define strategies for workers' stabilization, to adopt specific measures for professional development and stabilization of the employees, to define a clear Remuneration Policy, to take actions to make women leadership in biomedical science known in society, to promote gender equality in the creation of committees at IDIBGI. Although many of these actions would fit as part of the HRS4R, we only include those considered more relevant.

One of the more relevant actions to be executed by the HR Department is the Training Plan (Action 37). This document will include all training needs of employees and researchers in our institution, after doing an analysis of those that are compulsory by law, those technical and transversal knowledge and skills required in each category, including soft skills.

The Remuneration Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees early 2019 and it is being implemented since then. However, this is a sensitive and important matter that needs continuous review and improvement (Action 25). Moreover, it is important to monitor additional benefits, such as the compensation for the exploitation of the Intellectual Property Rights. In this regard, we plan to implement a form for researchers that submit new inventions to the Innovation and Transfer Department where the percentage of ownership must be specified (Action 32). In the future, if any exploitation of IPR takes place, we will be able to add derived profit to researcher's salary

The definition of strategies for workers' stabilization and professional development and stabilization measures for IDIBGI employees (Action 23 and Action 24) are also relevant measures for their professional and personal development. The issue itself is challenging (e.g. the complexity of the research system, the government policies that have a big impact, ...) and still requires creative solutions in which we are all engaged.

After the approval of the IDIBGI Scientific Career Plan, it is ready for its implementation. A Career Plan Committee and an implementation procedure have been created as well. For the very first time, this Committee has met in 2020 to evaluate the first candidates. The HRS4R Committee will monitor its implementation. Moreover, access to career advice and research support services have to be provided to young researchers. Training sessions have been planned as well (Action 27).

In order to improve the working conditions at IDIBGI it is also relevant to offer appropriate equipment and lab facilities to the research community. To obtain funding to renovate or purchase new equipment, to share equipment with institutions in our field or area, and to extend the building in order to have more laboratory facilities (Action 19) is required in order to fulfil the needs of the increasing number of employees and research groups.

Some actions that can be implemented to improve aspects related to Intellectual Property Rights are, on one side, organising meetings with different departments and specialist units in Hospitals to promote innovation and research (Action 28) and, on the other side, to provide training on this matter (Action 3), as included in our Training Plan.

Mobility is also one of the principles that can be motivated by searching and disseminating available national and international mobility grants (Action 26). Mobility was considered an important requirement for professional development in the Career Plan, especially for higher positions.

To improve co-authorship, an analysis of co-authorship policies (Action 29) from the evaluation agencies should be done to let researchers know the existing framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised, listed as a co-author and quoted.

Regarding the Ombudsperson (Action 31), appointed by the CERCA Institution, the existence of this figure will be communicated to improve the complains and appeals principle of the C&C.

Finally, new actions have been identified due to the COVID pandemic crisis. The most important is the need to have a teleworking policy (Action 18). Teleworking was included as a

reconciling measure but the use of it was not extended. In that case particular conditions were agreed by the employee and the HR Department.

IV. Training and development

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

On the training area the most relevant results were given on continuous professional development and access to research training and continuous development, generally, for all the professional groups.

Although in this area there was not much existing legislation or internal practices, these principles were not prioritized by the investigators compared to other areas such as recruitment and working conditions.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses provided in the initial submission, IDIBGI priorities in the short and medium term had not changed. We concluded that there were not any relevant legislation changes or new internal practices that had an impact on the initial analysis of the action plan.

The former IDIBGI Director left at the end of 2015, but it wasn't until February 2nd 2017 that the new one joined IDIBGI. Although we continued developing the action plan, some actions that required the involvement of both the Director and the Internal Scientific Committee had to be delayed, especially those related to Career Development. In this area the action to create an internal committee with principal investigators and workers to evaluate career plans and training remained pending.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal)

Training and development have diverse priority index, from 1.08 ("Relation with supervisors") to 1.35 ("Access to research training and continuous development").

The approved IDIBGI Scientific Career Plan will be implemented during this year (2020). The Career Plan Committee and implementation procedures have been approved. The first candidates to the Career Plan Committee will be evaluated soon along the year. The HRS4R Committee will monitor proper implementation of the Career Plan.

The IDIBGI Ethical and Code of Conduct approved in 2019 and the CERCA Code of Conduct are tools to support some of the C&C principles, such as "Relation with supervisors", "Supervision and managerial duties" and "Supervision".

In this area the Training Plan is relevant, as mentioned before. It must summarize all the training needed by employees at our Institution, and will be elaborated after doing exhaustive analysis of the training needs that are compulsory by law, those technical and transversal knowledge and skills required in each category, including soft skills. IDIBGI is complying with trainings that are considered compulsory by law, English language, the organization of Seminars and Conferences, and other training events that have been identified in the Gender Equality Plan or research support departments (grants office, etc).

Remarks (Award Renewal)

From the strengths and weaknesses analysis several actions are identified:

The Training Plan is being developed (Action 37). The plan contains the process description of how to identify those internal/organizational needs and how the institution may cover all training requirements among different staff positions. The plan covers all training needs detected along all the areas.

Training on public speeches and leadership, among other soft skills (Action 35) will be included as well, in order to improve the dissemination of knowledge. The Training Plan should foresee other relevant actions aimed at improving the dissemination of the training activities and promoting seminars and conferences provided at the IDIBGI, covering different research topics of interest (Action 33 and Action 34).

Finally, it is advised that senior researchers should devote particular attention to their multi-faceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisors and lab leaders. It is important for such researchers to elaborate a mentorship process for young researchers and students also considering career development and future issues (Action 36).

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?

Our priorities are well defined in the Strategic Plan 2018-2022. Any priorities concerning human resources are developed in the HRS4R action plan and Equality Plan.

We do not usually change the priorities defined in the plans, but we might redirect them or add other priorities that arise due to external circumstances.

This year with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, many priorities were forced to be redefined. As we already mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the laboratory working routines and biosecurity. Currently, training, ensuring that protection tools are available and used properly and new rules of behaviour and safety at work for all employees are highly prioritised.

Many workers have had to work remotely from home, despite the fact that teleworking is not regulated at IDIBGI. This is a new challenge that the pandemic has turned into a new priority. Therefore a new action in order to regulate teleworking needs to be initiated (Action 18). Nowadays most of our employees can work from home, but a regulation for the future of the institution is needed, so that this way of working can be implemented with the corresponding conditions agreed with the workers. During the pandemic working from home has been a need, but it is true that a good teleworking policy might help professionals to reconcile better and be able to increase their efficiency.

Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?

On December 3, 2019, the Catalan Government approved an Agreement creating a Strategic Alliance between the research and innovation institutes of the Health System of Catalonia (IRISCAT), with the aim to incorporate a large number of institutes into the alliance (about 19 health research institutions).

IRISCAT's mission is to develop a coordinated strategy of the research and innovation institutes of the Catalan health system to make better use of the advantages conferred by the size and high level of standards of the Catalan healthcare and research organizations.

The areas on which the objectives, lines of action and actions of the Strategic Plan will be defined are:

- clinical and translational research
- Interinstitutional scientific lines
- Internationalization
- Innovation
- Scientific-technical services to support research
- Administration and management support
- RRI (Responsible Research & Innovation)

Although IRISCAT was conceived in 2016 it has not been until December 2019 that the Catalan Government has formally approved the alliance. Since then IDIBGI has participated in many internal meetings between the Health Department and the 7 Catalan Health institutes (ICS), leading to coordinated actions.

For example, with regards to the teleworking, during the pandemic a work group with HR expertise made an analysis of the teleworking situation in order to establish a common minimum regulation for all institutes.

Also, during the pandemic all IRISCAT institutions developed together a common document with guidelines to go back to work progressively in a safe manner, which contained consensuated measures in order to offer more security and efficiency to the research organizations.

This coordination will be extended to all the strategical IRISCAT areas, giving IDIBGI the chance to be able to share and know experiences, policies, etc. from other institutes. Being able to share the expertise is an opportunity to work better and more efficiently in many aspects, especially for a relatively small institute like IDIBGI.

[Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?](#)

In June 2019 IDIBGI participated in the FEDER funds call to obtain funding for singular institutional projects that allow the generation of excellent research, the attraction of talent and the development of knowledge transfer and valorisation activities. The call means to co-fund projects targeted to the construction, the acquisition, the rehabilitation or the substantial extension of buildings for R&D infrastructures, through the allocation Generalitat de Catalunya's resources.

IDIBGI's proposal aims to expand the IDIBGI laboratories in the same building in which we are currently located. Obtaining public funds through the FEDER call would allow an organic growth of the institute by being able to allocate a larger number of researchers in our groups, include the Imaging and Mental Health groups in our facilities and purchase equipment. Despite the fact that formal final confirmation of the granting of such funds is still pending we have received a positive provisional resolution in July 2020, which has led to a new action to be included in the plan, that is to build new laboratory facilities (Action 39).

Moreover, the pandemic has already been conditioning some strategic decisions and our priorities during the last months. We expect that this exceptional situation will continue to influence the action plan as long as it continues to strike and does not get resolved.

3. ACTION PLAN

The IDIBGI Working Group has defined the following action plan in accordance with the results of the gap analysis.

Human Resources Excellence in Research

2014-2023

I. Ethical and professional aspects							
Action Nr. & EURAXESS Nr.		C&C	Action	Current Status	Timeframe	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
1	28	1, 2, 3, 34	Disseminate the IDIBGI and CERCA Code of Conduct through training sessions and newsletter	IN PROGRESS	Sustained action	DIR / COM	Nr of communications & Nr of trainings
2	29	2, 3, 4	Review the Welcome Manual, give more emphasis to the Codes of Conduct	NEW	Q2 2021	COM	Document
3	30	5, 31	Training on IPR and Science Law. Include these sessions in the Training Plan	NEW	Q2 2021 Q2 2022 Q2 2023	IN / HR	Agenda & Nr of attendees
4	31	5, 8	Implement a registry of the research results for the researchers at all stages (thesis, publications, patents, reports, products)	NEW	Q2 2022	DIR / SDM	Registry
5	32	7	Disseminate the IDIBGI Code of Good Practices in research	IN PROGRESS	Sustained action	COM	Nr of communications
6	33	7	Training on Data Protection. Include these sessions in the Training Plan	IN PROGRESS	Q2 2019 Q2 2021 Q2 2023	DPM / HR	Agenda & Nr of attendees
7	34	8	Training on Open Access. Include these sessions in the Training Plan	IN PROGRESS	Q4 2019 Q4 2021 Q4 2023	DIR / HR	Agenda & Nr of attendees
8	35	8, 9	Create the Communication Department	COMPLETED	Q1 2020	DIR	Appointment of communication manager
9	36	8, 9	Develop a Communication Plan	IN PROGRESS	Q1 2021	COM	Document
10	37	9	Disseminate to society IDIBGI's research activity (organize visits, press releases, post on social media, etc.)	IN PROGRESS	Sustained action	COM / FU	Nr of communications & Nr of events
11	38	11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 33	Activate the implementation of the Career Plan for researchers	EXTENDED	Q4 2021	CPC	Meeting minutes

Human Resources Excellence in Research

2020-2023

II. Recruitment and selection							
Action Nr. & EURAXESS Nr.		C&C	Action	Current Status	Timeframe	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
12	39	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	Update the Recruitment Manual	IN PROGRESS	Q1 2021	HR	Document
13	40	13	Improve job descriptions	IN PROGRESS	Q2 2019 Q2 2022	HR	Document
14	41	13	Make job offers more attractive for candidates	IN PROGRESS	Q4 2019 Q4 2021 Q4 2023	HR	Document
15	42	13	Create an application registry from candidates that apply through IDIBGI's a website	NEW	Q4 2020	HR	Registry
16	43	14	Train the team leaders in selection procedures	NEW	Q2 2019 Q4 2020 Q4 2022	HR	Nr of trainings & Nr of attendees
17	44	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	Assessment of the recruitment processes according to the OTM-R policy	NEW	Q2 2023	HR	Report

III. Working conditions							
Action Nr. & EURAXESS Nr.		C&C	Action	Current Status	Timeframe	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
18	45	24	Define teleworking policies	NEW	Q1 2021	HR	Document
19	46	23	Expand lab facilities, equipment and service platforms (subject to raise external funding and collaborative agreements with other research institutions and universities for sharing)	IN PROGRESS	Q4 2023	LAB / DIR	Funding obtained & Nr of agreements

Human Resources Excellence in Research

2020-2023

20	47	23, 24	Create the Health and Safety Committee	COMPLETED	Q2 2019	DIR	Meeting minutes
21	48	23, 24	Hire a Lab Manager	COMPLETED	Q3 2020	DIR	Appointment of the Lab Manager
22	49	10, 24, 27	Renew the Gender Plan	COMPLETED	Q1 2019	GEC	Document
23	50	25	Contribute to defining strategies for staff stabilization	EXTENDED	Sustained action	ISC / DIR	List of Actions
24	51	25	Define measures to promote professional development and stabilization of the workforce	EXTENDED	Sustained action	ISC / DIR	List of Mesures
25	52	26	Review and update, if necessary, the remuneration policy	IN PROGRESS	Q2 2021 Q2 2022 Q2 2023	DIR	Document
26	53	29	Disseminate mobility grants for short stays to researchers and encourage them to apply	IN PROGRESS	Sustained action	PM	Nr of communications
27	54	22, 28, 29, 30	Give career advice and information to young researchers (individual grants, collaborations, research services available)	NEW	Q3 2021 Q3 2023	PM / CPC	Agenda & Nr of attendees
28	55	31	Organise meetings with Hospital Departments and Specialist Units to promote innovation and research	NEW	Q3 2023	ISC / DIR / IN	Meeting minutes
29	56	32	Carry out an analysis of the co-authorship policy of the the evaluation agencies (AQU, ANECA)	NEW	Q1 2023	ISC / DIR	Document
30	57	35	Create the Works Council	COMPLETED	Q1 2019	DIR / WC	Meeting minutes
31	58	34	Introduce the CERCA Ombudsperson to the IDIBGI community	NEW	Q2 2021 Q2 2022 Q2 2023	COM	Nr of communications
32	59	31	Create a form & database to monitor the ownership percentage of the inventions and compensations of IPR exploitation	NEW	Q2 2021	IN	Form & Database

Human Resources Excellence in Research

2020-2023

IV. Training and development							
Action Nr. & EURAXESS Nr.		C&C	Action	Current Status	Timeframe	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
33	60	38, 39	Improve the dissemination of training and dissemination/outreach activities (courses, lecture series, etc.)	COMPLETED	Q4 2020	COM	Nr of communications
34	61	38, 39	Improve and promote IDIBGI's Seminar and Conference series	IN PROGRESS	Q4 2021	DIR / COM	Nr of conferencies and Nr of attendees
35	62	33, 37	Training on public speaking, leadership and other training on soft skills. Include these sessions in the Training Plan	NEW	Q1 2022	HR	Agenda & Nr of attendees
36	63	36, 37, 40	Develop a mentoring process for staff and students	NEW	Q2 2021	HR / LAB	Document
37	64	38, 39	Develop a Training Plan	IN PROGRESS	Q4 2020	HR	Document

RESPONSIBLE UNITS ACRONYMS

R: Human Resources Department

DIR: General Management

COM: Communication Department

IN: Innovation and Technology Transfer Department

PM: Projects Management Department

FU: Fundraising Department

WC: Works Council

LAB: Lab Manager

SDM: Scientific Data Manager

DPT: Data Protection Manager

CPC: Career Plan Committee

GEC: Gender Committee

ISC: Internal Scientific Committee

OTM-R PRINCIPLES

Our organisation has been working towards an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy. Here we define the progress of the implementation versus the initial phase:

[Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles \(Initial Phase\)](#)

Our organisation entered the HRS4R process prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit.

[Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles \(Internal Review for Interim Assessment\)](#)

OTM-R tool became available just when we started developing all the actions related to the Recruitment Manual, so we took it into consideration when doing so. For this reason, we approved a Recruitment Manual according to the principles included in the OTM-R toolkit.

[Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles \(Internal Review for Award Renewal\)](#)

OTM-R tool has improved selection processes at IDIBGI, especially the ones concerning the recruitment of new researchers. The OTM-R principles have also created awareness on our internal procedures and certain aspects of our recruitment manual that needed further improvement. Those have been only identified once the manual was ongoing.

One of the aspects for improvement concerns section 3 of the OTM-R tool. We have dedicated great efforts to provide training for Principal Investigators, however existing practices due to the “cultural baggage” at the institution make the implementation of the new guidelines challenging. We need to work on this but we think that the new generation of investigators is complying with the principles required as they become familiar with those since they are recruited at our centre.

With regard to advertising vacancies, we use social networks and different websites to promote our vacancies, depending on our needs. We are looking forward to improving the regular use of the same communication policy in order to encourage external candidates to apply (section 6 of the OTM-R tool) and making full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience (section 13 of the OTM-R tool).

We want to emphasize the need for further reinforcing the advertising and application phase, management of selection processes and the evaluation of quality.

Some of the improvements already accomplished are the following:

In order to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply (section 10 of the OTM-R tool), we regularly use an evaluation form that provides useful information about the process. The form allows us to detect whether the applicants that have submitted the form are in line with the requested profile.

As mentioned before, we have developed a communication policy that has resulted in an improvement of the recruitment process by also using other job advertising tools and attractive and visual templates (section 14 of the OTM-R tool).

The system allows us to be critical and ambitious in our procedure to detect aspects for improvement. This translates into a better commitment and growth of both the HR department and our institution and the professionals engaged in our professional objectives.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

General overview of the implementation process:

The implementation process of the HRS4R Action Plan is the responsibility of the HRS4R Committee, an internal working group at IDIBGI which implements and follows up the actions, monitors the progress and evaluates the indicators of achievement according to the Plan approved by the EU.

The Committee is made up of 11 people with different expertise, background and affiliation in order to incorporate their views and opinions in the development of internal HR policies and practices. The HRS4R is aligned with the organization's research strategy since it is foreseen in IDIBGI's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan and the managers are part of the Committee.

The Committee meets twice a year approximately to evaluate and monitor the Action Plan implementation and discuss specifically how the activities will be executed. Action status is recorded in an excel file (monitoring tool) and included in the meeting minutes. When the actions are completed, a record of its execution is saved in a specific file and included in the HRS4R assessments.

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?

The HRS4R Committee is the body responsible for the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan. The Committee is chaired by the IDIBGI Manager and meets twice a year approximately, depending on the needs of the actions and timeline. The main tasks of this Committee are to implement and follow up the actions, to monitor the progress made and to assess and evaluate the indicators of quality. Minutes of each meeting are written and sent to the members of the Committee for their revision and approval.

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

The research community is represented in the HRS4R Committee (levels R3 and R4), also high-level representatives of the institution (IDIBGI Managers) and main affiliated entities (Institut Català de la Salut (ICS) and Universitat de Girona (UdG)). By involving people with different expertise, backgrounds and institutions we aim to reach the whole IDIBGI community and achieve a great degree of compliance taking into account the views and opinions of IDIBGI's employees, according to HR policy and code of good practices.

The HRS4R Committee consists of IDIBGI managers (Anna Ribas and Míriam Gironès), President of University Social Council (Rosa Núria Aleixandre), R4 researchers (Lluís Ramió, also physician at the ICS), R3 researchers (Paco Ortega, biologist), HR technician (Sílvia Vilar), lab technicians (Gerard Pardo), scientific platforms technicians (Maria Buxó and Cristina Martínez) and project managers (Núria Chico and Maria Gifre).

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.

The HRS4R renewal is one of the actions foreseen in the IDIBGI Strategic Plan 2018-2022. In addition, the managers of the IDIBGI are part of the HRS4R Committee.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?

In the meetings of the HRS4R Committee we evaluate the status of the actions, according to the Action Plan, and discuss specifically the activities needed to carry out the actions.

For new actions, a responsible person (either the Department in charge and/or people involved) is appointed and the main steps and actions are agreed among the members of the Committee. For actions in progress, the designated responsible person presents the current situation and the Committee discusses the next steps to ensure that the action is fulfilled. When the actions are completed a record of its execution is kept in an internal document, managed by the member of the HRS4R committee responsible for such actions.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?

The HRS4R Committee monitors the progress of the Action Plan in an Excel file which includes all the actions, timeline (year and trimester), department in charge and indicators of achievement. Actions are highlighted in different colours according to their status: "new", "in progress", "completed", "extended". Status is updated in the monitoring tool after the HRS4R Committee meetings and is included in the minutes of the meetings.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?

Each action is associated with at least one indicator of achievement or output, all of them are included in the Action Plan approved by the EU. Progress is achieved and indicators are met when there is a document approved (report, manual, etc.), an activity performed (training course, etc.), a communication sent, etc. Proof records of the actions are saved in specific files at the IDIBGI and included in the HRS4R assessments (for instance, in the previous self-assessment we annexed all meeting minutes, documents, links, etc.). All information and documents produced are also available for the auditors during the on-site visit.