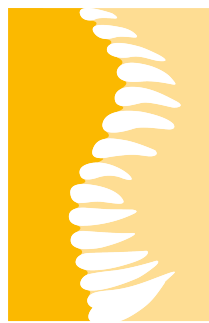


HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)



ICP^R

Institut Català de Paleontologia
Miquel Crusafont

2024

CERCA
Centres de Recerca
de Catalunya



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)

INSTITUT CATALÀ DE PALEONTOLOGIA MIQUEL CRUSAFONT



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1. INTRODUCTION

Legal structure. The Institut Català de Paleontologia Miquel Crusafont (ICP) is a public research center established as a non-profit foundation endowed with public funds, with the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) as patrons. The staff is composed of more than 50 people (researchers, technicians and administrative staff), including a Director and a General Manager with executive powers delegated by the Board of Trustees. As currently conceived, the ICP is an autonomous research institute from CERCA (Research Centres of Catalonia) that has scientific excellence as its main objective. It is supervised by the Board of Trustees under the auspices of CERCA Institution, and guided by the Director (who plans the scientific policy and strategic goals) with the aid of an external Scientific Advisory Board.

The Board of Trustees—composed of three trustees from the Generalitat de Catalunya (60%) and two from the UAB (40%)—is the highest governing, administrative and representative organ of the ICP, without prejudice that some of its functions may be delegated, either to the Delegated Commission, the Director, and/or the General Manager. The Director has chief executive officer functions, including the direction, organization management, and execution and inspection of research activities, as well as the determination of the strategic aims of the ICP and the proposal of a Strategic Plan to the Board of Trustees. The Director is appointed by the Board of Trustees following an open, transparent and merit-based selection process at the international level. In turn, the General Manager has chief administrative officer functions, including the financial, accounting and treasury management, as well as administrative contracting and preparation of the documentation required to elaborate the annual accounts and balance sheet. The General Manager is appointed by the Board of Trustees upon the Director's proposal. Finally, the Scientific Advisory Board is an advisory organ designated by the Board of Trustees upon the Director's proposal.

History. The ICP is the successor of the former Instituto Provincial de Paleontología de Sabadell (IPS), founded in 1969 under the auspices of the Diputació de Barcelona thanks to the efforts and charisma of paleontologist Miquel Crusafont-Pairó—the 'father' of the Catalan school of vertebrate paleontology. After being renamed in his honor after Crusafont's decease in 1983, and coinciding with the incorporation of a new generation of researchers, the Institut de Paleontologia M. Crusafont witnessed a couple of successful decades. Nonetheless, by the early 2000s it was in peril of becoming a local museum and its prospects were most uncertain.

The situation of the IPS was reverted thanks to the establishment of the ICP as a public foundation within the framework of CERCA (Research Centres of Catalonia) in 2006 and its subsequent merging with the former IPS, once the later was transferred from the Diputació de

Barcelona to the Generalitat de Catalunya. Since then, the ICP has been very successful in terms of research, but not exempt of problems due to the effects of the financial crisis in the early 2010s, which for many years restrained the growth of the ICP and precluded progress in several aspects. After five years in 'survival mode', beginning in 2017 the ICP started implementing new policies that emphasized service provision and ultimately enabled to reverse the previous delicate financial situation in 2020. Following the 2023 evaluation by CERCA (B+), the ICP looks to the future with renewed optimism and ambition to grow, so as to consolidate as a benchmark research center in vertebrate and human paleobiology and evolution at the international level.

Mission and scientific policy. The mission of the ICP is focused on research, conservation and dissemination of vertebrate and human paleontology at the highest international level. We perform research based on the following premises:

- Fieldwork and collection-based research, focused on the extraordinarily rich fossil vertebrate record from Catalonia.
- Adherence to a paleobiological approach that departs from the classical descriptive paleontology (oriented toward stratigraphy), and instead aims to test macroevolutionary hypotheses within the framework of life sciences.
- The use of modern visualization and analytical techniques (from CT to paleohistology).
- The distinction of different research groups, each one with specific research aims and scope.

Other important aspects of the ICP mission include:

- The conservation of the paleontological heritage of Catalonia.
- The communication of the research results to different publics by means of scientific dissemination.
- The transfer of paleontological knowledge to the benefit of society as a whole by means of training and outreach activities, as well as the provision of services.

Therefore, the ICP scientific policy in regard to paleontological research is based on the following premises:

- Modern paleontological research must be grounded on the paleobiological approach, which envisions paleontology as deeply entrenched among life sciences.
- Among life sciences, paleobiology has a voice of its own by uniquely providing (through fossils) direct access to past life, thereby adding a deep-time perspective that is essential for testing hypotheses on a geological timescale.

- Paleobiology is not only an idiographic (descriptive) discipline that contributes to the progress in the knowledge of the history of life on Earth, but also a nomothetic discipline based on a rigorous and quantitative hypothesis-testing framework.
- Paleobiological research must be therefore guided by clear research aims and specific hypotheses to be tested.
- Vertebrates have the greatest preservation potential among continental animals and therefore the study of their fossil record is most promising for investigating the evolution of terrestrial ecosystems in relation to paleoenvironmental changes through time.
- Although paleobiology is mostly devoted to basic (fundamental) research, it has important implications for other disciplines among life sciences, such as evolutionary biology, ecology and conservation (paleo)biology.
- Furthermore, paleobiological research is not devoid of applicability but has a great potential with regard to knowledge transfer related to cultural heritage.
- Finally, human origins and evolution need to be approached following the same scientific methods as that for any other group of animals, as regularly done in the subdisciplines of paleoprimateology and paleoanthropology.

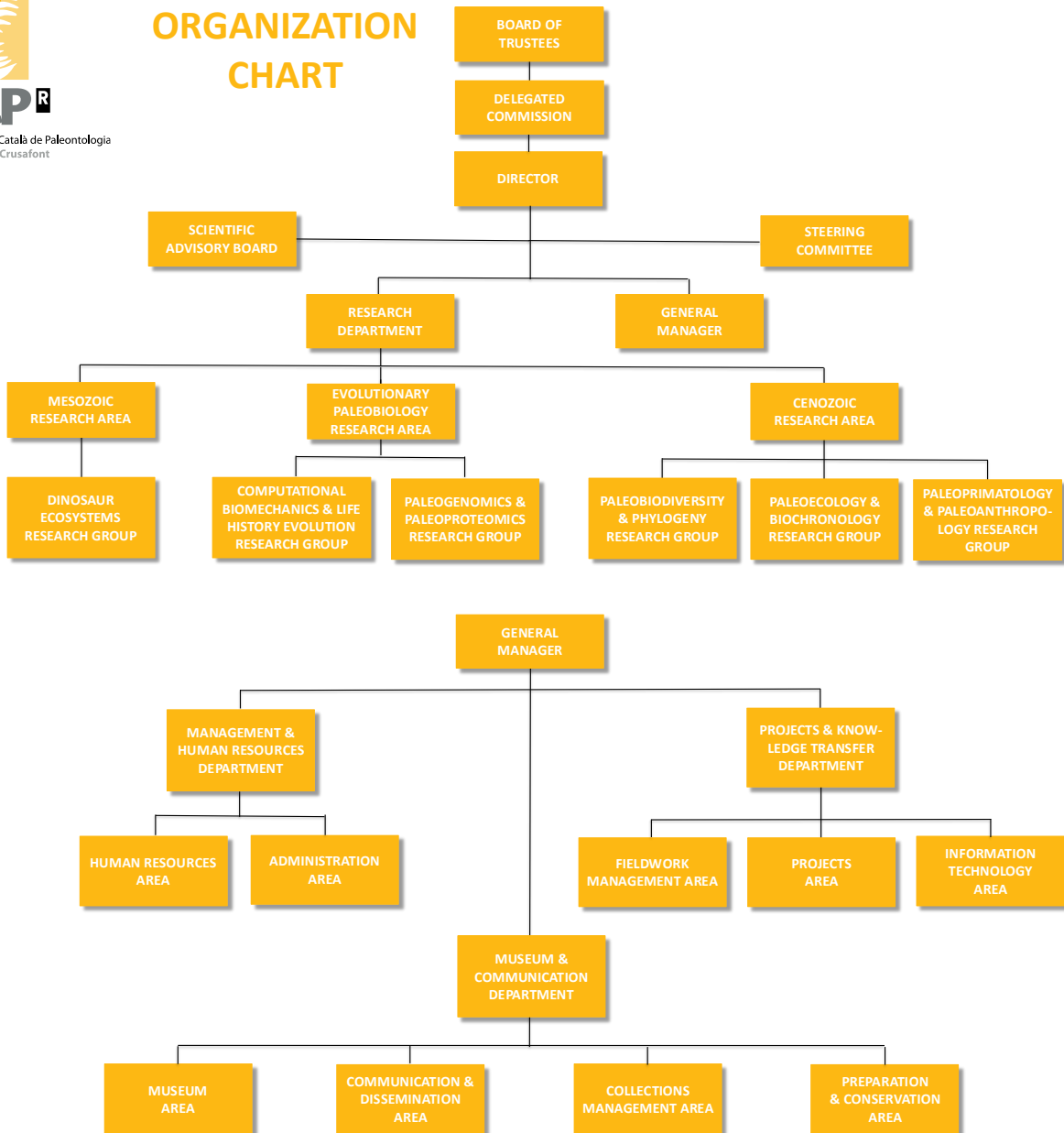
Vision. Given the aforementioned mission and scientific policy, the ICP view includes the following challenges:

- Perform high-impact paleobiological research at the international level.
- Promote the international visibility of the ICP as a worldwide renowned and benchmark research center in vertebrate paleontology and paleoanthropology.
- Contribute to the recuperation, conservation and dissemination of the paleontological heritage of Catalonia, including its valorization through research and the promotion of paleontological tourism.
- Contribute to solving current societal challenges, with emphasis on the development of more efficient environmental policies to face climatic change and biodiversity loss, by means of providing data on a geological timescale as well as by testing macroevolutionary hypotheses.
- Make paleontological knowledge and its evolutionary implications accessible to the society as a whole, by means of scientific dissemination, outreach, and training activities, with emphasis on humankind's origins and place in nature.
- Perform knowledge transfer activities by providing specialized paleontological services to research and educational institutions, public administrations, and private companies.
- Promote safe workspaces and working relationships based on freedom and respect among people.

- Adhere to a zero-tolerance policy regarding any type of sexual harassment (due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression) and unambiguously reject offensive, discriminatory and/or abusive behaviors and attitudes.



ORGANIZATION CHART



Organization Chart. The ICP is organized in four departments. The Research Department, led by the Director, includes researchers and part of the technicians that providing direct research support. It is structured into three Research Areas (Mesozoic, Cenozoic and Evolutionary Paleobiology), each including one or more Research Groups. Non-academic departments, in turn, include direct and indirect research support staff, and are under the

hierarchical supervision of the General Manager. The latter is also Head of the Management & Human Resources Department, while the Museum & Communication and the Projects & Knowledge Transfer Departments have a Head of Department each. Each department is divided into several technical Areas. The Management & Human Resources Department is dedicated to the financial and budgetary management of the center, human resources management (including HRS4R implementation), and infrastructure maintenance. The Museum & Communication Department is dedicated to the management of the Museum, including aspects related to direct research support (collection management, as well as paleontological preparation and conservation), along with internal and external communication of the center (including scientific dissemination and outreach activities). Finally, the Projects & Knowledge Transfer Department is dedicated to knowledge transfer activities by means of service provision, as well project and fieldwork management, among others.

In addition, the ICP has several committees, commissions, and working groups, with the aim of enhancing internal coordination as well as promoting the participation of ICP staff in decision-making. The following stand out: the Steering Committee (which includes the Director, the General Manager, and the other Heads of Department, and which has planning, organization, forecasting, strategy, decision-making, and advisory functions); the Non-Discrimination Committee (involved in the improvement and implementation of the Equal Opportunities Plan and associated non-discrimination policies); and the HRS4R Implementation Committee (involved in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers [HRS4R] of the European Union).



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2. BACKGROUND TO THE HRS4R IMPLEMENTATION AT THE ICP

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) of the European Union was published in 2008, with the aim of supporting research organizations in adopting and implementing the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers'. The implementation of the strategy and practices of the Charter & Code aims to ensure that the relationship between researchers and contracting organizations leads to success in the generation, transfer, and dissemination of knowledge and technological development, as well as to the development of the professional careers of researchers. Within this framework, the HR Excellence in Research Award gives public recognition to research institutions that have made progress in adapting their human resources policies to the principles established in the Charter & Code. These institutions can use the award icon to highlight their commitment to applying fair and transparent recruitment and evaluation procedures for researchers. To help organizations committed to implementing these principles, the European Commission established a process consisting of the following five steps: (1) Preparation of a rigorous internal gap analysis; (2) Publication of the strategy and action plan on the institution's website; (3) Evaluation and approval of the strategy by the European Commission; (4) Implementation of the action plan and monitoring of the process by the institution; and (5) External evaluation carried out by the European Commission five years after the start of the process.

HR Excellence in Research Award and HRS4R implementation at the ICP. At the end of 2016, the ICP [adhered](#) to the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers', with the aim of implementing the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) of the European Union. The HRS4R Implementation Committee was established shortly afterwards, in 2017, to carry out an internal 'Gap Analysis' based on the forty principles of the Charter & Code and, from there, to develop a first [HRS4R Action Plan](#). The ICP submitted these documents to the European Commission at the end of 2017 and was awarded the HR Excellence in Research award in March 2018. In April 2020, an interim evaluation [report](#) reviewing the HRS4R implementation process at the ICP was submitted to EURAXESS. The Consensus Report received in response in July 2020 was positive and determined that no corrective actions were needed, although it provided some recommendations for improvement. As a result, the plan was updated with new actions throughout 2021-2023. The final evaluation was expected to occur during 2023, but for reasons beyond the control of the ICP it was still pending in 2024. In any case, the HRS4R Implementation Committee decided to conclude the previous Action Plan at the end of 2023 and begin designing a new one for 2024 onward.

Fulfillment of the previous HRS4R Action Plan. The first [HRS4R Action Plan](#), in force between 2018 and 2023, initially included 25 specific actions, to which 7 were subsequently added, totaling 32 actions in the [final version](#). In late 2023, 94% (30/32) of these actions were fully (27) or almost (3) implemented, while only 6% (2/32) remained pending (and, therefore, were incorporated into the new Action Plan).

HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2018-2023)			
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	IMPLEMENTATION
1	Upload UAB & CERCA documents to the ICP website	1Q 2018	2019: FULL
2	Update the Strategic Plan	4Q 2018	2018: FULL
3	Manual of Best Practices in Research, Intellectual Property and Authorship	4Q 2019	2020: FULL
4	Protocol for Invasive and Destructive Analyses of Fossils	1Q 2019	2020: FULL
5	Welcome Handbook	2Q 2019	DELAYED
6	Protocol for Funding Request	4Q 2018	2022: FULL
7	Transparency webpage and internal communication	1Q 2018	2021: FULL
8	Protocol for Fund Expenditure Accountability	2Q 2018	DELAYED
9	Safety & prevention training	4Q 2019	2021: FULL
10	Update the internal Information Systems Security Document	3Q 2019	2023: ALMOST FULL
11	Improve and translate the Plan of Equal Opportunities and Diversity Management	2Q 2020	2020: ALMOST FULL
12	Establish a Non-discrimination Committee	1Q 2018	2018: FULL
13	Improve and translate the Guide of Prevention and Action in Case of Gender Violence	4Q 2020	2021: ALMOST FULL
14	Protocol for the Evaluation, Internal Promotion and Recruitment of Researchers and Technicians	2Q 2018	2029: FULL
15	Definition of professional categories	3Q 2018	2018: FULL
16	Strategy for the Professional Development of Researchers	4Q 2019	2020: FULL
17	Publicize positions at an international level	4Q 2018	2019: FULL
18	Implementation of new organigram with Management & Human Resources Department	2Q 2018	2019: FULL
19	Basic instructions for traveling abroad	3Q 2018	2022: FULL
20	Complaints protocol	2Q 2018	2020: FULL
21	Steering Committee	2Q 2018	2018: FULL

22	Coordination Meetings	1Q 2018	2018: FULL
23	Researchers Commission	1Q 2018	2018: FULL
24	Organization of talks ('Paleovermut's initiative')	1Q 2018	2018: FULL
25	Free language courses and other types of training	1Q 2018	2018: FULL
26	Internal regulation of working time	4Q 2020	2020: FULL
27	Assess the degree of knowledge of the HRS4R Action Plan	2Q 2021	2021: FULL
28	Salary Register	3Q 2022	2023: FULL
29	Staff delegates	4Q 2021	2021: FULL
30	RRI Commission	4Q 2021	2021: FULL
31	Strategic Plan Working Group	2Q 2021	2021: FULL
32	Psychosocial risk assessment	3Q 2023	2021: FULL

Elaboration of the new HRS4R Action Plan. The new HRS4R Action Plan, detailed later in this document, has been designed in 2024 by the HRS4R Implementation Committee under the leadership of the ICP Manager. This plan currently includes 28 actions aimed at more fully implementing HRS4R policies at the ICP, in accordance with the 20 principles of the new European Charter for Researchers, which entered into force in 2024. These principles, which are structured around four pillars, are the following:

- **PILLAR I: ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE**

1. I.1. Ethics and research integrity.
2. I.2. Freedom of scientific research.
3. I.3. Open science.
4. I.4. Gender equality.
5. I.5. Embracing diversity.
6. I.6. The researcher.
7. I.7. Free circulation of researchers.
8. I.8. Sustainability of research.

- **PILLAR II: RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION**

9. II.1. Researchers' assessment.
10. II.2. Recruitment.
11. II.3. Selection.
12. II.4. Career progression.

- **PILLAR III: WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES**

13. III.1. Working conditions, funding and salaries.
14. III.2. Stability of employment.



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- 15. III.3. Contractual and legal obligations.
- 16. III.4. Dissemination and exploitation of results.
- **PILLAR IV: RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT**
- 17. IV.1. Valuing diverse research careers.
- 18. IV.2. Career development and advice.
- 19. IV.3. Continuous professional development.
- 20. IV.4. Supervision and mentoring.

3. INTERNAL REVIEW

Since the elaboration of the previous HRS4R Action Plan in 2017, the ICP has made significant progress in aligning its human resources policies with the principles of the Charter & Code. The first Action Plan established the basis for systematizing and strengthening areas such as OTM-R, professional development, and organizational structure. This effort was positively recognized in the follow-up report received in 2020, which highlighted that, despite being a small center, the ICP had achieved the objective of providing itself with more solid documentation and procedures in these areas. However, the report also pointed out a structural vulnerability inherent in small institutions such as the ICP: the difficulty in maintaining sustained progress in the face of unforeseen events such as resignations or changes in key personnel. In this sense, one of the most relevant recommendations was to focus on the well-being of researchers and research support staff, as well as to evaluate the real impact of the new policies implemented.

This new HRS4R Action Plan includes not only the actions of the previous plan that remained pending, but also the experience and learnings obtained in recent years, proposing new lines of work to delve deeper into a solid and realistic human resources strategy adapted to the center. In the following, information is provided on the composition of the staff and the ICP budget for 2023, and both the history and future prospects of the center are analyzed in regard to different aspects: ethic and professional; selection and recruitment of personnel; working conditions and safety; and training and development.

a. Organizational information:

STAFF & STUDENTS		FTE ¹
Total researchers (including staff, fellowship holders, and PhD students)		29.5
Of whom are international		7
Of whom are externally funded		24
Of whom are women		11
Of whom are R3 o R4		14.5
Of whom are R2		4
Of whom are R1		11
Total number of staff		64.75

RESEARCH FUNDING 2023		€
Total annual organizational budget		2.394.157
Annual organizational direct government funding (designated for research, i.e., basal budget)		1.022.399
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research)		1.136.235
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research		224.033

¹ Full Time Equivalent. Data from late 2023.

b. Ethical and professional aspects:

During the previous period, the ICP implemented several measures to strengthen scientific integrity, transparency and institutional values. Among other milestones, we elaborated a Manual of Best Practices in Intellectual Property and Scientific Authorship, as well as the Protocol for Invasive Analyses, which established clear guidelines for the development of research. In 2020, the ICP launched the Complaints Protocol, thus guaranteeing a formal and effective channel so that any conflict situation can be reported and addressed quickly and transparently. In 2018, the Non-Discrimination Committee was established, which supported the drafting and implementation of the center's second Equal Opportunities & Diversity Management Plan, with the aim of promoting equity policies, gender perspective, and respect for diversity in all areas of the center. In addition, a new Protocol for the Prevention and Action in Case of Gender Violence was drafted. Internal bodies were also established, such as the Steering Committee (2018), the Researchers Commission (2018), the Responsible Research & Innovation Committee (2021), and the Strategic Plan Working Group (2021), to promote in the center a more participatory culture in terms of decision-making. It is also noteworthy the approval of the Salary Register in 2023, as a measure of remuneration transparency. However, some actions planned in this section (Protocol for Fund Expenditure Accountability) could not be completed and have therefore been incorporated into the new Action Plan.

To continue improving ethical and professional aspects, the new Action Plan includes several key measures. Of particular note is the drafting of a new Strategic Plan (action 1), scheduled for the second quarter of 2026, which will establish the main lines of action for the ICP during the period 2026–2029 and will act as an institutional reference in the medium term. The Protocol for Fund Expenditure Accountability (action 3), which was pending in the previous plan and is now scheduled for the first quarter of 2026, will also be completed, with the aim of strengthening financial transparency and good practices. In terms of security and data protection, the new plan includes updates to both the Internal Rules of the Information Systems Security (action 5) and the Privacy and Security Measures Protocol (action 6), between 2026 and 2027. With regard to equality and gender perspective, the preparation of a new Equal Opportunities Plan (action 22) is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2024, not only to adapt it to current regulations but also to incorporate significant improvements to go beyond the previous one. The Protocol of Prevention and Action in case of Gender Violence (action 7) will also be revised, during the second quarter of 2026, to adapt it to current laws and ensure its coherence with the new Equal Opportunities Plan. Other actions in this area are the valorization of job positions with a gender perspective (action 12) and a new psychosocial risk assessment with a gender perspective (action 14), both planned between 2027 and 2028. In addition, to improve internal communication, the plan foresees a Survey on the knowledge of

the HRS4R Action Plan (action 11) at the beginning of 2027, as well as specific actions to optimize communication through information technologies (action 26), which should be ready by the end of 2028. Along the same lines, it is planned to complete the Welcome Handbook (action 2), pending from the previous plan, during the fourth quarter of 2026. to improve the reception of new staff. Finally, it is planned to set up a new ERC Working Group (action 23) during the first quarter of 2024 and obtaining a quality certificate (action 24) in the fourth quarter of 2028, to strengthen the excellence of the center in both research and management, respectively.

c. Staff selection and recruitment:

HRS4R implementation represented a profound transformation in the management of human resources at the ICP. One of the starting points was the full implementation, in 2019, of the Protocol for the Evaluation, Internal Promotion & Recruitment of Researchers and Technicians, with the aim of ensuring more open, transparent and merit-based selection processes. From that same year, all vacant or newly created research positions began to be advertised internationally. This protocol was deployed in parallel with the formal definition of the professional categories recognized at the ICP, which in the case of researchers was based on the European Framework for Research Careers (R1–R4). These categories were also applied to the ICP Salary Scale, formalized for the first time in 2018. All these actions represented a very substantial improvement in terms of OTM-R policies and the development of the research career at the ICP. The OTM-R Checklist carried out in 2020 showed a high degree of compliance with these policies, although there is still room for improvement and some pendent updates will have to be carried out in the following years.

One of the central axes of the new Action Plan will be the implementation of a new Staff Selection & Recruitment Protocol (action 8), scheduled for the second quarter of 2026, with the aim of extending OTM-R policies to all contracts—not only those financed with ICP basal funds but also those linked to competitive projects, provided that they have not been previously evaluated by external funding agencies using OTM-R criteria. This new protocol will be accompanied by other key actions. First, a new Salary Scale (action 15), scheduled for the second quarter of 2025, will be elaborated to strengthen remuneration transparency and allow for a definition by objectives of professional career progression. This new salary scale will redefine the professional categories at the ICP, expanding their number (in accordance with the agreements made during the negotiation of the future sectoral agreement for research of Catalonia), and will introduce a series of subcategories and remuneration supplements. Once approved, other documents related to the professional career will need to be updated, such as the Internal Promotion Protocol (action 19), scheduled for the second quarter of 2026. This

update will enable a clear definition of the prospects and mechanisms for promotion across professional categories, but also of the mechanisms for progression within the same category. Finally, another noteworthy initiative will be the launch of the Program of Miquel Crusafont Predoctoral Contracts (action 16), which is expected to be completed during the fourth quarter of 2026 with the simultaneous hiring of four predoctoral researchers with basal funds from the center. This is a strategic commitment by the ICP to promote the attraction and retention of young talent, as well as to simultaneously correct the historical lack of sufficient researchers in training at the center (not yet resolved owing to budgetary restrictions).

d. Work and security conditions:

Many of the actions from the previous HRS4R Action Plan were aimed at improving working conditions and internal communication, with particular emphasis on ensuring that staff had clear and accessible information. In 2020, working time was regulated through the development of an Internal Rules for the Workday Regulation, accompanied by the implementation of a telematic workday registration system, which allows staff to consult the hours worked, leave and vacation days, and other relevant data. In 2022, a Travel Protocol with basic instructions and clear guidelines regarding work-related travel abroad was also completed. The following year, in 2023, the Salary Register, with data from 2020 and 2021, as well as a psychosocial risk assessment, which included a quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as a set of specific recommendations to improve staff well-being, were developed. Also during 2023, the Information Systems Security Document was updated, adapting it to the new European data protection regulations and beginning the deployment of secure access mechanisms. In parallel, the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Management Plan, which included actions to promote the reconciliation of work, personal, and family life, continued to be applied. However, the Welcome Handbook could not be completed and had to be rescheduled in the new HRS4R Action Plan.

Despite the significant progress made in recent years, multiple aspects still remain to be improved, especially in relation to staff remuneration, which is not sufficiently competitive at an international level. This aspect is not explicitly included in the new HRS4R Action Plan because it depends on the negotiation of the future research sector agreement of Catalonia and the subsequent allocation of funds from the Generalitat de Catalunya to cover the salary increases included therein. However, the improvement of salaries is implicitly included in the career progression mechanisms planned for the new Salary Scale and the new Internal Promotion Protocol, already detailed above. In relation to occupational well-being, the new Action Plan includes several initiatives aimed at improving the reconciliation between work and family life, internal communication, and the work environment. Initially, the adoption of

Internal Regulations to Guarantee the Right to Digital Disconnection (action 21) is planned for the second quarter of 2024, to preserve the mental health of workers and promote the balance between professional and personal life. In turn, the update of the Internal Rules for the Workday Regulation (action 10), scheduled for the first quarter of 2026, will adapt working conditions to the new regulations on paid leaves as well as realities such as teleworking, among others. Also planned for the second quarter of 2025 is the launch of an Intranet (action 18), which will function as a common online workspace to improve internal communication and access to institutional documentation. In addition, from the second quarter of 2026, it is planned to carry out activities to boost group cohesion and promote a good working environment (action 17), with the aim of consolidating a positive and collaborative organizational culture. Regarding IT security and the protection of personal data, it is planned to update the Internal Information Systems Security Regulations (action 5) during the first quarter of 2026, as well as to complete the application of the Privacy and Security Measures Protocol (action 6) during the first quarter of 2027.

e. Training and development:

In terms of professional development, the first HRS4R Action Plan focused on the development of a document that included the Strategy for the Professional Development of Researchers. This document, drafted in 2020, defined training and career paths but was pending development through specific career progression measures. Regarding training, free language courses and other training actions have been offered since 2018, complemented by scientific, technical and staff management. Training and awareness-raising on equality have also been progressively incorporated, in compliance with the Equal Opportunities & Diversity Management Plan, to ensure that staff members develop cross-cutting skills from a gender and diversity perspective. Despite these advances, the formalization through explicit training plans of the training actions carried out at the center, as well as the elaboration of internal rules to regulate their planning and execution, remained pending.

The new HRS4R Action Plan structurally reinforces the professional development of all staff, with particular attention to the research career. Initially, the development of a new Protocol for Internal Evaluation of Research Performance (action 20) is scheduled for the second quarter of 2024, with the aim of adapting the evaluation criteria included in the previous regulations to the new international standards (such as those promoted by DORA). In this sense, the use of objective metrics that are not based on journals but on the articles published by researchers will be encouraged—to be able to evaluate, in a fairer and more accurate way, both productivity and scientific quality and impact. In a second stage, professional development will be clearly strengthened through the definition of a new Salary Scale (action 15), planned for

2025, and the update of the Internal Promotion Protocol (action 19), planned for 2026, as already explained above. These documents will allow the professional development prospects of the center's staff to be established in a transparent manner, as well as the implementation of clear mechanisms and objectives for professional progression and the associated salary increases. In addition, the new Action Plan will provide a decisive boost to continuous training, with special emphasis on training in occupational risk prevention beyond legal requirements (action 4), which is expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2025 and which will contribute to fostering a consolidated preventive culture within the center. Furthermore, with the aim of systematizing training at the center, the elaboration of Internal Training Regulations, as well as successive versions of a Biennial Training Plan, are planned for the second quarter of 2025. Both documents are part of the same initiative (action 25) and will be developed in agreement with the Legal Representation of Workers, with the aim of planning the training needs two years in advance, considering not only the center's strategic needs, but also the demands and interests of the staff, as well as the requirements of various action plans. These regulations will allow for the detection of emerging training needs and strengthen both the individual and collective development of staff, while promoting a research career consistent with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Furthermore, the Biennial Training Plan will guarantee in advance a structured training offer adapted to the needs of the different groups of the ICP, incorporating cross-cutting themes (such as equality, sustainability, and project management) and specific contents (such as methodologies, laboratory techniques, leadership, and scientific writing). With these measures, the ICP aspires to consolidate an organizational culture based on continuous training as a fundamental pillar to promote not only excellence in research and management, but also to guarantee equal opportunities in the professional development of all the center's staff.

4. NEW HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)

Action Plan summary. The 28 actions initially included in the new HRS4R Action Plan (2024-2028) are listed in the following table, indicating the scheduled implementation date.

HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)		
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING
1	New Strategic Plan (2026-2029)	2Q 2026
2	Welcome Handbook	4Q 2026
3	Protocol for Fund Expenditure Accountability	1Q 2026
4	Training in occupational risk prevention	4Q 2025
5	Update of the Internal Rules of the Information Systems Security	1Q 2026
6	Update and application of the Privacy and Security Measures Protocol	1Q 2027
7	Revision of the Guide of Prevention and Action in Case of Gender Violence	2Q 2026
8	New Staff Selection & Recruitment Protocol	2Q 2026
9	New Organization	2Q 2025
10	Update of the Internal Rules for the Workday Regulation	1Q 2026
11	Survey on the degree of knowledge of the HRS4R Action Plan	1Q 2027
12	Valorization of job positions with a gender perspective	1Q 2028
13	Call for elections for the legal representation of workers	1Q 2026
14	Psychosocial risk assessment with gender perspective	4Q 2027
15	New Salary Scale	2Q 2025
16	Program of Miquel Crusafont Predoctoral Contracts	4Q 2026
17	Carrying out activities that promote group cohesion	2Q 2026
18	Implementation of the Intranet	2Q 2025
19	Update of the Internal Promotion Protocol	2Q 2026
20	New Protocol for Internal Evaluation of Research Performance	2Q 2024
21	Internal Regulations to Guarantee the Right to Digital Disconnection	2Q 2024
22	New Equality Plan	4Q 2024
23	Establishment of the ERC Working Group	1Q 2024
24	Obtaining a quality certificate	4Q 2028

25	Internal Training Regulations and Biennial Training Plan	2Q 2025
26	Actions to improve internal communication through information technologies	4Q 2028
27	New Volunteering Program	2Q 2026
28	Mental Health Support Program for Workers	1Q 2026

Action Plan details. The actions initially included in the new HRS4R Action Plan (2024-2028), already listed above, are detailed below. For each one, the description and objectives, the principles of the new European Charter for Researchers, the planned implementation schedule (by quarters), the responsible people or units, and the indicators to monitor their degree of fulfillment are indicated.

- Action 1: New Strategic Plan 2026-2029.** Description: Drafting and dissemination of the new ICP Strategic Plan, with the aim of defining and monitoring the strategic aims of the center. The document will be publicized through the institutional website and disseminated to all staff, and an annual monitoring of the degree of fulfillment will be carried out. Principles: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13 and 14. Timing: 2Q 2026. Responsible units: Director, General Manager, Scientific Advisory Board and Strategic Plan Working Group. Indicators: Document approved by the Steering Committee and ratified by the Board of Trustees, available on the ICP website and emailed to all staff.
- Action 2: Welcome Handbook.** Description: Drafting of a brief document that offers an overview of the objectives and functioning of the center and that, at the same time, facilitates access to more detailed information (protocols, manuals, internal regulations, and other relevant documents). Therefore, the manual will summarize the organization chart, professional categories and positions, the mission and strategic objectives, non-discrimination policies, working conditions and occupational risk prevention, and internal evaluation mechanisms and career development, among others. The main aim is to facilitate the reception of newcomers to the center, irrespective of whether they are hired or ascribed, students, or visiting researchers. Principles: 6, 13, 15 and 16. Timing: 4Q 2026. Responsible units: Director and Communication & Dissemination Area. Indicators: Document approved by the Steering Committee, available on the ICP website and emailed to all staff.
- Action 3: Protocol for Fund Expenditure Accountability.** Description: Drafting and implementation of a protocol for giving an account of expenses and contracts made by the center at the request of staff. The main objective is to clarify and facilitate procedures, while ensuring compliance with current legal regulations but minimizing the bureaucratic burden. Particular emphasis will be placed on the procedures for reporting information and requesting the payment of expenses related to purchases, travel and

- per diems, and the contracting of both personnel and services (considering the requirements of public procurement that may apply), especially by researchers and heads of departments and areas. Principles: 6, 8, 13 and 15. Timing: 1Q 2026. Responsible units: Administration Area. Indicators: Internal document approved by the Steering Committee, available through the future Intranet and emailed to all staff.
- **Action 4: Training in occupational risk prevention.** Description: Boosting the training of ICP staff in occupational risk prevention beyond the minimum requirements established by current legal regulations. The objective is to ensure that all staff have at least the mandatory basic training and, simultaneously, promote training as a preventive resource until tripling the minimum number required (with emphasis on field technicians) and training at least one person in rescue and first aid. Principles: 13 and 15. Timing: 4Q 2025. Responsible units: Department of Management and Human Resources. Indicators: Certificates of training carried out by all staff, training as a preventive resource (minimum 3 people), and training in first aid (minimum one person).
 - **Action 5: Update of the Internal Rules of the Information Systems Security.** Description: Revision and update of the center's internal IT security rules to guarantee the security of data and IT systems. The regulations will adapt to current legislation, the new IT tools recently implemented (Microsoft Office 365) and potential new IT service providers, in addition to addressing new threats. Principles: 1, 8, 13 and 15. Timing: 1Q 2026. Responsible units: Information Systems Security Committee. Indicators: Internal document reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee, available through the future Intranet and emailed to all staff.
 - **Action 6: Update and application of the Privacy and Security Measures Protocol.** Description: Revision and update of the internal protocol on the protection of personal data to adapt it to current legal regulations and ensure that it is consistent with future updates to the Internal Rules of the Information Systems Security. Principles: 1 and 15. Timing: 1Q 2027. Responsible units: General Manager and Data Protection Officer. Indicators: Minutes of the annual meetings with the Data Protection Officer.
 - **Action 7: Revision of the Protocol for the Prevention and Action in Case of Gender Violence.** Description: Revision of the current protocol on the prevention of gender-based violence, with the aim of including specific measures against LGTBQIA+phobic violence (in accordance with the agreements established with the Legal Representation of Workers), as well as improving reparation measures and the sanctioning regime. Principles: 4, 5 and 13. Timing: 2Q 2026. Responsible units: Non-Discrimination Committee and Steering Committee. Indicators: Document approved by the Steering Committee and ratified by the Board of Trustees, available on the ICP website and through the future Intranet, and emailed to all staff.

- **Action 8: New Staff Selection & Recruitment Protocol.** Description: Development of a new Selection & Recruitment Protocol that revises the procedures on this matter included in the current Protocol for the Evaluation, Internal Promotion and Recruitment of Researchers and Technicians, with the aim of making it more flexible and extending OTM-R mechanisms to all contracts, including temporary ones and/or those linked to projects that are not evaluated by external funding agencies. The emphasis will be put on adapting to the new professional categories that will be recognized in the future Salary Scale, as well as on the implementation of new equity measures or the improvement of existing ones. Principles: 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Timing: 2Q 2026. Responsible units: Director, General Manager, Legal Representation of Workers, Researchers Commission and Non-Discrimination Committee. Indicators: Document drafted by the Director and General Manager, reviewed by the Researchers Commission and the Non-Discrimination Committee, agreed with the Legal Representation of Workers, approved by the Steering Committee, available on the ICP website and through the future Intranet, emailed to staff and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 9: New Organization Chart.** Description: Restructuring of the Organization Chart to redefine some areas and relocate others, as well as to rename the research support departments, with the aim of promoting both the ICP Museum and knowledge transfer. Principles: 10, 11 and 12. Timing: 2Q 2025. Responsible units: Steering Committee. Indicators: Document approved by the Steering Committee, available on the ICP website, emailed to all staff, available through the future Intranet, and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 10: Update of the Internal Rules for the Workday Regulation.** Description: Revision of the current Internal Rules for the Workday Regulation to correct some shortcomings that have been detected, incorporate possible improvements and adapt it to new legal provisions. The aim is to facilitate the management of the working day by staff, while maintaining or even expanding the mechanisms for reconciling professional and personal life (teleworking, flexible working hours, etc.). Principles: 13. Timing: 1Q 2026. Responsible units: Human Resources and Legal Representation of Workers Area. Indicators: Document approved by the Steering Committee, emailed to all staff, available through the future Intranet and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 11: Survey on the degree of knowledge of the HRS4R Action Plan.** Description: Conduct a survey of the center's staff (both researchers and support personnel) to assess the level of knowledge of, and satisfaction with, HRS4R and the implementation of these policies at the ICP, with particular emphasis on the OTM-R mechanisms planned in this Action Plan. The survey will allow one to analyze whether the internal communication actions carried out are sufficient, or if they need to be expanded and/or improved.

Principles: 6. Timing: 1Q 2027. Responsible units: General Manager and Communication & Dissemination Area. Indicators: Sending a survey by email to staff and document analyzing the results approved by the HRS4R Implementation Committee.

- **Action 12: Valorization of job positions with a gender perspective.** Description: Carrying out a new valorization of job positions with a gender perspective that will serve as the basis for drafting a new Equal Opportunities Plan (EOP) of the center in the future. Although the ICP already has a valorization of job positions, which will be used to elaborate the next EOP, the subsequent one will need to incorporate specific criteria with a gender perspective to identify and correct the gender biases present in traditional evaluation methods, with the aim of avoiding pay inequalities derived from the feminization of certain jobs. Principles: 8, 13, 14 and 15. Timing: 1Q 2028. Responsible units: General Manager, Director and Legal Representation of Workers. Indicators: Document prepared by the General Manager and the Director, agreed with the Legal Representation of Workers and approved by the Steering Committee.
- **Action 13: Call for elections for the legal representation of workers.** Description: Call for elections to renew the Legal Representation of Workers, currently composed of three staff delegates, with the aim of establishing a Works Council and a Health and Safety Committee, as it will likely be required for the center due to the fact that it has more than fifty workers on a continuous basis. This will require the presentation of multipersonal candidacies, and even though it will be up to the center's staff to call the elections, the Director and the General Manager will facilitate the process as much as possible. Having a Works Council would increase staff involvement in decision-making, streamline processes related to staff management, and guarantee that the agreements reached are considered applicable regulations in labor matters. Principles: 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 17. Timing: 1Q 2026. Responsible units: Legal Representation of Workers. Indicators: Minutes of the electoral board's constitution, the election, and the constitution of both committees.
- **Action 14: Psychosocial risk assessment with gender perspective.** Description: Periodic performance of a psychosocial risk analysis and implementation of the resulting action plan, with the aim of preventing and mitigating the possible adverse effects on the mental health of the center's staff derived from the work environment. When the next assessment is due, it will be explicitly requested to incorporate a gender perspective, in order to identify, analyze and prevent psychosocial risk factors that may differentially affect women and men, and apply (if need be) corrective measures. Principles: 4, 5 and 13. Timing: 4Q 2027. Responsible units: General Manager and Prevention Delegates. Indicators: Report prepared by the occupational risk prevention company.

- **Action 15: New Salary Scale.** Description: Revision of the center's Salary Scale to adapt the professional categories of researchers and support staff to the future sectoral agreement for research of Catalonia (currently under negotiation), as well as to define subcategories enabling the establishment of objective career development mechanisms for all the ICP staff. The new professional categories and subcategories will allow the implementation of more explicit and egalitarian remuneration mechanisms, thus contributing to the improvement of the center's competitiveness in terms of attracting and retaining talent. The new scale will not imply an increase in the salaries corresponding to the currently recognized categories, at least until this is determined by the enforcement of the future collective agreement. Principles: 9, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17. Timing: 2Q 2025. Responsible units: General Manager, Director and Legal Representation of Workers. Indicators: Document prepared by the General Manager and the Director, agreed with the Legal Representation of Workers, approved by the Steering Committee, emailed to the staff, published on the future Intranet, presented in a Paleovermut and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 16: Program of Miquel Crusafont Predoctoral Contracts.** Description: Successive call for applications for four 4-year predoctoral contracts financed with the center's basal funds, with the aim of correcting the structural lack of predoctoral researchers (R1), which has not been solved through competitive calls. Therefore, this program aims to increase the proportion of PhD students at the ICP, but also to boost the supervision of doctoral dissertations by the R3 researchers of the center, with the aim of promoting their competitiveness. Principles: 2, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. Timing: 4Q 2026. Responsible units: Steering Committee. Indicators: Public job offers and resolutions of each call signed by the representatives of the respective Selection Committees, until there are four ongoing predoctoral contracts of this program simultaneously.
- **Action 17: Carrying out activities that promote group cohesion.** Description: Planning and execution of a program of activities to promote the cohesion of the center's staff, which is currently distributed in two different headquarters and several additional work centers. It is intended to promote the interaction, in a relaxed environment, of workers who seldom coincide (due to belonging to different areas or departments), with the aim of improving the work environment, increasing their sense of belonging and knowledge of common goals, and facilitating that everyone can freely express their needs and opinions. Principles: 17, 18, 19 and 20. Timing: 2Q 2026. Responsible units: HRS4R Implementation Committee. Indicators: Satisfaction surveys on activities aimed at staff and news of the events and activities performed.
- **Action 18: Implementation of the Intranet.** Description: Design and implementation of an internal web portal (Intranet) restricted to ICP staff, with the aim of improving internal

communication in multiple aspects, such as facilitating access to the center's documents (both public and internal), filling out forms, and booking services and infrastructures. This action will be facilitated by the recent implementation of IT platform Microsoft Office 365 at the ICP, which allows the use of SharePoint software to design the Intranet for all staff members, who already have an Office 365 corporate account linked to their email address. Principles: 9 and 16. Timing: 2Q 2025. Responsible units: IT Area and Communication & Dissemination Area. Indicators: Intranet in operation and communication by email to all staff.

- **Action 19: Update of the Internal Promotion Protocol.** Description: Update of the Internal Promotion Protocol in force at the center to adapt it to the future update of the Salary Scale, in which new professional categories and subcategories will be defined. It is intended to establish objective, transparent and equitable mechanisms that regulate not only the promotion between categories, but also the progression across subcategories within the same professional category, with the aim of designing a career development strategy for all ICP staff. Principles: 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Timing: 2Q 2026. Responsible units: Steering Committee, Legal Representation of Workers, Researchers Commission, Non-Discrimination Committee. Indicators: Document reviewed by the Researchers Commission and the Non-Discrimination Committee, approved by the Steering Committee and the Legal Representation of Workers, emailed to staff, available through the future Intranet and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 20: New Protocol for Internal Evaluation of Research Performance.** Description: Revision of the internal evaluation mechanisms of researchers currently included in the Protocol for the Evaluation, Internal Promotion and Recruitment of Researchers and Technicians, given that they have become outdated because of being grounded on journal-based bibliometric indicators and that, in addition, they are very time consuming. Based on previous discussions with the Scientific Advisory Board, the aim is to draft a new specific document that exclusively regulates the evaluation of research performance and that (following the recommendations of DORA) is based on author's metrics (on the articles published instead of the journals), uses Scopus (instead of the Journal Citation Reports) as the reference database, and applies exclusively to R3 and R4 researchers. Principles: 3, 6, 8, 9, 12 and 14. Timing: 1Q 2024. Responsible units: Director and Scientific Advisory Board. Indicators: Document prepared by the Director, reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Board, approved by the Steering Committee and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 21: Internal Regulations to Guarantee the Right to Digital Disconnection.** Description: Drafting of an internal document that guarantees the exercise of the right to digital disconnection by all ICP staff, ensuring that the agreed guidelines are

compatible with the main principle of flexible working hours that governs the center's workday (especially, in the case of researchers). The aim is to guarantee the personnel's rest outside working hours, prevent psychosocial risks and mental health problems, and promote a good work-life balance. In addition to the provisions derived from current laws, these regulations will include specific recommendations and will emphasize the responsibility of people managing staff to ensure the exercise of this right. Principles: 4, 5, 13 and 15. Timing: 2Q 2024. Responsible units: General Manager, Director and Legal Representation of Workers. Indicators: Document agreed between the General Manager, the Director and the Legal Representation of Workers, approved by the Steering Committee, emailed to all staff and ratified by the Board of Trustees.

- **Action 22: New Equality Plan.** Description: Coinciding with the expiration of the previous Equal Opportunities Plan (EOP) of the ICP, drafting a new one with more ambitious objectives and aligned with current legislation. The new EOP is intended to be an effective tool to promote real and effective equal opportunities between women and men, prevent gender bias and avoid any type of discrimination in the workplace. Principles: 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 19. Timing: 2Q 2024. Responsible units: Negotiating Committee of the Equal Opportunities Plan (Director, General Manager and Legal Representation of Workers). Indicators: Document approved by the Negotiating Committee, registered, and emailed to all staff.
- **Action 23: Establishment of the ERC Working Group.** Description: Establishment of a working group that, in addition to the Director and Project Manager, includes the center's R2 and R3 researchers, with the aim of training this staff in the Starting Grant and Consolidator Grant ERC calls, as well as helping them write competitive applications for this type of research projects. In the short and medium terms, it is intended to increase the number of applications submitted to these ERC calls, as well as to improve the training and competitiveness of researchers in these stages. Principles: 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 18, 19 and 20. Timing: Q1 2024. Responsible units: Director and Projects Area. Indicators: Minutes the working group's constitution and of the successive meetings.
- **Action 24: Obtaining a quality certificate.** Description: Implementation of the necessary procedures and protocols to improve the quality of management at the center, with the aim of obtaining an accreditation certificate. This action has two purposes: on the one hand, to optimize the internal management of resources, equipment and infrastructures; and, on the other, to externally accredit excellence in management, thus consolidating the positioning of the ICP as benchmark center in vertebrate paleontology at the international level. Principles: 10, 11, 13 and 17. Timing: 4Q 2028. Responsible units: Management & Human Resources Department and Projects & Knowledge Transfer Department. Indicators: Obtaining the certificate.

- **Action 25: Internal Training Regulations and Biennial Training Plan.** Description: Drafting of internal rules to regulate the continuous training of ICP staff and elaboration of a first biennial training plan to organize the contracting of training activities and promote the personal and professional development of the center's staff. Both documents must be agreed with the Legal Representation of Workers. The Training Plan is intended to include a training offer that is as personalized and flexible as possible, and which, at the same time, include the training needs included in other plans (EOP, psychosocial risk assessment, etc.). Principles: 18 and 19. Timing: 2Q 2025. Responsible units: General Manager and Legal Representation of Workers. Indicators: Documents agreed between the General Manager and the Legal Representation of Workers, approved by the Steering Committee and ratified by the Board of Trustees.
- **Action 26: Actions to improve internal communication through information technologies.** Description: Design and implementation of actions to improve internal communication through information technologies (already implemented or pending implementation), motivated by the dispersion of staff in various headquarters and work centers, as well as the frequent performance of tasks outside the ICP facilities (paleontological fieldwork, attendance at conferences, stays in other centers, etc.). It is intended to improve the effectiveness of internal communication, with the aim of guaranteeing and facilitating staff access to all information (activities, publications, training actions and news) and documentation (protocols, internal regulations, forms, etc.) relevant to the center. Principles: 16. Timing: 4Q 2028. Responsible units: General Manager. Indicators: 2 improvement actions carried out.
- **Action 27: New Volunteering Program.** Description: Elaboration of a Volunteering Program Management Plan that regulates the participation of people external to the ICP in the center's activities, including the ICP vision of volunteering and the principles that govern its management, as well as the rights and duties of all parties involved, in accordance with the current legal framework. The objective is to promote citizen participation through an appropriate management of the interest of the various publics who want to learn firsthand about the activities that take place at the ICP, as well as to effectively channel this interest so that it contributes to achieving the center's objectives (particularly with regard to the dissemination and conservation of paleontological cultural heritage) and brings paleontological research closer to the various interested publics. At the same time, it is intended to ensure that volunteers participate in ICP activities with all the safety guarantees and receive an adequate return in terms of training and knowledge. Principles: 6, 8, 10, 11, 15 and 20. Timing: 2Q 2026. Responsible units: Projects & Knowledge Transfer Department. Indicators: Document approved by the Steering Committee and ratified by the Board of Trustees.

- **Action 28: Mental Health Support Program for Workers.** Description: Elaboration of a mental health care program aimed at all center's staff (hired or ascribed) to provide anyone who requests it with access to an initial diagnosis and advice in cases of emotional distress or psychosocial risk linked to work. The aim is to prevent and minimize psychological risks (such as stress and burnout syndrome) and other mental health problems derived from work. Principles: 4, 5 and 13. Timing: 1Q 2026. Responsible units: Human Resources Area. Indicators: Document explaining the functioning of the program and minute of the Steering Committee meeting where it is approved.

5. OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT (OTM-R) POLICY

The ICP formally adopted the “European Charter for Researchers” and the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” in December 2016, within the framework of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) of the European Union. Shortly afterwards, in February 2017, the HRS4R Implementation Committee was established, as recognized in the Organization Chart approved in 2018, with the aim of ensuring the full integration of the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) in the center. The actions carried out within the framework of the previous HRS4R Action Plan may be summarized in the following three areas:

- **Remuneration and professional categories:** One of the first steps to ensure transparency was to design and approve, in 2018, a Salary Scale structured into four professional categories for research staff (R1–R4), following the European Framework for Research Careers, and three profiles for technical staff (T1–T3). This Salary Scale attributes each job position held at the ICP to the corresponding professional category and also establishes the salary ranges and supplements. The annual revision of the scale allows for improvements to be incorporated and updated in accordance with the salary increases stipulated for staff of the public sector of the Generalitat de Catalunya.
- **Staff recruitment and selection:** The final approval, in 2019, of the Protocol for the Evaluation, Internal Promotion and Recruitment of Researchers and Technicians, elaborated by the Management Committee with contributions from the Non-Discrimination Committee and the Research Personnel Commission, represented a huge step forward toward the full implementation of OTM-R policies at the ICP. This document, published in the Transparency portal of the ICP website and linked to public job offers, regulates the processes and mechanisms for selecting vacant or newly created positions financed by the ICP basal funds, while incorporating specific measures to guarantee equity, promote gender parity, and prevent any type of discrimination. Since its entry into force, the ICP has resolved a total of 15 job offers through the OTM-R mechanisms included in this protocol. To maximize transparency and optimize dissemination, all calls are published on the “Work with us” page of the ICP website, as well as on institutional social networks and specialized channels, which in the case of research staff must include EURAXESS.
- **Career development:** In addition to defining professional categories, the Protocol for the Evaluation, Internal Promotion and Recruitment of Researchers and Technicians approved in 2019 further established internal promotion mechanisms as well as various metrics to evaluate the performance of researchers based on bibliometric indicators. Subsequently, in 2023, a new Internal Promotion Protocol was drafted to replace the

provisions included in the previous protocol. Despite the improvements introduced, this protocol is provisional and will have to be revised and expanded, not only to be adapted to the new professional categories planned, but also to define the progression mechanisms within the same category (including, among others, new metrics for evaluating research performance).

The interim evaluation of the HRS4R implementation at the ICP, carried out by the European Commission in July 2020, already acknowledged the progress made by the center in ensuring the transparency of recruitment and professional development processes. However, the ICP aims to continue making progress in this regard through the new Action Plan. A new Protocol for Staff Selection & Recruitment is scheduled for 2026, not only to improve the OTM-R measures (with particular attention to gender perspective), but also to make it more flexible and extend its application to all ICP job offers. Currently, only the offers that are financed with basal funds are mandatorily ruled by the protocol, while selection processes for contracts linked to projects (and, therefore, financed with competitive funds) are not specifically regulated by the protocol (even though it is recommended to follow a similar, albeit simplified, process). The new protocol will adapt to the professional categories included in the new Salary Scale, which will predictably be those specified in the future research sectoral agreement of Catalonia. The drafting of the new Protocol for Staff Selection & Recruitment will be carried out by the Director and the General Manager in collaboration with the Legal Representation of Workers, the Research Personnel Commission, and the Non-Discrimination Committee. The document will be publicized on the ICP website, and it will also be accessible through the future intranet and will be communicated to all staff by email.

The modification of the professional categories included in the Salary Scale will also require updating the Internal Promotion Protocol, with the aim of transparently establishing the procedures for the promotion between categories, as well as defining objective and equitable criteria for progress between subcategories. This will allow for an adequate development of professional careers, by incorporating objective, transparent, merit-based, and gender-sensitive systems that guarantee equal opportunities. In the case of researchers, these mechanisms will be based on new criteria for evaluating research performance that better comply with currently recognized international standards. In addition, other performance evaluation mechanisms will be implemented, not only for support staff, but also for researchers, by considering other tasks inherent to academic activity (such as fundraising, teaching, supervision, mentoring, dissemination, and community service), which are often not reflected in publications. This new protocol will be drawn up by the Steering Committee, in collaboration with the Legal Representation of Workers, the Research Staff

Commission, and the Non-Discrimination Committee, and will be disseminated through the same channels as the Staff Selection & Recruitment Protocol.

With all these actions included in the new HRS4R Action Plan, the ICP will reinforce its commitment to the principles of OTM-R and will continue to move toward a human resources policy aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, while promoting key aspects such as mobility, efficiency, equal opportunities, and continuous professional development.



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HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)



6. IMPLEMENTATION

The new HRS4R Action Plan of the ICP for the period 2024-2028 plans a set of specific actions to more fully align the management of the center's human resources with the European standards of excellence, transparency, and equality in research. These actions aim to improve both the working conditions and professional development of researchers, as well as the quality and impact of the research carried out at the center. At the same time, it is intended that these improvements will not only benefit the researchers' conditions, but also those of the (both direct and indirect) research support staff (including administrative and service staff), always considering the particularities of the different types of professional category. The main actions planned can be summarized in the following lines of action:

- **Update and dissemination of ethical protocols:** The codes of conduct and research ethics protocols will be revised and disseminated, reinforcing the mechanisms that guarantee scientific integrity and transparency.
- **Improvement of selection and recruitment processes:** Personnel selection procedures will be revised and expanded to ensure that recruitment is open, transparent, and merit-based for all positions, thus promoting equal opportunities and attracting international talent.
- **Research career development:** Professional career paths will be defined and continuous training, mentoring, and professional development support actions will be promoted, especially aimed at staff in the initial stages of their research careers.
- **Improvement of working conditions and work-life balance:** Internal policies will be revised to promote work-life balance, gender equality, occupational risk prevention, and an inclusive work environment.
- **Promotion of internal communication and participation:** Internal communication channels will be strengthened and staff participation in decision-making and the evaluation of human resources policies will be encouraged.
- **Monitoring and periodic evaluation:** Specific indicators and follow-up mechanisms will be defined to monitor the implementation of actions and adjust them to the needs of the center.

The planned implementation timing of the new HRS4R Action Plan of the ICP extends from 2024 to 2028 and has been designed to guarantee a progressive and consensual execution of the actions. Although an orderly implementation is expected, delays due to unforeseen reasons or schedule adjustments because of strategic reasons cannot be ruled out. It is worth noting that a good number of actions are concentrated in the second quarter

of each year, as they often require ratification by the ICP Board of Trustees, albeit in many cases the actions will have already been implemented de facto beforehand.

The process will begin in 2024 with the renewal of the composition of the HRS4R Implementation Committee and awareness-raising actions for all staff about the objectives of the new plan. The actions planned for the first year are aimed at improving working conditions (such as equality and digital disconnection), as well as excellence in research and transparency in the evaluation of researchers. From 2025 onward, more specific actions will be promoted, aimed at improving working conditions and OTM-R policies (such as the new Salary Scale), continuous training (Regulations and Training Plan), organization (restructuring of the Organization Chart), internal communication (implementation of the Intranet), and safety (training in occupational risk prevention). At the same time, the progressive deployment of the new Equal Opportunities Plan, from 2025 onward, will allow for the reinforcement of work-life balance policies, the implementation of new equity mechanisms, and the transversal integration of gender perspective in the organizational culture of the center. In parallel, the HRS4R Implementation Committee will actively monitor the level of compliance with the Action Plan, based on the compilation of the indicators for the various actions, by means of quarterly meetings. From 2025 onward, this committee will also assess the suitability of adding new actions to the Action Plan, either on its own initiative or at the proposal of the Steering Committee, the Researchers Commission, or the Non-Discrimination Committee.

The year 2026 will represent an inflection point in the implementation of the Action Plan for two reasons: first, because the midpoint of the plan's execution period will be reached; and second, because it will be necessary to carry out an interim evaluation of the plan's state of implementation. All of this will make it possible to determine whether the process is progressing at a good pace, as well as to identify possible shortcomings or aspects that may be improved, introducing (if need be) the necessary adjustments in the timing of actions that are behind schedule. On the other hand, 2026 is also the year for which the full implementation of almost half of the actions has been planned. This is partly due to the fact that many of these actions require a certain amount of preparation time, and also to the need to avoid an overload of work during the final years of the plan—during which, in addition to the actions already planned, those that have been added later or have suffered delays will have to be executed. Although the actions planned for 2026 are very diverse, the development of a new Strategic Plan for the center stands out, with cross-cutting implications in very different aspects of both management and research. Other important actions planned for 2026 are aimed at improving OTM-R policies and talent recruitment/retention (such as the new selection and hiring protocol, the revision of the internal promotion protocol and the predoctoral contract program), staff working conditions

(including, in addition to the hiring and promotion protocols already mentioned, the revision of the regulations on working hours and initiatives to promote group cohesion), the prevention of harassment and discrimination (revision of the protocol for the prevention of sexist violence), the reception of new staff (welcome handbook), citizen participation (volunteer program), financial management (accountability protocol), IT security (update of the corresponding internal regulations), and staff participation in decision-making (holding union elections to establish a Company Workers' Committee).

During the last two years of the Action Plan, in addition to completing those actions that could not be implemented before the expected deadline or that were added later, it will be necessary to deploy several measures that, due to their complexity or intrinsic periodicity, have been planned for this final period. Thus, in 2027, three actions are planned to be implemented, two of which focus on improving working conditions: one to guarantee security in the processing of personal data, and another to assess psychosocial risks in the work environment. The third action will consist of a survey aimed at staff to assess the degree of knowledge about HRS4R policies. For 2028, in turn, three actions have been planned to improve working conditions (job evaluation), management (obtaining a quality certificate), and internal communication (through information technologies). Both the psychosocial risk assessment and the job evaluation will be carried out by incorporating a gender perspective, thus reinforcing the center's commitment to equality policies. In parallel, during this last year, preparations will begin for the final evaluation of the plan, with an eye on the elaboration of a new Action Plan to reaffirm the center's commitment to HRS4R policies through the renewal of the award. This evaluation will have to go beyond the degree of fulfillment of the various actions and, therefore, will include an analysis of the real impact on working conditions, the work climate, talent recruitment and retention, and excellence in research and management. In this sense, it will be necessary to carry out a rigorous and cross-cutting interpretation of the results of the staff survey carried out during the previous year.



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HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)



APPENDIX 2Q 2025:
Current Implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan (June 2025)

For reasons beyond the control of the ICP, the final evaluation of the previous HRS4R Action Plan (2018-2023) could not be carried out when it was due, being delayed until mid-2025, during the second year of implementation of the new Action Plan (2024-2028)—which, in the absence of clear guidelines from the final evaluation of the previous one, was designed for an equivalent period of five years. With the aim of providing an updated vision of the current HRS4R Action Plan, the following tables provide the updated information of the center (for the year 2024) and summarize the current degree of implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan (as of early June 2025).

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE ²
Total researchers (including staff, fellowship holders, and PhD students)	36.5
Of whom are international	8
Of whom are externally funded	29
Of whom are women	15
Of whom are R3 o R4	19.5
Of whom are R2	3
Of whom are R1	14
Total number of staff	79.25

RESEARCH FUNDING 2024	€
Total annual organizational budget	2.807.037
Annual organizational direct government funding (designated for research, i.e., basal budget)	1.131.119
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research)	1.322.982
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	279.388

Of the total of 28 planned actions, 29% (8) are fully implemented, 21% (6) are ongoing, 7% (2) are partially implemented, and 43% (12) are pending. The fully implemented actions include not only the 4 planned for 2024 and 3 of the 5 planned for 2025, but even one of those planned for 2026, which was implemented earlier than planned. The remaining actions planned for 2025 are ongoing or partially implemented. Therefore, we can conclude that the implementation of the new Action Plan is progressing at a good pace and that, for the time being, it is not suffering any delays compared to the initially planned schedule.

² Full Time Equivalent. Data from late 2024.

HRS4R ACTION PLAN (2024-2028)			
ACTION	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMING
1	New Strategic Plan (2026-2029)	ONGOING	2Q 2026
2	Welcome Handbook	ONGOING	4Q 2026
3	Protocol for Fund Expenditure Accountability	ONGOING	1Q 2026
4	Training in occupational risk prevention	PARTIAL	4Q 2025
5	Update of the Internal Rules of the Information Systems Security	PENDING	1Q 2026
6	Update and application of the Privacy and Security Measures Protocol	PENDING	1Q 2027
7	Revision of the Guide of Prevention and Action in Case of Gender Violence	ONGOING	2Q 2026
8	New Staff Selection & Recruitment Protocol	PENDING	2Q 2026
9	New Organization	FULL	2Q 2025
10	Update of the Internal Rules for the Workday Regulation	PENDING	1Q 2026
11	Survey on the degree of knowledge of the HRS4R Action Plan	PENDING	1Q 2027
12	Valorization of job positions with a gender perspective	PENDING	1Q 2028
13	Call for elections for the legal representation of workers	PENDING	1Q 2026
14	Psychosocial risk assessment with gender perspective	PENDING	4Q 2027
15	New Salary Scale	FULL	2Q 2025
16	Program of Miquel Crusafont Predoctoral Contracts	PARTIAL	4Q 2026
17	Carrying out activities that promote group cohesion	ONGOING	2Q 2026
18	Implementation of the Intranet	ONGOING	2Q 2025
19	Update of the Internal Promotion Protocol	PENDING	2Q 2026
20	New Protocol for Internal Evaluation of Research Performance	FULL	2Q 2024
21	Internal Regulations to Guarantee the Right to Digital Disconnection	FULL	2Q 2024
22	New Equality Plan	FULL	4Q 2024
23	Establishment of the ERC Working Group	FULL	1Q 2024
24	Obtaining a quality certificate	PENDING	4Q 2028
25	Internal Training Regulations and Biennial Training Plan	FULL	2Q 2025
26	Actions to improve internal communication through information technologies	PENDING	4Q 2028
27	New Volunteering Program	FULL	2Q 2026
28	Mental Health Support Program for Workers	PENDING	1Q 2026