



Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

RENEWAL PHASE
ACTION PLAN
(Cycle 2)

March 9th, 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTION PLAN

The Centre Tecnològic de Telecomunicacions de Catalunya (CTTC) endorsed the “European Charter for Researchers” and “The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researcher” in October 2013, showing its support towards providing a high-quality research environment for European researchers.

Since then, CTTC has been working towards embedding the HR Excellence in Research Process and strengthening the Institutional Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).

After the Initial Phase of the process, CTTC prepared and approved the Internal Analysis and the Action Plan on 09/11/2015, obtaining the ‘HR Excellence in Research’ award on 19/11/2015.

After the first two years of the Implementation Phase, CTTC prepared an Internal Review. CTTC approved the final Self-Assessment document with the HR Strategy and Revised Action Plan on 29/01/2018. After receiving the Interim Assessment with the comments and recommendations from the External Experts, the three-Year Implementation Phase started.

Then, a new internal review was performed and an Improved Action Plan elaborated to enter the Award Renewal Phase. The Improved Action Plan was approved by the Direction on February 7th, 2022. The outcomes of the Internal Review, including the complete list of actions, were submitted through the HR Award E-tool, and the Improved Action Plan published on CTTC’s website. After the External Assessment and Site Visit, CTTC started the implementation and continuous monitoring of the HRS4R actions according to the Improved Action Plan, incorporating the received feedback and recommendations.

Upon completion of the first 3-year cycle of the Renewal Phase, with a similar procedure, CTTC performed an internal review¹ and defined a Further Improved Action Plan, approved by the Direction on 9 March 2026.

The CTTC Action Plan is organized in four different work packages according to the 4 thematic areas:

- WP1: Ethical and professional aspects
- WP2: Recruitment
- WP3: Working conditions and social security
- WP4: Training

The HRS4R and HR policies are also embedded in the CTTC R&D Management Systems, recognized by AENOR with the certification of the quality standard (UNE 166002, also complying with ISO 56002, migrating to ISO 56001 in 2026), periodically revised and yearly audited. This certification is internally implemented as a project named “MUSSOL” with a manual and a set of 12 procedures (referred to as P01 up to P12). This involves several aspects/principles of the four thematic areas (such as professional responsibility and attitude, contractual and legal obligations, evaluation/appraisal, recruitment, intellectual property, etc.).

¹ Since we completed the interim phase before 26 November 2024, the Internal Review has been based on the original 40 principles. Once the Renewal Phase Cycle 2 is completed, CTTC will transition to the 20 principles under the European Charter for Researchers.

In WP1, dealing with ethical and professional aspects, we prioritise strengthening CTTC's ethical framework through the continuous improvement of MUSSOL procedures, ensuring inclusivity and alignment with the CERCA Code and the ethical standards of the Catalan public administration. We also extend our commitment to equality and actions to attract and retain female talent, in line with the Gender Equality Plan. Further efforts focus on broadening our Open Access policy, and on collaboratively defining the CTTC Mission with all personnel. In parallel, we continue improving communication, transparency, and public engagement, building on the communication strategy redefined and improved in the previous renewal phase cycle.

Recruitment remains a strategic priority for CTTC and a key pillar of the HRS4R Action Plan. In the previous cycle, the Open Transparent and Merit based Recruitment (OTM-R) policy was consolidated within the MUSSOL quality framework, strengthening transparency and consistency. The internal review confirmed important strengths but highlighted the need to improve systematic training for staff involved in recruitment, increase procedural efficiency, and further develop mobility recommendations. In response, WP2 introduces targeted actions including mandatory OTM-R and Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, optimisation of the recruitment timeline through measurable indicators, and enhanced mobility support. These measures address the identified weaknesses and reinforce a more efficient, inclusive and strategically aligned recruitment system.

CTTC's strategy on working conditions focuses on consolidating a high-performance research environment that prioritizes well-being and talent retention. Key strengths include established work-life balance and flexibility policies, essential to offset the salary gap relative to the private technology sector. This value proposition is supported by cutting-edge infrastructure and high-level scientific equipment provided to research units to achieve excellence through the optimal leveraging of these resources.

In response to public sector constraints, the WP3 Action Plan articulates measures to maintain institutional attractiveness: the creation of functional spaces to foster co-creation and the improvement of the climate survey to guide management's decision-making. Furthermore, internal cohesion and corporate health are enhanced, while transparency is guaranteed through the Ethical Mailbox, ensuring a solid labor framework aligned with the HRS4R strategy.

WP4 focuses on the training aspects, which we consider important for our Institution. In this framework, the role of the advisors will be defined and strictly established with respect to the early-stage researchers. The idea is to strength this relationship by providing effective tools to improve supervising activities, to better analyze obtained results and outcomes, to produce surveys of the conducted activities, etc. Furthermore, an important action will be devoted to the continuous training of the personnel to acquire new or deeper knowledge in specific technical topics/tools and complementary skills to improve their career development. This information will be collected through yearly satisfaction surveys and identifying needs from the Direction.

2. ACTIONS

WP1 Ethical and professional aspects

A1.1 Further improve and update MUSSOL procedures, according to the actions defined by the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, using inclusive language	
Gap principles	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 27, 28, 35
Timing	Yearly in Q3
Responsible Unit	Directorate of Quality Programs, Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Annual revision of MUSSOL Manual and Procedures and updated version including improvements.
Current status	In progress
Remarks	<p>MUSSOL procedures are continuously revised and improved as yearly certified by AENOR according to the quality standard for R&D Management.</p> <p>This action has been extended to be continuous also in the next phase.</p> <p>The documented information is available in a newly developed AI-assisted internal web tool including Infographic info for helping researchers, including a welcome pack for the new personnel.</p> <p>Furthermore, after creating in the previous Renewal Phase cycle a guide for neutral language, the target is to annually review the internal documentation to ensure nondiscriminatory language (covering also gap principles 10, 27 and 28).</p>
A1.2 Annual diagnostic of gender and discriminatory issues to include in the annual report for the Patrons	
Gap principles	10, 27
Timing	Yearly in Q1
Responsible Unit	Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Yearly audit with diagnostic performed in December. Summary included in the annual report.
Current status	In progress
Remarks	Yearly performed and audited, included in the annual report and in the report for the Patrons. Action extended to the next years with

	updated indicator (Yearly audit with diagnostic performed in Q1. Summary included in the annual report).
A1.3 Extend the policy for Open Access dissemination of the outputs of the research	
Gap principles	7, 8
Timing	Q4 2026
Responsible Unit	Directorate of Institutional Relations and Communication
Indicator(s)/target	CTTC Open access policy document. The number of open access items.
Current status	Extended
Remarks	Extend the open access policy, currently limited to publications, to other research results, such as data and code, to implement FAIR principles (findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability). This task will follow EU open data and their respective data management plan recommendations. New timing Q4 2026
A1.4 Work on the “CTTC Mission” definition involving all personnel	
Gap principles	2, 4, 7, 23, 35
Timing	Q4 2026
Responsible Unit	Direction, Directorate of Quality Programs
Indicator(s)/target	CTTC Mission statement available on CTTC website.
Current status	Extended
Remarks	The CTTC Mission will be worked with all researchers at all stage of their careers and will involve all personnel to have a common view of the mission to be pursued, in which all can be identified. This action is extended according to be aligned to the process initiated in the framework of the definition of the new CTTC strategic and functional plan. Accordingly, the new timing will be the end of this process envisioned by the end of 2026.
A1.5 Attract and retain female talent	
Gap principles	10, 27
Timing	Q4 2027-2028
Responsible Unit	Directorate of Quality Programs, Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	>23% of female researchers at CTTC.

Current status	New
Remarks	CTTC targets to achieve a higher gender balance with respect to the sector, strengthening actions on attraction and retention of female talent, improving underrepresented gender and make more inclusive research/communication, also with the support of internal CTTC programs such as “Women in STEM”.

WP2 Recruitment

A2.1 Further elaborate recommendations on mobility for the career development strategy	
Gap principles	18, 19, 28, 29
Timing	2027 Q1
Responsible Unit	Human Resources, Directorate of Institutional Relations and Communication
Indicator(s)/target	Revision of internal regulation documentation to include recommendations on mobility.
Current status	Extended
Remarks	Outgoing mobility has been promoted within the Program of Scientific Excellence Internal Projects Further extension for ingoing/outgoing mobility will be elaborated, strengthening talent attraction programs. New timing: Q1 2027.
A2.2 Training all staff involved in the recruitment	
Gap principles	11, 12, 13, 14, 16
Timing	Q4 2028
Responsible Unit	Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Nº of courses. Nº of attendees, ≥90% of staff involved in recruitment trained.
Current status	Extended
Remarks	Training activities on OTM-R principles, competency-based recruitment and prevention of bias are delivered on a regular basis to all staff involved in recruitment processes (selection panels, PIs, unit heads and HR staff). The objective is to ensure transparent, fair and non-discriminatory recruitment procedures, fully aligned with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Training completion and impact are monitored annually through

	participation records, accreditation and internal quality controls. New timing Q4 2028.
A2.3 Define and optimize the timeline for the recruitment process	
Gap principles	11, 12, 13, 14, 27, 28
Timing	Q3 2026: definition of expected timeline (document) for the recruitment process. Q1 2027 & Q1 2028: analysis of timeline of performed recruitment processes.
Responsible Unit	Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Document of expected timeline for the recruitment process defined ≥ 75% of finalized processes within the defined/expected timeline 100% of process documented
Current status	New
Remarks	This action establishes a systematic and objective basis for monitoring, analysing, and reducing the management time of selection processes, from the publication of the vacancy to the effective onboarding of the selected candidate. The time-based analysis strengthens the transparency, predictability, and fairness of OTM-R processes, and integrates objective data into the annual monitoring of the HRS4R Work Group, thereby facilitating continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making.
A2.4: Specific Training on EDI (equality diversity and inclusion) for all staff involved in the recruitment	
Gap principles	10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19
Timing	Q3–Q4 2026: design and first edition of the EDI training. Q1–Q2 2028: second edition and content update, incorporating lessons learned and the results of monitoring and evaluation.
Responsible Unit	Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	≥95% of staff involved in recruitment trained in EDI.
Current status	New

Remarks	<p>To design and deliver specific training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) addressed to all individuals involved in recruitment processes, with the aim of preventing bias, ensuring fair and equitable selection procedures, and strengthening the practical application of the OTM-R principles.</p> <p>This action reinforces CTTC’s institutional commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in recruitment processes. Specific EDI training provides all individuals involved in selection with the necessary competences to identify and prevent bias, apply merit-based criteria objectively, and ensure transparent and non-discriminatory recruitment processes fully aligned with the OTM-R principles.</p>
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WP3 Working conditions and social security

A3.1 Creation and Adaptation of Physical Spaces for Collaborative Research, Dissemination, and Professional Needs (Meetings, Co-creation, Public Engagement)	
Gap principles	8, 9, 23, 24
Timing	Q2 2027 and Q4 2028
Responsible Unit	Direction, Directorate of Institutional Relations and Communication
Indicator(s)/target	<p>Number of new spaces created/habilitated (meeting rooms, cabins, co-creation areas).</p> <p>Percentage of research staff satisfaction with the new spaces (Question included in the annual climate survey).</p> <p>Number of dissemination events/talks open to the external public held in the new spaces.</p>
Current status	New
Remarks	<p>This action focuses on the substantial improvement of the research environment and the optimization of working conditions.</p> <p>The main objective is to provide functional spaces (meeting rooms, co-creation areas, and privacy cabins) that respond to current collaborative and dissemination needs.</p>
A3.2 Improved annual survey (improve participation, internal communication and systematic assessment of climate and culture)	
Gap principles	4, 5, 6, 24, 30, 39 and 40.
Timing	Yearly Q4

Responsible Unit	Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Overall participation improvement 5% per year. Minimum 3-week response window and at least 3 reminders.
Current status	New
Remarks	Action aligned with HRS4R, MUSSOL continuous improvement and CTTC transparency goals. The redesigned survey enables comparable data and evidence-based decision-making. CTTC will implement a revised annual Climate & Culture Survey aligned with the Charter principles and HRS4R. The action establishes a yearly KPI system to monitor participation, response quality and improvement trends, ensuring systematic feedback on working conditions, organisational culture, resources, and career development.
A3.3 Promotion of new social activities and Well-being (Team Building, promote collaboration and engagement, work-Life balance ...)	
Gap principles	23, 24
Timing	Yearly (Q1-Q4)
Responsible Unit	Direction & HR
Indicator(s)/target	At least 2 social/team-building activities per year. 1 corporate agreement signed with a local sports center (reduced rates). Percentage of satisfaction with the well-being offer (Question included in the annual climate survey) > 70%
Current status	New
Remarks	(NEW ACTION introduced in Q2-2023). This action consolidates the centre's strategy for well-being and social cohesion. It aims to foster a healthy and engaging work environment by promoting on-site social activities and well-being initiatives, alongside providing access to corporate benefits at external facilities. The program is designed to be flexible, adapting its activities—ranging from social gatherings to physical health options—to the evolving preferences and needs of the staff.
A3.4 Improve management of Complains/appeals tools	
Gap principles	34

Timing	Yearly Q4
Responsible Unit	Direction & HR Complains/ appeals
Indicator(s)/target	1 annual internal communication (email or newsletter) and involvement of the Works Council in disseminating the tool. 100% of communications acknowledged within 3 working days. Annual anonymized report on the tool's activity.
Current status	New
Remarks	This action focuses on the efficient and transparent management of the Ethical Mailbox. This mailbox covers anti-fraud measures and any breach of the Code of Ethics or labour regulations, including harassment or discrimination cases as stated in internal rules. The dissemination of the tool will be improved through annual internal communications and the support of the Works Council to ensure that all staff are aware of its functioning and guarantees. Compliance with the response times established in the internal regulations and annual accountability is guaranteed.

WP4 Training

A4.1. Further define the role of the supervisors of early-stage researchers, to be included in regulation for predoc and for undergraduate students	
Gap principles	22, 30, 37, 36, 40
Timing	Q2 2027
Responsible Unit	Directorate of Institutional Relations and Communication
Indicator(s)/target	Revise and extend internal document
Current status	Extended
Remarks	Ongoing action. Supervisor roles are defined for hosted and visiting early-stage researchers. Further discussions are planned within the work group to extend the supervisors' role definition to all undergraduate and predoc students, involving the analysis of the results from annual feedback survey. New timing: 2027 Q2.
A4.2 Tools on career pathways for early-stage researchers (R1/R2)	
Gap principles	28, 30, 39
Timing	2027 Q4

Responsible Unit	Directorate of Institutional Relations and Communication, Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Career Guidance Package created and published internally, including curated resources (recommended courses/videos/trainings). Qualitative feedback collected from R1/R2 personnel after related session/webinar.
Current status	New
Remarks	This action aims to provide complementary tools to existing supervision structures for early-stage researchers (R1/R2). It will deliver an introductory overview of research career pathways (academic and non-academic) targeting the doctoral/postdoctoral stage. The guidance package will cover topics such as publication expectations, involvement in projects, differences between academic and industry career paths. A companion orientation session/webinar will be delivered to present the package.
A4.3 Training Plan	
Gap principles	28, 30, 36, 39, 40
Timing	Yearly: Q1: Training plan available. Q1–Q4: Execution of training activities.
Responsible Unit	Human Resources
Indicator(s)/target	Publication of the annual training program. Number of sessions carried out. Satisfaction survey (among participants): average score ³ 70%.
Current status	New
Remarks	Improvement of annual training offer (catalogue), providing a detailed training plan supporting specific needs and with a strategic vision including feedback (report and evaluation).

3. IMPLEMENTATION

CTTC ensures the effective implementation of the further Improved Action Plan in the second cycle of the renewal phase and the embedding of the HRS4R strategy through a structured governance and monitoring framework. The Directorate of Quality Programs, formally appointed by the Direction, main contact with the EC, holds institutional responsibility for coordinating the HR Excellence in Research Process and maintaining the Award. A dedicated HRS4R Work Group oversees the implementation and follow-up of the Action Plan. This group includes the Directorate of Quality Programs (WP1 coordinator), HR Unit members, including the HR Responsible (WP2 coordinator), the General Administrator (WP3 coordinator), the Directorate of Institutional Relations (WP4 coordinator), members of the Works Council and representatives of different researcher categories (R1-R4). The group meets periodically to review progress, monitor quantitative and qualitative indicators and assess the status of each action. Improvements of the HR strategy and Action Plan, according to different feedback collected, such as advice from evaluation committees and any input received from the researchers at all stages of their career, are considered. The Plan will be accordingly updated. Relevant feedback for the Plan will come from the results of the annual satisfaction surveys, performed each year to know staff's opinion regarding several aspects, including working conditions, quality of the different units, representation of the staff towards the direction, discrimination policies, training, strategic goals and IPR policy. All the procedures, documentation and material (as well as organizational information) related to HRS4R are provided to the Researchers through an internal web tool with a friendly AI-assisted research engine.

Since the HR Excellence in Research is recognized in the CTTC research strategy, there is a strong alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R: it is included in the Strategic and Functional plan, periodically revised by the CTTC Scientific Advisory Board and the HRS4R is considered one of the target strategic objectives to report to the Board of Trustees. The HR Excellence in Research Award is also an important achievement in the framework of CERCA, in alignment to the CERCA Code of Ethics and Conduct. Thus, CTTC Trustees & Boards and main stakeholders are involved in the implementation. Implementation is reinforced through the integration of key actions into formalised procedures within the R&D Management System, recognized by AENOR with the certification of the quality standard (UNE 166002 and ISO 56001), periodically revised and yearly audited. So that it will be continuously revised and updated according to the HRS4R Improved Action Plan. HRS4R and gender equality commitment of CTTC (Gender Equality Plan) is shared and promoted within the research community through EU-funded collaboration projects and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions as Doctoral Networks and Industrial Doctorates, attending and organizing events and conferences, as well as by means of the institutional web page and social media. We believe and work on the methodology above described, involving the HRS4R work group, the staff, different committees and units, the Direction, works council, Trustees and Boards, and the commitment of CTTC with the HR Excellence in Research process, since the Award was granted, ensure that the proposed actions are being implemented and the progress carefully monitored, in view of the second cycle of the renewal phase towards further strengthening our HRS4R.



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