

## TEMPLATE 4: ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2019ES418639

Name Organisation under review: FUNDACION PROFESOR NOVOA SANTOS

Organisation's contact details: Patricia Rey Pérez. Hospital Materno-Infantil, 1ª planta. C/ Xubias de Arriba, 84. 15006 A Coruña – España.

**SUBMISSION DATE:** FEBRUARY 9, 2021

### 1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Figures marked \* are compulsory.

Due to the COVID pandemic data provided refer to the last activity report closed and approved (year 2018).

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	*85
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	*4
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	*56
Of whom are women	*72
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	*3
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	*34
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	*45
Total number of students (if relevant)	35
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	*171
<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)</b>	<b>€</b>
Total annual organisational budget	<b>8.902.515,89 €</b> (2018)
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	<b>426.004,75 €</b>
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	<b>2.242.564,77 €</b> (2018)
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	<b>6.233.946,37 €</b> (2018)
<b>ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)</b>	
The Institute of Biomedical Research of A Coruña is made up of groups from the Health Area and the University of the city, with the aim of creating a stable collaboration framework, which integrates basic and	

clinical research, enabling an efficient transfer to society of the scientific advances obtained in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases.

The scientific structure of the Institute is organized into six major areas of research:

Area 1: Aging, Inflammation and Regenerative Medicine.

Area 2: Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases.

Area 3: Neurosciences, Oncology and Hematology.

Area 4: Health Technologies, Bioinformatics and Telemedicine.

Area 5: Genetics, Microbiology and Molecular Medicine.

Area 6: Public Health & Social Care

## 2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE:

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
Ethical and professional aspects	<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-INIBIC's research staff is empowered to select and develop its own projects and lines of research as well as the procedures to carry them out with entire freedom, provided that the Cooperative Scientific Plan, the Strategic Plan and the budget of the organization are respected.</li> <li>-It has available a Research Commission, a Research Ethics Committee, an Animal Welfare Ethics Committee and an External Scientific Committee that examine the scientific activity carried out.</li> <li>-There is a training Programme in place, as well as a defined procedure for transferring results in the field of research.</li> <li>-The Institute complies with the legal requirements for research data protection and security.</li> <li>-The hospital conducts training courses for emergency situations and also related to occupational safety.</li> <li>-The Institute is concluding the implementation and dissemination of an equality plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-It is convenient to improve communication and dissemination about working conditions.</li> <li>-The dissemination of the knowledge transfer procedure needs improving.</li> <li>-The Cooperative Scientific Plan must be updated for better guidance for researchers.</li> <li>-To ensure that researchers have sufficient guidance and counselling is important to emphasize the following actions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○A Code of Good Scientific Practice must be prepared</li> <li>○The Strategic Plan of the Institute must be updated</li> <li>○The Training Programme should be renovated.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>○An Open Access policy must be developed.</p> <p>-It is necessary to promote communication on social networks - The relationship with patient associations should be extended</p>
<p>Recruitment and selection</p>	<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job offers explicitly describe eligibility and evaluation criteria.</li> <li>-INIBIC has a defined, open and accessible hiring process, based on the evaluation of essential requirements and relevant to the position to be occupied and the merits of the applicants.</li> <li>-In terms of transparency, job descriptions specify detailed information such as the date of opening and closing of applications, the position offered, the hiring conditions and the essential requirements to be met by applicants.</li> <li>-INIBIC has begun to post its job offer on the Euraxess Platform. The offers are also advertised through the website.</li> <li>-Job description includes desired merits and capabilities of the professional profiles to be assessed. The assessment of the merits includes aspects of scientific publications, competences acquired, special qualifications , according to the job position to which the offer is addressed.</li> <li>-In the recruitment processes of candidates at INIBIC, there is impartiality regarding degrees obtained in foreign countries, all of them being assessed on an equal basis.</li> </ul> <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is room for improvement in detailing the way in which personnel selection is carried out.</li> <li>- Currently, job offers do not include aspects related to professional career prospects. Unselected candidates do not receive feedback indicating the resolution and the criteria applied.</li> <li>- At present, either secondments, stays or any kind of mobility to other centers or sectors are not especially recognized.</li> <li>- It is necessary to update the standard templates to be used for job offers in English, increasing the information on aspect to be positively valued, aspects to be considered, functions to be performed, the composition of the evaluation committee, career elements, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Working conditions</p>	<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All the professionals at INIBIC, regardless of their category, engaged in a professional research career in science are recognised as researchers and treated accordingly.</li> <li>- Researchers have at their disposal many support core facilities &amp; platforms. From an architectural point of view, INIBIC facilities are in good condition for the development of the work of researchers, including those with disabilities.</li> <li>- The Institute has set up a Mentoring Plan for Emerging Groups, with activities and initiatives that will help to improve quality and excellence in their research.</li> <li>- The entire selection process makes no discrimination based on gender, race, etc. Indeed, there is a positive balance regarding the presence of women. This situation will be extended and consolidated</li> </ul>

	<p>after the implementation of the Equality Plan, currently under development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are certain mechanisms for evaluating groups and professionals for the purpose providing candidates adequate guiding and mentoring during the course of their activity.</li> <li>- INIBIC recognises mobility experience as a positive value in the selection and evaluation process. Certainly, it has created a dedicated mobility registration and offers the opportunity to manage research projects online .</li> <li>- INIBIC approaches professional career advice to researchers by multiple means such as group/area leaders, the Scientific Direction or the Research Commission and the External Scientific Committee.</li> <li>- INIBIC carries out actions to promote corporate culture on innovation, protection and exploitation of results, in particular inventions, softwares, databases and brands. The participation of researchers in the intellectual property rights is regulated by the Results Transfer Procedure,</li> <li>- Many principal researchers are evaluated periodically for their teaching activity by the University.</li> <li>- There is available a mailbox for scientific-related complaints and claims. The management Unit administers the mail and deals with research complaint resolution.</li> <li>- Researchers are represented in the governing bodies and committees of the INIBIC. On the one hand, the Research Commission is set up with a majority percentage of researchers, including researchers in training. Equally, researchers are present in the Governing Council, the highest authority of the Institute.</li> </ul> <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is necessary to make available new suitable spaces compatible with the increase of the number of researchers and support platforms, as well as to review the current ones, in some cases obsolete.</li> <li>- As for the adoption of work/family conciliation measures, and flexible working hours few initiatives have been implemented. So there is area for further improvement</li> <li>- Stabilization and retention of researchers are areas of improvement in the National Health System.</li> <li>- INIBIC lacks a regulation for authorship in scientific publications.</li> <li>- It is advisable to speed up the response to complaints and suggestions and spread the mailbox functioning.</li> <li>- Greater initiatives on mentoring should be taken.</li> </ul>
<p>Training and development</p>	<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researchers in training have a close relationship with their mentors and supervisors throughout the training process. They are constantly evaluated and supervised.</li> <li>- Senior researchers lead research groups and occupy positions of coordinators of the main scientific areas</li> <li>- INIBIC has produced a Scientific Training Plan that assembles all the academic offer at all levels: undergraduate, postgraduate, specialized health training and continuous education. Periodic reviews have been carried out. The training is aimed at all professionals regardless of their category. The training activities include university education, master's degrees, doctoral programs, specialised courses, seminars, etc.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Institute should formally register all tutoring activities performed. Indeed, a tutoring plan must be developed.</li><li>- Greater diffusion of the Scientific Training Plan should be endorsed.</li><li>- The communication of occupational health and safety recommendations and data protection guidelines should be improved at workplace.</li></ul>
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The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan.

INIBIC has a recruitment process clearly defined, open and transparent which emphasises OTM-R as a key component. Since 2019, INIBIC not only has published the researcher positions on its website but also on the Euraxess Platform. A Selection Committee evaluates the candidates on a merit-based system, and analyses whether they meet the requirements considered decisive for each specific position.

Job descriptions clearly specify the details on the employment regimen, functions to be performed, the specific project to develop, and also the essential requirements. Notwithstanding, as aforementioned, it is advisable to implement some improvements to further advance in the adoption of the C&C principles.

With this in mind, INIBIC is intending to substantially enhance the selection & recruitment process, for the purpose of adapting it to all the requirements established by the C&C and the OTM-R policy, mainly through the following actions:

- ❖ **UPDATING THE SCIENTIFIC COOPERATIVE PLAN.** It should be updated every two years in order to facilitate researchers programming their future research projects in advance and in line with the scientific strategy of the Institute. It will incorporate the objectives of the HRS4R strategy as well as aspects concerning extension of the researcher's area and mentoring actions for emerging groups, in addition, measures to increase participation in research networks.
- ❖ **INTENSIFICATION OF THE INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION:** Specific action is foreseen concerning the dissemination of information and regulations related to the HRS4R: Having a unified and well-set communication strategy ensures that researchers are aware of relevant information and documentation such as regulations on workplace safety, data protection policy, procedure for IPR transfer and exploitation, rules for accessing INIBIC, change of group category, financial and legal requirements applicable to research projects, availability of a free suggestion box, information on innovation services and capabilities, counselling on health and accident insurance abroad, or OTM-R policy.  
The main channel used for connecting with the research community and distributing the information will be through a computer software which serves as a kind of intranet for receiving updates. Prior registration is required and also each INIBIC researcher will have to acknowledge reading and understanding of the information available, being this fact documented.  
As for external communication, The INIBIC website has already been translated into English. Subsequent updates will be linked with the main social networks, so that the most relevant news will be automatically published on the website and social media at the same time. A specific RRI plan will be designed in 2021. As explained in the monitoring sections of the Action Plan, after 2 years a review will be made via questionnaire to assess the awareness of the INIBIC staff over actions implemented or disseminated.
- ❖ **EQUALITY PLAN.** INIBIC will draw up an Equality Plan to assure the presence of underrepresented groups and related issues.
- ❖ **IMPLEMENTATION OF AN OPEN ACCESS POLICY.** An active Open Access policy will be developed for the alignment with the provisions and initiatives encouraged by the European Union and for boosting INIBIC's visibility and acknowledgment.
- ❖ **PROFESSIONAL CAREER PLAN AND COLLECTIVE LABOUR AGREEMENT.** In coordination with the regional government and under its premises and guidelines, great effort will be done on the implementation of a collective labour agreement that regulates the rights and duties of all the employees. It is willing to include salary and professional career improvements to the extent permitted by public sector.
- ❖ **ADOPTION OF THE OTM-R PRINCIPLES IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS MANUAL.** INIBIC is working on a standardized model of job description and job specifications in English to be

able to post all the offers on the Euraxess platform, including details like career prospects, selection and evaluation process, transparency, composition of the evaluation panels, and even participation of external evaluators, whenever possible.

- ❖ A Mentoring Plan will be launched to regulate and enhance supervisor- researcher relationship. Supervision and tutoring actions shall be processed and documented. A procedure for supervision and tutoring will be drawn up so that the responsible of each group will be able to improve their own practices when guiding and supporting students. The Scientific Director will ensure compliance with the plan and will examine it annually.

When completed, the OTM-R policy will be published in Spanish and English.

A quality control system for OTM-R will be developed, through annual audits of the selection and hiring process, evaluation of the implementation of the C&C and OTM-R policy.

Below, it is the list of actions proposed in the action plan that openly demonstrate the INIBIC adherence to the OTM-R policy:

1. OTM-R (1,2): Action 4: Intensification of Internal Communication; Action 5: Equality Plan.
2. OTM-R (5): Action 7: Professional Career development and Collective Labour Agreement for employees.
3. OTM-R (6, 7) Action 1: Updating the Cooperative Scientific Project.
4. OTM-R (9) Action 2: Elaboration of a Code of Good Scientific Practice; Action 3: Update and revision of the INIBIC Strategic Plan.
5. OTM-R (2, 8, 16, 17, 18) Action 5: Equality Plan.
6. OTM-R: (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23). Action 8: Adaptation of the hiring process to the OTM-R principles. Elaboration of an OTM-R manual.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL: <a href="http://www.inibic.es/es/hrs4r/">http://www.inibic.es/es/hrs4r/</a> // <a href="http://www.fundacionprofesorновоasantos.org/es/hrs4r/">http://www.fundacionprofesorновоasantos.org/es/hrs4r/</a>
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## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

General overview of the expected implementation process:

The HRS4R Strategy of the Biomedical Research Institute of a Coruña (INIBIC) has been promoted by the Foundation Profesor Novoa Santos that is the official managing body of the INIBIC. For its development, implementation and monitoring, an HRS4R Strategy Commission, has been created with representatives of the Management Unit (chiefly those with competences in the field of HR and Quality, to facilitate compliance with the action plan.) and researchers from different categories (including members of the Works Council) and subsequently adding more researchers ranging from categories 1 to 4 up to complete the representation of the different levels, prioritizing criteria of gender equality.
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Some members of the Commission, therefore, occupy positions of responsibility that empower them to carry out the action plan and supervise it effectively. In this sense, every six months the Foundation Profesor Novoa Santos will monitor the level of implementation of the strategy and will document and report it to the
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commission along with possible deviations, reformulations and next steps to follow.

The Commission will meet ordinarily at least twice a year, in June and November, but extraordinary meetings may be held if Foundation so requires. To be adopted shall require a majority, being the Foundation responsible for the execution of the resolutions approved.

The Direction of the Foundation, or the person appointed, will be responsible for centralizing the suggestions and nonconformities that may arise from the members of the Commission as well as all the deviations detected and any corrective actions deemed necessary.

On an annual basis and after Commission meeting, an e-mail will be sent to all the professionals to reflect and document progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy in comparison to the gap analysis previously performed.

Two years after the initiation of the Action Plan, a survey as the one used in the gap analysis phase, will be designed and sent to all staff in order that they will be able to assess the level of compliance with the Charter & Code and the progression attained, and accordingly preparing the report with the actions and measures to be taken based on the results obtained.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail:

<b>Checklist</b>	<b>*Detailed description and duly justification</b>
<p>How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?</p>	<p>The monitoring of the actions proposed in the action plan will be carried out on a six-month basis by the HRS4R Strategy Commission upon internal evaluation reports approved by the Foundation.</p> <p>As indicated, the HRS4R Commission will meet ordinarily twice a year to oversee the implementation, and extraordinarily as many times as the Foundation so requires to assess compliance with the calendar, implementing the improvements and reformulations that are necessary to comply with the HRS4R and OTM-R principles and avoid deviations as far as possible.</p> <p>Two years after the initiation of the Action Plan, a survey, as the one used in the gap analysis phase, will be disseminated among the staff to assess their level of awareness regarding the implementation of improvements and the progress achieved. This will result in the elaboration of a report incorporating new actions to be carried out, if appropriate, as well as any variations from the original programming, when necessary.</p>
<p>How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?</p>	<p>INIBIC has prepared the Action Plan with the participation of all the researchers from the institution, who have expressed their views and opinions through</p>

	<p>an ad-hoc survey.</p> <p>Besides, the employee’s representatives have been invited to participate in the HRS4R Commission.</p> <p>The institution has also developed an Equality Plan within the framework of the human resources strategy, again relying on representatives from all scientific profiles and areas.</p> <p>As mentioned, semi-annual meetings and reporting with the HRS4R Commission have been scheduled. Besides, it is planned to request the opinion of all the staff after two years of the implementation of the Action Plan.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Action Plan itself directly engages the researcher community in many of its actions (updating of the Training Plan and Collaborative Scientific Plan, always taking into account the needs expressed by the researchers, deployment of the mentoring plan, etc.).</p>
<p>How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation’s research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.</p>	<p>Actions to be developed according to what is established in the schedule of activities will be presented to the Scientific Direction of the Institute and its Board of Trustees, a governing body that comprises representatives of the organizations that make up the Institute.</p> <p>The INIBIC has been accredited as a Health Research Institute by the Carlos III Health Institute (ISCIII, the main health research funding agency in Spain), which demands the HRS4R award in order to maintain said accreditation. Consequently, the INIBIC must adopt the HRS4R policies and principles.</p>
<p>How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?</p>	<p>The Direction of the Foundation Profesor Novoa Santos is directly involved in the implementation of the Strategy, along with the Commission which is composed of representatives of the scientific and management areas.</p> <p>Regular monitoring meetings and a new questionnaire have been envisaged for the next two years after the implementation of the Action Plan.</p> <p>On the other hand, as stated in the previous section,</p>

	<p>the INIBIC has to implement the HRS4R strategy to maintain its accreditation as a Health Research Institute awarded by the ISCIII.</p> <p>In this sense, the gap analysis and the action plan have been submitted to the Board of Trustees, the highest governing body of the Institute for approval</p>
<p>How will you monitor progress (timeline)?</p>	<p>The action plan includes the actions to be carried out and a detailed timetable for their execution. The monitoring group will meet at least twice a year to meet the objectives set in the proposed calendar. On an annual basis, an e-mail will be sent to all the employees of the institute indicating the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy in relation with the gap analysis performed.</p> <p>Again, the opinion and view of all the staff regarding the level of compliance with the HRS4R and OTM-R principles will be examined after two years of the initiation.</p>
<p>How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?</p>	<p>In addition to the half-yearly evaluation made by the Foundation's Direction and reviewed by the Committee, it is expected to have the HRS4R Strategy appraised after two years of the start of the action plan, bringing together again the opinion of the employees, which guarantees having a vision of the real scope achieved.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees of the Foundation Profesor Novoa Santos, as the INIBIC's managing Unit, will be periodically informed about the progress made.</p>

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

<p>The general objective of the INIBIC is to create a stable collaboration framework that integrates basic and clinical research, enabling a more efficient transfer to society of the scientific advances obtained in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases.</p> <p>Finally, at a strategic level it is important to mention its set of values:</p> <p><b>MISSION</b></p> <p>Generate innovative scientific knowledge, of quality and international impact with the aim of transferring the results obtained to clinical practice and the productive sector, impacting on the</p>
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improvement of the patient's quality of life, in greater efficiency of care and in the economic and social progress of their environment.

#### **VISSION**

Place itself as an interdisciplinary center of reference and of international prestige that, by means of cooperation among all its agents, is able to conceive and develop research as a product, allowing innovation to improve clinical care and, consequently, increasing health and quality of life of its population”

Among its VALUES are some distinctive of the HRS4R:

- Excellence. Orientation towards the development of high-quality activities, in a process of continuous improvement.
- Transfer of knowledge. It is important to pursue the maximization and acceleration of the transfer of results into clinical practice, prioritizing research results that effectively improve the quality of life of its reference population.
- Internationalization. One of the main objectives of the Institute is to become a benchmark in an international level, strengthening collaborations with the main prominent international agents in the R+D+I field, and participating in different initiatives at this level.
- Training capacity. Along with Research and Medical Care, training is one of the three basic pillars on which all INIBIC activity is based.

The HRS4R aims to be a mechanism for the implementation of the recommendations regarding the rights and responsibilities of researchers and their employers and/or funders, listed in “The European Researcher Charter” and the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” (C&C).

INIBIC, in line with its strategy and vision as a Health Research Institute, in 2019 has endorsed the C&C principles, thus committing to align its policies and best practices in Human Resources with the recommendations expressed in both documents.