



# HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS (HRS4R)

Award renewal phase 2023-2026

**Institut Català d'Investigació  
Química (ICIQ-CERCA)**

December 2023

Case Number: 2019ES397266

Name Organization Under Review: Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ)

Organization Contact details: Cristina Quiñoa, People Manager,  
cquiñoa@iciq.es

SUBMISSION DATE: 24/12/2023

DATE ENDORSEMENT CHARTER & CODE: 15/02/2011

# INDEX

---

1.	ICIQ overview	4
2.	HRS4R - Introduction	4
3.	Preparation of the HRS4R Action Plan 2023-2026. Gap Analysis	5
4.	Implementation of the actions	7
5.	Action Plan	8

---

## 1. ICIQ overview

The Institute of Chemical research of Catalonia (hereinafter ICIQ) is a public foundation devoted to research in the field of chemistry. The foundation was created in 2000 by the Catalan Government and started its activities in 2004.

Since its creation, ICIQ has aimed to become an internationally recognized leading institution in the field of chemistry, committed to performing ground-breaking research. Moreover, ICIQ is committed to transfer knowledge and technology to pharmaceutical and energy industries. Finally, ICIQ is fully committed to training the next generation of scientists with the necessary skills and knowledge for tackling future challenges in chemical research.

ICIQ's mission is to lead, from the vantage point of molecular science, cross-strategies to solve major social and economic challenges, thereby contributing to the establishment of a knowledge-based economy and improving citizens' quality of life.

ICIQ performs top quality research in two main areas: catalysis and renewable energies. Activities in the catalysis area cover all aspects of this fundamental discipline: homogeneous, heterogeneous and enantioselective catalysis, organocatalysis, photocatalysis, supramolecular catalysis, the development of new ligands and catalysts and innovative catalytic processes, the elucidation of catalytic mechanisms and the design and simulation of catalytic reactors.

The research in the field of renewable energies focuses on the generation of hydrogen from water through sustainable processes, the development of more efficient photovoltaic devices and the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> into liquid fuels and feedstock for the chemical industry.

ICIQ has been awarded the Severo Ochoa Center of Excellence Accreditation for the 2014-2018 and 2020-2024 periods. This award, promoted by the Government of Spain, recognizes excellence at the highest international level in terms of research, human resources, training, technology transfer, and international leadership.

Furthermore, ICIQ is part of CERCA Institute (Research Centres of Catalonia) and also is one of the seven Catalan research centres of excellence of The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology (BIST), the leading institution of multidisciplinary research in Catalonia.

ICIQ provides an excellent research environment and culture that attracts the best talent worldwide, which contributes to achieving outstanding results in our research lines.

For further information please visit: <http://www.iciq.org>

## 2. Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

### Introduction

ICIQ is fully committed to the principles of the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#). In February 2011, ICIQ signed the Declaration of Commitment to the Charter & Code, and since then has been implementing actions in this direction to better comply with these principles.

In August 2017, ICIQ was awarded the HR Excellence in Research stamp by the European Commission. Following the guidelines issued by the European Commission, ICIQ performed an internal gap analysis comparing the existing institutional rules and practices with the 40 principles of the Charter & Code. From this internal gap analysis, an Action Plan was designed with the aim of bridging the main gaps between ICIQ practices and Charter & Code principles. Both, the Internal Analysis and the Action Plan were drawn up considering the contributions of all ICIQ employees, especially scientific staff. The process was led by the ICIQ Human Resources Unit, through its manager, together with the ICIQ Social Involvement Committee (hereinafter SIC). The SIC was an ICIQ working group composed of 10 representatives from all ICIQ staff, both scientists and non-scientists. It had two representatives for each one of the five personnel areas: research group leaders, postdoctoral researchers, predoctoral researchers, research support technicians, and administrative staff. The SIC disappeared in November 2018 when the ICIQ Workers' Committee came into being.

During the year 2019, a new working group was created in order to monitor the HRS4R plan. This working group has been responsible for the Internal Review of the HRS4R and the creation of the Action Plan 2020-2023.

The internal review was undertaken using the following approaches: a survey of the entire ICIQ community, a focus group and meetings with the Administrative Director. As a result of this review process, we generated an Action Plan consisting of 16 actions to be implemented from 2020 to 2023.

ICIQ truly believes that obtaining the HRS4R award strongly contributes to providing an excellent research environment that attracts the best researchers worldwide to the Institute. ICIQ will face the renewal phase and has elaborate a new Action Plan for the 2023-2026 period.

### **3. Preparation of the HRS4R Action Plan 2023-2026**

#### **Gap analysis**

The coordination of the renewal phase was orchestrated by the People Unit in collaboration with the rest of the Monitoring and Working Committee, and with the ICIQ Management approval.

The main objective of this process was identifying the Gap Analyses and formulating the new Action Plan for the coming years. The overall process adhered to a highly participatory approach in line with the philosophy of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). The entire ICIQ community, including research and administrative staff, was invited to contribute, with particular emphasis on the involvement of the research community and counting with the engagement of the Administrative Director.

The Monitoring and Working Committee was renewed in 2023. The composition of the new Monitoring and Working Committee reflects the institutional representation, with a particular focus on adequately representing the Research area. The participants

encompassed a diverse and inclusive array of roles: PhD, Postdoctoral researchers, Group Scientific Coordinator, Group Leader (GL), Core facilities technicians, Management staff and members of the Works Council. The gender distribution within the Monitoring and Working Committee, in terms of gender balance comprising seven female and three male members.

In the preliminary phase, a comprehensive survey was disseminated to the entire community. This internal survey consisted of 52 questions, covering the four dimensions: Ethics, Recruitment, Working Conditions and Training and Development. The survey collected responses from a broad range of staff, with 109 participants, 74% of whom were from the Research Area. The survey, conducted via Google Forms, used a variety of question formats, including open-ended questions, rating scales and dichotomous questions. Respondents were granted anonymity, with the option to refrain from answering questions that were not applicable to their specific circumstances, ensuring that the entire ICIQ community was included and that responses were representative. The Monitoring and Working Committee invited management to participate in the survey, but for the analysis of the results it was decided to do three analyses: the whole community, researchers and management.

In addition, we facilitated a Focus Group, orchestrated and guided by the Working Group. This collaborative session brought together staff in a variety of professional roles at ICIQ, with a notable concentration from the Research Area (86% of staff was from Research), including PhD, Postdoctoral researchers, GL's and also some representation of the KTT area. In addition, there were 3 people from the management area. The focus group had a total of 21 participants, all of whom actively participated in the discussions throughout the session, delving into the nuances of the four pillars. Each pillar was effectively facilitated by two members of the Monitoring and Working Committee.

The steps of the process were:

1. The Monitoring and Working Committee underwent a complete renewal, with all new members voluntarily joining in 2023.
2. The objectives, the methodology, and the main roles and responsibilities were discussed within the Monitoring and Working Committee.
3. A kick-off event took place with a communication email sent to all the ICIQ Community to inform them about the significance of the award and the importance of participation, with special emphasis to the Research Community.
4. The Internal Survey was launched, marked by an active dissemination campaign employing various channels such as mailing, newsletters, and posters to encourage widespread participation.
5. Working session with the Monitoring and Working Committee to analyze the results of the survey, the report written by EC Assessors in August 2020, and to prepare the Focus Group.
6. A Focus Groups was organized.
7. Working session with the Monitoring and Working Committee to analyses the results of the focus group and the internal survey to dissect the outcomes of both the Focus Group and the internal survey.

The OTM-R checklist was reviewed and update in parallel with the support of the Recruitment Selection Commission. The Commission is formed by two members of the Working session with the Monitoring and Working Committee and the Talent Officer and People Manager.

At the end of the Gap Analysis process, the Action Plan for the next 3 years was agreed by the Monitoring and Working Committee and approved by the ICIQ Management.

The new Action Plan 2023-2026 will give emphasis to the development of the following aspects:

- **Ethics:** Open Science and ongoing improvement of Good Practices in Research as it is part of values.
- **Recruitment and Selection:** Concrete guidelines about the selection criteria for PhD and postdoctoral researchers and the systematic use of E-recruitment tool. Increase attraction to recruit the best talent and improve candidate experience.
- **Working conditions.** Continuous improvement of the research environment by fostering a supportive, respectful, equitable, inclusive, stimulating and a safe environment, through greater integration of the preventive mindset at every organizational level. At the same time, our goal is to further enhance the well-being of our employees.
- **Training:** Career development for our researchers and professional growth through mentoring for PhDs and others development programs for Research.

## 4. Implementation of the actions

The coordination of the implementation and monitorization will be orchestrated by the People Unit in collaboration with the Monitoring and Working Committee and with the follow up of the ICIQ Management.

The HRS4R Monitoring and Working Committee will convene triannual meetings to assess the execution of prescribed initiatives, revise the indicators of success and introduce modifications in the Action Plan if necessary.

Each action specifies the Unit or individuals responsible for its implementation, and we have established indicators aligned with the SMARTS criteria.

The Action Plan has indicators and deliverables and a responsible of the action.

- **Indicators and deliverables:** The Action Plan proposes detailed actions, indicators and deliverables supported by a consistent schedule. If any room for improvement is found during the monitoring, the Action Plan will be updated accordingly.
- **Responsible:** Each action has been assigned to one or several members of the institution.

A new commission on OTM-R will meet once a year (Q4) to analyse the progress of the OTM-R implementation based on KPIs.

Since the process emphasizes continuous improvement, deviations from the proposed plan may occur as part of the ongoing improvement process, also other interesting feedback coming from other accreditations of excellence will be considered to add other actions or redefined them.

## **5. Action Plan**

Based on the results of the focus groups, the survey together with the HRS4R Monitoring and Working Committee, and the approval of the ICIQ Management, the following Action Plan has been defined to be implemented during the period 2023-2026. The actions have been organised according to the four areas of HRS4R: a.- Ethical and Professional Aspects; b.- Recruitment; c.-Working Conditions and Social Security; d.- Training). The Action Plan has been approved by ICIQ Management, and consequently has the Institutional support necessary for its implementation.



## Action plan

Nº	Title of the action	Status	C&C Principle	Metrics	Planned timetable	Lead
<b>Ethical and Professional Aspects</b>						
1	Increase awareness of Research Integrity throughout the research community.	In progress	2 Ethical principles 4 Professional attitude 38 Continuing Professional Development	List of Dissemination actions such as: - Including the Research Integrity policy in the Job Offer. - Maintaining a link to the policy in the Welcome Pack. - Number of documents signed by new employees that have read and understood the policy.	From Q2 2024	ICIQ Director and Research Integrity Committee
2	Additional course in research integrity and good scientific practices for Postdocs based on real-life examples and give continuity to the mandatory course of Research Integrity for PhD's.	New	2 Ethical Principle 4 Professional Attitude 38 Continuing Professional Development	- Program base on real-life cases. - Number of Research Integrity training sessions delivered to Postdocs. - Training on Research Integrity for PhD students in the PhD Training Programme. - Number of participants in Research Integrity sessions, PhD students and Postdocs.	From Q4 2024	Research Integrity Committee & People Unit
3	Creation, Dissemination and Implementation of an institutional Open Science policy	New	1 Research freedom 3 Professional responsibility 7 Good practices in research 8 Dissemination, exploitation of results	-Create the Guidelines or Policy. -Training and Dissemination actions.	From Q2 2024	ICIQ Director/Research Projects & International Collaborations Unit & Open Science Working Group
4	Increase awareness of the equality plan 2024-2027 within ICIQ staff	New	10 Non discrimination 24 Working conditions 27 Gender balance	- Number of dissemination actions performed by the Equality Commission to promote women in Science within the ICIQ Community. - Inform staff through the intranet on the committees available at ICIQ as well as their main objectives and roles. - Documentation and dissemination of the new plan. - Report on specific actions implemented (newsletter).	From Q2 2024	People Unit & Gender Equality commission
5	Increase awareness of diversity within the ICIQ community	New	7. Good practices in research 10. Non discrimination	- Organize at least 2 events on diversity at ICIQ - Number of training actions on diversity. - Number of attendees to the training (s).	From Q2 2024	Communication & Working group
6	Increase awareness of the HRS4R within the ICIQ community	New	4. Professional attitude 7. Good practices in research	- Regularly inform GL's on the progress made on the HRS4R actions (meetings or newsletter)	From Q2 2024	ICIQ Direction & Communication
<b>Recruitment</b>						
7	Review the recruitment procedures to adapt them to OTM-R Recruitment policy: -Train Group Leaders and Hiring Managers in the recruitment and selection process and ensure they follow the established interview guidelines. -Ensure that everyone uses the main functionalities of the E-recruitment tool.	In progress	12 Recruitment 13 Recruitment (Code) 14 Selection (Code) 15 Transparency (Code) 16 Assessing merits (Code) 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18 Recognition of mobility experiences (Code) 19 Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20 Seniority (Code) 21 Post-doctoral appointments (Code) 27 Gender balance	Review the recruitment procedures to adapt them to OTM-R Recruitment policy: - Train Group Leaders and Hiring Managers in the recruitment and selection processes and ensure they follow the established interview guidelines. - Ensure that everyone uses the main functionalities of the E-recruitment tool.	From Q2 2024	People Unit

8	<p><b>Improve candidate experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate candidate accessibility to ICIQ's Career Portal (this is a way of being more transparent and also helps to attract the best talent).</li> <li>-Offer candidates during the recruitment phase the opportunity to contact research group members and obtain first-hand information on the institution and the group.</li> <li>-Improve the induction process by providing the candidate with an action plan (next steps) of the incorporation process, thus, providing support to the candidate every step of the way.</li> </ul>	New	12 Recruitment 13 Recruitment (Code) 14 Selection (Code) 15 Transparency (Code) 16 Assessing merits (Code) 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18 Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19 Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20 Seniority (Code) 21 Post-doctoral appointments (Code) 27 Gender balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a list of actions to improve the candidate experience on the recruitment proces on the E-recruitment tool.</li> <li>- Create a document to give to the new employees with the steps they should follow till incorporation.</li> <li>- Facilitate information to contact other members of the group</li> <li>- Include information on the Job Offer regarding the composition of the Committee and information about the salary.</li> <li>-Create the role of "the Buddy" to improve induction process and reduce the learning curve.</li> </ul>	From Q4 2024	People Unit & Working group
9	<p><b>Provide training/guidelines to people who participate in selection and hiring processes from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective with the purpose of eliminating stereotypes and biases.</b></p>	New	12 Recruitment 13 Recruitment (Code) 14 Selection (Code) 15 Transparency (Code) 16 Assessing merits (Code) 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18 Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19 Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20 Seniority (Code) 21 Post-doctoral appointments (Code) 27 Gender balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of trainings on gender bias for hiring managers.</li> <li>- 75% of hiring managers attend the trainings.</li> <li>- Create guidelines about recruitment and bias.</li> </ul>	From Q3 2024	People Unit & Gender Equality commission
10	<p><b>Develop precise guidelines for ICIQ regarding the recruitment of Postdoc researchers, incorporating the selection criteria to be taken into account throughout the process that incorporate the principles of the Charter &amp; Code.</b></p>	Extended	12 Recruitment 13 Recruitment (Code) 14 Selection (Code) 15 Transparency (Code) 16 Assessing merits (Code) 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18 Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19 Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20 Seniority (Code) 27 Gender balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines approved by Academic committee.</li> <li>- Number of Hiring managers familiar with the document.</li> </ul>	From Q2 2024	People Unit
11	<p><b>Develop precise guidelines for ICIQ regarding the recruitment of PhD researchers, incorporating the selection criteria to be taken into account throughout the process and incorporate the principles of the Charter &amp; Code.</b></p>	Extended	12 Recruitment 13 Recruitment (Code) 14 Selection (Code) 15 Transparency (Code) 16 Assessing merits (Code) 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18 Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19 Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20 Seniority (Code) 21 Post-doctoral appointments (Code) 27 Gender balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines approved by Academic committee.</li> <li>- Number of Hiring managers familiar with the document.</li> </ul>	From Q2 2024	People Unit

12	Create a communication plan to attract talent to increase social media exposure.	New	12 Recruitment 13 Recruitment (Code) 14 Selection (Code) 15 Transparency (Code) 16 Assessing merits (Code) 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18 Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19 Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20 Seniority (Code) 21 Post-doctoral appointments (Code) 27 Gender balance	- Number of videos to give a voice to our employees in order to attract talent. - Number of new channels explored to reach a wider audience.	From 2024	Communications Department & People Unit
<b>Working conditions and social security</b>						
13	Deploy actions for a greater integration of the preventive culture (Health & Safety) at all levels of the organization.	New	6 Accountability 23 Research environment 24 Working conditions	- Ensure a Safety Coordinator is present in each laboratory. Number of Safety coordinators in each laboratory. - Increase the number of safety inspections in research laboratories involving the responsible person in the group and the Prevention Delegates. - Decrease the number of sanctions resulting from non-compliance with safety regulations. - Ensure annual sessions on First Aid and Fire Fighting trainings for new Safety Coordinators and refreshed every 5 years. - Ensure Safety Coordinators raise awareness of safety issues among teams and GLs. Number of actions done and/or description of implemented channels. - Involve the safety coordinators and the GLs in the accident investigation process and provide information about the main tips of accidents happened in the institute to all staff.	From Q2 2024	SHEQ Unit & Safety Coordination
14	Wellbeing & Mental Health Programme with local resources to improve the support of Mental Health and adopt Physical wellbeing measures as well as work-life balance	In progress	24 (Working conditions)	- Programme approved by ICIQ Direction with local resources. - Increase the number of actions related to psychosocial risk assessment - Number of people participating in actions. - Climate Survey every yearly to evaluate the advance on the program	From Q2 2024	SHEQ Unit & People Unit & Work Council & ICIQ Direction
15	Develop a protocol for conflict resolution and dissemination in the ICIQ Community	In progress	10 Non discrimination 34 Complaints / Appeals 36 Relationship with supervisors	- Publish the new protocol for the prevention, detection and management of conflict, unacceptable behaviour and bullying. - Ensure employees are familiar with the document. Numbre of people familiar with the document. - Ensure employees are trained in conflict resolutions. Number of training sessions on conflict resolution for managers - Number of reference personnel identified in the Conflict Resolution Protocol. - Ensures the reference personnel is trained. Number of trainings for the reference personnel.	From Q1 2024	SHEQ Unit & People Unit & Working group
16	Improve the dissemination of internal policies and procedures by enhancing internal communication and the renovation of the current Intranet in order to increase awareness of the different policies. To become acquainted with the different committees	New	23. Research environment 24. Working conditions 27. Gender Balance 34. Complaints/appeals	- New intranet available. - Number of different policies uploaded on the intranet. - List of committees with main responsibilities and contact information very accessible.	From Q3 2025	Communications & ICIQ Direction

17	Launch a program for fostering female talent in LATAM, specially designed to create opportunities for a more equitable and inclusive future.	New	27. Gender Balance	- Launch the program. - Fulfill the number of new female recruits foreseen in the programme.	From Q2 2024	ICIQ Direction & International Chair for Academic Program.
<b>Training</b>						
18	Develop a new in-house Mentoring Program to develop leadership skills for Postdocs (as mentors) and develop mentees in their professional growth (PhD students)	New	28 Career development 36 Relation with Supervisors 38 Continuing Professional Development 39 Access to research training and continuous development 40 Supervision	Mentoring Programme defined and implemented (In-house program). Young researchers (mentee) are appointed with senior ones'. - Create a guide for mentors. - Create a guide for mentees. - Conduct a training session for both mentors and mentees. - Start with a pilot of 15 or 16 matches.	From Q2 2024	People Unit & Academic Committee & ICIQ Direction
19	Create and Design a Training Policy to disseminate to the ICIQ's community.	New	28 Career development 38 Continuing Professional Development 39 Access to research training and continuous development 40 Supervision	- Implementation of the policy. - Actions to disseminate the policy. - 80% of staff knows the policy well (climate survey feedback). - Calendar of trainings/open trainings more visible for staff.	From Q2 2024	People Unit & Direction of the center
20	Consolidate the SHARP PhD Training Programme, a training itinerary that covers the different needs of pre-doctoral students for the 4 years duration of the PhD after first edition.	New	28 Career development 30 Access to career advice 33 Teaching 38 Continuing Professional Development 39 Access to research training and continuous development 40 Supervision	- Obtain feedback from the PhD's and from the suppliers to improve and consolidate the program. Program should: - Ensure the training includes the development of skills needed for PhD students at ICIQ. - Ensure the training includes information regarding our main policies. - Assure that it includes a module of careers paths	From Q1 2024	Communications & Academic Committee & People Unit
21	Create a Postdoc Training Programme	New	28 Career development 30 Access to career advice 38 Continuing Professional Development 39 Access to research training and continuous development 40 Supervision	- Create the program - After first edition, obtain feedback from the Postdocs and from the suppliers to improve and consolidate the program. Program should: - Ensure that it includes the development of skills needed for the Postdocs. - Ensure that it includes information regarding our main policies. - Ensure that it includes a module of careers paths	From Q1 2025	Communications & Academic Committee & People Unit
22	Create a pilot of online open training repository on the intranet.	New	28 Career development 38 Continuing Professional Development 39 Access to research training and continuous development	- Establish a series of modules. Number of resources online. - Number of employees who use those resources online.	From Q3 2025	Communication & Working group