

REPORT
OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON
**‘SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR
RESEARCHERS – HRS4R’**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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‘SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS – HRS4R’

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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared for the European Commission by the Expert Group on ‘Shaping the future of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers’. The report, which has been prepared as a first step and as an internal document, proposes a revised process for Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) wishing to implement the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). Implementation of the proposals in the report by the European Commission will result in significant enhancement and strengthening of the HRS4R¹ and the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers².

Between 2010 and the present date, over 240 organisations have received the HRS4R award. This represents a significant momentum in the development of the European Research Area (ERA) and demonstrates the participating organisations’ commitment to support the development of researchers and research career structures. More work needs to be done to increase the number and geographic spread of organisations demonstrably implementing quality HRS4R processes. Lessons must be learned from organisations that have already engaged in this process. What has worked well? What weaknesses can be identified in the current process? What improvements are necessary? What changes should be made to ensure the HRS4R process is an effective and efficient tool that enables organisations to implement the principles of the Charter and Code. How can the quality of these processes be appraised? What represents best practice in comparable organisational development processes? These were the concerns of the Expert Group.

The revised HRS4R implementation process describes a strengthened procedure of organisational implementation and review, supported by continuous external peer assessment, sponsored by the European Commission.

For participating organisations, the strengthened process includes a more in-depth and comprehensive implementation of the HRS4R. An organisational Gap Analysis and Action Plan remain a central part of this process. In addition, organisations are required to reflect on and provide evidence of their ongoing development and improved quality under core thematic areas of the European Charter and Code culminating in a narrative or descriptive text of the ‘state of play’ in key areas central to researcher and research career development. Furthermore, organisations are required to demonstrate activities to ensure the HRS4R is ‘mainstreamed’ in their organisation.

This model is driven by a clear, transparent & robust assessment which allows for an appraisal of the quality of the organisation’s HRS4R activity. The continuous organisational review and the external peer assessment creates a dialogue through which both parties can gauge the level of continuous improvement and progress. The review/assessment process facilitates a more robust and comprehensive exchange between the organisation and the European Commission via external peer review experts.

In recognition of the primacy of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTMR) of researchers in the development of the ERA, the revised HRS4R supports organisations to ensure they are aligned to best practice by emphasising OTMR as a key component of the HRS4R process. The strengthened HRS4R process provides an OTMR toolkit as part of the revised Gap Analysis Template. Indeed, the strengthened HRS4R introduces standardised templates for participating organisations and peer assessment panels to ensure necessary information is captured, to ensure minimum

¹ [COM(2008)317 final]. http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/hrs4r/Paper_on_the_HR_Strategy_for_Researchers.pdf

² [11 March 2005 – C(2005) 576 final].

standards in the approach and to provide consistency and standardisation as well as feedback to the participating organisations.

The revised HRS4R articulates the conditions for maintaining and losing the HRS4R award. It provides clarity on what happens after step 5 of the current HRS4R model: a cyclical approach of review, assessment and continuous progress towards improved quality.

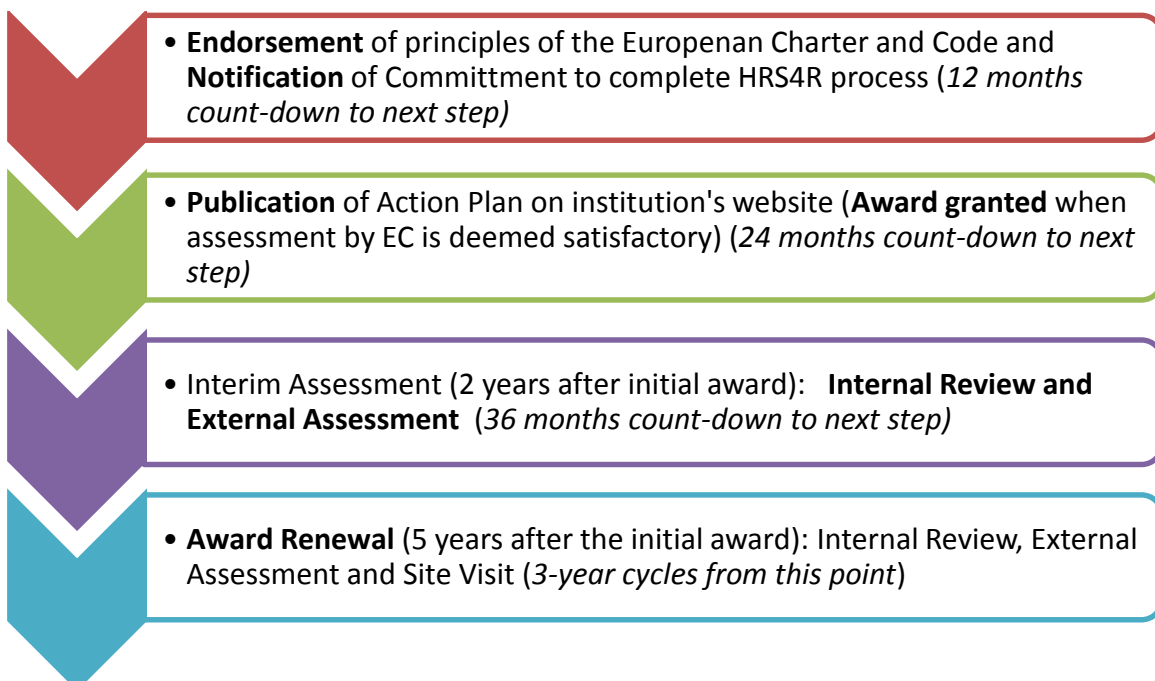
Organisations wishing to embark on the HRS4R implementation process for the first time are provided with a clear roadmap for implementation. Organisations currently engaged in the process, whether they are seeking the Award for the first time or have received the Award and are approaching one of the review stages under the current HRS4R model, can easily assimilate into the new strengthened model at the appropriate transition point.

Introducing the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) supports Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organisations (RFOs), hereafter called 'organisations', in the implementation of the principles of the Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (the Charter and Code) in their policies and practices. The concrete implementation of the Charter and Code by RPOs and RFOs renders them more attractive to researchers looking for their first or new employer or for a host for their research project. Research Funding Organisations implementing the Charter and Code principles will contribute to the attractiveness of their national research systems and to the attractiveness of the European Research Area. The HRS4R award identifies organisations as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favourable working environment. The European Research Area (ERA) Roadmap specifically quotes the HRS4R under its 3rd Priority, saying 'Research Performing Organisations in turn should be encouraged to participate in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and to review their current recruitment processes in a reflective and self-critical way, amending them where necessary to improve their openness and transparency as benchmarked against the Charter and Code.'

In addition, implementing the HRS4R can demonstrate that the organisation is actively working towards the requirements of Article 32 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement³. However, the Commission services might still verify compliance with this obligation when monitoring project implementation under Horizon 2020.

Implementing the strengthened HRS4R



³ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf

The Initial Phase – Endorsement of the C&C and Notification of Commitment

Endorsement of the principles of the Charter and Code and Notification of commitment to implement the HRS4R process

Prior to implementing the HRS4R process, organisations must formally **endorse** the principles of the Charter and Code by notifying the EURAXESS Rights Team. This notification must issue from the Rector/ President or other senior level position such as the Vice President for Research, or other person who has the legal authority to make a commitment on behalf of their organisation.

Organisations must then **notify** the European Commission of their intention to implement the HRS4R process. As above, this notification must issue from the Rector/ President or other senior level position such as the Vice President for Research, or other person who has the legal authority to make a commitment on behalf of their organisation.

Ideally endorsement of the C&C and the intention to implement the HRS4R process should both be notified in the same letter. Organisations should note that it is implementation of the HRS4R process that can demonstrate that the organisation is complying with the requirements of Article 32 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement – endorsement of the C&C alone is not sufficient.

Implementation Phase – Gap Analysis, Publication and Submission of the Action Plan

The Gap Analysis - (Process)

To support the Gap Analysis and Action Plan process, the European Commission provides a **Gap Analysis Template** [Template 1] and an **Action Plan Template** [Template 2] which are used for this exercise. These are standard documents and the only documents used for this part of the process. This kind of standardization allows for comparative analysis and is expected to provide a rich source of data for subsequent analyses and statistics⁴. These data may be useful, in particular, for monitoring progress along the European Research Area Roadmap.

Within twelve months of the notification to implement the HRS4R process, a completed **Gap Analysis and consequent Action Plan must be submitted** to the European Commission for an **initial assessment**. At the time of submission, the Action Plan must be published, in English, in a prominent part of the organisation's website such as the organisation home page, recruitment portal and/or research office page. The Action Plan should be clearly visible to researchers internally and externally.

The initial assessment is based on the exercise carried out by the applicant organisation to identify gaps between their current policies and practices versus the 40 principles of the Charter and Code (see detail in the Implementation Phase below) (i.e. Gap Analysis). The initial assessment seeks to gauge the appropriateness and quality of the actions proposed in the Action Plan. There are three possible outcomes of this assessment: acceptance, acceptance pending minor modifications and rejection. In the latter case, the applicant must make a new submission within 12 months for a new

⁴ By submitting these data, organisations accept the use of this data by the relevant Commission services

Assessment process. If accepted, the HRS4R award is granted and the organisation can use the HRS4R award to publicise its commitment to continuous improvement, aligned to the Charter and Code. The Award is granted to the organisation for five years. An organisation that has received the HRS4R award is considered as fulfilling its 'obligation to take measures to implement the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers' in full compliance with Article 32 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement.

Once an organisation has endorsed the Charter and Code and has notified its commitment to implement the HRS4R process, it must complete a **Gap Analysis**. While the manner in which this is completed is flexible (and should be designed in the most appropriate fashion for the individual organisation), it must include the following

- The organisation *must* set up a committee or working group to oversee the Gap Analysis
- The committee or working group *must* be sponsored by the Rector/ President or other senior level position such as the Vice President for Research, Director of Human Resources, etc.
- The organisation *must* take into consideration the views and needs of a wide range of stakeholders within the organisation including, but not limited to, a variety of management departments, and *must* include researchers: i.e. the group can be led by a single unit but must have representation from a number of units and include researchers at each stage of the research career (R1 to R4⁵). Besides, researchers at large *must* be consulted regardless to the means (by way of survey, workshops, for example)
- Organisations may choose to include external stakeholders to enhance the process. The range of stakeholders should be indicated in the document (i.e. a description of the range of stakeholders that contributed to the process)
- Organisations must explain the internal process and methodology used to carry out the Gap Analysis
- Where a national or regional Gap Analysis exists (e.g. identifying the impact of certain legislation), organisations can draw on this analysis. This analysis can be carried out periodically and collectively for all organisations in a given region or country.

The Gap Analysis - (Content)

Organisations must address each of the 40 principles of the Charter and Code under the document's 4 thematic headings

1. Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R)⁶
2. Ethical and Professional aspects
3. Working Conditions and Social Security
4. Training and Development

Organisations must state whether they are already fulfilling some of/all the principles and, if so, provide evidence of how this is the case (e.g. links to policies, examples of programmes, examples of supports in place)

- Whether aspects of the national or local legislative environment support or constrain the implementation of a principle

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

⁶ ERA PRIORITY 3 - AN OPEN LABOUR MARKET FOR RESEARCHERS includes "Using open, transparent and merit based recruitment practices with regard to research positions" as the top action priority identified through Member State consultations within the ERA Roadmap. ERA Roadmap, 2015: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1208-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

The gap analysis should clearly underline the existing gaps in relation to the 40 principles otherwise it is not possible to see the coherence with the subsequent action plan. Most importantly, the existing gaps should be described and actions outlined to fill these gaps must be included. There must be a coherent link between the Gap Analysis and the Action Plan.

A specific section of the Gap Analysis must be dedicated to the organisation's policies and practices in relation to Open Transparent and Merit Based Recruitment and a toolkit has been developed to support this⁷ (see Template 1: Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment Check-list).

The Action Plan

The organisations' Action Plan stems directly from the Gap Analysis and is comprised of a number of component parts (1) Overview (2) Charter and Code Themes (3) Actions (4) Embedding the HRS4R process. A template, which includes the above-mentioned sections, is provided for the completion of the Action Plan [Template 2]. The Action Plan must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

(1) Overview

The Action Plan must contain a (1 page) overview of the organisation including data on staff/ research numbers, remit/ function, scale, structure.

(2) Charter and Code Themes

The 40 principles assessed in the Gap Analysis span the 4 thematic areas of the C&C (Open, Transparent and Merit –based Recruitment (OTM-R); Ethical and Professional aspects; Working Conditions and Social Security; Training and Development). Organisations must describe the 'state of play' under these headings. Organisations must make a statement on their view of how they are performing in terms of the broader headings (as outlined above) i.e. the quality of their delivery on these topics. This narrative, which must be included in the Action Plan, is required to highlight the strategic priorities and emerging themes from the gap analysis. In the case of OTM-R a specific toolkit is provided to support the completion of this part of the Gap Analysis.

(3) Actions where feasible

The Action Plan should specify actions that overcome existing gaps, indicate ownership and responsibility of these and a timeframe for implementation i.e. actions must be time-bound and assigned to a specific department **and specific person/role** within the organisation. The timeline should cover at least 2 years up to the first internal review.

- Action Plans must reflect a balance between short-term interventions (such as putting on a workshop) and long-term systemic actions that bring about culture change;
- Actions must include indicators and/or targets for success that underpin the quality of the outputs and outcomes;
- Quantitative targets must also be included in the Action Plan where appropriate and relevant (a quantitative report about the present position and planned improvements).

(4) Embedding the HRS4R process

This section must provide evidence of how the thrust of the Charter and Code and the implementation of the HRS4R are being embedded into the organisation. That is, the Action Plan

⁷ Placeholder for reference to OTM-R report

must include information on how the HRS4R will be coordinated and embedded in the organisation through, for example, working groups, alignment with internal mechanisms such as Quality Assurance processes, and/or HR policies, inclusion in TORs of committees, boards, etc. (this list is suggestive and not exhaustive).

Publication and submission of HRS4R

Once organisations have completed their Gap Analysis and Action Plan they must take two final steps:

- publish the Action Plan on an easily accessible part of their website and
- submit Action Plan and associated Gap Analysis, in English, to the European Commission for assessment

Initial Assessment by the European Commission via External Assessment Panel

Description of assessment process

The European Commission establishes an **External Assessment Panel** which reviews the Gap Analysis and Action Plan as provided by e-mail and published on the organisation's website. There are clear terms of reference for the panel of assessors who report to the Commission. Broadly speaking, the **External Assessment Panel** is looking for coherence between the Gap Analysis and Action Plan (i.e. appropriateness and quality of the proposed actions). The criteria for this assessment, which are made known to the applicant organisations at the beginning of the process stem directly from the requirements of the Gap Analysis and Action Plan.

These criteria are that:

1. there is a sufficient and clear **overview** of the organisation
2. there is clear, detailed and comprehensive explanatory text (i.e. **narrative**) on the state of play of the four **thematic areas** of the Charter and Code at the organisation
3. there are **Actions** for the implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code
4. there are **examples** of how the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan and the Charter and Code are being further **embedded** in the organisation.

The external experts are required to duly fill and sign template A which serves to structure their individual feed-back. Each application being assessed by 3 independent external experts leads to 3 individual assessment reports which will be summarised and synthesised by the lead assessor who fills template B which is used to give a sound feed-back to the applicant organisation. Should discrepancies appear among the individual assessments the lead assessor will convene a 'virtual' consensus meeting to come up with a sound consensus report for feed-back to the applicant organisation.

Strengths and weaknesses, as well as recommendations are noted by the external Assessment Panel and shared in the consensus report. Where necessary, and on the basis of the external Assessment Panel's report, the external Assessment Panel suggest alterations to the Action Plan via dialogue and iterations of the Action Plan as described below.

Outcomes of the Assessment

Accepted

The organisation meets the criteria and the HRS4R award is granted by the European Commission. The panel may comment on the submission asking for future focus on a particular aspect/criterion, if appropriate. For example, they may say that they would like to see something addressed in the longer term, but acknowledge that the submission meets the criteria for the Award.

Once awarded, organisations are allowed to publish the 'HRS4R award' on their website. The organisations are then expected to implement and monitor the proposed actions before the next milestone in the process, which is two years after receipt of the 'HRS4R award'.

Accepted pending minor alterations

The organisation broadly meets the criteria for the Award but the external Assessment Panel has some concerns/questions about specific areas/criteria, in which case the organisation should reflect on the feedback, update the documentation and revert to the Commission, ideally, within 1 month. To this end, the Commission shares the External Assessment Panel's Consensus Report with applicant the organisation.

Declined pending (major) revisions

The organisation does not meet the criteria and the granting of the Award is put on hold until the next submission deadline, so the organisation can make the appropriate changes. When these are implemented and positively assessed under a new external assessment the Award is granted. To this end, the Commission shares the External Assessment Panel's Consensus with applicant the organisation.

Interim Assessment: Internal Review and External Assessment

This Interim assessment stage is two-fold: the Internal Review is performed by the organisation while the External Assessment is carried out by the European Commission via the panel of peer reviewers.

Two years after the initial HRS4R award is granted to an organisation, **progress and quality** of the actions and accompanying measures (such as embedding the HRS4R process for example) are assessed. In preparation for this External Assessment, the organisation must submit an Internal Review of how its Action Plan has been implemented to the European Commission. As mentioned, the purpose of this Interim Internal Review and External Assessment is two-fold. One the one hand, it allows the participating organisation to reflect and document progress and alter actions and their timing if necessary and it allows the organisation the opportunity to create new actions. On the other hand, the Interim Review and External Assessment allow the European Commission the opportunity to engage with the organisation on aspects of their work under the Action Plan. The outcome of the Internal Review is submitted to the Commission and must include a revised Action Plan for the remainder of the five years of the Award.

At this point of Interim Internal Review and External Assessment, the participating organisation does not jeopardise maintaining the HRS4R award. The outcome of the Interim Review and Assessment will fall under 1 of 3 headings:

1. The organisation is progressing with appropriate and improved quality actions as described in its Action Plan. There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded into the organisation's policies, routines and organisational structures. Therefore, the organisation receives an encouragement to continue along the path it has undertaken.

2. The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded into the organisation's policies, routines and organisational structures. Therefore, the organisation is encouraged to undertake some 'corrective actions' to improve an already sufficient performance.
3. The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded into the organisation's policies, routines and organisational structures. Therefore, the organisation is warned that, unless it takes strong corrective actions, it seriously risks not progressing through the subsequent external assessment and losing the right to use the HRS4R award.

Whereas the initial HRS4R award reflects an organisation's commitment to implement their own Action Plan to fulfil the principles of the Charter and Code, this Interim Review and External Assessment reflects the quality of the organisation's implementation of the HRS4R and associated developments and progress, such as fully integrating the HRS4R process within the organisation. These quality processes must be supported by evidence of better quality outcomes. The external assessment is intended to provide an appraisal of this quality improvement. The next milestone occurs three years after the Interim Review and External Assessment, i.e. five years after the initial Award: this is the Award Renewal and Site visit.

The Interim Review and External Assessment: Process Summary

- Within **two years of the Award being granted**, organisations carry out an **Internal Review** of actions and submit to the Commission this appraisal of progress and a renewed and enhanced Action Plan for the future.
- A template [Template 3] is used to support this process (in practice, this is almost identical to Template 2, adapted to look at progress made and plans for the future).
- The criteria for the two-year **External Assessment** modified from those made known to the applicant organisations at the beginning of the process and the panel members undertake the External Assessment against these, i.e. relative progress against the 4 thematic areas of the C&C.
- These **criteria** are that:
 1. there is a sufficient and clear **overview** of the organisation
 2. there is clear, detailed and comprehensive explanatory text (i.e. **narrative**) on the state of play of the four **thematic areas** of the Charter and Code at the organisation
 3. there is specific and satisfactory **progress** since the initial assessment.
 4. there are **actions** for the implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code within the next three years
 5. there are **examples** of how the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan and the Charter and Code are being further integrated into the organisation into the organisation's routines.
- In line with the original Action Plan, the two-year internal review must address: progress against proposed actions, indicators and targets for success, an overview of progress against the Charter and Code Themes, evidence of how the HRS4R process has been embedded. This

review is submitted to the Commission and published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

- The Assessment is carried out remotely by a team of three assessors aided by Template B
- The Assessors complete a single report returned to the Commission. This report will be given as feedback to the organisation.
- After the two-year review and assessment, organisations implement and monitor the proposed actions according to an enhanced Action Plan incorporating feedback from the assessment.

The Award Renewal Phase (5 years after initial HRS4R award)

Desk-based assessment and Site Visit

Five years after the initial HRS4R award, and three years after the Interim Internal Review and External Assessment, organisations must submit to the European Commission an internal review of how their Action Plan has progressed. This internal review is assessed by an external panel of expert peer reviewers appointed by the European Commission through desk based assessment, **followed by a site visit.**

A successful external assessment allows the participating organisation to retain the HRS4R award. In cases where the quality and appropriateness of the actions are deemed to be less than satisfactory, and/or where the implementation of the HRS4R is deemed not to be broad, deep and well integrated into the organisation, continued use of the HRS4R award will not be permitted. In this case, the organisation can re-apply for a desk-based assessment and site visit after a minimum of 2 years based on a revised Gap Analysis and Action Plan.

Description of activities at the Award Renewal: Desk-based assessment and Site Visit

- Now five years after the initial HRS4R award, organisations must carry out a second **Internal Review** of progress of the HRS4R process and submit this to the Commission with a **renewed Action Plan** for the future.
- Such reviews must be comprehensive in their scope and participation in these reviews must include a broad range of stakeholders within the organisation including researchers.
- The revised actions are published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website. Ideally this section of the website would also contain the organisation's OTMR policy.
- The template used at the two year stage [Template 3] is used again to support this process.
- The criteria for this review are essentially the same as those used at the interim review.
- These **criteria** are that:
 1. there is a sufficient and clear **overview** of the organisation
 2. there is clear, detailed and comprehensive explanatory text (i.e. **narrative**) on the state of play of the four **thematic areas** of the Charter and Code at the organisation
 3. there is specific and satisfactory **progress** since the previous review.
 4. there are **actions** for the implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code within the next three years
 5. there are **examples** of how the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan and the Charter and Code are being further integrated into the organisation into the organisation's routines.
- The Internal Review documentation is reviewed by the External Assessment Panel.

- External Assessment Panels are comprised of at least three assessors (Lead reviewer and two others) who are peer reviewers with expertise in the HRS4R and organisational review processes.
- Each submission is reviewed by against the criteria set out for the assessment.
- In line with the two-year review of the Action Plan, the five-year review must address: progress against proposed actions, indicators and targets for success, an overview of progress against the Charter and Code Themes, evidence of how the HRS4R process has been embedded.
- At this stage, organisations are again assessed by desk-based **External Assessment** followed by a site visit.
- Assessors must follow a template (Template C to support the process of desk-based research and site visit research) and must deliver a single, combined report to the Commission which is forwarded to the organisation. The feedback contained within the report helps guide the development of future actions within the organisation.

The External Assessment comprises a number of steps:

1. Each panel member reviews the organisation's documentation and completes a preliminary review template report
2. This is circulated between the three assessors at least one month in advance of the site visit.
3. Assessors meet to discuss and plan the site visit the day before the meeting (if practicable) or by conference call/ Skype
4. The site visit lasts one day and there are minimum requirements established
5. The panel must meet key stakeholders including researchers, management and practitioners
6. The panel holds a debriefing session either in person (if practicable) or by conference call/ Skype to reflect on and discuss the site visit.
7. A report is submitted to the Commission within one week of the site visit
8. The report submitted is based on the [Template C] and recommends 1 of the 3 options available to assessors during assessments of organisations:
 1. **Accepted:** The organisation is progressing with appropriate and improved good quality actions as described in its Action Plan. There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded into the organisation's policies, practices and organisational structures.
 2. **Accepted pending minor alterations:** The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded into the organisation's policies, practices and organisational structures.
 3. **No further use permitted - major revisions required:** The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded into the organisation's policies, practices and organisational structures.

Maintaining the HRS4R award (i.e. updating it) relies on the judgement of the assessors.

Continuous improvement and enhanced quality and assessment Phases – a three yearly cycle of renewal

Central to the strengthened HRS4R process, is the dynamic of internal review of progress and the external assessment of this progress. This allows for the independent peer review experts to form a judgement on the quality of the actions to support the implementation of the principles of the European Charter and Code and to provide feedback to the organisations.

For organisations that successfully complete the Award Renewal and Site Visit, **the Award is renewed on a three year cycle**, subject to a process of internal organisational review accompanied by external assessment and site visit. Once the Award is renewed, organisations update their website and implement and monitor proposed actions.

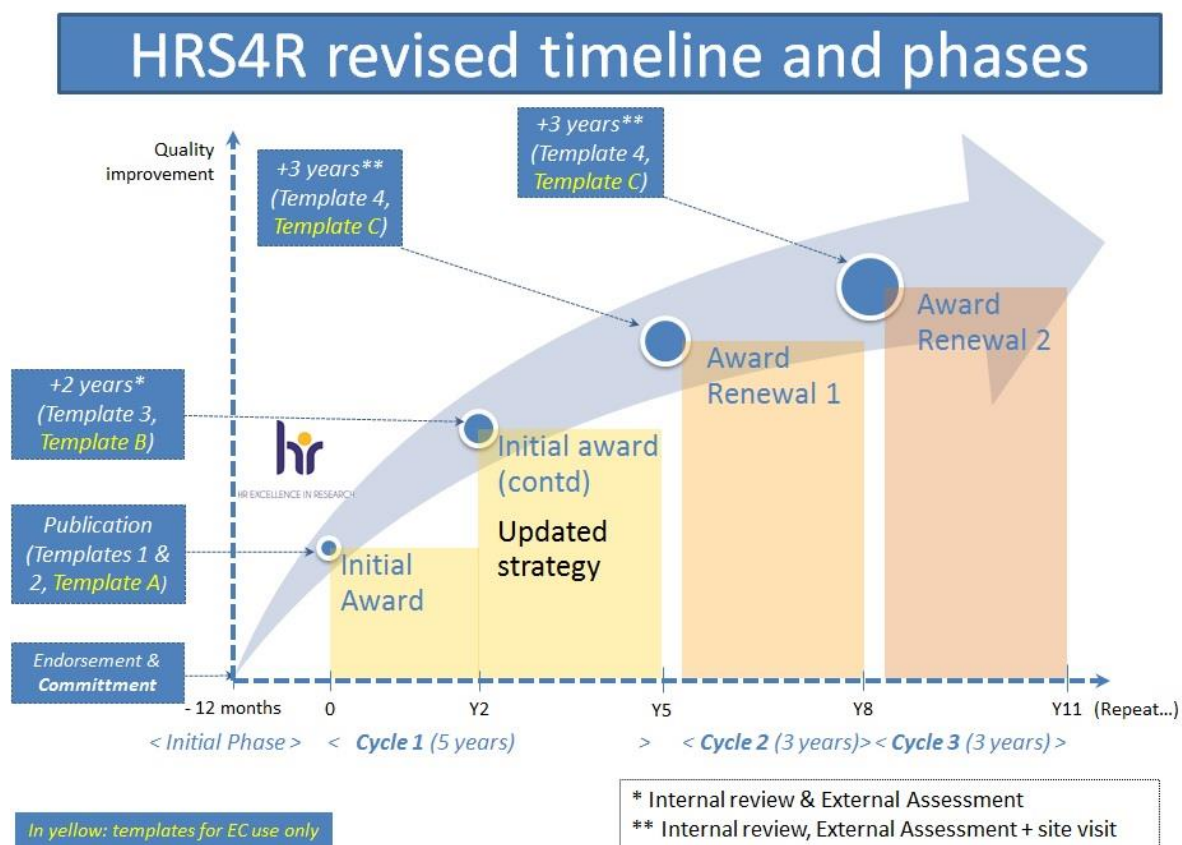
Within **three years** of the most recent Award renewal, organisations must repeat the **Internal Review** of actions and submit it to the Commission together with a renewed Action Plan for the future with a view to an **External Assessment and site visit** [Template 3].

These **criteria** for each review cycle are the same as for the Award Renewal Phase (5 years after initial HRS4R award namely that:

1. there is a sufficient and clear **overview** of the organisation
2. there is clear, detailed and comprehensive explanatory text (i.e. **narrative**) on the state of play of the four **thematic areas** of the Charter and Code at the organisation
3. there is specific and satisfactory **progress** since the previous review.
4. there are **actions** for the implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code within the next three years
5. there are **examples** of how the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan and the Charter and Code are being further integrated into the organisation into the organisation's routines.

This dynamic of continuous review and assessment allows for an ongoing **dialogue** between the organisations and expert peer review panels. The organisations' can demonstrate their drive to develop and embed research support systems in line with the principles of the European Charter and Code. The cyclic renewal of the HRS4R award allows for the opportunity to demonstrate not only the continued progress in the actions but also the **enhanced quality** of the actions spanning lifecycle of robust OTM-R through to appropriate and meaningful researcher support training and career development.

HRS4R Timeline and Phases



Summary table for templates used for the HRS4R process

Step of the HRS4R process	Templates for candidate organisation	Templates For EC
Endorsement	Notification to the EC	Acknowledgement of receipt
Notification		Send Template 1 & 2
Gap Analysis and Action Plan	Template 1 & 2 completed	Template A
Interim stage	Template 3	Template B
Award Renewal	Template 3	Template C

TEMPLATE 1: GAP ANALYSIS

Name Organisation under review:

Organisation's contact details:

SUBMISSION DATE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

DATE ENDORSEMENT CHARTER AND CODE

Please provide the date when your organisation officially endorsed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

PROCESS (MAX. 300 WORDS)

The HRS4R process must engage all management departments directly or indirectly responsible for researchers' HR-issues.⁸ These will typically include the Vice-Rector for Research, the Head of Personnel, and other administrative staff members. In addition, the HRS4R strategy must consult its stakeholders and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from R1 to R4⁹, as well as appoint a Committee overseeing the process and a Working Group responsible for implementing the process.

Please provide evidence of how the above groups were involved in the GAP-analysis: e.g. names, meeting dates, or consultation format. In addition, indicate how the Committee and Working Group are composed.

GAP ANALYSIS

The Charter and Code provides the basis for the Gap analysis. In order to aid cohesion, the 40 articles have been renumbered under the following headings. Please provide the outcome of your organisation's GAP analysis below. If your organisation currently does not fully meet the criteria, please list whether national or organisational legislation may be limiting the Charter's implementation, initiatives that have already been taken to improve the situation, or new proposals that could remedy the current situation. In order to aid the organisation's recruitment strategy, a specific self-assessment checklist is provided for Open, Transparent and Merit-Based recruitment.

⁸ The term 'human resources' is used in the largest possible sense, to include all researchers (Frascati definition) disregarding the profile, career 'level', type of contract etc. etc.

⁹ For a description of R1-R4, please see

http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers : GAP analysis overview

Status: to what extent does this organisation meet the following principles?	+= fully implemented +/- = almost but not fully implemented -/+ = partially implemented - = insufficiently implemented	In case of -, -/+, or +/-, please indicate the actual “gap” between the principle and the current practice in your organisation. If relevant, please list any national/regional legislation or organisational regulation currently impeding implementation	Initiatives already undertaken and/or suggestions for improvement
Ethical and Professional Aspects			
1. Research freedom			
2. Ethical principles			
3. Professional responsibility			
4. Professional attitude			
5. Contractual and legal obligations			

6. Accountability			
7. Good practice in research			
8. Dissemination, exploitation of results			
9. Public engagement			
10. Non discrimination			
11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems			
Recruitment and Selection – please be aware that the items listed here correspond with the Charter and Code. In addition , your organisation also needs to complete the checklist on Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment included below, which focuses on the operationalization of these principles.			
12. Recruitment			
13. Recruitment (Code)			
14. Selection (Code)			
15. Transparency (Code)			
16. Judging merit (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. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)			
Working Conditions and Social Security			
22. Recognition of the profession			
23. Research environment			
24. Working conditions			
25. Stability and permanence of employment			
26. Funding and salaries			
27. Gender balance			

28. Career development			
29. Value of mobility			
30. Access to career advice			
31. Intellectual Property Rights			
32. Co-authorship			
33. Teaching			
34. Complains/ appeals			
35. Participation in decision-making bodies			
Training and Development			
36. Relation with supervisors			
37. Supervision and managerial duties			
38. Continuing Professional Development			

39. Access to research training and continuous development			
40. Supervision			
Any additional issues			

Template 1 – Annex: Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment Check-list *OTM-R Checklist for organisations*

	Open	Transpa- rent	Merit- based	Answer: ++ Yes, completely +/-Yes, substantially -/+ Yes, partially -- No	Suggested indicators (or form of measurement)
OTM-R system					
1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and in English)?	x	x	x		[weblink]
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x		[Date of latest update; ensure that it is sent to all staff]
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x		- Existence of training programmes for OTM-R - Number of staff following training in OTM-R
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x			Web-based tool for (all) the stages in the recruitment process
5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	x	x	x		
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	x	x	x		Trend in the share of applicants from outside the organisation
7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	x	x	x		Trend in the share of applicants from abroad
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	x	x	x		Trend in the share of applicants among underrepresented groups (frequently women)
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	x	x	x		Trend in the share of applicants from outside the organisation
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?					
Advertising and application phase					
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x			
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit? [see Chapter 4.4.1 a)]	x	x			

13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	x	x			- The share of job adverts posted on EURAXESS; - Trend in the share of applicants recruited from outside the organisation/abroad
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	x	x			
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate? [see Chapter 4.4.1 b)]	x				
Selection and evaluation phase					
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees? [see Chapter 4.4.2 a)]		x	x		Statistics on the composition of panels
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?		x	x		Written guidelines
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?		x	x		
19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help to judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?			x		Written guidelines
Appointment phase					
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?		x			
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?		x			
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?		x			Statistics on complaints
Overall assessment					
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?					

TEMPLATE 2: HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

Name Organisation under review:
Organisation's contact details:
Weblink to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan:

SUBMISSION DATE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

....

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

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

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	*
- Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	*
- Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	*
- Of whom are women	*
- Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	*
- Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	*
- Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	*
Total number of students (if relevant)	
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	*
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	

Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	

2. NARRATIVE (MAX. 2 PAGES)

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

Note

3. ACTIONS

Please provide a list of all actions to be undertaken in this HR strategy. The list must be accompanied by an extended version in which the actions are described in more detail. The overview must contain at least the following headings: Title action – timing – Responsible Unit – Indicator(s) / Target(s).

Examples:

Title action	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<i>e.g. Advertising all researcher vacancies on Euraxess</i>	<i>Spring 2016</i>	<i>HR recruitment unit</i>	<i>- 50% increase in applications - Min. 1/3 applications from abroad</i>
<i>e.g. Granting postdoctoral researchers budgetary autonomy</i>	<i>December 2017</i>	<i>Finance Dept.</i>	<i>Board of Government endorsement for new regulation</i>

<i>e.g. Improve supervisor training for newly appointed tenure track staff</i>	<i>Continuous</i>	<i>Doctoral Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Min. 2 training courses on offer per term</i> - <i>Continuous monitoring of effect: increase of positive evaluations from PhD students</i>
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As 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 your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please also list the weblink where this strategy can be found.

Actions addressing the implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles:

4. IMPLEMENTATION (MAX. 1 PAGE)

Please provide an overview of the expected implementation process. You can use the following questions as a guideline in your description:

- Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?
- How do you involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?
- How will your organisation ensure that the proposed actions will also be implemented?
- Is there evidence of any alignment of the HRS4R with organisational policies? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in organisation’s research strategy, overarching HR policy?
- How will you monitor progress?
- How do you expect to prepare the internal and external review?

TEMPLATE 3: INTERNAL REVIEW

Name Organisation under review:
Organisation's contact details:
Web-linklinklinklink to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan:
Web-linklinklinklink to organisational recruitment policy (OTM-R principles): ¹⁰

SUBMISSION DATE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

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1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide an update of the key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	*
- Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	*
- Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	*
- Of whom are women	*
- Of whom are stage R3 or R4 ¹¹ = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	*
- Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	*
- Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	*
Total number of students (if relevant)	
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	*
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	

¹⁰ Organisations that have entered the HRS4R process prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015) may not have prioritised actions implementing the OTM-R principles yet. This will be taken into account by the assessors.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure,...)	
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	

2. NARRATIVE (MAX. 2 PAGES)

Please consult the narrative on the strengths and weaknesses under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code as provided in the initial submission of your organisation's HR Strategy. Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed? Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy? Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

Please provide a brief commentary – not only looking back, but also looking forward.

3. ACTIONS

Please consult the list of all actions you have submitted as part of your HR strategy. Please add to the overview the current status of these actions as well as the status of the indicators. If any actions have been altered, omitted or added, please provide a commentary for each action. Examples:

Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target	Current status
e.g. Advertising all researcher vacancies on Euraxess	Spring 2016	HR recruitment unit	- 75% increase in applications - 50/850 applications from abroad	Completed
e.g. Granting postdoctoral researchers budgetary autonomy	December 2017	Finance Dept.	Board of Government endorsement for new regulation	In preparation
e.g. Improve supervisor	Continuous	Doctoral	- Min. 2 training courses on offer per term	Action extended by

training for newly appointed tenure track staff		Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous monitoring of effect: increase of positive evaluations from PhD students - Mentor for every PhD supervisor with less than 2 years' experience 	introducing a new mentoring programme for PhD supervisors, based on the PhD students' feedback.
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As the establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy, please also indicate how your organisation is working towards / has developed an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation.

In case your organisation has entered the HRS4R process prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015), please fill out the OTM-R checklist¹², attach it to this self-evaluation form, and provide a commentary on how you will (continue to) address these principles in the years to come.

Commentary on the implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles:

4. IMPLEMENTATION (MAX. 1 PAGE)

Please provide an overview of the expected implementation process. You can use the following questions as a guideline in your description:

- How have you prepared the internal review? How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?
- Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?
- Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy?
- How do you involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?
- How is your organisation ensuring that the proposed actions are also being implemented?
- How are you monitoring progress?
- How do you expect to prepare for the external review?

Please note that the revised HR strategy and Action Plan must also be published upon completion of the internal assessment.

¹² The OTM-R checklist can be downloaded from XXX

TEMPLATE A: INITIAL EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT of HR STRATEGY

Name Organisation under assessment:
Organisation's contact details:
Submission date initial GAP-analysis, HR Strategy and Action Plan:

Name Assessor1 (lead):	Date:
Name Assessor2:	Date:
Name Assessor3:	Date:

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Accepted	Accepted alterations	pending	minor	Declined revisions	pending (major)
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This assessment is composed in consensus by the assessors on (date).....

DETAILED ASSESSMENT

1. ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

	YES	NO (or no evidence)
Has the organisation formally endorsed the Charter and Code?		
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published on the organisation's website?		
Have the following elements of the templates for the Gap Analysis and the HR Strategy and Action Plan been completed? A. Gap Analysis B. HR Strategy and Action plan: B1. Organisational information B2. Narrative B3. Actions B4. Implementation		
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been formally endorsed by the organisation's highest authority?		

2. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation.

	YES	NO
--	-----	----

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?		
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?		
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?		
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?		
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?		
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?		
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?		
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?		

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

If any of the above statements have prompted a “no” in the evaluation, please provide suggestions for (minor) alterations or (major) revisions, in order to qualify for the HRS4R award.

If the organisation deserves to be commended on their ambition, their actions, evidence of good practice and/or their implementation process, please provide a commentary supporting this.

CONFIDENTIAL

TEMPLATE B: INTERIM EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT of UPDATED HR-STRATEGY

Name Organisation under assessment:
Organisation's contact details:
Submission date initial GAP-analysis, HR Strategy and Action Plan:

Name Assessor1 (lead):	Date:
Name Assessor 2:	Date:
Name Assessor 3:	Date:

DETAILED ASSESSMENT

1. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended and obtained by the organisation.

	YES	NO
Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?		
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation's priorities in HR-management for researchers?		
Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or alterations?		
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organisation's management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?		
Has the organisation developed an OTM-R policy ?		

2. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the information submitted and taking into account the organisation's national research context, how would you as an assessor judge the HR Strategy's **strengths and weaknesses**?

--

If relevant, please provide suggestions for alterations or revisions to the (updated) HR strategy:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Which describes the organisation’s progress most accurately?	Additional comments
<p>1. The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.</p>	
<p>2. The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.</p>	
<p>3. The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.</p>	

TEMPLATE C: RENEWAL EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT based on SITE VISIT

Name Organisation under assessment:
Organisation's contact details:
Submission date initial GAP-analysis, HR Strategy and Action Plan:
Date Site Visit:

Name Assessor 1 (lead):
Name Assessor 2:
Name Assessor 3:

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

This assessment is composed in consensus by the assessors on (date).....

DETAILED ASSESSMENT

1. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended and obtained by the organisation.

1A. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT (TO BE COMPLETED BY EACH assessor ASSESSORS PRIOR TO THE SITE VISIT)

	YES	NO
Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?		
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation's priorities in HR-management for researchers?		
Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or alterations?		
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organisation's management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?		
Is the OTM-R policy in place and publicly available ? ¹³		

Look ahead at the questions to be addressed during the site visit, listed in part 1B. Does the internal assessment submitted by the organisation give rise to any issues you wish to explore in more detail during the site visit? Which elements of the HR Strategy and Action Plan would you like to focus on during the site visit?

¹³ Organisations that have entered the HRS4R process prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015) may not have prioritised actions implementing the OTM-R principles yet. In this case, they should not be penalized but strong recommendations must be made to address these principles appropriately.

1B. SITE-VISIT BASED Assessment (TO BE COMPLETED JOINTLY BY THE ASSESSORS AFTER THE SITE VISIT)

Please provide a brief answer to the following questions:

1) Does the site visit confirm the impression made by the written self-evaluation report?
2) What have been the benefits of implementing an HR Strategy in the organisation under review? How do you judge its overall impact and achievements?
3) How do you judge the organisation's level of ambition with regard to its HR strategy for researchers, taking into account the initial state of play?
4) How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Ethical and Professional Aspects of Researchers ?
5) How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Recruitment of Researchers ? Is an OTM-R policy in place?
6) How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Researchers' Working conditions and Social Security ?
7) How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding Researchers' Development and Training ?

Please list one or more elements of **good practice** that you would recommend to other organisations – either in terms of action or in terms of coordination/process.

--

Please list one or more **examples of difficulties** the organisation has had to deal with during the set-up or implementation of the HR Strategy and Action Plan.

2. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the information submitted and the site visit, and taking into account the organisation’s national research context, how would you as an assessor judge the HR Strategy’s **strengths and weaknesses**?

If relevant, please provide suggestions for alterations or revisions to the (updated) HR strategy:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Which describes the organisation’s progress most accurately?	Additional comments
1. The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.	
2. The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.	
3. The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.	

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