

EURAXESS

Renewal Phase Assessment With Site Visit - EC Consensus Report

Case number

2018ES343628

Name Organisation under assessment

Centre de Recerca Matemàtica

Organisation's contact details

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Spain

Submission date of the Internal Review

16/02/2022

Submission date to the European Commission

03/04/2023

Detailed assessment

a. Quality assessment

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

If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

| | YES / NO / PARTLY | Recommendations |
|--|-------------------|--|
| Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented? | Yes | Even though the organization has embarked in the HRS4R before the enforcement procedure was adopted, the applicant has prepared and made available on Euraxess and on its website many useful documents that allow a proper understanding of their current state of play as far as the C&C Principles are concerned and their future implementation strategy. |
| Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation's priorities in HR-management for researchers? | Yes | The strengths and weaknesses section of the assessment indeed shows a certain prioritization and proposes a few issues as priority challenges. However, the Action Plan is not always coherent with this prioritization. |
| Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or modifications? | Yes | The CRM HRS4R webpage https://www.crm.cat/hrs4r/ is very well structured including full information about the status of their current strategy and a proper overview of all the updates introduced in their Action Plan during the years. |
| 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? | Yes | The proper implementation of their Actions is promoted by the existing link between the HRS4R Action Plan and the Organisation's Strategic Plan. However, the weakness underlined in the interim assessment concerning the need for improvement of the proposed indicators is not yet resolved. |
| Is the OTM-R policy in place and publicly available? | No | The Applicant declares that they have an OTM-R Policy. There is a page on their HRS4R website devoted to it but it contains rather general guidelines about the added value of having such a policy and how it should be structured, with several links to Euraxess manuals and guidelines. There is also a link to a report they have prepared but it is apparently not working. The applicant's assessment gives the impression that for the moment they have completed only the checklist but that they don't yet have a real structured policy. However during the site visit it became apparent that CRM do have an OTM-R Policy, and we recommended that they make it publicly available on their website. |

During the transition period special conditions apply:

Institutions having started the HRS4R implementation 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 penalised but strong recommendations should be made to address these principles appropriately.

Does the internal assessment of the institution give rise to any issues you wish to explore in more detail during the site visit? (max 1000 words)

In the Award Renewal - Action 29 is the Development and implementation of the CRM's Open Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment policy and endorsement by the Governing Board. It is noted that this is completed and the link that is given is <https://www.crm.cat/otm-r/>. However, this link contains information about what OTM-R is, a link to relevant European Commission documentation and the Euraxess portal and the OTM-R Checklist. I cannot find the OTM-R Policy. I also do not see the OTM-R Policy in the documentation submitted for this renewal application. In addition in the Section "Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles it clearly states that CRM is working on the development of the centre's first OTM-R policy, which will have to be drafted and brought in front of the Governing Body.

It is stated in the award renewal that with the granting of the Maria de Maeztu award the number of researchers will double in CRM. It is acknowledged that this growth represents both an opportunity and a huge challenge for CRM. How will management ensure that the HRS4R strategy is an integral part of this growth?

Action 43 is the Introduction of compulsory meetings between PhD students and their supervisors and the indicator is the percentage of training conventions signed prior to next registration. I am unsure what this means. All PhD students should have regular meetings with the PhD supervisor(s) and these should be recorded whereby issues or risks are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant progression boards. This is very important as the survey showed concerns regarding the management of conflict among CRM research community especially between supervisors and students. What Actions have CRM implemented to reduce conflict?

Action 59 aims to "Increase female participation in leadership positions and governing bodies". How does CRM plan on doing this?

1. The AP states that staff provided input through informal surveys. It is the best if the institution provides anonymous opportunity to staff members to declare and comment on their reflections regarding the process. Do you plan to overcome this issue in future?
2. The actions, in their naming, are quite complicated and unclear. It is important to be clear in what is the action and its purpose, what are the targets and the indicators to measure the implementation success.
3. The size of the institution is often a drawback in implementation process. Quite small institution as CRM should utilities that fact and gain most of it. What are the goals that should profit the most?
4. I would like to learn more on decision making process in daily business. How the intuition work inside?
5. Are there any regional (Catalonian) or national (Spanish) obstacles in legislative or policies? How does the institution handle the communication with the authorities? Do you have opportunity to reflect to new laws of bylaws?

The site visit will be the occasion for further clarification about the following issues, crucial to gain a proper understanding of their state of play:

1. Their current management of gender issues and the foreseen improvements.
2. Their current recruitment policies. Even though the applicant declares having an OTM-R policy in place, the policy seems not having been provided and the OTM-R checklist shows many challenges still unsolved.
3. Their current mentoring and supervision strategy. There are several Actions in their Action Plan focusing on this issue but it's not easy to understand, based on the info provided, which is their state of play and proposed improvements.
4. The level of involvement of their research community in the HRS4R process is somewhat unclear. It appears they have tried to guarantee proper communication to keep the research community at large informed about the HRS4R progress and initiatives. However, it is not clear how the research community at large has been involved in the process and which role it has played in the definition of the proposed initiatives for the Action Plan 2022-2024.
5. Their monitoring strategy should be better explained, the proposed Action Plan somewhat lacks in proper indicators and in a coherent measurement strategy.
6. Which is their strategy for complaints mechanism management.

Which elements of the HR strategy and Action Plan would you like to focus upon during the site visits? (max 1000 words)

1. It would be good to understand the exact involvement of the research community in developing the New Action Plan. It is stated in the renewal application that the feedback from the researchers has been gathered, mostly, through informal meetings and email communication. However, did the research community (R1 to R4) have an involvement in identifying the new actions in the Action Plan 2022-2024?
2. Action 12 is the drafting of a poll to evaluate the degree of satisfaction amongst researchers regarding the working conditions has been designed by the HRS4R steering committee but is marked as having yet to be approved by the centre's Manager and Director before being passed to the staff. The extension date on this is Q2 2018 but it is still marked as extended. Has this been completed yet? If so what were the results of this Poll?
3. Action 14 indicates that it has been observed that researchers are not aware of the full contracting costs and the associated benefits. However it is noted that this action has been de-prioritized due a shift on the current focus of the action plan. It will be tackled further down the road by the board of directors of the CRM. Can you explain why this is no longer a priority for CRM?
4. Action 57 is to "Conduct a Work Climate Survey" and the timelines was Q2 2022. Was this completed? Are the results of the study available? If so where have they been published? Was it circulated to all researchers from R1 to R4? What was the survey response rate? Can you present the main findings? It is mentioned in the Implementation Section of the renewal application that there was a participation of 50% of researchers in the survey - is this the same survey?
5. Newly received prize from the Spanish Ministry will provide new job positions. Is there a strategy to handle a number of newcomers that should align with institutional policies? What will the step be after the prize is implemented?
6. The approach towards the OTM-R policy. What is the timeline and the actions?
7. Methodology used for the AP composition - terminology and the writing principles need to be addressed.
8. Gender Management.
9. Management of complaints mechanisms.
10. Supervision and mentoring.
11. Monitoring strategy for the HRS4R Action Plan including detailed explanations about the proposed indicators and measurement strategy.
12. CRM Status and relationship with other Catalan universities.

b. SITE-VISIT BASED Assessment

Please provide a brief answer to the following questions:

Note: Click on each question to open the editor.

1. Does the site visit confirm the impression made by the written self-evaluation report?



- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partly

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? ▼

The site visit has mostly confirmed the impression made by the written self-evaluation report and provided the missing information identified in the desk-based assessment. Through the site visit it has been possible to get a proper understanding of the applicant's structure and procedures and to gain full insights about their strategic goals, practices, and level of ambition. It appears that CRM is a little independent centre, physically hosted within the premises of the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, strongly interconnected with this university, with the Universidad de Barcelona and with the Universidad Politecnica de Catalunya. This creates a unique environment, to be taken into account when assessing the level of implementation of the C&C Principles within CRM. For example, CRM is not in the position to issue PhD titles and shares the task of supervising and mentoring PhD students together with one of the academic institutions it is linked with. Furthermore, it is common practice for this organization to employ personnel that may have been recruited by external donors or funders such as the Government of Catalunya.

The Applicant has shown a great commitment towards the full implementation of the C & C Principles. The award has apparently represented a lever to promote an increasing transparency in their internal procedures, through the creation of a series of guidelines made available through their website, an unusual task for such a little institution. The organization has used the guidelines and indications of the HRS4R to revise and redefine its policies and initiatives to achieve greater transparency and increase the quality of its recruitment policies. The organisation leadership has shown during the visit the willingness to continue improving the implementation of the HRS4R principles within its premises and to continue supporting a fair and sound working environment for its researchers.

The site visit allowed for an in-depth reflection and discussion on the HRS4R, the challenges, the issues and the progress that has been made at CRM to date. The meetings helped the assessors to gauge the level of continuous improvement and progress in the HRS4R and we would like to encourage CRM to continue in the spirit of continuous improvement. CRM shows a remarkable commitment towards the implementation of the HRS4R, especially considering how small the institution is. The information provided on the website including, among other things, their Action Plans (2015-2017, 2018-2020, 2022-2024) shows a path of constant improvement towards the full implementation of the Charter and Code Principles.

At this stage of the implementation process, the Assessors are looking for continued progress as well as a move towards enhance quality of actions which should be supported by specific indicators and targets to ensure success. The Assessors found that a number of actions in the new Action Plan (and indeed in previous Action Plans) could benefit from more qualitative and quantitative indicators, to ensure that they can be measured easily. So one weakness of the new Action Plan is the indicators/targets. The Assessors are looking for quality actions, indicators and targets to ensure success at this stage. Please ensure that all actions are described in detail. The Assessors would advise the Implementation Committee to be as descriptive as possible when drafting new Action Plans. It is recommended that for all actions a proper description, relevant indicators and a measurement strategy, which is currently lacking, is provided, which should be linked back to the gaps identified.

The Assessors would also like to see stronger involvement of the research community in identifying weaknesses and gaps but also in the identification of actions for the Action Plan and in the prioritization of the most urgent challenges to be faced.

It is particularly outlined that the organization has established procedures, transparent processes and pathways for regular (repetitive) activities that before the HRS4R establishment were confusing and complicated.

A lot of activities have been reflected in paperwork, with adequate forms or rulebooks. Also, opening to the international environment is another benefit, as found by the institution itself. Moreover, the availability (online) of series of documents, forms, procedures etc. in transparent and easily reachable way, is also considered as an achievement.

The institution has started reflecting on HR policies from a strategic perspective, hence the HRS4R is quite integrated and embedded into everyday business and strategic documents/goals.

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? 

During the site visit the Assessors wanted to determine if the HRS4R activities had been mainstreamed at CRM. They believe that CRM is making great progress in its commitment to support the development of researchers and research career structures. I further believe that after reviewing the Action Plans to date (2015-17, 2018-2020 and 2022-24) that there is a path of constant improvement towards the full implementation of the Charter & Code principles at CRM. There was clearly a strong commitment towards the HRS4R which seems to be solidly embraced at Strategic and Managerial level as evident during the site visit. CRM are ambitious with regard to its HR Strategy for Researchers and have made great progress since they initially signed the Endorsement Letter in 2014.

The Applicant is a small organisation founded in 1984. The Centre enjoys apparently full independence, but it has strong interconnections with the other Catalan academic institutions. Its status and structure have changed several times coming to the current situation based on a strong coordination and interconnection with the other universities of Catalunya. The level of implementation of the C&C Principles achieved so far appears satisfactory. Since the beginning of the process the organisation has adopted an OTM-R Policy, made great efforts towards gender balance (they have for example adopted an anti-harassment policy), they have adopted a welcome package including many relevant information for newcomers. Their recruitment procedures take usually place in English and are advertised through Euraxess. Interviewed researchers appeared very satisfied with their working environment described as stimulating and properly satisfactory. Still some progresses is needed at the level of supervision, mentoring, salary conditions and appropriate mechanisms to manage complaints.

The Assessors find the level of ambition appropriate in regard to the size of the Organisation, number of supportive staff members, general research (core activities) and overall working environment.

Moreover, the level of ambition reflected through the research excellence and impact proves best how the researchers are treated and hired at the institution.

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?**



CRM are making great progress to ensure the implementation of the Charter & Code principles regarding the Ethical and Professional Aspects of Researchers. They have a Code of Conduct in place and relevant training. However, there is an awareness issue due to the high turnover of researchers as identified in the recent survey. Action 44 of the new Action Plan is the Organisation of awareness and training activities on ethical policies. The indicator is the number of training offered and the number of participants. Whilst this is a good indicator, an additional target could be the increased awareness amongst researchers of the Code of Conduct which should be assessed annually through the researcher Poll. The lack of awareness was noted on the last survey, so assessing the level of awareness to ensure it is increasing annually is important.

The spread among their internal community of such principles is promoted, among others, by their welcome package (<https://www.crm.cat/researchers-documentation-package/>) provided to all newly employed researchers, including the CERCA code of conduct. In these guidelines all employees are provided with basic information concerning the applicable principles, among which for example: honesty and transparency, open access to research data, handling of industrial property, individual commitment to good scientific practice and ethical standards, commitment and responsibility for research activities and scientific publications, etc.

The applicant offers as well dedicated training courses on ethics in research to its employees. However, it is unclear whether the training is compulsory nor if it includes information as well about data protection and data management. On a positive note, CRM has adopted an Institutional Open Science Policy.

With a strong dedication to Open Science and Open Access, as well as GEP, the institution through active collaboration with three leading Catalan universities is judged as very good and dedicated to progress in this aspect of C&C.

No information has been provided concerning any possible mechanism in place to counter plagiarism. Interviewed researchers complained about not having access to relevant software and scientific publication databases. PhD students may have access to them only through their academic supervisors using the resources of the academic institution issuing their titles.

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?



In 2015 the Strengthened HRS4R process recommended that all Institutions must align with best practice by emphasising OTM-R as a key component of the HRS4R process and provides an OTM-R Tool Kit. During the Desk Based Assessment, it was noted that CRM had prepared the OTM-R checklist as part of the revised Gap Analysis template. However, from the Desk Based Assessment all Assessors deducted that CRM did not have an OTM-R Policy. However, the Assessors received the CRM Recruitment Guidelines immediately prior to the Site Visit, which is in fact the OTM-R Policy. This has been approved internally and is now in use. It is recommended that the OTM-R Policy be placed on CRM's HRS4R website. It does included most issues such as advertising internationally on the Euraxess portal, gender balance on interview panels, training for interview panel members, etc. However, it does not include the requirement to give feedback to unsuccessful applicants or details of an appeals process at CRM. However, the Guidelines for Shortlisted Candidates does reference feedback but not appeals. It is important that CRM have an appeals process. It is also important that the OTM-R Policy is as comprehensive as possible and includes all areas covered in the OTM-R Checklist.

As a positive asset CRM has an important level of internationalisation according to its personnel figures. It is acknowledged that there are a low number of female researchers at all levels (27 researchers, 6 are women, and 16 are international). In order to deal with this issue CRM have developed and launched a Diversity and Equality Plan and provide training to all CRM staff. In addition there is a Protocol for the prevention, detection, response to a resolution of psychological harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace. Both these documents along with the training, and the bringing in of external female interview panels members and the interview training will help to increase gender balance at CRM into the future and reduce unconscious bias.

It is to be noted that the Applicant is a very little organisation, relying on external funding for the recruitment of personnel. It appears therefore to be very common for this organisation to employ personnel that has already been recruited by external funders, such as their local government. Nonetheless, for the recruitment processes directly managed by them they appear to be mostly in line with the C & C Principles. Their adverts include all basic information foreseen in the toolkit, they are advertised through their website and through Euraxess, the selection takes place usually in English and applicants apply through dedicated e-tools. With very clear responses from the interviewees, it can be concluded that the institution pays a lot of attention to the recruitment.

Still not all principles have been implemented, such as appropriated training for HR personnel. All selection committee members should be trained to exercise the recruitment correctly and unbiasedly.

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?**



All interviewed researchers were very happy with their working conditions and their resources and facilities at CRM. Some postgraduate students were however concerned about the level of their salary as it is quite expensive to live in Barcelona compared to other areas in Spain. It was clear from touring the facilities at CRM that it is a very nice working environment where researchers can excel.

The results of the HRS4R survey rates CRM's complaints/appeals procedures as low – to include conflict between supervisors and ESRs. It is important that CRM have a robust complaints process in place and that everyone is aware of their options? The Assessors learned about the Ombudsman, but this does not seem to be well known throughout CRM. It is our understanding that this person is a researcher in CRM. Normally it is best if this person is external to the organisational structure, to ensure impartiality, objectivity and unbiased. We also learned about an external Ombudsman which is part of the Centres de Recerca de Catalunya (CERCA) collaboration that researchers in CRM have access to. Again this should be widely communicated to researchers at all levels in CRM as they were unaware of this route if they had a problem.

From a general point of view all researchers appeared to be satisfied about their working conditions. They all agreed upon been able to enjoy proper rights and job flexibility with the opportunity to profit of remote working whenever needed or appropriate.

As far as the welcome provided to newly employed researchers is concerned, it was confirmed that the promised welcome package including relevant information for newcomers has been put in place. However interviewed researchers showed the need for additional practical assistance. It seems that, especially for foreign employees, the relocation in Catalunya can be rather difficult and challenging.

Another thing that was very clearly visible in all the interviews, was the conditions for conducting the research and the freedom given to the researchers is pleasing and satisfactory.

The institution has the Workers' Council, an Ombudsman (locally employed), and very open communication with the top management, providing the proper use of corresponding rights.

The only thing arising as the issue by PhD students is the level of their salaries, which in fact is not the institution to blame, but the fund providers (national institutions in the majority), that often set bars for the salaries. The management, however, stated that those practises are reported to the institutions and new salary tables will be adopted soon.

7. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding **Researchers' Development and Training**? 

CRM is making great efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter & Code principles regarding Researchers' Development and Training. However, from the point of view of career development and training the Applicant has indeed a peculiar situation especially for PhD Students. Since the Applicant has not the power by law to issue PhD titles, PhD students assigned to their institution usually enjoy a double supervision, with one supervisor at CRM and another one at the University issuing the title. The system appears to be rather complex, however all researchers interviewed have shown great satisfaction about the support and mentoring received. Apparently, the Applicant has an offer of soft skills courses, in line with their dimension and potential, even though attendance of some very important courses (such as ethics in research) doesn't appear to be compulsory. Furthermore, it seems as well that the supervisor and the applicant's itself provide some counselling at the level of career development, but rather at an informal and unstructured level.

As far as supervision is concerned all researchers interviewed appeared to be satisfied about their supervisors and confirmed having received constant assistance and appropriate support whenever needed. What's striking is however the lack of a formalised complaints mechanisms procedure. It appears the applicant has not precise mechanisms in place at this level. An Ombudsperson exists but the role is assigned to a member of the organisation itself, thus lacking potentially in objectivity and impartiality of judgement. Most researchers appeared not even knowing such figure existed within their organisation.

Supervisors do not seem to have access to training to support their supervision of students. The Assessors would recommend a Supervisors Training programme be implemented to support Supervisor in the supervision of PhD students. Topics to be included are; the fundamentals of research supervision, attracting the right candidate, the Student's Voice, Monitoring, Assessment, Examiners, Viva Voce, Managing the supervisors/student relationship, etc.

It is great to see the inclusion of a Mentoring Programme at CRM, as this was done on an ad hoc basis previously. However, again the Assessors would just like to pick up on how the metrics and indications could be improved in this regard. Action 67 – create a mentoring programme and the indicators/targets is the availability of the programme. However, the metrics should consider more than just the Mentor Programme being available, it should include details of the training given to the Mentors and Mentees, and the number of paired Mentors/Mentees p.a. and the success of the Mentor/Mentee relationships as captured in an annual report from the programme participants.

It is understood that the institution has opened policies regarding the training possibilities: with either staff proposing the topics or using the training capacities at partner universities.

It interesting is that training sometimes is conducted by staff members. Mentoring and supervision for PhDs are often dual, with mentors from both university and the institution.

Post-Docs also have the opportunity to get on board at affiliated universities and do mentoring/supervision.

Career development opportunities and clear career pathways for R1-2s are available.

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. (max 500 words)

The Director of CRM would seem to operate an **Open Door Policy** where PhD Students, Researchers or PIs can drop in and chat to him if they have a problem. The proximity of the Researchers to the Administrative Support Office and the HR Manager also provides a great opportunity for any queries to be dealt with without much delay. This is a true benefit of being a small Institution, where staff and students interact with each other on a daily basis.

All researchers seemed to be very happy with their conditions of employment, the facilities provided by CRM and the access to resources. CRM also organises periodic surveys to better understand the needs and opinions of the scientific community about HRS4R actions and challenges.

There is an awareness amongst management and the HRS4R Implementation Committee about the gender imbalance at CRM. Management have been very proactive in this regard, and have made a number of attempts to rectify this. They have implemented a Diversity and Equality Plan along with a role out of training to all CRM staff. In addition there is an internal **Protocol for the prevention, detection, response to a resolution of psychological harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace**. The Applicant has adopted internal guidelines defining the main forms of harassment (workplace harassment, sexual harassment, psychological harassment) and putting in place a dedicated intervention protocol allowing the victim to report the issue and get timely the needed support and assistance. Both these documents along with the training, and the bringing in of external female interview panels members and the interview training will help to increase gender balance at CRM in the future.

Internal Institutional Open Science Policy: In February 2023 the Applicant adopted a policy specifically devoted to open science in which CRM endorses DORA and commits to the principles of open access by creating a series of measures intended to promote the publication mainly in open access of its researchers works.

Other elements of good practice include:

1. Two-time award Maria de Maetzu winners - clearly reflects the ambitions, dedication, excellence, and impact in research.
2. International environment.
3. The institution continued work and even adoption of new documents in a short time between the report writing and the site visit - clearly, very self-aware of needed improvements and advance in HRS4R.
4. The HRS4R is embedded in daily business and C&C principles are often inseparable parts of policies, rulebooks and established procedures.
5. Establishment of unique practice - affiliation with three leading Catalan universities, with very complex and yet fluid cooperation models.

Strengths and weaknesses

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?** (maximum 1000 words)

Strengths:

The Applicant shows a remarkable commitment towards the implementation of the HRS4R, especially if one considers how small the institution under evaluation is. The information provided on their website including, among others, their Action Plans (2015-2017, 2018-2020, 2022-2024) shows a path of constant improvement towards the full implementation of the C&C Principles.

CRM is to be commended for being granted the **Maria de Maeztu Excellence** unit award by the Spanish State Research Agency, as a recognition for their good practices in terms of research and ethical policies carried out and implemented at CRM during the implementation phase of the Charter & Code. This programme, which is evaluated by an independent international committee of prestigious scientists, acknowledges the research centres that demonstrate scientific leadership and impact at global level.

Gender - it is great to see that female external experts are brought in to be part of the selection committees when needed due to the low number of senior female researchers at CRM. This is a very welcomed approach to ensuring gender balance on selection committees.

The **CRM Documentation Package** is a comprehensive resource for researchers and includes a welcome pack for researchers, the CRM career Plan and on a wider level contains details for career paths in Spain and recruitment opportunities for researchers in Spain. It also contains details of contracts, including details of the Catalan and Spanish courses at UAB for international researchers.

Teaching experience is essential for PhD candidates for those students who wish to move into a career in academia. As CRM is not a teaching centre, it is a welcomed move that CRM was able to set up an agreement with a private college which offers PhD candidates the opportunity to teach at their courses. This should be widely advertised to all PhD Students.

Some of the new actions are really important in today's climate for researchers, such as Action 65: Develop an annual program of activities targeted to ECRs to provide different perspectives of the professional career (seminars on industry, technology transfer, scientific management, journalism). This is critical as not all PhD students or ECRs will end up in academic, so transferrable skills are crucial for this cohort of staff to develop when in CRM.

It is really nice to see that CRM are looking at ways to improve and create a more attractive and welcoming work environment for researchers at every level as detailed in Section 4 Implementation. It is also acknowledged by CRM that it is important to keep working on the awareness of the cultural transformation that this process implies. CRM have a clear advantage in this regard in that it is a small centre facilitating face to face communication, whereas larger organisations cannot depend on this form of communication.

Other Strengths:

1. Awareness of weaknesses.
2. GEP establishment.
3. Open Science and Open Access as one of the institutional strategic policies.
4. Collaboration with Catalan universities.
5. Working conditions addressed very well in the AP.
6. Starting from a status of declared structural weakness as far as gender equality is concerned, CRM has achieved to adopt a gender equality plan, including several interesting actions.
7. CRM, as promised, has completed a documentation package including a huge number of guidelines and documents made available on their website for their researchers, including among others: their strategic plan, Code of Conduct, Anti-Harassment Policy, guidelines of researcher's career paths in Spain, career plan, welcome pack, etc.
8. Their strong commitment towards the HRS4R seems to be solidly embraced at strategic, managerial level.

Weaknesses:

It is acknowledged that a substantial weakness at CRM is gender balance as evident from the low number of female researchers at CRM (12) especially at higher levels of research and teaching, which is predominantly male. However, CRM have acknowledged this and has developed an Equality and Diversity Plan to address this issue along with the creation of the gender equality committee and the introduction of unconscious bias training for interview panels.

One weakness of the Action Plan is the indicators/targets. Please ensure that the Indicators and targets are described in detail. For example, Action 44 Organization of awareness and training activities (workshops, mailing etc.) about policies regarding ethics and good practices in science, has an indicator/target of; Number of training offered during the span of the action plan and number of participants. However, an additional target could be the increased awareness of researchers of the code of conduct which is assessed annually through the results of the researcher poll.

Other Weaknesses:

1. Not always in a position to keep up with implementation plans.
2. The language barrier, also a self-declared issue.
3. The complaints mechanism is missing - and will be addressed, according to the institution.
4. With more than half of staff members being the international, special attention is needed for them.
5. Even though during the interim assessment, the Assessors had already underlined the need of improvement in the indicators proposed, the new Actions proposed seem to be still lacking in proper indicators.
6. Even though some actions have been undertaken at the level of mentoring and supervision, it is unclear how the Applicant's system actually works, what it already exists and what it may be lacking. Are appropriate complaint's mechanisms in place? Which kind of supervision researchers usually receive? Does an Ombudsperson exist?
7. It is not properly explained how the research community has been involved in the HRS4R accreditation process and how they are involved in decision making bodies.

If relevant, please provide suggestions for modifications or revisions to the (updated) HR strategy: (maximum 2000 words)

A lot of the links in the Internal Review point to the Transparency Portal Transparency Portal - Centre de Recerca Matemàtica (crm.cat) (<https://www.crm.cat/transparency-portal/>) which does not seem to contain the documentation that you are linking from - e.g., Gender Equality Plan link in internal review does not go to gender equality plan, and the recruitment handbook goes to this page also goes to this page Transparency Portal - Centre de Recerca Matemàtica (crm.cat) (<https://www.crm.cat/transparency-portal/>) but I cannot find the Recruitment Handbook on this page. Please ensure that all links in the Internal Review and future reviews go directly to the documents they are supposed to be pointing at. This link contains most documents Researcher's Documentation Package - Centre de Recerca Matemàtica (crm.cat) (<https://www.crm.cat/researchers-documentation-package/>).

Some of the Actions include the development of new policies, procedures or guidelines. For example Action 48 is to "Create and disseminate internal guidelines for data protection for researchers" and the Indicator/Target is "Availability of the guidelines for the CRM research staff." The introduction of new procedures, policies or guidelines should always be followed by training, a compliance monitoring or a monitoring of the changes brought about by the new procedures or guidelines to ensure that they have the desired effect. Please expand the Indicators/Targets to include these additional stages for all new policies, procedures and guidelines implemented at CRM (example indicator xx% of all R3 and R4 researchers trained after 3 years, mandatory training for all R1 researchers in their 2nd year, etc.). Again Action 54 is the Planning, approval and implementation of the next Gender Equality Plan - the approval and publication of the plan is one target, please ensure relevant training programmes are also organised to raise awareness of the new GE Plan.

Action 53 states "Revise recruitment practices for specific positions to guarantee that standards and recruitment practices are consistent with the OTM-R policy" and the Indicator/Target is "Number of new policies updated and guidelines created". This is too vague. What are the new policies? Or which policies will be updated? Or what guidelines will be created?

Action 63 is the development of a Training Policy for different communities at CRM, and the indicator is the number of training activities offered. The first indicator should be the Training Policy itself, then the number of training activities offered per category of staff (R1 to R4), then the number of participants in each training programme. Please ensure the use of quantitative indicators for all actions.

For Action 67, "Create a mentoring programme..." The indicators/Targets for this is the availability of the programme. However, the targets should be more than the mentor programme being available, it should include the training for mentors and mentees, the number of paired mentors/mentees, and the annual report on the success of the mentor/mentee relationships.

For a lot of the new Actions the timing is set at Ongoing. Please enter the time by which the action will be commenced and implemented, and then once action has been achieved this can be entered as an ongoing activity within CRM and marked as Completed on the Action Plan.

CRM have a nice section on the website for HRS4R, and it may be beneficial to include the members of the HRS4R Steering Committee on the website so researchers know who to contact if they have an issue surrounding the implementation of HRS4R at CRM.

A proper involvement of the research community should be foreseen. Researchers should be an active crucial key player within the HRS4R, taking part in the genesis of internal analysis, action plans, and mostly in the prioritisation to identify the most urgent challenges to be faced.

The proposed Action Plan includes a lot of very small actions, for which a proper description, relevant indicators and a measurement strategy is frequently lacking. It is also unclear how these little actions contribute to the gaps identified.

Again, given the institution size, maybe hiring external consultant that will be unbiased in communication and assessment, would provide better overview of weaknesses that should be addressed in future.

General Assessment

Which of the below situations describes the organisation's progress most accurately? Tick the right situation regarding the award renewal application:.

Accepted



Pending **minor** modifications



Pending **major revisions**



Explanation

- **Accepted:** The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. **There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded. The next assessment will take place in 36 months.**
- Pending **minor** modifications: 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. The institution is requested to submit within 2 months a revised file taking into account the recommendations of the assessors.**
- Pending **major revisions:** 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. The institution is requested to submit within 12 months a revised file taking into account the recommendations of the assessors. Until then, the HR Award will be put as "pending".**

General Recommendations

If any of the above statements have prompted a "no" in the evaluation, please provide suggestions of modifications in the form below.

- If the general assessment is "pending minor modifications" the recommendations are split into:
 - Immediate mandatory recommendations (to be implemented for award renewal, resubmission within 2 months)
 - Other recommendations (to be carried out during the award renewal phase).
- If the general assessment is "pending major revisions" the recommendations are split into:
 - Mandatory recommendations (to be implemented for award renewal, resubmission within 12 months)
 - Other recommendations

Recommendations *

Immediate mandatory recommendations

The Assessors recommend revising the Action Plan and making it more coherent - according to presented activities and state of play. They further recommend that for all actions identified, more details should be provided on the indicators/targets for each of the actions. One weakness of the new Action Plan is the indicators/targets. The Assessors are looking for quality actions, indicators and targets to ensure success. For example when the Action relates to a new policy or a survey, launching the policy or carrying out the survey is not the end, in fact it's only the beginning. Three follow up steps are necessary for each new policy or procedure and should be added to the action plan under the indicators/targets: training, compliance monitoring, effect monitoring. Please also ensure that SMART objectives and targets are set for all Actions with quantitative indicators. It is recommended that for all actions a proper description, relevant indicators and a measurement strategy, which is currently lacking, is provided.

The Assessors would also like to see stronger involvement of the research community in identifying weaknesses and gaps but also in the identification of actions for the Action Plan and in the prioritization of the most urgent challenges to be faced.

The interaction between researchers and their supervisors/mentors can sometimes bring to misunderstandings and conflicts. It is therefore crucial to have in place a procedure allowing the proper management of such cases. At the moment the applicant doesn't appear to have one, this should be taken into account

The Applicant has a peculiar structure leading sometimes their junior researchers to have a double supervision. It is therefore very important that the Applicant adopts guidelines to properly define in a transparent and efficient way the tasks of the supervisors vis à vis their Academic counterparts, whenever applicable.

Other recommendations

Gender Balance, efforts and improvements have already been made at this level. Still additional intervention may be needed for example at the level of Evaluation Committees.

The Applicant has already developed a sound OTM-R Policy, further improvements should be taken into account at the level of additional support provided to newly employed researchers. Interviewed researchers showed great satisfaction for the welcome package they receive but underlined also the importance, especially for foreign researchers, to receive more practical assistance.

Interviewed researchers made it clear how important it would be, especially for young researchers, to profit of higher salaries. The Applicant is therefore advised, within the limits of what national legislation allows, to take this request into account.

The availability of reached documents-decisions needs to be updated on the website, and also to be provided in local and English.

It is advisable to elevate the communication bottom-up regarding the initiatives for some social events (team-building, off-site gatherings...)

Finally, it is advisable to invest some additional time/efforts to promote the process more and make both existing staff and newcomers up-to-date with the decisions of the Committee and Working group and upcoming events.

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. (max. 2000 words)

CRM is clearly making great progress in implementing the Charter and Code. They seem to strive for continuous improvement, noticeable by the number of Actions in the Action Plan. CRM is a well organised institution fulfilling high international standards in research. They show a willingness to improve all the time.

Congratulations to CRM for the many important changes they have been able to realise towards the full implementation of the C&C Principles. A special acknowledgement goes, among others, to their efforts to promote gender balance in a research field such as Mathematics where this is an uneasy task. To be also commended the adoption of a protocol to counter harassment in all its forms.

It is visible that the institution is excellent in research and pays attention to contributing processes,

It is clear that the management is aware of weakness and strengths, with overarching goals aiming beyond formal and expected ambitions,

We wish CRM the very best of luck with the next phase of the implementation of the HRS4R award.