



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

**Human Resources Strategy for  
Researchers (HRS4R)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan  
2018 – 2021**

## **INDEX**

0. BACKGROUND	1
1. METHODOLOGY	1
2. FOLLOW-UP OF THE 1 <sup>ST</sup> HRS4R ACTION PLAN	2
3. 2 <sup>ND</sup> HRS4R ACTION PLAN	7

## **0. BACKGROUND**

- In 2014 the Centre de Recerca en Economia Internacional (CREI) endorsed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- Following this commitment, CREI started the process to participate in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) initiative to make CREI a more attractive workplace for researchers at all levels.
- On November 26, 2015, after submitting its first HRS4R Action Plan (for the period 2015 – 2019), CREI received the HRS4R award from the European Commission.
- The first HRS4R Action Plan (for the period 2015 – 2019) was produced after carrying out an internal gap analysis, with the active involvement of all CREI researchers. This first action plan identified a number of key areas for change and further development.
- In 2018 CREI submitted the interim assessment (see Annex 1) and the OTM-R checklist (see Annex 2) to the HRS4R external assessors. After their review, the external assessors concluded that “The organization 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” (see Annex 3).

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

At present CREI’s personnel consists of:

- 4 CREI Senior Researchers (one of them is also the CREI Director)
- 5 CREI Junior Researchers
- 3 CREI Associate Researchers (part-time dedication)
- 3 Research Assistants (\*)
- 1 Visitor
- 1 Business Manager (who is also doing the function of Research Projects Manager as this position is vacant)
- 3 Administrative Support Staff

(\*) Whose contracts are linked to research grants and who, for this reason, don’t belong to what we understand as “CREI structure”.

Due to the small size of CREI, we have continued with the approach followed in previous years, holding periodic meetings with all researchers and the Business Manager to analyze the implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> HRS4R Action Plan and the comments and suggestions made by the external assessors. In addition, we have reflected on the actions to be undertaken once we

complete successfully this 2<sup>nd</sup> HRS4R Action Plan. The small size of CREI is an important fact to deal with when we plan the next steps.

## 2. FOLLOW-UP OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> HRS4R ACTION PLAN

This is the visual summary of the current status of the proposed actions included in the 1<sup>st</sup> HRS4R Action Plan:

COMPLETED
IN PROGRESS
NOT STARTED

Title action
I.1.i. Attend every year the Meetings of the Allied Social Science Associations to interview potential candidates. (Principle 12)
I.1.ii. Invite the most promising candidates for campus visits to better evaluate their research abilities and to show them the high-quality research environment CREI provides. (Principles 16, 19)
I.1.iii. Contact all candidates we interview and/or invite for visits to inform them of their performance and the likelihood of receiving an offer from CREI. (Principle 15)
I.1.iv. Make an effort to attract female candidates. (Principles 10, 27)
I.2.i. Prepare a “Guide for New Researchers” detailing immigration procedures, how to rent a house, schooling options for families, etc. (Principles 5, 24)
I.2.ii. Provide language support for both researchers and spouses. (Principle 24)
I.2.iii. Help researchers’ partners access the local labor market. (Principle 24)
I.3.i. Analyze the financial conditions offered by other European and US institutions to determine how competitive CREI is in this respect. (Principle 26)
II.1.i. Clarify tenure standards. (Principles 11, 25, 28)
II.1.ii. Develop official policy for obtaining extensions to the tenure clock. (Principles 24, 25)
II.1.iii. Develop official policy for leaves/sabbaticals. (Principles 24, 29)
II.1.iv. Prepare a “Researcher Handbook” that describes these standards and policies. (Principle 24, 29)
II.2.i. Assign administrative staff to help in applying to external grants. (Principle 23)
II.2.ii. Provide reasonable “insurance funds” for new researchers and for researchers that lack external funding. (Principle 23)
II.3.i. Contract ergonomics specialists to ensure researchers have set up their working spaces in a safe and healthy manner. (Principle 23)
II.4.i. Assign a senior mentor to each junior researcher to help clarify tenure standards, provide regular feedback on research, and provide help to get invitations to seminars and conferences. (Principles 28, 36, 37, 40)
III.1.i. Distribute among researchers the results of the periodic external evaluations. (Principle 35)
III.1.ii. Hold annual meetings with all researchers to explain the main issues regarding the running of CREI, including hiring plans, sources of government and grant funding, expenses, etc. (Principle 35)

We have included more details of the status of the different actions in the following table.

Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target Current status (as reported in the Interim Assessment)	Action to be taken / Comments	New timing
I.1.i. Attend every year the Meetings of the Allied Social Science Associations to interview potential candidates. (Principle 12)	May 2016	Recruitment chair	<p>ASSA Meeting 2017: 0 researchers ASSA Meeting 2018: 3</p> <p><i>Due to budget restrictions, 2017 was the first year CREI has not been able to carry out the recruitment process as described in the above paragraphs. Nevertheless, it has been possible to reestablish the recruitment process for 2018.</i></p> <p><i>Initially it was planned 5 CREI researchers would attend the 2018 ASSA Meeting, but due to weather problems only 3 of them could finally travel to Philadelphia. The other 2 CREI researchers participated in the ASSA Meeting interviews through videoconference as much as they could despite the distance and the time difference.</i></p> <p><i>From now on, CREI will attend every year the Annual ASSA Meeting event though there is no budget for hiring a new researcher, in order to “be in the market” in future years.</i></p> <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Recently the European Economic Association has announced their intention to organize an annual European Job Market to be held in December.</p> <p>The EEA has asked the most important European research institutions in Economics to support this new European Job Market. For this reason, CREI has decided to attend the EEA only. In light of the results of the 2018/2019 recruitment campaign CREI will review its decision and may consider attending the ASSA Meeting event again.</p>	--
I.1.ii. Invite the most promising candidates for campus visits to better evaluate their research abilities and to show them the high-quality research environment CREI provides. (Principles 16, 19)	May 2016	Recruitment chair	<p>2018 Job-Market Campaign: 15 candidates invited</p> <p>COMPLETED</p>	--	

Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target Current status (as reported in the Interim Assessment)	Action to be taken / Comments	New timing
I.1.iii. Contact all candidates we interview and/or invite for visits to inform them of their performance and the likelihood of receiving an offer from CREI. (Principle 15)	May 2016	Recruitment chair	2018 Job-Market Campaign: 34 candidates were interviewed  <i>We have included this feedback in our Recruitment Procedure.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
I.1.iv. Make an effort to attract female candidates. (Principles 10, 27)	May 2017	Recruitment chair	2018 Job-Market Campaign:  - Applications received: 102 female candidates out of a total of 394 (25.9%) - Candidates interviewed: 6 female candidates out of a total of 34 (17.6%) - Flyout candidates: 4 female candidates out of a total of 15 (26.7%)  <i>During all the Recruitment Process we take actions to attract female candidates. In our job advertisement we have included a statement to encourage female candidates to send their application. In all the phases of the recruitment process we have made sure women are well represented. In addition, we have started to assess specifically the gender dimension in our recruitment statistics.</i>  <i>All these measures have been included in our Recruitment Procedures and will be maintained and evaluated in the coming years.</i>  <i>Although the percentage of female candidates is relatively low, we have been able to hire Victoria Vanasco, who was an Assistant Professor at Stanford GSB, to join CREI in September 2018.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	Although we think this action is completed, as participation of women in macroeconomics is lower than in other fields, we understand that we have to consider new ways to promote female participation in CREI activities and recruitment. Moreover, we encourage and analyze female participation in all our activities and most of our internal reports.	

Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target Current status (as reported in the Interim Assessment)	Action to be taken / Comments	New timing
I.2.i. Prepare a “Guide for New Researchers” detailing immigration procedures, how to rent a house, schooling options for families, etc. (Principles 5, 24)	Delayed to May 2018	Business Manager	Documentation and midterm survey responses.  <i>This action has been delayed to May 2018.</i>  <i>This delay has arisen due to changes in CREI Direction and Management and the fact that we did not have an immediate need to have this document prepared as no researchers joined CREI in September 2017.</i>  <i>We are working on the “Guide for New Researchers” and we expect to have it finished by May 2018 so that it can be helpful for the new CREI researcher, Victoria Vanasco.</i>  <i>IN PROGRESS</i>	Finish the document “Guide for New Researchers”.	May 2018
I.2.ii. Provide language support for both researchers and spouses. (Principle 24)	May 2016	Business Manager	55 classes per year (2017)  <i>All CREI researchers and their spouses have the possibility to have Spanish or Catalan classes arranged and paid for by CREI.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
I.2.iii. Help researchers’ partners access the local labor market. (Principle 24)	Delayed to October 2018	Business Manager	Midterm survey responses  <i>We have contacted an agency who can help with this issue and we have to analyze the terms and conditions to work with them.</i>  <i>IN PROGRESS</i>	Continue exploring new ways to help researchers’ spouses access the local labor market.	2019

Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target Current status (as reported in the Interim Assessment)	Action to be taken / Comments	New timing
I.3.i. Analyze the financial conditions offered by other European and US institutions to determine how competitive CREI is in this respect. (Principle 26)	May 2018	Business Manager	Internal report  <i>We are gathering information from other institutions and preparing the Internal Report.</i>  <i>IN PROGRESS</i>	Finish the analysis. Design periodical reports to update this information.	Dec 2019
II.1.i. Clarify tenure standards. (Principles 11, 25, 28)	May 2016	Senior committee	Midterm survey responses  <i>The document "Policy on tenure promotion" has been published and provided to all CREI researchers.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
II.1.ii. Develop official policy for obtaining extensions to the tenure clock. (Principles 24, 25)	May 2016	Senior committee	Midterm survey responses  <i>This aspect has been included in the document "Policy on tenure promotion" discussed above.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
II.1.iii. Develop official policy for leaves/sabbaticals. (Principles 24, 29)	May 2016	Senior committee	Midterm survey responses  <i>The document "CREI Employment conditions" has been published and provided to all CREI researchers. One of the aspects included in this document is the requirements to obtain a leave of absence.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	



Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target Current status (as reported in the Interim Assessment)	Action to be taken / Comments	New timing
II.1.iv. Prepare a “Researcher Handbook” that describes these standards and policies. (Principle 24, 29)	Delayed to May 2018	Senior committee	Documentation and midterm survey responses  <i>Although basically all the information to be included in the “Researcher Handbook” has been published and communicated to all CREI researchers, we are preparing a summary, which will be distributed to CREI staff in the next months.</i>  <i>IN PROGRESS</i>	Finish the document, publish it and design the procedure to update it regularly.	<i>Dec 2018</i>
II.2.i. Assign administrative staff to help in applying to external grants. (Principle 23)	May 2016	Business Manager	Midterm survey responses  <i>All CREI researchers have an administrative assistant who helps them apply to external grants and helps them with all administrative tasks.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
II.2.ii. Provide reasonable “insurance funds” for new researchers and for researchers that lack external funding. (Principle 23)	May 2016	Business Manager	Midterm survey responses  <i>“Insurance funds” are included in our offer to CREI candidates.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
II.3.i. Contract ergonomics specialists to ensure researchers have set up their working spaces in a safe and healthy manner. (Principle 23)	May 2016	Business Manager	1 visit / year  <i>Ergonomics specialists visit CREI once a year to evaluate and give advice on researchers’ working spaces.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	It has been established as a yearly procedure.	

Title action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target Current status (as reported in the Interim Assessment)	Action to be taken / Comments	New timing
II.4.i. Assign a senior mentor to each junior researcher to help clarify tenure standards, provide regular feedback on research, and provide help to get invitations to seminars and conferences. (Principles 28, 36, 37, 40)	May 2016	Senior committee	Midterm survey responses  <i>Senior mentors have been assigned to CREI Junior researchers.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
III.1.i. Distribute among researchers the results of the periodic external evaluations. (Principle 35)	May 2016	Director and Business Manager	Midterm survey responses  <i>On December 1, 2017, CREI had its 3-year external evaluation, obtaining the maximum score possible ("A"). The conclusions of the evaluation report were communicated to CREI researchers on February 19, 2018.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	--	
III.1.ii. Hold annual meetings with all researchers to explain the main issues regarding the running of CREI, including hiring plans, sources of government and grant funding, expenses, etc. (Principle 35)	May 2017	Director and Business Manager	Midterm survey responses  <i>In 2016 and 2017 we held annual meetings for this purpose and we will continue with this practice in the next years.</i>  <i>COMPLETED</i>	These meetings are held several times a year in order to keep CREI researchers informed.	

### 3. 2<sup>nd</sup> HRS4R ACTION PLAN

As shown in the table before, there are some actions from the 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan to be completed and other actions that, although they are completed, they have to be implemented as standard CREI procedure.

Having discussed the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan and the results of the assessment review, the actions to carry out during the 2<sup>nd</sup> HRS4R Action Plan consist of the continuation of 5 actions from the 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan and 3 new actions related to researchers' career and compensation and governance:

No	C&C Princ.	Proposed action
1	10	<p><b>(I.1.iv) Make an effort to attract female candidates. Action completed but it needs periodic update.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find new ways to increase women's participation in CREI activities.</li> <li>- Record women's participation in our internal reports (CREI recruitment report, CREI activities report, etc.).</li> <li>- Design internal procedures to ensure a gender perspective is taken into account in all CREI activities.</li> </ul> <p>Responsible Unit: Director / Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: 2021</p>
2	5	<p><b>(I.2.i.) Finish the "Guide for New Researchers".</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finish the document.</li> <li>- Design internal procedures to review and update periodically its content.</li> </ul> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: May 2018</p>
3	24	<p><b>(I.2.iii) Continue exploring new ways to help researchers' spouses access the local labor market.</b></p> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: 2019</p>

No	C&C Princ.	Proposed action
4	26	<p><b>(I.3.i.) Finish the analysis of financial conditions offered by other European and US institutions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finish the document.</li> <li>- Design internal procedures to review and update periodically its contents.</li> </ul> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: December 2019</p>
5	24,29	<p><b>(II.1.iv) Finish the “Researcher Handbook”.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finish the document and publish it.</li> <li>- Design internal procedures to review and update periodically its contents.</li> </ul> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: December 2018</p>
6	13	<p><b>Develop the CREI OTM-R policy.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approve the CREI OTM-R policy and make it public through CREI’s website.</li> <li>- Design internal procedures to apply the CREI OTM-R policy.</li> </ul> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: 2021</p>
7	2	<p><b>Code of Conduct.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design a CREI Code of Conduct aligned with the principles of the C&amp;C.</li> <li>- Formal approval of this Code of Conduct.</li> <li>- Implementation of the Code of Conduct along the CREI organization.</li> </ul> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: 2021</p>

No	C&C Princ.	Proposed action
8	24	<p><b>Working conditions.</b></p> <p>- Improve researchers' working conditions to make CREI a more attractive employer and attract and retain researcher talent. Explore the implementation of a Flexible Remuneration Plan.</p> <p>Responsible Unit: Business Manager</p> <p>Timing: 2021</p>