HRS4R

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS

ACTION PLAN 2024-2027

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) is a European Commission initiative designed to align research institutions with the principles outlined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These principles promote transparent, open, and merit-based recruitment processes, ensuring a supportive and inclusive working environment for researchers across Europe. In May 2015, CREAF (Centre for Ecological Research and Forestry Applications) was awarded the "HR Excellence in Research" distinction, recognizing its commitment to fostering such an environment.

This document outlines CREAF's Strengthened Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), through which the centre aims to assist both its researchers and the researchers employing them in adopting the updated Charter for Researchers. The document identifies the strengths and weaknesses of current practices and presents an Action Plan for 2024–2027 that will guide CREAF's efforts to enhance its human resources policies.

The European framework

In July 2023, the European Commission unveiled a comprehensive set of measures aimed at strengthening the European Research Area (ERA), making it more resilient, attractive, and competitive. Among these measures, the Commission introduced a new Charter for Researchers, directed at researchers, employers, funders, and policymakers. This new Charter is an evolution of the previous (2005) European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The original European Charter for Researchers was a set of general principles and requirements that outlined the roles, responsibilities, and entitlements of researchers, as well as those of employers and funders of researchers. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers complemented the Charter with general principles and guidelines that employers and funders should follow when recruiting or appointing researchers. A total of 1,444 organizations across Europe endorsed the previous Charter and Code principles.

The new Charter builds on this foundation, featuring updated principles and a streamlined structure. It is a key instrument in the EU's policy to promote attractive research careers. Consequently, it has guided CREAF's HRS4R Action Plan for 2024–2025 following its structure in four pillars:

   a. Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science

   b. Researchers Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

   c. Working Conditions and Practices

   d. Research Careers and Talent Development

The Centre

CREAF is a public research center that generates knowledge through research to understand nature and collaborates with society to find informed solutions to global and local environmental challenges. Its strength lies in combining research excellence, high capacity for knowledge transfer, and significant impact on policy and society. CREAF has shown remarkable progress, increasing scientific output (from 120 to 300 SCI papers per year in 10 years, 90% in Q1), securing EU-funded projects (over 40 current EU projects, 6 MSCA grants, and 2 ERC grants), and gaining international recognition. CREAF also demonstrates strong leadership in communication, citizen science, talent development, and successful HRS4R and EDI strategies.

The centre is currently composed of 308 people of whom 164 are research staff. These include 51 senior researchers (R3 and R4) that contractually pertain to five independent institutions: CREAF itself, the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the University of Barcelona (UB), the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA). There are also 64 predoctoral researchers (R1), 49 postdoctoral researchers (R2).

CREAF'S HRS4R DESIGN

The development of an institution's HRS4R is achieved through an internal analysis based on the principles of the Charter and Code, culminating in the creation and publication of the HR Strategy on the institution's website. After the European Commission acknowledges that the institution has adopted this strategy, the strengthened HRS4R procedure is structured into three main phases: initial, implementation, and award renewal, each with a fixed timeline of 12, 24, or 36 months, respectively (Figure 1). CREAF received the HRS4R award in May 2015, and we are currently in the award renewal phase without a site visit.
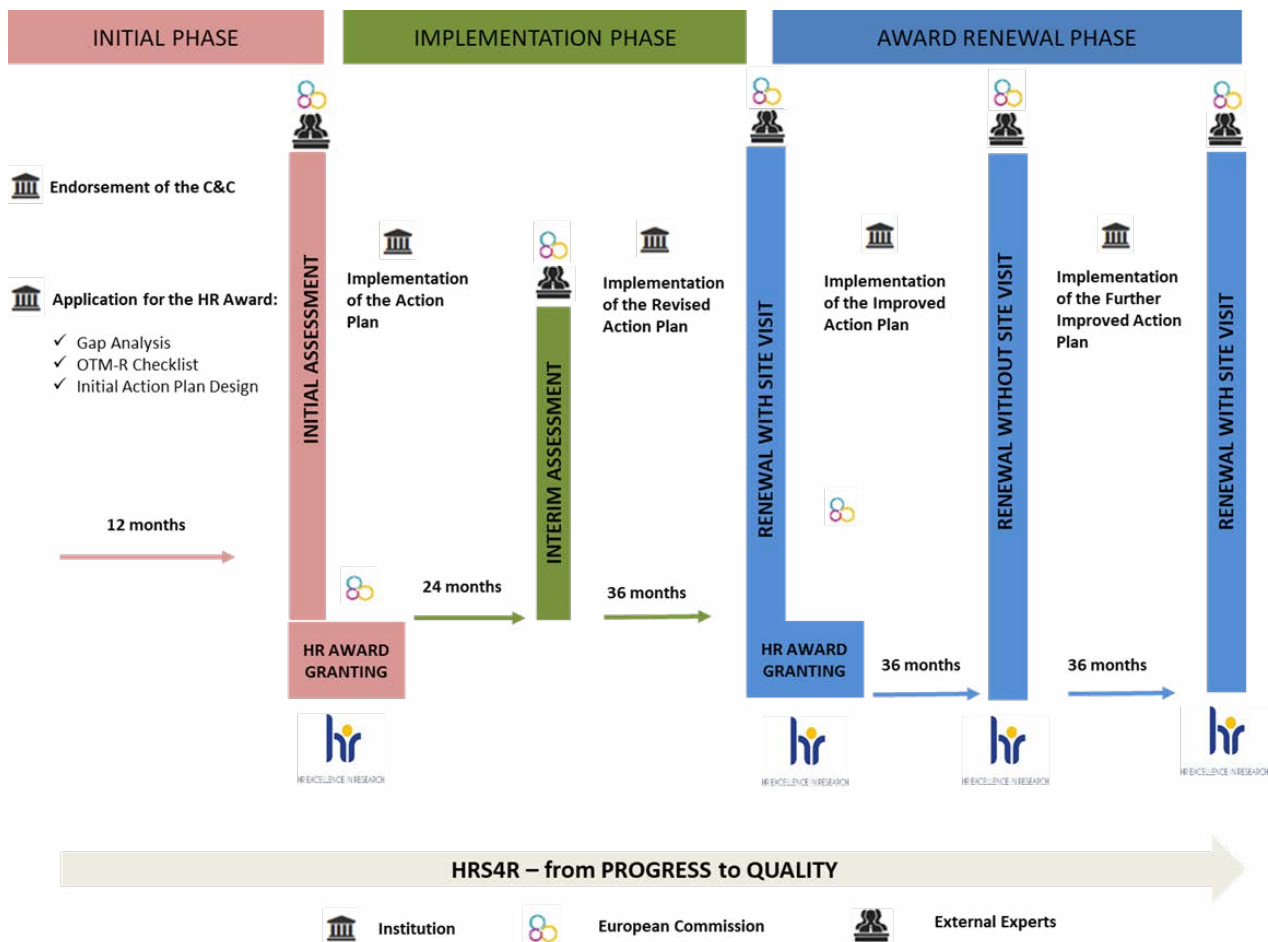

Figure 1. Timeline and actions of the main phases of the HRS4R development.

Similar to previous CREAF's HRS4R action plans, the 2024–2027 Action Plan has been developed under the coordination of the HRS4R Working Group, which includes the Director, the Administration Manager, and representatives of researchers and research managers. The working group has met regularly to monitor the progress of the strategy's development and to help address any challenges. Additionally, because our HRS4R is fully aligned with CREAF's overall strategy, we have benefited from the participation of the research community through institutional bodies such as the Workers' Committee, the EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee, the Research and Development Committee, the Severo Ochoa Committee, and the CoARA Committee, which have co-designed several initiatives outlined in the current action plan.

The 2024–2027 HRS4R Action Plan has been designed following a comprehensive GAP analysis, aligned with the four thematic areas of the new Charter for Researchers, which updates and replaces the 2005 Charter and Code for Researchers with new and revised principles. This analysis, combined with the feedback provided by the external experts' from the 2021 site visit, has helped us to identify key strengths and weaknesses. A summary of these, along with new priorities and strategic decisions, is presented in the following section.

Although the current HRS4R strategy prioritizes improving the working conditions of researchers within the center, there is a strong commitment to ensuring equal treatment for all professional groups. As a result, the action plan includes initiatives addressing the needs of all staff.

In September 2024, a general anonymous survey was conducted to gather feedback on the implementation of CREAF's HRS4R (see Annex A). Reflecting the center's approach to extending the HRS4R framework to all professional groups, the survey was open to all staff, not just researchers.

The survey was structured around the four groups of principles from the new Charter and Code to ensure alignment with the updated framework. A total of 307 people belong to the CREAF community, with 132 responding to the survey (43% participation). The respondents represent diverse roles and departments, ensuring a pluralistic view. Among them, 54 are men, 56 women, 2 non-binary, and 20 preferred not to disclose their gender. By professional group, the responses include 36 senior researchers, 15 postdoctoral researchers, 16 predoctoral researchers, 34 research technicians, and 31 research management staff.

The average scores across the four pillars reveal varying levels of satisfaction within the organization:

- Ethics, Integrity, and Open Science: Scores average 3.6, reflecting generally positive perceptions but highlighting opportunities for improvement in awareness and communication.

- Recruitment, Evaluation, and Career Progression: With an average of 3.3, concerns center around transparency in promotion processes and recognition.

- Working Conditions: Scores are closer to 3, indicating notable dissatisfaction, particularly with salaries and physical workspaces.

- Training and Development: Averaging 3.7, this pillar receives favorable feedback, especially for initiatives like the institutional training program, though gaps remain in support for non-research staff.

Satisfaction levels by gender are relatively consistent. By professional group, postdoctoral researchers report the lowest satisfaction, particularly regarding recognition and supervision, underlining challenges in career progression and support.

In summary, The revised GAP analysis together with the results from the HRS4R survey, the feedback from external experts during the 2021 site visit, and other institutional strategies—such as CREAF's Strategic Plan and the Severo Ochoa institutional project—have all been carefully considered in designing this action plan. These inputs have guided the prioritization of new actions proposed to further strengthen CREAF's HRS4R policies for the 2024–2027 period.

All CREAF's HRS4R action plans can be consulted in our website.

GAP ANALYSIS

PILLAR 1: ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS

Under Pillar 1, CREAF has made significant progress in promoting ethics, integrity, gender equality, and open science. Notably, the design of the Research Integrity Promotion Plan and the formation of the CoARA Commission demonstrate our commitment to fostering a culture of research integrity and advancing research assessment practices. Furthermore, the freedom of scientific research continues to be fully upheld at CREAF, allowing researchers to explore new ideas without restrictions. We believe that the recent appointment of a new Open Science and Knowledge Management (OS-KM) Officer will also embed open science practices into CREAF's culture. Moreover, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan for 2023-2027, along with the new harassment protocol and our representation in gender national networks such as CERCA and SOMMa, reflects our ongoing efforts to contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable research environment. Finally, regarding Open Science to Society, a dedicated person to promote and support these practices has been appointed. This person has the task to promote interaction of a specific citizen science working group at CREAF.

Despite these strengths, some areas remain in need of development. CREAF currently lacks a formal procedure for managing suspected scientific misconduct, which is essential for maintaining research integrity. Additionally, we do not yet have a systematic procedure for tracking, storing, organizing, and sharing data under the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) principles, which is critical to advancing open science practices. There is also a need to improve staff competencies in Open Science and Knowledge Management (OS-KM), as many employees lack the skills to fully engage with these emerging practices. Finally, while we have made significant strides in gender diversity, addressing other forms of diversity, such as racial, ethnic, or socio-economic diversity, remains a challenge.

Moving forward, our new action plan prioritizes all these areas identified.

PILLAR 2: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In Pillar 2, CREAF demonstrates several strengths in its approach to researchers' assessment, recruitment, and progression. The implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) practices, with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) publicly available, reflects our commitment to fair recruitment processes. Additionally, the adoption of Factorial HR software as an e-tool has streamlined our recruitment and selection processes, making them more efficient and user-friendly. Our adhesion to CoARA and the establishment of a dedicated CoARA working group aimed to promote the deployment of CREAF's CoARA Plan further signify our intent to enhance our recruitment, selection, and promotion policies, aligning them with best practices in research assessment.

However, challenges remain that may hinder our progress in this area. Aligning our processes with CoARA principles represents a significant cultural shift for the organization, which is expected to be gradual. Furthermore, most of our staff is hired by external bodies, limiting our influence over the selection processes. This lack of direct involvement poses a challenge in ensuring that our recruitment practices fully reflect the values and standards we aspire to uphold at CREAF.

To address these weaknesses, our action plan will focus on fostering a cultural understanding of CoARA principles among staff and stakeholders, while implementing training and resources to support this transition.

PILLAR 3: WORKING CONDITIONS

In Pillar 3, CREAF showcases several strengths related to working conditions and the dissemination and exploitation of research results. The recent appointment of a new Transfer Officer signifies our commitment to enhancing the management of intellectual property and technology transfer. We have also implemented IPR training sessions, equipping our staff with the necessary skills to navigate intellectual property rights effectively. Additionally, the introduction of a new Impact Officer, the first of its kind at Catalan level, positions us as leaders in driving change in how research impact is framed and assessed. Moreover, we have organized numerous impact capacity-building workshops aimed at empowering our staff and we have promoted direct engagement of researchers with policy actors, civil society and citizens.

However, we face notable challenges that may impact our working conditions and practices. We are currently in the process of renewing our labour agreement, which is a tremendous opportunity to improve staff salaries but at the same time, as a public center, we are constrained by legal limitations and budgetary restrictions, which require careful navigation to ensure compliance and secure necessary approvals for operational changes.

To address these weaknesses, our action plan will prioritize the timely renewal of the labour agreement to improve salaries and working conditions for all staff. We also continue prioritizing our commitment to promote transfer knowledge and research impact to society.

PILLAR 4: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Under Pillar 4, CREAF has made significant strides in enhancing the professional development of our researchers, largely thanks to the Severo Ochoa project. For the first time, we have established a Career Service dedicated to supporting researchers in their career growth. This service offers a variety of initiatives, including bi-weekly scientific seminars, a quarterly training program aimed at developing both transferable and research skills, and curated resources available on our intranet. Additionally, we host career development sessions specifically designed for early-career academics, covering essential topics such as career opportunities in academia and beyond, crafting effective CVs, and excelling in interviews. Feedback from participants has been very positive.

Despite these strengths, we face some challenges in our professional development initiatives. Currently, there is no formal code for good supervision, leading to inconsistencies that can depend on group dynamics or individual supervisors. Furthermore, given the relatively small size of CREAF, it can be difficult to find mentors, due to potential conflicts of interest. To address this, we propose implementing a peer-mentoring program in collaboration with other institutions, allowing researchers to benefit from a broader network of mentorship opportunities while fostering a supportive community.

2024-2027 ACTION PLAN

The aim of the 2024-2027 Action Plan is to ensure that the evolution of CREAF is in line with the HRS4R standards.

The proposed actions have been grouped in four pillars:

1. Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science,

2. Researchers Assessment, Recruitment and Progression,

3. Working Conditions and Practices,

4. Research Careers and Talent Development in alignment with the European Code and Charter.

A responsible unit, a target audience with a timeframe and indicators have been defined for each action. CREAF HRS4R Working Group will assess the implementation of the Action Plan and will propose adjustments.

	Title action	Responsible	Target audience/ Timeframe	Indicator(s)
PILLAR I: ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE				
01	Implement training and tools to raise awareness and guidance on CoARA research assessment principles and research integrity practices.	CoARA Working Group	All research staff 2025 Q1-2027 Q2	Courses, participants and satisfaction New tools developed
02	To develop an open procedure for the management of Suspected Scientific Misconduct	Director, Researchers commission and CoARA Working Group	All research staff 2025 Q3	New procedure

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

03	Increase the number of publications that are self-archived in the DDD repository, and that are published in ORE or diamond open access journals.	Open Science and Knowledge management officer	All research staff 2025 Q1-2027 Q4	Percentage of open access publications in ORE and OA journals
04	Implement a current research information system (CRIS) to track, store, organize, analyse, exploit, control, and share data under the FAIR principles	Open Science and Knowledge management officer	All research staff 2026 Q1	CRIS implemented
05	Develop and implement a comprehensive training programme for data stewards and data curators to enhance data management practices across the organization	Open Science and Knowledge management officer	All research staff 2026 Q1, 2027 Q1	Courses, number of participants and satisfaction
06	To expand and strengthen citizen science research	Impact officer, citizen science technician and Communication Dept.	Researchers Q1 2025- Q4 2027	Number of activities targeting underrepresenting citizens. Number of cit sci working group meetings and activities. Number of interactions with cit sci networks and institutions
07	To implement and evaluate CREAF's JEDI Plan (2024-2027)	EDI officer and EDI committee	All staff Q4 2024, Q4 2025, Q1 2026, Q1 2027	Final evaluation report of CREAF'S JEDI Plan 2024-2027
08	Perform regular awareness campaigns on commemoration of 11th February	EDI officer and Communication Department	All staff Q1 2025, Q1 2026, Q1 2027	Links to the annual campaigns
09	Design and implement a 'Women in Science Leadership Program'	EDI officer	Women researchers (R3 and R4) and women research managers leading an area or unit. Q1 2027	*Number of participants and satisfaction*

10	Consolidate CREAF's mobility program	Technical coordination	CREAF's early career researchers and researchers from outside institution **Q1-Q2 2025**	*Number of participants in the programme.*
PILLAR II: RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION				
11	Redesign CREAF's recruitment, selection and promotion policy and procedures following CoARA principles	CoARA working group	Researchers **Q1 2025- Q4 2026**	*New policies*
12	Engage with CoARA working groups, the Spanish national chapter and/or general assembly as appropriate to support the systemic reform, exchange good practices and monitor global progress	CoARA working group	CREAF **Q1 2025**	*Number of initiatives (networks, conferences, etc.) with CREAF representation*
13	Keep monitoring OTM-R policy indicators and communicate results	HR Department	All staff **Q4 2024, Q4 2025, Q4 2026, Q4 2027**	Indicators published Number of communications to staff
PILLAR III: WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES				
14	To improve CREAF's lab facilities	Lab officer	All staff **Q1 2025-Q4 207**	Description of the facilities improved, and budget invested
15	To reorganize office space uses to sustainably support staff growth	General Manager	All staff **Q1 2025-Q4 2025**	New rules and monitoring system
16	To set up a new collective bargaining agreement including better salaries for all staff and a career progression plan program for all staff members	General Manager, Director and HR Dept	All staff **2025 Q3**	New collective bargaining agreement with better salaries and clear rules for professional advancement and promotion.

17	Promote researchers' participation in organisation govern-ance	Director and technical coordination	Researchers Q1 2025-Q4 2027	Researchers' representation in institutional decision-making bodies
18	To promote that CREAF's research results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both)	Transfer officer / Open Science and Knowledge management officer	All research staff Q2 2026- Q2 2027	Training on open licenses, copyright, patented inventions, trade secrets and the balance between openness and commercial potential/ number of participants/satisfaction
19	Consolidate CREAF's research data management policy and strategy that ensures the availability and utility of CREAF's research data.	Open Science and Knowledge management officer	All research staff Q2 2025	New policy
20	To engage and collaborate with stakeholders to maximise uptake and production of impactful research.	Impact officer	All research staff Q1 2027	Number of Impact narratives and impact stories detailing the incorporation of research results in environmental decision making at local, national and EU level and other impacts of CREAF's research.
PILLAR IV: RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT				
21	To consolidate and improve CREAF's career service.	Academic talent officer	All research staff Q1 2025- Q4 2027	*Career development group sessions run, participants and satisfaction* *Individual consultations*

22	To consolidate CREAF's training program 'Watering Talents' with courses also tailored to research management and administration staff as well.	Academic talent officer, HR Dept.	All Staff Q1 2025- Q4 2027	*Number of courses per year, participants and satisfaction*
23	To develop a peer mentoring program for early-career researchers.	Academic talent and EDI	Postdoctoral researchers Q2 2027	*Number of postdoctoral researchers engaged in the program and satisfaction*
24	To develop a supervision code of good practices for predoctoral and also postdoctoral researchers.	Academic talent officer and PhD Commission	Predoctoral researchers and supervisors Q3 2025	*Supervision code of good practices* *Number of awareness session conducted*
GENERAL				
25	To conduct a general satisfaction survey to all staff.	General Manager	All staff Q3 2027	*Results report*

ANNEX A: HRS4R 2024 SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

Foreword

The 2024 HRS4R Survey was conducted in September 2024 with the aim of evaluating the level of satisfaction among staff in various areas of the centre, as well as identifying strengths and areas for improvement within the organization.

The survey was conducted through the Microsoft Forms platform, guaranteeing the anonymity of the participants. It was aimed at all personnel that make up the CREAF community, including contracted personnel, as well as seconded and associated personnel, to obtain the highest possible diversity of perspectives in the responses. A total of 21 questions were asked structured as to follow the 4 pillars included in the European Charter for Researchers regarding Ethics, Integrity, Gender, and Open Science-Recruitment, Evaluation, and Career Progression-Working conditions and Training and Development. To evaluate it we use a Likert scale from 1 to 5; where 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree and an additional don't know no answer category. Moreover, we included some open questions per pillar whose analysis is also part of the present report in each dedicated section.

In total, 307 people belong to the CREAF community, and a total of 132 have responded, representing a 43%, representing a diverse sample of staff from different departments and roles within the organization. The responses come from staff with very varied profiles and professional experiences, ensuring a representative and pluralistic view of the sample.

Regarding gender distribution, of the 132 people who completed the survey, 54 are men, 56 are women, 2 identified as non-binary, 20 preferred not to indicate their gender. Additionally, regarding the professional profile of the participants, segmenting the responses according to the work group they belong to, we find the following: senior research staff 36 responses, postdoctoral staff 15, predoctoral staff 16, research technicians 34, and research management staff 31.

The survey results provide an insight into the perceptions and experiences of the staff, identifying both strengths and areas needing improvement. The global evaluation of responses suggests that satisfaction levels are generally mid-high (between 3-4) across most areas. Scores tend to fall slightly below the threshold for "high satisfaction" (4-5), indicating room for improvement but a relatively positive overall sentiment. The question regarding work-life balance achieved some of the best results, with scores around 4 across genders and professional groups, reflecting a general agreement that the centre supports employees in balancing work and personal life. Questions about working conditions (space and facilities) received significantly lower scores, averaging around 2.5, indicating widespread dissatisfaction with the current infrastructure and resources available.

The average scores by pillar reveal differences in satisfaction:

- Ethics, Integrity, and Open Science: Scores average around 3.6, indicating an adequate perception with minor areas for improvement in awareness and communication.

- Recruitment, Evaluation, and Career Progression: Scores hover closer to 3.3, with concerns about transparency in promotion processes and recognition.

- Working Conditions: With an average closer to 3, dissatisfaction is more pronounced, especially regarding salaries and physical spaces.

- Training and Development: Scores range around 3.7, reflecting positive feedback on initiatives like "Watering Talents" but identifying gaps in support for non-research staff.

Overall, scores by gender are relatively consistent, with no major disparities. The non-binary group, however, often reports higher satisfaction (e.g., in opportunities for professional advancement) but constitutes a small sample, which may not be fully representative. The "prefer not to say" group consistently scores lower, particularly in questions about recognition and inclusion, suggesting a need to address specific concerns.

Overall, scores by Professional Group are Postdoctoral researchers frequently report the lowest satisfaction levels in areas like recognition and supervision, reflecting challenges in career progression and support.

Research management staff often score lower in questions about training relevance and working conditions, indicating potential gaps in addressing their specific needs.

The responses obtained reflect the priorities and concerns of the centre's staff have been used as a concrete foundation for the development of CREAF 2024-2027 HRS4R Action Plan. The plan has incorporated the insights and action points derived from the analysis of the survey responses, with the aim of enhancing employee well-being and overall satisfaction while fostering a more motivating, productive, balanced, inclusive, and satisfactory work environment for all members of CREAF.

Below are the results of the general sample expressed in percentages, with a total sample of 132 people. Additionally, the attached results are expressed in averages, segregated by gender and group of membership.

Survey results

Which group do you belong to?

- Senior researcher
- Postdoctoral
- Predoctoral
- Research technician
- Research management and administration staff

24%	11%	12%	26%	24%

2. What's your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non- binary
- Prefer not say

41%	42%	2%	15%

Ethics, integrity, gender and open science

3. Do you think that ethical considerations and integrity in research are well addressed at the centre?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3,6)

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree
- (6) Don't know no answer

0,8%

8,3%	18,8%	30,8%	11,3%	30,1%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.8	3.6	5	3.2

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.8	3.9	3.3	3.8	3.3

In general, the responses regarding how ethical considerations and integrity in research are addressed with more than 60% of respondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options. However, almost a third of the participants selected the "don't know / prefer not to answer" option, suggesting a lack of awareness about the centre's actions and policies in this area. Among those who did respond, the group that prefers not to disclose their gender scored an average of 3.2, indicating a lower perception in this area.

Regarding professional groups, research management and administration staff scored an average of 3.3, also reflecting a slightly lower perception compared to other categories. Predoctoral researchers gave lower scores, indicating that, while the overall perception is that these issues are managed adequately, there are differences in perception based on gender and professional profile.

4. Do you think that equity, diversity, and inclusion are well addressed at the centre?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.6)

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly agree
- (6) Don't know no answer

2,3%	9,8%	21,2%	44,7%	17,4%	4,5%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.7	3.8	5	3.2

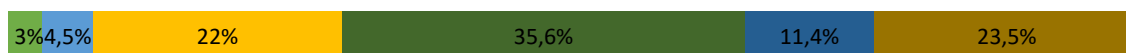| Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
4.1	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.6

In general, the responses regarding how equity, diversity, and inclusion are addressed with more than 60% of respondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options. The results of the survey regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion indicate that the male and non-binary genders exhibit a slightly higher satisfaction on how CREAF addresses these aspects compared to the other genders. Regarding the group affiliation, senior and technical research staff have rated the item more favourably than support, predoctoral, and postdoctoral staff.

5. Do you think that open science is well addressed at the centre?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.6)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

3%	4,5%	22%	35,6%	11,4%	23,5%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.7	3.6	5	3.3

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.7	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.5

In general, open science appears to be adequately addressed at the centre, with more than 60% of repondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options. Although postdocs and the "prefer not to say" group gave slightly lower scores. This suggests that these groups may perceive the implementation of open science initiatives as less clear or effective, highlighting areas for improvement in communication and application in the qualitative comments received in the survey.

6. In case of extreme ratings (1 or 5), please explain your answers by indicating both areas for improvement and strengths. If you have not marked extreme responses, do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

The opinions reflect several key areas for improvement within the centre. Regarding open science and access to information, there is an emphasis on improving access to scientific publications, especially for technical and non-research staff, in order to effectively implement the principle of open science. It is recommended to enhance access through specific funds or internal resources. Regarding ethics and research integrity, there is a call for the creation of clear protocols to address ethical issues, such as the fraudulent use of affiliations, to build trust among staff. Clearer protocols and a zero-tolerance culture are suggested, along with the establishment of an external commission to assess these cases. Regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion, progress in initiatives such as the JEDI plan are acknowledged.

Recruitment, Evaluation, and Career Progression

7. Do you consider that the selection processes at CREAF are aligned with the centre's open, transparent, and merit-based selection policy (OTM-R)?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.6)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

0,8%

11,3%	15,8%	39,8%	12%	20,3%
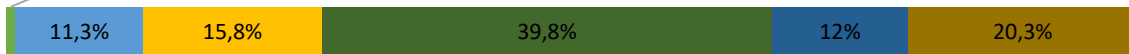
Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.7	3.8	4	3.2

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.8	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.4

Overall, the responses suggest that the selection processes at CREAF are well aligned with the open, transparent, and merit-based selection policy (OTM-R), with scores close to 4. However, the "prefer not to say" group gave slightly lower scores, indicating that this group may have a somewhat less favorable or less clear perception of how these principles are applied in their cases. Similarly, predoctoral researchers also gave slightly lower scores. It is important to note that almost all predoctoral researchers are selected through national competitive fellowships. Consequently, the selection process is conducted by external funding bodies and does not follow CREAF's OTM-R policy. In summary, while the majority perceive the selection policy positively, there is room for improvement in communication and transparency.

8. Do you think that the centre evaluates and recognizes your performance, training, and skills in relation to your position correctly?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.1)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

7,5%	24,8%	22,6%	30,1%	10,5%	4,5%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.2	3.3	2	2.5

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3	3.4	3	2.9	3.4

Regarding the evaluation and recognition of performance, training, and skills, most respondents rated these aspects mid-to-high, with over 60% selecting neutral to strongly agree options. However, one-third expressed discontent, indicating room for improvement.

Based on the results obtained, no significant differences between genders are observed regarding the centre's recognition of performance, skills, and training, as both men and female show similar average scores, indicating no notable differences in perception.

Similarly, when analysing the results by group of belonging, no significant differences are observed. Senior researchers, research technicians, and predoctoral staff show similar average scores, indicating a consistent perception across these groups. However, postdoctoral staff gave slightly lower scores.

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 2.6)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

9. Do you believe there are sufficient opportunities for professional advancement and promotion? 3,8%

12,8%	33,8%	28,6%	17,3%	3,8%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
2.7	2.7	4	2.3

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
2.3	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.9

In general, the perception of sufficient opportunities for professional advancement and promotion appears to be mid-low at the centre it is important to note that 47% of respondents selected "disagree" or "strongly disagree," with 12.8% specifically selecting "strongly disagree." Despite this, the values for 3 to 5 are close to 50%, indicating a significant portion of respondents have a neutral to positive perception of the opportunities for professional advancement and promotion.

There are no significant differences between genders or affiliation groups.

10. In case of extreme ratings (1 or 5), please explain your answers by indicating both areas for improvement and strengths. If you have not marked extreme responses, do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

The responses show some concern about the lack of professional promotion opportunities at CREAF, especially for non-research staff. While most of the sample agrees that the OTM-R policy is being properly implemented, others are unaware of whether there is a lack of transparency, and some believe that it is neither objective nor transparent, creating uncertainty among employees. It is important to note that the question related to the OTM-R policy received a score of 3.6, which is relatively positive. Therefore, while there are individual comments expressing concerns, these do not represent the majority opinion.

Additionally, some comments suggest a perception of inequality in promotion opportunities, which may depend on subjective factors such as personal relationships rather than actual performance. This perception, although not widespread, highlights the need for clearer and more objective criteria in the promotion process to ensure fairness and transparency.

Regarding working and salary conditions, some comments indicate that salaries are low compared to other centres, and the lack of job stability limits professional growth opportunities, as there is neither a defined career plan nor a regular evaluation system to recognize performance, making internal progression more difficult.

Working conditions

11. Do you think there is a good working environment at CREAF?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 4)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

1,5%

6,8%	7,5%	49,6%	31,6%	3%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
4.1	4.2	5	3.7

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
4	4.2	3.8	4.1	4.3

The perception of a good working environment at CREAF appears to be higher scored question of the survey together with the questions regarding work-life balance, with more than 80% of respondents selecting agree to strongly agree options, and a 7,5% note a neutral option.

There are no significant differences between genders or affiliation groups.

12. Do you think there are good working conditions regarding salary compensation?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.1)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

9%	18%	28,6%	33,1%	7,5%	3,8%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.2	3.3	4	2.5

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.2	3.4	2.8	3.5	2.7

In general, the perception of good working conditions regarding salary compensation at CREAF appears to be mid-low, more than two thirds of respondents are neutral or agree with the statement that there are good working conditions regarding salary compensation. Despite this, 27% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

No significant differences between male and female are observed.

Senior researchers, research technicians, and predoctoral staff show similar average scores, indicating a consistent perception across these groups. Professional groups with lower salaries such as research management and administration and predoctoral researchers staff gave slightly lower scores.

13. Do you think there are good working conditions regarding the space and facilities?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 2.5)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

2,3%

25,8%	23,5%	28,8%	17,4%	2,3%	

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
2.4	2.7	1	2.2

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
2.5	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.6

In general, the perception of good working conditions regarding space and facilities at CREAF appears to be lowest scored question of the survey, with 17.4% of respondents selecting "agree" and 2.3% selecting "strongly agree" options, and 28.8% noting a neutral option.

Based on the results obtained, no significant differences between genders are observed regarding the perception of good working conditions regarding space and facilities, as both men and women show similar average scores, indicating no notable differences in perception.

Similarly, no significant differences are observed among groups.

14. Do you think there are good working conditions regarding the work-life balance?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 4)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

2,3%   1,5%

6,1%	15,9%	47%	27,3%	
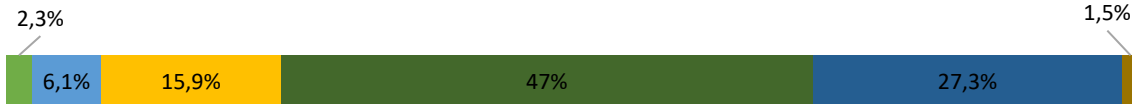
Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
4	4	4	3.7

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.8	4.1	3.9	4	3.7

There is a general perception of good working conditions regarding the work-life balance at CREAF appears to be one of the highest scored together with the work environment, with more than 90% of respondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options.

No significant differences are observed among gender and groups.

15. Do you think that CREAF promotes staff participation in the daily management and strategy of the centre (for example, in the development and implementation of strategic plans, the Severo Ochoa project, etc.)?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

5,3%	20,5%	23,5%	26,5%	6,1%	18,2%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3	3.2	5	2.9

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.1	2.9	3	3.5	3.2

In general, the perception of staff participation in the daily management and strategy of the center at CREAF appears to be mid score, with more than 60% of respondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options.

Based on the results, no significant gender differences were observed.

When analyzing the results by affiliation group, no significant differences were found, although postdoctoral researchers reported the highest scores.

16. Do you think that CREAF has adequate procedures for handling staff complaints/appeals and resolving labour conflicts?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 2.9)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

9,8%	17,4%	15,9%	18,9%	5,3%	32,6%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
2.9	3.1	5	2.2

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
2.9	3.3	2.5	3.4	2.5

In general, the perception of adequate procedures for handling staff complaints/appeals and resolving labour conflicts at CREAF appears to be moderate, with 26.5% of respondents selecting "agree" and 6.1% selecting "strongly agree" options, and 23.5% noting a neutral option. It should be noted, however, that almost one third of respondents are unable to evaluate if CREAF has adequate procedures for handling staff complaints or appeals, and resolving labour conflicts. This suggest that more information of the already existing procedures is needed

No significant differences between genders are observed regarding the perception of adequate procedures for handling staff complaints/appeals and resolving labour conflicts, as both men and women show similar average scores, indicating no notable differences in perception.

When examining the results by professional group, no notable differences emerge. Senior researchers, research technicians, and predoctoral staff report comparable average scores, reflecting a uniform perception among these groups. In contrast, research management and administrative staff provided slightly lower ratings, pointing to a potential need for enhanced support tailored to their needs

Additionally, it is important to highlight that many conflict management processes are not visible. This discretion, while potentially efficient, lacks transparency. It would also be beneficial to delve deeper into the different perceptions among groups to understand the underlying causes and address them effectively.

17. In case of extreme ratings (1 or 5), please explain your answers by indicating both areas for improvement and strengths. If you have not marked extreme responses, do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

Although there is a general consensus about the positive work environment and work-life balance, some comments indicate that there are two main and urgent issues regarding working conditions at CREAF. On one hand, there is a lack of space, and on the other, the salary conditions. Regarding space, there is a significant shortage of adequate and well-distributed workspaces, which limits productivity and creates a disorganized work environment between teams, affecting their ability to interact and hindering meetings and collaborations, leading to widespread dissatisfaction. Many comments highlight the need for an immediate solution, either through the reorganization of current spaces or, ideally, through the construction of a new building.

On the other hand, the salaries at the centre are perceived as inadequate and below the standards of similar research centres. There is also significant concern about the mismatch between remuneration and the workload as well as training demands. In addition to these structural issues, areas for improvement have been identified in conflict management and internal communication, as the vast majority are unaware of any clear mechanisms for resolving internal complaints and conflicts. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in decision-making and in the management of resources and expenses seems to be a recurring issue in the responses, with some suggestions for improving participatory processes and ensuring that all voices are heard.

Training and development

18. Do you think that the training offerings provided by the centre (Watering Talents, others) offer a good selection of specialized courses for your professional profile?

TOTAL SAMPLE- (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.5)

■ (1) Strongly disagree ■ (2) Disagree ■ (3) Neutral ■ (4) Agree ■ (5) Strongly agree ■ (6) Don't know no answer

5,3%	14,3%	19,5%	33,1%	21,1%	6,8%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.5	3.9	5	2.8

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.7	3.4	2.9	4	4.2

In general, the perception of the training offered at CREAF appears to be mid-high, with more than 73% of respondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options. Disagree or strongly disagree scores are below 20%.

Men scored slightly higher on the questions, while non-binary respondents gave more positive ratings, and those who preferred not to disclose their gender gave more negative ratings. However, the sample sizes for the latter two groups are very small and should be interpreted with caution.

There are variations in perception among different groups, with research management and administration staff showing significantly lower scores. Enhancing the training offered at the center with courses specifically tailored for research management and administration staff could improve overall satisfaction.

19. Do you think that CREAF provides support for your career development (mentoring program, information on opportunities inside and outside academic, CV review, interview support, etc.)?

TOTAL SAMPLE- OVERALL AVERAGE (3.3)

■(1) Strongly disagree ■(2) Disagree ■(3) Neutral ■(4) Agree ■(5) Strongly agree ■(6) Don't know no answer

5,3%	15%	24,1%	29,3%	11,3%	15%

Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.3	3.5	5	2.5

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.5	3	2.7	3.9	3.9

In general, the perception of career development support appears to be mid-high, with more than 60% of respondents selecting neutral to strongly agree options.

There are no significant differences in perception between genders, with average scores being quite similar.

There are variations in perception among different groups, with research management and administration staff showing lower scores.

It is important to highlight that the lower perception among research management and administration staff could indicate the need to improve support for this specific group. However, it should be noted that the question was directed only at researchers at various stages of their careers, and within these profiles, the results are positive.

20. Do you think that CREAF has an adequate system for supervising the development of doctoral theses and the relationship between predoctoral students and supervisors?

TOTAL SAMPLE (OVERALL AVERAGE 3.6)

■(1) Strongly disagree ■(2) Disagree ■(3) Neutral ■(4) Agree ■(5) Strongly agree ■(6) Don't know no answer

0,8%

6%	17,3%	21,1%	8,3%	46,6%
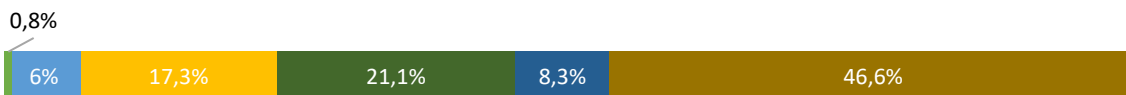
Gender			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not say
3.6	3.7	5	3.1

Group of belonging				
Senior researcher	Research technician	Research management and administration staff	Postdoctoral	Predoctoral
3.6	4	3.2	2.9	3.8

The perception of the quality of the supervision system received positive ratings from groups directly involved, such as senior researchers and predoctoral researchers. Less than 10% of respondents

disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. It is remarkable that postdoctoral researchers rated it significantly lower, highlighting the need for initiatives to enhance supervision for this group.

21. In case of extreme ratings (1 or 5), please explain your answers by indicating both areas for improvement and strengths. If you have not marked extreme responses, do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

In general, the training and development area has been positively assessed, with widespread recognition of the quality of the training. Initiatives such as the "watering talents" program stand out for their usefulness in professional growth. However, some comments suggest that the current courses are too general and do not always meet the specific needs of technical staff or administrative personnel. There is also a perception that the technical training remains at an introductory level, and that there is a lack of personalized or specialized training.

Furthermore, while research staff have clear support and career development opportunities, there is a significant gap when it comes to the professional development of administrative and management staff. This includes the lack of career plans and specific training for these roles, with a noticeable absence of resources and development programs available for Research management staff.