2 – GAP ANALYSIS - OVERVIEW

Case number: 2025PT336606

Name Organisation under review: Center for Neuroscience and Cell Biology (CNC)

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GAP ANALYSIS

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

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

Status: to what extent does this organisation meet the following principles?	Implementation: ++ = **fully** implemented +/- = **almost but not fully** implemented -/+ = **partially** implemented -- = **insufficiently** implemented	In case of --, -/+, or +/-, please **indicate the actual "gap"** between the principle and the current practice in your organisation. If relevant, list any national/regional legislation or organisational regulation currently impeding implementation	Initiatives undertaken and/or suggestions for improvement:
PILLAR 1 – ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE			
1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY	+/-	The ethical principles (2) are fulfilled in general by CNC, but the institution has not officially adhered to the Code of Ethics, Conduct and Integrity of the University of Coimbra (UC). In general, researchers are aware that they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management. A majority of researchers are aware of their accountability towards society as a whole. The principle of accountability (6) is fulfilled by most researchers, but awareness can be improved.	Initiatives undertaken: - CNC has adopted Code of Good Conduct for Preventing and Combating Harassment at work at the UC; - UC features a Research Ethics Committee available for CNC to consult, which is responsible for ensuring the highest ethical standards, dignity and non-discrimination, observance of the principles of autonomy, responsibility, honesty, quality and scientific integrity, across all areas of knowledge, promoting intellectual freedom and transparent, fair and effective processes; - CNC is in the process of implementing its internal open science policy, in compliance with EC Open Access policies; - Economic balance and administrative processes are

		Researchers are generally aware of safe working practices, in line with national legislation, including the necessary precautions for health and safety and data protection, however, awareness of the principle of good practice in research (7) can be improved.	regularly audited; - All research projects are monitored by a project manager, responsible for financial management and cost control; - Transparent management of funds is carried out through Laborders platform; - Any acquisition of goods and services by the researcher must be done through a process that includes the selection of the most viable supplier and a proper justification of the need for the acquisition, as well as the authorization by members of CNC management; - PIs are aware of their accountability towards their funders or other related public/ private bodies and are responsible for transmitting to the team members: - CNC has a Health Security and Safety Office (HSO) which provides information on health and safety to researchers and advises the Board of Directors on how to best provide conditions to ensure that CNC fulfils obligations to be in compliance with all occupational health, safety, and national environmental rules and regulations; - HSO implemented several Health and Safety procedures and guidelines that are accessible to all researchers in CNC's internal website; - HSO provides training in First Aid; - All researchers benefit from work accident insurance; -HSO has implemented a survey to the CNC community (in Portuguese and in English), where everyone can express what they find adequate or inadequate and make suggestions for improvement, leading to the continuous improvement of the Health and Safety Office; -HSO has implemented monitoring in risk assessment (chemical, biological and ergonomic) in order to make progress on the well-being and physical/mental health of CNC community; - Training courses are given to new researchers on the topics

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of good practices, taking into account exposure to chemical, biological, physical, mechanical, postural or mental load risks;

- CNC has a Data Protection Office (DPO) whose mission is to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of personal data protection policies;

- In carrying out its duties, CNC's Data Protection Officer provides yearly awareness-raising actions in the area of personal data protection that are mandatory for all CNC employees, regardless of their position or legal relationship, with the aim of providing all knowledge, means and suitable tools to act within the scope of personal data protection;

- Researchers attend yearly training in Data Protection and are aware that it should be fulfilled at all times;

- CNC's Data Protection Officer carries out annual internal audits to monitor compliance with personal data protection policies;

- The DPO also provides support for CNC collaborators in issues related to the protection of personal data and help to solve any practical difficulties detected in this area, with a dedicated Data Protection Officer;

- Internal guidelines on Data Protection have been implemented and can be found on the internal website: Privacy and Data Protection Policy; Code of Conduct for Personal Data Protection;

- Candidates are informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria;

- The advertisement of the positions includes a description of the working conditions and entitlements (e.g., salary, requirements, application process, selection methods, etc.);

- Candidates are informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

Suggestions for improvement:
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			- Officially adhere to the Code of Ethics, Conduct and Integrity of the University of Coimbra; - Communicate to CNC community about the adherence to the Code; - Have the document easily accessible for CNC researchers; - Encourage a culture of honesty and provide continuous clear information in scientific and ethical integrity in research; - Incorporate information and links about ethical issues in the Welcome Manual for researchers; - Annual training session to all new CNC researchers on this subject (could be included in the Welcome Day event); - Develop a Practical Ethics Guide by creating a concise document with key guidelines on research ethics and integrity, highlighting practical examples and best practices; - Promote ongoing awareness by hosting regular workshops or roundtable discussions on research ethics, ethical dilemmas, and scientific integrity, complementing the annual session on Welcome Day; - Establish a confidential communication channel to allow researchers to report ethical concerns or dilemmas safely and without fear of retaliation; - Include information and links regarding the guidelines and procedures that can be found on the internal website (regarding Health and Safety, precautions for recovery from information technology disasters, as well as Data protection) in the Welcome Manual for researchers; - Each research group should name a Data Steward, who will be responsible for overseeing and fostering the correct data management practices within the group, including proper backup strategies; - Create conditions for all researchers that need to have access to the adequate PPE and implementation of a periodic verification and maintenance plan for CPIs;

			- Regarding Health and Safety, implementing the already established prevention strategy not only for newcomers, but for the whole CNC community; - Creation of a document that explains the entire recruitment procedure; - Publish the recruitment procedure on CNC´s website; - Include this principle in the guidelines for Selection Committee members; - Inform candidates systematically, prior to the selection, about career prospects.
2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH	+/-	The principle of research freedom (1) is fulfilled by CNC but encouragement for researchers to pursue their own funding could be improved. Regarding the principle of professional attitude (4), generally, CNC researchers are familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms.	Initiatives undertaken: - The scientific context of the positions is usually pre-defined in the recruitment announcement. Once the researcher is recruited, they have the freedom to pursue their research activities within this context and the freedom to expand the frontiers of knowledge by designing their own projects and applying to their own funding; - Scientific freedom is proportional to scientific independence and capacity to attract funding of the researcher; - CNC has a yearly Welcome Day, with representatives of the research infrastructures and supporting offices, where functioning rules are shared with newcomers; - CNC ensures effective and timely support by the administrative structure of a help-desk system (ticketing, purchasing, travel and trips, timesheets, HR, IT-support, budgeting). Suggestions for improvement: - Include information about research freedom and links to reference documents on research ethics, good scientific practices and research misconduct in the Welcome Manual for CNC researchers;

			- Adopt as research management good practice, the attitude of informing employers, funders or supervisors when research projects are delayed, redefined or completed, or giving notice if the projects are to be terminated earlier or suspended.
3. OPEN SCIENCE	+/-	Regarding the principle of dissemination and exploitation of results (8), in 2023 the percentage of articles published in OA was 80%. Regarding the principle of public engagement (9), CNC researchers are generally aware of the importance of communicating their research activities to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. However, not all research groups are equally engaged in outreach activities as some researchers might prefer to focus their efforts and time on other activities. There is no specific training for researchers in specific scientific areas.	Initiatives undertaken: -CNC complies with dissemination and exploitation rules, as it is a requirement of public funders; - According to the policies of the University of Coimbra, which includes affiliated entities, all researchers have the obligation to publish the AAM (Author Accepted Manuscript) or the VoR (Version of Record) of peer-reviewed publications, PhD and MSc thesis in the "Estudo Geral" repository, an official OpenAIRE scientific repository; - CNC has a Technology Transfer Office (TTO) which provides support to researchers in innovation and socio-economic growth by transforming the scientific and technological knowledge developed in the laboratories into solutions to major societal challenges in healthcare; - The TTO supports researchers in four main areas (Intellectual Property and Licensing, Entrepreneurship, Academy-industry collaborations, and Training and Awareness) and has created guidelines to report technologies of commercial interest and the Technology Readiness Level document, which can be found on the internal website; - To improve skills in the exploitation of results, CNC offers two yearly courses in technology transfer: one is free and on-site, and the second is subject to a small fee, online and open to the CNC outside community. TTO gives lectures in lab meetings of the different CNC groups upon request; - CNC disseminates its scientific discoveries through the media and social networks, promoting broad outreach to the

			non-specialist public and accountability. This is achieved through the joint efforts of the CNC Science Communication Office, researchers, and the UC Communication Division. As a result, our research appears on TV, newspapers, radio, the internet, and social media, with communication tailored to each platform; - CNC has a very active Science Communication Office (SciComm) composed of a multidisciplinary team that brings together people with a broad and well-built expertise, essential for the development of an outstanding science communication strategy; - SciComm is in charge of liaising researchers with journalists and communicating the outcomes of CNC research through the presence on social networks; - SciComm fosters public engagement in science projects and activities, through the participation in national and international initiatives that involve different stakeholders / audiences all over the year; - SciComm offers yearly training in science communication for PhD students in topics such as Public Engagement in Science, Science & Art, Science & Media; - SciComm gives support to CNC researchers in the writing of communication tasks tailored to the project and scientific field, involving different and multidisciplinary stakeholders; - SciComm created guidelines on how to make a video that can be found on the internal website; - CNC has long-established relationships with non-academic institutions and societal engagement organizations, such as schools, non-profit organizations, patient associations, artistic companies, newspapers, and municipal councils, among others. These partnerships enable the execution of public engagement projects with a meaningful impact on society; - In recent years, significant funding has been attracted for the development of public engagement initiatives.

			Suggestions for improvement: - Guarantee that all possible research outputs are disseminated in Open Access; - Better dissemination of CNC services, expertise, IP, and capabilities to industry through creating a CNC Portfolio document; - Creating a working group of researchers and clinicians to increase collaboration with the Coimbra Hospitals and clinical translation of CNC research; - Strengthening relationships with traditional and new media allows for a broader dissemination of results on innovative platforms with high audience engagement, such as podcasts and videos; - Create guidelines in the media process, create infographic or use social networks to give CNC community support; Raise awareness to the use of platforms such as Biorender and Canva to improve communication; - Evaluate the need for specific training in specific scientific areas; - Raise awareness among CNC researchers for the advantages of having an established communication strategy for peers and non-peers.
4. GENDER EQUALITY	+/-	CNC has the following proportions of Females/Males: overall (65%F/35%M), among Group Leaders (56%F/44%M), among Research Line Representatives (33%F/66%M), at the level of the Board of Directors (25%F/75%M). Females are overrepresented overall, however, at the level of Managing Boards, females are underrepresented.	Initiatives undertaken: - Public notices of the opening of positions safeguard the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender; - Selection committees for recruitment as well as juries for academic exams (MSc, PhD) are balanced regarding gender (as per the UC Academic Regulamentation); - Working hours flexibility is helpful in maintaining work/life balance. Suggestions for improvement:

			- To create a working group for continuously monitoring gender balance issues at CNC and proposing actions that address the problems that are found. This working group should regularly make surveys among CNC community to identify concrete actions that can be implemented to safeguard gender balance.
5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY	+/-	Lack of an equality plan; There is no specific structure to support and advice newly recruited researchers in terms of the bureaucracy needed to get installed in Portugal; Infrastructures could be rethought to cover all types of disabilities.	Initiatives undertaken: - All contents on CNC's website are in English and all internal information is conducted in Portuguese and English; - CNC facilitates access for disadvantaged groups by stating the information on the calls; - Open positions are disseminated/advertised in Portuguese and English and in several platforms, including EURAXESS, in a manner to avoid discrimination by gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin; - CNC has implemented the "Code of Conduct for the prevention and fight against harassment in the workplace". - CNC has implemented an Institutional Coordination Committee, which includes one representative of each group, one representative of the research infrastructures and one representative of the support offices. CNC's Scientific Council includes CNC's integrated members (PhD holders) and one representative of the PhD students, however the latter cannot vote. Suggestions for improvement: - Adoption of the equality plan of the University of Coimbra, adapted to CNC activities; - Promoting the integration of the gender dimension in research projects, by giving researchers support in the proposals and delivering yearly workshops; - Creation of guidelines to support newly recruited researchers in terms of the Portuguese bureaucracy needed

			to get installed in Portugal with support of the UC's International Relations Office.
6. THE RESEARCHER	+/-	Regarding the principle of professional responsability (3), there is a general lack of awareness of the responsible research and innovation (RRI) principles. Currently no anti-plagiarism measure is used systematically to verify PhD thesis. Insufficient awareness of CNC policies against plagiarism. Regarding the principle of contractual and legal obligations (5), national, sectorial or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions might not be clear for all researchers. The knowledge about this principle might not be clear for all researchers, especially among R1 and R2 levels. Regarding the principle of recognition of the profession (22), all researchers engaged in a research career are recognised as professionals and are treated accordingly. Remark that legislation distinguishes between trainees (researchers with stipend) and employees (researchers with work contract).	Initiatives undertaken: - The Code of Ethics Conduct and Integrity of the University of Coimbra includes guidelines regarding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, cheating, copying and falsification; - The University of Coimbra provides software for detecting plagiarism, which can be used for all documents produced. - The contract signature is held in-person to allow for questions to the HR and legal staff regarding the content of the contracts; - All legal and contractual information is expressly communicated in the individual employment contract, - Contracts include clauses with different regulations: GDPR, confidentiality, intellectual property, etc; - CNC has a Technology Transfer Office, which provides consulting and training in IP-related issues. - All employment rights, including parental leave, holidays, absences and inclusion in an insurance policy, are guaranteed to researchers through an individual employment contract; - All fellows, including students, have all their rights guaranteed through a fellowship contract, namely the inclusion in personal accidents policy and the possibility of inclusion in voluntary social insurance. Suggestions for improvement: - Officially adopting at CNC, the University of Coimbra's Code of Ethics, Conduct and Integrity, which addresses the topics of integrity and plagiarism; - Design and implement RRI guidelines tailored to the specificities of CNC activities; - Adopting an institutional policy for Research Data Management in light of the FAIR principles, to promote an

			openness mindset and the practice of reuse instead of repeating previously done research; - Include information (links) about the principle of professional responsability (3) in the Welcome Manual for researchers. - Inform about the administrative staff who can clarify questions regarding legal and contractual obligations in the Welcome Guide for researchers; - Implement an individual welcome session, in which the work contract is signed, as well as a document that refers to regulations, procedures and policies; - Formal implementation of an updated version of the existing Welcome Guide for researchers. - Include information about researchers rights and insurances in the Welcome Manual.
7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS	+/-	Due to the lack of a structured career development strategy for their researchers, CNC does not have a specific policy regarding the value of mobility (29). Generally speaking, CNC encourages their researchers for mobility (geographical, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual). The principle of access to career advice (30) is generally fulfilled for PhD students and young researchers.	Initiatives undertaken: - General awareness of the recognition of mobility experience (principle 18) among Selection Committee members. - The principle of mobility has been fulfilled within the context of the EU-funded projects (MSCA-ITN, MSCA-IF and MSCA-RISE). - This principle has been applied in the context of the EU-funded projects (MSCA-ITN, MSCA-IF and MSCA-RISE) and of the in-house Doctoral Programme; - In the framework of the R&D Ci BB, groups are evaluated and advised by the External Advisory Board; - A mentoring program for young researchers is in place. This program connects young researchers with senior investigators that have volunteered to be mentors. A confidentiality agreement is signed by the two parts. A positive, constructive and equal relationship is encouraged between mentor and mentee. The program will be evaluated at the end of the first year.

			Suggestions for improvement: - Include the principle of value of mobility (29) in the guidelines for Selection Committee members; - Specify this recognition on the public calls, when applicable. - Extend the good practices initiated in the EU-funded projects to the Career Development policy of the institution; - Inform CNC researchers about the recently launched FCT Mobility Programme and encourage applications when pertinent; - Improve the dissemination of the mentoring initiative and include the information in the Welcome Manual for researchers.
8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH	+/-	Regarding the principle research environment (23), some of the infrastructure is outdated. Regarding funding and salaries (26), salaries are not competitive as compared to high performing countries in Europe. Generally speaking, CNC does not have a structured career development (28) strategy for their researchers.	Initiatives undertaken: - CNC is one of the centres included in a R&D unit and associated laboratory (CiBB), regularly evaluated at national level. In the latest evaluation it scored "Very Good" as R&D unit and 100% as associated laboratory, attesting for a stimulating research and research training environment, which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, and that it complies with the national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety. These evaluations result in attribution of funding from the national agency; - CNC has a Health Security and Safety Office (HSO) which provides information on health and safety to researchers and advises the Board of Directors on how to best provide conditions to ensure that CNC fulfils obligations to be in compliance with all occupational health, safety, and national environmental rules and regulations; - All researchers benefit from work accident insurance.

			- CNC offers competitive salaries, including stipends, considering the fringe benefits they entail, the cost of living and the average salary in Portugal; - CNC follows the Decree-Law 57/2016, the Labor Code (Law no. 7/2009, February 12), the Code of Administrative procedure (Decree-Law no. 4/2015, January 7) and the National Regulation for Stipends; - Regarding social security provisions, all researchers are supported by the Portuguese social security scheme in support of maternity, health and retirement; - The salary increases applied to the public sector are reflected in CNC researchers' salaries. - Under the EU-framework, CNC is leveraging 3 projects (2 ERA-Chairs and one Teaming), which foresee measures to correct the lack of a career development plan. Suggestions for improvement: - Several CNC groups have their research laboratories in an old building that is not always properly maintained. Negotiation with the UC towards having access to better spaces is necessary (and is ongoing); - Animal house facility in the same old building has several flaws; renovation is necessary and planned. - Implement a Career Development Plan for each new researcher entering the institution.
PILLAR 2 – RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION			
9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT	+/-	Regarding evaluation/ appraisal systems (11), CNC employees with contracts at UC are evaluated under specific systems for technicians, researchers and professors.	Initiatives undertaken: - CNC employees with contracts at UC are evaluated under specific systems for technicians, researchers and professors. This evaluation allows salary increases and competitiveness. - Researchers are encouraged to develop their own ideas and gain scientific independence;

		Regarding co-authorship (32), CNC does not have clear guidelines/recommendations regarding co-authorship and regarding researchers publishing independently from their supervisor(s).	- As a rule, researchers at all career stages are co-authors in scientific papers to which they contributed. Suggestions for improvement: - Implementation at CNC of a system for evaluating the researcher's progress. - Provide training on the evaluation process through workshops that help researchers understand the criteria, prepare effectively, and optimize their career advancement opportunities. - Inscribe the co-authorship principle (32) in the Career Development Strategy.
10. RECRUITMENT	+/-	CNC does not have an universal document that guides the selection committee in the creation of an open call. Lack of a document that explains the entire recruitment procedure. In general, the principle of Selection (14) is accomplished, however, there might be a lack of knowledge for selection committee members. Lack of official guidelines with recommendations for the selection committees.	Initiatives undertaken: - At CNC, working conditions are regulated by different labour laws and collective labour agreements, applied to all employees regardless of their nationality; - The advertisement of the positions is redacted to give a broad description of knowledge and competencies required, and not so specialised as to discourage suitable applicants; - The advertisement of the positions includes a description of the working conditions and entitlements, including career development prospects, for the majority of calls; - The public notice specifies all the position characteristics (e.g. salary, requirements, application process, selection methods, etc.); - The time allowed between the call for applications and the deadline for reply is considered to be realistic; - The Selection Committee is chosen to have diverse expertise and adequate gender balance; - Candidates are informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria; - After the evaluations, the candidates are informed of the strengths and weaknesses of their applications;

			- The dissemination strategy is inclusive in geographical origin and gender; - Open positions are disseminated/advertised in Portuguese and English and in several platforms, including CNC´s website and EURAXESS website; - Information about job offers is also disseminated through the institutional social networks, as well as via internal communication; - CNC encourages applications from anyone, regardless of race, colour, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, disability, for the positions it offers; - CNC favours the opening of a tender procedure for all positions regardless of the legal obligation to do so; - Recruitment and selection are aligned with the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment; - CNC facilitates access for disadvantaged groups by stating the information on the call (Decree-Law no. n.º 29/2001, February 3); - Contracts include clauses with different regulations: GDPR, confidentiality, intellectual property, etc; - Contracts present all the researcher´s employment rights provided by the Labor Code. - Application of Decree-Law 57/2016, the Labor Code (Law no. 7/2009, February 12), the Code of Administrative procedure (Decree-Law no. 4/2015, January 7), as well as the funder´s own legislation/regulation. - Selection Committee members (Jury) are chosen to have diverse expertise, adequate gender balance, include members from different sectors and disciplines (when needed) with relevant experience, including from other countries (when pertinent); - Support from the HR department to clarify legal issues with the Selection Committee members.

			Suggestions for improvement: - Adoption of a specific form for requesting to open a public call with the HR department; - Creation of guidelines for Selection Committee members with the principles of the Charter&Code. - Creation of a document that explains the entire recruitment procedure.
11. SELECTION	+/-	Career prospects are sometimes not described on the calls (15). Lack of a document that explains the entire recruitment procedure (15). For the majority of the researcher positions, the principle of judging merit (16) is fulfilled, in accordance with Decree-Law 57/2016. At CNC, there are no specific guidelines regarding career variations(17). According to Portuguese Law, degrees awarded by a non-Portuguese higher institution for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Bologna cycles must be recognized by the national agency. At CNC the recognition of qualifications (19) is only requested to the selected candidate(s) upon signature of their work contract(s). At CNC, there are no specific guidelines regarding seniority (20).	Initiatives undertaken: - Candidates are informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria; - The advertisement of the positions includes a description of the working conditions and entitlements (e.g., salary, requirements, application process, selection methods, etc.); - Candidates are informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications. - For specific calls, the whole range of experience of researchers, including their creativity and level of independence is taken in consideration; - CNC ensures that the recruitment and selection of its employees is done through an: open and transparent process, with equal opportunities, through a fair and merit-based evaluation, which aims to ensure that the candidate is selected based on merit and that it is the person with the most suitable profile; - Application of the Labor Code, which provides to the researcher the rights of maternity leave and family assistance. - Information about the need for recognition of the degrees is clearly stated on the call; - Informal qualifications are recognised by default and, if needed, the certificates might be requested to the candidates.

			Suggestions for improvement: - Creation of a document that explains the entire recruitment procedure; - Publish the recruitment procedure on CNC´s website; - Include this principle in the guidelines for Selection Committee members; - Inform candidates systematically, prior to the selection, about career prospects; - Apply the principle of judging merit to all recruitment processes; - Include the principle of judging merit in the guidelines for Selection Committee members. - Raising awareness of the principle of Variations in the chronological order of CVs (code) among the Selection Committees; - Include the principle of Variations in the chronological order of CVs (code) in the guidelines for Selection Committee members. - Include the principle of Recognition of qualifications (Code) in the guidelines for Selection Committee members. - Include the principle of Seniority in the guidelines for Selection Committee members; - Raising awareness among the Selection Committees of the principle of Seniority.
12. CAREER PROGRESSION	-/+	Regarding postdoctoral appointments (21), the general recommendation that junior researcher´s contracts should be up to 5 years after the obtention of the PhD, is not systematically followed. In general, the principle "working conditions" (24) is accomplished, however, there might be a lack of knowledge among some CNC researchers regarding this principle.	Initiatives undertaken: - In accordance to Portuguese Law, postdoctoral stipends can only be attributed to PhD holders of less than 3 years post-PhD and for a duration of 5 years; - For junior researchers, it is recommended that postdoctoral contracts (non tenure-track) are attributed to PhD holders of less than 5 years post-PhD.

| | | Regarding "Stability and permanence of employment", about 52% of CNC researchers (PhD holders) do not have permanent contracts. | - At CNC, working conditions are regulated by different labour laws and collective labour agreements, applied to all employees regardless of their nationality;
- Possibility of adopting teleworking and flexible working hours when functions are compatible.
- CNC does not treat fixed-term employees less favourably than similar permanent employees. Portuguese Law has mechanisms to prevent fixed-term employees from abuse arising from the use of successive fixed-term contracts;
- The normal career progression is that researchers apply to UC permanent positions, continuing to be hosted by CNC to carry out their R&D activities;
- As an Associate Laboratory, R&D unit CiBB (that CNC belongs to) has the statutory obligation to create permanent (tenure) scientific and technical careers for doctorates. Nation-wide, this is further supported by FCT Tenure programme. CiBB has actively applied to this program, and recently secured 16 new career positions (calls to be open during 2025).

Suggestions for improvement:
- Raising awareness among supervisors and fellows, of the recommendations regarding postdoctoral contracts, as the postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long-term career prospects;
- Include the principle of postdoctoral appointments in the guidelines for Selection Committee members.
- Conduct regular reviews to monitor postdoctoral progress, evaluating research milestones, skill development, and career growth, ensuring that appointments are aligned with long-term career advancement |

			- Enhance communication of teleworking policies by providing clear guidelines on expectations, responsibilities, and the tools needed for effective remote work. - Raise awareness among CNC researchers regarding access to training for fixed-term employees and to ensure that fixed-term employees are informed about available permanent jobs.
PILLAR 3 - WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES			
13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES	+/-	Regarding "Research environment" (23), some of the infrastructure is outdated. In general, the principle "Working conditions" (24) is accomplished, however, there might be a lack of knowledge among some CNC researchers regarding this principle. Regarding "Funding and salaries" (26), salaries are not competitive as compared to high performing countries in Europe.	Initiatives undertaken: - CNC is one of the centres included in a R&D unit and associated laboratory (CiBB), regularly evaluated at national level. In the latest evaluation it scored "Very Good" as R&D unit and 100% as associated laboratory, attesting for a stimulating research and research training environment, which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, and that it complies with the national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety. These evaluations result in attribution of funding from the national agency; - CNC has a Health Security and Safety Office (HSO) which provides information on health and safety to researchers and advises the Board of Directors on how to best provide conditions to ensure that CNC fulfils obligations to be in compliance with all occupational health, safety, and national environmental rules and regulations; - All researchers benefit from work accident insurance; - At CNC, working conditions are regulated by different labour laws and collective labour agreements, applied to all employees regardless of their nationality; - Possibility of adopting teleworking and flexible working hours when functions are compatible.

			Suggestions for improvement:
			- Several CNC groups have their research laboratories in an old building that is not always properly maintained. Negotiation with the UC towards having access to better spaces is necessary (and is ongoing); - Animal house facility in the same old building has several flaws; renovation is necessary and planned. - Enhance communication of teleworking policies by providing clear guidelines on expectations, responsibilities, and the tools needed for effective remote work. - CNC offers competitive salaries, including stipends, considering the fringe benefits they entail, the cost of living and the average salary in Portugal; - CNC follows the Decree-Law 57/2016, the Labor Code (Law no. 7/2009, February 12), the Code of Administrative procedure (Decree-Law no. 4/2015, January 7) and the National Regulation for Stipends; - Regarding social security provisions, all researchers are supported by the Portuguese social security scheme in support of maternity, health and retirement; - The salary increases applied to the public sector are reflected in CNC researchers' salaries.
14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT	-/+	Regarding "Stability and permanence of employment", about 52% of CNC researchers (PhD holders) do not have permanent contracts.	Initiatives undertaken: - CNC does not treat fixed-term employees less favourably than similar permanent employees. Portuguese Law has mechanisms to prevent fixed-term employees from abuse arising from the use of successive fixed-term contracts; - The normal career progression is that researchers apply to UC permanent positions, continuing to be hosted by CNC to carry out their R&D activities; - As an Associate Laboratory, R&D unit CiBB (that CNC belongs to) has the statutory obligation to create permanent (tenure)

			scientific and technical careers for doctorates. Nation-wide, this is further supported by FCT Tenure programme. CiBB has actively applied to this program, and recently secured 16 new career positions (calls to be open during 2025). Suggestions for improvement: - Raise awareness among CNC researchers regarding access to training for fixed-term employees and to ensure that fixed-term employees are informed about available permanent jobs.
15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS	+/-	National, sectorial or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions might not be clear for all researchers. Regarding complains/appeals (34), CNC has a workflow for conflict resolution. Information about this workflow is on the website.	Initiatives undertaken: - The contract signature is held in-person to allow for questions to the HR and legal staff regarding the content of the contracts; - All legal and contractual information is expressly communicated in the individual employment contract - Contracts include clauses with different regulations: GDPR, confidentiality, intellectual property, etc; - CNC has a Technology Transfer Office, which provides consulting and training in IP-related issues. - CNC has a workflow for conflict resolution. Information about this workflow is on the website; - During the PDBEB opening day, students are informed of this workflow. Suggestions for improvement: - Inform about the administrative staff who can clarify questions regarding legal and contractual obligations in the Welcome Guide for researchers; - Implement an individual welcome session, in which the work contract is signed, as well as a document that refers to regulations, procedures and policies;

			- Formal implementation of an updated version of the existing Welcome Guide for researchers. - Include information about the conflict resolution procedures in the Welcome Manual.
16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS	+/-	In 2023 the percentage of articles published in OA was 80%. Regarding Intellectual Property Rights (31), CNC researchers might need deeper awareness of IP procedures, especially with external organisations/collaborators, as well as training in the valorisation of IP and understanding of how royalties work.	Initiatives undertaken: - CNC complies with dissemination and exploitation rules, as it is a requirement of public funders; - According to the policies of the University of Coimbra, which includes affiliated entities, all researchers have the obligation to publish the AAM (Author Accepted Manuscript) or the VoR (Version of Record) of peer-reviewed publications, PhD and MSc thesis in the "Estudo Geral" repository, an official OpenAIRE scientific repository; - CNC has a Technology Transfer Office (TTO) which provides support to researchers in innovation and socio-economic growth by transforming the scientific and technological knowledge developed in the laboratories into solutions to major societal challenges in healthcare; - The TTO supports researchers in four main areas (Intellectual Property and Licensing, Entrepreneurship, Academy-industry collaborations, and Training and Awareness) and has created guidelines to report technologies

			of commercial interest and the Technology Readiness Level document, which can be found on the internal website; - To improve skills in the exploitation of results, CNC offers two yearly courses in technology transfer: one is free and on-site, and the second is subject to a small fee, online and open to the CNC outside community. TTO gives lectures in lab meetings of the different CNC groups upon request; - CNC disseminates its scientific discoveries through the media and social networks, promoting broad outreach to the non-specialist public and accountability. This is achieved through the joint efforts of the CNC Science Communication Office, researchers, and the UC Communication Division. As a result, our research appears on TV, newspapers, radio, the internet, and social media, with communication tailored to each platform; - CNC has a Technology Transfer Office, which provides consulting and training in IP, including protection and valorisation strategies; - CNC has an IP Regulation Policy (the same as the University of Coimbra-UC) that covers all the responsibilities, rights, and procedures regarding IP to CNC researchers; - All issues regarding IP are covered in the individual employment contract by referring to the UC/CNC IP Regulation Policy; - CNC IP Regulation Policy establishes that CNC researchers who contributed intellectually to the IP must be cited as inventors and receive 55% of all the IP revenues from CNC/UC (excluding the value to cover the IP expenses); - CNC IP Regulation Policy establishes the procedure regarding shared IP with external organisations/collaborators; - The Welcome Day to new CNC staff includes an informative session on tech transfer; - Training sessions and programmes at CNC directed to researchers regarding IP protection and entrepreneurship in

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>the biotechnology field, such as the annual mini-course "Biotech Transfer Step-by-Step" and the national-funded project BiotechSTARS.

Suggestions for improvement:
- Guarantee that all possible research outputs are disseminated in Open Access;
- Better dissemination of CNC services, expertise, IP, and capabilities to industry through creating a CNC Portfolio document;
- Consolidation of the CNC Technology Transfer Office to increase its capacity to support CNC employees;
- Documentation given to new CNC staff explaining tech transfer and its procedures and concepts;
- Better mapping of new CNC staff (some students and interns are under the radar and not attending, e.g. the Welcome Day);
- More training sessions and programmes to raise awareness for IP;
- More informative sessions about IP in lab meetings and other events/initiatives of the CNC groups.</td></tr>
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PILLAR 4 -RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

| 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS | +/- | At CNC, there are no specific guidelines regarding career variations (17). The principle of Recognition of mobility experience (18) is fulfilled. | Initiatives undertaken:
- Application of the Labor Code, which provides to the researcher the rights of maternity leave and family assistance.

 Suggestions for improvement:
- Raising awareness of the principle of "Variations in the chronological order of CVs" among the Selection Committees;
- Include the principle of "Variations in the chronological order of CVs" in the guidelines for Selection Committee members; |

			- General awareness of the recognition of mobility experience among Selection Committee members. Suggestions for improvement: - Include the principle of "Recognition of mobility experience" in the guidelines for Selection Committee members; - Specify the principle of "Recognition of mobility experience" on the public calls, when applicable.
19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	+/-	Regarding "Continuing Professional Development" (38) and "Access to research training and continuous development" (39), there is no specific incentive for continuous researchers' improvement besides individual drive to do better.	Initiatives undertaken: - Courses within the PDBEB PhD program frequently address emergent fields, and lectures are open to everyone in the institute; - There are multiple seminars held each week that provide training to researchers at all levels. Most researchers attend conferences on a regular basis ensuring updating on different topics including but not restricted to their scientific subjects. - Courses within the PDBEB PhD program frequently address emergent fields, and lectures are open to everyone in the institute. Suggestions for improvement: - Local training on laboratory and project management could be implemented (for example with the support of EMBO, that is offering this type of training); - Create strong partnerships with companies that allow training periods for students in those companies and the possibility to develop some practical work for their thesis; - CNC could adhere to ORPHEUS training programme for supervisors and students (Orpheus offers support and guidance in the pursuit of certification and labelling as quality assurance mechanisms. ORPHEUS also offers disciplinary specific training opportunities for research students and

			supports the professional development of new and experienced research supervisors).
20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING	+/-	Regarding "Relation with supervisors" (36), some PhD students (especially in programs other than PDBEB) may not have frequent feedback from their supervisor and other faculty members. Regarding "Supervision and managerial duties"(37), a mentorship program has been implemented in which senior researchers provide feedback to early career researchers, however, the program could be extended to a larger number of early career researchers and to senior researchers. Regarding "Supervision" (40), CNC has a complex reporting system, with different types of funding schemes for hiring early-stage researchers (specially PhD holders) comprising different supervision systems. Regarding "Teaching" (33), most CNC researchers do not attend training for teaching and coaching activities. Regarding complains/appeals (34), CNC has a workflow for conflict resolution. Information about this workflow is on the website.	Initiatives undertaken: - All PhD students in PDBEB have a thesis committee and a mentor. Students provide a yearly progress report to their thesis committee and meet with the committee every two years for feedback. The mentor provides advice not only on scientific progress but also on aspects of career development and relationship with supervisor and group members; - Most (if not all) research groups at CNC have weekly laboratory meetings that provide opportunities for students to discuss their work. One to one meetings between students and supervisors are also regularly held; - A handbook on Research Quality Assurance was drafted and will be implemented at CNC. The handbook includes guidelines on the duties of supervisors and trainees; - PhD students' representatives are elected by PhD students, and take part in the Scientific Council of CiBB; - A mentorship program has been implemented in which senior researchers provide feedback to early career researchers. Senior researchers have volunteered for this role, and early career researchers have selected their mentor (if they wish to have one). A confidentiality agreement between mentor and mentee is signed. This program aims at connecting early career researchers with senior peers outside of their research group, for career advice and feedback on the trajectory taken. A positive, constructive and equal relationship is promoted; - PhD students at CNC report to their PhD supervisor; typically, students have their own PhD fellowship, funded by FCT (the Portuguese research council). Supervisors are evaluated when the FCT fellowship is granted, which ensures quality of supervision;

			- Early-stage PhD holding researchers report to their project coordinator (in case their contract is funded by a research project) or to the CiBB scientific council (in case they have a contract through CiBB - funded by FCT or other agencies). All researchers are integrated in research groups, led by a very qualified researcher; - CNC has clearly defined rules regarding teaching: the maximum limit is 4 h per week, according to the Research Career Regulations; - Remuneration is adequate and depends on the actual teaching duties; - Teaching by CNC researchers is on a voluntary basis; - Time devoted by senior members of staff to the training of early stage researchers, is counted as part of their teaching commitment for evaluation purposes; - CNC has a workflow for conflict resolution. Information about this workflow is on the website; - During the PDBEB opening day, students are informed of this workflow. Suggestions for improvement: - Introduce Supervisor Evaluation by implementing a system for PhD students to provide anonymous feedback on communication, guidance, and support, aimed at improving supervisory practices and mentorship effectiveness; - A broader panel of mentors can be considered, with more elements outside of academia (industry, technology transfer, science communication, science management, consulting, for example); - The mentorship program can be extended to a larger number of early career researchers; - A mentorship program for senior researchers could be put in place;

			- Organisational charts could be available, to clarify supervision systems; - Clear mapping of the teaching performed by researchers should be implemented; - Suitable training should be provided for teaching and coaching activities as part of the professional development of researchers; - Include information about the conflict resolution procedures in the Welcome Manual.