

## 4: ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2025PT336606

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

Organisation's contact details: Raquel Rodrigues (raquel.rodrigues@cnc.uc.pt)

Submission date: 5 June 2025

### 1. Organisational Information

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

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<i>FTE/Number (headcount)</i>
<i>Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research</i>	358,7/436
<i>Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)</i>	32,45/37
<i>Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)</i>	292,9/370
<i>Of whom are women</i>	247,95/301
<i>Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.</i>	88,95/133
<i>Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level</i>	86,5/90
<i>Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level</i>	183,25/213
<i>Total number of students (if relevant)</i>	183.25(PhD)+124.50(other students) 213(PhD)+159(other students)
<i>Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)</i>	509,95/625
<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)</b>	€
<i>Total annual organisational budget</i>	-
<i>Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)</i>	2,512,265.00
<i>Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)</i>	-
<i>Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research</i>	-
<b>ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)</b>	
<p>CNC is a R&amp;D centre affiliated with the University of Coimbra (UC) that, besides its own core of research and supporting staff, hosts a large number of researchers and students (notably PhD students) who are employed/registered by/at the university, hence externally funded.</p> <p>The annual organisational [direct government] funding is awarded following a national-level, regular (every 5-years) evaluation procedure of R&amp;D institutions conducted by the national public agency that funds R&amp;D, the budget for each institution depending on the evaluation result.</p>	

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice:

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

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
Ethical and professional aspects	<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>CNC demonstrates a strong commitment to ethical and professional research practices. Researchers benefit from scientific freedom, with the flexibility to develop independent projects and secure their own funding. Ethical principles are upheld through a Code of Ethics, Conduct and Integrity (University of Coimbra) and a Research Ethics Committee (University of Coimbra), ensuring integrity, fairness, and inclusivity.</p> <p>Professional responsibility is reinforced by anti-plagiarism policies, supported by detection software. A structured onboarding process and administrative support system ensure researchers receive guidance and assistance. Contracts are transparent, covering key regulations such as GDPR and intellectual property, with in-person signing sessions for clarity.</p> <p>Accountability is a priority, with open science policies, financial audits, and transparent fund management through dedicated (digital) platforms. Procurement of research materials and services follows strict approval procedures to ensure compliance and efficiency. Health and safety are safeguarded by a dedicated office, offering risk assessments, first-aid training, and insurance coverage, while data protection is reinforced through audits, training, and internal policies.</p> <p>CNC actively promotes dissemination and innovation, encouraging open-access publications and supporting technology transfer. A Technology Transfer Office provides guidance in intellectual property and commercialization. Public engagement is fostered through a Science Communication Office, which connects researchers with journalists, organizes outreach initiatives, and provides training.</p> <p>Non-discrimination is embedded in hiring and communication policies, ensuring accessibility for diverse groups. Evaluation and appraisal systems reward performance, fostering career progression. These initiatives position CNC as an institution committed to research excellence, transparency, and societal impact.</p>

	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p>While CNC upholds research freedom, researchers could receive more encouragement to pursue independent funding. Ethical principles are generally followed, but CNC has not officially adhered to the UC Code of Ethics, Conduct, and Integrity.</p> <p>There is insufficient awareness of responsible research and innovation (RRI) principles, and no systematic anti-plagiarism measures are in place for PhD theses. Awareness of CNC’s anti-plagiarism policies is also limited.</p> <p>National, sectorial, and institutional training and working condition regulations might not be clear to all researchers, particularly at R1 and R2 levels.</p> <p>Accountability is largely respected, but awareness of financial and societal responsibility could be improved. Similarly, while most researchers follow safe working practices, awareness and compliance with IT disaster recovery measures are limited. There are gaps in availability and maintenance of protective equipment, including respirators, chemical cabinets, and fume hoods.</p> <p>Though CNC researchers are generally aware of the importance of communicating their research activities to society, this engagement is inconsistent across research groups. Furthermore, CNC lacks specific outreach training for researchers in specific scientific areas.</p> <p>There is no formal equality plan or dedicated structure to support new researchers with bureaucratic processes in Portugal. Infrastructure adaptations for all types of disabilities could be improved.</p>
Recruitment and selection	<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>CNC ensures fair, transparent, and inclusive recruitment and selection processes aligned with most Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) principles. Job advertisements provide a broad description of required competencies to encourage diverse applications, detailing working conditions, entitlements, and career development prospects. Dissemination strategies prioritize inclusivity, with postings available in Portuguese and English across multiple platforms, including EURAXESS and institutional social networks. CNC actively encourages applications regardless of background, nationality, or gender and facilitates access for disadvantaged groups.</p>

	<p>Selection processes are structured and objective, with committees composed of experts from diverse fields, genders, and international backgrounds when relevant. Candidates are informed of the selection criteria beforehand and receive feedback on their applications post-evaluation. CNC supports mobility experience recognition and respects rights related to maternity leave and family assistance.</p> <p>Merit-based evaluation considers overall experience, rather than a strictly chronological assessment of qualifications. The need for degree recognition is clearly stated in the calls, however informal qualifications are acknowledged, and the official degree recognition is only requested after selection. Transparency is reinforced through clear communication of contract terms, which include provisions on GDPR, confidentiality, and intellectual property while ensuring compliance with Portuguese labor laws.</p> <p>Postdoctoral appointments are regulated under national law, ensuring structured career progression for early-career researchers. CNC consistently prioritizes equal opportunities, clarity, and legal compliance, fostering an open and competitive environment for recruitment and selection.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p>CNC lacks a universal recruitment document to guide selection committees in open call procedures. There are no official guidelines or recommendations for committee members, leading to potential inconsistencies in selection processes.</p> <p>While merit-based selection generally follows Decree-Law 57/2016, there are no specific guidelines on career variations or seniority criteria. Additionally, postdoctoral contracts are not systematically limited to five years after PhD completion, deviating from the general recommendation.</p>
Working conditions	<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>CNC ensures comprehensive employment rights for all researchers, including parental leave, holidays, absences, and insurance policies through individual employment contracts. Fellows and students also receive benefits through fellowship contracts, including accident insurance and voluntary social security options.</p> <p>The research environment is highly rated, with CIBB (R&amp;D unit and associated laboratory to which CNC belongs) scoring “Excellent” as an R&amp;D unit and 100% as an associated laboratory. CNC offers a</p>

	<p>stimulating, well-equipped environment that supports remote collaboration over research networks and complies with health and safety regulations.</p> <p>A Health Security and Safety Office (HSO) ensures adherence to occupational health and safety standards, and all researchers are covered by work accident insurance.</p> <p>CNC follows labour laws and collective agreements, ensuring equal treatment of fixed-term and permanent employees. CNC is committed to creating permanent research careers and CiBB has secured 16 new tenure positions for 2025. Researchers receive competitive salaries aligned with public sector increases and are supported by the Portuguese social security scheme.</p> <p>CNC promotes gender balance, career development, and mobility through EU-funded projects. A mentoring program connects junior and senior researchers under a confidentiality agreement to provide career advice.</p> <p>Intellectual property is supported through an IP Regulation Policy and a Technology Transfer Office, ensuring fair recognition and revenue distribution. CNC also encourages co-authorship and independent research.</p> <p>Additionally, CNC has a conflict resolution workflow and researchers participate in decision-making bodies, ensuring a transparent, inclusive, and supportive research environment.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p>While all CNC researchers engaged in a research career are recognized as professionals, legislation distinguishes between trainees (stipend-based) and employees (contract-based), which may create disparities. There is limited awareness among some researchers regarding working conditions. Furthermore, outdated infrastructure poses challenges in the research environment.</p> <p>Job stability remains a concern, as 52% of PhD holders do not have permanent contracts. Additionally, salaries are not competitive compared to leading European research institutions. Gender balance is uneven—although women are overrepresented overall (65%F/35%M), they are underrepresented in leadership roles, particularly in Managing Boards (25%F/75%M).</p> <p>CNC lacks a structured career development strategy, which impacts mobility policies and long-term researcher progression. Career advice is</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>generally available for PhD students and young researchers, but senior researchers may have fewer resources. Awareness of Intellectual Property (IP) procedures and commercialization strategies needs improvement.</p> <p>There are no clear guidelines on co-authorship, nor regarding independent publishing for researchers. Training in teaching and coaching is not widely attended.</p>
Training and development	<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>CNC fosters a structured and supportive environment for training and development, ensuring that researchers at all stages receive mentorship, supervision, and continuous learning opportunities.</p> <p>PhD students in the PDBEB program benefit from thesis committees and mentors, who provide feedback on scientific progress, career development, and interpersonal relationships. Annual progress reports and biennial committee meetings ensure structured guidance. Weekly lab meetings and one-on-one discussions with supervisors further enhance their research experience. PhD student representatives actively participate in CNC's Scientific Council, ensuring their voice in institutional decisions.</p> <p>A mentorship program connects early-career researchers with senior scientists outside their research group. This program, based on voluntary participation, provides career advice and trajectory feedback, with confidentiality agreements ensuring a safe and constructive environment.</p> <p>CNC promotes continuing professional development through frequent courses in emerging fields, open to the entire institute. Weekly seminars and regular conference participation help researchers stay updated on the latest scientific advancements.</p> <p>PhD students and early-career researchers receive high-quality supervision, with FCT-funded fellowships ensuring supervisor evaluation. Researchers are always integrated into research groups led by highly qualified scientists.</p> <p>A Research Quality Assurance handbook is being implemented, outlining clear guidelines for supervisors and trainees. These initiatives collectively ensure a dynamic, well-supported research environment that promotes both scientific excellence and career growth.</p>

	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p>While CNC has implemented a mentorship program to provide feedback from senior researchers to early-career researchers, it could be expanded to include more early-career and senior researchers. There is currently no specific incentive for continuous improvement among researchers, leaving it largely to individual motivation.</p> <p>The lack of structured incentives for professional development means that researchers are left to drive their own growth. This extends to continuing professional development, where there is no formal system or encouragement in place to foster ongoing research training and career advancement.</p> <p>Additionally, CNC has a complex reporting system, with different types of funding schemes for hiring early-stage researchers (specially PhD holders) comprising different supervision systems.</p>
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### 3. Actions

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the organisation's HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

\*URL: <https://www.cnc.uc.pt/en/hr-excellence-in-research>

Please fill in a sum up list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis:

<b><i>Proposed ACTIONS</i></b>	<b><i>GAP Principle(s)</i></b>	<b><i>Timing (at least by year's quarter/s semester)</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Unit</i></b>	<b><i>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</i></b>
<p><b>Action 1:</b> Develop a comprehensive Welcome Manual for researchers at CNC, to be provided upon arrival. The manual will offer key information on research freedom, ethics and integrity, plagiarism policies, and professional responsibility. It will also outline the workflow for conflict resolution, provide guidance on complaints and appeals procedures, and include details on the recognition of the research profession, as well as access to career advice and mentoring opportunities.</p> <p>To promote responsible research practices, the manual will cover the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and FAIR data management. It will also address legal and contractual obligations, including researchers' rights, insurance, and financial accountability.</p> <p>In terms of safety and infrastructure, the manual will provide information on health and safety procedures, IT disaster recovery, and data protection. Additionally, it will introduce the administrative staff responsible for clarifying legal and contractual matters, and list key contacts with links to institutional, national, and European reference documents.</p> <p>The Welcome Manual will be made available in both English and Portuguese.</p>	<p>Research Freedom; Ethical Principles; Professional Responsibility; Contractual and Legal Obligations; Good Practice in Research; Complaints/ appeals; Recognition of the Profession; Access to Career Advice; Complaints and Appeals; Supervision and managerial duties</p>	Q1 2026	Science Communication Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Completion and publication of the Welcome Manual in Portuguese and English; inclusion of all listed topics; percentage of new researchers receiving the manual at onboarding.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Manual published by Q1 2026; 100% of listed topics included; 100% of new researchers receive the manual upon arrival.</p>
<p><b>Action 2:</b> Formally adopt and communicate adherence to the University of Coimbra's Code of Ethics, Conduct and Integrity. This will be one of the main priorities. Ensure all CNC researchers are informed and have access to the Code, which will be highlighted in internal communications and on the Welcome Manual.</p>	<p>Ethical Principles, Professional Responsibility</p>	Q1 2026	Board of Directors	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Formal adoption of the Code by CNC; visibility of the Code in internal communication channels and the Welcome Manual; percentage of researchers acknowledging awareness of the Code.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Code formally adopted by Q1 2026; Code featured in 100% of internal communication platforms and in the Welcome Manual; 100% of researchers acknowledge</p>



				awareness through annual internal survey.
<b>Action 3:</b> Organize annual training on research ethics, scientific integrity, and good practices. These sessions will be mandatory for new researchers and open to all staff. They can be incorporated into the Welcome Day or held as standalone sessions.	Ethical Principles, Professional Responsibility	Q1 2026	Human Resources Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Number of annual training sessions held; participation rate of new researchers; overall staff attendance; inclusion of training in Welcome Day program.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> At least 1 session held annually starting Q1 2026; 100% participation of new researchers; minimum 50% attendance rate among existing staff per year; training fully integrated into Welcome Day by 2027.</p>
<b>Action 4:</b> Develop a Practical Ethics Guide by creating a concise document with key guidelines on research ethics and integrity, highlighting practical examples and best practices.	Ethical principles	Q4 2026	Human Resources Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Completion and distribution of the Practical Ethics Guide; availability in digital and print formats; number of downloads/accesses from internal platforms; inclusion of practical examples and best practices.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Guide finalized and distributed by Q4 2026; 100% of key topics covered; at least 75% of researchers access or receive the guide within the first year of publication.</p>
<b>Action 5:</b> Establish a confidential communication channel for researchers to report ethical concerns. Promote awareness of this channel during onboarding and internal meetings to ensure researchers feel safe to use it.	Ethical principles	Q4 2026	Human Resources Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Launch of the confidential communication channel; number of awareness initiatives (e.g., onboarding, internal meetings) mentioning the channel; number of reports submitted; researcher awareness levels measured via survey.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Channel operational by Q4 2026; 100% of onboarding sessions include channel information; at least 80% of surveyed researchers are aware of the channel within the first year.</p>
<b>Action 6:</b> Adopt an institutional Research Data Management policy based on FAIR principles to promote a culture of	Professional responsibility	Q1 2027	Research Funding & Project Management Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Approval and publication of the Research Data Management (RDM)</p>

openness and encourage the reuse of existing data, reducing unnecessary duplication of research efforts.				<p>policy; inclusion of FAIR principles in internal documentation and training; number of researchers trained on RDM; number of datasets deposited in open repositories.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Policy adopted and published by Q1 2027; 1 training session held annually; at least 50% of researchers trained on RDM within the first year; 20% increase in datasets deposited in FAIR-aligned repositories by end of 2028.</p>
<b>Action 7:</b> Implement a Welcome Session for new researchers where contractual, legal, and institutional obligations are explained. Administrative staff will be introduced, and documentation will be provided.	Contractual and legal obligations	Q1 2026	Financing and Administrative Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Number of Welcome Sessions held annually; percentage of new researchers attending; availability of documentation; inclusion of administrative staff presentations.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> First session implemented by Q1 2026; 100% of new researchers attend within their first month; documentation provided in 100% of sessions.</p>
<b>Action 8:</b> Establish a formal researcher evaluation system at CNC to periodically assess research progress, aligned with transparent and well-defined criteria. The system should include regular feedback opportunities and support for setting individual goals. To accompany this, provide training workshops that clarify evaluation procedures, criteria, and how to use appraisals as a tool for career development. These workshops will also guide researchers in preparing for evaluations and making the most of feedback received.	Evaluation/appraisal systems	Q2 2026	Group leaders	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Researcher evaluation system developed and documented; percentage of researchers evaluated annually; number of training workshops held; attendance rate at workshops.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> System implemented by Q2 2026 with 100% of researchers evaluated annually; minimum of 1 workshop held per year; 75% attendance rate among researchers.</p>
<b>Action 9:</b> Develop and implement a comprehensive set of recruitment and selection guidelines that reflect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This will be a priority. These guidelines should clearly define each stage of the recruitment process, from opening a public call to candidate selection and	Recruitment; Selection; Transparency; Judging merit; Recognition of mobility; Recognition of qualifications; Seniority; Postdoctoral appointments	Q1 2026	Human Resources Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Recruitment and selection guidelines developed and published; percentage of selection committees trained on the guidelines; availability of the document on the CNC website; feedback from selection committee members.</p>

communication of results. They must include detailed recommendations on judging merit, recognizing non-linear career paths, mobility experience, seniority, qualifications and postdoctoral appointments. The document should be made publicly available on the CNC website to ensure transparency and consistency. All selection committees must be trained to use these guidelines effectively.				<b>Targets:</b> Guidelines published by Q2 2026; 100% of selection committees trained by Q4 2026; guidelines accessible on website by Q2 2026; 90% positive feedback on clarity and usability of guidelines.
<b>Action 10:</b> Ensure transparency in recruitment by systematically informing candidates of selection procedures, career prospects, and evaluation criteria. This information should be included in job postings and the selection guidelines.	Transparency; Recruitment; Judging merit	Q1 2026	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Percentage of job postings including selection procedures, career prospects, and evaluation criteria; updates made to selection guidelines to reflect transparency measures; <b>Targets:</b> Selection guidelines updated and 100% of job postings include required information by Q1 2026.
<b>Action 11:</b> Create and publish a comprehensive document outlining the recruitment procedure, including all stages from job posting to final selection. Make this available online and for all staff involved. This will be a priority.	Transparency; Recruitment	Q1 2026	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Completion and publication of the recruitment procedure document; accessibility of the document on internal and external platforms; number of staff trained or informed about the document. <b>Targets:</b> Document published and accessible online by Q2 2026; 100% of HR and selection committee members informed by Q4 2026.
<b>Action 12:</b> Develop and implement a specific form for requesting the opening of a public call in collaboration with the HR department to streamline and standardize the recruitment process. Together with Action 9 and 11, this will be a priority.	Recruitment	Q2 2026	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Development and internal approval of the public call request form; percentage of recruitment processes initiated using the form; staff feedback on usability and clarity. <b>Targets:</b> Form developed and implemented by Q2 2026; 100% of new recruitment processes initiated with the form from Q2 2026 onward.
<b>Action 13:</b> Introduce a system allowing PhD students to anonymously evaluate their supervisors regarding communication, guidance, and support. Use this feedback to identify areas for improvement in supervisory practices and to enhance the overall mentorship experience.	Relation with supervisors; Supervision	Q3 2026	Advanced Studies Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Development and implementation of an anonymous evaluation system for PhD students; percentage of PhD students participating in evaluations; number of supervisory practices reviewed based on feedback; improvements

				implemented in supervisory practices. <b>Targets:</b> Evaluation system launched by Q3 2026; 90% participation rate of PhD students in annual evaluations; at least 80% of identified areas for improvement addressed within six to nine months of feedback.
<b>Action 14:</b> Make organizational charts available to clarify supervision systems, ensuring that all researchers understand their roles and the structure of support available within their research groups.	Supervision	Q3 2026	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Creation and publication of organizational charts; percentage of researchers with access to the charts; feedback from researchers regarding clarity of supervision systems. <b>Targets:</b> Organizational charts published by Q3 2026; 100% of researchers have access to the charts; 90% of researchers report clear understanding of supervision systems in annual surveys.
<b>Action 15:</b> Implement a Career Development Plan for every new researcher, tailored to their field and career stage, with regular follow-ups and mentoring support.	Career development	Q3 2026	Group Leaders	<b>Indicators:</b> Implementation of individual Career Development Plans for new researchers; percentage of new researchers with a tailored plan; number of follow-up sessions conducted. <b>Targets:</b> 100% of new researchers have a Career Development Plan in place by Q3 2026; minimum of one follow-up session per researcher per year.
<b>Action 16:</b> Include co-authorship guidelines and the ability to publish independently within the Career Development Strategy to ensure clarity and fairness in credit attribution.	Co-authorship	Q3 2026	Group leaders	<b>Indicators:</b> Inclusion of co-authorship guidelines and independent publication options in the Career Development Strategy; percentage of researchers aware of these guidelines. <b>Targets:</b> Co-authorship guidelines included in the Career Development Strategy by Q3 2026; 100% of researchers informed about the guidelines through onboarding or training sessions.
<b>Action 17:</b> Establish a working group to monitor gender balance, conduct periodic surveys, and propose measures to improve representation at all levels of	Gender balance; non-discrimination	Q1 2026	Gender Balance working group	<b>Indicators:</b> Creation of a working group on gender balance; number of surveys conducted; number of

CNC. Additionally, promote the integration of the gender dimension in research projects by providing researchers with proposal support and offering annual workshops on the topic.				measures proposed to improve representation; percentage of researchers receiving gender integration support in research proposals; number of annual workshops held. <b>Targets:</b> Establish the working group by Q1 2026; conduct at least one survey per year; implement at least two measures to improve representation by Q1 2027; 100% of researchers receive support for gender integration in proposals; hold one annual workshop on gender integration.
<b>Action 18:</b> Provide structured training for researchers involved in teaching and coaching. Map current teaching responsibilities and integrate professional development activities accordingly.	Teaching	Q3 2026	Advanced Studies Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Number of researchers trained in teaching and coaching; percentage of researchers with mapped teaching responsibilities; number of professional development activities integrated into teaching roles. <b>Targets:</b> Train 100% of researchers involved in teaching by Q3 2026; map teaching responsibilities for all relevant researchers by Q3 2026; integrate at least two professional development activities for researchers with teaching roles by Q3 2027.
<b>Action 19:</b> Ensure that all researchers are aware of the existing mentorship programme initiative by improving its visibility within the institution. Include clear information about the program in the Welcome Manual and during onboarding activities for new researchers.	Access to career advice	Q1 2026	Science Communication Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Inclusion of mentorship programme information in the Welcome Manual and onboarding activities; percentage of new researchers informed about the mentorship programme. <b>Targets:</b> 100% of new researchers are informed about the mentorship programme during onboarding; mentorship programme details included in the Welcome Manual by Q1 2026; 100% of new researchers receive this information.
<b>Action 20:</b> Expand the mentorship program by including a broader range of mentors from outside academia (industry, technology transfer, science	Supervision and managerial duties	Q2/Q3 2026	Group Leaders, with collaboration of the Technology Transfer Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Number of new mentors recruited from outside academia; percentage increase in early

communication, etc.), extend it to a larger number of early career researchers, and establish a mentorship program for senior researchers to support their professional growth.				career researchers participating in the mentorship programme; establishment of a mentorship programme for senior researchers; feedback from participants on the quality and impact of the mentorship received. <b>Targets:</b> 10% increase in external mentors included by Q2 2026; 100% of early career researchers offered the opportunity to participate in the mentorship programme by Q3 2026; senior researchers' mentorship programme launched by Q1 2027; 85% satisfaction rate from mentees by Q4 2027.
<b>Action 21:</b> Extend the established health and safety prevention strategy to cover the entire CNC community, not just newcomers. Ensure all researchers have access to the necessary personal protective equipment and implement a regular verification and maintenance plan for Critical Protection Infrastructure to ensure researchers' safety across all labs.	Good practice in research	Q1 2026	Support Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Percentage of researchers receiving necessary personal protective equipment; frequency of health and safety training sessions for all researchers; percentage of researchers with access to updated Critical Protection Infrastructure; regularity of safety checks and maintenance for labs. <b>Targets:</b> 100% of researchers have access to personal protective equipment by Q1 2026; health and safety training provided to 100% of researchers annually; 100% access to updated Critical Protection Infrastructure by Q4 2026; monthly safety checks and maintenance for all labs.
<b>Action 22:</b> Address the current issues with laboratory and animal house facilities by negotiating with the University of Coimbra for access to better, well-maintained spaces. Ensure that ongoing renovation plans are executed to improve the research environment for all CNC groups.	Research environment	Q1 2026	Board of Directors	<b>Indicators:</b> Progress in negotiations with the University of Coimbra for improved facilities; completion of renovation plans for laboratory and animal house spaces; feedback from researchers regarding the quality and maintenance of the new facilities. <b>Targets:</b> Negotiations completed and new facilities accessible by Q1 2027; renovations

				completed by Q3 2027; 90% of researchers report satisfaction with facility improvements in post-renovation surveys.
<b>Action 23:</b> Assign a Data Steward to each research group to oversee and ensure proper data management practices, including backup strategies and data protection. Conduct regular safety and compliance reviews to ensure adherence to data management and safety protocols.	Good practice in research	Q1 2028	Research Funding & Project Management Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Assignment of a Data Steward to each research group; completion of data management and safety reviews; percentage of research groups compliant with data protection protocols; number of training sessions conducted for data management and protection.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> Data Stewards assigned to 100% of research groups by Q1 2028; 100% of research groups comply with data management protocols by Q1 2028; at least 2 training sessions on data management held annually; 90% of researchers report satisfaction with data management practices.</p>
<b>Action 24:</b> Promote awareness of national and EU mobility programs and integrate mobility value recognition into the Career Development Plan.	Value of mobility	Q4 2026	Research Funding & Project Management Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Number of awareness campaigns conducted on national and EU mobility programs; percentage of researchers aware of mobility opportunities; integration of mobility recognition into Career Development Plans.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> At least 2 awareness campaigns held annually; 90% of researchers aware of mobility programs by Q4 2026; 100% of new Career Development Plans to include mobility recognition by Q1 2027.</p>
<b>Action 25:</b> Monitor postdoctoral appointments to ensure they remain transitional and development-focused. Regularly review appointments and encourage long-term career planning.	Postdoctoral appointments	Q3 2026	Human Resources Office	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Percentage of postdoctoral appointments with clear career development plans; frequency of reviews for postdoctoral appointments; number of postdocs participating in long-term career planning sessions.</p> <p><b>Targets:</b> 100% of postdoctoral appointments have a career development plan by Q3 2026; 100% of</p>

				postdocs reviewed annually; at least 80% of postdocs participate in career planning sessions by Q3 2027.
<b>Action 26:</b> Improve internal communication around teleworking policies by creating clear guidelines and expectations for researchers and supervisors.	Working conditions	Q1 2027	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Completion and publication of teleworking guidelines; percentage of researchers and supervisors who acknowledge and understand the guidelines. <b>Targets:</b> Teleworking guidelines published by Q1 2027; 100% of researchers and supervisors acknowledge the guidelines within one month of publication.
<b>Action 27:</b> Raise awareness among CNC researchers about training opportunities for fixed-term employees and ensure they are informed about available permanent job positions within the organization.	Stability and permanence of employment	Q1 2026	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Percentage of fixed-term employees aware of training opportunities; percentage of fixed-term employees informed about permanent job positions; number of communications about job openings and training opportunities sent to fixed-term employees. <b>Targets:</b> 100% of fixed-term employees informed about available training opportunities and permanent job positions within by Q1 2026; monthly communication sent to fixed-term employees regarding training and job openings.
<b>Action 28:</b> Ensure full compliance with Open Access principles by guaranteeing all CNC research outputs are disseminated in Open Access repositories	dissemination, exploitation of results	Q4 2027	Research Funding & Project Management Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Percentage of CNC research outputs published in Open Access repositories; number of research outputs uploaded to institutional repositories within the required timeframe; compliance with Open Access policies as reported in internal audits. <b>Targets:</b> 100% of CNC research outputs disseminated in Open Access repositories by Q4 2027; 100% compliance with Open Access policies for all eligible publications within six months of publication.



<b>Action 29:</b> Enhance CNC's Technology Transfer process by creating and regularly updating a CNC Portfolio document that showcases the institution's services, expertise, IP, and research capabilities.	dissemination, exploitation of results	Q2 2027	Technology Transfer Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Completion and publication of the CNC Portfolio document; frequency of updates to the document. <b>Targets:</b> CNC Portfolio document created and published by Q2 2027; document updated at least annually.
<b>Action 30:</b> Consolidate the CNC Technology Transfer Office to better support employees, providing clear documentation on tech transfer and procedures. Offer more IP training sessions and informative sessions during lab meetings and CNC group events.	Intellectual Property Rights	Q2 2027	Technology Transfer Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Completion and availability of clear documentation on technology transfer procedures; number of IP training sessions held; number of lab meetings and CNC group events where tech transfer information is shared. <b>Targets:</b> Documentation on tech transfer procedures available by Q4 2026; at least 2 IP training sessions per year; tech transfer information included in at least 75% of CNC group events by Q4 2027.
<b>Action 31:</b> Strengthen CNC's outreach and communication efforts by expanding its relationship with both traditional and digital media platforms, including innovative platforms with high audience engagement, such as podcasts and videos.	dissemination, exploitation of results	Q1 2027	Science Communication Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Number of media collaborations with traditional and digital platforms; frequency of podcasts and videos produced; engagement metrics (views, likes, shares, etc.) for podcasts and videos. <b>Targets:</b> At least 2 new media collaborations per year; at least 3 podcasts or videos produced annually; increase in audience engagement by 10% year-on-year for podcasts and videos.
<b>Action 32:</b> Develop media engagement guidelines and encourage the use of infographics, social media, and tools like Biorender and Canva for effective communication of CNC research. Raise awareness among researchers about the importance of having a clear communication strategy for both peers and the public. Assess the need for specific training in science communication to enhance outreach efforts.	Public engagement	Q4 2026	Science Communication Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Completion and dissemination of media engagement guidelines; number of researchers using tools like Biorender and Canva; number of training sessions conducted on science communication; participation rate in training; survey results on communication strategy awareness. <b>Targets:</b> Guidelines published by Q4 2026; at least 50% of research

				groups using recommended tools by 2027; at least 1 science communication training session per year; 50% of targeted researchers trained by end of 2027; increase in awareness scores by 20% in annual internal surveys.
<b>Action 33:</b> Develop and implement guidelines to assist newly recruited researchers with the Portuguese bureaucracy required for settling in Portugal, in collaboration with the UC's International Relations Office.	Non-discrimination	Q1 2026	Financing and Administrative Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Completion and publication of the guidelines; inclusion in onboarding materials; number of new researchers receiving the guidelines. <b>Targets:</b> Guidelines published by Q4 2026; included in 100% of onboarding kits; 100% of newly recruited researchers receive the document.
<b>Action 34:</b> Adoption of the equality plan of the University of Coimbra, adapted to CNC activities;	Non-discrimination	Q1 2028	Board of Directors	<b>Indicators:</b> Equality Plan formally adopted and adapted to CNC; publication of the adapted version; number of CNC-specific actions implemented; awareness campaigns or training sessions conducted. <b>Targets:</b> Plan adapted and published by Q1 2028; at least 3 CNC-specific actions implemented within the first year after publication; 100% of staff informed through internal communication channels; at least one awareness or training session per year.
<b>Action 35:</b> Develop and implement local training programs on laboratory and project management. Additionally, create partnerships with companies to offer training periods for students, providing practical work opportunities aligned with their thesis projects.	Continuing Professional Development	Q1 2027	Research Funding & Project Management Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Number of local training programs on lab and project management developed and delivered; number of partnerships established with companies; number of students participating in company-based training periods or thesis projects. <b>Targets:</b> At least 1 local training program implemented by Q1 2027; partnerships established with at least 2 companies by Q3 2027; at least 5 students per year benefiting from industry-based practical experiences.

<b>Action 36:</b> Promote researchers' awareness of their accountability to employers, funders, and society by encouraging transparent financial management and cooperation with audits. Provide training to support staff and project leaders on the financial and technical justification of research contracts, especially European-funded ones.	Accountability	Q3 2026	Research Funding & Project Management Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Number of awareness initiatives and training sessions conducted; percentage of project leaders and support staff trained; inclusion of accountability topics in internal communications and onboarding materials. <b>Targets:</b> Minimum of 1 training session held per year starting in Q3 2026; at least 80% of relevant staff trained by Q4 2028; accountability information included in 100% of onboarding materials by Q1 2026.
<b>Action 37:</b> Enhance accessibility to financial data by upgrading existing platforms with intuitive dashboards, enabling researchers to efficiently monitor project budgets and expenditures.	Accountability	Q4 2027	Financing and Administrative Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Development and deployment of upgraded financial dashboards; user satisfaction rate; percentage of researchers accessing and using the dashboard. <b>Targets:</b> Dashboards implemented by Q4 2027; at least 75% of researchers actively using the dashboards by Q4 2028.
<b>Action 38:</b> Develop a targeted recruitment strategy to increase the number of international researchers, including targeted advertising in countries or regions known for high-quality research in CNC's specialized fields.	Recruitment and Selection	Q4 2026	Human Resources Office	<b>Indicators:</b> Number of targeted recruitment campaigns launched in selected countries/regions; Number and percentage of international applications received; Number and percentage of international researchers successfully recruited. <b>Targets:</b> Launch at least 3 targeted recruitment campaigns by Q4 2026; Achieve a 20% increase in international applications by Q1 2027.

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan.

CNC has undertaken a strategic review of its recruitment policies and processes to ensure alignment with the OTM-R Toolkit. The aim is to establish a consistent, fair, and inclusive recruitment system that attracts and retains top talent while guaranteeing transparency, objectivity, and equal opportunities for all candidates.

#### 1. Clear Recruitment Procedures and Guidelines

As outlined in Actions 9 to 12 of CNC's action plan, CNC is developing and implementing comprehensive recruitment and selection guidelines. These will detail all stages of the recruitment process—from drafting job descriptions to final selection—ensuring consistency across groups. The guidelines will also highlight the principles of judging merit holistically, recognizing mobility, career breaks, and diverse career paths.

The document will be publicly available on CNC's website and systematically referenced in all job postings, providing transparency and clarity for applicants and selection committees alike. Additionally, a standardized form for requesting public calls will be introduced (Action 12) to streamline internal processes.

#### 2. Transparent Advertisement of Positions

In line with the OTM-R Toolkit recommendations and national legislation, all CNC research vacancies are and will continue to be published on multiple platforms, such as Euraxess, institutional websites, and professional networks like LinkedIn. Efforts are made to provide detailed information on job roles, required qualifications, evaluation criteria, and legal provisions. The aim is to ensure that postings reach a wide and diverse audience.

#### 3. Merit-Based and Objective Evaluation

CNC has formalized a system of evaluation that is based on objective and transparent criteria. All members of selection panels will be trained to follow the newly developed recruitment guidelines (Action 9), ensuring that evaluation metrics are applied consistently, and that non-traditional career paths and broader contributions to science (including teaching, mentoring, outreach, and science management) are duly recognized.

In accordance with Action 10, job advertisements will explicitly state evaluation criteria, career development opportunities, and the stages of the recruitment process. Feedback mechanisms will be in place for candidates who wish to inquire about selection decisions, reinforcing CNC's commitment to accountability and openness.

#### 4. Appeal and Feedback Mechanisms

CNC supports the right of applicants to raise concerns or appeal decisions. A complaints process, aligned with national legislation, is already in place. Candidates are informed of their rights and appeal windows in all job announcements and

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL:

#### 4. Implementation

General overview of the expected implementation process:

The implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan at CNC will be carried out through a collaborative effort across various institutional offices, each of which will be responsible for different actions in line with their expertise. The phased timeline for implementation will start in late 2025 and will extend into 2028, ensuring steady progress.

The **Science Communication Office** will lead the development of the comprehensive Welcome Manual for researchers (Action 1) and will ensure visibility of the mentorship program within the institution (Action 19). It will also strengthen CNC's outreach and communication efforts across traditional and digital media platforms (Actions 31, 32).

The **Board of Directors** will formally adopt and communicate the University of Coimbra's Code of Ethics, Conduct, and Integrity (Action 2), will improve laboratory and animal house facilities (Action 22), and will adopt the Equality Plan adapted to CNC activities (Action 34).

The **Human Resources Office (HR)** will oversee actions related to ethics training (Action 3), recruitment and selection (Actions 9–12, Action 35), internal communication (Actions 26, 27), and postdoctoral appointment monitoring (Action 25). HR will also manage the supervision system (Action 14).

The **Advanced Studies Office** will manage the PhD student supervisor evaluation system (Action 13) and will provide structured training for researchers involved in teaching and coaching (Action 18).

**Group Leaders** will be responsible for implementing formal researcher evaluation systems (Action 8), Career Development Plans (Action 15), co-authorship guidelines (Action 16), and expanding the mentorship program in collaboration with the Technology Transfer Office (Action 20).

The **Gender Balance Working Group** will monitor and promote gender equity across CNC (Action 17).

The **Research Funding & Project Management Office** will lead the implementation of the Research Data Management policy (Action 6), the appointment of Data Stewards (Action 23), the promotion of mobility programs (Action 24), local training programs for lab and project management (Action 35), and Open Access compliance (Action 28). It will also provide financial and project management training (Action 36).

The **Financing and Administrative Office** will manage Welcome Sessions for new researchers (Action 7), will assist with Portuguese bureaucracy (Action 33), and will enhance access to financial data through upgraded dashboards (Action 37).

The **Support Office** will extend the CNC health and safety prevention strategy to all researchers (Action 21).

The **Technology Transfer Office** will enhance CNC's technology transfer process, will maintain the CNC IP Portfolio, and will deliver training on intellectual property procedures (Actions 29, 30).

Each action in this plan will be tied to a responsible office and a concrete implementation milestone, ensuring CNC's ongoing commitment to the principles of the European Charter and Code, as well as the goals of the HRS4R process.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail:

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?	<p>The HRS4R Working Group will be responsible for overseeing the execution of the actions outlined in the HRS4R plan. The managers of the working group will convene every three months to review the progress of each action, assess the timeline, and ensure that objectives are being met. These regular meetings will serve as an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions being implemented, and adjustments to the resources or timeline can be made if necessary to ensure the success of the actions.</p> <p>During these meetings, the group will also review any challenges encountered in the implementation process and will work together to identify solutions. The feedback from these discussions will help guide any necessary changes or reallocations of resources to support the completion of the actions in a timely manner.</p> <p>Once an action has been successfully completed, a detailed report will be written. This report will outline the objectives achieved, provide an update on the results, and highlight any lessons learned or recommendations for future actions. The Consulting Group, which includes key decision-makers and</p>

	<p>representatives from all researcher levels (R1, R2, R3, and R4), will review the reports and offer guidance for any next steps or improvements.</p> <p>This process ensures consistent monitoring, transparency, and accountability throughout the implementation of the HRS4R actions, with regular feedback loops to keep both the Working Group and Consulting Group informed of progress and any necessary adjustments. A detailed communication plan will be developed to regularly inform all staff about the progress of the HRS4R implementation.</p>
How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?	<p>At CNC, we ensure active involvement of the research community (researchers at all levels) in the HRS4R implementation since researchers are represented in the HRS4R decision-making bodies: Working Group and Consulting Group. This ensures the input of the research community on the measures put in place.</p> <p>Regular updates on the progress of HRS4R actions will be shared through internal channels, including the CNC website and newsletters. A detailed communication plan will be developed to regularly inform all staff about the progress of the HRS4R implementation.</p> <p>Through surveys, focus groups, and informal discussions, we will continuously engage the research community, ensuring their perspectives are reflected in the process and the implementation aligns with their needs.</p> <p>In the future, we will provide information on the website to demonstrate how researchers are involved in the consultation and implementation process.</p>
How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.	<p>At CNC, the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R is ensured through an integrated governance structure. All proposed measures were reviewed for conformity with HRS4R principles by the Working Group, which includes the Director of CNC, and the Consulting Group, which includes one of the Vice-Directors. This guarantees that the institution's leadership is directly engaged and that HRS4R remains a core part of CNC's strategic direction.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Working Group and Human Resources Office will monitor all developments to ensure they align with HRS4R standards before any proposal is submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. This process firmly embeds the HRS4R as the overarching HR framework and ensures it is consistently reflected in CNC's research strategy and institutional policies.</p>

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?	To ensure effective implementation, regular progress meetings will be held with all responsible offices and working groups responsible for each action. These meetings will allow tracking of progress, adjustment of timelines if necessary, and coordination of any additional support needed. Updates will be reported to the Working Group to maintain oversight and ensure alignment with the overall strategy.
How will you monitor progress (timeline)?	Progress meetings will be held with each working group to ensure timely completion of actions or to revise timelines as needed.
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?	Progress will be measured using clear indicators for each action, such as published documents, trainings held, systems implemented, and researcher feedback. Each responsible office will report on these milestones to the HRS4R Working Group. Regular monitoring meetings will ensure actions stay on track or are adjusted if needed, and results will support the next assessment and ongoing improvements.