ISGlobal Barcelona Institute for Global Health

HRS4R

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

Action Plan 2015-2018

Barcelona, May 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ISGlobal

The Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) is the result of an innovative alliance between academic, government, and philanthropic institutions seeking to contribute to the efforts being made by the international community to address the challenges facing global health.

ISGlobal provides a hub of excellence dedicated to scientific research and the provision of health care. The institute, which originated from a joint initiative of the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona and the University of Barcelona, has amassed over 30 years of experience in the field of global health. The pivotal mechanism of its work model is the transfer of knowledge generated by scientific research to practice, a task undertaken by the institute's Education and Policy and Global Development departments.

The institute's ultimate goal is to work towards closing the health equity gaps between and within different regions of the world.

In 2015, ISGlobal will merge with the Barcelona Institute for International Health Research (CRESIB), a research centre with which it shares a common history and background as well as having the same trustees. After the merger, CRESIB will cease to exist as a separate entity and all its assets and liabilities will be transferred to ISGlobal, which will acquire all the research centre's rights and assume its obligations.

Since 2013, ISGlobal has been working with the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology (CREAL) with a view to becoming a world class research and translational centre in global health. The aim is that, in the near future, this alliance will culminate in a merger between the two organisations. With this end in view, the two centres have been working on a joint internal analysis and survey and on coordinating their respective action plans so as to align, as far as possible, their activities and facilitate the eventual merger.

1.2 Background to the HRS4R

ISGlobal's mission is to improve global health and promote health equity through excellence in research and the translation and application of knowledge. Our values are:
- *Excellence*
- *Respect for diversity*
- *Fairness, accountability and transparency*
- *Independence*
- *Commitment to public health*
- *Commitment to the highest ethical standards*
- *Creativity in a friendly work environment*

Consequently, the pursuit of excellence in research by ensuring optimum employment conditions and working environment for our researchers is fully in line with our corporate vision, and developing a comprehensive human resources strategy is a logical step in our development process.

ISGlobal's research centre, CRESIB, endorsed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in 2013. The CRESIB-ISGlobal HRS4R Action Plan is closely aligned with the centre's Strategic Plan. It relates to researchers at all stages of their career and also to the whole staff of ISGlobal irrespective of the person's position or contractual situation. Since the motivation of administrative and research support staff is also greatly influenced by their environment, ensuring a positive work environment and good working conditions for everyone will also yield better results for our researchers and the centre as a whole.

As mentioned above, ISGlobal and CREAL are working together towards the goal of merging to become a world class research and translational centre in global health. As a result of this strategic alliance, the two institutes have formulated a joint strategic plan for the period 2014-2016, which includes the convergence of their HRS4R strategies. They have also worked together to carry out an internal analysis and survey of their organisations and have collaborated on the elaboration of their respective action plans.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 HRS4R Working Group

The task of coordinating the development and implementation of the human resources (HR) Strategy and Action Plan was assigned by the ISGlobal Directorate to the General Manager, the Human Resources Manager and the Scientific Coordinator.

At the end of 2014, a working group (HRS4R-WG) was set up to conduct the internal analysis and to develop the Action Plan. Researchers at all career stages and members of the whole community were invited to participate in the working group on a voluntary basis. When forming the working group, we took into account the need to include representatives from all categories of research professionals and from all other groups (research technicians, administrative staff, the education department and the policy department). Gender balance was also taken into account, and the final working group included nine women and six men (see Figure 1).

Fig.1. *Members of the HRS4R Working Group*

Category	Gender
PI	M
PI	M
Postdoctoral fellow	F
predoctoral fellow - clinician	F
predoctoral fellow – basic research	F
Statistician	M
Lab Technician	M
Project Manager	F
Education Dept. staff	M
Policy Dept. staff	F
Admin Staff	F
Personal Assistant	F
General Manager	*M*
Scientific coordinator	*F*
HR Manager	*F*

In late 2014 and early 2015, an internal analysis was conducted to identify the internal procedures and practices in need of improvement. This was done by evaluating existing practices and comparing them with the principles of the

Charter and Code. In this way, the Charter and Code served as an instrument for continuous improvement of the human resources strategy.

The internal analysis was performed using the methodology described below.

2.2 Analysis of Regulatory Framework and Existing Practices

The first step in the internal analysis was to identify and examine the legislation affecting the implementation of the Charter and Code principles. At the same time, the centre's existing practices in areas covered by the principles were also analysed. The legislation establishes the framework for the internal analysis conducted by the HRS4R working group. They concluded that ISGlobal's practices comply with the Charter and Code. Current ISGlobal practices were summarised according to the Charter and Code principles.

2.3 Survey

To assess the degree to which the Charter and Code principles are applied in ISGlobal, a survey (see *Annex 1*) was designed and sent to the whole ISGlobal community, including researchers at all career stages, and all staff.

The HRS4R-WG prepared a proposal based on the European Commission template, which includes 40 principles. The resulting questionnaire survey included 24 questions and statements and was approved by the Directorate on 23 February 2015.

The survey, which was answered anonymously, was made available in two languages (English and Catalan) and the responses were collected using the Google Forms tool.

The survey included:

- a brief general introduction explaining the objectives of the HRS4R;
- 3 questions relating to the profile of the respondent (category, seniority and sex);
- 24 items relating to the Charter and Code principles.

On a scale ranging from 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest), respondents evaluated each statement from two points of view:

- Degree of implementation: respondents scored each item on the basis of the extent to which they considered the policy or regulation is being implemented at the centre.
- Level of importance: respondents scored each item on the importance they accorded to the issue.

Taking into account the results for these two values, a Priority Index (*Pri*) was calculated as follows:

$$Pri = \frac{\text{Level of importance}}{\text{Level of implementation}}$$

The *Pri* has been used to prioritise the list of issues.

If the answer to the question was yes or no, the index is designated as level of agreement, and is obtained as a result by multiplying the ratio of six to five.

The survey was sent to all respondents in a general mailing on 26 March 2015 and a reminder was sent out a few days later. An open informative session was held on 8 April 2015 to explain the objective of the survey and clarify doubts.

2.4 Participation and results

The survey was answered by 81 people out of a possible total of 176, a participation rate of 46%. The results were analysed for the sample as a whole and also by professional category.

The results of the survey identified some starting points for improvement. These were helpful in the design of the Strategy and the Action Plan.

All the survey results are attached in Annex 2.

The working group reviewed the qualitative and quantitative results and agreed that the items considered more important and those with a higher priority should be addressed first.

Question	Priority Index	Level of Importance	Level of Implementation /Agreement
Q.18 Do you think the centre should have a policy to evaluate annual objectives?	8	4.22	0
Q.14 Do you think your centre is sufficiently transparent about wage conditions?	7.06	4.36	0.62
Q.2 Do you think its necessary to have a postdoc program (that specifies the tasks and objectives to be achieved during their postdoctoral stay)?	2.17	3.81	1.76
Q.16 Regarding teleworking (working from home) at your centre, grade its...	2.09	4.45	2.91
Q.22 Do you think it is necessary to have a teaching policy?	2.06	3.91	2.46
Q.13 Regarding the welcome guide at your centre, grade its...	1.99	4.1	2.72
Q.10 Regarding the Code of Good Practices in your centre, could you please grade the...	1.92	4.25	2.83
Q.23 Regarding internal communication at your centre, grade its...	1.91	4.55	2.98
Q.4 Regarding the PhD programme at your centre, could you grade the...	1.77	3.67	2.56
Q.15 Regarding the flexibility of working hours at your centre, grade its...	1.7	4.76	3.45
Q.1 Regarding the researchers' career path, grade the...	1.69	4.75	3
Q.19 Regarding the security measures at your workplace, grade its...	1.51	4.44	3.46
Q.3 Regarding the mentoring policy, could you grade its...	1.49	3.81	3
Q.11 Regarding data protection at your centre, grade the...	1.44	4.29	3.44
Q.17 Regarding the policy on travel and subsistence allowances, grade its...	1.41	4.26	3.54
Q.6 Do you think it is necessary to have a publications policy (bibliometric criteria, percentage of papers in each quartile, etc.)?	0.97	3.54	3.65
Q.21 How would you grade the training program?	0.97	4.59	4.75
Q.7 Do you think it is important to define a career path?	0.95	4.64	4.88
Q.8 Do you think it's necessary to have a description of workplaces?	0.94	4.59	4.88
Q.20 Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on equal opportunities and management of diversity?	0.94	4.16	4.44
Q.12 Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on the selection/recruitment of personnel?	0.92	4.04	4.38
Q.9 Regarding researcher mobility, do you think it would be necessary to have a program that defines training stays at centres outside your centre?	0.91	3.78	4.14
Q.24 Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on the resolution of internal conflicts at your centre?	0.9	3.96	4.38
Q.5 Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on intellectual property and transfer?	0.85	3.92	4.59

Table 1:

3. ACTION PLAN

On the basis of the results of the gap analysis, the HRS4R-WG identified the areas requiring support and improvement at the institutional level.

The 25 actions proposed in the Action Plan approved by the Directorate on **11 May 2015** will enable the organisation to fulfil the Vision and Strategic Objectives for HR for the period 2015-2018 in line with the Code and Charter for Researchers.

The Action Plan specifies the person or body responsible for each action as well as a timeframe and a progress indicator. A Monitoring Committee will be set up to evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan and conduct the Self-Assessment.

The Monitoring Committee will follow-up on the progress of the Action Plan, propose adjustments when needed, and report to the Directorate twice a year. There will be a formal review at the end of 2018 and at that time a new Action Plan will be proposed for the following period.

The aim of implementing the 2015-2018 Action Plan is to ensure that the evolution of ISGlobal is in line with the HRS4R standards.

Actions

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL	
1	Disseminate the Code of Good Scientific Practices and the procedure for dealing with research misconduct.
2	Organise specific training on ethics in research and good scientific practice and include relevant documentation in the welcome pack for newcomers.
3	Follow-up on the mechanisms for ethical conflict resolution and establish procedures for dealing with conflict situations.
4	Develop an ISGlobal strategy on knowledge and technology transfer and a policy on intellectual property.
5	Develop a publication policy aimed at improving the dissemination of information and promoting the timely publication of quality research papers in high impact journals.
RECRUITMENT	
6	Develop a policy and guidelines on recruitment and personnel selection.

7	Train group leaders in team management and in recruitment processes.
8	Provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application to all candidates interviewed for any position and evaluated by a selection panel.
9	Develop and disseminate a brochure to improve PhD recruitment.
10	Update and improve the existing induction procedure: initial training, welcome guide and materials, and induction presentation.
WORKING CONDITIONS	
11	Define standardised job descriptions and a professional career structure for non-research staff, and develop a evaluation system to ensure its implementation.
12	Make internal salary scales public in the interests of transparency.
13	Create and implement a procedure for conflict resolution.
14	Inform employees about benefits of improving their work-life balance.
15	Create a guide for employees who are going to be parents and improve conditions for pregnant employees.
16	Develop a mobility policy that promotes networking and internationalisation.
17	Develop a guide for expatriate personnel.
18	Implement and disseminate the measures proposed in the ISGlobal Equal Opportunities and Diversity Plan (2015-2017).
19	Develop a guidebook for postdoctoral staff.
20	Create mechanisms to provide advice to predoctoral and postdoctoral employees about their career options at the end of their training period**.**
TRAINING	
21	Set up a working group to develop an annual in-service training plan for all employees.
22	Develop a continuous training programme and an annual training plan for all employees and publish it on the ISGlobal intranet.

23	Perform an annual training assessment to inform the design of the following year's training plan for all employees.
24	Identify core competencies for PhD and postdoctoral researchers and provide training for them if needed.
25	Review the mentoring program (set up in 2013).

The Action Plan defines the person or body responsible for each action, as well as the timeframe and an indicator to measure progress.

ETHICAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ASPECTS	
1	**Disseminate the Code of Good Scientific Practices and the procedure for dealing with research misconduct.**
Responsibility	Scientific Coordinator
Time Scale	Starting in 2016 1Q
Indicator	All personnel have been given the Code and have certified receipt.
2	**Organise specific training on ethics in research and good scientific practice and include relevant documentation in the welcome pack for newcomers.**
Responsibility	Scientific Coordinator/HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 1Q
Indicator	1 training session held each year to refresh content and clarify doubts.
3	**Follow-up on the mechanisms for ethical conflict resolution and establish procedures for dealing with conflict situations.**
Responsibility	Directorate, Internal Scientific Committee
Time Scale	2017 2Q
Indicator	Revised policy and procedure
4	**Develop an ISGlobal strategy on knowledge and technology transfer and a policy on intellectual property.**
Responsibility	Director of Innovation
Time Scale	2016 1Q
Indicator	Document on innovation policy available
5	**Develop a publication policy aimed at improving the dissemination of information and promoting the timely publication of quality research papers in high impact journals.**
Responsibility	Scientific Coordinator and Internal Scientific Committee
Time Scale	2015 4Q
Indicator	Publication policy available
RECRUITMENT	
6	**Develop a policy and guidelines on recruitment and**

	personnel selection.
Responsibility	HR Department
Time Scale	2016 4Q
Indicator	Recruitment procedure and guide available
7	**Train Group leaders in team management and in recruitment processes.**
Responsibility	HR Department
Time Scale	2015 3Q
Indicator	At least one training session per year; number of participants
8	**Provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application to all candidates interviewed for any position and evaluated by a selection panel.**
Responsibility	HR Manager and Selection Panel
Time Scale	2017 Q3
Indicator	All candidates have received feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application
9	**Develop and disseminate a brochure to improve PhD recruitment.**
Responsibility	Scientific Coordinator and Training Director
Time Scale	2018 3Q
Indicator	PhD brochure available
10	**Update and improve existing induction procedure: initial training, welcome guide and materials, and induction presentation.**
Responsibility	HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 1Q
Indicator	Welcome handbook improved. Induction plan available.
WORKING CONDITIONS	
11	**Define standardised job descriptions and a professional career structure for non-research staff, and develop a system to ensure its implementation.**
Responsibility	Directorate, HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 4Q
Indicator	Job descriptions available for each position. Career structure for non-research staff established
12	**Make internal salary scales public in the interests of transparency.**
Responsibility	General Manager, HR Manager
Time Scale	2017 1Q
Indicator	Internal salary scales are published.

13	**Create and implement a procedure for conflict resolution.**
Responsibility	General Manager, HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 2Q
Indicator	Plan in place for the prevention of workplace harassment. Policy and procedure for conflict resolution available.
14	**Inform employees about benefits of improving their work-life balance.**
Responsibility	HR Manager, Communication Department
Time Scale	2016 2Q
Indicator	Information on work-life balance published in new intranet area
15	**Create a guide for employees who are going to be parents and improve conditions for pregnant employees.**
Responsibility	HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 3Q
Indicator	Guide available
16	**Develop a mobility policy that promotes networking and internationalisation.**
Responsibility	General Manager, HR Manager
Time Scale	2017 1Q
Indicator	Mobility policy available.
17	**Develop a guide for expatriate personnel.**
Responsibility	HR Manager
Time scale	2018 1Q
Indicator	Guide for expatriate personnel available.
18	**Implement and disseminate the measures proposed in the ISGlobal Equal Opportunities and Diversity Plan (2015-2017).**
Responsibility	HR Manager
Time Scale	2015 3Q
Indicator	Gender Equality Plan approved and published.
19	**Develop a guidebook for postdoctoral staff.**
Responsibility	Scientific Coordinator and Training Director
Time Scale	2016 4Q
Indicator	Postdoctoral guidebook available.
20	**Create mechanisms to provide advice to predoctoral and postdoctoral employees about their career options at the end of their training period.**
Responsibility	HR Manager and Scientific Coordinator
Time Scale	2017 3Q

Indicator	Number of seminars, discussions, and annual follow-up sessions with predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows.
TRAINING	
21	**Set up a working group to develop an annual in-service training plan for all employees.**
Responsibility	Directorate, HR Manager
Time Scale	2015 4Q
Indicator	Number of sessions held, training policy available, and terms of reference of the training working group established.
22	**Develop a continuous training programme and an annual training plan for all employees and publish it on the ISGlobal intranet.**
Responsibility	HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 1Q
Indicator	Survey template, number of evaluations.
23	**Perform an annual training assessment to inform the design the following year's training plan for all employees.**
Responsibility	Directorate, HR Manager
Time Scale	2016 2Q
Indicator	Yearly plan available
24	**Identify core competencies for PhD and postdoctoral researchers and provide training for them if needed.**
Responsibility	PhD committee, Scientific Coordinator, Postdoctoral representatives
Time Scale	2016 2Q
Indicator	Number of courses done
25	**Review the mentoring program (set up in 2013).**
Responsibility	Mentoring program committee
Time Scale	2016 3Q
Indicator	Annual report, number of evaluations

Timetable for Actions:

Action	2015		2016				2017				2018			
	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q
1			▓											
2			▓											
3								▓						
4			▓											
5		▓												
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4. ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP

The Monitoring Committee will report on the implementation of the HR Action Plan to the Directorate twice a year. It will also be responsible for the follow-up of the progress of the Action Plan and will propose adjustments when needed.

As stated in steps 4 and 5 of the HRS4R, there will be a preliminary formal internal review at the end of 2017 followed by a proposal of new actions for the following period. The Monitoring Committee will also be responsible for preparing and facilitating the external review that will take place at the end of 2018.

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ANNEX I. SURVEY

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Survey for all ISGlobal personnel

Dear colleague,

As you know, ISGlobal is working towards obtaining the European logo that accredits us as a centre committed to its personnel and to the improvement of working conditions. With this objective, we have created a working group that has analysed the current situation and developed an Action Plan 2015-2018. To identify and prioritize actions/policies to be performed/improved, we would like to have your opinion.

At the following link you will find a survey with a series of questions we would like your opinion on, in relation to their degree of implementation and how important you feel they are.

While the survey is anonymous, we would initially ask for some general information that would allow us to more detailed assessment and evaluation of the results.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Information required:

Work category:

☐Research

    ☐ PIs   ☐ Postdocs + Staff Scientist + Research Fellow

    ☐ Predocs + Medical Research Fellow

☐ Others

    ☐ Translation and training

    ☐ Research support staff *(statisticians, data managers, laboratory technicians, field workers)*

☐ PMs, Project assistants, Research managers

☐ Management

How long have you worked here?

☐ 0 to 1 year   ☐ between 1 and 3 years ☐ more than 3 years

Sex:

☐ Male   ☐ Female

Survey:

Please grade the following questions on a scale of 0 to 5:

1. Degree of implementation: grade from 0 to 5 to appraise the degree of implementation of the policy/regulation at the centre, if it has been established, if it is used, etc. (the higher the grade, the better the implementation; grade as 0 if it is not used or if you don't know)

2. Degree of importance: grade from 0 to 5 according to how important this issue is to you (the higher the grade, the more important it is).

Finally, at the end of each question, there is a field where you can provide further suggestions if you like.

Questions

1.   Regarding the researchers' career path, grade the...

                          0 1 2 3 4 5   0 1 2 3 4 5

Degree of Implementation ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Degree of Importance ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Suggestions

2.   Do you think it's necessary to have a postdoc program (that specifies the tasks and objectives to be achieved during their postdoctoral stay)?

                          0 1 2 3 4 5

Yes ☐ No ☐   Degree of Importance ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Suggestions

3.   Regarding the PhD programme at your centre, grade the...
4.   Do you think it is important to define a career path?

5.   Regarding researcher mobility, do you think it would be necessary to have a program that defines training stays at centres outside ISGLOBAL?

6.   Regarding the Code of Good Practices in your centre, grade the…

7.   Do you think it is necessary to have a publications policy (bibliometric criteria, percentage of papers in each quartile, etc.)?

8.   Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on intellectual property and transfer?

9.   Regarding data protection at your centre, grade the…

10.   Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on the selection/recruitment of personnel?

11.   Regarding the welcome guide at your centre, grade its…

12.   Do you think your centre is sufficiently transparent about wage conditions?

13.   Regarding the flexibility of working hours at your centre, grade its…

14.   Regarding teleworking (working from home) at your centre, grade its…

15.   Do you think it's necessary to have job descriptions ?

16.   Regarding the policy on travel and per diem allowances, grade its...

17.   Regarding the policy for evaluating annual objectives, grade its…

18.   Regarding the security measures at your workplace, grade its…

19.   Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on equal opportunities and management of diversity?

20.   Do you think it is necessary to have a training program?

21.   Regarding the policy on teaching?

22.   Regarding the mentoring policy, grade its...

23.   Regarding internal communication at your centre, grade its...

24.   Do you think it is necessary to have a policy on the resolution of internal conflicts at your centre?