ikerbasque
Basque Foundation for Science

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS (HRS4R)

2008 - 2023 Report

Content

0. Executive Summary

2007

Ikerbasque, the Basque Foundation for Science was created in 2007 by the Basque Government to contribute to develop scientific research in the Basque Country.

The European Commission adopted the European Researchers' Charter and the Code of Conduct for Researcher Recruitment, drafting two documents aimed at researchers as well as employers and providers of public and private sector funding.

Ikerbasque signed and adopted both documents in 2008.

To help accommodate the research institutions to the Charter and Code principles, the Commission set out a procedure through which those institutions interested in including them, could design their own Human Resources Strategy .

Ikerbasque was invited by the European Commission to take part in the 2nd Cohort of HR Strategy Group to implement and HR Strategy related Action Plan.

Ikerbasque developed and deployed a Human Resources Strategy which led to the "HR Excellence in Research" acknowledgement in 2011.

Using a comprehensive approach involving all key stakeholders, Ikerbasque completed its second self-assessment in 2013 with positive results. A revised action plan was established for the 2014-2016 period based on this assessment.

OTM-R

As a result of the seminar organized by the European Commission in January 2016, Ikerbasque incorporated the OTM-R policy in its processes.

Ikerbasque was evaluated in 2017 by the European Commission after the completion of the 2014-2016 Action Plan. The HRS4R Strategy, the achievements and the overall coherence of the strategy were assessed and were considered an "excellent work" by the EU Commission experts.

After this evaluation, Ikerbasque deployed the 2017-2019 HRS4R Action Plan, which was an updated version of the previous Action Plan. This Action Plan was developed taking into account the results of the evaluations and including some modifications and new elements that were considered necessary.

In 2019, Ikerbasque confirmed again the Endorsement letter to those principles.

At the end of the 2017-2019 Action Plan, the results obtained were gathered, and using many other inputs from all stakeholders of Ikerbasque, the 2020-2022 Action Plan was drafted under the coordination of the HRS4R Working Group.
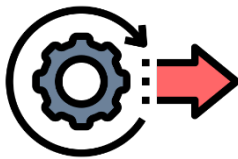
During the late 2022 and early 2023, the HRS4R Action Plans approach evolved, and rather than developing fixed 3-year- plans, the new Action Plan has been thought to be a living document, this is, an Action Plan with no time spam and in which new actions can be included at any moment.

This new approach started in 2023 with a new "living" Action Plan which initially included 18 different actions to tackle the gaps detected in the self-assessment carried out in the late 2022 and early 2023.

1. Introduction

Ikerbasque, the Basque Foundation for Science was created in 2007 by the Basque Government to contribute to develop scientific research in the Basque Country by setting different activities, such as attracting researchers, creating new research centres and disseminating the science culture within the society.

During this period, Ikerbasque has recruited over 300 researchers from 28 countries, who have joined the universities and research centers of the Basque Country. These researchers have published more than 7,000 scientific articles in indexed publications, with over 10,000 citations per year. Similarly, the Foundation has contributed to the development of the BERC (Basque Excellence Research Centres) research centers, a network that is currently comprised of 9 centers working on cutting edge research fields.

In these 13 years of Ikerbasque's progress, the Foundation's researchers have achieved a return of more than 200 million €. This implies that for each euro that the Basque Government has invested in Ikerbasque, a return of almost 2 Euros has been obtained. These resources have been used to foster research by contracting researchers of all levels and investing in equipment and infrastructures.

Ikerbasque has adopted the Advanced Management Model of Euskalit, an upgraded EFQM management model, and guided by its definitions we perform annual evaluations and revisions of the processes, in which all the staff is involved, to ensure the continuous improvement of the operations of the foundation. This management model was recognised in 2011 with the Q award for Management Excellence and in 2015 with the A award for Advanced Management.

2. HRS4R: background

The European Commission adopted in 2005 a European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These two documents, addressed to researchers as well as research employers and funders in both the public and private sectors, are key elements in the EU's policy to boost researchers' careers.

Specifically, the European Charter for Researchers is a set of general principles and requirements which specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers. It constitutes a framework for researchers, employers and funders which invites them to act responsibly and as professionals within their working environment, and to recognise each other as such.

Moreover, the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers consists of a set of general principles and requirements that should be followed by employers and/or funders when appointing or recruiting researchers. These principles and requirements are complementary to those outlined in the European Charter for Researchers. Institutions and employers adhering to the Code of Conduct will openly demonstrate their commitment to act in a responsible and respectable way and to provide fair framework conditions to researchers, with a clear intention to contribute to the advancement of the European Research Area.

To help accommodate the research institutions to the Charter and Code principles, the Commission set out a procedure through which those institutions interested in including them, could design their own Human Resources Strategy.

This procedure consists of five steps:

1. Preparation of a rigorous Internal Analysis.
2. Publication of the Institution Strategy in the corporate website to maintain and improve the Charter and Code.
3. Evaluation and approval of the Strategy by the Commission.
4. Application and continuous self-assessment of the process by the institution
5. And finally, have the Strategy and its deployment evaluate externally by the Commission every 36 months after initiating the process.

3. Development of the HRS4R strategy

The HRS4R strategy in Ikerbasque is embedded within the overall strategy of the institution. We annually evaluate the results of our strategy and deploy a new Action Plan within the framework of the long-term strategy. In addition to the annual evaluation, a specific PDCA 3-year PDCA cycle is used for the HRS4R strategy as proposed by the European Commission.
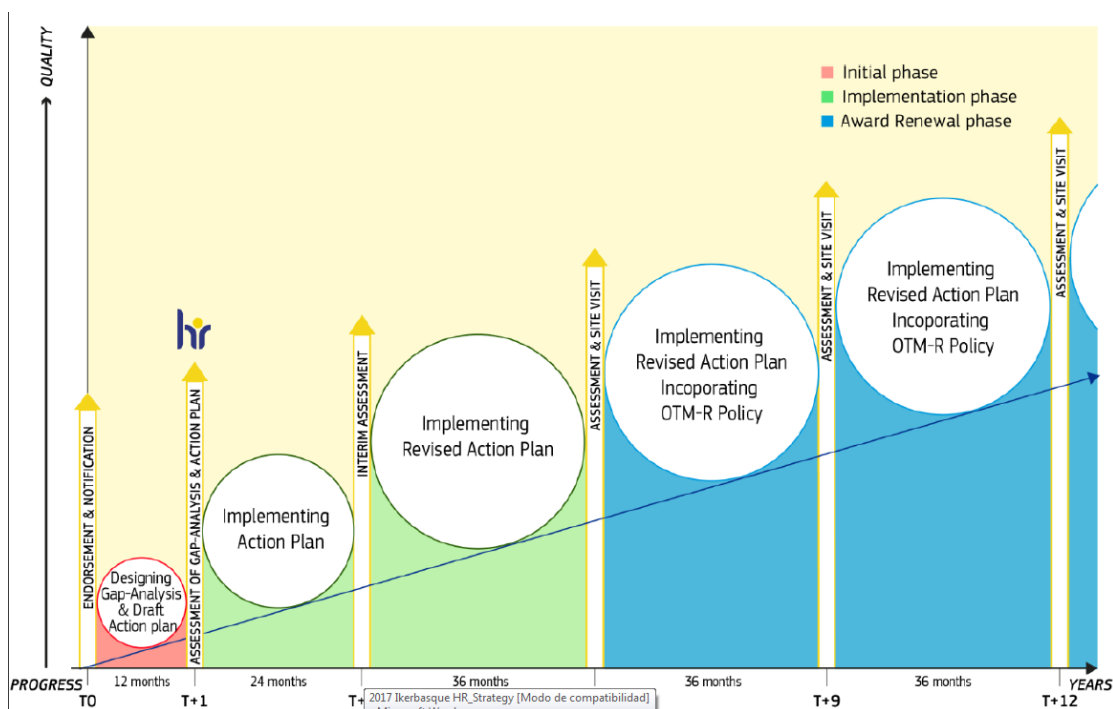
The Ikerbasque Strategy for attracting talented researchers was established back in 2007 and reflects the commitment for excellence, openness, flexibility, pan-European focus, ethical awareness and ethical and human values. Ikerbasque signed the "Declaration of Commitment to the Principles of the European Charter of Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment ff Researchers" in 2008.

Ikerbasque was invited by the European Commission to take part in the 2nd Cohort of HR Strategy Group to implement and HR Strategy related Action Plan (2011). We developed and deployed a Human Resources Strategy which led to the "HR Excellence in Research" acknowledgement in 2011.

At the end of 2013, Ikerbasque underwent a self-assessment process for reviewing and following-up the implementation of the Action Plan designed in 2011 as part of the continuous improvement of our talent recruitment, retention and recognition of careers processes. The process involved the Governing Board, Researchers, Staff and a variety of stakeholders. After completing that self-assessment, the Revised 2014-2016 Action Plan was developed, focused on the implementation of initiatives internally identified, and the recommendations suggested from the EC.

5 years after the "HR Excellence in Research" acknowledgement was received, Ikerbasque run a new self-assessment process in 2016, which resulted in the HRS4R 2017-2019 Action Plan. The self-assessment process was coordinated by the Ikerbasque HRS4R Working Group, and each of the 40 principles of the C&C were revised and aligned with the reality of Ikerbasque, including the implementation of an OTM-R policy.

A new self-assessment was completed in 2017 with an external evaluation by independent experts of the European Commission and, as a result, Ikerbasque renewed the HR award until 2020.

In 2019, at the end of the 2017-2019 Action Plan, Ikerbasque confirmed its commitment with the Endorsement letter to the Charter and Code.

At the end of the 2017-2019 Action Plan, the results of the Plan were analysed and, along with the gathering of other information received from many other inputs from all stakeholders of Ikerbasque, the HRS4R Working Group developed a Gap Analysis which led to a Revised 2020-2022 Action Plan.

The deployment of the 2020-2022 Action Plan was monitored by the Ikerbasque HRS4R Working Group.

For the following Action Plan, the HRS4R Action Plans approach evolved, and rather than developing fixed 3-year-plan, the new Action Plan has been thought to be a living document, this is, an Action Plan with no time spam and in which new actions can be included at any moment.

This new approach started in 2023 with a new Action Plan which initially included 18 different actions to tackle the gaps detected in the self-assessment carried out in the late 2022 and early 2023.

IKERBASQUE STRATEGY STATEMENT

Ikerbasque fosters the professionalism and excellence of the research activity and research career in the Basque Country, Spain and Europe. Our policy for recruiting scientists guarantees impartiality through the whole selection process, by prevailing competency and evidence-based qualifications. The principles of openness and fairness guide the evaluation of every individual's achievement, this leads to a personal and personalised evaluation and degree of development which may include training and mentoring.

The remuneration policy is set taking into account the constraints of the Basque and Spanish Science system, and is based in personal situation, research path and performance.

At Ikerbasque, we prefer to use the term of Person or Researcher, instead of Human Resource when we are referring to research staff, but since the European Common Strategy uses this term (HR), we will use it within this document, to comply with the common terminology.

The mean of the Charter and Code for Ikerbasque researchers

Ikerbasque recognises that research merit of the research staff of the foundation that work on very different scientific areas, from experimental sciences to humanities, that can not only be evaluated based only in publication rates, but also in researchers' training, fund raising via competitive projects, dissemination and knowledge transfer, among others. Indeed, these broader skills are particularly valued as they are essential to modern science careers. Becoming an acknowledged institution for the Charter and Code offers a greater level of accountability and clarity   for   Ikerbasque.

The mean of the Charter and Code for Ikerbasque managing staff

The management team of Ikerbasque is selected by finding professionals with a strong background in research management, and also a wide range of competencies beyond the big science indicators, such as management and communication skills, teamwork and knowledge transfer, among others.

4. 2011-2013 Action Plan

Regularly a self-assessment is performed so the results of the Action Plan can be measured and the Strategy reviewed. Ikerbasque carried out its first self-assessment in 2013.

As a result of the feedback received by the different groups, Ikerbasque staff completed the self-assessment with the following results:

FOCUS POINT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	STATUS
General	Define and publish Ikerbasque Code of Conduct.	Develop: MT	2011	Completed
	Ensure that research activities are made known to society through newsletter and open conferences.	Develop: MT & IR	2011 - 2012	Completed
Recruitment	Development of a transparent web portal with all research positions available in the Basque Country.	Develop: MT	2011	Completed
	Offer complete on-line information about the phases and result of the evaluation process in the recruitment calls.	Develop: MT Supervise: SAC	2011 - 2012	Completed
	Definition and implementation of actions to foster applications from female researchers.	Develop: MT Supervise: EC	2011 - 2012	Completed
	Increase the number of female researchers in the evaluation committees.	Define: EC Develop: MT	2011 - 2012	Completed
Research Activity	Establish an "Ikerbasque Code of Conduct for staff and researchers" and communicate it to the stakeholders	Develop: MT Supervise: EC	2011/07 2011/09	Completed
Continuous improvement	Improvement of our intranet to foster long life training and continuous improvement of professional profile.	Develop: MT Supervise: IR	2011/09	Completed
	Provide additional information on the living and working conditions in Spain, such as retirement and pensions systems, working permits, etc.	Develop: MT Supervise: IR	2011/06	Completed
	Self-assessment.	Develop: MT Supervise: EC	2013	Completed

Acronyms

IR: Ikerbasque Researchers | SAC: Scientific Advisory Board |EC: Executive Committee |MT: Staff/Management Team

5. 2014-2016 Action Plan

36 months after our first self-assessment, Ikerbasque conducted a second internal review at the end of the 2014-2016 Action Plan in order to ease the External Evaluation by the European Commission.

Our self-assessment is built using a comprehensive approach involving all key stakeholders who took part in the development of our Strategy & Action Plan, as well as new players who have become relevant during the past years to fulfill our Strategy.

Apart from building feedback channels with key stakeholders, a specific working group was created to address the gender inequality problem, which was already part of our 2011 Action Plan and is nowadays a key issue in our HRS4R Strategy.

As a result of the feedback received by the different groups, Ikerbasque staff completed the self-assessment with the following results:

FOCUS POINT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	STATUS
General	Define and deploy 2014-2017 Strategic Plan	EC, GM, MT, P01 Process leader	2014 - 2016	Completed
	Analysis of gender and science	EC, GM, MT, P03 Process leader	2014 - 2015	Completed
Recruitment	Adapt to new regularization process for foreign researchers in the Entrepreneurship Law	P04 Process leader	2014	Completed
	Renew and improve the Welcome Plan	P04 Process leader	2014	Completed
	Improve communication and feedback to non selected applicants	MT, P05 Process leader	2014	Completed
	Create an Access database to manage research talent	MT, P08 Process leader	2014 - 2015	Completed
Research Activity and Conditions	Improve salary conditions of Research Fellows	GM, MT	2015 - 2016	Completed
	Define and implement a consolidation process for Research Fellows	EC, GM, MT, EC	2015 - 2016	Completed
	Improve the triennial assessment process	MT, P05 Process leader	2014	Completed
	Establish personal interviews with each researcher prior to triennial assessment	P05 Process leader	2015 - 2016	Completed
	Annual joint workshop with Ikerbasque researchers	P05 Process leader	2014 - 2016	Completed
	Improve intranet options for triennial assessment	P05 Process leader	2015	Completed

	Reinforce the annual plan for personal interviews with researchers	MT, P05 Process leader	2014 - 2016	Completed
	Improve intranet for salary information and payslip documents	MT, P05 Process leader	2015	Completed
	Dissemination of research results of researchers	P07 Process leader	2014 - 2016	Completed
	InfoDays on H2020 calls for local researchers	EC, GM, MT, P03 Process leader	2014 - 2016	Completed
Continuous improvement	Improve the satisfaction surveys to stakeholders	MT	2014 - 2015	Completed
	External independent evaluation and assessment of management system	GM, MT, P01 Process leader	2015	Completed

Acronyms

IR: Ikerbasque Researchers | SAC: Scientific Advisory Board |EC: Executive Committee |MT: Staff/Management Team |GM: General Manager

2014-2016 Action Plan Monitoring

As a result of the feedback received by the different groups, Ikerbasque staff monitors regularly the deployment of the Action Plan.

Ikerbasque will be externally evaluated in 2017 by the European Commission. Our HRS4R Strategy will be assessed, including the achievements made so far and the overall coherence of the Strategy.

6. 2017-2019 Action Plan

An updated Strategy and Action Plan was drafted in 2016 after completing the above mentioned internal review, to be deployed in the 2017-2019 period.

Ikerbasque HRS4R is coordinated by the **HRS4R Working Group.** This group is sponsored by the Governing Board and composed by General Manager (who coordinates the Group), the leaders of P04 "Talent Attraction" process and P05 "Talent Management", all the Management Staff and researchers from both categories: Research Fellows (R3) and Research Professors (R4).

The HRS4R strategy in Ikerbasque is embedded within the overall strategy of the institution. Our management framework was originally designed according to EFQM model and was upgraded to the Advanced Management Model of Euskalit. Accordingly, Ikerbasque evaluates annually the results of our strategy, involving all relevant stakeholders, and deploy a new Action Plan within the framework of the long term strategy. In addition, a specific PDCA 3 year cycle is used for the HRS4R strategy as proposed by European Commission.

During the self-assessment process in 2016, each of the 40 principles of the C&C were revised and aligned with the reality of Ikerbasque, including the implementation of an OTM-R policy. This process was coordinated by the HRS4R Working Group and in order to get a comprehensive approach, the analysis in Ikerbasque has involved all key players concerned. This process involved the participation of over 1,000 people. In order to be efficient, the participation of each group followed a procedure tailored to the specifics of each group, which included:

STAKEHOLDER	PARTICIPATION METHOD
Ikerbasque Research Fellows	• Anonymous Satisfaction survey (on-line) • Workshop • Personal Interviews • Focus Group on Gender Equality
Ikerbasque Research Professors	• Anonymous Satisfaction survey (on-line) • Workshop • Personal Interviews • Focus Group on Gender Equality
Call Applicants	• Anonymous Satisfaction survey (on-line) tailored for each call
Basque Research Community	• Anonymous Satisfaction survey (on-line)
Host Institutions	• Anonymous Satisfaction survey (on-line) • Periodic interviews • Focus groups • Meetings with the Scientific Directors of Research Centers and Universities
Ikerbasque ISAB	• Working session
Governing Board	• Board Meetings
Executive Committe	• Committee meetings
Staff	• Anonymous Satisfaction survey (on-line) • Focus groups • Personal Interviews

| | • Management meetings |
| | • Focus Group on Gender Equality |

2017-2019 Action Plan has been structured under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code, specifically addressing the individual articles where a gap was detected during the gap analysis.

I. Ethical and Professional Aspects					
C&C	**ACTIONS**	**TIMING**	**RESPONSIBLES[1]**	**INDICATORS/TARGET**	**STATUS**
3, 8, 24	Review and improve Ikerbasque Policies on Research Expectations to align them with C & C	2017	MT, P05 Process leader	Last update of Ikerbasque policies Satisfaction of IR	Completed
5	Updated and web-based Welcome Plan	2017-2018	MT, P05 Process leader	Last date of update Satisfaction on new IR	Completed
9	Define public engagement tools in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan	2017	EC, MT, IR, P07 Process leaders	Published: Satisfaction of IR with their participation	Completed
10, 27	Implementation of an Equality Plan	2017-20198	GB, EC, MT	Published: Number of female applicants and researchers	Completed

II. Recruitment and Selection					
C&C	**ACTIONS**	**TIMING**	**RESPONSIBLES**	**INDICATORS/TARGET**	**STATUS**
13	New call templates	2017	P04 Process leader	Satisfaction of applicants	Completed
14, 20	Review of Selection Process. Comprehensive Policy about the Evaluation Committe	2018	EC, GM, P04 Leader	Satisfaction of applicants Number of complains	Completed
14, 15	Guide for Evaluators publicly available	2017-2018	MT, P04 Process Leader	Satisfaction of applicants Number of complains	Completed
12, 13, 15, 18	New Sciencecareers website connected to the revamped Euraxess site	2017	MT, P03 Process leader	Number of applicants Share of foreign applicants	Completed
21, 25	Review and dissemination of Ikerbasque #6 Policy on RF Assessment	2017	MT, IR	Satisfaction of applicants	Completed

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[1] GB: Governing Board; EX: Executive Committe; IR: Ikerbasque Researchers; GR: General Manager; MT: Management Team; SAC: Scientific Advisory Committe

III. Working Conditions and Social Security					
C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLES	INDICATORS/TARGET	STATUS
23	Develop Science.eus website to include funding instruments	2017-2018	MT	Published:	Completed
26	Review Ikerbasque policies to explain better career development and salary promotions	2017	EC, GM, P05 Process leader	Satisfaction of IR with triennial assessment	Completed
28	Analyse best-practices in mentoring in other institutions	2018	GM, MT	Satisfaction of IR with career development	Completed
30	Develop a specific website for the Euraxess Service Center	2017-2018	MT	Satisfaction of IR with career development	Completed
34	Review the complains procedure with participation of researchers, Appropriate dissemination of the procedure-	2017-2019	GM, MT, IR	Number of complains Overall satisfaction of IR about Ikerbasque	Completed
35	Include a comprehensive participacion scheme for researchers in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan	2017		Overall satisfaction of IR about Ikerbasque	Completed
22	New Ikerbasque website to enhance research results	2017		Awareness in society	Completed

IV. Training and Development					
C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLES	INDICATORS/TARGET	STATUS
36	Coordination meetings with Directors of host institutions to ensure appropriate supervision	2017-2019	GM	Satisfaction surveys results	Completed
38,39	Development of a career guide with training instruments for researchers	2018	MT, P05 Process leader	Satisfaction of IR with career development	Completed
38,39	Improvement of the Intranet to ease interaction between Ikerbasque and researchers	2018	MT	Number of complains Overall satisfaction of IR about Ikerbasque	Completed

7. 2020-2022 Action Plan

Ikerbasque HRS4R is coordinated by the HRS4R Working Group. This group is sponsored by the Governing Board and composed by General Manager (who coordinates the Group), the leaders of P04 "Talent Attraction" process and P05 "Talent Management", all the Management Staff and researchers from our three categories: Research Fellows (R3), Research Associates (R4) and Research Professors (R4).

The HRS4R strategy in Ikerbasque is embedded within the overall strategy of the institution. Our management framework was originally designed according to EFQM model and was upgraded to the Advanced Management Model of Euskalit. Accordingly, Ikerbasque evaluates annually the results of our strategy, involving all relevant stakeholders, and deploy a new Action Plan within the framework of the long-term strategy. In addition, a specific 3-year PDCA cycle is used for the HRS4R strategy as proposed by EC.

During the self-assessment process in 2019 and early 2020, each of the 40 principles of the C&C were revised and aligned with the reality of Ikerbasque, including the implementation of an OTM-R policy. This process was coordinated by the HRS4R Working Group and in order to get a comprehensive approach, the analysis in Ikerbasque has involved all key players concerned: Researchers, Call Applicants, Scientific Advisory Board, Management Board and Staff, as well as external consultats. In order to be efficient, the participation of each group followed a procedure tailored to the specifics of each group, which included:

- Personal detailed and structured interviews with all researchers (2016-2019)
- On-line yearly survey to all Ikerbasque researchers (2016-2019)
- On-line survey to all applicants of our 2019 calls (195 applicants), tailored for each call
- Focus Group Workshop on Gender Equality (researchers + management Staff) in 2019
- General Workshop with more than 130 researchers (July 2019)
- Benchmarking of experiences with other institutions regarding HRS4R (Sept 2019)
- Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board (14th November 2019)
- Self-assessment conducted by an external consultant (December 2019)
- HRS4R Working Group meetings to analyze the results of the previous Action Plan (16th December 2019)
- Meetings with the Scientific Directors of Research Centers and Universities in the Basque Country (10th and 12th February 2020, with more than 30 participants)
- On-line survey to all researchers regarding the principles of the HRS4R Charter & Code (March 2020)
- On-line survey to host institutions regarding the principles of the HRS4R Charter & Code (March 2020)
- Meetings of the Management Board (31st March 2020)
- Revision and approval of the HRS4R 2020-2022 Action Plan by the Board (2nd April)

The Ikerbasque HRS4R Working Group gathered and analyzed all the information provided by these different inputs, and defined the next Action Plan.

The Action Plan was revised by the Management Board on the 31st March 2020, and presented to the Board on the 2nd April 2020. After debate, the specific HR Strategy 2020-2022 Action Plan was approved by the Board of Ikerbasque and its deployment started.

		I. Ethical and Professional Aspects					
#	**C&C**	**ACTIONS**	**TIMING**	**RESPONSIBLES[2]**	**INDICATORS**	**TARGET**	**STATUS**
1	4, 5, 6, 8	Review and improve Ikerbasque policies.	2022	EC, GM, P05 Process leader	Renewal date of policies	> 2019	Completed
2	10, 27	Improve the % of women incorporated.	2020-2022	GB, EC, MT, SAB	% of women incorporated	40%	Completed
3	All	Define the 2021-2024 strategic plan.	2021	EC, GM, MT, P01 Process leader	Strategic Plan approval	Y/N	Completed
4	8, 9	Develop a dissemination tool of impact for researchers	2021	GR, MT, P05 and P07 Process leaders	Satisfaction of IR with dissemination tools provided	80%	Completed
5	9, 10, 27	Consolidate an award for brilliant women researchers.	2020	GB, EC, GR, MT, SAB, Equality plan leader	Consolidation of the award in the 2020-2022 period	Y/N	Completed
6	10, 27	Create a forum to share good practices in gender policy including all interested Basque research institutions.	2021	GR, MT, Equality plan leader	Creation of the forum	Y/N	Completed

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[2] GB: Governing Board; EC: Executive Committe; IR: Ikerbasque Researchers; GR: General Manager; MT: Management Team; SAC: Scientific Advisory Board

II. Recruitment and Selection

#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLES	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
7	14	Partial renew the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for recruitment and selection processes.	2020-2022	GB, EC, GR, SAB	Renewal date of some of the SAB members	> 2019	Completed
8	13	Produce new call templates.	2022	GR, MT, P04 process leader	Call template renewal date	> 2019	Completed
9	13	Boost new channels of recruitment.	2020	GR, MT, P04 and P07 process leaders	Number of applicants to our calls	Δ > 0	Completed
10	12	Further complete the Welcome Plan.	2021	GR, MT, P05 process leader	Welcome Plan renewal date	> 2019	Completed
11	11, 14	Improve the evaluation area website for evaluators.	2020	MT, P05 and P08 process leaders	Number of evaluators at disposal	Δ > 0	Completed
12	9, 12	Extend the science.eus website to present the Basque Country as an attractive place for researchers abroad.	2021	GR, MT, science.eus manager	+Number of applicants to our calls +Visits and job offers posted in the portal	Δ > 0 in our calls +100 offers	Completed
13	13	Review the Ikerbasque Fellows call.	2021	GR, MT, P04 process leader	Number of applicants to our calls	Δ > 0 in RFs call	Completed
14	11, 12, 16	Open the recruitment procedure from other calls.	2020	GR, MT, P04 process leader	Number of applicants to our calls	Δ > 0	Completed
15	13	Review of the permanent positions call.	2020	GR, MT, P04 process leader	Number of applicants to our calls	Δ > 0 in perm. call	Completed

III. Working Conditions and Social Security

#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLES	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
16	23, 24, 25	Review the working conditions of youngest researchers.	2020-2022	GR, MT, P05 process leader	Satisfaction of younger IR regarding their working conditions	80%	Completed
17	26	Review Research Associates position definition.	2020-2022	GR, MT, P05 process leader	Overall satisfaction of Research Associates	80%	Completed
18	28	Review the career promotion plan and its coherence between categories.	2020	GR, MT, P05 process leader	Satisfaction of IR with career development	80%	Completed
19	37	Analyze best practices in mentoring in other institutions.	2020-2022	GR, MT	Satisfaction of IR with career development	80%	Completed
20	All	Develop a guide for supervision and mentoring	2021	EC, GR, MT	Launching of the HRS4R logo renewal	Y/N	Completed
21	34, 35	Strengthen the HRS4R Working Group.	2020	GR, MT, IR	Satisfaction of IR with their participation in decision-taking bodies	80%	Completed

IV. Training and Development						
#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLES	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
22	28, 30, 34, 35	Further develop the intranet content.	2022	GR, MT, P05 and P08 process leaders	Satisfaction of IR in their relation with management staff	80%	Completed
23	8, 37, 40	Automate the publications of researchers in the intranet.	2020	GR, MT, P05 and P08 process leaders	Satisfaction of IR with dissemination tools provided	80%	Completed
24	32	Extend the Ikerbasque web page to ease contact between researchers to foster collaboration.	2022	GR, MT, P08 process leaders	Satisfaction of IR with professional development tools	80%	Completed
25	30	Develop a career guide for researchers.	2022	GR, MT, P05 process leader	Career guide developed and published	Y/N	Completed
26	All	Yearly self-assessment.	2020-2022	GR, MT	Self-assessment performed	Y/N	Completed
27	36	Coordination meetings with host institutions Directors.	2020-2022	EC, GR	Number of coordination meetings held	6	Completed
28	38, 39	Training about the incoming Horizon Europe program.	2020	GR, P05 process leader	Satisfaction of IR with training and professional development tools	80%	Completed
29	38, 39	Information to researchers about opening calls and other funding instruments.	2020	GR, P05 process leader	Satisfaction of IR with training and professional development tools	80%	Completed
30	8, 9	Increase the visibility of the work done by the youngest researchers.	2020-2022	GR, MT, P07 process leaders	Satisfaction of IR with dissemination tools provided	80%	Completed
31		General training in cross curricular matters.	2022	GR, P05 process leader	Satisfaction of IR with training and prof. dev. tools	80%	Discarded

8. Ikerbasque HRS4R continuous Action Plan

After the 2020-2022 Action Plan, Ikerbasque evolved the HRS4R Action Plans approach, and rather than developing fixed 3-year-plan, the new Action Plan has been thought to be a living document, this is, an Action Plan with no time spam and in which new actions can be included at any moment.

This new approach started in 2023 with a new Action Plan which initially included 18 different actions to tackle the gaps detected in the self-assessment carried out in the late 2022 and early 2023.

During the self-assessment process in 2022 and early 2023, each of the HRS4R principles of the C&C that applied to Ikerbasque were revised and evaluated, including the implementation of an OTM-R policy. This process was coordinated by the HRS4R Working Group and in order to get a comprehensive approach, the analysis in Ikerbasque involved all stakeholders concerned: Researchers, Call Applicants, Scientific Advisory Board, Management Board and Staff, as well as external consultants.

In order to be efficient, the participation of each group followed a procedure tailored to the specifics of each group, which included:

- Personal detailed and structured interviews with all researchers (2020-2022)
- On-line yearly survey to all Ikerbasque researchers (2020-2022)
- On-line survey to our researchers host institution's directors/managers (2020-2022)
- On-line survey to all applicants of our 2020, 2021 & 2022 calls (around 500 candidates from which we received +250 surveys completed), tailored for each call
- Inter-center forum on equality in science organized by ikerbasque with all Basque research institutions (30/06 2022 & 29/06/2021)
- Meetings with the general managers of Research Centers and Universities in the Basque Country (09/03/2022)
- General Workshop with +200 researchers (01/06/2022)
- Review of our Talent Management process (Aug. 2022)
- Review of our Talent Attraction process (Setp. 2022)
- Ikerbasque self-assessment conducted by an external consultant (Oct. 2022)
- Management assessment (including HR management) performed by Euskalit, an external organization (Nov. 2022)
- HRS4R Working Group meetings to analyze the results of the previous Action Plan and to brainstorm new ideas for the following Action Plan (Oct. 2022)
- Ikerbasque Equality Commission meeting (Oct. 2022)
- Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board (Nov. 2022)
- New HRS4R Action Plan work session with an external consultant (Feb. 2023)
- Benchmarking of experiences with other institutions regarding HRS4R (Feb. 2023)
- On-line survey to all researchers regarding the principles of the HRS4R Charter & Code (March 2023)

- Meeting with external expert in gender equality in Science (Jun. 2023)
- Approval of the new Action Plan by the HRS4R Working Group (Jul. 2023)
- Meetings of the Management Board (Feb. & Jul. 2023)

The Ikerbasque HRS4R Working Group gathered and analyzed all the information provided by these different inputs from all stakeholders, and defined the following Action Plan to tackle the gaps detected:

#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESP[3]	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
		I. Ethical and Professional Aspects					
1	10, 27	Improve the % of women incorporated through the deployment of the equality plan	4Q 2024	GM, EC, MT, SAB	% of women selected	40%	
					% of women incorporated	40%	
					% women in IKB personnel	29%	
2	10, 25, 27, 28	External expert advice to improve the consolidation of women RF	2Q 2023	MT	% of women RF selected that join ikerbasque	80%	
					% of women RF that consolidate as RA	60%	
3	10, 24, 26, 27	Audit of salaries regarding gender & category	4Q 2023	GM, MT	Satisfaction of women with salary & funding	75%	
					Satisfaction of women in gender balance	70%	
4	35	Improve the participation of researchers in the next Strategic Plan	1Q 2024	GM, EC, MT, IR, GB	Satisfaction with the participation in decision-making bodies	70%	
5	35	Improve the participation of researchers with decision-making focus groups	2Q 2024	GM, MT	Satisfaction with the participation in decision-making bodies	70%	

#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESP.	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
		II. Recruitment and Selection					
6	13, 24	Strengthen the Welcome Plan	3Q 2023	MT	IR satisfaction with the integration process	80%	
7	13	Improvements in the calls webpage for evaluators and candidates	4Q 2024	MT	Satisf. of candidates with the web tool	80%	
					Nº of evaluators available	100	
8	13, 24	Review the Ikerbasque Fellows call	1Q 2024	GM, MT	# of applicants to RF call	114	
					Satisf. of RF candidates	80%	
9	13, 24	Review the Ikerbasque Permanent Positions call	2Q 2024	GM, MT	# of applicants to PP call	35	
					Satisf. of PP candidates	80%	

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[3] GB: Governing Board; EC: Executive Committe; IR: Ikerbasque Researchers; GR: General Manager; MT: Management Team; SAC: Scientific Advisory Board

III. Working Conditions and Social Security

#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESP.	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
10	24, 28	Boost the HRS4R strategy in Basque research institutions	2024	GM, EC	# of basque research institutions adhered to the HRS4R strategy	16	
					Satisfaction with Working Conditions	85%	
11	24	Review the PRL policies with host institutions	2Q 2023	GM, MT	% PRL policies reviewed & updated	100%	
12	24	Review the Research Associates position definition	2Q 2023	GM, EC, MT	Overall satisfaction of Research Associates	80%	
13	23, 24	Further develop the intranet content	2024	MT	Functionality developed and implemented (Y/N)	Y	
14	23, 24	Personal interviews with all researchers	2023-2025	GM, MT	% of IKB researchers visited	90%	
15	24, 26	Review the salary scale of ikerbasque researchers	4Q 2023	GM, MT	Satisfaction with funding & salaries	75%	
16	25, 27	Improve the information given to RFs regarding the consolidation process for RA	2024	GM, MT	Satisfaction with stability & employment in RF	80%	

IV. Training and Development

#	C&C	ACTIONS	TIMING	RESP.	INDICATORS	TARGET	STATUS
17	11, 28	Review the triennial evaluation policy	2Q 2023	GM, MT, SAB	Satisfaction with career development	80%	
18	11, 28	Performance analysis of candidates to support the evaluation in the triennial assessment	2Q 2023	GM, MT, SAB	Satisfaction with career development	80%	

9. Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment policy

As stated by the *Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management under the ERA*, "By ensuring that the best person for the job is recruited, open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers (OTM-R) improves the effectiveness of national research systems, guarantees equality, especially for under-represented groups, and boosts trans and international co-operation. This in turn promotes optimal circulation of scientific knowledge".

As member of the 2nd cohort of organizations involved in the development of HRS4R, we have analyzed, assessed and integrated the recommendations and principles of OTM-R into our internal recruitment policies.

In 2016 Ikerbasque used the Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management on Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) of Researchers and implemented the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission. This was a smooth process and highlighted that Ikerbasque has been recruiting researchers based on Open, Transparent and Merit-based processes since it was created in 2007.

Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) brings benefits to researchers, institutions, a country's research system, contributes to the full implementation of the European Research Area (ERA) and to an increase in the cost-effectiveness of investments in research. More specifically, OTM-R ensures that the best person for the job is recruited, guarantees equal opportunities and access for all, facilitates developing an international portfolio (cooperation, competition, mobility) and makes research careers more attractive.

Nonetheless, the systematic review of our recruitment instruments using the OTM-R checklist has allowed Ikerbasque to improve its internal analysis, leading to an improved "Talent Attraction" process and an OTM-R policy.

The result is the current Ikerbasque OTM-R Policy, effective November 2016 and formally endorsed by the Governing Board in May 2017, and revised again in 2020 and 2023.
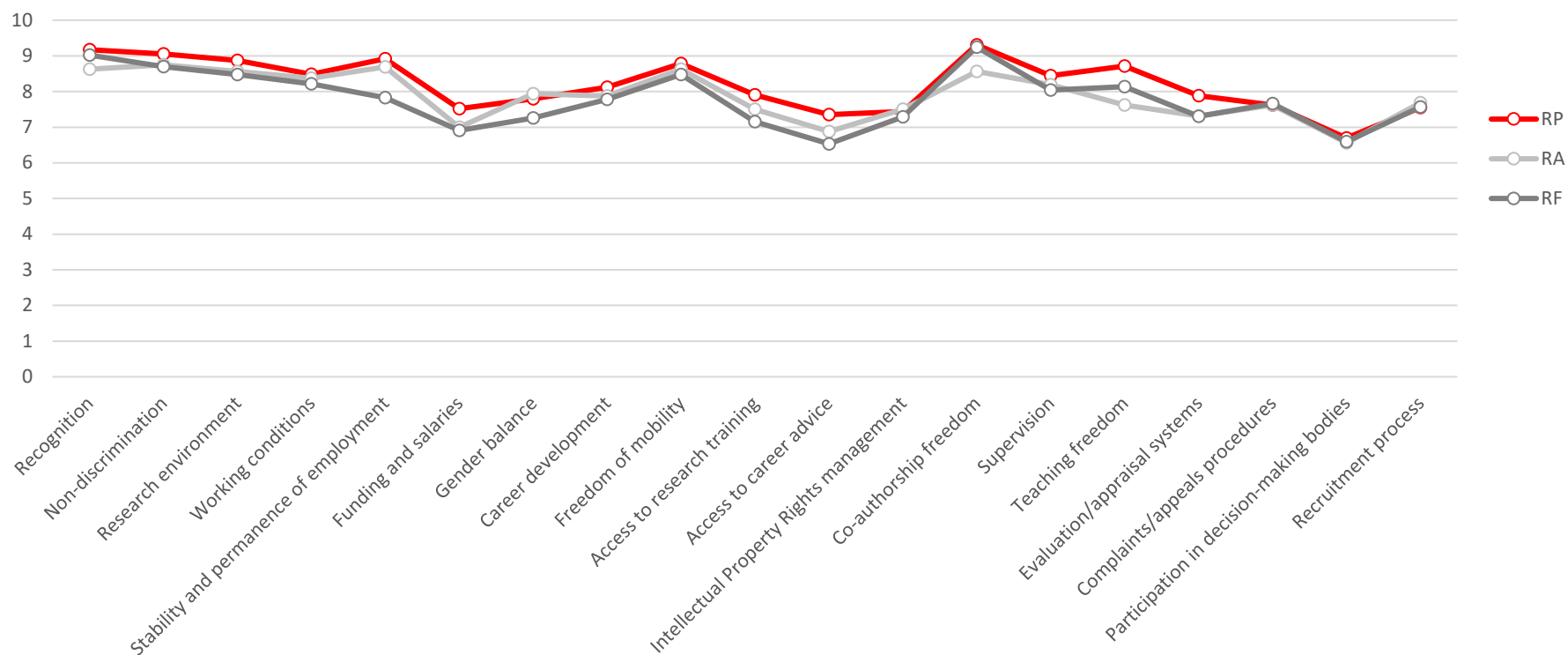
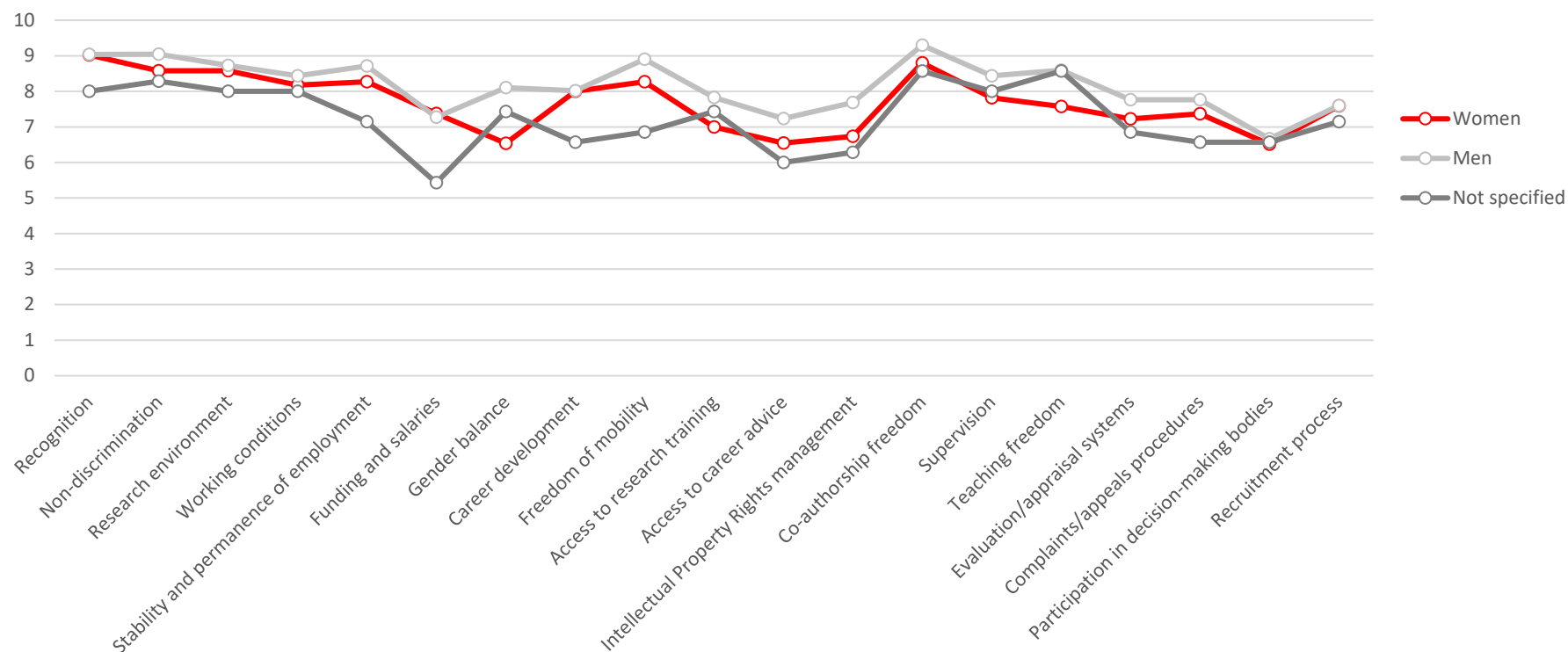# Annex I: Gap Analysis (2023)

Gap Analysis general results:
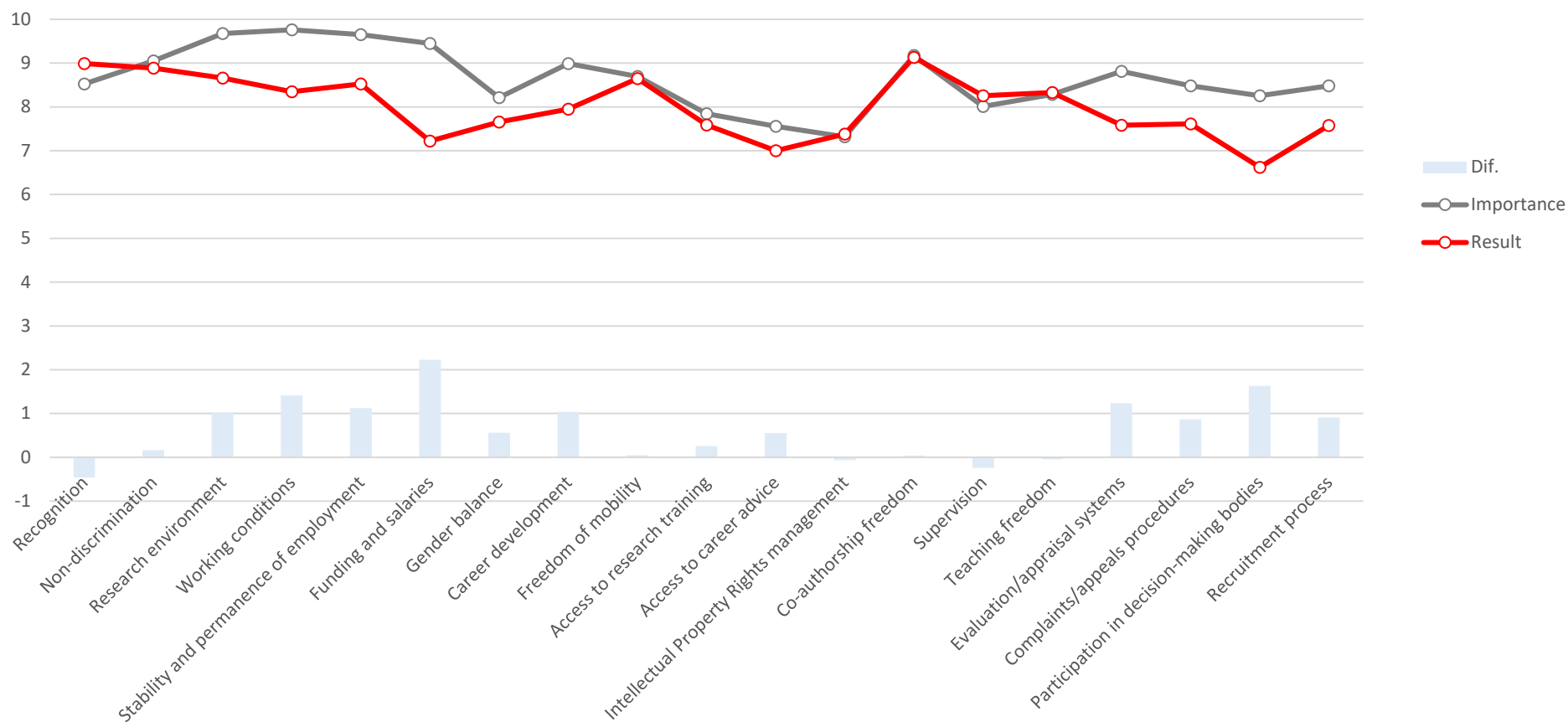
Gap Analysis results by category:

Gap Analysis results by gender:

ikerbasque
Basque Foundation for Science

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Annex II: OTM-R Checklist

	O	T	M	Answer: Yes *completely* / *Yes substantially* / *Yes partially* / *No*	Improvement actions	Suggested indicators (or form of measurement)
OTM-R system						
1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and in English)?	x	x	x	Yes partially	Translate the policy to Spanish and Basque	• Translated and published: Y/N
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x	Yes substantially	• Review the RF call • Review the PP call • Improve the Welcome Plan	• Satisfaction of our call candidates • Ikerbasque researchers' satisfaction with the integration process
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x	Yes partially	• Boost the HRS4R strategy in basque research institutions	• # of basque research institutions adhered to the HRS4R strategy
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x		Yes substantially	Strengthen the dissemination of our calls with online tools and in international platforms	• Applicants number coming from online • Subscribers to our international newsletters
5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	x	x	x	Yes substantially	Continuous self-assessment of the recruitment process	• Satisfaction of host institutions • Research Fellows consolidated
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	x	x	x	Yes completely		• Trend of the share of external candidates in our calls

7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	x	x	x	Yes completely		• Trend in the share of applicants from abroad
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	x	x	x	Yes substantially	Improve the percentage of women selected	• Trend in the share of applicants among underrepresented groups (frequently women)
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	x	x	x	Yes completely		• Trend in the share of applicants from outside the institution • Overall satisfaction of our call's candidates with the process
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?				Yes completely		• Satisfaction of host institutions
Advertising and application phase						
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x		Yes completely		• Overall satisfaction of our call's candidates with the process
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit?	x	x		Yes completely		• Overall satisfaction of our call's candidates with the process
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	x	x		Yes completely		• Job adverts posted on EURAXESS • Trend in the share of applicants recruited from abroad
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	x	x		Yes substantially	Explore social networks or other platforms to increase visibility of our offers	• Applicants to our calls
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate?	x			Yes completely		• Overall satisfaction of our call's candidates with the process

Selection and evaluation phase					
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees?	x	x	Yes completely		• Statistics on the composition of panels
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?	x	x	Yes completely		• Written guidelines, published in the web
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?	x	x	Yes substantially	Improve the gender balance in the Scientific Advisory Board	• Gender equality in the Scientific Advisory Board
19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help to judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?		x	Yes completely		• Written guidelines
Appointment phase					
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?	x		Yes completely		• Share of applicants who receive an answer
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?	x		Yes completely		• Overall satisfaction of our calls candidates with the feedback given
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?	x		Yes partially	Review complaints procedure	• Statistics on complaints
Overall assessment					
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?			Yes substantially	Review assessment process	• OTM-R control panel