

Trento, 16th of May 2018

Declaration of commitment to the implementation of the strengthened HRS4R procedure, based on the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK)

- having been charged with keeping Trentino in the mainstream of European and international research, by attracting women, men and resources at the forefront of technological development and humanities studies;
- having examined and recognizing the value of the European Commission Recommendation of the 11th of March, 2015, regarding the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, by submitting the formal endorsement on 18th of October 2016;
- having performed the gap analysis and the action plan as per strengthened HRS4R procedure, submitted on the 18th of October 2017;
- having the President publicly endorsed the process on the 20th of December 2017;
- having received on the 14th of March 2018 the feedback provided by the assessors in the consensus report, regarding the minor revisions to be performed before resubmitting a revised version of the application within two months;
- having performed corrective actions in order to respond to the feedback received as described in the *"Revised Action Plan"*, the *"Response to the Consensus Report"* Attachment n.1 and the *"Description of FBK HRS4R Process"* – Attachment n.2;

with this letter would like to express the strong commitment to implement the proposed actions, to monitor the fulfillment of the necessary steps and to guarantee further improvements for the next milestones as per HRS4R strengthened process.

Approved by the Secretary General, as a delegate of the Board of Directors and signed on the 16th of May 2018.



Eng. Andrea Simoni
FBK Secretary General

Attachment n. 1: Response to the Consensus Report

1. Have the Strategy and Action Plan been formally endorsed by the organisation's highest authority? NO

Assessors Recommendation: Please do not forget comments regarding the commitment of the HRS4R by the highest authority. The cover letter for your resubmission will have to be signed by the General Secretary and use words saying when it was approved by the board (when) and how committed and supportive the board is to the implementation

FBK Response: Please find at above the "*Cover Letter – Declaration of Commitment*" for our resubmission, signed by the General Secretary as a delegate of the board of directors, stating the steps of the process and the commitment to the implementation.

2. Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed? NO

Assessors Recommendation: Information on FBK can be found on the web as well as organigrams. Please provide additional information on the board members, research centres and the working group who worked and designed the HR strategy: who, level, representation, relation to the organisation, relations between the groups. If not integrated as a text in the published HR (Template 2), please refer to this information (application + implementation) using a link on your website.

FBK Response: in order to provide additional information regarding the stakeholders of the HRS4R process and give further information about how the different steps involved the different groups, we have created a new document which is called "Description of FBK HRS4R Process".

3. Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis? NO

Assessors Recommendation: the problem is that the gap analysis is mostly based on regulation and results of the survey. Having regulation related to principles does not mean that all the researchers applies the principles. It is not evident (evidence is missing) that the gap analysis is really covering all pertinent issues because the survey covered only 23 questions. What do the researchers say regarding ethical issues/problems? What do the PhD think about their supervision?

FBK Response: Please find the extended response to this in the "*Description of FBK HRS4R Process*" document under Methodology paragraph – Phase 1. Assessment.

Assessors Recommendation: You have >200 R2 and say that you have no appointment of postdocs. What does it mean?

FBK Response: Please find the extended response to this in the "*Description of FBK HRS4R Process*" document under paragraph 1. Participants: Premise. FBK contractual levels are inverted comparing to universities, there are no "Post Doc appointments" as such.

Assessors Recommendation: Perhaps could you be solved this problem by saying how the R1 and R2 were integrated in the process, and how and why you choose not to address all the principles in

the survey. How do you plan to develop your gap analysis/survey in the next future and revision of the AP?

FBK Response: after organizing the focus groups in order to review the proposed actions, we described how researchers at all level were integrated in the process in the "*Description of FBK HRS4R Process*" Document. In the same document we have outline also Future Development in paragraph n.3.

4. Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career? NO

Assessors Recommendation: Assessors have only your text and cannot imagine more that what you say. It is not clear how the researchers were involved in the process. Not as beneficiaries of the actions but as actors of the design and the implementation. See above: add a clear description on how you rely on them for the analysis, the priorities and the validation. Perhaps could you organize within next month a public presentation/consultation of the AP in your institution, with a possibility to comment the AP or to add gaps if any (explain if you delay actions to the next cycle).

FBK Response: in the first submission of the action plan and gap analysis the research community was involved through a survey, therefore following the above suggestion we have structured a series of 5 focus group homogeneous and representative of FBK Research Community, sampled by age, seniority, gender, research centre and contract level and type (both fixed-term & permanent). Please refer to the document "*Description of FBK HRS4R Process*" paragraph 2. Methodology, Phase v. Define participated action plan for the details on how focus group were organized and how the action plan was revised based on the feedback obtained by the research community (revising or adding actions).

5. Are the goals sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization? NO

Assessors Recommendation: it is difficult to estimate ambition vs organisation. What can be said here is that the application seems to be top-down driven. It is not convincing that the concerns of all the researchers are taken into account. The AP spreads on 2 years and will fill all the identified gaps. And what next? Will you then consider that you will fulfil all the C&C principles? What about the process within the first 6y-cycle? Please explain how this HRS4R is/will be challenging for your institution.

FBK Response: Please find details about the future steps in the HRS4R process in the document "*Description of FBK HRS4R Process*" in paragraph 3. and as well in the action plan part 4. Implementation.

Assessors Recommendation About evaluation/appraisal : " Probably in this sentence "A9: The aim is to implement a continuous monitoring/performance evaluation tool for the research centres" we used the wrong term as we referred to research centres actually meaning research individuals working in that center."

FBK Response: Clarification will indeed be convenient. Response: the wording was adjusted on A9 specifying that the action is intended for the individuals, not for the research centres.

Attachment n.2

DESCRIPTION OF THE HRS4R PROCESS IMPLEMENTED BY FBK

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1. Participants
 2. Methodology
 3. Future Development
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1. Participants

Premise regarding Contractual Levels: Please note that Provincial Collective Foundations Labour Agreement (hereinafter CCPL) determines contractual levels with inverted numbering comparing to the European classification: Fourth level researcher R4 (position requirement: M.Sc. degree), Third level researcher R3 (position requirement: 3 years of experience/PhD), Second level researcher R2 (position requirement: 8 years of experience), First level researcher R1 (position requirement: 13 years of experience).

FBK Chairman and Secretary General: Prof. Francesco Profumo together with Eng. Andrea Simoni and Human Resources Service decided to start the HRS4R process. On the occasion of the Christmas wishes (20th of December 2017) FBK Chairman shared with all FBK staff and Researchers the news about the submission of the endorsement letter.

Directors of Research Centers: see Organization Chart at this [link](#). First meeting: 30th of November 2016. Regular email updates regarding the steps of the process and AP approval on the 6th of October 2017.

Working group: Heads and delegates of [11 FBK Services](#). First All Hands Meeting: 13th of September 2016. From November 2016 to October 2017 meetings were organized with each service for Phase 1 (Assessment) and Phase 4 (Action Plan).

HRS4R Process Committee: Dr. Dalla Torre, Dr. Rigoni, Dr. Berti, Dr. Bacca (HR Team). Prof. Schizzerotto and Dr. Azzolini for the statistical analysis (IRVAPP research center).

Focus Group: 2 focus groups including Junior researchers (R4) + PhD; 2 focus groups including Mid-level researchers (R3); 1 focus group including Heads of Unit, Senior Researchers and a Research Centre Director (R2 + R1);

Researchers Community: n. 432 Researchers were the target for the Gap Analysis survey.

2. Methodology

The HRS4R process was structured in 5 phases as per below description:

i. ASSESSMENT: Meetings were organized with each Administrative Unit in order to assess the applicability of the C&C articles in FBK context by analysing the national/regional legislation and organizational regulation governing the C&C principles. By performing this analysis only 23 articles were selected for this first assessment, the motivation for each article not to be included is explained in the gap analysis template, column 3 "regulatory framework". Eg. Art. 36 "Relationship with supervisors" refers to researchers in their training phase. FBK cannot release education titles, but only fund Phd scholarship in collaboration with national and international universities, therefore the education and supervision part of the doctorate path is formally regulated and deployed by the universities. That said, in this example, no further actions are allowed on this topic - similar limitations apply to the other articles not included in the survey.

It is not excluded that in future steps the remaining articles will be surveyed and further investigated as permitted to FBK in its institutional capacity, by the regulatory constraints and law leeway, which limit FBK room for manoeuvre on such topics. It is to be noted that FBK is established under the Laws of the Autonomous Province of Trentino, therefore University regulations cannot apply to FBK, because it is a non-profit **public** interest body, but it is recognized as a **private** legal entity.

ii. SURVEY: 23 articles were chosen to be converted into items of a [questionnaire](#). The survey was sent to all FBK researchers in order to investigate their level of agreement to the statements.

iii. ANALYSIS: the responses were analyzed by FBK Irvapp Research Center (Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies). The items scoring an average lower than 3.25 were selected as target for the action plan. See [Survey Technical Report](#) for methodology and results.

iv. DRAFT ACTION PLAN: The Working Group, which was organized in subgroups for each item, reviewed the target articles by opening a discussion on strategic initiatives and actions to be undertaken, as well as indicators and timeline of implementation.

v. DEFINE PARTICIPATED ACTION PLAN: Upon completion of the draft action plan, the HR Process Committee confronted the Research community on the actions in order to evaluate the alignment between the proposed actions and the gaps they addressed in the questionnaire. Five focus group were organised: they were homogeneous and representative of FBK Research Community, sampled by age, seniority, gender, research centre and contract level and type (both fixed-term&permanent)

- two focus groups including Junior researchers (R4) and PhD;
- two focus groups including Mid-level researchers (R3);
- one focus group including Heads of Unit, Senior Researchers and a Research Centre Director (R2 and R1);

Each focus group comprised n. 4-5 participants, lasted 2 hours and upon consent of the participants to the focus groups, the discussions were recorded and transcribed. Different actions were assigned to different focus group and each action was discussed in at least 3 focus groups: in a junior focus group, in a middle focus group and in the senior group.

Each focus group started with a brief introduction on the state of the submission process, followed by the group discussion based on the below structure.

Firstly, the Process Committee read the articles of the C&C referring to the specific action being discussed, secondly, the initiatives already in place in FBK (AS IS section in the presentation) and lastly, launched the proposed actions of improvement to be discussed within the group (TO BE section in the presentation). The groups could suggest amendments and edits to the proposed actions on the basis of perceived additional gaps, if any;

The outcome of the focus groups was integrated into the action plan, in particular taking into account the two factors which frequently emerged during the discussion: transparency and communication. One of the following comments were added to each action:

- Approved: in this case the action was appreciated and supported by the researchers
- Revision: in this case the researchers proposed an edit to the suggested action
- New action: in this case the researchers proposed a new initiative to fill the gap

With the revision of the actions and the postponing of the start of the implementation, we have also adjusted the timeline for each action (it is noted in the "timing" section of the action plan).

3. Future Developments

The Process Committee is planning to perform another survey and organise feedback & follow-up sessions with the Focus Group participants after the resubmission and within the first year (T1 in our Gantt) and at T+3 and T+6 in the HR Strategy Process Cycle. With the purpose of developing a longitudinal approach, the focus groups will not vary unless changes in the research population and availability issues occur. Furthermore, in order to involve the whole community of researchers, regular updates about HRS4R action implementation will be shared with all employees through the means of FBK Internal Newsletter, which is a monthly communication about interesting news regarding HR.

4. Challenges

The implementation of the Participated Action Plan will be challenging in many ways, given that the different actions at stake will determine the cooperation of different Administrative units to deploy the changes, thus fostering an all-encompassing organisational change. To give an example, the Digital Researcher Folder (Action 10), which will allow each researcher to access all his/her career/publications/contract data with one-click, will require the active involvement of several different functions, from the Governance to the Data office, HR and researchers community for testing. After this first 2 years phase, the challenge will be to on the one side to maintain and improve these organisational changes while simultaneously engaging in the definition of new actions (by the means of interim assessments) and/or possible modifications to previous ones.