

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED)

HR Excellence in Research Award

ACTION PLAN 2025-2029

Case number: 2021ES607175

Name Organisation under review: Centre for Demographic Studies (CED)

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Link to the organisation's published HR Strategy and Action Plan:

<https://ced.cat/en/about-ced/hr-excellence-in-research/>

Link to the organisation's recruitment policy, in line with OTM-R principles:

<https://ced.cat/en/job-opportunities/>

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

The Center for Demographic Studies (CED) is one of Europe's leading and most internationally renowned demographic research centers. It enjoys an excellent reputation for high-impact research, publications, and the quality of its training and teaching.

The CED studies demography from an interdisciplinary perspective, investigating the structure and dynamics of populations. It also hosts the European Doctoral School of Demography, making it a unique environment for demographic research. Over 60% of CED's budget comes from competitive research grants, mainly from European and Spanish agencies, and from contracts with governments, institutions, and companies.

BUILDING ON PROGRESS: FROM THE 2016-2021 TO THE 2025-2029 HRS4R ACTION PLAN

On 3 July 2014, the Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED) signed the Letter of Commitment to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, thus formally endorsing the European principles for excellence in human resources management in research. This marked the beginning of the CED's long-term commitment to continuously improving its human resources policies, procedures and working conditions, while strengthening the institutional framework supporting its research community.

As part of the initiative promoted by the CERCA Institution, to which the CED belongs, to implement the HR Excellence in Research quality framework, the CED developed its first Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) Action Plan. The **Action Plan 2016-2021** was submitted to the European Commission on 12 November 2015, and the CED was **awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award** on 26 February 2016. This recognition reflected the CED's commitment to transparent recruitment, a stimulating and supportive working environment, researchers' professional development and the progressive alignment of its human resources practices with the principles of the European Charter and Code.

The implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan was closely aligned with the **CED's II Strategic Plan 2017-2023**, ensuring that the development of human resources policies and practices contributed to the Centre's broader institutional objectives. In this regard, the HRS4R framework provided a structured approach to strengthening the research environment, supporting researchers' professional development and promoting responsible and transparent human resources management, in line with the CED's strategic priorities.

Following the successful implementation of the initial Action Plan, the CED submitted its HRS4R **Action Plan 2022-2025**, and the **HR Excellence in Research Award was renewed** in 2022 after a positive evaluation, including an on-site visit. The recommendations resulting from this assessment provided an important basis for the subsequent implementation and review of the CED's HR Strategy.

During the 2022-2025 implementation period, the CED addressed these recommendations through a combination of structural improvements, policy development and measures aimed at strengthening the research environment. Emphasis was placed on reviewing and updating institutional documents directly relevant to researchers and their careers. Between 2024 and 2025, the CED reviewed or developed a comprehensive set of policies and plans, including the Dissemination Plan, Knowledge Transfer Plan, Research Career Development Plan, Personal Data Protection Plan, Code of Good Research Practices, Training Programme, Mobility Plan, Mentoring Plan, Language Policy and Digital Disconnection Policy.

The CED also strengthened its human resources procedures and equality framework. An OTM-R action protocol was developed for the recruitment of structural positions and temporary posts lasting more than one year, reinforcing transparency and consistency in recruitment processes. In December 2024, the CED approved its III Equality Plan, together with the Protocol for the Prevention and Response to Harassment or Violence against LGTBQ+ Persons and the planned measures for equality and non-discrimination of LGTBI persons. These measures have further consolidated the CED's

commitment to equality, diversity, non-discrimination and a safe and inclusive working environment.

The **HRS4R Working Group** has played a central role throughout this process. Its composition has evolved over time to reflect changes in the CED's research and professional community, including the career progression of early-career researchers and the incorporation of new members of staff. The Working Group brings together representatives of different career stages and professional profiles, ensuring that the implementation and monitoring of the HRS4R Strategy incorporate a broad range of perspectives. The CED has complemented the work of the Working Group with smaller-format meetings involving HRS4R members and other members of the community whenever specific policies, plans or actions required more focused discussion and input.

The preparation of the **new Action Plan** has therefore been conceived as a continuation of this process, while also representing an opportunity to further integrate human resources policy into the CED's institutional development. The new Action Plan for 2025-2029 has been developed in close alignment with the CED Strategic Plan 2024-2030. Rather than considering the HRS4R Strategy as a separate set of human resources measures, the new Action Plan is intended to support the strategic priorities of the institution and to strengthen the organisational and human resources capacity required to achieve them.

The **CED Strategic Plan 2024-2030** provides the broader framework for the development of the new Action Plan and places particular emphasis on strengthening the institution's research excellence and internationalisation, attracting and retaining talent, promoting career development, fostering interdisciplinary research, enhancing training and professional development, and consolidating an inclusive and supportive institutional environment. The **new HRS4R Action Plan 2025-2029** translates these priorities into a set of concrete human resources actions, with defined objectives, responsibilities, implementation periods and measurable indicators.

The new Action Plan also responds directly to the lessons learned from the previous implementation period. Attention has been paid to improving the measurability and monitoring of actions through more clearly defined KPIs, strengthening support for researchers at different career stages, and ensuring that institutional policies are translated into practical measures with a visible impact on the research community. The new plan further develops areas such as research career development, mentoring and mobility, recruitment and selection, training, equality and non-discrimination, research management and organisational efficiency.

The development of the new Action Plan has also taken place in the context of the reform of the **European Charter for Researchers**. The previous CED Action Plan was structured around the former 40 principles of the Charter and Code, whereas the new Action Plan has been designed according to the revised framework of **20 principles adopted by the Council of the European Union** in December 2023. The CED has therefore used the transition to the new framework as an opportunity to reassess its existing practices, identify areas requiring further development and ensure that the actions included in the new plan are appropriately mapped to the four pillars of the revised European Charter for Researchers.

The new Action Plan should consequently be understood as the result of an evolutionary process rather than a standalone exercise. It builds on the CED's experience since its

initial commitment to the Charter in 2014, incorporates the recommendations and lessons arising from previous HRS4R assessments, consolidates the institutional policies developed during 2022-2025, and connects human resources priorities with the objectives of the CED Strategic Plan 2024-2030. At the same time, it introduces new actions aimed at addressing emerging institutional needs, particularly in relation to research careers, talent attraction and retention, equality and inclusion, recruitment, research management, digitalisation and organisational development.

Following the completion of the current assessment, the CED will continue to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan through its HRS4R governance structure and regular review mechanisms. The institution is committed to maintaining an evidence-based approach, using the defined KPIs to assess progress and identify areas requiring further action. In parallel, the CED will continue to involve researchers and professional staff in the development and review of relevant policies, ensuring that the HRS4R Strategy remains a living institutional framework that evolves in line with the needs of its research community and with the broader strategic objectives of the Centre.

ACTION PLAN 2025-2029

ACTIONS	Charter Principle (s)	Responsible Unit (s)	Timeline	Current Status	Monitoring indicators / Target (s)	Comments/Evidence
1. Digitalise Research Management Services (Fundanet)	8. Sustainability of Research 13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries	General Manager; Human Resources Unit; Research Unit; Training Unit; IT Unit	S2 2025	In progress	FUNDANET as the central research management platform; Improve information on project management, reporting, funding information and others	Build on the implementation of FUNDANET to streamline project management and improve coordination between research managers and researchers
2. Digitalise Human Resources and Recruitment services (Factorial)	8. Sustainability of Research 10. Recruitment 11. Selection 13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries	General Manager; Human Resources Unit; Research Unit; Training Unit; IT Unit	S1 2026	New In progress	Recruitment processes/workflow implemented (Factorial); * % of recruitment processes managed through the tool * % of staff using Factorial for relevant HR processes	Build on the implementation of Factorial to improve and streamline existing HR procedures, covering recruitment and onboarding, daily time recording, holidays, absences and sick leave, internal communications, and payroll document management

3. Recognise Research Funding Achievements through Career Development Incentives	13. Workin Conditions, Funding and Salaries 15. Contractual and Legal Obligations 18. Career Development and Advice	Director; General Manager; Human Resources Unit	S1 2026	New	Review and strengthen the recognition and incentive mechanisms for researchers who successfully secure competitive funding, ensuring alignment with the CED Career Development Plan	Incentives for researchers securing competitive funding were paid for 2025 and 2026, in line with the existing mechanisms and the CED Career Development Plan
4. Strengthen the Researcher Experience: Recruitment, Onboarding and Integration	10. Recruitment 13. Working conditions, Funding and Salaries 15. Contractual and Legal Obligations	General Manager; Human Resources Unit; Research Unit; Training Unit	S1 2027	New In progress	New/Updated Onboarding and Welcome Document ; * % of new starters receiving onboarding; * % new-starter reporting positive feedback	Formalise existing induction practices into a consistent process covering employment, IT access, occupational health and safety, data protection, research integrity, equality and practical information. Evidence: onboarding checklist, welcome materials and feedback

5. Develop and implement a coherent institutional framework for the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence across research, training, and institutional management processes	1. Ethics and Research Integrity 3. Open Science 16. Dissemination and Exploitation of Results	Director; General Manager; Research Unit; Open Science Unit; Training Unit; Human Resources Unit; IT Unit	S1 2027	New In progress	Guidance on responsible AI use adopted and integration policy; * number of awareness/training activities	Develop guidance for the responsible use of AI across the CED, addressing transparency, human oversight, bias, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and verification of AI-generated outputs
6. Responsible Open Science practices and FAIR Research Framework	1. Ethics and Research Integrity 3. Open Science 8. Sustainability of Research	General Manager; Research Unit; Open Science Unit; Data Protection Officer; Library	2025-2029	In progress	Provide institutional guidance on Data Management Plans, Repositories, Research Data; Open Access, and others; * % eligible projects with DMP; * % eligible publications available through Open Access; * % researchers participating in Open Science training	Build on the CED Open Science Policy and existing open-access practices, promoting FAIR data sharing in line with ethical principles, consent, confidentiality and applicable legal requirements

7. Develop an Updated Framework for Intellectual Property and Research Outputs	1. Ethics and Research Integrity	General Manager; Research Unit; Open Science Unit; Data Protection Officer	S1 2027	New In progress	An updated and approved CED Intellectual Property Policy	Review and update the CED <u>Intellectual Property Regulations</u> to ensure alignment with the current legal and institutional framework and provide a clear approach to the ownership, protection, management and exploitation of research outputs
8. Strengthen Research Integrity, Ethics and Protection Mechanisms	1. Ethics and Research Integrity 2. Freedom of Scientific Research	Director; General Manager; Research Group Leaders; Data Protection Officer	S2 2027	New In progress	Review the <u>Code of Good Research Practice</u> including a Research Integrity reporting procedure; * % of researchers informed about reporting procedures; * % of researchers completing relevant training	Review institutional procedures and applicable legal frameworks, ensuring a clear distinction between research-integrity concerns and employment grievances, with confidential and fair handling

9. Definition KPIs for assessment and monitoring	8. Sustainability of Research 9. Researchers' Assessment 12. Career Progression 13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries	General Manager; HRS4R Working Group; Human Resources Unit; Research Unit; Training Unit	S2 2025 (1st version) S2 2026 (baseline-targets)	New In progress	* Set of approved KPIs covering all Action Plan actions; * annual completion rate; * availability of baseline data; * annual review and documented corrective measures	Build on the HRS4R internal review, existing institutional statistics, staff data and previous Action Plans. Use disaggregated data where appropriate and lawful, and assign an owner and source to each KPI
10. Establish a Research Leadership and Mentoring Programme (R2-R4)	13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries 18. Career Development and Advice 19. Continuous Professional Development	Director; General Manager; Research Group Leaders; Research Unit	2025-2027 (1st cycle) 2028-2029 (2nd cycle implementing improvements)	New In progress	Provide targeted training on research leadership, research funding, project leadership and others (ERC funding opportunities) * number of leadership activities/workshops * % of success rate for applications submitted	Build on the CED Training Plan through targeted workshops, coaching and mock interviews to strengthen supervision, inclusive leadership, career development and responsible research management

11. Enhance Early-Career Researchers' Access to Funding Opportunities (R1-early stage R2)	13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries 18. Career Development and Advice 20. Supervision and Mentoring	Director; General Manager; Research Group Leaders; Research Unit	2025-2027 (1st cycle) 2028-2029 (2nd cycle implementing improvements)	New In progress	Provide regular information sessions on relevant postdoctoral funding schemes (all levels) including eligibility criteria, deadlines and application requirements. * Number of funding opportunities activities; * % of success rate for applications submitted	Build on the CED research-projects support function by organising information sessions on funding opportunities, followed by tailored advice and support for individual researchers and specific calls
12. Ensure the accessibility and visibility of procedures for handling complaints and appeals	4. Gender Equality 5. Embracing Diversity 13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries	General Manager; Human Resources Unit; Gender Commission; Data Protection Officer	S1 2027	In progress	A clearly signposted channel and procedure; * number and type of cases recorded in anonymised form; * response times; * annual review of lessons learned	Strengthen the existing CED complaint channel , ensuring confidentiality, protection against retaliation, clear responsibilities and appropriate referral options

13. Strengthen the CED Framework for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Harassment	4. Gender Equality 5. Embracing Diversity	General Manager; Gender Commission; Human Resources Unit	S2 2027	New In progress	An updated and accessible institutional protocol for preventing and addressing sexual harassment, effectively communicated to all CED staff	Build on the CED's existing protocol . Ensure clear definitions, confidential reporting, protection from retaliation, support for affected people and fair procedures.
14. Develop the IV CED Equality Plan to Advance Gender Equality and Inclusion	4. Gender Equality	General Manager; Gender Commission; Human Resources Unit	S2 2028	New	IV CED Equality Plan approved and published for the period 2029-2032	Build on the CED III Equality Plan and existing equality monitoring. Consider career-stage and leadership representation, recruitment, work-life balance, prevention of harassment and intersectional barriers
15. Renew and Strengthen the CED Protocol for LGTBIQ+ Equality and Protection	5. Embracing Diversity	General Manager; Gender Commission; Human Resources Unit	S2 2028	New	An updated and renewed institutional protocol for preventing and addressing harassment and violence against LGTBIQ+ people for the period 2029-2033	Build on the existing CED LGTBIQ+ protocol (2024-2028) by incorporating identified improvements into the next four-year plan

16. Promote Equal Opportunities and the Inclusion of Under-represented Groups	5. Embracing Diversity 11. Selection	General Manager; Human Resources Unit; Research Group Leaders	S2 2027 (identify barriers) S2 2028 (pilot)	New	Strengthen diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities across the CED workforce by identifying and addressing potential barriers to recruitment. * number of hiring from under-represented groups; * number of non-European visiting researchers	Use the Equality Plan , OTM-R review and existing workforce statistics as a baseline
17. Promote Staff Well-being and Work-Life Balance	4. Gender Equality 13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries	General Manager; Human Resources Unit	S1 2027	New	Promote staff well-being and a healthy working environment through work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, digital disconnection and continuous improvement. * survey on staff satisfaction with work-life balance	Review existing measures and policies, identify staff needs through periodic satisfaction surveys, and document areas for improvement and follow-up actions

18. Responsible Researcher Assessment and Career Progression	9. Researchers' Assessment 12. Career Progression 13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries 18. Career Development and Advise	Director; General Manager; Research Group Leaders; Human Resources Unit	S2 2027 (development) S2 2028 (pilot)	New In progress	Beyond the current assessment system established in the Development Career Plan , the CoARA principles will be taken into account in this new review of the procedure. * % of researcher profiles covered by the framework	Review the Development Career Plan in line with CoARA principles, promoting transparent and qualitative assessment of diverse research contributions and career paths.
19. Modernise and Strengthen the CED OTM-R Recruitment Framework	7. Free Circulation of Researchers 10. Recruitment 11. Selection	General Manager; Human Resources Unit; Research Unit	S2 2027	New In progress	An updated and modernised OTM-R procedure implemented, ensuring (improving) alignment with the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment * number vacancies; * % international candidates; * % female candidates	Build on the CED's existing OTM-R protocol and recruitment practices, which cover researchers and technical/management staff. Review transparency, accessibility, selection criteria, feedback and record-keeping

20. Enhance Researchers' Skills in Knowledge Dissemination, Transfer and Research Impact	3. Open Science 16. Dissemination and Exploitation of Results	General Manager; Research Unit; Open Science Unit; Training Unit	S2 2027	New	Strengthen researchers' capacity to communicate and disseminate research results effectively, engage with non-academic audiences and promote the transfer and societal impact of CED research * number of training sessions; * number of activities related to dissemination	Build on the CED Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination Plans to strengthen public engagement, stakeholder outreach and the societal impact of research
21. Individualised Training Plan for career and competence development	17. Valuing Diverse Research Careers 18. Career Development and Advice 20. Supervision and Mentoring	Director; General Manager; Research Group Leaders	S1 2028	New In progress	* % of researchers with an agreed training plan; * number of plans reviewed annually	Develop and implement the CED Training Plan to strengthen professional and research-related skills, and support continuous learning and career development. Evidence: annual training plan; training activities and participation

22. Ensure Institutional Continuity through Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer	13. Workin Conditions, Funding and Salaries 14. Stability of Employment 18. Career Development and Advice	Director; General Manager; Human Resources Unit	S2 2028	New	Anticipate the retirement of key personnel through succession planning, ensuring continuity of critical functions and the effective transfer of institutional knowledge and expertise to successors. * annual review of anticipated retirements, replacement needs and progress in implementing succession measures	Build on the CED organisational structure, role descriptions, process documentation and HR planning . Focus on continuity of essential scientific, technical and administrative functions while respecting transparent recruitment and equal opportunities
23. Expand and Modernise CED Facilities to Support Research Growth	10. Recruitment 13. Working conditions, Funding and Salaries	Director; General Manager	S1 2029	New	Expand CED facilities to accommodate research growth, strengthen collaboration and provide a high-quality working environment.	Assess future space and infrastructure needs in line with projected research growth and the priorities of the next CED Strategic Plan 2031-2037, identifying feasible options for expansion and improvement