ACTION PLAN 2026-2030 FOR HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Parc Taulí
Consorci Corporació Sanitària

Parc Taulí R
Institut d'Investigació i
Innovació I3PT

Table of Content

1. The Institute

Parc Taulí Research and Innovation Institute (I3PT) is the research centre associated with the **Parc Taulí Healthcare Corporation Consortium (CCSPT)**, a public consortium within the Catalan healthcare system, centred around a university hospital linked to the **Autonomous University of Catalonia (UAB)**. CSPT serves a reference population of over 407,000 inhabitants and employs more than 4,600 healthcare professionals.

Formally established in 2015, I3PT builds on a consolidated research trajectory dating back to 1993. It currently comprises 7 research areas and 26 research groups, strongly embedded in clinical practice and translational research.

Approximately 90% of research professionals are employed by CSPT, with their contractual framework and working conditions governed by CSPT policies, while the remaining researchers are employed directly by I3PT. This shared employment model, characteristic of a clinical research environment, requires close coordination between institutions to ensure coherence in research careers, working conditions, and human resources policies.

Within this context, the Institute's HR Excellence in Research strategy focuses on strengthening institutional support, facilities, and professional development opportunities for all researchers, while improving working conditions for those employed by I3PT. This approach reflects the Institute's commitment to fostering high-quality and sustainable research careers within a complex organizational setting.

2. The HR Excellence in Research Strategy

I3PT endorsed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C) in 2020 and was awarded the HR Excellence in Research logo in 2021. Following the internal review in 2023 and the subsequent European Commission assessment, mandatory actions were identified to ensure continued compliance and measurable progress in the renewal process.

The HR Excellence in Research strategy reflects I3PT's commitment to aligning institutional policies and practices with the C&C principles, with a particular focus on ethics and integrity,

gender equality, open science, research careers, transparent recruitment and assessment, and fair working conditions. In this context, the current Action Plan prioritises research careers and talent development, especially researcher assessment, recruitment, and progression, as key drivers of excellence in a predominantly clinical research environment.

Since endorsement, the Action Plan has evolved from an initial 22 actions to 32, incorporating additional measures to address emerging challenges in talent attraction and retention through continuous monitoring and improvement. In line with European Commission guidelines, stakeholder focus groups and an in-depth Gap Analysis informed the identification of key gaps, leading to the definition of five strategic axes and the consolidation of the New Action Plan (Q3 2026 – Q2 2030).

3. Action Plan Development Process

This section outlines the methodology used to develop the Action Plan, based on a participatory, evidence-based, and institutionally endorsed approach, in line with European Commission guidelines. The process integrated stakeholder involvement through focus groups, a Gap Analysis, feedback from monitoring committee meetings, a review of the actions proposed by the European Commission, and final validation by the Institute's governing bodies.

3.1. Focus groups

To obtain a 360° view of all professional profiles and to identify the most pressing needs, focus groups were organised so that each group included one representative from each professional profile. The composition of each focus group included the following roles:

- Predoctoral researchers
- Postdoctoral researchers
- Group leaders
- Research and administrative support staff

Communication with potential participants was carried out through direct email invitations, with a high level of responsiveness from the staff invited. Each focus group included between five and six participants. Participation and opinions were treated collectively, always ensuring confidentiality.

The work with each focus group was structured into two main blocks. In the first block, the Human Resources department explained the key aspects of the professional career plan included in the new collective agreement. This session aimed to clarify any doubts regarding the agreement and to gather feedback for its upcoming revision.

The second block was dedicated to the action plan and its results. This part of the session involved the participation of four facilitators, all members of the monitoring committee. Each facilitator introduced one of the pillars, presented the corresponding actions and achievements, and moderated an open discussion. To encourage participation, facilitators also posed guiding questions related to each pillar.

Each meeting had a designated note-taker responsible for drafting the minutes. In addition, all sessions were recorded with the prior consent of the participants. It was clearly explained that the recordings would be used exclusively for transcription purposes and that all contributions would be anonymised.

3.2. Gap Analysis

The methodology used to collect data for the Gap Analysis was based on open-ended questions addressed to researchers at different stages of the professional career, covering aspects related to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and feedback collected during Commission meetings. The different sources of information were combined to provide an overview of the current situation. Data analysis was carried out by the monitoring Commission for the HR Excellence in Research Action Plan and subsequently reviewed and discussed with the I3PT Management.

3.2.1. Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions were developed for each principle identified as a priority for I3PT. These questions were distributed directly to researchers (predoctoral researchers, postdoctoral researchers, and lead researchers) and staff (Hospital HR representatives and research support staff), with the aim of gathering perspectives and identifying needs across different stages of the research career. For analysis purposes, the responses were reviewed to identify the main issues and areas for improvement, where applicable. This segmentation

was designed to obtain a broad overview while considering the specific context and experiences of each profile.

3.2.2. Writing and approval process

Once the narrative of the action plan had been developed (following the collection, analysis, and identification of the main strategic axes and their corresponding actions), the Action Plan was presented to the different committees and governing bodies for evaluation and approval.

This validation process involved the following bodies:

- I3PT Management
- Internal Research and Innovation Committee
- Governing bodies
- Following this validation process, the dissemination of the Action Plan is incorporated into the communication campaign specifically developed for the HR Excellence in Research Award. The Action Plan is also published on the Institute's website to ensure its availability to the research community and other stakeholders.

4. Action Plan

The results of the focus groups and the Gap Analysis provided evidence-based input on the main challenges and areas for improvement to be addressed in the next Action Plan. The identified issues were grouped into strategic axes of work, each comprising several actions addressing one or more principles of the European Charter for Researchers. These axes reflect shared objectives and complementarities among actions and were subsequently mapped to the four pillars of the European Charter for Researchers, ensuring coherence between the identified needs and the HR Excellence in Research framework.

4.1. Work Streams

Definition and Structuring of Researcher Career Profiles

Define and consolidate researcher profiles (R1–R4), clarifying roles, responsibilities, rights, and expectations associated with each career stage, in alignment with the Euraxess framework and the institutional context.

Mentoring and Professional Development of Researchers

Implement a personalised mentoring programme aimed at supporting the professional development of researchers, particularly at R1 and R2 stages, by strengthening key competences, fostering progressive autonomy, and providing structured career guidance.

Communication, Scientific Culture and Engagement with Society

Enhance internal communication through the creation of formal and informal exchange spaces among researchers and strengthen the external visibility of the Institute's research activities towards society, promoting an open, participatory, and responsible research culture.

Strategic Collaborations and Partnerships: Identify, establish, and strengthen

Strategic internal and external collaborations and partnerships to enhance scientific cooperation, knowledge exchange, researcher mobility, and institutional positioning.

Structural Sustainability of Research Groups

Develop and implement a sustainability plan for research groups to ensure the continuity of research activity beyond short-term competitive projects, reinforcing institutional support and reducing excessive dependency on individual Principal Investigators.

4.2. Follow-up and Evaluation of the Action Plan

The Action Plan implementation is monitored through a structured governance process led by the monitoring committee. The Committee includes representatives from research, human resources, knowledge and quality management, communication, and research management units, covering all research career stages.

4.2.1. Monitoring activities are organised as follows:

Systematic documentation of each action using a standard monitoring template, including objectives, indicators, progress status, results, evidence, and identified deviations.

Periodic review by the Monitoring Commission to assess progress, methodology adequacy, and contribution to objectives.

Direct interaction with action owners through follow-up meetings to address deviations and agree on corrective measures.

Regular reporting to institutional governance bodies, including I3PT Management and the Internal Research and Innovation Committee.

Internal dissemination of results and key achievements through established communication channels.

4.2.2. Prioritisation of Actions and Implementation Timeline

The prioritisation of actions has been defined according to their level of institutional urgency, impact on compliance with HR Excellence in Research principles, and relevance for long-term organisational development. Four priority levels have been established:

🔴 **Very High Priority actions** are those requiring immediate implementation due to their direct relevance to regulatory alignment, institutional credibility, risk mitigation, or significant impact on researchers' working conditions. These measures are considered essential foundations for the effective deployment of other actions.

🟢 **High / Medium-High Priority actions** are important for strengthening research practices, career development, transparency, and alignment with European frameworks. Although not critical in the short term, they play a key role in consolidating quality standards and improving the research environment.

🟡 **Medium Priority actions** contribute to institutional improvement and cultural evolution but may be implemented progressively without immediate compliance implications. Their impact is mainly developmental rather than regulatory.

🔵 **Strategic (Structural) Priority actions** refer to long-term institutional transformations affecting governance models, sustainability of research activity, and career frameworks. These require phased implementation over several years due to their scope and resource implications

Parc Taulí Ⓡ
Institut d'Investigació i
Innovació I3PT

Pillar I: Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority level
1	Implement a mandatory, verifiable research integrity module for all research staff, prioritising new recruits.	1,6	Talent Management Knowledge and Quality Management	% of research staff completing the research integrity module on time.	Q3_2026 – Q2_2027 Q1_2030 – Q4_2030	🟢
2.	Enhance trust and clarity in research misconduct reporting channels.	1	Communication Scientific Coordination	% of staff aware of and confident in misconduct reporting channels (staff survey).	Q3_2026 – Q2_2027	🟡
3	Integrate Open Science training across existing modules in the Training Plan to researchers with the knowledge and tools to embed Open Science practices into their regular workflows.	3	Open Science Management	Proportion of Open Science–trained researchers applying Open Science practices.	Q1_2027 - Q3_2027	🟢
4	Include specific training/workshops on citizen participation in research and innovation projects within the Institute's RRI training module, targeting researchers and project management staff.	3	Scientific Coordination	Proportion of RRI-trained staff applying citizen participation practices in research and innovation projects.	Q2_2026 – Q2_2028	🟡
5	Add a training module for R2–R3 researchers on public-sector research management to support progressive autonomy in publicly funded projects.	6	Projects Management Talent Management	Proportion of R2–R3 researchers trained in research management who assume autonomous roles in publicly funded projects.	Q1_2028 – Q4_2029	🟢

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority level
6	Strengthen the long-term structural sustainability of research groups and research activity beyond short-term competitive funding.	8	General Management	▪ Existence and implementation of an institutional policy for the structural sustainability of research groups. ▪ Percentage of research groups maintaining continuous research activity in line with the institutional sustainability policy.	Q2_2026 – Q4_2030	🔵

Pillar II: Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority level
7	Review and update researcher evaluation criteria to move towards a more balanced and qualitative assessment framework, in line with CoARA principles.	1	Scientific Coordination	Proportion of researcher evaluations conducted using the revised qualitative assessment framework.	Q1_2027 - Q4 2028	🟢
8	Review and improve researcher recruitment processes by defining and implementing a selection procedure aligned with the I3PT Recruitment Code and OTM-R principles, ensuring transparent, objective and competitive assessment of candidates.	1,2	Talent Management	▪ The selection procedure developed and formally approved. ▪ Percentage of researcher recruitment processes conducted using the OTM-R–aligned selection procedure with common evaluation criteria.	Q3_2026 – Q3_2027	🔴
9	Conduct an internal mapping of research profiles, roles, and contractual arrangements to identify staff performing research activities within the institution.	4	Talent Management Scientific Coordination	▪ Completion of an institutional mapping identifying research-performing staff, their profiles, roles and contractual arrangements.	Q3 2026 – Q1_2027	🟢

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority Level
10	Translate, standardize, and maintain an English version of all institutional policies, regulations, and onboarding documentation to ensure effective integration of international staff.	2,3	Knowledge and Quality Management	Percentage of institutional policies, regulations, and onboarding documents available in a validated English version.	Q3_2026 – Q4_2026	🟡
11	Define, validate and implement clear and balanced researcher career progression criteria, adapted to career stage and trajectory type, and ensure their communication and support from early career stages.	4	Talent Management Scientific Management	Percentage of researchers whose career progression is assessed using the validated and communicated career progression criteria.	Q1_2027 – Q4_2027 Q1_2029 – Q4_2029	🔴

Pillar III: Working Conditions and Practices

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority Level
12	Review of the new collective agreement about researcher career development provisions, including: ▪ Reviewing the salary structure for research staff to ensure alignment with career stage, experience, and level of responsibility. ▪ Updating the nomenclature of researcher contracts to clearly reflect the stage of the scientific career.	1	Talent Management Scientific Coordination	Updated collective agreement including revised researcher salary structure and contract nomenclature aligned with career stages.	Q1_2028 - Q4_2028 Q1_2030 - Q4_2030	🔵
13	Define the responsibilities and rights of different researcher profiles (predoctoral researchers, postdoctoral	3	Talent Management Scientific Coordination	Percentage of researcher job descriptions updated to include clearly defined	Q3_2026 – Q4_2027	🔴

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority level
	researchers, principal investigators and group leaders), including project design, funding acquisition, staff supervision, project execution and financial management, and reflect this definition in the job descriptions.			responsibilities and rights by researcher profile.	Q1_2028 – Q_2028	
14	Review the organization model of workspaces and develop a plan to ensure researchers' access to adequate and stable working spaces.	3	Talent Management General Management	Workspace organisation model reviewed and an institutional plan approved to ensure adequate and stable workspaces for researchers.	Q1_2028 – Q4_2029	🟡
15	Redefine the institutional R1–R4 research profiles in alignment with the Euraxess framework, ensuring they are contextualised to the specific organisational and contractual reality of I3PT.	4	Scientific Coordination	Formal approval and implementation of the revised institutional R1–R4 research profile framework aligned with Euraxess.	Q3_2026 – Q2_2027	🔴

Pillar IV: Research Careers and Talent Development

Nº Action	Action Title	C&C principle	Owner in Charge	Indicator	Timeframe	Priority level
16	Define a mentoring programme addressed to research staff at all career stages to develop their competencies, leadership skills and talent management capabilities. Attention will be given to supporting researchers in tenure-track positions, with a specific gender perspective.	2,4	Talent Management Knowledge and Quality Management	Number and percentage of research staff participating in the mentoring programme, disaggregated by career stage, tenure-track status and gender, and satisfaction level of participants.	Q1_2029 – Q4_2030	🟢

| 17 | Map and strengthen internal and external partnerships to foster collaboration and researcher mobility. | 2,3 | Knowledge and Quality Management Legal Unit | Creation and regular update of a partnerships database Number of new or revised collaboration agreements Number of collaborative activities derived from established partnerships. | Q1_ 2029 – Q4_2029 | 🟡 |
| 18 | Develop an onboarding module for management and support staff aimed at providing specific training on the research context and enhancing understanding of the different researcher profiles within the Institute and their respective needs. | 3 | Talent Management | Development and implementation of an onboarding module on research activities for management and support staff, and number of participants trained per year. | Q1_2027 – Q3_2027 | 🟢 |