



*Fundació Privada i2CAT, Internet i  
Innovació Digital a Catalunya*

**Action Plan for the period 2021-2023**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

**SUBMISSION DATE: 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2023**

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## 1. HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

**Name Organization under review:** Fundació privada i2CAT, Internet I Innovació Digital a Catalunya

**Organization's contact details:** Joan Manel Martín Almansa, CEO.

**Web link to published version of organization's HR Strategy and Action Plan:**  
[www.i2cat.net/talent](http://www.i2cat.net/talent)

### Organizational Information

i2CAT is a CERCA research and innovation centre based in Barcelona which specializes in advanced digital technologies.

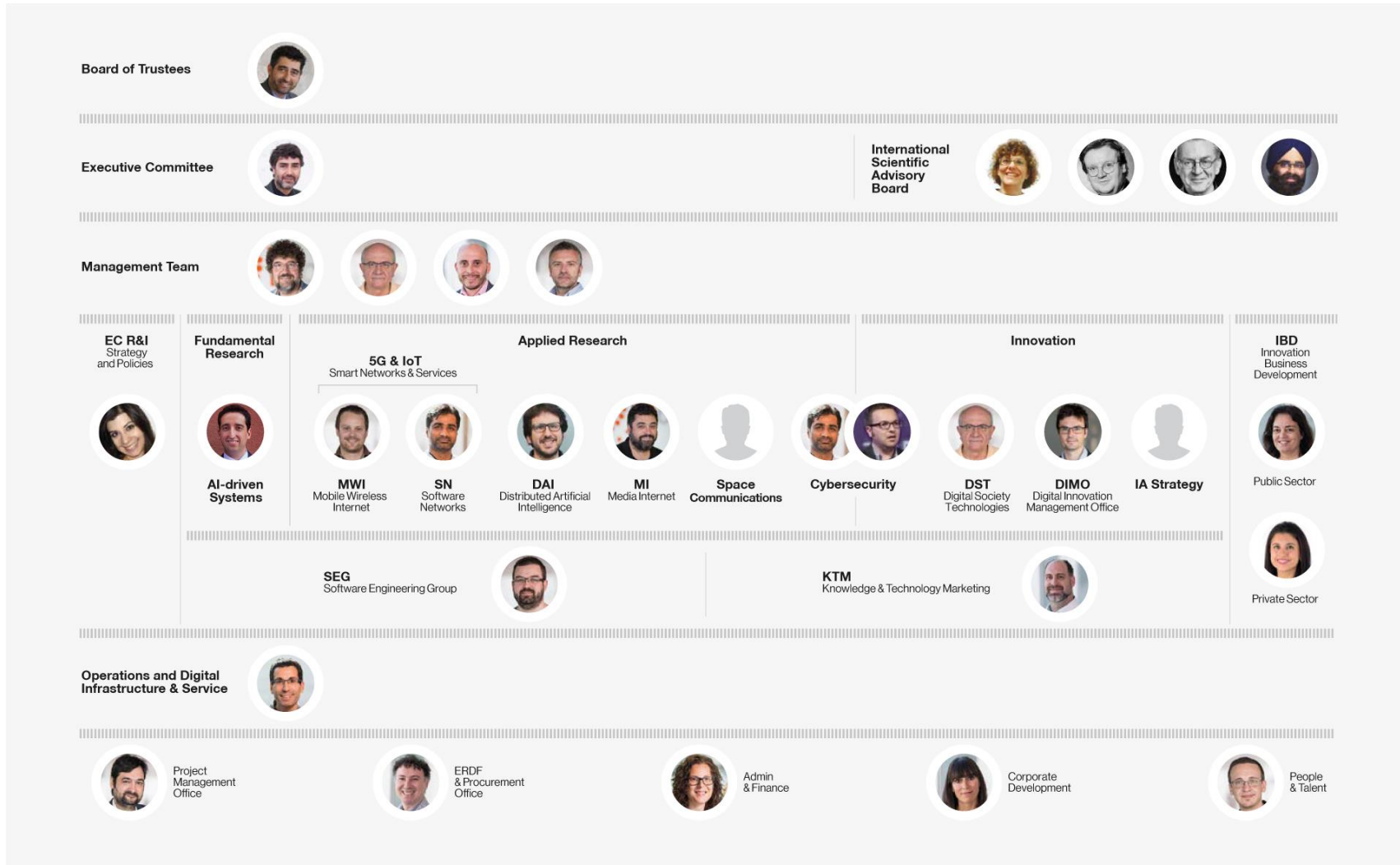
Since 2003, i2CAT has been committed to designing and building the future digital society by leveraging the knowledge gained from cutting-edge European and local R&D projects in the fields of 5G/6G, IoT, immersive and interactive technologies, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, blockchain, space communications and digital society technologies.

The centre partners with companies, public administration, academia, and end-users to leverage this knowledge in order to meet real social and business challenges.

The i2CAT Foundation is governed by i) the Board of Trustees, ii) the Executive Committee and iii) the Management Team.

The figures and table below illustrate the organizational structure of i2CAT Foundation at these different levels.

## Organization Chart (1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021)

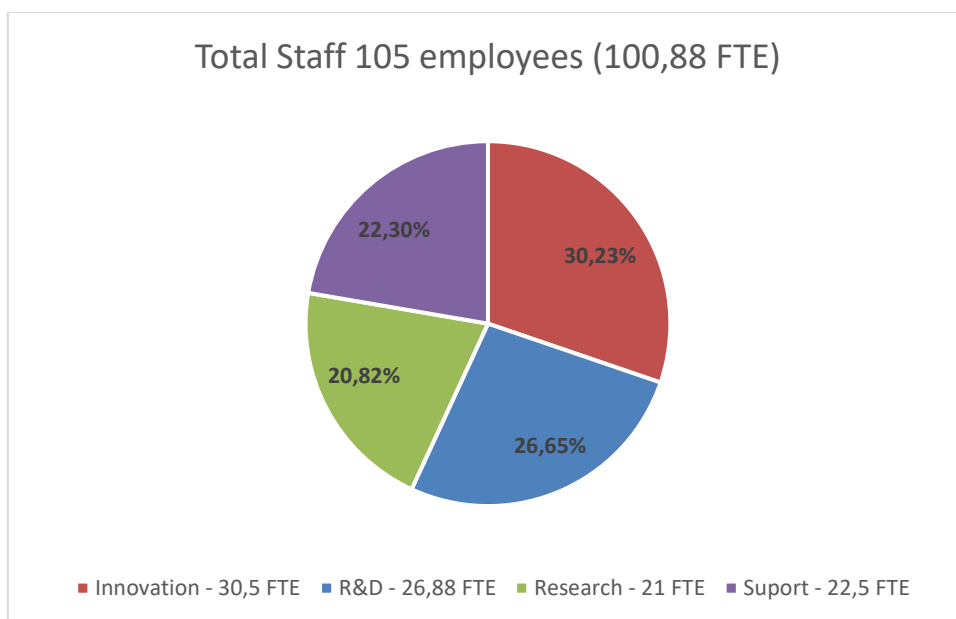


## Key figures:

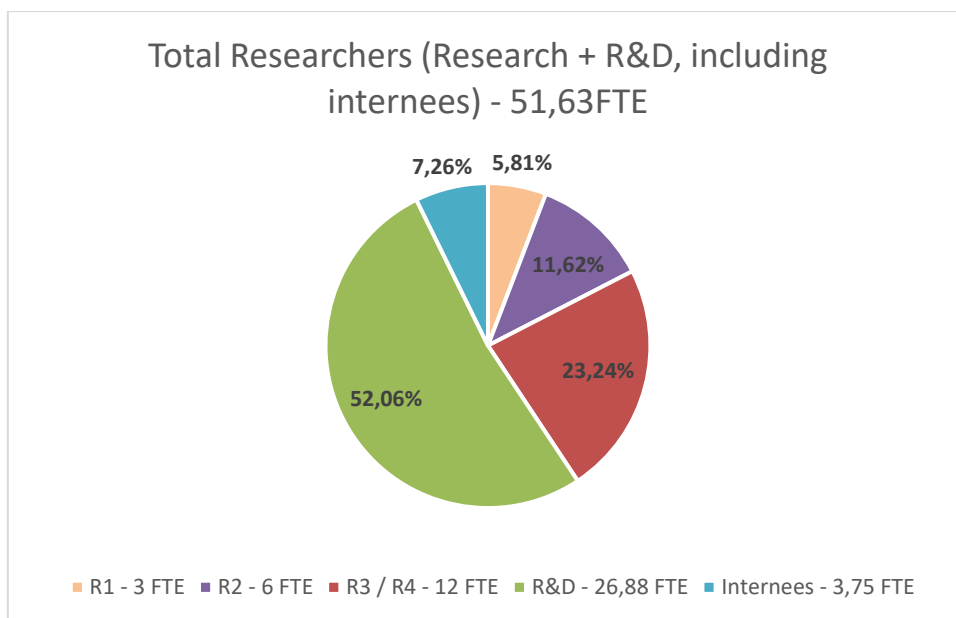
<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS (1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021)</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	47,88
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	12
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organization is host organization)	3
Of whom are women	8
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	12
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organizations corresponding with postdoctoral level	6
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organizations corresponding with doctoral level	3
Total number of internees (if relevant)	3,75
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	100,88
<i>Note: The 3 externally funded researchers are not counted in the rest of the FTE's as they are not hired by i2CAT.</i>	

<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year- 2022)</b>	<b>€</b>
Total annual organizational budget	11.793.557,15 €
Annual organizational direct government funding (designated for research)	3.428.483,06 €
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organizations – including EU funding)	6.064.867,37 €
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	1.348.207,26 €

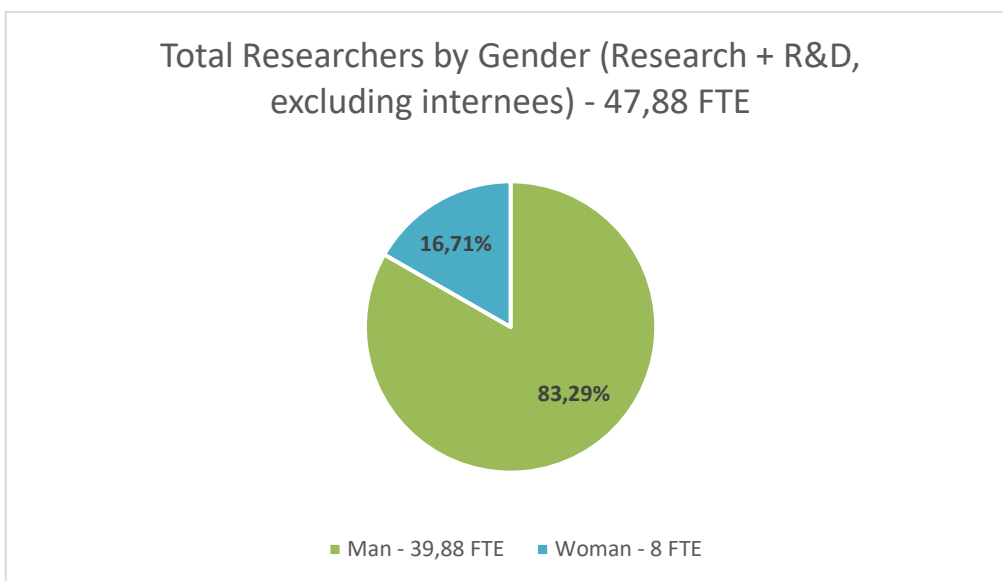
### Staff figures: (1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021)



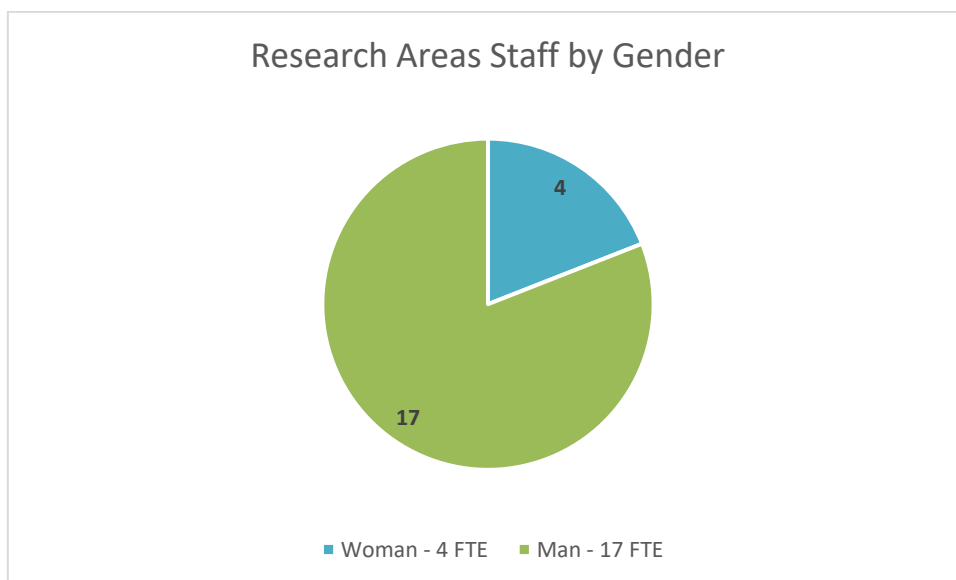
The i2CAT Staff is composed by 105 employees (100,88 FTE), of whom 47,88 FTE are employees working in research areas (Research + R&D).



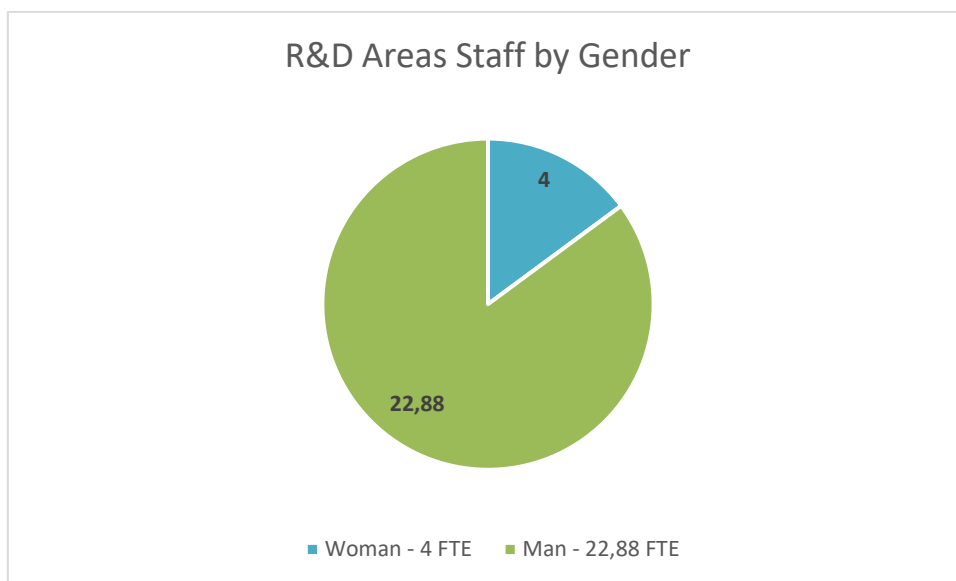
The Research Area of i2CAT is composed by 57 employees (51,63 FTE, including internees), of whom 12 FTE are classified in R3 or R4 stage, 6 FTE are classified in R2 stage, 3 FTE are classified in R1 stage, 26,88 FTE are classified as R&D (engineers working in research areas but not doing or holding a PhD) and there are 3,75 FTE classified as internees.



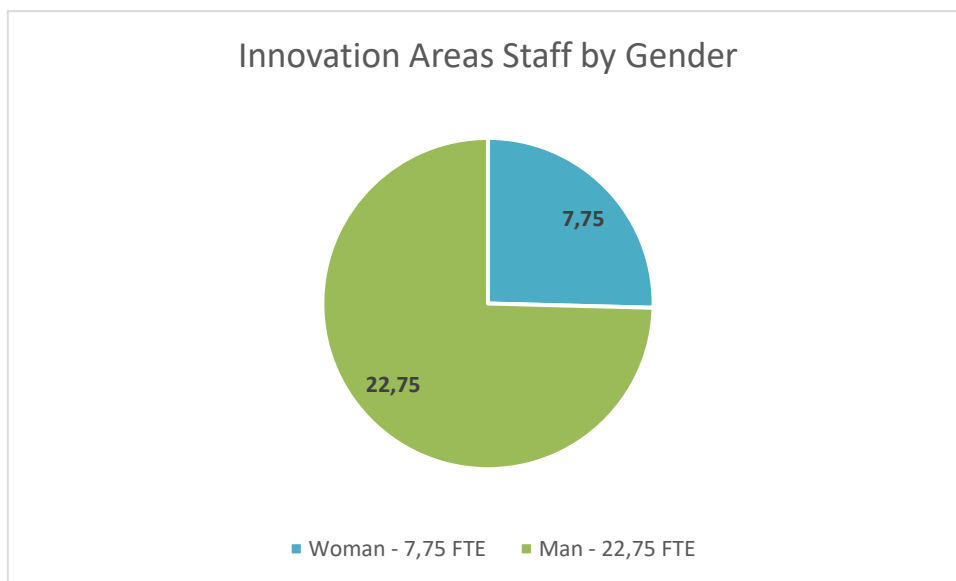
The Research Area of i2CAT is composed by 50 employees (47,88 FTE, excluding interneers), of whom 8 FTE are women and 39,88 FTE are man.



The research areas of i2CAT (PhD students or holders) are composed by 21 FTE, of whom 17 FTE (80.95%) are man and 4 FTE (19.05%) are woman.

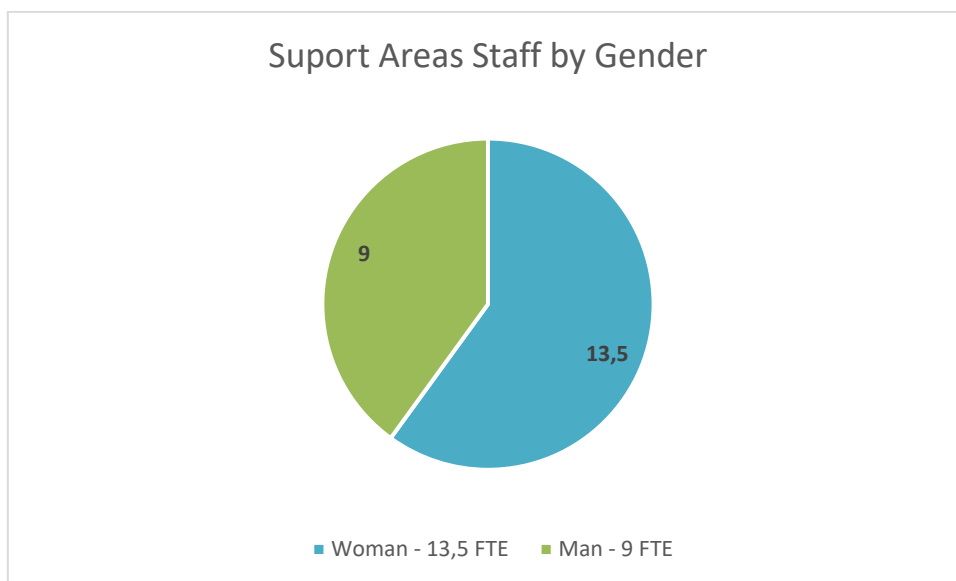


The R&D areas of the i2CAT Foundation (engineers working in research areas but not holding or pursuing a PhD) are composed by 26.88 FTE, of whom 22.88 FTE (85.12%) are man and 4 FTE (14.88%) are woman.

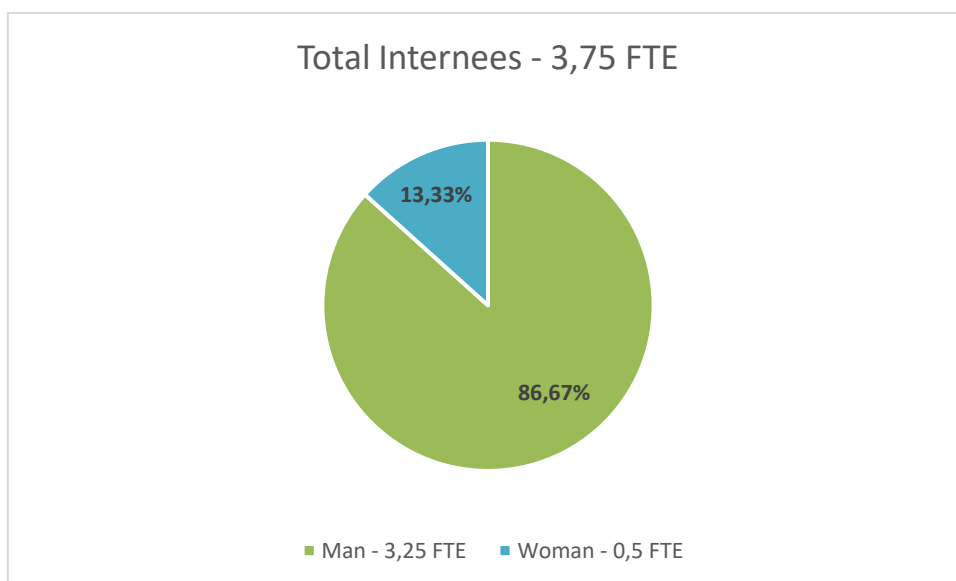


The innovation areas of the i2CAT Foundation are composed by 30.5 FTE, of whom 22.75 FTE (74.59%) are man and 7.75 FTE (25.41%) are woman.





The support areas of the i2CAT Foundation are composed by 22.5 FTE, of whom 13.5 FTE (60%) are woman and 9 FTE (40%) are man.



The Research Areas of i2CAT count with 7 internees (3,75 FTE), of whom 0,5 FTE are women and 3,25 FTE are man.

## 2. NARRATIVE

The current strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and practice in i2CAT have been analyzed under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code, which includes:

- Ethical & Professional aspects
- Recruitment
- Working conditions and Social Security
- Training

Each charter has been analyzed separately, taking into account the results of the gap analysis and the progress done during the implementation phase in order to clearly differentiate the current strengths and weaknesses in the institution.

### 2.1. Ethical & Professional aspects:

Regarding the Ethical & Professional aspects, i2CAT Foundation determined the following:

#### **STRENGTHS:**

- Since 2020 i2CAT performs an annual work environment survey where all staff members are asked about different labor and work environment related aspects. The results are shared annually with the staff members. In the work environment survey done at the end of 2020 a total of 91 above 103 employees participated in the survey, which is a participation of an 88.35% of the staff.
- All i2CAT researchers have the freedom to present their research proposals to different research programs in order to obtain competitive funding. According to the results of the gap analysis held in 2016 and although there are certain limitations related to the type of projects developed and the funding received by i2CAT, there is a positive perception of the employees regarding their research freedom. The results of the gap analysis show a result of 3,71 over 5 with regards to research freedom. In the work environment survey carried out at the end of 2020 the question related to the freedom and autonomy to organize the own work was assessed globally with an 8,63 over 10.
- i2CAT counts with an accessible and confidential suggestion box which is available through the corporate intranet. The comments provided by the staff are treated and answered on a monthly basis in a weekly online corporate event (i2gether). For the period January 2019 to December 2020 i2CAT received a total of 56 suggestions that were treated.
- In addition to the suggestion box, the company holds a weekly online meeting called “i2gether” each Friday where the most relevant news of the organization are shared among the staff members.
- Staff members assess positively the communication system and channels promoted by the organization. On the last work environment survey (end of 2020), the questions related to the communication system and channels obtained the following results:

- With regards to the statement “There is a fluid communication by part of the organization towards i2CAT's staff” the obtained assessment is a 7.72 over 10.
- With regards to the statement “Communication within the organization is done in a respectful and educate way” the obtained assessment is an 8,94 over 10.
- With regards to the statement “I value positively the communication channels and formats (i.e. i2gether, suggestion box) promoted by the organization” the obtained assessment is an 8.36 over 10.
- Staff members assess positively their participation in work related aspects that affect themselves. On the last work environment survey (end of 2020), the questions related to the perception they have with regards to the participation in matters that affect themselves was assessed with an 8 over 10.
- Transparent accountability, which is shared with the employees every year. The main economic indicators of the organization are shared annually with the staff in a corporate event (i2gether). These figures are also presented in the annual report which the company publishes each year.
- Career plans and categories for all departments can be found in the “Employee’s Policy” which is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet. The salary ranges associated to each career plan and category are also public and accessible.
- Established mechanisms to disseminate i2CAT results already exist and work correctly. i2CAT regularly announces their results in different channels like:
  - Social Media (Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
  - Corporate News section of our website
  - Weekly corporate online event (i2gethers)
- Active dissemination activities (conferences, workshops etc.) to make the research activities known to the society. Since January 2019 until December 2020, i2CAT participated in:
  - 20 Journal publications
  - 44 Conferences
  - 9 Workshops
  - 1 Standard Contribution
- i2CAT counts with an equality plan accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet, including an anti-harassment process and committee and a non-sexist language guide. During 2021 the organization foresees to promote a new call for election of a new equality committee and to update the current equality plan.
- The annual objectives of the organization are shared with all staff members during the first quarter of the year and assessed at the beginning of the next natural year. On the last work environment survey (end of 2020), the i2CAT staff answered:
  - Staff members were asked if they knew the i2CAT objectives and vision (which was valued with a 7,93 over 10)
  - Staff members were asked if they felt compromised with the i2CAT objectives (which was valued with an 8,17 over 10)
  - Staff members were asked if they felt they could contribute to the objectives achievement (which was valued with an 8,42 over 10)

- i2CAT counts with an established IPR policy which is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet. The policy describes the participation of employees with regards to possible IPR economic incomes.
- i2CAT is adhered to CERCA's ethical code which is published on the corporate intranet and in the HRS4R section of the i2CAT website ([www.i2cat.net/talent](http://www.i2cat.net/talent)).
- All research staff members have access to the scientific repository of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia which includes some of the most relevant repositories like IEEEExplore, ACM, Elsevier or Springer among others.
- i2CAT counts with an established Research Data Best Practice Guide published in our intranet. The guide establishes the procedures and tools to manage research data through all its lifecycle, following the FAIR principles and the requirements of the research projects funding institutions.
- With regards to data storage and data backups i2CAT has been developing new processes since the start of COVID-19. This regarding, to guarantee a proper data backup, the following actions have been implemented:
  - All departments of i2CAT count with a shared cloud unit (Google Drive) where important or relevant data of the daily activity is stored in order to avoid the loss of information. This Cloud Units guarantee that no information is lost, and information can be recovered even 30 days after deleting it.
  - The services of tools like Confluence and Jira which are used by i2CAT are backed up in an Azure Cloud Unit which also guarantees that no information is lost.
  - The ERP of i2CAT (Fundanet) makes its own backups in order to guarantee that no information is lost.
  - In addition, and to guarantee a higher security level, i2CAT makes backups of their backups in our own datacenter, which only connects to the internet to make the backups and disconnects afterwards to avoid possible attacks.
- Non-disclosure agreements signed with all employees.
- A fully English supported work environment has been established. English, Spanish and Catalan are vehicular languages within the organization and every employee is able to communicate in any of those languages.
  - English is considered as a vehicular language within i2CAT guaranteeing that all staff members can express themselves in English.
  - All policies and corporate communications are done in three languages (Catalan, Spanish and English).
  - The i2CAT website is fully translated to English language.
  - All internal written communications are done in three languages (English, Catalan and Spanish).
  - All research vacant positions are published in English language.
  - An English training plan has been promoted by the organization consisting of 7 different groups depending on their English level (from B1.1 to C2 level). In addition to the collective classes those managers who request it also receive one to one English classes.

### **WEAKNESSES:**

- The research freedom is often conditioned to the obtention of competitive funding, as i2CAT cannot grant a full research freedom with its own economic means. Nevertheless, all i2CAT researchers have the freedom to present their research proposals to obtain competitive funding and in case the funding is acquired, to carry out their research.
- Although some staff members participate from time to time in the meetings of the board of trustees, it is not done so on a regular basis. This regarding, participation of staff members in the board meetings should be improved.

### **REMARKS:**

Since the application and grant of the HRS4R award, i2CAT Foundation has been working in order to improve those aspects where weaknesses had been detected and trying to constantly improve those aspects which were already positively assessed but where a margin of improvement was detected.

This regarding, the main improvements highlighted previously are related to the following areas:

- HR team and HR policies: In 2017 the organization hired an HR Manager for the first time since its creation, to promote a more attractive work environment for employees. In 2020, due to the growth of the organization a second person joined the department to strengthen the recruitment processes of the organization. It is planned that for 2022 a third person joins the HR team to improve the training plan of the organization and support the general HR administrative tasks of the organization.
- Internal and external communication: The communication team of the organization has also grown since 2017 in order to have a higher impact in both, internal and external communication activities. By the moment of the initial submission of the HRS4R award the communication team consisted of 2 persons, while at the beginning of 2021 it is formed by 5 people.
- Work environment surveys: Since 2020 i2CAT has implemented a work environment survey in order to know the perception of its employees with regards to work related aspects and introduce improvements in those areas where possible weaknesses were detected.
- Internal transparency: Since the application to the HRS4R award the organization has been constantly improving internal transparency, sharing the key figures of the organization (financial, HR, communication, objectives, project results, suggestion box, work environment results, etc.) in a weekly online event.
- Internal workflows: With the growth of the organization a new system called IBPM, which stands for i2CAT Business Process Management, and is a Jira instance heavily customized to facilitate management and follow up of i2CAT business processes through the whole organization. The system was set up to configure different workflows addressed to facilitating the daily work of employees and allowing a better tracking of different organizational metrics. Examples of this workflows would be:
  - Assets management: Discovery and management of the i2CAT assets.
  - Associations management: Manage i2CAT participation in different associations; including the goals for participating, cost and return of investment.

- Business agreement management: Managing the creation, review and signature of business agreements (tech. transfer, exploitation, MoUs, NDAs, etc.)
- Calls for Proposals and Deals: Management of competitive calls for proposals and of the whole Deal lifecycle (of all types: Grant, R&D Services, Contribution)
- Compatibility Requests: The compatibility request workflow is used to regularize the compatibility of second activities that some employees are exercising and that, as a center of the public sector, i2CAT has to comply with the law of incompatibilities of the public sector.
- Contact: Represents an external person, usually related to an organization.
- Device Inventory: Inventory of the different i2CAT devices, records their assignments and status.
- Employee Workflow: Management of Employees lifecycle.
- External user access to i2CAT Services. Allowing users from organizations other than i2CAT to access a specific Jira-Project, Confluence spaces or Bitbucket repositories.
- i2CAT Profile: How to tag issues of type Deal, Project, Asset and Publication, so that they show up at the i2CAT Profile Confluence space.
- IT Support Requests: Request IT support to the ASIS team.
- IP Rights Management: Manage patents, open-source software, trademarks or other IP rights that belong to i2CAT.
- Job Vacancies: Workflow to create job vacancies request and to manage and track the job vacancy status.
- Leads: A non-solid Deal opportunity.
- Networking: All travel requests are related to an event, which in IBPM is modelled as a Networking Event issue.
- Publications: Management of scientific publications authored by i2CAT.
- Reporting worked hours: How to log time spent working on different activities.
- Project management
- Project execution: Project execution workflow.
- Project and Deal planning: How to plan a project, assigning effort to multiple areas.
- Financial planning: How to plan the financials of a project and keep them updated.
- Management of Deliverables: How to manage deliverables of R&D projects where i2CAT has to do work.
- Management on Invoices: How to manage invoices of "R&D Services" type projects.
- Project Management Dashboard: How to use and create project management dashboards, visualizing project data from IBPM on Confluence.
- Project Status Summary page: How to use and create the project status summary page, to have a quick overview of the project status without going into the details provided via the project management dashboard.
- Reporting worked hours in "Grant" projects (Horizon Europe, etc.): How to properly report worked hours in "Grant" projects (Horizon Europe, etc.).
- Server: It is the directory of the servers that are in use and functioning in i2CAT
- Training requests: Workflow to request training activities to human resources.
- Travel requests: Workflow to request permission to travel for business, make all the required purchases (hotel, flights) and report expenses after travel is over.

All these improvements do not only respond to fulfilling the compromises and objectives set up on the HRS4R Action Plan, but also to adapt the internal processes to the growth of the organization and to create a more attractive working environment which facilitates the talent acquisition and talent retention.

## 2.2. Recruitment Chapter

Regarding the Recruitment Chapter, i2CAT Foundation determined the following:

### **STRENGTHS:**

- i2CAT counts with an established recruitment policy based on the OTM-R policy promoted by the European Commission that guarantees no discrimination for any reason. The policy is accessible to all staff members through the corporate intranet and through the HRS4R section of the i2CAT website ([www.i2cat.net/talent](http://www.i2cat.net/talent)). On 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020 i2CAT had 9 different nationalities (12 employees) among its research staff members.
- A structured interview process has been established and is detailed on the OTM-R policy (which is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet and also through the HRS4R section of the i2CAT website ([www.i2cat.net/talent](http://www.i2cat.net/talent)), which facilitates the understanding of the process for participants and guarantees a common interview process regardless of the department that participates in it.
- Since mid of 2020 a clear process is established in order to open new job vacancies using an internal tool called IBPM. The process requires that managers who wants to open a new position fill up a form, ensuring that the necessary information of the vacant position is provided to the HR team.
- Following one of the compromises set up in the OTM-R policy and in the action plan of the HRS4R award, all vacant positions related to research areas are published in English.
- A Welcome Plan in collaboration between the HR team and the department where the new employee will work has been established. The Welcome Plan consists of an initial Welcome session with an HR member, where the person is introduced to the different systems, processes and policies of the organization, and another session with a key member of the department where the person joins in order to introduce him/her to the projects or daily work. In addition, the Welcome Plan also contemplates different follow up meetings with the new starting employee on month 1, month 3 and month 6, to guarantee that the person adapts properly to its new role.
- Staff members assess positively the onboarding process of the organization. On the last work environment survey (end of 2020), the questions related to the onboarding process obtained the following results:
  - With regards to the statement “When I started at i2CAT I was informed about the policies and regulations.” employees with less than 1 year seniority in the organization assessed it with an 8.38 over 10.
  - With regards to the statement “When I started at i2CAT I received the necessary support by my department” employees with less than 1 year seniority in the organization assessed it with a 7.84 over 10.
  - With regards to the statement “They explained me my duties and responsibilities” employees with less than 1 year seniority in the organization assessed it with an 8.16 over 10.
  - With regards to the statement “My colleagues gave me the necessary support to do adapt myself to my workplace” employees with less than 1 year seniority in the organization assessed it with an 9.16 over 10.



- With regards to the statement “My superior gave me the support and trust to adapt myself to my workplace” employees with less than 1 year seniority in the organization assessed it with an 9.14 over 10.
- With regards to the statement “I felt myself welcomed by part of the team and the organization” employees with less than 1 year seniority in the organization assessed it with an 9.33 over 10.
- i2CAT developed a candidate’s referencing policy in order to promote the involvement of i2CAT's employees on talent attraction activities. The policy is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet (employee’s policies) and implies the payment of a bonus of 1.000€ gross to the person that refers a possible candidate after the new employee overcomes the initial 6 months.
- No kind of discrimination (gender, age, ethnic, sexual orientation, etc.) is tolerated on the recruitment processes.
- Mobility experience and in particular international mobility is recognized as a plus.
- In March 2020 the organization hired a person fully dedicated to recruiting processes.
- The HR team of i2CAT provides full in-house support on the management of work and residence permits as well as other administrative and bureaucratic processes (obtaining Spanish ID, Social Security number, opening a bank account, etc.).
- The HR team has created a relocation brochure and a mobility guide to facilitate the understanding of the relocation process to new incorporations from abroad.

#### **WEAKNESSES:**

- Although an improvement has been done in terms of hiring a dedicated person to recruitment tasks and by improving the general conditions of the organization, there are still limitations related to the economic conditions which i2CAT can offer and which arise from public legislation that applies to the organization due to being part of the public sector (i.e. Spanish and Catalan Budget Law). This reality implies that there is still a gap between the economic conditions which i2CAT as a public organization can offer, compared to the conditions offered by the private sector.
- Due to being considered a public organization, which is subject to laws that affect the public sector, i2CAT has restrictions for offering fix contracts, which in certain circumstances can be a disadvantage for attracting highly competitive talent.
- The current growth of the organization (in 2020 the organization had a growth in terms of headcounts of a 44.4%) together with the normal staff turnover, makes that the HR department handles a big amount of recruitment processes at the same time, which often hinders dedicating more time to each recruitment process.
- i2CAT should improve the way it proactively recruits candidates by searching suitable candidates in different professional networks.
- Although an improvement has been done by part of i2CAT by assisting their candidates in the obtention of a work and residence permit and the necessary VISA to enter the country, the process is not as fast as desired and delays the incorporation of foreign employees. As an example, since a non-EU candidate accepts an offer until the bureaucratic work has been completed it takes an average time of 3 to 4 months.

- Establishment of standard technical and personality tests for each department should be improved.

#### **REMARKS:**

The i2CAT Foundation has been constantly improving their recruitment and onboarding system throughout the implementation phase of the HRS4R award, on one hand to improve as an organization and fulfill those compromises of the HRS4R action plan, but also in order to guarantee that the first contact of possible candidates provides a positive impact and facilitates the acquisition of talented staff.

The aforementioned improvement can be seen with the hiring of a recruiter dedicated to the organizational recruitment processes, the establishment and implementation of the OTM-R policy, the establishment of a bonus for those employees referencing external candidates, the support for obtaining a work and residence permit in addition to the VISA and the continuous improvement of the welcome plan.

Although a clear improvement has been made by i2CAT with regards to the recruitment chapter, there are still external limitations that need to be considered given the sector of activity where the i2CAT Foundation carries out its work (ICT sector) and the reality that as a public organization it needs to compete with the private sector in multiple occasions. This regarding, the i2CAT Foundation as a public organization, is still subject to laws of the public sector which makes that the organization has disadvantages towards private organizations (see working conditions section for more details for this limitations). Examples could be the contract typology (the private sector offers fix contracts and i2CAT has limits for it) or the economic offers (Barcelona has become an ICT&Digital hub where private companies constantly increase the salaries and conditions of their workers in a way that i2CAT cannot follow). Unfortunately, these limitations are not in i2CATs hands.

For the following years the organization plans to keep improving the recruitment processes by standardizing technical and personality tests, by providing continuous training to those persons that actively participate in recruitment processes, by more actively participating in recruitment events and by seeking a closer collaboration with universities and research institutions that promote the view of i2CAT as an attractive international research center.

### 2.3. Working Conditions & Social Security

Regarding the Working Conditions & Social Security, i2CAT Foundation determined the following:

#### STRENGTHS:

- i2CAT counts with flexible work schedule conditions established in the employee's policy which are accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet. As an example of these flexible conditions, we could highlight:
  - Flexible entry schedule between 8 to 10 in the morning.
  - Flexible lunchtime from 30 minutes up to an hour.
  - Reduced working hours every Friday (6.5 hours) of the year and all days during the months of July and August (7 hours).
  - Those employees with family responsibilities can request an adaptation of their work schedule to better balance the personal and professional life.
  - Tele-work or Remote work is possible and has been improved since the HRS4R application. By the moment of the application to the HRS4R award the organization allowed up to 1 day of remote work per week. With the start of COVID-19 pandemic and as part of the contingency plan during the pandemic, the organization switched to a full remote work environment. Once the COVID-19 restrictions had been lifted the organization implemented a remote-work policy that allows up to 3 days per week of remote-work.
- Career plan and salary ranges are shared through the "Employees policies" document which has been approved by the board of trustees and which is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet.
- Merit based appraisal system established based on the different career plans described in the "Employees policies" which are accessible through the corporate intranet. Each year the Directors of each department assess their staff members together with the HR team and propose appraisals to the management team. Since 2020 a yearly follow up meeting has been established with all employees in order to share the assessment, the vision and career plan for each person together with its managers and a person of the HR team.
  - In January 2021, a total of 78 employees received the increase established in the Catalan Budget law for the staff of the public sector, which is a 74.29% of the total staff.
  - In January 2021, a total of 44 employees received an additional increase due to professional development, which is a 41.9% of the total staff.
- Retribution policy within the "Employees Policy" has been approved by the board of trustees, which includes:
  - Salary structure (fix salary + variable salary related to annual objectives)
  - Variable salary (objectives) is communicated during the first quarter of the year.
  - Additional benefit system is implemented, allowing all employees the possibility to request that a part of their salary is paid in kind with the services of restaurant vouchers, public transport pass, nursery service and/or private medical

- insurance. All these services count with a tax exemption which allows those employees adhering to these services to maximize their retribution by benefitting of the tax exemption.
- A candidate referencing policy has been established in order to promote the involvement of i2CAT's employees on talent attraction activities. The policy is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet (employee's policies) and implies the payment of a bonus of 1.000€ gross to the person that refers a possible candidate after the new employee overcomes the initial 6 months.
  - An additional benefit, consisting of a gift of a 200€ voucher, has been approved by the board of trustees for those employees that marry or have a child. The policy is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet (employee's policies).
  - i2CAT staff have the option to access the Polytechnic University of Catalonia gym at a reduced price.
  - i2CAT counts with an established IPR policy which is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet. The policy describes the participation of employees with regards to possible IPR economic incomes.
  - Staff members assess positively the working conditions of the organization. On the last work environment survey (end of 2020), the questions related to the working conditions obtained the following results:
    - With regards to the statement "I feel that my workplace is a stable position" and although the limitations described in the weaknesses section for establishing permanent contracts, the obtained assessment was a 7.62 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "With the flexible retribution system (salary in kind) I am" the obtained assessment was a 7.28 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "With regards to the telework policy of i2CAT I am" the obtained assessment was an 8.72 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "With the i2CAT work schedule policy I am" the obtained assessment was an 8.35 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "I consider that my working conditions allow me to reconcile my personal and professional life" the obtained assessment was a 7.86 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "I consider my workplace to be a safe environment" the obtained assessment was an 8.7 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "I have freedom and autonomy to organize my work" the obtained assessment was an 8.63 over 10.
    - With regards to the statement "I can participate in taking decisions that affect my work" the obtained assessment was an 8.00 over 10.
  - Free fruits, water, coffee and tea are provided to the employees attending the office.
  - 25 labor days of paid holidays per year, which is more than the minimum set up by law in Spain (22 days).
  - New employees have the option to choose among different laptop models (DELL, Lenovo or MacBook) and operative systems (Linux, Windows, iOS).

## WEAKNESSES:

- i2CAT has limitations for establishing permanent contracts and for increasing salaries due to different legal regulations that apply to the organization.  
On one hand i2CAT has to respect the national labor law “Estatuto de los Trabajadores” (<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2015-11430>), which encourages the establishment of permanent contracts and allows temporary contracts only in certain circumstances (i.e. being contracted only for a specific project).  
On the other hand, as i2CAT receives public funds from the government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), it must respect the Catalan Budget Law “Llei de Pressupostos de la Generalitat” art. 27, ([http://aplicacions.economia.gencat.cat/wpres/AppPHP/2017/pdf/VOL\\_L\\_ART.pdf](http://aplicacions.economia.gencat.cat/wpres/AppPHP/2017/pdf/VOL_L_ART.pdf)), which restricts two fundamental aspects related to the working conditions. The first limitation is referred to the possibility of establishing permanent contracts, as the budget law establishes limitations to increase the number of permanent contracts of each public organization (limitation is called “*Taxa de Reposició*”). The second limitation is referred to the possibility of increasing salaries of the employees, as the budget law establishes which is the maximum amount that can be increased every year excepting people who have a change of category or responsibility.  
This situation implies that while one legislation encourages the use of permanent contracts, the other one establishes restrictions in the number of permanent contracts that can be done. In addition, the limitation on salary increases set up by the budget law makes it hard to compete with the salary increases given in the private sector where these limitations do not apply.
- Although an improvement has been done by establishing the career and professional development plan, i2CAT needs to improve the dissemination of these policies in order to reduce the feeling of dissatisfaction with regards to the salaries in comparison with the private sector or ICT market conditions. On the last work environment survey (end of 2020) some of the questions related to the working conditions, obtained the following results:
  - With regards to the statement “I know the professional development policy and the growth opportunities I have within the organization” the obtained assessment is a 6.31 over 10.
  - With regards to the statement “I think my salary is in line with my responsibilities” the obtained assessment is a 5.35 over 10.
  - With regards to the statement “I believe that i2CAT's remuneration policy follows the principles of equity, meritocracy and responsibility” the obtained assessment is a 6.59 over 10.
- Gender balance is difficult to achieve, as the ICT Sector is not a gender balanced one. Although i2CAT is committed and works for increasing the number of women in those areas where they are underrepresented, the institution considers that gender equality must specially be worked from early ages (i.e. from schools) as it is an underlying social problem, which is very hard to solve only by part of the companies. On a corporate level, at January 2021 women represented around a 29% of the FTE while man represent around 71% of the staff. As shown in the initial figures of this document, this percentage

aggravates if we only consider the research and R&D departments, where only 16.71% of the staff are woman and 83.29% are man.

#### **REMARKS:**

Regarding working conditions, since the application and grant of the HRS4R award the i2CAT Foundation has been working to improve different work-related aspects described in the strengths section to promote a more attractive environment for the existing employees, but also for facilitating the talent attraction. Nevertheless, it must be considered that i2CAT, as a public organization, is subject to certain limitations due to being subject to laws of the public sector (see weaknesses of the current block). Unfortunately, it is not within i2CATs hands to change these laws, however the organization needs to find ways to keep improving the feeling of their employees with regards to this matter.

The aforementioned improvement in work conditions can be seen with the approval of the “Employee’s Policies”, which define the salary structure of all employees, provides transparent salary ranges related to the different career plans and defines how the appraisal system of the organization works, establishes additional benefits, defines the different career plans that correspond to each department, establishes a flexible work environment and work schedule and improves the remote work policy among others.

Regarding gender balance, there is still much to do within the ICT sector. i2CAT tries to contribute to reduce this gap by promoting the participation of its employees in different actions (i.e., speeches in schools, basic programming courses for children, internal trainings, explicit mentions in our job vacancies, etc.), but there is still a lack of balance between men and women in this sector that needs to be reduced.

## 2.4. Training Chapter

Regarding the Training Chapter, i2CAT determined the following:

### **STRENGTHS:**

- Since the creation of the HR department there has been a significant improvement of the perception of employees regarding training. By comparing the results of the Gap Analysis performed when applying to the HRS4R award with the results of the work environment survey carried out in 2020, the obtained result in terms of training were of 2.71 over 5 (which would be a 5.42 over 10) in the gap analysis vs. 6.65 over 10 in the work environment survey carried out at the end of 2020.
- The training policy considers two main classifications for trainings activities. On one hand those trainings promoted by the organization in collaboration with the inputs received from the different department directors and on the other hand, individual trainings that can be requested by each employee. For this purpose, a training request formulary has been established and is accessible to all employees via i2CAT's intranet. With regards to this aspect, staff members were asked in the work environment survey carried out at the end of 2020 regarding training aspects, obtaining the following results.
  - With regards to the statement "I know the channels and procedures to request training of my interest" the obtained assessment is a 7.07 over 10.
- The training budget has been raised during the period of 2017-2021.
  - 2017: Budget of 25.000€
  - 2018: Budget of 40.000€
  - 2019: Budget of 50.000€
  - 2020: Budget of 50.000€
  - 2021: Budget of 65.000€
- A training section has been created within i2CAT's intranet. Whenever it is possible, i2CAT films and publishes its internal trainings within that section, making it accessible to all employees.
- The organization has the intention of boosting the training plan and budget for the coming years, for which it is planned to hire another person within the HR team assuming these specific tasks. The goal for 2022 is to raise the training budget, at least, to 150.000€ per year.

### **WEAKNESSES:**

- More internal PhD programs should be established to promote research careers among junior profiles and attract new talent.
- The management of a training plan is a task that besides of the budget, requires a high effort of one person in terms of time dedication. In order to be able to boost the current training plan of the organization there is the need of hiring a new person that assumes these tasks.

- Although there is an improvement in the perception of employees regarding the training activities carried out by part of the organization, there is still work to do to reach a higher satisfaction degree.

#### **REMARKS:**

Since the application and grant of the HRS4R award i2CAT has been working to improve those aspects related to the training chapter. For this purpose, i2CAT has developed an internal training policy which is available through the corporate intranet, establishing clear conditions and processes for requesting training actions.

The aforementioned training policy sets up an internal training request form to promote the request of individual trainings among its employees and also establishes different kind of permanency agreements depending on the cost of the requested trainings in order to guarantee a proper return of the investment in those trainings of a higher cost.

Although an improvement in terms of training has been made by part of the organization by creating in 2017 the HR department, the organization is realizing that with the growth of the organization there is the need of hiring a specific resource that is able to dedicate more time in the analysis of training needs, establishment of training itineraries and managing the whole training cycle in order to keep improving the training topic.

For this purpose, there is the commitment of the organization of hiring a dedicated person for the year 2022 and to raise the training budget of the organization to more than the double amount that was established for 2021.



### 3. ACTIONS

The implementation of this Action Plan aims to adequate internal workflows with that of the Charter and Code (CC). The plan showed in the following table has been carried out over the implementation phase. Each action will be assigned to specific group(s) in order to be executed properly.

In the next table, the following abbreviations are used:

- Management Team: MT
- Human Resources Unit: HR
- Corporate Development: CD
- Infrastructures and Services: I&S
- Administration: AD
- Whole staff: All

<i>Proposed actions</i>	<i>Gap Principles</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Responsible Unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / Target</i>	<i>Current status</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>AE1: Open internal debate around the ethical code and study related ethical codes, which might be applicable to i2CAT or might serve as a basis for the definition of the institutional Code of Ethics. Prepare a document as a compendium of the ethical code taking into consideration the Spanish Science Law and make all the i2CAT staff adhere to it.</i>	2	3Q 2017	<i>Management Team &amp; Corporate Development</i>	<i>Count with an Ethical Code.</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<p><i>It was finally completed on 1Q 2019.</i></p> <p><i>i2CAT has adhered to CERCA's ethical code. CERCA is an entity that agglutinates all Catalan research institutes with the aim of promoting that the Catalan research institutions develop successfully, promote synergies and strategic cooperation, improve the positioning, visibility and impact of research and facilitate dialogue with public and private agents.</i></p> <p><i>The Management Team has signed an adherence letter to the code of conduct.</i></p> <p><i>Both, the code and the adherence letter are available on i2CAT's intranet and in the HRS4R section of i2CAT's website (<a href="https://www.i2cat.net/talent">https://www.i2cat.net/talent</a>)</i></p>
<i>AE2: Renew access to specific research databases and engines necessary to carry out research.</i>	3	3Q 2017	<i>Management Team</i>	<i>Grant access to all researchers to a research database.</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<p><i>It was finally completed on 1Q 2019.</i></p> <p><i>i2CAT has granted its researchers access to research databases</i></p> <p><i>All research staff members have access to the scientific repository of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia which includes some of the most relevant repositories like IEEEExplore, ACM, Elsevier or Springer among others.</i></p>
<i>AE3: Promote the application of the IPR code</i>	5, 31	2Q 2017	<i>Management Team, Knowledge &amp; Technology MKT Team</i>	<i>Have an IPR code / policy.</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<p><i>It was finally completed on 1Q 2017.</i></p> <p><i>Since 2017, i2CAT has established an IPR code. The policy is accessible to all staff members through the corporate intranet in Catalan, Spanish and English. (Private access link, only for i2CAT staff: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/IPR+regulation">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/IPR+regulation</a>)</i></p> <p><i>The main characteristics of the i2CAT IPR policy is the definition of how the possible incomes that may arise from the exploitation of Intellectual Property results will be shared among the staff members that participated in its invention.</i></p> <p><i>More precisely, the policy establishes that a 33% of the possible incomes will belong to i2CAT, another 33% of the possible incomes will belong to the departments that participated in the invention as additional budget for those areas and a 34% will be shared directly among the staff members that participated in the invention.</i></p>

						<p><i>In December 2021 the policy was updated adding new information and definitions to the previous existing policy.</i></p>
<p>AE4: Elaborate a set of “best working practices” in relation to data storage, protection and privacy. Inform the staff leveraging on existing communication channels</p>	7	1Q 2018	Administration	Have a GDPR Policy.	Completed	<p><i>i2CAT developed a GDPR policy which was finally approved and published on 1st semester 2019.</i></p> <p><i>As the EU GDPR policy came into effect in 2019, the previous policy had to be updated according to European GDPR law.</i></p> <p><i>The aforementioned policy is approved and published in our corporate intranet accessible to every employee (Private access link, only for i2CAT Staff: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/GDPR+policy">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/GDPR+policy</a>)</i></p> <p><i>During the second semester of 2021 and during the whole year 2022 i2CAT is establishing and promoting corporate security policies to improve the protection and privacy of the organization. Examples of these policies are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Centralization of identity management: In order to avoid having to log in to each service through a different identity manager, which would make it easier for possible malefactors to steal an identity, i2CAT has implemented a centralized identity management, making that the log in processes to most of our systems is done through one centralized service.</i></li> <li>- <i>i2CAT forces every user to change their passwords every 6 months.</i></li> <li>- <i>i2CAT has implemented a double factor authentication method (2FA)</i></li> <li>- <i>Since 2022 i2CAT is implementing cybersecurity awareness trainings among its staff.</i></li> </ul>
<p>AE5: Improve management of both internal and external data, applying existing regulation and recommendations (“Ley Oránica de Protección de Datos (LOPD)”). This implies every member of the staff so sign a “Non-Disclosure Agreement” to ensure the compliance of the LOPD</p>	7	4Q 2017	Administration and HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDA Signed</li> <li>• Cession of image rights signed</li> <li>• Internal Data policy</li> </ul>	Completed	<p><i>This indicator was finally achieved on 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2018.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>NDA signed with every employee at that moment (2018) and every new employee also signs it on his/her first day.</i></li> <li>• <i>Cession of image rights document signed with every employee at that moment (2018) and every new employee also signs it on his/her first day.</i></li> <li>• <i>i2CAT has defined a GDPR policy which is accessible to all staff members through the corporate intranet (Private access link, only for i2CAT Staff: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/GDPR+policy">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/GDPR+policy</a>)</i></li> <li>• <i>During 2021 i2CAT established a Research Data Best Practice Guide published in our intranet. The guide establishes the procedures and tools to manage research data through all its lifecycle, following the FAIR principles and the</i></li> </ul>

						<p>requirements of the research projects funding institutions. (Private access link, only for i2CAT staff: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Research+Data+Management">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Research+Data+Management</a>)</p>
AE6: Improve data backups management; either using external solutions and/or defining internal mechanisms	7	4Q 2017	IT	Have a common backup system for every department	Completed	<p>It was finally completed during first semester 2020.</p> <p>With regards to data storage and data backups i2CAT has been developing new processes since the start of COVID-19. This regarding, to guarantee a proper data backup, the following actions have been implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All departments of i2CAT count with a shared cloud unit (Google Drive) were important or relevant data of the daily activity is stored in order to avoid the loss of information. This Cloud Units guarantee that no information is lost, and information can be recovered even 30 days after deleting it.</li> <li>• The services of tools like Confluence and Jira which are used by i2CAT are backed up in an Azure Cloud Unit which also guarantees that no information is lost.</li> <li>• The ERP of i2CAT (Fundanet) makes its own backups in order to guarantee that no information is lost.</li> <li>• In addition, and to guarantee a higher security level, i2CAT makes backups of their backups in our own datacenter, which only connects to the internet to make the backups and disconnects afterwards to avoid possible attacks.</li> </ul>
AE7: Promote a transition to a fully English supported work environment to facilitate internationalization	10	1Q 2018	Corporate Development + HR + Administration	Have a fully translated environment	Completed	<p>All i2CAT departments understand and speak English, which allows that any foreign person can be attended properly.</p> <p>English is considered as a vehicular language at i2CAT.</p> <p>i2CAT's Website and Intranet are fully translated to English. All internal communications are done in Spanish, Catalan and English.</p> <p>The corporate intranet as well as all internal policies and procedures that are published are fully translated to English. (Private access link, only available for i2CAT Staff: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Intranet+Home">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Intranet+Home</a>)</p>
AR1: Define and implement a new recruitment process and better disseminate the welcome package for new staff	12	3Q 2017	HR	Have an Open, Transparent and Merit Based	Completed	<p>This indicator is under constant improvement.</p> <p>The milestone of defining and implementing a recruitment policy based on the OTM-R principles was achieved on the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2018. The policy is published</p>

				<i>Recruitment guide published</i>		<p>on the i2CAT corporate intranet and on the i2CAT website (<a href="https://www.i2cat.net/talent">https://www.i2cat.net/talent</a>)</p> <p>Since then, i2CAT is putting its efforts in disseminating the OTM-R policy among those persons involved in recruitment processes with internal trainings related to good recruitment practices. Last training was held on first quarter of 2023.</p> <p>In 2020 The Welcome Pack process was defined and published on the corporate intranet accessible to all employees (<a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/download/attachments/29557603/Welcome_Plan_ENG.pdf?version=1&amp;modificationDate=1541500825000&amp;api=v2">https://confluence.i2cat.net/download/attachments/29557603/Welcome_Plan_ENG.pdf?version=1&amp;modificationDate=1541500825000&amp;api=v2</a>)</p> <p>The Welcome Pack sessions consists of an initial Welcome session with an HR team member, where the person is introduced to the different systems, processes and policies of the organization, and another session with a key member of the department where the person joins in order to introduce him/her to the projects or daily work. In addition, the Welcome Plan also contemplates different follow up meetings with the new starting employee on month 1, month 3 and month 6, to guarantee that the person adapts properly to its new role and detect possible aspects that need to be addressed.</p> <p>The Welcome Pack documents provided to new starting employees were renewed in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2022 making the document more visual and attractive.</p>
AR2: Translate into English all new staff positions published	13	Continuou s	HR	All Research positions should be published at least in English	Completed	<p>It was finally established from 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2018 on.</p> <p>All research positions are published in English, however i2CAT still reserves the right to publish administration positions in Spanish or Catalan, as it attracts more candidates for these kinds of positions.</p>
AR3: Elaborate a recruitment guide that should be followed in any recruitment procedure. This guide should include the description of the tracking of the position, candidates evaluated and results of the different interviews and tests. The guide shall indicate how to prepare the offer, how to arrange and carry	13, 15	3Q 2017	HR	Count with a recruitment policy that includes the mentioned aspects	Completed	<p>It was finally completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2018.</p> <p>i2CAT's recruitment policy include the OTM-R principles. The policy is available at i2CAT's corporate intranet and also through the HRS4R section of i2CAT's website (<a href="https://www.i2cat.net/talent">https://www.i2cat.net/talent</a>) and facilitates the understanding of the process for participants and guarantees a common interview process regardless of the department that participates in it.</p> <p>Since mid of 2020 a clear process is established in order to open new job vacancies using an internal tool called IBPM. The process requires that the manager who</p>

<p>out interviews and the structure of the jury that evaluates the candidates. This guide should also define the mechanisms to announce the position, the criteria and the results of the selection process providing arguments on the candidates about the results on the process.</p>						<p>wants to open a position fills up a form, ensuring that the necessary information of the vacant position is provided to the HR team.</p> <p>The system allows a tracking of all open job vacancies and the current status of the position.</p>
<p>AR4: Ensure that CERCA's "Gender Bias in Research Institutes" video (available in YouTube) is watched by the members of the selection and Recruitment committee before the interviews and evaluation meetings</p>	14, 27	Continuou s	HR	Ensure the video is available and watched by the members of the Recruitment committee	Completed	<p>It was finally done on 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2018.</p> <p>i2CAT's recruitment policy includes a link to that video. In addition, that video is attached directly on i2CAT's intranet. HR made sure that every member of the recruitment committee has watched this video.</p> <p>Last recruitment training where the video "Gender Bias in Research Institutes" was watched was in first quarter of 2023.</p>
<p>AW1: Improve the appraisal system to: 1) Communicate the annual objectives and criteria in the first term of the year. 2) Organize follow-up meetings 3) Provide tools/means for researchers to track the status of their yearly objectives</p>	11, 30	1) 1Q Yearly 2) Each semes ter 3) Each semes ter	Management Team + Administration + HR	Fulfill the 3 mentioned points.	Completed	<p>It was started in 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2018 and developed in a continuous way.</p> <p>1) i2CAT communicates its yearly objectives during the first quarter of every year in an internal communication event done on a weekly basis (i2gether). In the work environment survey carried out at the end of 2022, staff members were asked: - The statement: "I know the vision and objectives of i2CAT" obtained a 7.72 over 10. - The statement: "I think I can contribute to the achievement of the i2CAT objectives" obtained an 8.49 over 10.</p> <p>2) A career plan and salary ranges are shared through the "Employees policies" document which has been approved by the board of trustees and which is accessible to all employees through the corporate intranet (Private access link for staff members: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Human+resources#Humanresources-Pol%C3%ADticadepersonal">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Human+resources#Humanresources-Pol%C3%ADticadepersonal</a>)..</p> <p>In addition to the career plan and salary ranges, a merit-based appraisal system has been established based on the different career plans described in the "Employees policies" which are accessible through the corporate intranet.</p>

						<p>Each year the Directors of each department assess their staff members together with the HR team and propose appraisals to the management team. Since 2020 a yearly follow up meeting has been established with all employees in order to share the assessment, the vision and career plan for each person together with its managers and a person of the HR team.</p> <p>3) i2CAT shares on a monthly basis the main activity KPI's among its employees, where they can track the development and achievement of the objectives. These indicators are available through the corporate intranet. (<a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Reports#Reports-MonthlyKPIs">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Reports#Reports-MonthlyKPIs</a>)</p>
AW2: Define and communicate an internal career development plan. Categories, associated salary ranges and expected transitions across categories, as well as specialization lines must be included. The plan must ensure feasible transitions from/to each category. Also mentoring tasks may be included.	26, 28, 30	2Q 2017	Management Team + HR	Have a Career Development Plan	Completed	<p>It was finally fulfilled on 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2019.</p> <p>On the second semester of 2019 i2CAT defined an internal career plan for every area of the organization, including categories (seniority levels like Junior, Professional and Senior), with merits, capacities, trainings, roles, etc. to be achieved in each category to develop and improve within a specific career.</p> <p>The aforementioned policy is available to all employees through the corporate intranet. (<a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Human+resources#Humanresources-Pol%C3%ADticadepersonal">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Human+resources#Humanresources-Pol%C3%ADticadepersonal</a>)</p> <p>In the work environment survey carried out at the end of 2022, the question “I know the professional development policy and the growth opportunities I have within the organization” obtained a score of 7.07 over 10. The question “With the professional development I had I am”, obtained a 7.53 over 10.</p>
AW3: Design through consensus new ways to increase retributions to employees. An alternative is already planned with the usage of IPR code mentioned in statement number 5. Other approaches related to improving the efficiency of the organization should be studied.	26	4Q 2017	Management Team + HR	Have different alternatives for increasing the retributions	Completed	<p>It was done in a continuous way at different moments of 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>i2CAT has developed several mechanisms during 2018 and 2019 to increase the retributions of its employees.</p> <p>On one hand, i2CAT developed the Career &amp; Development plan which includes different categories, salary ranges for each category and draws the path for employees to progress within their careers. As mentioned in the previous point, this policy is available to all employees through the corporate intranet (see point AW2).</p>

						<p>On the other hand, i2CAT has created its IPR policy, which defines that those employees participating in a development with potential to be exploited have right to a 34% of the results (see point AE3).</p> <p>i2CAT also defined a candidate referencing policy in order to foster the participation of its employees among the recruitment processes. If an employee references a candidate which is finally hired, that employee has right for a bonus of 1.000€ gross.</p> <p>Finally, i2CAT also defined a policy of exceptional incentives for special moments of its employees (marriage or paternity/maternity) where i2CAT gives an additional voucher of 200€.</p> <p>The two previous incentives are also defined in the employee's policy available to all employees through the corporate intranet. (Private access link for staff members: <a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Human+resources#Humanresources-Pol%C3%ADticadepersonal">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Human+resources#Humanresources-Pol%C3%ADticadepersonal</a>)</p> <p>In year 2023 the annual working hours of the organization have been reduced, from 1764 hours per year to 1720 hours per year and the days of vacations have been increased from 25 days per year to 27 days per year + 2 additional days set up by the organization where staff does not work.</p>
AW4: Objectives and merit-based economic supplements must be clearly stated (in written form) and negotiated with employee.	30	1Q yearly	HR	Define all objectives or economic related conditions in a written way	Completed	<p>It was started from 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2020 on.</p> <p>Since 2020, i2CAT signs in a written way with its employees all objectives and salary increases.</p>
AW 5: Improve the current communication mechanism to better reach all the staff and provide more feedback on the suggestions and complaints raised. The feedback to the comments - conveniently anonymized - should be provided during the monthly general	34	Continuou s	Management Team + Administration	Anonymized suggestions box and comment suggestions during the monthly meeting	Completed	<p>It was completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2018.</p> <p>i2CAT has translated the suggestions box to English, following the AE7 action. The suggestions box allows employees to write anonymous suggestions while also being able to identify themselves.</p> <p>All suggestions are treated in the monthly bases in a weekly meeting of the organization (i2gether).</p>



<p>meeting and included in the internal monthly newsletter.</p>						<p>Since January 2019 until May 2023 i2CAT has received and treated a total of 157 suggestions.</p> <p>In additions, since 2020 the organization carries out an anonymous annual work environment survey among all its staff members and shares the results on a corporate event (i2gether) every year.</p>
<p>AW6: Improve the information flow in the management team to communicate better the needs between the board of trustees and the staff. Facilitate the participation of staff on the board of trustees and the executive committee when required</p>	35	Continuou s	Management Team	Participate of staff members in the board of trustees meetings	In progress	<p>The management team of i2CAT informs the staff about the most significant facts that are treated or approved by the board of trustees in the weekly corporate event (i2gether), however the participation of employees in the board of trustees or the executive committee board is definitely a point to improve.</p>
<p>AT1: Define an internal training plan along with the staff to identify real needs. Take into account cross-topic fields such as negotiation and leadership skills, as well as foreign languages.</p>	38, 39	1-2Q yearly	HR	Have a defined training workflow for employees and count with a training policy	Completed	<p>It was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2019 and this indicator is under constant development.</p> <p>The training plan of i2CAT considers two main classifications for trainings. On one hand those trainings promoted by the organization in collaboration with the inputs received from the different department directors and on the other hand, individual trainings that can be requested by each employee.</p> <p>For those trainings promoted directly by i2CAT, each year a member of the HR Team meets with all i2CAT directors to gather the main training needs of each department. Based on the received input the organization plans and executes cross topic trainings among its staff members (i.e. negotiation skills, leadership skills, presentation skills, languages (Catalan, Spanish and English), research trainings like scientific writing or research proposal writing, gender equality trainings, health and safety trainings, etc.).</p> <p>For the individual training requests i2CAT has implemented a training request formulary within its intranet where employees can request their training needs (see point AT2).</p> <p>The training policy also establishes permanency agreements for trainings requested by individuals depending on the cost of the training to ensure a proper return of the investment.</p>

						<p><i>In February 2022 a dedicated person has been hired in the HR team to manage and lead the training plan of the organization. In addition to the hiring of the aforementioned person, the training budget has been significantly increased during last years. In addition to the figures presented in the Strengths/Weaknesses section, in 2022 the training budget was raised to 175.000€ and for 2023 it has been increased again up to 250.000€.</i></p> <p><i>During 2022, a total of 110 training actions were done, of which 67 were trainings organized and promoted by the organization and 43 trainings were requested by individuals. In total, an 85.35% of the i2CAT employees participated, at least, in one training action during 2022.</i></p> <p><i>In the work environment survey carried out at the end of 2022, the score of the questions related to training increased significantly.</i></p> <p><i>To the question “With the training I receive from the organization I am” the obtained score is a 7.88 over 10 (in 2021 the same question received a 6.42 over 10)</i></p> <p><i>To the question “Do you think that the training policy has improved regarding other years?” the obtained score is an 8 over 10.</i></p>
AT2: Formalize the procedures related to training (how to request specific training, internal communication of a new training event, etc.).	38, 39	1Q 2018	HR	Have a defined training workflow	Completed	<p><i>It was completed on 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2019.</i></p> <p><i>For individual trainings i2CAT has developed an internal workflow based on a formulary on its intranet where employees can request training of their interest (<a href="https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Training+requests">https://confluence.i2cat.net/display/INDEMO/Training+requests</a>).</i></p> <p><i>During the year 2022 the internal workflow was modified in order to be able to exploit different training indicators such as training types, training categories, cost of the trainings, assistance, etc.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, i2CAT also promotes cross topic trainings organized by the organization. For this purpose, the HR Team holds annual meetings with the directors of each area to gather the training needs of each team and also defines which training corresponds to which employees category. Consequently, the HR</i></p>

						<i>department plans and organizes different training actions based on the detected needs and invites employees to participate in them.</i>
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### 3.1. Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles

As the establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy, by submitting the Initial Phase of the HRS4R, i2CAT developed an OTM-R policy, which has been updated in order to adapt it to i2CAT's recruitment reality but without impacting on the principles of an OTM-R recruitment policy.

Main actions done since the approval of the OTM-R policy are:

- Dissemination of the OTM-R policy through i2CAT's website and intranet. The OTM-R policy can be found in the HRS4R section of our website (<https://i2cat.net/talent/>)
- Establishment of the procedure of publishing all research positions at least in English.
- Elaborate a guide within the OTM-R policy that defines the different phases of a recruitment process, the persons involved and how candidates are being assessed.
- Disseminate the video "Recruitment bias in Research Institutes" to make sure no unconscious bias are done during a recruitment process.
- Make sure that all candidates are properly informed about the status of their candidacy by informing them when:
  - They are selected for an interview.
  - The candidate moves on to a next phase of the recruitment process.
  - They have been chosen as the final candidate or when they have been discarded from the recruitment process.
- Organize internal trainings to disseminate the recruitment policy among those employees that participate actively in recruitment processes.

## Implementation

### ➤ General overview of the expected overall implementation process on the Action Plan:

On a general level, i2CAT has been advancing with the clear objective of fulfilling all actions mentioned on the initial phase, not only due to the timings and compromises set up in the HRS4R implementation phase, but also in order to improve as an organization and make from i2CAT a more attractive organization, facilitating talent attraction and talent retention.

The Human Resources department has been leading, supervising and coordinating the whole process in close collaboration, on one hand with the working group set up for the HRS4R process and, on the other hand, with different persons and areas of the organization who had some responsibilities in the organization related with the implementation of the different actions, making sure that the different implementations were carried out in accordance with the HRS4R principles.

In order to supervise the implementation process of each action we revised all actions submitted during the initial phase, questioned ourselves how we could keep improving and defined a set of subactions/tasks to be done and distributed these tasks among the persons in charge for developing them. By doing so we also set up a deadline where a meeting was held to see if the

actions were carried out without problems or if support or more time was needed in order to be able to fulfill them.

The main difficulties that raised during the implementation process were related to combine the day to day work of the different members of the organization with the need to advance in the implementation of the actions described in the initial phase. In some occasions we found out that several people of the organization did not saw these actions as part of their priorities or responsibilities, which required a closer follow up with to ensure a proper fulfillment.

Due to the previous mentioned facts, in some actions we were able to advance faster than expected while in other occasions we advanced slower than what was initially planned. This reality made that some actions required to be readjusted in time to be able to properly fulfill them. In any case, i2CATs compromise as organization with the HRS4R strategy remained unequivocal during all the process.

➤ **How have you prepared the internal review?**

The preparation of the internal review was much related with the fulfillment of actions set up in the implementation phase of the HRS4R application.

Since we started working on the implementation of the different actions, we saw the internal review as the deadline in which the different actions should be completed. For this purpose, and as stated previously, the different actions set up in the action plan were divided into sub-tasks which were distributed among the different persons of the working group also establishing a tentative deadline to fulfill them to ensure that there still was a margin of time in case any setback happened.

Finally, the internal review process was carried out by the working group by checking with the respective persons that the set of planned actions were carried out in time and considering if the actions carried out responded to the initial goal pretended to be achieved. By the moment of assessing the achieved actions we also considered if there was still margin for improvement to prepare the goals for the next action plan.

➤ **How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?**

As mentioned in the previous points, the implementation of the different actions was done in close collaboration with the working group and with those persons that played a role in every specific action.

Depending on the action to be carried out, different collectives have been involved during the implementation process. In general, an initial idea was drafted by the working group, together with the upper management and the HR department. This draft was shared with the different

involved stakeholders to make sure that the different implementation drafted responded to the needs and reality of all involved parts.

An example of the involvement of the research community was the definition of the different career plans, and more concretely, those careers related to research staff. During this process the research managers received a draft of the proposed career plans which was meant to serve as a guidance, and they were asked to provide inputs and contributions in order to enrich the initially proposed career plans. The same applied to other collectives not related to research when it came to define their career plans.

Another example of that involvement was done in the definition of i2CAT's IPR code, where the research managers worked together with the upper management and the Knowledge and Technology Marketing team (KTM) to define the IPR policy.

We truly believe that the process of working together with different stakeholders helped significantly to extend the vision that this was a collective work where all areas of the organization took part, rather than a vision of imposed policies by the upper management.

➤ **Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?**

i2CAT counts with a working group for the implementation of the HRS4R actions. The working group consists of:

	NAME	POSITION	DEPARTMENT
1	Sonia Beltrán	Administrative	Support Area: Finance & Administration
2	Roger Onnen	People & Talent Director	People & Talent
3	Josep Paradells	Director i2CAT Foundation	Management Team
4	Marisa Catalan	IoT Research Area Director	Research Area: Internet of Things
5	Xavier Costa	AI Driven Systems Research Area Director & Scientific Director	Research Area: AI Driven Systems
6	Eduard Grasa	Operations & Digital Infrastructure Director	Support Area: Operations & Digital Infrastructure
7	Alba García	Scrum Master	Software Engineering Group
8	Joan Adrià Ruiz	Space Communications Research Area Director	Research Area: Space Communications
9	Claudia Torres	R1 – Early-Stage Researcher	Research Area: Software Networks

The whole HRS4R process is supervised and lead by the Human Resources Director as most of the actions set up in the action plan of the HRS4R are directly or indirectly related to the HR branch. Nevertheless, the working group has been actively participating in the definition of the actions and timings to be achieved and also in the assessment of how the organization was advancing in the fulfillment of the different tasks, for which regular meetings were held.

➤ **Is there any alignment of organizational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organization's research strategy, overarching HR policy?**

The principles of the HRS4R had a direct and clear impact on the development and update process of different i2CATs policies.

Examples of it are:

- i2CAT's working schedule policy: Flexible working environment has been promoted. More home-office has been promoted.
- i2CAT's employee's policy: Which includes the definition of all available careers and categories at i2CAT and a process to grow within these categories. It also includes the salary ranges for each category.
- i2CAT's training policy: Which promotes employees to request training and ensures that the organization makes the proper investments within this area.
- i2CAT's referencing policy: Which promotes the participation of i2CAT's employees within the different open recruitment processes and established a way to compensate them for referencing candidates.
- i2CAT's IPR policy: Which defines how i2CAT compensates its employees for producing potential assets that can be exploited.
- i2CAT's conciliation policy: Which establishes flexible conditions for employees with children under the age of 6 years and improves the conditions established by law.
- i2CAT's ethical code: i2CAT adhered to CERCA's ethical code, which was one of the actions set up on the initial phase.
- i2CAT's OTM-R policy: Which makes sure that the recruitment process is clear, open, transparent and merit-based.

As it can be seen the principles of the HRS4R strategy are present in different kind of policies of the organization. As stated previously, the definition of these corporate policies is not only thought for fulfilling with the actions of the HRS4R, but also to improve the conditions and working environment of the organization in order to become more attractive for possible employees given the competitiveness of the ICT sector.

➤ **How is your organization ensuring that the proposed actions are also being implemented?**

i2CAT's interest on the HRS4R is not only for being recognized as a research institution aligned with the principles of the European Commission, but also due to the competitive sector where it develops its activity.

i2CAT works within the ICT sector, which in Spain is a very competitive sector where the demand of professionals is higher than the offer. In order to be competitive attracting ICT talent and taking into account some of the weaknesses described in the working conditions sections, i2CAT is constantly reviewing their policies and trying to improve them in order to make them more attractive for possible candidates, compensating with our policies those aspects where the organization is more limited due to the public legislation that it has to respect. This own interest of i2CAT to keep developing and improving its conditions has also been one of the motors to implement the proposed actions.

As explained on the section "How have you prepared the internal review?", i2CAT has been working in a collaborative way to ensure that the actions proposed on the initial phase were carried out to be able to prepare the internal review properly.

In order to do so, regular meetings were set up with the working group of the HRS4R, but also with those employees who had any kind of responsibility in the development of any specific action but who did not directly form part of the working group.

In these meetings, concrete tasks were defined in order to advance in the fulfillment of the actions set up in the implementation phase. After defining the different tasks to be done a deadline was set up for each action and follow up meetings were held to ensure that the actions were completed properly.

➤ **How are you monitoring progress?**

As detailed before, regular follow up meetings were held with those employees taking part in the implementation of every action in order to monitor and ensure the proper fulfillment. One of the key meetings hold by the working group was set up in the equator of the timeline we had in order to implement the whole set of actions. In this meeting a complete revision of the different kind of actions was done and allowed us to have a general overview of how we were advancing in the fulfillment of our compromises.

Having that said, we need to recognize that one of the major challenges was to combine the day to day work of every employee involved in this process, with the work to be done in order to ensure the fulfillment of the actions. This challenge made that several actions were postponed with regards to the initial planning.

➤ **How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?**

We consider that a good way to measure the progress in view of the next assessment is based on two factors.

On one hand and within the scope of one specific action plan, a way to measure the progress is to check how many of the actions set up in the action plan have been fulfilled, establishing which



is the percentage of achieved actions. This assessment is based on a more short-term view based on the fulfillment of specific actions.

In addition, and taking as a reference a broader timeline, we try to assess how the whole organization has been evolving and becoming more “mature” comparing the reality of the organization between the different phases of the HRS4R implementation (i.e. Initial Phase vs. Implementation Phase vs Renewal Phase). This assessment focuses on a longer point of view and does not focus on concrete and specific actions but tries to get a feeling of “where we are right now vs. where we come from”. From i2CAT’s point of view this type of assessment also helps to provide a feeling of satisfaction as the whole work and evolvment that is behind the HRS4R process shows up and is seen by all the members that have been participating in the process.

➤ **How do you expect to prepare for the external review?**

In order to prepare the external review, the working group has reviewed the fulfillment of the different actions that were set up in the Action Plan to refresh the work that has been carried out within the different phases (Initial Phase, Implementation Phase, Renewal Phase).

In addition, the working group will try to prepare a simulation of different questions which we consider that can be asked by the external evaluators. Having that said we are aware that it is impossible to prepare to all possible questions and this regarding we are not very much concerned as we truly believe that we have clearly been working to improve as an organization and that the work described is a good prove of it.