Fundació Privada i2CAT, Internet i Innovació Digital a Catalunya

Action Plan for the period 2017-2019

INDEX

1. HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

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

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

Web link to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan: www.i2cat.net/en/HRS4R

RE-SUBMISSION DATE: 04TH OCT 2017

SUBMISSION DATE: 29TH MAY 2017

a) ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

i2CAT Foundation is a non-profit research and innovation centre, which promotes mission-oriented R+D+i activities on advanced Internet architectures, applications and services. The centre stands up for a new open innovation framework, fostering the collaboration between companies, public administration, the academic environment and end-users.

The i2CAT vision for the next 10 years is a networked smart world, a collaboratory based in a new generation of networked intelligent technologies and systems, a co-creating platform between machines, people and the environment for a sustainable and smart future.

The i2CAT Foundation is governed by i) the Board of Trustees, ii) the Executive Committee and iii) Management Team.
The figures and table below illustrate the organisational structure of i2CAT Foundation at these different levels.
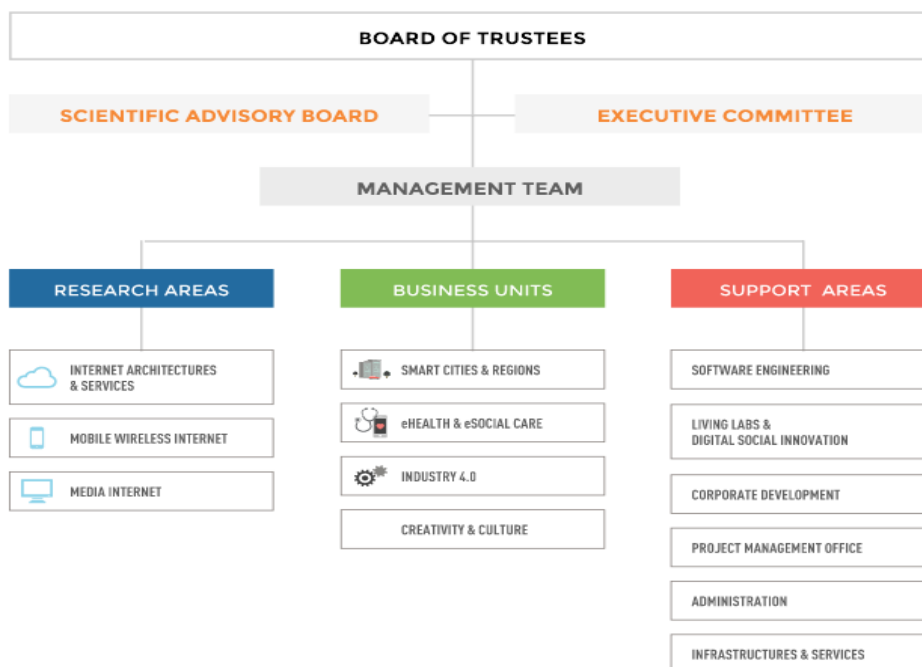
STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	31
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	4
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	0
Of whom are women	3
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	21
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	3
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	7
Total number of students (if relevant)	
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	58,95

Staff figures
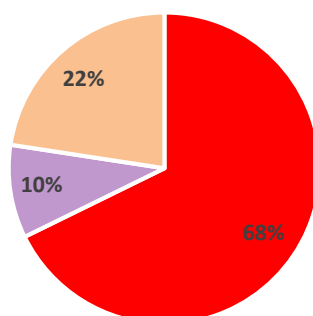
Total Staff - 61 employees (58,95FTE)
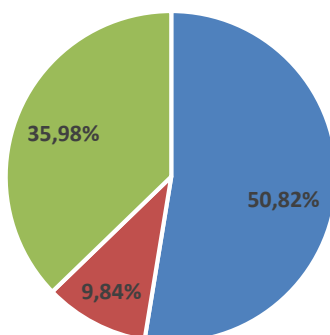
- Research Areas - 31 FTE
- Business Units - 6 FTE
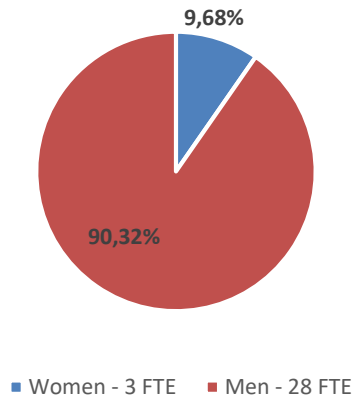- Support Areas - 21,95 FTE

The Research Area of i2CAT is composed by 31 employees, of whom 4 are international and 3 are women. The research category distribution is shown in the following graphic.

Total Researchers - 31FTE

- Stage R3 or R4 - 21 FTE
- Stage R2 - 3 FTE
- Stage R1 - 7 FTE

Total Researchers - 31 FTE

9,68%

90,32%

■ Women - 3 FTE   ■ Men - 28 FTE

Total Researchers - 31 FTE

12,90%

87,10%

■ International - 4 FTE   ■ National - 27 FTE
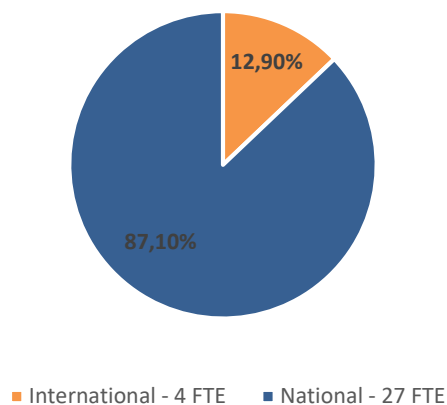
b) NARRATIVE

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, in order to clearly differentiate the strengths and weaknesses in the institution.

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

STRENGHTS:

- Positive perception of the employees regarding their research freedom.
- Internal communication system with monthly staff meetings and internal and external newsletters.
- Transparent accountability, which is shared with the employees every year.
- Established mechanisms in order to disseminate i2CAT results already exist and work correctly.
- Active dissemination activities (conferences, workshops etc.) in order to make the research activities known to the society.
- Established and working equality plan accessible to all employees.

WEAKNESSES:

- i2CAT Foundation is limited by the funds received and therefore cannot grant a full and complete research freedom. There are "material limits" which have to be considered.
- No ethical code established yet.
- No access to specific research databases and engines that could ease the researchers work.
- A best practice guide regarding data protection is missing.
- Constant data backup processes are not established within the i2CAT Foundation.
- Annual bonus and appraisal systems should be more transparent and organized in order to be known by the employees at the beginning of each year.

Regarding the **Recruitment Chapter**, i2CAT Foundation determined the following:

STRENGHTS:

- Established Welcome Plan for new employees.
- No kind of discrimination (gender, age, ethnic, sexual etc.) on the selection processes.
- Mobility experience is recognized as a plus.

WEAKNESSES:

- No recruitment policy established yet, although working on it.
- All open positions should also be published in English in order to attract more international candidates.

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

STRENGHTS:

- Flexible working conditions (i.e. flexible entry schedule).
- Tele-work is possible.
- Established complaints procedure, which are treated every month in front of all employees.

WEAKNESSES:

- Difficulty to establish permanent contracts to all researchers due to different legal regulations applying to i2CAT collective.
  On one hand i2CAT has to respect the national labour 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, after which the employee should be ceased or converted to permanent contract).
  On the other hand, as i2CAT receives public funds from the regional government (Generalitat de Catalunya), it has to 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)*, which restricts the increase of budget that can be dedicated to the salary structure every year, emphasizing that only permanent contracts will be considered as salary structure while temporary contracts will not be taken into account.
  This means that while one legislation encourages the use of permanent contracts, the other one establishes restrictions in the amount of budget that can be dedicated to the establishment of permanent contracts, while promoting the establishment of temporary contracts by not taking them into consideration in the salary structure.
- Career development plans are not established yet, although working on it.
- Dissatisfaction with the salaries structure in comparison with the private sector or market conditions.
- Gender balance is difficult to achieve, as the ICT Sector is not a balanced one. Although i2CAT believes and works for non discrimination, the institution considers that gender equality must specially be worked from schools as it is an underlying problem, which is very hard to solve by companies, due to the difficulties to find feminine talent in this sector within the market.
- The annual objectives system is not transparent enough.
- No IPR code has been established, although the organization is working on it
- Lack of mentorship or follow-up meetings in terms of career advice.

Regarding the **Training** Chapter, i2CAT determined the following:

STRENGHTS:

- Good perception of the supervisors or senior researchers support on their management and support duties.

WEAKNESSES:

- Lack of annual formation plan within the organization, although i2CAT is working to establish one.
- No formation procedures established within i2CAT, although the organization is working on them.

c) ACTIONS

The implementation of this Action Plan aims to adequate internal workflows with that of the Charter and Code (CC). The plan will be carried out over the next 24 months. 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

Ethical and professional aspects					
Action	Extended Description	Addressed CC points (GAP analysis)	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Targets
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.	2	MT, CD	3Q 2017	Ethical Code document published in the Intranet
AE2	Renew access to specific research databases and engines necessary to carry out research.	3	MT	3Q 2017	Renewal of access to at least 2 research databases, IEEE and ACM Digital Library and engines
AE3	Promote the application of the IPR code	5, 31	MT	2Q 2017	Approval and signature of the commitment letter by the Board of Trustees before end 2017. Dissemination of the IPR Code (PDF document) via our Intranet and provided to any new candidate in the Welcome Pack. New employees will have a receipt confirmation clause in his/her working contract.

AE4	Elaborate a set of "best working practises" in relation to data storage, protection and privacy. Inform the staff leveraging on existing communication channels	7	MT, CD, HR	1Q 2018	Best working practices document published in the Intranet
AE5	Improve management of both internal and external data, applying existing regulation and recommendations ("*Ley Orgánica de Protección de Datos (LOPD)*"). This implies asking every member of the staff to sign a "*Non-Disclosure Agreement*" to ensure the compliance of the LOPD.	7	MT, AD, HR	4Q 2017	NDA signed with every internal staff (61 by the moment) and any new incorporations. NDA signed and registered in our ERP with third entities in case of sensible information treatment. 7 data protection files declared yet in AGDP (Agencia Española de Protección de Datos, www.agpd.es) in accordance to LOPD. An internal policy will be defined and published via intranet providing a figure responsible for Data Protection topics.
AE6	Improve data backups management; either using external solutions and/or defining internal mechanisms.	7	I&S	4Q 2017	Internal mechanisms for data backups management defined and published in the Intranet

Action	Extended Description	Addressed CC points (GAP analysis)	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Targets
AE7	Promote a transition to a fully English-supported work environment to facilitate internationalisation	10	CD	1Q 2018	Bilingual (Catalan and English) - External communication: Website and annual activity report. - Internal communication: 100% internal regulations, welcome pack document and monthly KPI report.

		Recruitment			
Action	**Extended Description**	**Addressed CC points (GAP analysis)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Timing**	**Indicators/Targets**
AR1	Define and implement a new recruitment process and better disseminate the welcome package for new staff	12	MT, HR, AD	3Q 2017	New recruitment process defined and published in the intranet. Dissemination of the welcome package
AR2	Translate into English all new staff positions published.	13	CD	Continuous	100% job positions at least in English
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 out	13, 15	MT, HR	3Q 2017	Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment guide published.

Action	Extended Description	Addressed CC points (GAP analysis)	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Targets
	interviews and the structure of the jury that evaluates the candidates. The 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.				
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.	14, 27	All	Continuous	Dissemination of the CERCA's video
Working conditions and social security					
Action	**Extended Description**	**Addressed CC points (GAP analysis)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Timing**	**Indicators/Targets**
AW1	Improve the evaluation and appraisal systems 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.	11, 30	MT, HR	1.- 1Q yearly 2.- each semester 3.- each semester	Plenary meeting yearly in March Follow-ups meetings and documentation each semester.
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	MT, HR	2Q 2017	Career development plan for researchers defined and published

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 organisation should be studied.	26	All	4Q 2017	Evaluation of new mechanisms and their publications if suitable
AW4	Objectives and merit-based economic supplements must be clearly stated (in written form) and negotiated with the employee.	30	MT, HR	1Q/yearly	Objectives and merit-based economic supplements written and signed by employer and employee yearly in March
AW5	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 meeting and included in the internal monthly newsletter.	34	MT, CD	Continuous	Feedback given in all monthly general meetings
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.	35	MT, HR	Continuous	Participation of staff members as invited in the board of trustees meetings

Training					
Action	**Extended Description**	**Addressed CC points (GAP analysis)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Timing**	**Indicators/Targets**
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.	38, 39	MT, HR	1-2Q yearly	Internal training plan defined and published yearly in March
AT2	Formalize the procedures related to training (how to request specific training, internal communication of a new training event, etc).	38, 39	MT, HR	1Q 2018	Training procedure defined and published

As the establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy, i2CAT Foundation is **currently implementing** an internal recruitment policy, which aims to establish the fundaments of an open, transparent and merit based recruitment policy, excluding any kind of discrimination due to any reason.

In order to provide an overview of this recruitment policy and its principles, all recruitment actions will be analysed taking into account the three phases identified on the OTM-R expert report, which are:

1- Advertising and application phase

2- Evaluation and selection phase

3- Appointment phase

Advertising and application phase:

i2CAT will implement an open and transparent recruitment policy, as all open positions are published, on a first step, on our webpage, being accessible to anyone (http://i2cat.net/en/careers). At the same time and in order to disseminate the job opportunity on a higher level, the different open positions are also published on other public channels such as social media (Linkedin, Twitter etc.) or other job search portals (i.e. www.talentclue.com, www.infojobs.net). In order to assure that the vacant position is also available international researchers or national researchers that are currently abroad, the vacant position will also be published on EURAXESS.

All job descriptions will be published, as a minimum, in English language in order to guarantee the possibility of abroad researchers to apply to the vacant position. Job offers will always include (i) a description of the organisation, (ii) a description of the vacant position, the amount of vacancies, its department and the related tasks, (iii) working conditions related to the job offer as well as the desirable starting date, (iv) minimum requisites in order to be considered as a valid candidate and desirable requisites for the open position and (v) the professional development opportunities for the announced position. These conditions will apply to anyone who presents himself/herself to any vacant position.

In addition to any specific vacant position published by i2CAT, the Foundation will also published a generic job offer on its webpage in order to receive constant candidacies of interested workers, creating in this way an accessible pool of candidates.

Evaluation and selection phase:

For the whole evaluation and selection phase, i2CAT has created the "selection committee group", which is composed by one person of the Human Resources department, the respective area manager of the vacant position and the CTIO. This committee will watch the video "Recruitment vias in Research Institutes" and will be present during the whole selection process evaluating each candidate taking into account the principles of the OTM-R policy.

Once an open position is published, i2CAT will define the duration of the candidacy reception phase. Any person applying to any vacant position will receive an e-mail confirming the correct reception of their documentation.

After closing the candidacy reception phase, i2CAT guarantees to screen all candidates who applied to the vacant position. A first filter is done by part of i2CAT, excluding all candidates that do not reach the minimum requisites published on the job offer. Excluded candidates will receive an automatic e-mail thanking them for participating on the selection process, but informing them that their candidature has been rejected. The rest of the candidates will access the next phase of the recruitment process and are called for an interview. On this initial interview phase, candidates might be interviewed face-to-face or via remote interviews.

The first interview will focus on the candidates past performance, experience and their future potential, based on their merits, the variations in the order of CV's, the recognition of mobility and seniority.

As generic evaluation criteria and according to the advertised position requirements the selection committee group should focus on:

- Acquisition of funding
- Generation of societal impact
- International portfolio (including mobility)
- Knowledge transfer and exchange
- Management of research and innovation
- Organizational skills/experience
- Outreach/public awareness activities
- Research performance
- Supervision and mentoring
- Teaching
- Teamwork

After the first round of interviews, the selection committee group will define which candidates access the final interview phase based on the criteria listed above and without taking into account any personal information that might be available.

All candidates excluded from the selection process will be informed via e-mail or phone call that their candidacy has been rejected, informing them about their strengths and weaknesses.

The final candidates are interviewed a second time with the objective of deepen into those aspects who are not fully clear and with the aim to contrast the different profiles of the final candidates.

At the end of this interview phase, the selection committee group will have to fill a template in order to assess and compare the candidates' professional strengths and weaknesses, without taking into account any personal situation, which could lead to break the merit based recruitment.

Appointment phase

From the evaluation and comparison of the different final candidates, a decision will be taken and an offer will be done to the candidate. Once the offer is accepted by the final candidate, all other candidates who have been interviewed will be contacted in order to let them know the result of the selection process and thank them for the invested time.

d) ORGANIZATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan covers the period 2017-2019 and includes the actions planned for the final list of C&C principles defined by the process previously described. Each implemented principle is outlined with the current situation at i2CAT Foundation and one or more improving actions are provided together with the corresponding indicator for evaluation, the department/s responsible/s for the action development and the expected completion date within the period 2017-2019.

Some principles have been regrouped as they have resulted in the implementation of the same actions within the Action Plan. Next step, as the last point before being submitted to the European Commission, the HR Strategy and action plan at i2CAT will be published on the institutional website. The main objective is to illustrate how i2CAT will adopt the Strategy and, after the official approval of the award by the EC, the concerned information will be shown at an outstanding position within the institutional web page.

The HRS4R WG, on its role of monitoring committee, will internally monitor the development and compliance of the Action Plan. The self-assessment will be conducted every two years and will result on a progress report updating the Action Plan for the subsequent period. The external assessment of progress, if it is previously authorized by the European Commission, would be carried out by the CERCA institution, who would act as supervisor for the HRS4R implementation.

Time line of the actions was thoroughly discussed with the responsible persons, who have confirmed their project routine and provided more information about milestones and indicators of success. Actions have been planned with all precautions; work plan provides milestones, controlling measures and risk management procedures.

In summary, the monitoring procedure includes:

- Monitoring meetings with people in charge of the actions, at least once every six months. Working Group members will take part and assess the progress.
- Annual report providing information about the action plan's progress.
- On June 2019, an internal audit will be held by the internal auditor of i2CAT, supported by the Working Group members. The audit report will cover the completion of the Action Plan and will be published on the web site.

- Middle 2021, an external auditor will be invited to evaluate on progress made towards the objectives of i2CAT HR Strategy for Researchers and its compliance with the principles of the Charter & Code. This procedure will be repeated every four years. Report will be published on the web site.

In case i2CAT does not comply with the established deadlines, corrective actions will be taken.

e) CONCLUSIONS

This process enables organizations to truly integrate the principles into their own human research policy, thereby promoting the organization as a stimulating and favourable work place. In this sense, the Action Plan for i2CAT comprises 19 actions to be undertaken during the next period 2017-2019. Few of these actions are very complex to be implemented and fully developed, but they will represent a highly significant step to strengthen the i2CAT recruitment practices and employment conditions, so that the whole process will be highly beneficial for both researchers who work and wish to work at i2CAT and for our institution itself. Main improvements expected from the process implementation are to increase our attractiveness to researchers and provide them with a favourable working environment, high quality research and innovation, and international mobility valorisation.