

RESEARCH HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

STEP 5-EXTERNAL EVALUATION

July 2014

INTRODUCTION

Since 2010, when the human resources area strategy was drawn up and the seal of excellence obtained, IMDEA Agua has been working to carry out the actions proposed in the Action Plan defined at that time. IMDEA Agua is a young and dynamic institute, which has undergone growth and changes in the last years, involving an ongoing process of adaptation to that changes.

STEP 5: EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Phase 5 began with a new self-assessment process. A new meeting of the current working group to assess the situation and propose how to approach the Action Plan, has been set up.

The decision was taken to hold meetings of no more than 5 people (same mechanism as in step 4), with several objectives:

- To provide information on IMDEA water's participation in the C&C process (especially aimed at new staff) and the interest and benefits involved.
- To discuss the progress of the Action Plan anticipated in 2012, evaluate the improvements made and propose new actions.

The C&C principles analysed were:

Ethical and professional aspects

- Professional attitude
- Accountability
- Good practice in research
- Evaluation/appraisal systems

Recruitment

- Transparency
- Seniority

Working conditions and social security

- Working conditions
- Funding and salaries
- Complaints/appeals
- Participation in decision-making bodies

Training

- Supervision and managerial duties

- Supervision
- Access to research training and continuous development

- To deal with queries related with the process and the Institute structure.

The meetings, which were organised in a dynamic and informal manner, set out from a brief and concise introduction (more detailed for those who requested it) to IMDEA Water's participation in the process, the interest and benefits derived, the current situation and what the meeting was intended to achieve (determining the degree of satisfaction, receiving *feedback* and clearing up doubts and queries). They then proceeded to analyse each principle to be evaluated, examining the actions carried out to date, assessing the degree of satisfaction of both in-house and associated staff, and taking on board *feedback* on new ideas and improvement proposals.

The meetings had no set format or order but were adapted as each session developed, allowing greater emphasis on the aspects of most interest to participants.

The WG-C&C pooled the results and drew up a new action plan for 2014-2016 (see annex).

OUTCOMES

A total of 12 meetings were held. Annex I includes a table summarising the self-assessment outcomes, stating the principles to be evaluated (which were proposed for the 2012-2014 period), the evidence present in IMDEA Water (adding the new actions available), planned activities for the period 2012-2014, the "who" and the "when" (adapted from the following period 2014-2016), qualitative and quantitative indicators selected and new improvement proposals (Action Plan 2014-2016).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The format used for the meetings encouraged the participation of most of the people, with most participants viewing the approach as: dynamic, allowing interaction with other colleagues; more "friendly" than the questionnaire; useful, making it easy to resolve any queries arising on the spot; open, allowing the inclusion of the points arousing most interest in each person. In general, it may be considered a good way to receive and transmit information.

Summarizing, most important activities for improvement are related with: ongoing work on **information channels**; **IT** improvements and encouraging **information sharing** between management and research groups and among the same, to foster greater **collaboration** with a view to finding synergies; and assuring the **supervision** tasks of the mentors.

ANNEX 1. ASSESSMENT OF ACTION PLAN DESIGNED AND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS: ACTION PLAN 2014-2016

Note: Blue lettering indicates changes with respect to 2012: updates to the current body of evidence in the institute, adaptations, assessment of progress of scheduled actions and indicators and the new action plan proposed.

Principles to improve and definition	Current rules and practices	Actions Planned 2012-2014	Who / When	New Actions Planned 2014-2016	Quantitative Indicators	Qualitative Indicators
<p>4.- Professional attitude Researchers should be familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms, and should seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided. They should inform their employers, funders or supervisor when their research project is delayed, redefined or completed, or give notice if it is to be terminated earlier or suspended for whatever reason.</p>	<p>Periodic technical and economic reports to funding bodies</p> <p>Annual report</p> <p>Protocols and procedures (intranet) in place for internal validations, to facilitate timely justification to funding bodies</p>	<p>Greater involvement of centre and researchers: meetings; reports; <i>feedback</i> <i>In progress</i></p> <p>Ongoing management system enhancement and automation <i>In progress</i></p>	<p><u>Who:</u> Management, accountability, Line Supervisors and other researchers</p> <p><u>When</u> Ongoing process</p>	<p>Greater involvement of centre and researchers: meetings; reports; <i>feedback</i></p> <p>Ongoing management system enhancement and automation (intranet procedures, LIMS...)</p>	<p>% Attendance annual meeting</p> <p>No of meetings</p> <p>No of new protocols</p> <p>No of incidents from funders</p>	<p>Annual meeting (YES/NO)</p> <p>It is approved the annual report? (YES / NO)</p> <p>Protocols available? (YES / NO)</p> <p>Has been improved the management system? (YES / NO)</p> <p>How?</p>
<p>6. Accountability Researchers need to be aware that they are accountable to their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies as well as, on more ethical grounds, towards society as a whole. In particular, researchers funded by public</p>	<p>The Institute is subject to mandatory accountability and must carry out an annual audit.</p>	<p>Ongoing work on cost accounting system implementation <i>In progress</i></p> <p>Improving internal information</p>	<p><u>Who:</u> Management</p> <p><u>When:</u> A few weeks prior to approval of the activity report</p>	<p>Encourage communication through the intranet</p> <p>Encourage internal</p>	<p>No of internal bulletins</p> <p>No of web news</p> <p>No of intranet news</p>	<p>Have been implemented improvements to the accountability system? (YES / NO)</p>

<p>funds are also accountable for the efficient use of taxpayers' money. Consequently, they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and cooperate with any authorised audits of their research, whether undertaken by their employers/funders or by ethics committees.</p> <p>Methods of collection and analysis, the outputs and, where applicable, details of the data should be open to internal and external scrutiny, whenever necessary and as requested by the appropriate authorities.</p>		<p><i>In progress</i></p> <p>Improving diffusion outside the Institute <i>In progress</i></p> <p>Enhancing the electronic transactions system <i>In progress</i></p>	<p>and annual accountancy and some weeks before the annual action plan's approval by the Foundation Board of Trustees</p>	<p>meetings</p> <p>Improving diffusion outside the Institute</p> <p>Enhancing the electronic transactions system</p>	<p>No of social nets</p> <p>No of activities during science week</p> <p>No of activities during researcher's night</p> <p>No of web visits</p>	<p>How?</p> <p>Annual meeting (YES/NO)</p> <p>Has been improved internal communication? (YES/NO)</p> <p>Is the dissemination effort maintained to society?</p>
<p>7. Good practice in research</p> <p>Researchers should at all times adopt safe working practices, in line with national legislation, including taking the necessary precautions for health and safety and for recovery from information technology disasters, e.g. by preparing proper back-up strategies. They should also be familiar with the current national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality protection requirements, and undertake the necessary steps to fulfil them at all times</p>	<p>Workplace Risk Prevention (WRP) monitoring</p> <p>IT (computing) enhancements</p> <p>Scientific DB access system (Madroño network)</p> <p>Adaptations in compliance with Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA)</p> <p>Safety in laboratories</p>	<p>IT: ongoing enhancement of IT services <i>In progress</i></p> <p>Laboratories: protocols <i>In progress</i></p> <p>Archive: Updating information on availability of access to scientific DBs. <i>Achieved</i></p> <p>Encouraging awareness of good saving practices <i>In progress</i></p>	<p><u>Who:</u> Management, WRP Manager, Laboratories Supervisor and outsourced companies responsible for execution</p> <p><u>When:</u> short-term and medium-term</p>	<p>Improve WRP training</p> <p>IT: ongoing enhancement of IT services</p> <p>Laboratories: protocols</p> <p>Encouraging awareness of good saving practices</p>	<p>No of WRP seminars</p> <p>No of people trained in WRP</p> <p>No of EPI registration</p> <p>No of IT incidents</p> <p>No of IT improvements</p> <p>No of files in Geomatic DBs</p> <p>No of Madroño's incidents</p> <p>No of management</p>	<p>Jobs revision according WRP (YES/NO)</p> <p>Madroño's documents available? (YES/NO)</p> <p>Madroño's registration? (YES/NO)</p> <p>Stock of material available? (YES/NO)</p> <p>Stock of Reagents material available? (YES/NO)</p> <p>List of lab wastes available? (YES/NO)</p>

					<p>procedures and analysis equipment</p> <p>No of ENAC certificates No UNE rules available</p> <p>No of laboratory notebook's incidents</p>	<p>Lab's protocols available? (YES/NO)</p> <p>Emergency plan available? (YES/NO)</p>
<p>11. Evaluation/appraisal systems Employers and/or funders should introduce for all researchers, including senior researchers, evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing their professional performance on a regular basis and in a transparent manner by an independent (and, in the case of senior researchers, preferably international) committee.</p>	<p>Evaluation and assessment conducted by the Board and the Scientific Committee, composed of internationally acknowledged researchers and experts</p> <p>Laboratory notebooks</p>	<p>Setting up an individual motivation system to enhance commitment of researchers, e.g. personal files summarising outcomes</p> <p>Information: ensuring that new staff are aware of this principle; periodic meetings; <i>feedback</i></p> <p>In progress</p>	<p><u>Who:</u> Executive and Management</p> <p><u>When:</u> Ongoing process</p>	<p>Increase feedback during evaluation process</p>	<p>No of training courses for researchers</p> <p>No of training courses for technicians</p> <p>No of training courses for management area</p> <p>No of external stages</p>	<p>Is available an internal repository to keep reports?</p> <p>Internal annual meeting? (YES/NO)</p> <p>Protocol information for new staff available? (YES/NO)</p>
<p>15. Transparency Candidates should be informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. They should also be informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.</p>	<p>Candidates are informed of the evaluation process, rating criteria, recruitment conditions, remuneration and possibilities of development within their professional career, someone being available to deal with</p>	<p>Including the agreement governing the institution in tenders</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Informing new employees of their total involvement in working groups and different activities of</p>	<p><u>Who:</u> Executive and Management</p> <p><u>When:</u> Ongoing process</p>	<p>Keep continue information about career development</p>	<p>No of informative meetings</p>	

	any queries. After the selection process, every candidate is personally informed about the evaluation results via e-mail	the Centre in progress				
20. Seniority The levels of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not be set as a barrier to entry. Recognition and evaluation of qualifications should focus on judging the achievements of the person rather than his/her circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were gained. As professional qualifications may be gained at an early stage of a long career, the pattern of lifelong professional development should also be recognised.	The goals achieved will be rated notwithstanding other conditioning factors.	No new actions scheduled	<u>Who:</u> Executive and Evaluation Committee <u>When:</u> Ongoing process	No of actions planned		
24. Working conditions Employers and/or funders should ensure that the working conditions for researchers, including for disabled researchers, provide where appropriate the flexibility deemed essential for successful research performance in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective-bargaining agreements. They should aim to provide working conditions which allow both women and men researchers to combine family and work, children and career. Particular attention should be paid, inter alia, to flexible working hours, part-time working, tele-working and sabbatical	Implementation of the Workplace and Social Security regulation in force <u>Rules:</u> An agreement is in place	Flexibility should be linked to a greater commitment by staff, who must be aware that they are forming part of a workgroup, with which they must coordinate in progress	<u>Who:</u> Executive Team <u>When:</u> Ongoing process	No of actions planned	No of special permits requested No of special permits denied	Special permits registration available?

leave, as well as to the necessary financial and administrative provisions governing such arrangements.						
<p>26. Funding and salaries Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that researchers enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or salaries with adequate and equitable social security provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. This must include researchers at all career stages including early-stage researchers, commensurate with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications and/or responsibilities</p>	<p>Researchers are entitled to all provisions of the Spanish Social Security.</p> <p><i>Regulation:</i> Spanish regulation in force. <i>Current rules and practices in IMDEA Water</i> Researchers are entitled to all that anticipated in the Spanish Social Security system</p>	<p>Information: creating personal folder on intranet to include documentation related with this principle; when economic conditions allow, assessing implantation of an incentive system and informing on availability or otherwise of incentives</p> <p>Not necessary</p>	<p><i>Who:</i> Executive Team and Management</p>	<p>Continue information related with economic situation</p>	<p>No of new contracts or temporary change categories</p> <p>No of informative meetings</p>	
<p>34. Complaints/appeals Employers and/or funders of researchers should establish, in compliance with national rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial (ombudsman-type) person to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and early-stage researchers. Such procedures should provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances, with the aim of promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the</p>	<p>The reason for the need to improve is the lack of information and protocol</p>	<p>Drawing up a document outlining procedure to follow (informal channel)</p> <p>in progress</p> <p>Including an intranet mailbox (private) for complaints submission</p> <p>Achieved</p>	<p><i>Who:</i> Management</p> <p><i>When:</i> Ongoing process</p>	<p>Drawing up a document outlining procedure to follow (informal channel)</p>	<p>No of suggestions or complains recorded in the mailbox</p>	

overall quality of the working environment.						
<p>35. Participation in decision-making bodies Employers and/or funders of researchers should recognise it as wholly legitimate, and indeed desirable, that researchers be represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work, so as to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the workings of the institution</p>	<p>Under the legal structure of the Institute, the Board is ultimately responsible for decision making. Nevertheless, researchers may provide all kinds of information and suggestions to be transmitted to the Board</p> <p><i>Regulation:</i> Compliance with the Foundation Regulations, which do not include participation in decision making bodies, is mandatory</p>	<p>Creating a document (intranet) describing the Institute's legal structure for information purposes Achieved</p> <p>Periodic meetings between Line Managers and the Executive In progress</p>	<p><i>Who:</i> Executive Team</p> <p><i>When:</i> Ongoing process</p>	<p>Periodic meetings between main researchers and directors</p>	<p>No of meetings</p>	<p>Is there information on the organizational structure?</p>
<p>37. Supervision and managerial duties Senior researchers should devote particular attention to their multi-faceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisors, leaders, project coordinators, managers or science communicators. They should perform these tasks to the highest professional standards. With regard to their role as supervisors or mentors of researchers, senior researchers should build up a constructive and positive relationship with the early-stage researchers, in order</p>	<p>There are tutors and research line managers</p>	<p>Continuing to set up collaborations with researchers from other centres to increase the number of doctors and tutors. Improving follow-up and monitoring of supervision tasks In progress</p> <p>Greater commitment of tutors/mentors. Intragroup meetings</p>	<p><i>Who:</i> Executive and Line Supervisors</p> <p><i>When:</i> Mid-term. Due to the current economic situation, no terms can be estimated</p>	<p>Continuing to set up collaborations with researchers from other centres to increase the number of doctors and tutors. Improving follow-up and monitoring of supervision tasks</p> <p>Greater commitment of tutors/mentors. Intragroup meetings will</p>	<p>No of agreements with new institutions</p> <p>No of intra-group meetings</p> <p>No of meetings with Heads</p>	

<p>to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of the researchers' careers</p>		<p>will be encouraged In progress Periodic meetings with the Executive for managers to transmit their working proposals and commitments In progress After two years under contract, a meeting to be held with pre-doctoral researchers (and a designated committee). This will assess the supervisor's progress and involvement In progress</p>		<p>be encouraged Periodic meetings with the Executive for managers to transmit their working proposals and commitments Annual meeting to be held with pre-doctoral researchers (and a group of doctors). This will assess the supervisor's progress and involvement</p>		
<p>40. Supervision Employers and/or funders should ensure that a person is clearly identified to whom early-stage researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties, and should inform the researchers accordingly. Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisors are sufficiently expert in supervising research, have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise and commitment to be able to offer the research trainee appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms.</p>						
<p>39. Access to research training and continuous development Employers and/or funders should ensure that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development and to improve their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies. Such measures should be regularly assessed for their accessibility, uptake and effectiveness in improving competencies, skills and employability.</p>	<p>Ongoing training to be promoted and financed</p>	<p>- Ongoing encouragement and reporting on training activities for all staff (including technicians), although no specific funding system can be guaranteed in the short-term In progress Continuing to include this type of information on the intranet In progress Internal training</p>	<p><u>Who:</u> Executive, Management and Line Supervisors. <u>When</u> Ongoing process</p>	<p>Ongoing encouragement and reporting on training activities for all staff (including technicians), although no specific funding system can be guaranteed in the short-term Continuing to include this type of information on the intranet Internal training provided by in-house</p>	<p>No of training courses-technicians No of training courses-management area No of training courses-researchers No of external stages No of internal courses</p>	<p>Available information in annual report? (YES/NO)</p>

		provided by in-house staff skilled in specific topics of general interest <i>In progress</i>		staff skilled in specific topics of general interest	No of internal seminars	
<p>25. Stability and permanence of employment Employers and/or funders should ensure that the performance of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts, and should therefore commit themselves as far as possible to improving the stability of employment conditions for researchers, thus implementing and abiding by the principles and terms laid down in the EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work</p>		Reporting on the organisation's intention to support the research career at the centre (in line with economic possibilities) <i>In progress</i>	<p><i>Who:</i> Executive <i>When:</i> ongoing</p>	Reporting on the organisation's intention to support the research career at the centre (in line with economic possibilities) More informative meetings	<p>No of extended contracts No of permanent contracts No of meetings</p>	
<p>31. Intellectual Property Rights Employers and/or funders should ensure that researchers at all career stages reap the benefits of the exploitation (if any) of their R&D results through legal protection and, in particular, through appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including copyrights. Policies and practices should specify what Rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial organisations, as possibly provided for funder specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement</p>	This item is embodied in accords with other entities and consortium agreements signed in the scope of public tenders	Drafting the Intellectual Property rules and making them available on the intranet <i>No actions planned</i>	<p><i>Who:</i> Executive, Management, R+D+i Unit <i>When:</i> long-term</p>			Available information about IP? (YES/NO)