

**The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers-**  
**Institute of Health Carlos III**  
**Updated September 2012**

### **Strategy**

Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) endorsed the “Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” (C&C) in 2010, and joined the Second Cohort of the Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group in 2011, attending the Kick-off meeting of the group project in February 2012 at Brussels. ISCIII also attended the first and second Mutual Learning seminars held respectively at Dublin (June 2011) and Varna (June 2012).

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers – HRS4R has 5 steps:

1. HR Policy Institution Internal Analysis in relation to C&C principles
2. Publication of the Strategy/Action Plan
3. European Commission (EC) approval and Excellence Logo concession
4. Strategy Implementation and Self- evaluation (at least every two years)
5. External evaluation (at least every four years)

An internal ISCIII Work Group was formed and held its first meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010 to study the C&C. The Work Group has held a series of meetings to carry out the Internal Analysis (step 1 of the Strategy) in terms of national legislation and internal practices. This group has also carried out a Survey among the ISCIII researchers and has produced an Action Plan to reduce the detected gaps that has recently been approved by the Director Board.

The Internal Analysis has been based in the template proposed by the European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/index>).

The EURAXESS Work Group was integrated by:

- Carlos Segovia and Teresa Corral (International Research Programmes and Institutional Relations Dept., SGPIIRI)
- Roberto Bieger and Beatriz Poza (Human Resources Dept., General Secretary)
- Aurora Echeita and Sonsoles Berrón (Research, Services, and Training Dept., SGSAFI)
- Alvaro Roldán (Research Promotion and Evaluation Dept., SGEFI)

EURAXESS Work group analyzed the national regulation and the normalized institutional practices regarding the principles contained in the C&C following the suggested template (**annex 1**). Most of the principles were fulfilled by the institution; however several gaps were identified in relation to some of the principles. A survey was carried out among ISCIII researchers in relation to the 15 principles that were identified by the Work Group as the most problematic principles in the organization.

## Survey

A questionnaire addressing ISCIII researchers was designed based on the template for the analysis. The survey for researchers was focused on the principles identified by the Work Group as the weak points in the institution policies. Researchers were asked about their perception of the agreement between ISCIII policies and the corresponding C&C principle and also about the degree of relevance they conceded to that C&C principle. Both answers have a 1 to 5 scale, ranging from 1 (no agreement/no importance) to 5 (good agreement/high importance).

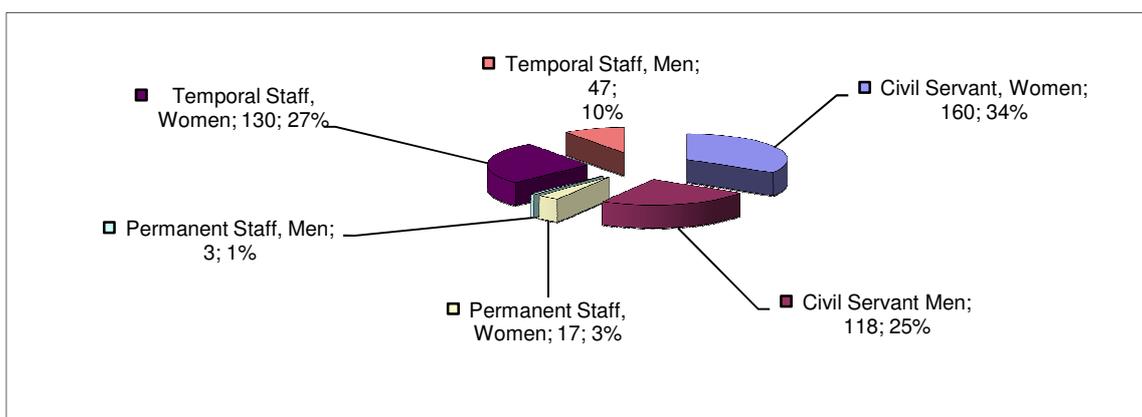
A first draft of the survey was used for a pilot survey to correct possible errors, and was reviewed and approved by ISCIII Director.

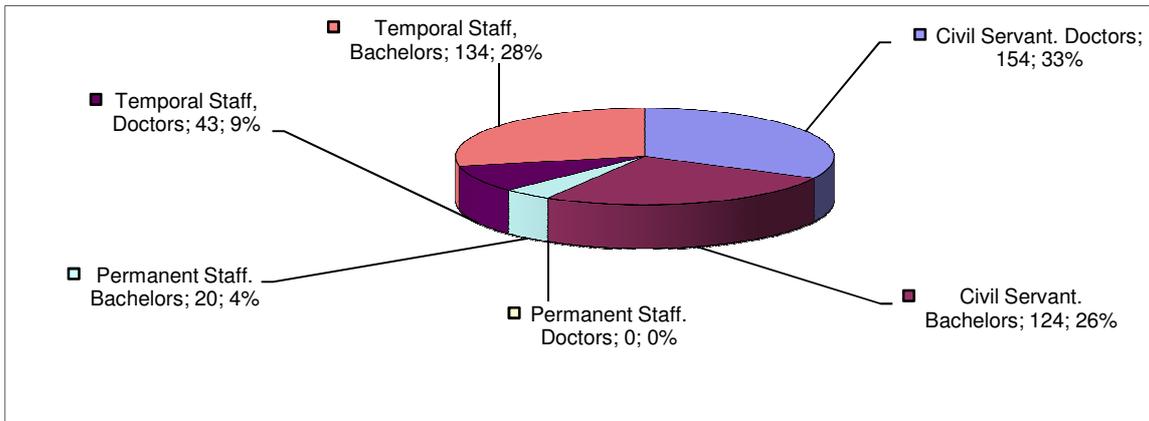
The final questionnaire was sent by email to the researchers accompanied by an introduction letter of the ISCIII Director on 14th December 2011. The questionnaire was sent to 465 ISCIII employees associated to research activity holding at least a Bachelor Degree either with a permanent position or by contract. Answers were collected by internet between 14th-22th December, and two reminder messages were sent before the deadline.

Survey results:

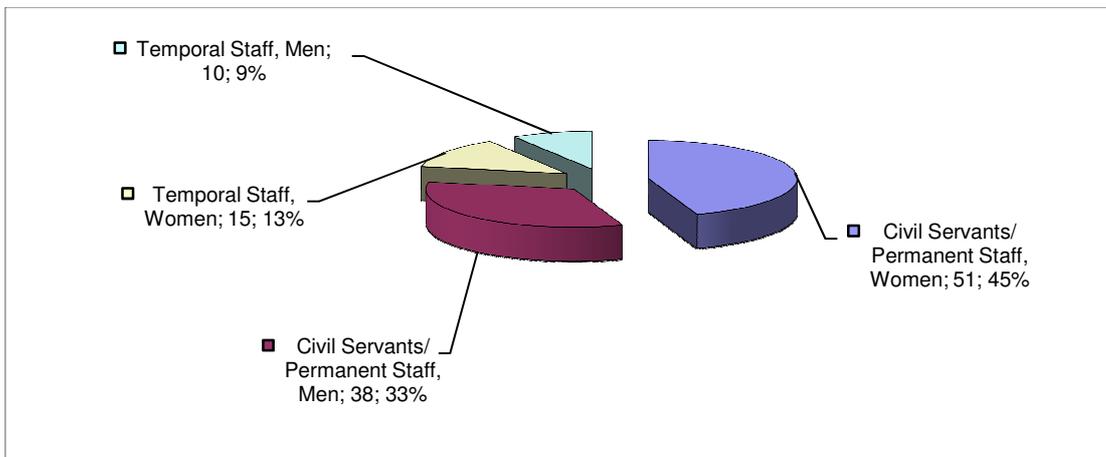
The Survey was answered by 114 employees out of 475 (24%). These employees are divided in the following tables according to their contractual relation: Governmental Positions (civil servants), Permanent Staff and Temporal Staff (by fix-term contract):

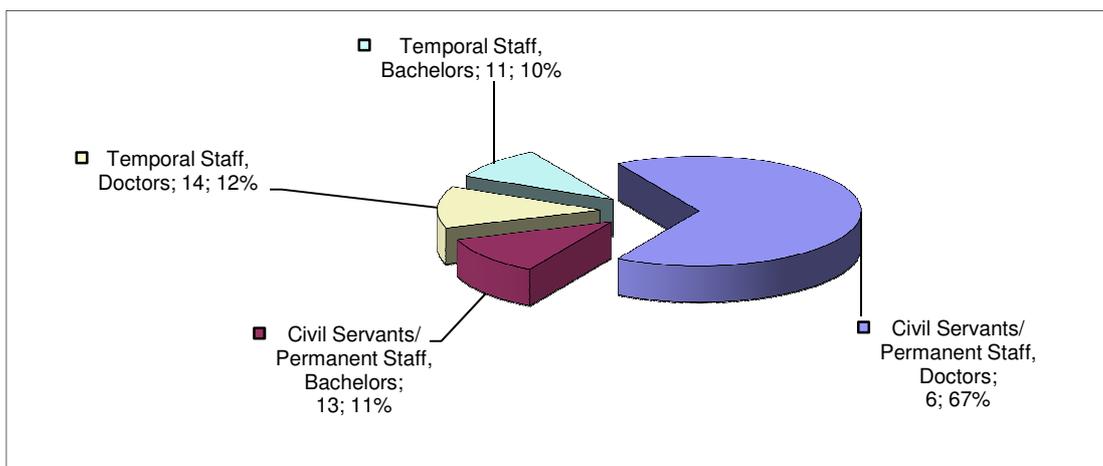
Personnel Classification	C&C Target Population				Total
	Women	Men	Doctors	Bachelors	
<b>Civil Servants</b>	160	118	154	124	<b>278</b>
<b>Permanent Staff</b>	17	3	0	20	<b>20</b>
<b>Temporal Staff</b>	130	47	43	134	<b>177</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>475</b>





C&C Survey Respondents					
Personnel Classification	Women	Men	Doctors	Bachelors	Total
Civil Servants/Perm. Staff	51	38	76	13	89
Temporal Staff	15	10	14	11	25
<b>Total</b>	66	48	90	24	114





Response ratio was considered normal in the first batch of answers. Higher level of response was observed after the first and second reminders were sent.

Some data from the respondent group were compared with the Target population to detect possible bias, as described in the following table:

	Respondents (114)		Target Population (475)
	Average/Percentage	CI 95%	Average/Percentage
General			
Age	45,2	43,7 - 46,8	45,6
Women percentage	58%	49 – 67%	65%
Doctors percentage	79%	71 – 86%	40%
Civil Servant and Permanent Staff percentage	78%	70 – 86%	63%

Women are underrepresented among the respondents. There is a significantly higher proportion of doctors and employees with a Permanent position among the respondents.

Answers are summarized in the following table:

	Agreement degree		Importance		Priority Index*
	Aver	CI 95%	Aver	CI 95%	
1 = No agreement/No importance; 5 = Good agreement/High importance					
9. <u>Career Development</u> Do you believe ISCIII has defined a specific career development Strategy for researchers that includes support and guidance for personal and professional development of researchers that helps reducing insecurity about their professional future?	1,8	1,6-1,9	4,7	4,5-4,8	2,6
4. <u>Evaluation/appraisal systems</u> Do you believe ISCIII introduces evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing their professional performance in a transparent way by and independent committee?	1,8	1,6-1,9	4,3	4,2-4,4	2,4
3. <u>Public engagement</u> Do you believe that ISCIII ensures that the research activities of its researchers are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science?	2,0	1,8-2,1	4,5	4,3-4,6	2,3
10. <u>Access to career advice</u> Do you believe that ISCIII ensures that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the institutions concerned, or through collaboration with other structures, is offered to researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of their contractual situation?	1,9	1,7-2,1	4,4	4,3-4,5	2,3
2. <u>Dissemination, exploitation of results</u> Do you believe that ISCIII ensures, that the results of the research of their researchers are disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred into other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised?	2,1	2,0-2,3	4,60	4,5-4,7	2,1
12. <u>Participation in decision-making bodies</u> Do you believe that ISCIII allows researchers to be legitimate represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work, to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the workings of the institution?	2,1	1,9-2,2	4,4	4,2-4,5	2,1
13. <u>Relation with supervisors</u> Do you believe that ISCIII promotes that their Researchers in their training phase establish a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and representative(s), keeping records of work progress and research findings?	2,1	1,9-2,3	4,3	4,1-4,4	2,0
7. <u>Postdoctoral appointments</u> Do you believe that ISCIII has established clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers, including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments?	2,3	2,1-,5	4,4	4,2-4,5	1,9
15. <u>Access to research training and continuous development</u> Do you believe that ISCIII ensures that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development and for improving their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies?	2,3	2,1-2,5	4,5	4,4-4,6	1,9
5. <u>Selection</u> Do you believe that ISCIII ensures that selection committees bring together diverse expertise and competences and have an adequate gender balance, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, also from other countries and with relevant experience to assess the candidate?	2,5	2,3-2,7	4,4	4,3-4,6	1,8
1. <u>Contractual and legal obligations</u> Do you believe that ISCIII promotes that researchers at all levels know the national, sectorial or institutional regulations, governing training and/or working conditions, including Intellectual Property Rights regulations, and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract?	2,3	2,2-2,5	4,03	3,9-4,2	1,7
6. <u>Recognition of mobility experience</u> Do you believe that ISCIII considers as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher any mobility experience, e.g. a staying in another country/region or in another research setting (public or private) or a change from one discipline or sector to another, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience?	2,4	2,2-2,6	4,1	3,9-4,2	1,7
11. <u>Intellectual Property Rights</u> Do you believe that ISCIII ensures 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?	2,5	2,3-2,6	4,2	4,0-4,3	1,7
8. <u>Research environment</u> Do you believe that ISCIII promotes that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote	2,6	2,5-2,8	4,4	4,2-4,5	1,6

collaboration over research networks, and that the national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research are observed?					
14. <u>Continuing Professional Development</u> Do you believe that ISCIII encourages researchers at all career stages to seek for continuous improvement by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies, by a variety of means including, but not restricted to, formal training, workshops, conferences and e-learning?	3,3	3,2-3,5	4,4	4,3-4,6	1,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>2,1-2,5</b>	<b>4,4</b>	<b>4,2-4,5</b>	<b>1,9</b>

\*Priority index: Importance / Agreement

According to the respondents, the principles that require improving the degree of agreement to the C&C out of the 15 analyzed principles are:

1. Career Development.
2. Dissemination and Exploitation of results
3. Evaluation Systems
4. Participation in decision making bodies
5. Selection

A summary of the suggestions presented by the survey participants is presented below:

- Establishing mechanisms of control in order to detect, avoid and/or repair research activity obstacles, that may be used to elaborate improvement proposals.
- Create technical committees to articulate the participation of the researchers in decision making processes.
- Clearly designing the development of the research career.
- Promoting relations between departments and units within ISCIII, to foster collaboration among different research groups and to improve the research activity.
- Increasing the technical and support personnel that alleviate the administrative burden to researchers.
- Improving services and systems of ISCIII informatics department.
- Supporting dissemination and exploitation of research results.
- Promoting access to external training activities for the researchers.
- Promoting the internationalization as well as regional and international mobility of researchers.

In summary, the survey has allowed detecting some starting points for improvement of the agreement of the ISCIII policies with C&C principles, and has helped to the elaboration of the Action Plan that follows:

## Action Plan

Proposal to incorporate the C&C in ISCIII			
Principle (C&C)	Action	Responsible	Time frame
5	1. Update of clauses of endorsement to the present regulation regarding training, work conditions and intellectual property, that link the recruited researchers	General Secretary- Human Resources	December 2012
5	2. Review and dissemination of ISCIII Code of Good Practices in Research when adhesion to ISCIII (permanent of temporal Staff)	Research Dpt. (SGSAFI). Research Coordination	December 2012
5	3. Establishment of informative sessions.	EURAXESS Committee	November 2012
8	4. Elaboration and dissemination of Code of Confidentiality	International Dpt. (SGPIIRI)- Transfer Technology Office (OTRI)	December 2012
8	5. Elaboration of an Strategy for Technology Surveillance/ Technology Transfer /Coordination between Researchers and TTO	SGRIIPI-OTRI/ SGSAFI	December 2012
9	6. Development of an ISCIII policy for dissemination of research results to the society	Press Office	Q2 2013
9	7. Participating in dissemination activities: Science Week, Researcher Night, etc.	Press Office	Q2 2013
11	8. Evaluations systems will be adapted, according to foreseen period, to the new Science Law of Science, Technology and Innovation 17/2011.	General Secretary- Human Resources	Q4 2014 (pending on regulation development)
14	9. SGEFI should include in calls the need to consider gender balance in selection committees, according to the Innovation National Plan	Research Promotion and Evaluation Dpt. (SGEFI)	Q1 2013 (pending on R&D National Plan)
14	10. Establishing minimum criteria for Selection committees to include external experts for relevant positions.	General Secretary- Human Resources	Q1 2013
18	11. Analysis of positive discrimination to evaluate private-public and interdisciplinary mobility	SGEFI/ General Secretary- Human Resources	Q1 2013
21	12. Adaptation of the HR calls to the Law of Science, Technology and Innovation 14/2011.	General Secretary- Human Resources	Q2 2013 (pending on regulation)

			development)
24	13. Analysis of the employees working hours and special daily shifts.	General Secretary- Human Resources / SGSAFI- Research Coordination	December 2012
28	14. Nomination of a Mentor by Center/Area for early-stage researchers, and function definition, such as progress assessment professional development advice (according to the advisory committee that will be created in relation with principle 35	Director / Research Coordination	Q2 2013
30	15. Inclusion of a link to EURAXESS Website within the ISCIII intranet.	Informatics Dept.	October 2012
30	16. Mentor nomination (see principle 28)	Director / SGSAFI- Research Coordination	Q2 2013
31	17. Training on IPR issues	SGPIIRI- OTRI	Q1 2013
34	18. Mediation in researchers complaints will be suggested as one of the mentor functions (see principle 28)	Director / SGSAFI- Research Coordination	Q2 2013
35	19. Regulation of decision-making bodies. Among their functions the mentor nomination referred to in principle 30.	Director / SGSAFI- Research Coordination	Q1 2013
36	20. Definition of functions for the mentors mentioned in principle 28, such as supervision management.	Research Coordination	Q2 2013
38	21. Increase of Specific Training Aids	General Secretary	Q4 2012
39	22. ISCIII Training Plan Optimization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of specific training needs</li> <li>• Establishing yearly study of participation</li> </ul>	General Secretary / SGSAFI- Research Coordination	Q1 2013