

Action Plan 2021-2023

May, 2021

CONTENT

- 1- Executive Summary
- 2- Background to the HRS4R
- 3- HR Vision
- 4- HR Strategic Objectives 2021-2023
- 5- GAP analysis
- 6- Action Plan 2021-2023

1-. Executive Summary

The Barcelona Macula Foundation: Research for Vision (BMF) is an international research foundation created on August, 2011.

The main motivation behind the Barcelona Macula Foundation: Research for Vision is to conduct and support research into diseases of the retina and macula that cause blindness and have no effective treatment, in order to restore or prevent loss of vision. The principal focus of interest is macular and retinal degeneration, such as atrophic age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinitis pigmentosa and Stargardt's disease.

The Barcelona Macula Foundation is an organization focusing exclusively on research into the medical and surgical pathology of the macula, the retina and the vitreous. The Foundation devotes special attention to pre-clinical research. The idea is to pass results on to the clinical phase in the shortest possible time. In fact, BMF researchers have already carried out phase-I, phase-II and phase-III clinical trials both for exudative and non-exudative age-related macular degeneration and for other degenerative diseases of the retina.

We work exclusively on research into the medical and surgical pathology of the macula, the retina and the vitreous. We devote special attention to pre-clinical research in order to pass results on to the clinical phase in the shortest possible time. We want to address all of our research to improving patients' wellbeing and seeking solutions for their pathologies. For this reason, many of our research projects culminate in clinical trials in which we verify the effectiveness of the treatments we develop.

BMF is located within the Institut de la Màcula (IM), which is an international benchmark in the treatment of medical and surgical pathologies of the macula, retina and vitreous and forms part of the Hospital Quirón Teknon. The use of state of the art techniques and treatments in different specialties places the centre at the forefront of treating and handling sight disorders. The structure of the Foundation combines a dedicated and efficient team with a Scientific Council of international renown and a Board of Trustees committed to our goals.

BMF is committed to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In 2017, BMF signed the Declaration of Commitment and is considered as a Euraxess Network member. With HR Strategy for Researchers BMF wants to keep sustaining the best framework and environment for research excellence, maintaining and improving it by adopting international best practices and high-quality standards.

2-. Background to the HRS4R

“20 years of research, design and conduct of clinical trials for sever loss of vision”.

We are in a race against the clock to seek solutions to diseases that affect people who today are losing their eyesight.

This road is full of obstacles, but we already know what it feels like to overcome one: in fact, we are proud to say that we have already mastered the principal cause of legal blindness: wet AMD. It used to cause devastating effects, and now we can halt it. Now we have to keep up the effort to improve its treatments and to achieve solutions for complaints that are still untreatable, such as retinitis pigmentosa or Stargardt’s disease. But we foresee definitive solutions that will allow sufferers to recover their vision, one of the most highly-valued treasures for the wellbeing of both young and old.

We do not resign ourselves to anything. We know that achieving these goals is only a matter of time, of insistence, of applying talent and resources. And this is why you find us on this path. We at the Barcelona Macula Foundation strain every available resource to win the flight at the earliest opportunity.

- **Our Mission:**

The main motivation behind the Barcelona Macula Foundation: Research for Vision is to conduct and support research into diseases of the retina and macula that cause blindness and have no effective treatment, in order to restore or prevent loss of vision. The principal focus of interest is macular and retinal degeneration, such as atrophic age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinitis pigmentosa and Stargardt’s disease.

- **Our Vision:**

At the BMF we work alongside institutions and corporations linked to the scientific elite to revert vision pathologies which until recently were incurable and to make blindness a problem of the past.

▪ **Our values:**

INNOVATION

We seek to incorporate innovative, promising therapeutic strategies for age-related macular degeneration and other diseases of the macula and the retina by associating with national and international academic institutions.

SOCIAL COMMITMENT

Our responsibility is to society, our sponsors, our colleagues and, above all, our patients.

EXPERIENCE

The experience gained from both clinical practice and research keeps us in very close touch with the needs and wishes of our patients and their families. Everything we do is for them

▪ **Our strategic objectives:**

Primary: "Prevent blindness or restore sight"

Our responsibility is to society, our sponsors, our colleagues and, above all, our patients.

Secondary:

- To build new therapeutic approaches to macular and retinal degeneration on cellular therapies, tissue engineering and transplantation, and biomaterials applied to these therapies.
- To promote a better understanding of degenerative diseases of the macula and the retina in the scientific world and in society. The general public, and patients in particular, are a key part of our activities.
- To become a key player internationally by creating a network for more efficient and focused research.

3-. HR Vision

BMF recognizes that the researchers from all areas and levels, together with the support staff are essential contributors and the key players for the science success at national and international level. The Foundation wants to promote a challenging work environment where equal opportunities, ethics & integrity, work-life balance, career prospects and the best work conditions are met.

4- HR Strategic Objectives 2021-2023

STRUCTURE

The structure of the Barcelona Macula Foundation combines a dedicated and efficient team with a Scientific Council of international renown and a Board of Trustees committed to our goals.

STRUCTURE	Function	Members	M	F
Executive Team	Staff: Medical Director, RH Manager	2	1	1
Research Team	Staff: Doctors and technicians, nurse	3	1	2
The Board of Trustees	President, vocals and Secretary	7	7	0
Scientific Council	Advisors	4	4	0

- Promote and enhance recruitment policies to attract top talent and train the next generation of scientists
- Provide a positive work environment that builds on the principles of equal opportunities and work-life balance
- Deliver the best services with high quality to all the BMF staff and stakeholders.
- Provide and support the career development inside the Organization and outside, guiding the researchers for their next professional step.

5- Gap Analysis

The opinion of the BMF staff in relation to evaluate the degree of current compliance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers has been channeled through a working group, which includes researchers and technicians. As it is a small Foundation, the personnel was consulted by workshops.

The task of coordinating the development and implementation of the human resources (HR) Strategy and Action Plan was assigned by the Medical Director to the HR Manager and Assistant to the Board.

At the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, an internal analysis was conducted to identify the internal procedures and practices in need of improvement. This was done by evaluating existing practices and comparing them with the principles of the Charter and Code. In this way, the Charter and Code served as an instrument for continuous improvement of the human resources strategy.

The internal analysis was performed using the methodology described below.

The first step in the internal analysis was to identify and examine the legislation affecting the implementation of the Charter and Code principles. At the same time, the center's existing practices in areas covered by the principles were also analyzed.

To assess the degree to which the Charter and Code principles are applied in BMF, we made two workshops with participation of all the workers.

The first workshop was celebrated on 21th of November, 2019. A meeting was carried out to be able to brainstorming the different aspects related to the European Charter of the Researcher and the Code of Conduct from different points of view:

- Medical Management
- Internal Management
- Human Resources
- Research

The HR Manager explained that the European Commission recommends all research institutes to explicitly support the Charter & Code.

During the first workshop, the participants worked the Template 2 Gap analysis from point 1 to 28.

- 1-. Ethical and Professional Aspects (1 until 11)
- 2-. Recruitment and Selection (12 until 21)
- 3-. Working Conditions and Social Security (13 until 28)

The second workshop was celebrated on 8th of January, 2020. During the second workshop, the participants worked two points:

- The Template 2 Gap analysis from point 1 to 28 to finalize the last clarifications of the first workshop.
- The template 2 Gap Analysis form 29 to 40 point.

The result about the brainstorming and analysis is shown in the following table.

Ethical and Professional Aspects		
1. Research freedom	+/+	All our researchers have a reasonable freedom for taking decisions. The Medical Director defines a global strategy taking into account the Mission of the BMF. In this framework, the Research team has freedom to propose investigations and themes. The participants agree that there is a different level of freedom according to the experience and seniority of each researcher.
2. Ethical principles	+/+	A great effort is made to do things well. Strict compliance to ethical practices and principles appropriate to our discipline.
3. Professional responsibility	+/+	Medical Director checks and validates the team work and the content of thesis, degree's works, congress posters, etc. Recognition to previous

		researcher conducted by other teams is properly recognized.
4. Professional attitude	+/+	The manager report possible deviations. Every 15 days the Medical Director call coordination meetings in order to get informed about the progress of the research projects and any difficulties which could arise such as delays, redefinitions or cancellations formalization of meeting minutes for each one. During these meetings the team is also informed about the Calls and their requirements.
5. Contractual and legal obligations	+/+	We do things well but we can improve every day. We try to outsource specific tasks. There is no expert in IPR knowledge in our team. It might be an issue in the future if we have to deal with patents or author permissions. An introductory course in this field could be useful for the team. Meanwhile we ask Leitat or pay private services to answer the needs.
6. Accountability	+/+	We make periodic financial and task reports to ensure financial efficiency and transparency. Researchers adhere to the principles of transparent and efficient financial management and cooperate with any authorized audits of their research. All projects are subjected to audits whether they are public or private funds. There is further scope for improvement in financial and administrative areas
7. Good practice in research	+/+	The BMF has a current and up to date labour risk prevention plan, a data protection plan and there is a contract with a mutual accident to take care of the workers' health (annually medical revision). All researchers adopt safe working practices in line with national legislation. Besides, they take the necessary precaution for health and safety work.
8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	+/+	They feel that the stakeholders play their influencer role when the results are to be published. The team feels the most appropriate route for dissemination of the results of its research are publication in peer-reviewed journals as well as through the organs and publications of the patient organizations. BMF personnel regularly attend and present at meetings. Moreover, BMF exploits Internet communication systems using the latest technologies, which allows the team to stay in close contact with the general public, the patient associations and other research centers.
9. Public engagement	+/+	Currently, the BMF has a Communication Plan with impact in social networks and research networks community, however BMF must develop a communication plan with more social impact about the studies of investigation. We work continuously to improve our external communication. Periodic newsletters, internal magazine (iMaculaReport), social media; advertising/screening campaigns (Golf Clubs), Museums (CosmoCaixa- Top Retina Stand), Bdebate...
10. Non discrimination	+/+	The BMF is committed and aligned with a culture of zero tolerance with discrimination based on race, color, nationality, social origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, but the board managers are all men. Decision making bodies (patronat and scientific committee) are only men.
11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems	-/+	The BMF does not have a performance management system. The evaluation is done with continuous feedback but without formal appraisal systems.

Recruitment and Selection		This aspect HHRR explain the point of view to the researchers. It is new creation department and need develop different tools and protocols.
12. Recruitment	+/-	Good practices in recruitment an selection. Up to the present time, BMF publishes all the vacancies in its website and social media channels.
13. Recruitment (Code)	+/-	Employers have adhere to the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers when appointing or recruiting researchers.
14. Selection (Code)	+/-	We use a wide range of selection practices such as external expert assessment and face-to-face interviews. BMF has a RH Manager with a wide experience in several selection methods. The Internal Good Practice Code includes this content in one section (4 point).
15. Transparency (Code)	+/-	The BMF has de policy and guidelines on transparency in the Internal Good Practice Code.
16. Judging merit (Code)	+/+	The Medical Director has his own criterion for merit assessment.
17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	+/+	The BMF does not penalise the professional career breaks or variation in the chronological order of CVs.
18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	+/+	The BMF considers as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher any mobility experience.
19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	-/-	The team needs training in Enic-Naric for managing recognition and qualifications.
20. Seniority (Code)	+/+	The BMF recognizes and evaluates the qualifications focused on judging the achievements of the person rather than his/her circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were gained.
21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	+/-	The BMF must develop clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers, including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments.
Working conditions and Social Salary		
22. Recognition of the profession	+/+	BMF is covered by a national collective agreement (private medical centers) which include a clear professional categories definition. The category is included in the work contract. They agree that the recognition depends on each professional.
23. Research environment	+/+	The BMF offers the same conditions for permanent and fixed-term employees. The BMF ensures a research training environment offering appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities according to organisational and research circumstances
24. Working conditions	+/+	The team counts on all the equipment and material required to fulfill their tasks. The BMF promotes the possibility to collaborate with other research groups and centers. The needs and demands of the personnel are being taken into account. The BMF ensure that the working conditions for researchers, including for

		disables researchers.
25. Stability and permanence of employment	+/+	BMF offers stability and permanence.
26. Funding and salaries	+/+	All the employees are hired under Spanish legislation with a legal employment contract with all social security coverage. The BMF has the same conditions for permanent and fixed-term employees. Possible salary differences may be due to the difference in experience, in the contribution of value and in autonomy.
27. Gender balance	+/-	BMF will work a Gender plan for 2020. There is something which should be reviewed and improved: The Board of Directors is formed only by men.
28. Career development	-/+	The Researchers and the medical Director agreed with the implementation of the career development. However, the nurse proposes to improve this aspect. For example, she asks for more training regarding interpretation of fundus images to fulfil the tasks that they were not trained for.
29. Value of mobility	+/+	BMF recognizes the value of geographical, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility as well as mobility between the public and private sector as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career.
30. Access to career advice	+/-	BMF ensures that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the institutions concerned, or through collaboration with other structures regardless of their contractual situation.
31. Intellectual Property Rights	+/-	We use an specific consultancy and offers training about intellectual property rights.
32. Co-authorship	+/+	Medical Director makes appointment in his papers or publications. Every project is evaluated about individual contributions.
33. Teaching	+/+	Teaching is contemplated in BMF in specific moments.
34. Complains/ appeals	+/+	BMF has established, in compliance with national rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial (RH Manager). BMF has in the web page a Complaints channel it is anonymous and managed by an external company.
35. Participation in decision-making bodies	+/+	BMF recognizes 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.
Training and Development		
36. Relation with supervisors	+/+	Researchers in their training phase have established a structured and regular relationship with the Medical Director.
37. Supervision and managerial duties	+/+	The Medical Director as supervisor of researchers builds up a constructive and positive relationship with the researchers, in order to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of the

		researchers' careers. BMF is a small organization with close relationships. The researchers work with autonomy.
38. Continuing Professional Development	+ / +	BMF promotes researchers continually improve themselves by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies. This is achieved by a variety of means including, formal training, workshops, conferences...
39. Access to research training and continuous development	+ / +	BMF gives the opportunity for professional development and for improving their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies.
40. Supervision	+ / +	Medical Director, PhD Research and internal researchers are the person whom researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties. The supervisors are sufficiently experienced in supervising research, knowledge, to be able to offer the research trainee appropriate support.

After the Gap Analysis, we considered the following aspects that need to be improved within the HR Action Plan 2020-2022:

- Ethical and Professional aspects:
 - 11-. Evaluation/ appraisal systems
- Recruitment and selection:
 - 13-. Recruitment and code.
 - 19-. Recognition of qualifications
- Working conditions and social security:
 - 27-. Gender Balance
 - 28-. Career Development
 - 30-. Access to the Career Advice

6-. Action Plan

The actions proposed in the Action Plan have been defined in an inclusive and open process involving all the research professional categories, areas and roles.

The Action Plan specifies the person or body responsible for each action as well as a timeframe and a progress indicator. A Monitoring Committee will be set up to evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan and conduct the Self-Assessment.

This action plan is committed to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the actions proposed will take place during 2020 to 2022. After this period, there will be a formal review and at that time a new Action Plan will be proposed for the following period.

The aim of implementing the 2021-2023 Action Plan is to ensure that the evolution of BMF is in line with the HRS4R standards.

Currently, with the Covid-19 crisis, the budget, the staff and projects have been considerably reduced.

ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

Proposed ACTIONS	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Ethical and Professional Aspects				
BMF must to develop formal systems for evaluation/appraisal in order to create a more transparent, open, equal and internationally accepted system of recruitment and career development as a prerequisite for a genuine European labour market for researchers.	11. Evaluation/appraisal systems	Q4 2023	HR Manager	Develop a formal system to evaluate the appraisal for each researcher.
Recruitment and Selection				
Employers have to be trained and have to adhere to principles Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers.	13. Recruitment (code)	Q1 2022	HR Manager	Training about the new practices and the Code of Conduct. BMF will communicate the new Human Resources Strategy (HRS4R) for all Researchers.
BMF needs to develop an internal policy and guidelines on personnel	14. Selection (code)	Q3 2022	HR Manager	Guide Selecion Document. Also we are

<p>selection. The guide that will be created may provide a standardized structure for hiring personnel based on objective selection criteria in order to eliminate discriminatory biases and facilitate and enhance the work of all those involved in the hiring process. The objective is to be able to provide advice on how to select candidates effectively. In the guide BMF will include a script for a properly structured interview. Up to the present time, we apply the external consultancy policy. Nowadays, we are considering to implement a selection process with blind CV's.</p>				<p>considering to implement a selection process with blind CV's.</p>
Working Condition and Social Salary				
<p>Develop and implement the Equality Plan</p>	<p>27. Gender Balance</p>	<p>Q3 2023</p>	<p>Medical Director HR Manager Assistant to the Board</p>	<p>Documentation & Dissemination</p>
<p>BMF need develop and prepare a document to provide written guidelines in regards to Scientific Development within different research careers and paths.</p>	<p>28. Career Development & 30. Access to career advice.</p>	<p>Q2 2023</p>	<p>Medical Director HR manager</p>	<p>Plan Documentation & Dissemination</p>