

***Open, Transparent and Merit-based recruitment of
researchers and general management staff (OTM-R policy)***

November, 2023

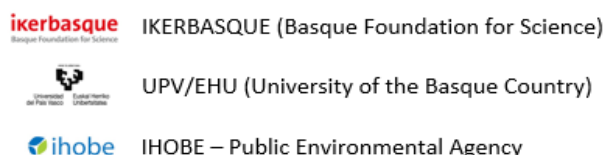
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1. Foreword

BC3, the Basque Centre for Climate Change – Klima Aldaketa Ikergai, is a world class interdisciplinary research centre located in Leioa for the study of the causes and consequences of climate change.

It was created as a Basque Excellence Research Centre (BERC) by the Basque Government and the University of the Basque Country in 2008 and constituted as a non-profit association. The Associate Members are:



The centre led by one of the most recognized scientists in this field, Prof. María José Sanz contributes to the decision-making at the Basque, Spanish and International level by integrating natural and social sciences to address the socio-economic implications of global climate change.

BC3's Steering committee ¹ decided to endorse the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in the meeting celebrated in December, 2013.

BC3 conducted the initial Internal Analysis of the "HR Strategy for Researchers" (HRS4R) in 2014 and designed its Action Plan in 2015. After undergoing the evaluation process, the European Commission approved the Action Plan and in April 2015, BC3 was recognized with the "HR Excellence in research" award. In early 2017 BC3 underwent the self-assessment process for reviewing and improving the previous Action Plan. After completing that self-assessment, the 2017-2020 Revised Action Plan (AP2) was developed, focused on the implementation of initiatives internally identified, and the recommendations suggested from the European Commission. In 2017, BC3 also implemented its first OTM-R Policy engaging into the Strengthened HRS4R Process.

5 years after the "HR Excellence in Research" acknowledgement was received, BC3 conducted the Internal Review for Renewal Assessment. For that purpose, BC3 ran a new self-assessment process in May 2020 ([GAP Analysis 2020](#)), which resulted in the [2020-2023 Improved Action Plan](#) (IAP1). The self-assessment process was coordinated by the BC3 HR Excellence Working Group, and each of the 40 principles of the Charter & Code were revised and aligned with the reality of BC3 including the review of the OTM-R policy ([OTM-R Checklist 2020](#)). BC3 remotely hosted in February 2021 an external evaluation by independent experts of the European Commission and in 02/03/2021 the "HR Excellence in Research" award was renewed.

Currently BC3 is in the Award Renewal phase without site visit, with the implementation of the Further Improve Action Plan proposal done by People department and shared within the new HR Excellence

¹ Steering Committee: One of the highest governance meetings of the Association. All BC3's partners participate in the meeting for decision making.

working group and Management Committee. For that purpose, BC3 ran a new self-assessment process in August 2023 ([GAP Analysis 2023](#)), which resulted in the [2024-2027 Further Improved Action Plan \(FIAP1\)](#). The self-assessment process was coordinated by People department as BC3 HR Excellence Working Group members, and each of the 40 principles of the Charter & Code were revised and aligned with the reality of BC3 including the review of the OTM-R policy ([OTM-R Checklist 2023](#)).

As members of the 6th cohort of organisations involved in the development of HRS4R, BC3 has analyzed, assessed and integrated the recommendations and principles of OTM-R into our internal recruitment policies.

The centre used the Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management of the European Commission on Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) of Researchers and the checklist for ensuring the completeness of our analysis and the corresponding policy definition.

The first edition was dated in November 2017. This policy was reviewed during the first semester of 2018 by BC3's HR Working Group² and they aligned it with the new Strategy for the period 2018-2021, the second revision was dated October 2018. The BC3's HR Working Group reviewed it again in february 2019 (3rd edition) to include the new HR categories approved in the MC (Management Committee)³ celebrated on the 24th of January 2019. This document includes the general management staff recruitment process as part of its key activity. In the following years, the OTM-R Policy was reviewed year by year, aligning it to the 2022-2025 Strategy plan, legal statements, new corporate image launched in June, 2023 and reviewed through the eyes of the Equality commission. However, it is not until November 2023 when the HR working group finishes the revision of the staff categories in order to align them to the current context of the centre. The result is the current 4th BC3's OTM-R Policy.

2. Objective of the policy

BC3's OTM-R process objective is to attract and retain top-ranking scientists, promising Early Career staff and excellent general operation employees, keeping an attractive working environment in order to be able to contribute with excellence in a globalized science and research system. BC3's recruitment policy is open, transparent and merit based in order to commit with the centre's mission and values:

Mission

BC3 mission is to strategically foster co-production of knowledge relevant to decision making by integrating environmental, socioeconomic, and ethical dimensions of climate change.

Vision

² BC3 HR Excellence Working Group: Internal management team made up of scientific and managerial staff, in charge of designing and implementing actions within BC3's management policies and processes to comply with the HR Excellence In research (HRS4S).

³ Management Committee meets every month (except summer period) to support the Scientific Director. It's composed of the Scientific Director, Operations Manager, research line coordinators and research group leaders

BC3 aims to steer climate change science towards the co-production of new knowledge and the co-design of policy solutions together with other stakeholders through a solid and transdisciplinary approach, with the ultimate goal to achieve **sustainable, decarbonized, resilient, prosperous and inclusive future**.

Values

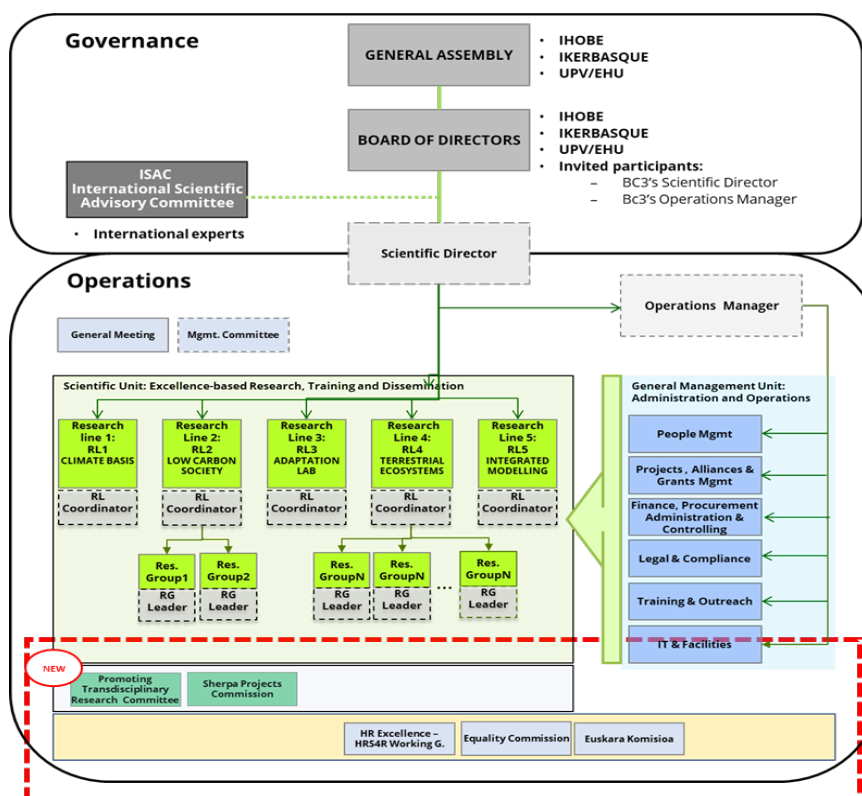
- Search for **excellence** of long-term research, operation and management of the centre.
- The promotion of **collaboration** in the fields in which the BC3 competes, actively looking for insertion in international research excellence networks, but also promoting a close **cooperation** with all the interest groups, as it is reflected in our **transdisciplinary** work.
- **People respect** a commitment with people working in BC3, developing highly qualified personnel with common but differentiated responsibilities based on **equity** (fairness of opportunity), promoting **equality** and creating an **attractive social environment**.
- **Social Responsibility** in increasing citizens' standard of living by climate change knowledge transfer to the society and including society inputs into our research.
- **Integrity**, committing with the highest ethical standards in personal and professional behavior, and promoting **transparency and sustainability** in governance and operations of the centre.
- The support to the centre members' research initiatives considering sustainable conditions of work, and the application as wide as possible, of the principle of **freedom of research**.

The final aim of this document is to define a policy for continuously improving our recruiting process for talent attraction of researchers and general management staff.

3. BC3's Operational Model – Scientific Unit and General Management Unit

The Operational Model of the centre is based on simple principles that allow BC3 to be an agile and dynamic organization. Taking into account the centre dimensions BC3 operations are divided in two units:

- **Scientific Unit**, comprising the strategic activities of the centre: Excellence-based research, training and dissemination activities, and led by the Scientific Director.
- **General Management Unit**, comprising all the supporting activities for an efficient and innovative management of the centre and led by the Operation Manager: "People", "Projects, Alliances and Grants", "Finance, Administration and Controlling", "Legal and Compliance", "Training and Outreach", "IT and Facilities".

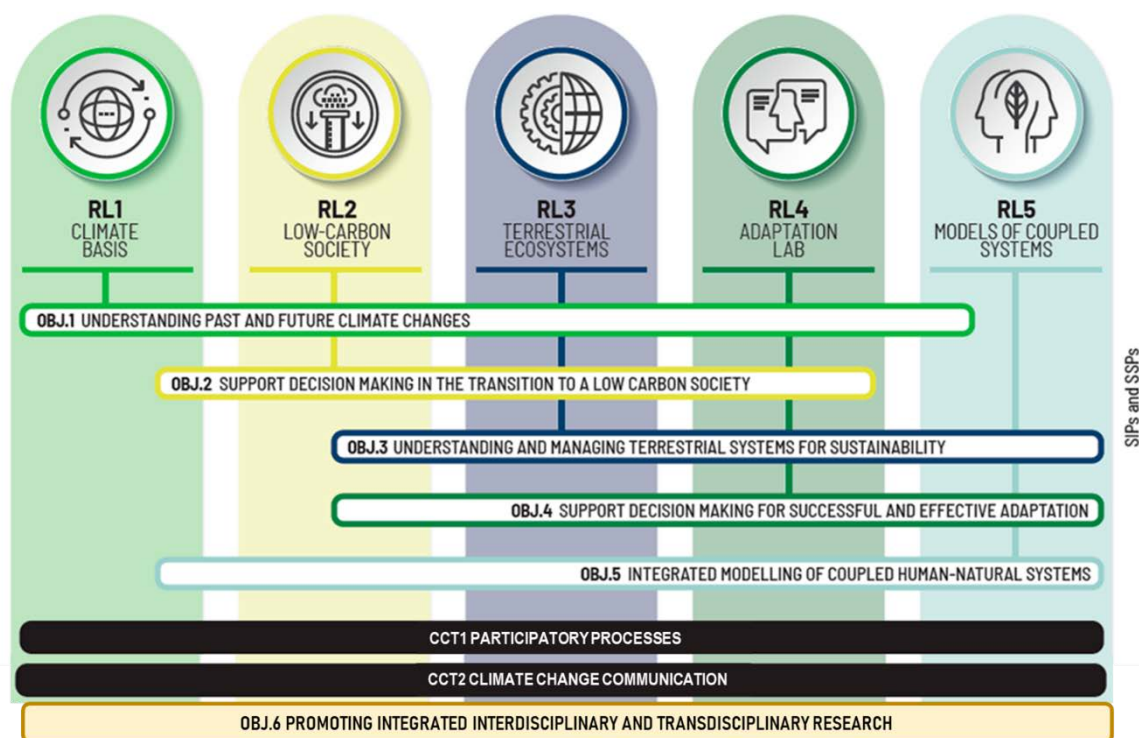


4. Scientific Unit - BC3's research and innovation organization

BC3 aims to strategically foster co-production of knowledge relevant to decision making by integrating environmental, socioeconomic, and ethical dimensions of climate change. The centre considers that coordinated transdisciplinary (i.e., interdisciplinary and participatory) research approaches are essential in the post-Paris Agreement era, while being aware that climate action and protection will never be the sole priorities of governments and no single approach will work equally for all members in society.

BC3 expects to contribute strongly to the co-generation of new scientific knowledge and the consolidation of scientific support relevant to policy making at different scales, which includes understanding and linking social and policy processes and promoting regular communication between stakeholders at all governance levels, in the post-Paris and SDGs era.

These impacts will be achieved through the contribution of the five Research Lines and on the basis of its Overall Objectives.



These RLs should not be regarded as “research groups” per se: they neither prescribe research topics nor consist of fixed members. Rather, they have the organizational function of classifying research activities and facilitating management, mentoring and reporting. Thus, they can be regarded as conceptual domains with overlapping boundaries, which together cover all research activities performed by the centre, as well as different aspects of the work of each researcher. In fact, most BC3 researchers often identify themselves with more than one RL, and many research projects involve more than one RL. Accordingly, RLs also play a fundamental strategic role, since they highlight the scientific priorities and trends of the centre. For this reason, the structure of Research Lines is being revised periodically, in order to present a realistic and up-to-date scientific profile of BC3.

Within RLs, specific research activities are deployed by Research Groups (RGs), which are dynamically teams of researchers pursuing a common research topic. In general, Research Groups are led by a Senior Researcher (Research Professor or Fellow) responsible for one or more research projects. Many researchers simultaneously participate in several Research Groups, depending on their interests and expertise. Consequently, Research Groups usually involve several Research Lines and interact closely among themselves with the objective of solving identified multidisciplinary problems. For organizational reasons, though, Research Groups are formally assigned to a particular Research Line, which acts as its “host”.

BC3 Research categories

BC3’s **research** positions are divided in two big categories, Senior level positions and Early Career positions. The description of each category is explained in the table below (Table 1).

BC3 researchers could be scientists directly recruited and contracted by **BC3**; or, researchers recruited by **Ikerbasque** and contracted by either **Ikerbasque** or **BC3**. **Ikerbasque** is the Basque Foundation for Science that every year launches calls for contracting two categories of researchers: Senior researchers through the **Ikerbasque Professorship** call, or promising young researchers through the **Ikerbasque Research Fellowship/ Research Associates** call. These categories are integrated into **BC3's** organizational structure.

Usually those researchers contracted directly by BC3, are researchers contracted to work in a specific research project funded by competitive or non competitive fund/grant. This means that the contracts are linked to the conditions established by the project or by the funding organization. With this approach, in some cases, it could happen that BC3 must rely on the OTM-R policies of the funding organizations, such as, Governments, International Agencies, ... Once the initial contracts are finished, in case of new recruitment, BC3 will review the current recruitment scenario and, if necessary, publish a job offer following the procedure set out in this policy.

In the case of Ikerbasque researchers, the Foundation is committed to the "HR Strategy for Researchers" (HRS4R) and has an OTM-R policy in place.

Table 1. Scientific positions

BC3 Scientific Positions	
Senior level	<p>Scientific Director – Senior level Position with: strong experience in managing teams, funding attraction capacity; solid research track and international research experience. Type of Contract: High Level Management Contract</p>
	<p>Ikerbasque Professor – Senior level directly recruited by IKERBASQUE through an international call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The applicants must have their PhD completed before January 2009 (for 2017 call). - Only researchers with a solid research track, senior level and international research experience are considered. <p>Type of contract: Indefinite position</p>
	<p>BC3 Research Professor – Senior level researcher with more than 7 years of research experience after having obtained his/her PhD. Type of contract: Indefinite position</p>
	<p>Ikerbasque Research Fellow/ Associate - Senior level directly recruited by IKERBASQUE through an international call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The applicants must have their PhD completed between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2014 for the call of 2017. This eligibility period might be extended under special circumstances such as maternity or long-term illness. - Promising young researchers with a solid research track and international experience. <p>Type of contract: Tenure-track style 5/6-year contract or Indefinite in case of Associates</p>
	<p>BC3 Research Fellow – Senior level researcher with more than 4 years of experience after having obtained his/her PhD. Type of contract: Project based contract/ Tenure-track style 5/6-year contract or indefinite Expected duration: Linked to project duration/ linked to the tenure-track duration/ indefinite</p>
Early Career level	<p>BC3 Post-Doctoral Researcher – Early career Researcher who has recently obtained his/her PhD Type of contract: Project based contract/ Tenure-track style 5/6-year contract Expected duration: Linked to project duration</p>
	<p>BC3 Predoctoral researchers– Early career researcher part of a PhD programme. Type of contract: Project based contract/ Predoctoral Contract Expected duration: Linked to project duration/grant duration</p>

	<p>Research Assistant – A researcher whose function is to assist the most senior level researchers in their daily scientific activity.</p> <p>Type of contract: Project based contract</p> <p>Expected duration: Linked to project duration</p>
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BC3 Technical categories

Considering the new innovation (modellers/programmers) or technical (laboratory technicians/communication specialists) profile needs of BC3, the Management Committee celebrated on the 24th of January 2019, agreed to define new Technical HR categories (Tech assistant and Tech officer) and from 2022 a senior category has been also included, Tech. Manager.

- Technical assistant or analyst (equivalent to a Early Career position)
- Technical officer (equivalent to a post doc)
- Technical Manager (equivalent to a more senior position, such as research fellows)

BC3 technical staff will be directly recruited and contracted by BC3. Usually those profiles contracted directly by BC3, are people contracted to work in a specific research project funded by competitive or non-competitive fund/grant. This means that the contracts are linked to the conditions established by the project or by the funding organization. With this approach, in some cases, it could happen that BC3 must rely on the OTM-R policies of the funding organizations, such as, Governments, International Agencies, ... Once the initial contracts are finished, in case of new recruitment, BC3 will review the current recruitment scenario and, if necessary, publish a job offer following the procedure set out in this policy.

Table 2. Innovation or Technical positions

BC3 Innovation or Technical Positions	
Senior level	<p>Technical manager – An experienced technical profile whose function is to lead a group of technical staff, define policies, develop high level technical tasks (IT, communication, stakeholder engagement) or software programmes/models or lead technical strategies of a RL or BC3.</p> <p>Type of contract: Project based contract or indefinite</p> <p>Expected duration: Linked to project duration or indefinite</p>
Early Career level	<p>Technical officer – A experienced technical profile whose function is to develop laboratory technical tasks or software programmes/models assisted by a more senior researcher.</p> <p>Type of contract: Project based contract or indefinite</p> <p>Expected duration: Linked to project duration or indefinite</p>
	<p>Technical assistant or analyst – Early career level assistant with technical profile whose function is to assist the most senior level researchers in their daily technical activity (laboratory assistance or programmer/modellers).</p> <p>Type of contract: Project based contract or indefinite</p> <p>Expected duration: Linked to project duration or indefinite</p>

5. Recruitment procedure at BC3

Considering the scope and information provided in the previous sections, the profiles that BC3's OTM-R+GM policy covers for scientific staff are explained below (profiles directly recruited by BC3).

Scientific Unit recruitment procedure

Table 4. BC3 Scientific Positions/Contracts and Evaluation Panels.

BC3 Scientific Positions	
Senior level	<p>Scientific Director – Senior level Position with: proven track record in the area of climate change and at least 15 years research experience after the completion of the PhD. He/ She should also have experience in managing a research institution and have international reputation in the field. The candidates may also demonstrate a record of invited presentations in well-established international conferences, granted projects, awards, prizes etc.</p> <p>Functions: Defines the scientific goals and research topics of the centre. Guarantees excellence in the scientific production, execution and monitoring of the whole research centre.</p> <p>Type of Contract: High Level Management Contract</p> <p>Evaluation panel: Internal and External Panel Internal: Previous Scientific Director, 2 Ikerbasque Professors External: ISAC Member, IKERBASQUE Director</p>
	<p>BC3 Research Professor – Senior level researcher with more than 7 years of research experience after having obtained his/her PhD.</p> <p>Functions: Coordinates a RL or a RG, ensures the excellence of the RL or RG in terms of scientific production, talent attraction and retention, and guarantees the economic sustainability of the RL or RG</p> <p>Evaluation panel: Internal and External Panel Internal: Scientific Director, MC Members External: ISAC Member</p>
	<p>BC3 Research Fellow – Senior level researcher with more than 4 years of experience after having obtained his/her PhD.</p> <p>Functions: Coordinates Projects, ensures the excellence project and project members in terms of scientific production, talent attraction and retention.</p> <p>Evaluation panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, Principal Investigator (PI) of the project, RL coordinator</p>
Early Career level	<p>BC3 Post-Doctoral Researcher – Early Career researcher who has recently obtained his/her PhD</p> <p>Functions: conducts research activities under the direction of a Research Fellow or Professor with the aim of achieving excellence</p> <p>Evaluation panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, PI of the project</p>
	<p>BC3 Predoctoral Researcher – Early Career researcher part of a PhD programme.</p> <p>Functions: conducts research activities to support research projects with the aim of developing the PhD thesis</p> <p>Evaluation panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, PI of the project/ Supervisor</p>
	<p>Research Assistant – Early Career level researcher whose function is to assist the most senior level researchers in their daily scientific activity.</p> <p>Functions: research assistance within research projects</p> <p>Evaluation panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, PI of the project/ Supervisor</p>

Table 5. BC3 Innovation or Technical Positions/Contracts and Evaluation Panels.

BC3 Innovation or Technical Positions	
Senior level	<p>Technical Manager – More than 5 years of experience technical profile. Functions: to lead a group of technical profiles, define policies, develop high level technical tasks (IT, communication, stakeholder engagement) or software programmes/models Evaluation Panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, PI of the project</p>
Early Career level	<p>Technical officer – A 2-3 years of experience technical profile. Functions: to develop laboratory or specialists technical tasks or software programmes/models assisted by a more senior researcher or technical manager Evaluation Panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, PI of the project</p>
	<p>Technical assistant or analyst – Early Career level assistant with technical profile Functions: to assist the most senior level researchers/technical officers and managers in their daily technical activity (laboratory assistance or programmer/modellers). Evaluation panel: Internal Panel Internal: Scientific Director, PI of the project/ Supervisor</p>

The recruitment process for the scientific and innovation/technical positions in BC3 has 4 steps and a 5th one for improvement:

1. LAUNCHING THE JOB OFFER

The main reasons to launch a job offer in BC3 are:

- Specific research/technical profile is needed to develop an externally funded project; or,
- The publication of a competitive call where BC3 could act as host institution or
- Comply with the specific requirements of the funding sources.

For any of those cases, the job offer must be aligned with the active Strategy of the centre and BC3 must ensure that counts with the economic resources, facilities or any other resource to guarantee the successful integration of the researcher or technical staff in our centre.

The People department provides to the PI the template to fill with the position requirements. All BC3 job offers should have the same look and coherence, including at least the following information;

- ✓ Job offer title
- ✓ Introduction of the job offer
- ✓ Information about the project
- ✓ Job description
- ✓ Key responsibilities
- ✓ Main requirements/skills
- ✓ Benefits and work environment
- ✓ Terms of contract
- ✓ Salary *
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Additional information

- ✓ Application procedure
- ✓ Deadline to apply
- ✓ Contact info for informal enquiries
- ✓ Logo & Funding

Examples of previous calls are available here: info.bc3research.org/job-offers

*Regarding salary information, if the project related to this position has a specific salary budget taking into account the categories mentioned in this policy, such salary shall be specified in the Job offer. If a flexible budget is allowed, a salary range can be indicated.

Once the offer is designed, the PI should send it to PEOPLE for validation, approval and publication.

2. PUBLICATION OF THE JOB OFFER

BC3 publishes all the research/technical positions and all of them are open. BC3 uses its own means to publish the job offer, such as, institutional websites (www.bc3research.org; <https://info.bc3research.org>; <http://aries.integratedmodelling.org/> ; and, any other BC3 site) and social media, but also extends the publication to other sources (in case there are financial resources to pay those sources or they are free) such as:

- [ScienceCareers.eu](https://sciencecareers.euraxess.org/) and [Euraxess](https://euraxess.org/) portals
- [AcademicPositions.eu](https://academicpositions.euraxess.org/) or [ResearchGate](https://researchgate.net/)
- Mailing lists of the specific area of science: The Principal launching the call selects the networks or mailing lists to be used to share the job offer.

The BC3 Communication will post the offer and the People department will send an email to the PI or evaluation panel with a secure link to access the applications list and content at all times. This information will be stored in Drive and the applicant's list will be updated in real time.

All the applications should be submitted through an online form, and the system will confirm the correct submission to the applicants. The data requested in the form include name, email, gender, nationality, CV, cover letter as well as other relevant documentation. BC3 will gather data such as gender and nationality only for statistical purposes.

The selection panel will manage this information with due privacy (Regulation EU 2016/679 on the protection of personal data of natural persons), since the applicants agree in providing this information only for this process so BC3 won't use those data for any other purpose different than the one stated in the form.

When the deadline comes, the BC3 communication will close the job offer and the People department will send an email informing the PI.

After the completion of this process, candidates receive a very simple survey on how the application process has turned out. This feedback fosters the continuous improvement of the People department.

3. EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES

The panel to evaluate the job offer candidates depends on the category as explained in Tables 4 and 5.

BC3's selection panels are made up of staff with experience in the evaluation of scientific or technical profiles and are familiar with the HRS4R and OTM-R principles. BC3 strives to apply an intersectional approach in its recruitment policy by planning and implementing its processes in a way that is neutral to the gender, ethnicity, geography, etc. of the individuals.

Thus, a **binding composition of the selection panel** has been established, which will include:

1. Principal investigator of the Project (PI)
2. A member of the People department
3. A member of the project or same Research Line. *This person must be Senior researcher.

In addition to the above-mentioned members, a Senior researcher from a different research line may be invited to join the panel, in this case this participation is strongly recommended but not compulsory.

A minimum of 30% participation of women is required.

- If the panel is made up of 3 members, the participation of at least 1 woman must be ensured.
- If the panel is made up of 4 members, the participation of at least 2 women must be ensured.

If it is not possible to committ with this requirement, it must be justified.

Phases in the evaluation of candidates

There are 3 stages in the evaluation process:

1. First screening

-> **Responsible:** People department

-> **Tasks to develop:** the department will select the candidates that meet the main criteria set out in the offer and will also prepare a screening file for the selection panel to initiate the interview process.

2. Assessment of applications and first interview

->**Responsible:** Selection Panel

->**Tasks to develop:**

- Nomination of the members of the selection panel.
- Evaluation of the first screening.
- Management of interviews to select the adequate person according to:
 - Main job requirements
 - Technical and cross-cutting skills
 - Other desirable skills

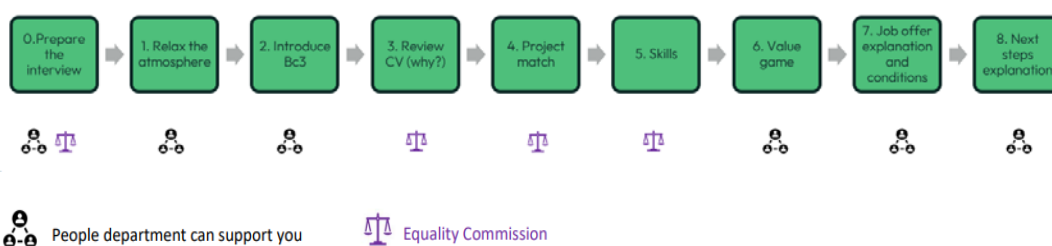
* In this stage, the working conditions will not be discussed, since the purpose is to evaluate the match with the position based on skills and experience. The

working conditions will be discussed in the next stage directly with the principal investigator (PI).

- The committee will write a short report on the selection process that will be sent to People department.

In November 2022 the Equality Commission together with the HRS4R working group developed a facultative **step by step interview guide** intended to offer advice with the aim of making the interview process fair and equal for all candidates. This document was created to avoid biased decisions in what concerns gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, nationality or any other aspect that could be discriminatory.

The selection panel will be advised to review and understand this guide before starting the interview process.



Either with these resources or with others chosen by the selection panel, the applications received will be evaluated and interviews will be made to reach the result – the candidate.

In case of having different candidates that have passed the same external call, such as, Ramón y Cajal, Juan de la Cierva, Ikerbasque Professorship or Fellowship, FPI, FPU, FPT ... and BC3's has to select among candidates, because it cannot support all the candidacies, the Scientific Director with the support of the Management Committee will select the most adequate candidate/s considering BC3's Strategic Objectives.

3. Negotiation of labor conditions

-> **Responsible:** Principal investigator of the Project (PI)

-> **Tasks to develop:**

- Negotiate the working conditions that will frame the professional relationship with the candidate. The PI may carry out the desired conversations.
- Share with People department the agreed conditions.
- People department will prepare the offer letter, that will be shared with Scientific Director or Operations Manager for the signature.
- The PI will authorize People department to send the offer letter to the candidate.
- After accepting the offer, the selection process will be officially closed (the rest of the applicants will be informed through an email sent by People department).

4. CONTRACT NEGOTIATION AND WELCOME

After the selection of the candidate, the People department will start the contracting procedure. There are some conditions that could be negotiated during the negotiation phase, considering the limits set up by the funding scheme: starting date of the contract, or resources that BC3 could offer to the employee.

Once the negotiation phase is closed, BC3 will submit the employment contract with the agreed conditions.

In order to facilitate the integration of the contracted person within the centre, BC3 has defined a Welcome Plan, containing detailed information on the tasks/activities to be performed during the first days in the centre. These activities include not only professional advice but also personal advice.

5. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BC3 will evaluate on an annual basis the results of their recruiting process with the aim of improving the overall process, in terms of transparency, publicity, clarity and alignment of the recruited person and the job offer. For that aim, the HR Working Group will perform the analysis and develop an improvement report. Following this procedure, BC3 has produced its 4th edition of the OTM-R+ GM policy.