Sustainable Careers for Researcher Empowerment

WP4
Implementation of the Research Career Framework

Deliverable 4.2
Report on Trials to Implement SECURE Research Career Framework

SECURE
Sustainable Careers for
Researcher Empowerment

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RESPONSIBILITY

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Full Name
Adoc	Adoc Talent Management
EC	European Commission
EFfRC	European Framework for Research Careers
ERA	European Research Area
ERAC	European Research Area and Innovation Committee
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, and Occupations classification
EURES	European Employment Services
HRS4R	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
PLOCAN	Oceanic Platform of the Canary Islands
RA	Recruitment Agency
RCF	Research Career Framework
ResearchComp	European Charter for Researchers, the European Competence Framework for Researchers
RFO	Research-funding Organisation
RI	Research Infrastructure
RPO	Research-Performing Organisation
TGB	Technopolis Group Belgium
TTLM	Tenure Track-like Model
UCY	University of Cyprus
UEFISCDI	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, and Innovation Funding
UNIRI	University of Rijeka
UNL	Nova University Lisbon
RC	Recommendation

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1. Introduction

The SECURE project aims to enhance career structures for researchers across Europe by developing a comprehensive framework known as the Research Career Framework (RCF). The SECURE RCF builds upon existing best practices and aligns with several key European initiatives (European Framework for Research Careers (EFfRC), the European Charter for Researchers, the European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp), and the European Skills, Competences, and Occupations (ESCO) classification to improve research careers and reduce precarity.

As detailed in Deliverable D2.1: First draft of SECURE Research Career Framework (*DOI: 10.5281/ZENODO.10776715*) of the SECURE project provides an initial response to and interpretation of the new European Framework for Research Careers (EFfRC). Figure 1 illustrates how the RCF is structured around the 8 pillars and 44 recommendations of the EFfRC, ensuring comprehensive coverage of key aspects of research careers.

Figure 1. European Framework for Research Careers

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4
Researchers, Research Managers, and Research Technicians in the European Research Area	Recognition, Interoperability, and Comparability of Researchers' Careers	Recruitment and Working Conditions	Researchers Skilled for Intersectoral and Interdisciplinary Careers and for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
#1-6	#7-10	#11-15	#16-25
Pillar 5	Pillar 6	Pillar 7	Pillar 8
Career Assessment, Development, and Progression	Balanced Circulation of Talents and Making the Union an Attractive Destination	Support Actions for Research Careers	Monitoring of Research Careers
#26-30	#31-32	#33-39	#40-44

D2.1 proposes a set of 150 SECURE RCF actions for implementing the EFfRC at RFOS and RPOs, addressing related challenges for each recommendation. These actions were meant to provide clear, practical guidance while allowing flexibility for organisations to adapt them to their strategic interests and needs.

During the SECURE project, the trial organisations selected and interpreted a number of these actions, which were integrated into individual action plans for each trial as detailed in D4.1. Actions plan to implement RCF.

This document, D4.2: *Report on the Trials to Implement the SECURE RCF*, includes a detailed overview of the selected actions, the implementation process, challenges faced, key achievements, and lessons learned over the 12-month trial period from February 2024 until January 2025. The trial organisations include 3 Research-performing Organisations (RPOs), 1 Research-funding Organisation (RFO), 1 Research Infrastructure (RI), and 1 Recruitment Agency (RA) (Table 1).

The outcomes of these trials, combined with extensive consultations conducted throughout the project, will serve as crucial inputs for the development of the final version of the SECURE RCF (D2.3: Final Version of

Research Career Framework). This iterative process ensures that the framework is not only theoretically sound but also practically applicable across various research contexts. By incorporating real-world implementation experiences and feedback from diverse stakeholders, the final SECURE RCF will be refined to address the complex challenges of research careers more effectively, providing a robust and adaptable tool for enhancing the European research landscape.

Table 1. Trial organisations to implement the SECURE RCF

Trial #	Organisation	Acronym	Organisation Type	Country
1	University of Cyprus	UCY	RPO	Cyprus
2	University of Rijeka	UNIRI		Croatia
3	Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	UNL		Portugal
4	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding	UEFISCDI	RFO	Romania
5	Consorcio para el diseño, construcción, equipamiento y explotación de la Plataforma Oceánica de Canarias	PLOCAN	RI	Spain
6	Adoc Talent Management	ADOC	RA	France

2. Trials and challenges

2.1 Trial 1 – UCY (RPO)

Cyprus has steadily expanded its research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem over the last two decades, with universities, research institutes, and private-sector partnerships contributing to a more vibrant landscape. Despite this progress, researchers in Cyprus often face career precarity, especially at the early-career (R1) and mid-career (R2–R3) stages, where short-term contracts and limited tenure opportunities are common. This environment hampers long-term planning and stability, making it challenging for Cypriot institutions to retain and attract talent.

A related issue is funding instability, driven by project-based grant cycles and a reliance on external financing. While the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digital Policy has introduced new funding mechanisms and sought to encourage intersectoral mobility, these efforts remain uneven in practice. The country is also grappling with how to foster "brain circulation" rather than losing promising researchers to more established research hubs abroad.

Against this backdrop, the University of Cyprus, the nation's flagship research-performing organisation, has recognised the need to align its internal policies and career structures with broader European standards, including the European Charter & Code for Researchers. The SECURE project's focus on strengthening career frameworks and tenure-track pathways is thus timely and relevant, offering UCY a chance to systematically address longstanding challenges related to sustainability, intersectoral collaboration, and high-quality research.

While UCY has improved its research output and visibility, it still contends with five core challenges surrounding researcher careers:

- **Mapping to R1–R4 profiles**: UCY lacked a fully articulated framework for classifying researchers by career stage, creating inconsistencies in recruitment, progression, and expectations.

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- **Career precarity and funding instability**: Heavy reliance on short-term grants and insufficient availability of stable positions hinder the career prospects of postdoctoral and mid-career researchers.
- **Administrative burden**: Researchers often navigate bureaucratic processes that could be optimised. Limited institutional support channels contribute to time lost on tasks outside core research.
- **Evolving research assessment**: Like many institutions, UCY has focused on metrics such as citation counts. There was a recognised need to embrace more holistic evaluation criteria that include open science and societal impact.
- **Stakeholder engagement**: Working effectively with national funding bodies, industry, and policy makers was a priority. UCY recognised that addressing research career precarity requires a coordinated approach across multiple sectors.

2.2 Trial 2 – UNIRI (RPO)

At the University of Rijeka, research assessment is framed by national legislation, which sets broad employment criteria for researchers. However, these criteria still rely heavily on quantitative metrics, making it difficult to fairly address, recognise, incentivise and reward diversity of academic contributions. Teaching, leadership, community engagement, and international collaboration are often undervalued.

To address this imbalance, there is an evident need to move towards a more qualitative and socially responsible evaluation system. This shift will allow for a fairer recognition and reward system, one that values the multifaceted nature of academic careers. Academic careers are more complex and layered than research professions in general, and this complexity needs to be reflected in the assessment process.

Via the SECURE initiative, UNIRI is actively tackling key challenges, including:
- **Broadening the definition of researchers**: Recognising roles beyond research, such as policy support, community engagement, scientific communication, and open science practices.
- **Refining Career Frameworks**: Establishing structured researcher profiles (R1-R4) to provide clearer career progression pathways.
- **Strengthening Support for Early Career Researchers (ECRs)**: Enhancing development programmes through the UNIRI Doctoral School.
- **Balancing national and institutional criteria:** Introducing institutional guidelines that complement national employment regulations for a more inclusive and comprehensive assessment process.
- **Attracting and retaining talent**: Addressing resources' gaps to increase competitiveness and encourage expatriate researchers to return.

UNIRI is leading the way in transforming research assessment by implementing:
- **A shift towards qualitative over quantitative metrics**: Moving beyond citation-based evaluations metrics to focus on competency-based frameworks.
- **Alignment with European standards**: Promoting the European Researcher Competence Framework to enhance global competitiveness.
- **New researcher classifications**: Introducing clear R1-R4 profiles to streamline career development and assessment.
- **Recognition of diverse researcher roles**: Acknowledging expertise beyond research, in a broad spectrum of evaluation criteria referring to academic knowledge and skills, skills and norms of academic and institutional behaviour, and personal qualities, knowledge and skills.
- **Flexible reward systems**: Advocating for incentives that recognise excellence within and beyond the existing framework.

2.3 Trial 3 – UNL (RPO)

NOVA University Lisbon is a Portuguese public Higher Education Institution whose mission is to serve society through knowledge & education, locally and globally, by developing teaching and research of excellence that create significant social and economic value. With 40 R&D Units, 92% of which have been rated as Excellent or Very Good by international panels, participation in 10 Associated Laboratories, 15 Research Infrastructures and 12 Collaborative Laboratories involving both academic and non-academic entities, NOVA contributes significantly to scientific and technological advancement. The global recognition of NOVA is further strengthened by over 25,000 scientific publications in the last 5 years, with 50% of articles published in international collaboration. Additionally, NOVA actively participates in international networks and European projects—under the H2020 and Horizon Europe programs, the university has already secured approximately 200 million euros in competitive projects, with a growing number of international consortia led by its researchers across various scientific fields. Notably, NOVA leads nationally, per capita, in prestigious grants awarded by the ERC, with 38 projects secured, a testament to the excellence of research produced at the institution, which underscores its commitment to attracting and retaining talent and amplifies its impact.

NOVA invests in knowledge valorisation, fostering partnerships with companies and the creation of startups. In 2024 alone, 25 new patent applications were submitted, and 3 new spin-offs were recognized. Each year, around 5,000 students receive training in entrepreneurship. This focus is reflected in the approximately 2 billion euros generated by startups founded by NOVA alumni and several active license agreements.

Despite the university's strong emphasis on innovation, excellence in research, and international collaboration, the broader structural challenges within the Portuguese academic and research system persist. Many researchers at NOVA, like their counterparts across Portugal, often face precarious employment conditions, short-term contracts, and uncertain career prospects. This situation can hinder long-term research planning, limit the ability to attract and retain top talent, and create barriers to fully realizing the potential of the scientific community. At the beginning of the trial, while the majority of full-time Professors at UNL hold permanent contracts, 87% of full-time researchers on the research career track were employed under fixed-term contracts, with the average age at career entrance for an Assistant Researcher being over 42 years old.

Via the SECURE initiative, UNL is actively tackling these key challenges, setting as its main priorities:
- **Reducing the percentage of researchers on precarious contracts:** Aiming to at least triple the number of researchers with permanent contracts by 2028.
- **Lowering the average age of entry into research careers:** Targeting a 10% reduction in the average age for starting teaching or research careers by 2035.
- **Expanding and promoting alternative career opportunities**: Creating and enhancing career pathways for young researchers beyond traditional academic roles.
- **Promoting transparent and fair systems:** Establishing clear, equitable frameworks for promotion and the recognition of merit.
- **Applying for the HR Excellence in Research Award**: Formally endorsing the European Charter for Researchers and committing to its implementation at the institutional level, as a catalyst for institutional change and alignment with the main principles outlined in the Charter.

These efforts reflect UNL's commitment to fostering a more stable, inclusive, and supportive environment for researchers.

2.4 Trial 4 – UEFISCDI (RFO)

UEFISCDI is the main funder of competitive research in Romania, this organization serves as a policy adviser for science, innovation, and higher education policies under the Ministry of Education and Research. It implements the majority of the programs under the National Research, Development, and Innovation Plan 2022-2027, which is the operational instrument of the National Strategy on Research, Innovation, and Smart Specialisation for 2022-2027.

Romania's research system faces insufficient financing, brain drain, and fragmented career pathways. The new Law No. 183/2024 introduces structured research careers aligned with R1-R4 profiles, but additional measures are needed. Through the SECURE pilot, UEFISCDI explored funding programs that support researchers' development, attract and reintegrate returning researchers, and raised awareness of the wide diversity of research careers both within and beyond academia. UEFISCDI also promoted European frameworks like the European Charter for Researchers, the HRS4R strategy, ResearchComp and EURAXESS portal and ERA Talent Platform among researchers. The SECURE trial allowed UEFISCDI to explore how these principles can be effectively implemented in Romania, ensuring that researchers benefit from the same high standards as their European peers.

Via the SECURE initiative, UEFISCDI is actively tackling key challenges, including:
- **Promoting the mobility and training** of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.
- **Attracting and reintegrate** researchers returning from abroad.
- Enhancing **researchers skills.**
- Fostering **collaboration with industry**.
- Promoting an **entrepreneurial culture.**
- Improving the **research assessment system**.

2.5 Trial 5 – PLOCAN (RI)

The Oceanic Platform of the Canary Islands plays a crucial role in advancing marine science and technology. As a Unique Scientific and Technological Infrastructure (ICTS), PLOCAN fosters research and innovation to address global challenges related to climate change, marine renewable energy, ocean conservation and restauration.

In Spain, researchers often face career instability and limited tenure opportunities. This job insecurity affects not only young researchers but also those with significant experience in the academic field.

Via the SECURE initiative, PLOCAN is actively tackling key challenges, including:
- **Refine career frameworks**: Establishing structured profiles for research managers and technicians aligned with European initiatives (RCF, ESCO, EFfRC, RMComp).
- **Integrate Open Science into evaluation processes**: Revising internal procedures and promoting open access to research data, fostering collaboration and inclusivity.
- **Fostering entrepreneurship and innovation**: Through internal workshops on intellectual property and encouraging participation in related events, PLOCAN supports researchers in exploring entrepreneurship, start-ups, and spin-offs. This innovation-driven approach encourages researchers to expand beyond traditional academic roles and create tangible solutions for society.
- **Gender Equality and Inclusive working conditions**: PLOCAN works on improving working conditions by focusing on inclusivity and gender equality. This involves reviewing policies and implementing best practices to ensure equal opportunities for PLOCAN team.
- **Attracting talent**: Through platforms like EURAXESS and the ERA Talent Platform, PLOCAN aims to

broaden its outreach, enhance visibility, and attract highly skilled professionals to strengthen its research and innovation capabilities.

2.6 Trial 6 -ADOC (RA)

Researchers in France face significant challenges, including high competition for permanent academic positions, job instability due to temporary contracts, and limited access to career development opportunities. These uncertainties prevent career planning and affect both individual researchers and the research and innovation ecosystem as a whole. Through the SECURE project, Adoc Talent Management has implemented initiatives designed to bridge the gap between academia and industry by testing best practices from academic career support to the private sector. Adoc Talent Management work aims to create an ecosystem where researchers' expertise is fully recognized and valued in multiple professional contexts. By promoting researcher career development frameworks that align with both public and private sectors, Adoc Talent Management facilitates transitions, induces higher job satisfaction, and enhances innovation potential for the whole society.

Through the SECURE RCF initiative, Adoc Talent Management aims to create an ecosystem where researchers' expertise and competencies are fully recognized and valued in multiple professional contexts, particularly by bridging the understanding between non-academic employers and PhD holders regarding their potential contributions.

Through the SECURE project, Adoc Talent Management has implemented initiatives designed to bridge the gap between academia and industry by demonstrating that best practices from academic career support can be successfully applied to the private sector. This includes the following key challenges:

- **Facilitating Intersectoral transitions:** Adoc Talent Management works in a structured scoring model to align research roles with the existing European R1-R4 framework. This approach aims to provide a standardized method to evaluate research positions based on experience, skills, and responsibilities, ensuring consistency across different sectors.
- **Identifying key factors that shape researchers' career decisions:** Through extensive data analysis, key factors influencing job changes can be identified, including motivations for leaving, expectations for new roles, and challenges in organizational adaptation. These insights help recruiters and career advisors anticípate risks and align candidates with suitable long-term roles.

- **Applying structured career progression models from academia** to the private sector to create sustainable career pathways for PhDs, ensuring long-term stability and professional growth.

3. Actions selected, key achievements and lessons learnt

This section is structured into two parts. The first focuses on detailing the specific actions selected by each trial organizations. The second part presents the joint actions carried out collaboratively.

3.1. Specific actions implemented by the trial organizations

3.1.1 Trial 1 – UCY (RPO)

Table 2 shows the actions selected by UCY to implement the SECURE RCF and table 3 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 2. Actions selected by UCY to implement the SECURE RCF

Action #	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	Progress status
UCY1	1	5	R1-R4	Adopt the R1-R4 profiles or map existing organisational profiles onto the R1-R4 profiles	Completed
UCY2	2	7	Recognition/ Interoperability	Engage with key stakeholders on recognition and support of diverse research careers	Completed
UCY3	3	12	Working Conditions	Review and improve support to researchers with the fulfilment of administrative duties	Completed
UCY4	4	17	ResearchComp	Raise awareness on ResearchComp and transversal skills/competences for researchers	On track
UCY5	5	27	Research Assessment	Inform research assessors on the added value of reformed research assessment criteria	Completed
UCY6	5	30	Tenure Track	Engage with national research-funding bodies on need for long-term funding for TTLMs	Completed
UCY7	6	31	Competitive Union	Review and internally discuss support to attract and reintegrate returning researchers	Completed
UCY8	7	36	Charter Encouragement	Raise awareness on the revised Charter among researchers	Completed

Table 3. Details on the implementation of selected actions

Action #	Implementation
UCY1	Some profiles were found not to fully align with R1-R4 definitions, so departmental heads are being involved to refine the criteria. The next steps include refining the mapping for new hires and embedding R1-R4 definitions into recruitment/job descriptions for consistency.
UCY2	The stakeholder mapping has been completed, revealing overlapping interests and varying levels of relationship with UCY. A workshop/roundtable was organized, in connection with Pillars 5, 27, and 7, 36, to gather insights on diverse research careers. The event saw increased attendance and cross-fertilization of ideas. Moving forward, a living stakeholder registry will be maintained, and periodic updates will be held. Annual thematic conferences may be considered to continue engagement and foster collaboration.
UCY3	The review and improvement of administrative support for researchers has been completed, focusing on key areas such as process mapping, feedback mechanisms, administrative liaisons, and the creation of guides. Inefficiencies in processes were identified, and a continuous improvement cycle was established with regular staff training. A feedback tool was implemented for researchers, leading to the creation of a dedicated support service. Additionally, administrative liaisons were appointed in departments to enhance communication and direct support. Institutional guides were revised to clarify administrative procedures and will be integrated into orientation programs for new researchers.
UCY4	The organization of a workshop/seminar on ResearchComp and the importance of transversal skills (such as communication, project management, leadership, and interdisciplinary collaboration) was not completed within the planned timeframe due to availability constraints. The event has been rescheduled.
UCY5	The workshop/seminar on reformed research assessment criteria, focusing on the importance of open science, peer review, valuing locally relevant research, and gender aspects of research assessment, has been completed as planned.

UCY6	A follow-up meeting with the Ministry for Research and Innovation representatives has been successfully scheduled and completed. It focused on discussing the response to initial communications and further advocating for long-term funding for TTLMs. To ensure continued momentum, periodic policy reviews will be scheduled to address emerging needs.
UCY7	A meeting with the ad-hoc committee on Excellent and Returning Researchers has been successfully held, where tangible actions to support returning researchers were discussed and decided upon. Early arrangements and follow-ups ensured the availability of committee representatives for the meeting. Moving forward, policies will be adapted based on the feedback received, and best practices will be shared campus wide.
UCY8	A workshop/seminar to raise awareness on the revised Charter among researchers has been successfully organized and completed. This activity was carried out with staff efforts to ensure its success.

The SECURE trial activities at UCY resulted in tangible improvements:

1. **Clearer researcher roles**: By mapping its internal profiles to R1–R4, UCY formalised expectations and progression steps, making career stages more transparent.
2. **Cultural shift toward diverse path recognition**: Workshops and stakeholder engagement spurred a broader acceptance of non-linear careers. Departments are increasingly open to integrating researchers with industry or entrepreneurial backgrounds.
3. **Streamlined administrative processes**: Feedback from researchers indicates that the new departmental liaisons and revised guides will contribute towards reducing administrative complexity.
4. **Momentum for Tenure Track-Like Models**: UCY gathered extensive best practices for TTLMs and opened discussions with funding bodies on long-term financial support. While implementation is ongoing, the groundwork laid during the pilot has galvanised both internal and external support.
5. **Increased capacity and awareness**: UCY staff and researchers have gained a deeper understanding of evolving European standards and global best practices. This heightened capacity positions UCY to lead further reforms in Cyprus.

Building on these successes, UCY plans to institutionalise the lessons learned and maintain momentum. Several immediate actions stand out:

1. **Expand stakeholder workshops:** UCY envisages to create a regular forum for dialogue with industry, policymakers, and researchers, promoting ongoing feedback and collaboration opportunities.
2. **Continue administrative reforms:** A dedicated task force will monitor administrative processes, collecting researcher input to maintain efficient workflows and to refine guidelines, especially as funding and reporting requirements evolve.
3. **Deepen collaboration with funders:** Sustained engagement with the Deputy Ministry of Research and Innovation is vital to secure multi-year financing streams for new tenure-track positions. UCY will advocate more vigorously for stable, long-range funding lines that ensure career continuity for promising researchers.
4. **Enhance support for returning researchers:** The ad-hoc committee on returning researchers is expected to finalise proposals for bridging funds, partial salary support, or mentorship programs. The aim is to cultivate Cyprus as a **talent hub** rather than a transit point.
5. **Remain active in ReICO discussions:** UCY will continue collaborating with the OECD and European Commission, offering feedback on ReICO's development. By aligning its data collection practices with ReICO guidelines, UCY can better track researcher outcomes and inform strategic institutional decisions.

6. **Embed SECURE principles in daily practice:** Ultimately, UCY sees the SECURE framework not as a short-term project but as a blueprint for long-lasting cultural and policy transformation. Each department is encouraged to reflect these principles in its recruitment, appraisals, and professional development processes.

In summary, the SECURE trial has **catalysed a series of meaningful reforms** at UCY, from clarifying career stages to exploring tenure-track pathways. By continuing to focus on stable funding, administrative efficiency, and international best practices, UCY seeks to maintain its trajectory toward becoming a leader in **sustainable**, **innovative**, and **globally recognised** research careers, ultimately strengthening the broader Cypriot R&I ecosystem.

3.1.2 Trial 2 – UNIRI (RPO)

Table 4 shows the actions selected by UNIRI to implement the SECURE RCF and table 5 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 4. Actions selected by UNIRI to implement the SECURE RCF

Action #	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	*Implementation activities*
UNI1	1	1	Researchers	Adopt the EFfRC definition of 'researcher' in organisational regulations and policies	*Completed*
UNI2	1	3	Research Managers	Define a clear profile for research manager positions with their roles and responsibilities	*Completed*
UNI3	1	3	Research Managers	Support ongoing training, development, and professionalisation of research managers	*Completed*
UNI4	2	7	Recognition/ Interoperability	Engage with key stakeholders on recognition and support of diverse research careers	*Completed*
UNI5	3	12	Working Conditions	Review and internally discuss providing commensurate remuneration for researchers	*Completed*
UNI6	4	16	Doctoral Training	Integrate policies and practices for Open Science into doctoral training programmes	*Completed*
UNI7	4	17	ResearchComp	Raise awareness on ResearchComp and transversal skills/competences for researchers	*Completed*
UNI8	5	27	Research Assessment	Recognise Open Science practices and societal impact of research in research assessment	*Completed*
UNI9	5	28	Assessment Initiatives	Collect and share best practices on reforming existing research assessment systems	*Completed*
UNI10	6	31	Competitive Union	Review and internally discuss support to attract and reintegrate returning researchers	*Minor issues*
UNI11	7	36	Charter Encouragement	Raise awareness on the revised Charter among researchers	*Completed*
UNI12	7	36	Charter Encouragement	Endorse and implement the revised Charter at organisations	*Completed*

Table 5. Details on the Implementation of selected actions

Action #	Implementation
UNI1	Vice-Rectors Gordan Jelenić and Saša Zelenika presented at the Expert Council for R&I and the Senate the need and rationale for amending the Rulebook on scientific, artistic, and innovation activities. The consolidated text of the Rulebook on scientific, artistic, and innovation activities has been accepted and is now published on the UNIRI website.
UNI2	The technical evaluation of the current job classification was carried out to improve efficiency, internal fairness, and ensure compliance with the new Civil Service Act, which establishes uniform rules for employment, promotion, and performance assessment in state administration. The final job classification for the University of Rijeka, focusing on fairness and efficiency, was adopted in October 2024 (M9). The new classification within the UNIRI Rectorate was approved at the end of October and has also received approval from the responsible Ministry.
UNI3	The University of Rijeka is actively involved in key bodies like EARMA, BESTPRAC, ASTP, EUA, and EUA CDE and plans to continue this engagement. UNIRI RMAs took part in various events, webinars, and workshops, and facilitated participation in national RM Roadmap consultations. However, the University seeks additional funding to increase on-site events and enhance local RMA engagement.
UNI4	Vice-Rector for Science and Art Gordan Jelenić, a member of the Expert Council for Research and Innovation and the Council for Science, participated in discussions on the policy for the Measures for the Improvement of Scientific Work at the University of Rijeka. On June 28, 2024, a call was announced for these measures, and the research professors for 2024 were awarded during a ceremony on October 27, 2024.
UNI5	The duration, learning outcomes, and ECTS credits for the OS-related training were determined in collaboration with representatives from the University Library of the University of Rijeka. The content and ECTS credits were finalized during a meeting of the Doctoral School Council. A total of 42 applicants from 10 faculties applied to participate in the YUFE DIOSI doctoral education model.
UNI6	Vice-Rector for Strategic Projects Saša Zelenika has consistently kept the members of the Expert Committee for Research and Innovation informed about ResearchComp and its related developments.
UNI7	The UNIRI OS Policy was adopted in January 2025. The Vice-Rector for Strategic Projects Saša Zelenika participated in 26 RC Committee meetings, advocating for the inclusion of OS in researchers' assessment criteria. Consequently, OS-related criteria for research and teaching were included in the RC proposal submitted to the Croatian National Council for Science, Higher Education, and Technological Development, which has not yet published the National criteria.
UNI8	The Vice-Rector for Strategic Projects Saša Zelenika actively participates in YUFE WP5 and the YERUN Academic Careers Working Group, exchanging best practices on EU, CoARA, and national activities. Key upcoming events include CoARA WG ACA meetings on May 28 and December 5, 2024, and a workshop on June 25, 2024. Task 1 meetings are also scheduled for February 16, March 19, and April 12. These efforts will continue beyond the project.
UNI9	The Expert Committee for Research and Innovation regularly analyses and evaluates the tendencies in this framework, e.g. those in the framework of CoARA (especially the WG on Reforming Academic Career Assessment and the WG on Early- and Mid-Career Researchers UNIRI is active in) but also in YERUN, in the Netherlands, in Finland, Norway as well as in other national and institutional settings.
UNI10	UNIRI management regularly discusses the returning researcher's scheme and the new Lump Sum Performance-Based Financing Agreement. Negotiations with the Ministry are ongoing, with the agreement expected to take effect by the 2025/2026 academic year. UNIRI has expressed strong support for the scheme, which continues despite the funding mechanism not being fully decided. Faculties remain interested, with new researchers arriving in 2024 and 2025. A dedicated Senate session on the agreement and the scheme will be held on February 6, 2025.
UNI11	The University of Rijeka renewed its HRS4R charter in August 2024 after a GAP analysis showed significant progress in aligning with HRS4R principles and EU policies. UNIRI updated its Action Plan, renewed its OTM-R policy in February 2024, and redefined internal processes, resulting in the renewal of its HRS4R

	status and HR Excellence in Research logo.
UNI12	This will be finalized once negotiations with MSEY are completed and the Lump-Sum Performance-Based Financing Agreement is in effect, expected by the beginning of the 2025/26 academic year.

Activities of the SECURE initiative at UNIRI have resulted in concrete advancements, such as:

1. **Clearer career framework for researchers:** UNIRI updated its Rulebook on scientific, artistic, and innovation activities to define the term "researcher" and trialled a new career framework aligned with the European Researcher Competence Framework (ResearchComp). This framework introduces structured researcher profiles (R1-R4), providing clearer career progression and reducing uncertainty for researchers at various stages.

2. **Defining and strengthening the role of research managers:** UNIRI has adopted a new job classification clearly describing different research managers' roles within the University rectorate and supported ongoing training, development, and professionalisation of research managers. In line with these efforts, the network of research managers at UNIRI held regular quarterly meetings and UNIRI research managers were actively involved in the important global RM-related initiatives and networks such as EARMA/INORMS, BESTPRAC, ASTP and RM Roadmap.

3. **Pilot testing of competency-based researcher evaluation**: As part of the SECURE trial, UNIRI has made significant progress by piloting a shift towards competency-based research assessment, moving away from traditional citation-driven methods. This new approach, outlined in the UNIRI Guidelines for Additional Criteria for the Selection to Academic, Artistic, Teaching, Collaborative, and Professional Positions, as well as the UNIRI Rulebook on scientific, artistic, and innovation activities, recognizes a broader range of contributions.

4. **Strengthening Early Career Researcher (ECR) support**: UNIRI has made substantial strides in expanding its support for ECRs, with a focus on developing essential transversal skills. Key initiatives include the creation of new skills and competence development programs through the UNIRI Doctoral School, as well as providing financial support via the UNIRI ECR funding scheme. These efforts are designed to better equip early career researchers for success in their academic and professional careers.

5. **Revising Institutional Guidelines for Fairer Career Assessment**: As part of the SECURE project, UNIRI has updated its institutional guidelines and policies, including the launch of a new HRS4R Action Plan for 2024-2027. These revised guidelines aim to ensure a more inclusive recruitment and promotion process by recognizing the full spectrum of academic contributions, extending beyond traditional research outputs. This shift is intended to create a more equitable environment for all researchers.

6. **Active Stakeholder in Research Assessment Reform Efforts:** The creation of the UNIRI CoARA Action Plan (2024-2027) has formalized expectations and progression stages in academic careers, enhancing transparency in professional pathways. This plan, which has gained recognition as a best-practice model, outlines strategies to modernize research evaluation at UNIRI. Key initiatives include aligning assessment practices with European standards, expanding qualitative evaluation criteria, and promoting open science and knowledge valorisation.

7. **Exploring the Implementation of a Tenure-Track Model**: UNIRI has worked to provide researchers with a clearer and more structured path to permanent academic positions. This has been achieved through the aforementioned policy improvements and the full utilization of national support mechanisms for returning researchers. These initiatives are focused on increasing job security and making research careers at UNIRI more attractive, with the ultimate goal of fostering a more sustainable and supportive academic environment.

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Building on these successes, UNIRI will focus on:

1. **Expanding Stakeholder Collaboration**: A regular forum for dialogue with researchers, policymakers, and key actors will be established, promoting continuous feedback and collaboration opportunities.
2. **Continuing Administrative Reforms**: A dedicated task force will monitor administrative processes, collecting researcher input to maintain efficient workflows and refine guidelines as funding and reporting requirements evolve.
3. **Strengthening Collaboration with Funders**: UNIRI will continue to engage closely with national authorities to secure long-term funding streams for stable academic positions, advocating for funding lines that ensure career continuity for promising researchers.
4. **Enhancing Support for Early Career Researchers**: Initiatives will be promoted to facilitate the return of researchers, with proposals for bridging funds, partial salary support, or mentorship programs, positioning UNIRI as a talent hub rather than a transit point.
5. **Ongoing Collaboration with International Bodies**: UNIRI will continue its active collaboration with the OECD and the European Commission, providing feedback on the development of research assessment frameworks. This will help align its practices with international guidelines and make data-driven strategic decisions.
6. **Embedding SECURE Principles into Daily Practice**: UNIRI views the SECURE framework not as a short-term project but as a foundation for long-lasting cultural and policy transformation. Each department is encouraged to reflect these principles in recruitment, evaluations, and professional development processes.

In summary, the SECURE initiative has catalysed meaningful reforms at UNIRI, from clarifying career pathways to exploring tenure-track models. By continuing to focus on sustainable funding, administrative efficiency, and international best practices, UNIRI aims to position itself as a leader in sustainable and innovative research careers, ultimately strengthening the regional research and innovation ecosystem.

3.1.3 Trial 3 – UNL (RPO)

Table 6 shows the actions selected by UNL to implement the SECURE RCF and table 7 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 6. Actions selected by UNL to implement the SECURE RCF

Action#	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	Progress status
UNL1	1	2	Intersectoral Mobility	Raise awareness on the wide diversity of research careers in and outside academia	*Completed*
UNL2	1	3	Research Managers	Support ongoing training, development, and professionalisation of research managers	*Completed*
UNL3	2	7	Recognition/ Interoperability	Engage with key stakeholders on recognition and support of diverse research careers	*Completed*
UNL4	3	12	Working Conditions	Review and internally discuss providing more permanent contracts to researchers	*Completed*
UNL5	4	17	ResearchComp	Raise awareness on ResearchComp and transversal skills/competences for researchers	*Completed*
UNL6	5	27	Research Assessment	Recognise Open Science practices and societal impact of research in research assessment	*Completed*
UNL7	5	27	Research Assessment	Monitor any reforms in research assessment criteria for negative and unwanted effects	*On track*
UNL8	5	29	Career Support	Review and improve the career support and professional development of researchers	*Completed*

UNL9	5	29	Career Support	Provide professional mentoring to researchers by experts in and outside the organisation	*On track*
UNL10	6	31	Competitive Union	Engage with key stakeholders to contribute to the balanced circulation of researchers	*Completed*
UNL11	7	36	Charter Encouragement	Raise awareness on the revised Charter among researchers	*Completed*
UNL12	7	37	HRS4R/Charter	Raise awareness on the HRS4R award and its relevance for researchers	*On track*
UNL13	7	37	HRS4R/Charter	Apply formally to receive the HRS4R award from the European Commission	*Completed*

Table 7. Details on the implementation of selected actions

Action #	Implementation
UNL1	The UNL website has been redesigned and includes now a preliminary dedicated career development section, ensuring all researchers are aware of the available resources and opportunities. A structured communication plan is being implemented, regularly updating the site and promoting participation in future career development initiatives. Additionally, an annual webinar plan is under development, with feedback gathered to continuously improve future efforts and ensure effective communication across diverse institutional channels. Effective resource allocation and timely decision-making are crucial for implementing an institutional plan for researchers' career development, with an emphasis on engaging motivated schools early and aligning expectations. Progress updates are regularly shared and reviewed during Strategic Research Council meetings, fostering strategic alignment across Schools and facilitating the exchange of established best practices.
UNL2	The mapping of research managers training programs and its analysis is complete, though it took longer due to incomplete surveys from some schools. A training program has been designed to address the identified needs and will be implemented in the first semester of 2025. UNL staff attended several conferences during the trial period, highlighting the value of in-person events for networking and sharing best practices in the Research Management domain. A draft on the new Regulation on Science Management careers has been drafted and widely discussed, but consensus among Schools has yet to be reached. Main challenges include the lack of national guidelines and legislation, currently under discussion.
UNL3	The mapping of initiatives that supports researchers' careers at UNL is complete, and discussions on career development began at the UNL Strategic Research Council in June 2024. The focus is shifting from grant writing and scientific development support to broader career opportunities beyond academia. Mentoring and intersectoral initiatives are already implemented in some of UNL's schools, with Vitae membership formalized, making available several career development tools and resources to the research community. A strategic plan and budget allocation will be approved to further support these mentoring initiatives, in addition to the plans of hiring over 220 researchers and professors under a permanent contract by October 2025.
UNL4	The regulation on researchers' careers at UNL has been revised with input from all UNL Schools and the alignment with the main principles of the Charter and CoARA, but its publication is pending the final approval of the Statutes of Research Careers in Portugal (ECIC), which is currently under debate in the Portuguese Parliament. Once the new ECIC is approved, UNL will make the necessary adjustments (if needed) and officially publish its updated regulation. Notably, UNL secured 228 permanent research and faculty positions through the FCT-Tenure program, with some researchers already hired. Challenges

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	include administrative burdens and the need for standardized procedures, but UNL is committed to hiring over 220 researchers and professors with permanent contracts by the end of 2025, tripling the number of tenured researchers.
UNL5	The ResearchComp has been discussed within the Strategic Research Council and UNL's new website now includes a Career Development section featuring this important tool. On January 22, 2025, an introductory session with a European Commission member was held to present and promote the tool to UNL researchers. To ensure the research community is fully aware of the initiatives and understands their value, continuous communication and advertising of the tool are essential, along with regular updates on ResearchComp and its role in career development planning.
UNL6	As part of the trial, UNL launched an Open Science guide for researchers, available on the University website, reinforcing its commitment to promoting OS across all Schools and the continued efforts in this domain reflected by the leadership at the national level regarding the number of open access publications. New impact metrics, approved by the Value Creation Council, will be added to the 2024 Quality Assurance Monitoring (QAM), focusing on societal impact and public policy influence. New Open Science metrics are being discussed for inclusion in the QAM plan based on OPUS trial feedback. UNL will continue promoting Open Science, collecting feedback, and ensuring schools gather relevant evidence.
UNL7	UNL revised its Regulation on Researchers' Assessment in mid-2023, aligning it with CoARA towards a more qualitative and socially responsible evaluation system that should enable a fairer recognition and reward framework, taking into consideration different dimensions of academic careers. Four out of nine schools (Nova SBE, IHTM NOVA, ENSP NOVA, and NMS) have completed their researchers' evaluation. Collection of feedback is still pending from the remaining schools to fully monitor this reform of research assessment and drive improvements. Challenges include differing paces and methodologies, with a need to strengthen coordination between HR and Research Support offices to improve efficiency.
UNL8	The mapping of UNL's researchers nearing the end of their contract is complete, and a proposal for the research career development plan has been presented to the Strategic Research Council and the Board of Deans, awaiting final approval for implementation. To ensure success, early engagement of interested parties and alignment of expectations, starting with the most motivated Schools, is essential.
UNL9	A financial proposal from Chaperone to provide external career development mentoring services has been received, and mentoring workshops at ITQB NOVA/NMS have engaged 303 participants. Implementing a unified plan across faculties is challenging due to varying needs, but satisfaction surveys will help refine future efforts. A mentoring network is in place at ITQB NOVA, and a plan for additional mentors at other schools is under development, with monthly seminars set to begin by April 2025.
UNL10	The study on mobility flows of researchers in the context of the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions was reviewed, and a meeting with author Mantas Pupiris took place in December 2024. Many recommendations have already been implemented at UNL, with further improvements depending on national-level changes. Experts are open to discussing their areas, and UNL should collaborate with funding agencies to propose programs or calls that address funding gaps and the promotion of intersectoral mobility through incentives such as tax benefits.
UNL11	The Charter for Researchers was presented at the UNL Strategic Research Council meeting on June 2024, with the first meeting of the UNL HRS4R working group held on July 2024. A survey was conducted to introduce the principles and assess researchers' perceptions, gathering 170+ responses. Despite extensive dissemination, it was challenging to gather more responses. Results showed many researchers were unfamiliar with the Charter Principles and the career support initiatives at UNL, prompting a need for ongoing communication and promotion of HRS4R information The Gap Analysis and OTM-R checklist is still in progress, and once completed and approved, UNL will update and advertise the findings on the website.
UNL12	The HRS4R topic was presented at the UNL Strategic Research Council meeting in June 2024. The Endorsement Letter for the HRS4R award was submitted after receiving EC guidelines to align with the

	new principles of the European Charter for Researchers. The process took longer due to delays in the EC's revision of the e-Tool to incorporate these new principles. Once the application is finalized, UNL will update and promote the information on the website. The Gap Analysis is being redesigned to align with the updated Charter, and ongoing communication bringing researchers to the centre of the process is deemed essential.
UNL13	The Strategic Research Council approved proceeding with the HRS4R process, and the Endorsement Letter was submitted in the EC e-tool in January 2025. A working group was created, and feedback was gathered through five follow-up meetings and a survey conducted within the research community. This input was incorporated in the draft of the final version of the Gap Analysis, that will be completed and submitted for approval by the Steering Committee by July 2025. Challenges include the varying needs of different Schools.

UNL has achieved remarkable success in implementing its Action Plan, successfully completing 27 out of 33 proposed activities, while the remaining 6 are making significant progress. Here are some of the advancements that have been made:

1. **Reducing career precarity**: UNL has made a significant impact in reducing career precarity by securing funding for 228 permanent research positions through the FCT-Tenure Competition in 2024. With a success rate of 87%, well above the national average of 50%, UNL led the country in securing these positions. Of the 1,100 positions selected for funding, UNL received 100 positions for teaching and 128 positions for research careers. This achievement will nearly triple the number of researchers with full-time permanent contracts at the university and contribute to staff renewal, lowering the average age of entry into teaching and research careers.

2. **Fostering policy reform**: UNL has made substantial progress in revising key policy documents related to research careers, aligning its policies with major European recommendations. Notable advancements include the revision of the University's Regulation on Careers, Recruitment, and Employment Contracts of Researchers, which is now ready for publication following extensive consultation. Additionally, UNL has reformulated its researcher evaluation process in line with CoARA principles and prepared the draft for a new Regulation on Research Management careers.

3. **Recognizing Open Science practices and societal impact**: UNL has been proactive in promoting Open Science practices and integrating societal impact into the research assessment process. The university has recognized the importance of Open Science, and its efforts have led to the inclusion of new societal impact indicators in the Quality Assurance Monitoring system. UNL has also launched the Open Science Guide for researchers and earned recognition from the European Commission for its Research Impact Narratives Challenge, which was featured as a Best Practice in Research & Innovation during the EU Knowledge Valorisation talks in 2024.

4. **Enhancing career development**: As part of the SECURE pilot, **UNL** has assessed the training needs of both researchers and research managers (RM) and has strengthened its career development actions. A dedicated webpage, "Support Our Talent," now showcases best practices, provides recommendations, and highlights ongoing initiatives to support career development. In addition, more than 400 researchers and RMs have benefited from training sessions, including webinars on writing a narrative CV, specialized support for European funding applications, and training in partnership with **UNL** Associate Laboratories. UNL is also currently planning a "Two-week intensive pilot training programme" for RMs in 2025 and negotiating with specialized consultants to offer further career development webinars and workshops.

As a result of the implementation of these activities, UNL could list the following lessons learned:

1. **Collaborative work** is key - e.g. the success of FCT: Tenure application was the result of a collective effort focused on combating precariousness in science and enhancing conditions for UNL's researchers. This achievement was made possible through the dedicated work of teams from the academic units and the Rectorate, under the leadership of the Strategic Research Council and the Vice-Rector for Research, Professor Isabel Rocha.
2. **Clear and effective communication**: Importance of using the right channels to reach the target audience for each initiative/activity.
3. **Mapping existing initiatives and best practices at each School**: Some good ideas and practices are already in house and can be implemented at the institutional level.
4. **Stakeholder engagement**: Collect (and integrate) feedback from interested partiesin the different activities performed, not only to align policies with national and international recommendations but also to engage and align the vision with the main target groups.
5. **Not everything can be controlled**: As a public university governed by national rules and legislation, delays in implementing or updating certain policies may occur due to ongoing changes in the national landscape.

3.1.4 Trial 4 – UEFISCDI (RFO)

Table 8 shows the actions selected by UEFISCDI to implement the SECURE RCF and table 9 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 8. Actions selected by UEFISCDI to implement the SECURE RCF

Action #	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	Progress status
UEF1	1	2	Intersectoral Mobility	Raise awareness on the wide diversity of research careers in and outside academia	*Completed*
UEF2	2	7	Recognition/ Interoperability	Collect and share best practices on recognition and support of diverse research careers	*On track*
UEF3	3	12	Working Conditions	Collect and share best practices on improving the working conditions for researchers	*Completed*
UEF4	4	17	ResearchComp	Raise awareness on ResearchComp and transversal skills/competences for researchers	*Completed*
UEF5	4	17	ResearchComp	Collect and share best practices on ResearchComp and transversal skills/competences	*Completed*
UEF6	5	27	Research Assessment	Monitor any reforms in research assessment criteria for negative and unwanted effects	*Completed*
UEF7	5	28	Assessment Initiatives	Identify structural and administrative barriers to reform research assessment systems	*On track*
UEF8	5	28	Assessment Initiatives	Collect and share best practices on reforming existing research assessment systems	*On track*
UEF9	5	30	Tenure Track	Review regulations and status of TTLMs in national context and locally at organisations	*Completed*
UEF10	6	31	Competitive Union	Review and internally discuss support to attract and reintegrate returning researchers	*Completed*
UEF11	7	33	Talent platforms	Raise awareness on the EURAXESS portal and ERA Talent Platform among researchers	*On track*
UEF12	7	36	Charter Encouragement	Raise awareness on the revised Charter among researchers	*On track*

| **UEF13** | 7 | 37 | HRS4R/Charter | Raise awareness on the HRS4R award and its relevance for researchers | *On track* |

Table 9. Details on the implementation of selected actions

Action #	Implementation
UEF1	Document completed, dissemination in March 2025. An informational material highlighting the advantages of intersectoral mobility and the diversity and opportunities of research careers both inside and outside academia was developed. The document presents research careers in the academic and research environment, emerging interdisciplinary fields and their impact on research careers, research careers outside the academic environment, non-traditional roles, benefits of exploring different career paths and successful examples of transitions from academia to other sectors. The material will be disseminated via institutional channels like the website, newsletter, and social media. Additionally, a presentation on the topic will be held on March 17, 2025, as part of the webinar "Career in Research: European-level initiatives" organized by UEFISCDI within SECURE project.
UEF2	A study identifying best practices for recognizing and supporting diverse research careers is underway and will be finalized in March 2025. The study includes examples from both European and international levels, and a dedicated section with key takeaways and actionable points that can serve as inspiration to other organizations considering to better recognize and support diverse research careers. The results will be shared through various channels, including the website, newsletter, and social media.
UEF3	Desk research was conducted to analyse best practices for improving researchers' working conditions at the European level, with a finalized document planned for dissemination via institutional channels such as the UEFISCDI website, newsletter, and social media. The analysis faced challenges in distinguishing basic working conditions from those specifically advantageous to researchers.
UEF4	A brief document about ResearchComp, outlining its goals, alignment with European frameworks, benefits, and future potential, was finalized by M12 (January 2025). This document will be disseminated through various institutional channels, including the website, newsletter, and social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and the Open Science Knowledge Hub by the end of the project and also post-project, in different correlated dissemination and awareness raising actions (e.g. within an activity carried out by UEFISCDI for developing recommendations concerning competences and skills for open science). Additionally, a presentation will be made at the webinar "Career in Research: European-level initiatives" organized by UEFISCDI within SECURE project on March 17, 2025.
UEF5	Desk research on best practices for ResearchComp and transversal skills was finalized by M12 (January 2025). The document on best practices on Research Competence Framework for Researchers and transversal skills/competences will be shared via the website, newsletter, and social media and also presented at the national webinar on March 17, 2025. UEFISCDI team conducted a series of interviews with representative from European organisations involved in activities regarding the development of the research career. VITAE, KULeuven, German University Association of Advanced Graduate Training (UniWiND/GUAT) and University of Cyprus were interviewed for the European competence frameworks for researchers and the ResearchComp topic. Challenges included limited best practices and difficulty reaching relevant institutions.
UEF6	Monitoring of reforms in research assessment criteria and related laws was conducted, including reactions from the research community. Still, taking into account that a new Ministerial Order (no. 3019/2025) regarding career progression in higher education was adopted in February 2025, this action will also be continued post-piloting phase. Challenges include limited feedback due to the recent adoption of the new law in June 2022, the Ministerial Order (no. 3019/2025) and the ongoing implementation of regulations. The monitoring will continue beyond the SECURE project to track community reactions to changes in academic title standards and research grant evaluation criteria.
UEF7	A national survey was conducted to identify structural and administrative barriers to reforming research

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	assessment systems. Challenges encountered include timing conflicts and overlapping with other institutional surveys and consultation, leading to postponement until February and March 2025. Despite this, the survey and the analysis of responses will be finalized before the end of March 2025, during the project timeline. The topic of the survey has benefited from increased interest at national level, as at the beginning of March 2025 UEFISCDI already had almost 1200 responses from the research community. The survey report will also be disseminated broadly at national and international levels.
UEF8	A review of best practices on reforming existing research assessment systems was carried out. Four interviews were completed, and two others are underway. Challenges included difficulty in obtaining timely and positive responses from invited organizations for interviews. The review provides insights into current practices and examples of new approaches being tested. The final document will be disseminated through institutional channels like the website, newsletter and social media platforms.
UEF9	The review of relevant national regulations concerning Tenure Track like models was conducted leading to an overview of the national context.
UEF10	A review of the current support for attracting and reintegrating returning researchers was conducted at the institutional level. An internal meeting was held on 22 November 2024 with the UEFISCDI management and relevant departments managing national funding programs. A briefing report, summarizing this meeting was finalized. While there were challenges in coordinating a meeting with the management and other relevant departments, the process successfully identified key supporting measures. Future discussions beyond the SECURE project may involve successful researcher reintegration stories.
UEF11	The promotion of the EURAXESS portal and ERA Talent Platform is ongoing. Information is disseminated through various institutional channels, including the UEFISCDI website, newsletter, LinkedIn, Facebook, OSKH, and the Open Science Community-Brain Map platform.
UEF12	A brief informational document on the revised European Charter for Researchers was finalized and will be disseminated through institutional channels and will be presented at the webinar "Career in Research: European-level initiatives" organized by UEFISCDI within SECURE project on March 17, 2025.
UEF13	A brief informational document on the HRS4R award was made. It aims to inform the Romanian RDI community about the importance of the HRS4R award and the process to apply for it. The document will be disseminated through institutional channels. An internal meeting with relevant departments (HR, NPC, IT, and communication) was held to discuss the application process. UEFISCDI is preparing to apply for the award. A presentation on the HRS4R award will be held at the webinar "Career in Research: European-level initiatives" organized by UEFISCDI within SECURE project on March 17, 2025.

UEFISCDI has made substantial progress in executing its Action Plan. Below are some of the notable advancements that have been made:

1. **Informational material on intersectoral mobility and career diversity**: UEFISCDI has developed and distributed informational material emphasizing the diverse career paths available both within and outside academia and the potential advantages of intersectoral mobility. This material is designed to inform researchers about both traditional career paths and the opportunities that extend beyond them.
2. **Study on best practices for career recognition and support**: A study is underway on best practices related to the recognition and support of diverse research careers and will be finalized in March 2025. This study highlights examples of methods for acknowledging and promoting various career paths, ensuring that researchers have the necessary support throughout their careers.
3. **Study on best practices on reforming research assessment systems**. The study will be ready and disseminated before the end of March 2025. It will contain examples of best practices from different research funding and research performing organizations in Europe, based on in depth interviews conducted with their representatives, as well as a set of key takeaways and actionable points that can serve as inspiration for other organizations who wish to take up on similar endeavours.

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4. **Improved working conditions for researchers**: UEFISCDI has produced informational material focused on best practices for improving the working conditions of researchers. This material aims to provide guidance on creating better work environments, enhancing job security, and ensuring career satisfaction for researchers.

5. **ResearchComp and competence frameworks**: UEFISCDI has created a document that provide valuable information about the Researcher Competence Frameworks, existing at European level, including best practices for implementing the frameworks. **Review of key research policies and practices**: UEFISCDI has conducted several reviews, including for the new law regarding the RDI Personnel, the new standards for obtaining academic titles such as for associate professor and professor, and for the habilitation certificate and doctoral degrees, looking also at the reactions from the research communities with regards to research assessment criteria. Additionally, a survey was carried out to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the current research assessment system, alongside reviews on best practices for reforming research assessment and the national context with regards to TTLMs.

6. **Identify structural and administrative barriers to reform research assessment systems**: A large survey addressed to researchers is currently underway at national level in Romania to document existing administrative and structural barriers to reforming research assessment. In the first half of March 2025, it already registered approximately 1200 responses from researchers. The analysis of the gathered responses will be finalized by the end of March 2025, within the project timeline.

7. **Supporting the Re-integration of returning researchers**: UEFISCDI has reported on an internal cross-departmental meeting focused on supporting the attraction and reintegration of returning researchers.

8. **Promotion of European Charter for Researchers**: UEFISCDI has disseminated key informational documents on the revised European Charter for Researchers, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) Award, and the EURAXESS portal, along with the ERA Talent Platform. These resources are intended to help researchers navigate European research frameworks and opportunities. All outputs will be widely disseminated through various institutional channels, including the website, newsletter, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, X) and online platforms such as BrainMap and the Open Science Hub. A national webinar will take place on March 17, 2025, where topics like diversity of research careers, ResearchComp, the Charter for Researchers, the HRS4R Award and presentation of the SECURE Project and the UEFISCDI Pilot will be presented and promoted to the national RDI community.

As a result of implementing these activities, the following lessons have been learned and next steps identified:

1. **Ensuring Coherence Across Frameworks Impacting Research Careers**
   - A **coherent and overarching alignment** of recommendations and requests related to research careers at both the EU and national levels is essential to drive real cultural change.
   - Strengthening efforts to align **initiatives and regulations** across EU, national, and institutional levels.
   - Defining **clear, yet simplified and comprehensive** procedures and regulations.
   - Continuously monitoring **legislation, rules, and regulations**, along with responses to changes in research assessment, researcher careers, and tenure-track model development.

2. **Institutional culture:**
   - **Build Institutional Awareness & Leverage Institutional Expertise:** Cross-departmental discussions help clarify significance, impact, and get institutional commitment.
   - **Engaging Leadership & program officers:** enabled a comprehensive review of funding support, understanding the level and need of alignment with existing mechanisms at institutional, national, and European level.

3. **Learning from Best Practices**
   - Engaging in discussions on different models/frameworks to learn from others' experiences and adapt to the national context.

4. **Awareness Raising**
   - **Dissemination** activities and **appropriate tools** can ensure the successful implementation of pilot activities – e.g., the role of regular subject-targeted dissemination in BrainMap communities.
   - **Increasing awareness and knowledge** at both the team and institutional levels regarding these interventions and their benefits for the RDI community.
   - **Regular and consistent dissemination** of research career initiatives, incorporating international best practices that highlight their benefits within the RDI community.

5. **Next Step**

   Diving deeper into key topics (e.g. HRS4R award and ResearchComp) to:
   - Apply for the HRS4R Award
   - **Test** appropriate measures through future projects and **implement** further strategic actions.
   - **Link to other relevant** institutional and national **strategic topics**.
   - **Integrate outcomes** into the institutional **dissemination/engagement approach** for long-term impact within wider national RDI (topic) communities.

3.1.5 Trial 5 – PLOCAN (RI)

Table 10 shows the actions selected by PLOCAN to implement the SECURE RCF and table 11 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 10. Actions selected by PLOCAN to implement the SECURE RCF

Action #	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	Progress status
PLO1	1	3	Research Managers	Define a clear profile for research manager positions with their roles and responsibilities	*On track*
PLO2	1	4	Research Technicians	Define a clear profile for research Technicians positions with their roles and responsibilities	*On track*
PLO3	2	8	Alternative Careers	Raise awareness on non-linear and hybrid research career paths among researchers	*Completed*
PLO4	2	9	ESCO Classification	Integrate (updates of) the ESCO classification into research job/grant advertisements	*On track*
PLO5	3	12	Working conditions	Review and improve support for inclusivity, equal opportunities, and gender equality	*On track*
PLO6	3	12	Working conditions	Collect and share best practices on improving the working conditions for researchers	*Completed*
PLO7	4	20	Entrepreneurship	Encourage, train, and support researchers for entrepreneurship, start-ups, and spin-offs	*On track*
PLO8	5	27	Research Assessment	Recognise research manager and research management activities in research assessment	*Completed*
PLO9	5	27	Research Assessment	Recognise research technicians and technical support activities in research assessment	*On track*

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PLO10	5	27	Research Assessment	Recognise Open Science practices and societal impact of research in research assessment	*On track*
PLO11	6	31	Competitive Union	Review and internally discuss support to attract and reintegrate returning researchers	*On track*
PLO12	7	33	Talent Platforms	Disseminate job/grant opportunities in the EURAXESS portal and ERA Talent Platform	*On track*

Table 11. Details on the implementation of selected actions

Action #	**Implementation**
PLO1	An external company specialized in human resources conducted a job analysis to provide an objective evaluation of the roles and responsibilities within the organization. This included a review of the
PLO2	functions of PLOCAN's teams in research management and support activities, as well as the development of clear profiles for research managers and technicians, aligned with the RCF and SECURE RCF recommendations.
PLO3	An awareness-raising workshop was organized with an R&D company, focused on non-linear or hybrid research career paths. During the workshop, best practices, lessons learned, and potential challenges were identified.
PLO4	A review of the roles and competences for research managers and specialized technicians at PLOCAN was conducted**.** Then a new profile for research managers and research technician have been proposed aligning them with the ESCO classification.
PLO5	An analysis of current policies and plans, including the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, was conducted. Based on best practices and new legislation, a proposal was developed to improve processes and ensure regulatory compliance. Additionally, the annual monitoring process has been updated to align with these changes.
PLO6	Best practices from other research infrastructures and public administrations were collected and shared, and these practices were then disseminated to PLOCAN's employees.
PLO7	An internal workshop on intellectual property was organized for PLOCAN staff, alongside the promotion of participation in relevant intellectual property events.
PLO8	PLOCAN´s senior management team have evaluated the inclusion of Open Science practices by the team in the evaluation process. Annual evaluation procedures tailored to specific research profiles will be
PLO9	updated and will include metrics and KPIs for research assessment. This will include number of scientific documents, protocols and data uploaded to public repositories.
PLO10	PLOCAN will join the Barcelona Declaration to strengthen its commitment to Open Science. PLOCAN aims to promote transparency, accessibility, and inclusivity in research, ensuring that scientific outputs contribute meaningfully to society and are reflected in research assessment practices.
PLO11	A meeting was organized with PLOCAN's senior management team to discuss supporting returning researchers and propose new strategies. Best practices were also gathered from other organizations that have successfully attracted and reintegrated returning researchers.
PLO12	A meeting was held with the HR department to explore how to effectively use the EURAXESS portal for disseminating job and grant opportunities.

PLOCAN has made notable progress in implementing its action plan, key achievements are listed below:

1. **Enhanced Awareness and Understanding of the RCF**: Increased awareness of the Researcher Competence Framework (RCF) and its potential benefits has fostered a more supportive research environment for both the institution and the team.

2. **Alignment with EU Initiatives**: PLOCAN has successfully aligned its actions with important EU initiatives such as the Researcher Competence Framework (RCF), ESCO, the European Employment Framework for Researchers (EEfRC), and Research Manager Competence (RM Comp). This alignment has been instrumental in advancing skills development and recognizing the competencies of researchers within the organization.

3. **Comprehensive analysis of working conditions**: A thorough analysis of working conditions and organizational policies has been conducted, benchmarking them against best practices. This has identified key opportunities for improvement and innovation, setting the stage for continuous development within the institution.

4. **Active senior management involvement**: Senior management has played a crucial role in driving internal change and supporting organizational development. Their active involvement has ensured that the necessary resources and support are available to implement these initiatives successfully.

5. **Increased efforts in internal training**: PLOCAN has enhanced its internal training efforts to support innovation, career growth, and the overall development of its team, helping them stay competitive and prepared for future challenges.

Moving forward, PLOCAN will focus on the following key actions to continue its growth and development:

1. **Applying for the HRS4R Award**: PLOCAN aims to apply for the Human Resource Excellence in Research (HRS4R) Award, further reinforcing its commitment to improving research career structures and supporting its researchers.

2. **Promoting Open Science culture**: PLOCAN will continue to encourage the integration of an Open Science culture within the organization, ensuring transparency, collaboration, and accessibility in research practices.

3. **Strengthening alignment with EU recommendations**: PLOCAN will further strengthen its alignment with EU recommendations regarding skills and competencies for researchers, ensuring that its policies remain in line with European standards.

4. **Commitment to the Barcelona Declaration**: The organization will also propose its commitment to the Barcelona Declaration, reaffirming its dedication to enhancing research career structures and fostering a supportive environment for researchers.

These next steps will guide PLOCAN's continued progress, ensuring the ongoing development and support of its researchers while contributing to the wider European research community.

3.1.6 Trial 6 -ADOC (RA)

Table 12 shows the actions selected by ADOC to implement the SECURE RCF and table 13 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 12. Actions selected by ADOC to implement the SECURE RCF

Action#	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	Progress status
ADOC1	1	5	R1-R4	Adopt the R1-R4 profiles or map existing organisational profiles onto the R1-R4 profiles	*Completed*
ADOC2	1	5	R1-R4	Refer to the R1-R4 profiles in job/grant advertisements and relevant communications	*Completed*

ADOC3	1	5	R1-R4	Raise awareness of and support adoption of R1-R4 profiles in the non-academic sector	*On track*
ADOC4	2	7	Recognition/ Interoperability	Track the long-term career paths of researchers at and beyond home organisations	*Completed*
ADOC5	2	9	ESCO classification	Integrate (updates of) the ESCO classification into research job/grant advertisements	*On track*
ADOC6	2	9	ESCO classification	Identify changing and emerging skills/competences, qualifications, and occupations	*Completed*
ADOC7	2	10	Human Resources	Develop clear documentation, guidelines, and communications on the R1-R4 mapping	*Completed*
ADOC8	3	11	Recruitment/ Selection	Inform recruiters and selectors on the value of alternative career paths and career breaks	*Completed*
ADOC9	3	12	Working Conditions	Collect and share best practices on improving the working conditions for researchers	*Completed*
ADOC10	4	17	ResearchComp	Raise awareness on ResearchComp and transversal skills/competences for researchers	*Completed*
ADOC11	4	25	Interdisciplinary Mobility	Encourage, train, and support researchers for interdisciplinary collaboration and mobility	*Completed*
ADOC12	5	28	Assessment initiatives	Collect and share best practices on reforming existing research assessment systems	*Completed*
ADOC13	5	29	Career support	Review and improve the career support and professional development of researchers	*Completed*
ADOC14	6	31	Competitive Union	Review and internally discuss support to attract and reintegrate returning researchers	*Completed*
ADOC15	7	33	Talent platform	Disseminate job/grant opportunities in the EURAXESS portal and ERA Talent Platform	*On track*

Table 13. Details on the implementation of selected actions

Action #	Implementation
ADOC1	A list of private sector job titles and their associated missions was created, standardized, and mapped to the R1-R4 classification. A model was developed for mapping job titles of the private sector into R1-R4 classification, with plans to enhance it using machine learning to improve accuracy and adapt to changing job market trends.
ADOC2	The implementation of the R1-R4 nomenclature in job advertisements has been completed. Preparatory training sessions and explanatory materials were provided to overcome potential resistance or confusion. The job titles are now described according to the R1-R4 profiles to ensure transparency between the non-academic and academic sectors.
ADOC3	A guideline has been developed to help clients to categorize the job profiles using the R1-R4 nomenclature. Training sessions, support materials, and a clear visual representation of the model's results were created to enhance understanding and facilitate use. Regular feedback sessions and updates will continue to improve the process.
ADOC4	A worldwide survey was developed, distributed, and analysed to map the professional careers of PhD holders across various factors such as year of PhD completion, discipline, and career trajectory. A detailed mapping of intersectoral movements was created, and a graphic visualization of transitions between key sectors was developed. The results were presented to HR consultants, and discussions were held on how to valorise this data for clients. A tracking system for candidates placed in client companies was also successfully implemented.
ADOC5	Our HR consultants have been introduced to both ESCO and ResearchComp as tools for describing

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	candidate skills and competences in job offers. There is still a need for the consultants to become fully familiar with these tools. Depending on the job titles, ADOC will continue to choose the most appropriate classification, either ESCO or ResearchComp, to describe candidate profiles.
ADOC6	A literature review has been conducted, and the necessary resources have been selected to compile a list of emerging skills. A worldwide survey has been launched, and the data analysis has been completed, resulting in a list of occupations held by PhD holders. A mapping of occupations across the professional experiences of PhD holders has also been developed.
ADOC7	A clear guideline presenting the R1-R4 nomenclature was developed and shared with HR consultants during trainings. The profiles' mapping is based on specific criteria with missions assigned to each criterion. The challenge was in identifying the relevant criteria as a base to fully define the profiles and establish a clear distinction between the R1-R4 profiles. A list of criteria and missions associated with each profile needs to be compiled into a guideline document.
ADOC8	A meeting with recruitment consultants was held to brainstorm and discuss these specific questions. Additionally, a webinar was organized and hosted, which brought together recruitment professionals from both the public and private sectors to discuss how career interruptions and intersectoral changes are perceived in hiring processes. Recordings of the webinar were provided to mitigate the risk of low attendance.
ADOC9	Through a quantitative survey, key factors influencing the choice of a job position for PhD holders were identified. These factors were tracked across different sectors, and the insights gathered will inform best practices for improving retention and career satisfaction in both academia and industry.
ADOC10	A webinar was successfully hosted, bringing together recruitment professionals from both the public and private sectors. The webinar focused on intersectoral mobility and emphasized the importance of transversal skills in enabling career transitions. A recording of the webinar was made available to ensure broader reach and impact despite potential attendance challenges.
ADOC11	A comprehensive training program has been developed to equip PhD candidates with the necessary skills for effective collaboration in interdisciplinary teams. The training is now included in the training catalogue of Adoc Talent Management and will be offered to research institutions. Feedback from participants will be used for content adjustments and to improve engagement for future sessions.
ADOC12	A working group has been established to review current assessment practices and assess the impact of these practices on career development in both academic and non-academic sectors. Currently, the focus is on assessing company HR practices through the HRS4R process.
ADOC13	The survey successfully mapped intersectoral movements across different career stages, providing a clear overview of transitions between key sectors across professional experiences.
ADOC14	The results show that researchers value stability, career growth opportunities, and professional development, regardless of sector. Tracking these factors over time will inform best practices for improving retention and career satisfaction in both academia and industry.
ADOC15	It depends on actions 2-9 and 1-5 for a fully homogenized job offer, but resources are being allocated to ensure it is completed on schedule.

Adoc Talent Management has made significant achievement and valuable insights in implementing its action plan. Below are some of the key achievements that have been made:

1. **Bridging the gap between academia and industry**: Adoc Talent Management has successfully demonstrated that best practices from academic career support can be applied in the private sector. By developing career development frameworks that align both sectors, the organization has facilitated better transitions for researchers, enhanced job satisfaction, and boosted innovation potential.

2. **Standardization of sector language for intersectoral transitions**: One of the most significant achievements is the development of a structured scoring model that maps private-sector research roles

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to the European R1-R4 framework. This standardized model helps ensure that both research roles and non-research roles, regardless of the sector, are evaluated consistently based on experience, skills, and responsibilities, **helping for** smoother transitions between academia and industry.

3. **Insightful initiatives on career interruptions and transitions**: Adoc Talent Management organized a webinar that brought together professionals from both the public and private sectors to discuss career interruptions and sector changes. The discussions provided valuable insights into the perceptions of recruiters regarding career breaks and the competencies expected of PhD holders transitioning between sectors, helping to improve support for researchers during these critical periods.

4. **Data-driven career guidance**: The data collected from the SECURE project and Adoc's own analysis have provided valuable insights into the key factors influencing researchers' career decisions. This analysis has enabled Adoc to offer more personalized career advice, improving job satisfaction and supporting better alignment of candidates with long-term career goals.

5. **Mapping intersectoral career transitions**: Adoc developed a comprehensive mapping of career transitions across various stages and sectors, providing a clear picture of how PhD holders move between public research, private research, non-research public and private sectors, and associations. This mapping helps identify patterns and supports the development of effective career guidance strategies, ensuring smoother transitions for researchers.

Moving forward, Adoc Talent Management will focus on the following key actions to continue its growth and development:

1. **Developing training on interdisciplinarity**: Adoc will create a training module on interdisciplinarity to help young researchers collaborate effectively across disciplinary boundaries, which is increasingly essential to address complex societal challenges. This module will be incorporated into the organization's long-term strategy and offered to research institutions.

2. **Expanding the use of the R1-R4 framework in the private sector**: Adoc is working on developing comprehensive documentation and guidelines to assist recruitment consultants and clients in applying the European R1-R4 framework in private-sector hiring decisions, thereby facilitating better understanding and utilization of this classification system.

3. **Engagement with the HRS4R process**: Adoc is committed to applying for the Human Resource Excellence in Research (HRS4R) Award, reinforcing its commitment to aligning HR practices with European standards and supporting its ongoing development in line with EU research frameworks.

4. **HRS4R enrolment:** Adoc Talent Management has enrolled in the HRS4R process and is currently working on the gap analysis and the OTM-R strategy to elaborate an action plan enabling alignment with the European HR standards. By assisting companies in adopting best HR practices for researchers, Adoc Talent Management would contribute to strengthening the collaboration between academia and industry, ensuring that businesses benefit from a well-integrated research workforce while researchers gain access to a career-friendly and innovation-driven corporate environment.

These next steps will guide Adoc's continued progress, ensuring the long-term development of researchers' careers and further strengthening its role in bridging the gap between academia and industry.

3.2. Joint actions (JOI) implemented by the trial organizations.

Table 14 shows the common actions selected by the trials to implement the SECURE RCF and table 15 shows how these actions were implemented.

Table 14. Joint actions selected by all trial organizations

Action #	Pillar	RC	Topic	Action	Progress status
JOI1	5	30	Tenure Track	Engage with key stakeholders on TTLMs to collect and share best practices on TTLMs	*Completed*
JOI2	8	40	ReICO	Engage with OECD and key stakeholders on development and implementation of ReICO	*Completed*

Table 15. Details on the implementation of selected actions

Action #	Implementation
JOI1	Collection of best practices on TTLMs and share with key stakeholders at the European level**.** Two joint meeting with selected stakeholders on TTLMs was successfully organized and was highly productive, fostering valuable discussions (see section 6 for more details).
JOI2	Initial contact has been established with representatives from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to stay informed about their ongoing initiatives related to the Research and Innovation Careers Observatory. Through this collaboration, the SECURE project aims to contribute to the broader goal of enhancing the attractiveness of research careers and supporting the development of a robust monitoring system that benefits researchers, policymakers, and organizations across Europe, while ensuring the protection of data privacy.

4. Conclusions

The process of the implementation of the SECURE RCF by the RPOs, RFOs, RI and RA have been described in detail in this document. As described in D4.1. Actions to implement RCF each trial had its own unique strategy for the selection and implementation of the SECURE RCF actions due to the individual nature of the organisations and their own strategic interest and priorities. The action plans were broken down into concrete actions and activities for each trial organisations with targets to be realised within the trial duration of 12 months. During this period, trials met regularly to share experiences, challenges and learn from each other.

In general, the trials have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing research careers within their institutions. Most of the selected actions were completed by the end of the trial period, while others are still being implemented. This is mainly due to challenges faced by some organisations, including delays in specific actions caused by the complexity of internal changes, the time required for them to take effect, as well as resistance to change and administrative barriers.

The general conclusions regarding the actions to implement SECURE RCF by the trial organisations are listed as follows:

- The **implementation of the SECURE RCF is closely aligned with European standards and frameworks**, such as the EFfRC, the European Charter for Researchers, and ResearchComp, fostering greater interoperability and recognition of research careers across different countries and sectors.
- Efforts to **standardize profiles and competences for researchers, research managers and technicians** have been made to ensure consistency with EU standards.
- The trial organisations highlight the critical importance of **engaging key stakeholders** within their organisation, researchers themselves and external organisation (policy makers, funding bodies, research governmental representatives, etc.) in the design and implementation of career development initiatives.

- The actions to implement SECURE RCF need to be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of different research organizations. This is reflected in the flexibility provided to trial organizations in selecting and adapting RCF actions.
- The trials have led to the development of **improved career development resources and support services for researchers**, including training, mobility career guidance, and mentorship programs.
- Integrating **Open Science practises** in into research assessments encourage the adoption of these practises, fostering transparency, collaboration, and knowledge sharing.
- Several trial organisations have shown a commitment to **engaging with the HRS4R process**.

Further, SECURE project has provided a valuable framework and a set of practical tools for enhancing research careers in Europe, and the lessons learned from the implementation trials will be instrumental in shaping future efforts to create a more supportive and rewarding environment for researchers at all stages of their careers.

The outcomes of these trials, along with an extensive consultation conducted throughout the project-which is ongoing at the time of writing (D2.2: Consultation on Research Career Framework)- will provide crucial input for developing the final, refined version of the SECURE RCF (D2.3: Final Version of Research Career Framework). This iterative process guarantees that the framework is not only grounded in sound theory but also demonstrably applicable across diverse research organisations (RPO, RFO and RI).

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6. Annex

Below, we share the best practices exchanged in the field of TTLM by country:

Croatia:

- **University of Rijeka (UNIRI)**
  The tenure-track model at the University of Rijeka aims to attract Croatian researchers back to their home country by providing a clear pathway to tenured academic positions. Funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and the university, the model offers a secure five-year career progression cycle from Assistant Professor to higher academic positions. Candidates are evaluated using national and institutional criteria, encompassing research, teaching, professional impact, and leadership. This model allows flexibility for faculties to set discipline-specific standards while maintaining transparency and comparability. It supports internationalisation and aligns with national higher education reforms. The system seeks to enhance academic excellence and contribute to the university's strategic development supporting also the introduction of qualitative criteria.
  Znanstvenici - povratnici | UNIRI

France:

- **CNRS France**
  The CNRS is the largest research institution in France. Its recruitment process is highly competitive and structured by sections, each with its own selection committee. Every January, an annual recruitment campaign, providing details about the number of positions available in each section, allows candidates to submit their applications in the section corresponding to their field of research expertise. Each application is assessed by the committee and if the candidate's profile and research proposal do match the position, the candidate is invited to present his/her work and career path during an interview with the selection committee. Following this interview, a final decision is made, ranking the candidates who reached the stage of interviews. Selected candidates usually begin their position in the autumn of the same year. During the first year, newly recruited researchers undergo a probationary period (stage). Tenure (titularisation) is granted at the end of this year.
  https://carrieres.cnrs.fr/en/

Portugal:

- **NOVA University Lisbon (UNL)**
  In Portugal, academic careers are divided into two parallel tracks: teaching and research. Both tracks have three levels: Assistant Professor/Assistant Researcher, Associate Professor/Principal Investigator, and Full Professor/Research Coordinator. A tenure-track system, regulated by national law and NOVA's internal rules applies to both. The tenure-track period differs between tracks: 5 years for Assistant Professors and 3 years for Assistant Researchers. Candidates are evaluated based on national and institutional criteria, including research, teaching, impact & knowledge valorisation, and leadership. This model balances and recognize the diversity of practices, activities and careers in research with transparency, promoting international competitiveness and supporting academic excellence and strategic development in various scientific domains, through qualitative and quantitative criteria. Promotions to permanent positions are granted based on demonstrated performance and achievements. Recently, to tackle precarity in research careers, the national Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) closed the first FCT-Tenure call for 1.100 permanent positions in both teaching and research track for PhD holders who have had a precarious contract in Portugal before. These positions are co-funded by the FCT and each host institution. NOVA has secured funding for 228 positions under this programme.
  https://www.unl.pt/en/management-documents-and-legislation/teachers/
  https://www.unl.pt/en/management-documents-and-legislation/researchers/

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Spain:

- **Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB)**
  The tenure-track model at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) is designed to attract and retain talented researchers by offering a clear pathway to permanent positions. Candidates undergo a rigorous evaluation process, including research, teaching, and management criteria, over a maximum period of six years. Successful candidates are promoted to permanent positions based on their performance and achievements. The model emphasizes international competitiveness and alignment with the UAB's strategic goals. It also includes mentorship and support to help researchers develop their careers. This system aims to enhance the university's research excellence and academic reputation.
  https://www.uab.cat/web/universitat-autonoma-de-barcelona-1345467954774.html
  https://www.uab.cat/doc/application-conditions-lecturers
  https://www.uab.cat/doc/BasesSHEnglish

- **Carlos III University of Madrid (UC3M)**
  The tenure-track model at Carlos III University of Madrid (UC3M) aims to attract and develop high-potential researchers by offering a structured path to permanent positions. Candidates are evaluated over a probationary period, typically six years, based on research, teaching, and institutional contributions. The process includes annual reviews and a final comprehensive assessment to determine promotion to a permanent professorship. UC3M emphasizes international standards, encouraging candidates to demonstrate excellence in their fields. The model provides mentorship and resources to support career development. This approach strengthens the university's research profile and academic competitiveness.
  https://business.uc3m.es/jobs/file_pdf_1721832292.pdf

- **Pompeu Fabra University (UPF)**
  The tenure-track model at Pompeu Fabra University (UPF, 2023) is designed to recruit and retain top-tier researchers by offering a clear pathway to permanent academic positions. Candidates undergo a rigorous evaluation process over a maximum period of six years, assessing their research, teaching, and institutional contributions. The model emphasizes international competitiveness, requiring candidates to meet high standards of excellence in their fields. UPF provides mentorship and support to help researchers achieve their career goals. Successful candidates are promoted to permanent positions based on their performance and achievements. This system enhances UPF's reputation as a leading research-intensive university.
  https://seuelectronica.upf.edu/regulacio-del-sistema-tenure-track-per-a-la-captacio-i-retencio-de-talent

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WP4
Implementation of the Research Career Framework

Deliverable 4.2
Trials to Implement the Research Career Framework

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