Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Marnie Hancke

Project plan

Application to join the European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers via HRS4R

Project manager: Marnie Hancke
Project sponsor: Vice-Chancellor Maria Knutson Wedel

1. Background and objectives

In the early 2000s, the EU initiated a special area of activity to promote mobility and good working conditions for researchers. In 2005, the European Charter for Researchers and Guidelines for the Recruitment of Researchers (hereinafter Charter & Code) were adopted. The aim of the Charter & Code is to establish a strong European area for research activities, to support and structure European research policy and to establish an attractive, open and sustainable labor market for researchers.

Charter & Code consists of 40 general principles, recommendations and good practice for the employment and recruitment of researchers at all career stages. In four thematic areas, Charter & Code defines the role, responsibilities and rights of researchers and their employers: (1) the researcher's ethical and professional responsibilities, (2) working conditions and social security, (3) postgraduate/third-cycle education and career development, and (4) recruitment.

In order for higher education institutions in Europe to acknowledge the value in implementing Charter & Code, the HR Excellence in Research Award is a label granted by the European Commission to establishments engaged in the process. This recognition shows, among other things, that a higher education institution is an employer that applies fair and transparent recruitment and assessment procedures, and continuously improves working conditions and support for research staff.

To facilitate institutions and organizations implementation of the Charter & Code in their policy documents, the European Commission coordinates via EURAXESS the HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) tool. This tool contains fixed templates and mandatory steps in the implementation of Charter & Code. Higher education institutions that undergo this process and show progress can thus apply for the HR

Excellence in Research Award certification. This includes a commitment over several years. In an initial phase (maximum 12 months) a gap analysis is carried out, evaluating how the university relates to the 40 principles in the Charter & Code. Based on the identified gaps, an action plan is then formulated. Once the report has been reviewed by the European Commission, the university can receive the HR Excellence in Research Award. After the Initial Phase, an implementation phase follows for five years. The first two years the initial action plan is implemented followed by a new review, after which a revised action plan that extends over three years is adopted, followed by a further review. After these five years the award is renewed every three years.

In Sweden, on October 19th, 2016, the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF) adopted a recommendation to all Swedish higher education institutions regarding accession to the European Charter & Code. On 19th of January 2017, SUHF sent a Declaration of Commitment to the European Commission declaring its support for the principles in Charter & Code and supporting the higher education institutions in Sweden that wish to join. According to SUHF, the implementation of the Charter & Code will bring benefits to Swedish higher education institutions such as:

- Contributing to an increased degree of internationalization.
- Showing that Sweden's higher education institutions stand behind the Charter & Code and support the development of an increased exchange of knowledge and experience within independent research.
- Indicating to the international community that Swedish universities are proactive, safeguard international cooperation as well as their intellectual capital and are attractive employers.
- The facilitation of the application procedure for applying for research funding.
- Providing increased opportunities for obtaining financial grants from the European Commission in the face of intensifying competition.

Examples of other benefits reported by higher education institutions that have undergone the process are an improved research environment and strengthened strategic HR work (e.g. more integrated with the core mission).

Currently SLU is one of few Swedish higher education institutions that has not yet been certified or even begun the process for certification. In addition to the advantages mentioned above, the certification and the quality assurance that it reflects, are of utmost importance for SLU to remain attractive to applicants, in particular international ones. Yet another clear incentive for SLU is the harmonization of processes an area that is mentioned in both SLU's current and future strategy. The project is anchored with Pro Vice-Chancellor Ylva Hillbur and Director of Human Resources Anna-Karin Olofsdotter.

2. Purpose – project benefits

The project aims for SLU to join the Charter & Code and implement HRS4R, which gives the university the right to use the HR Excellence in Research Award. The project includes the initial phase of the application process up to the application itself, as well as a strategy for implementation. It also includes any potential completion of the application required to obtain certification. XXX anchoring is crucial for the project to be successful. The faculties will therefore be involved in the working process.

3. Objectives – project results

The goal of the project is that SLU in 2021 submits an application for HR Excellence in Research Award, to EURAXESS the part of the European Commission responsible for HRS4R.

The application includes (1) gap analysis, (2) OTM-R checklist (Open Transparent Merit-based Recruitment), and (3) action plan, all of which are designed according to a mandatory template.
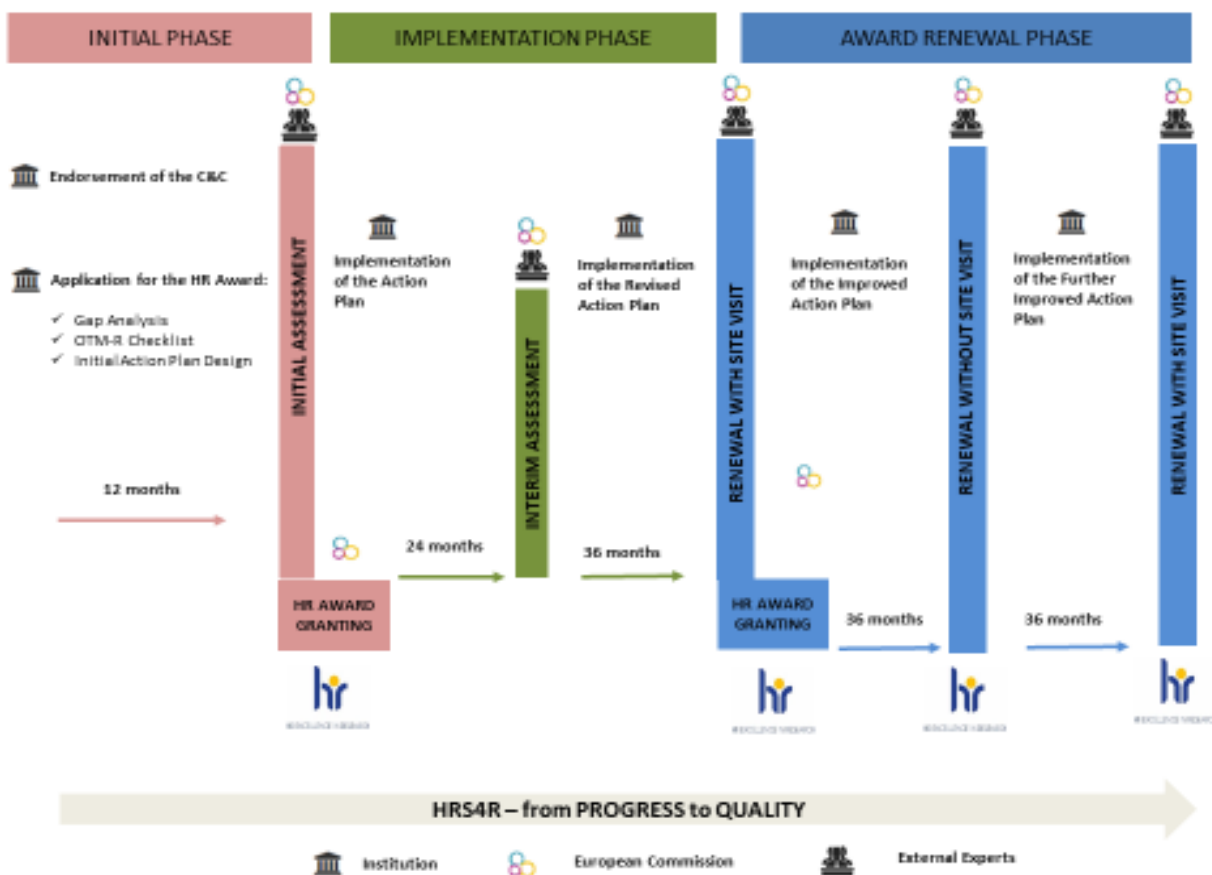
The gap analysis compiles SLU's current situation and desired situation relative to the 40 principles in the Charter & Code covering ethical and professional aspects, recruitment, working conditions and social security, as well as education and career development.

The OTM-R checklist is an analysis of how SLU works with recruitment with regard to openness, transparency and merit-based selection.

The action plan determines the activities required for SLU to progress from the current situation to the desired situation with regard to the implementation of Charter & Code, who/whom is responsible for the different measures, the schedule for each measure and indicators for measuring goal fulfillment. The submission of the application implies that SLU has begun the implementation of the action plan. The period for implementing the action plan is estimated to be 2021-2022.

4. Delimitations and impact on other activities

The figure on the next page is produced by EURAXESS and shows the process for obtaining, implementing and maintaining the certification. The project will include the activities required to obtain the certification and creating an action plan for the implementation, described in the figure as the Initial Phase. However, the Implementation Phase and then the Renewal Phase are not included in this project. These actions will be carried out within ordinary activities during the coming years.

INITIAL PHASE | **IMPLEMENTATION PHASE** | **AWARD RENEWAL PHASE**

Endorsement of the C&C

Application for the HR Award:
- ✓ Gap Analysis
- ✓ OTM-R Checklist
- ✓ Initial Action Plan Design

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Implementation of the Action Plan

INTERIM ASSESSMENT

Implementation of the Revised Action Plan

RENEWAL WITH SITE VISIT

Implementation of the Improved Action Plan

RENEWAL WITHOUT SITE VISIT

Implementation of the Further Improved Action Plan

RENEWAL WITH SITE VISIT

12 months

24 months

36 months

36 months

36 months

HR AWARD GRANTING

HR AWARD GRANTING

HRS4R – from PROGRESS to QUALITY

🏛 Institution   European Commission   External Experts

5. Critical factors

The implementation of the project is largely dependent on the participation, support and contribution of several individuals and groups. Lack of participation and that the necessary amount of time constitutes a risk. Some of the most important measures for risk minimization are (1) clarity from the management throughout the university about the importance of the project and (2) the use of existing constellations / forums as much as possible.

Furthermore, altered conditions from the EU regarding the application can affect the content or process with regard to time. Measures for risk minimization are that the project continuously monitors any alterations or additional requirements via EURAXESS website. Furthermore, the Endorsement Letter which signals SLU's desire to apply for the award to the Commission must be sent in time, before the documents are finally completed to ensure the current process and avoid affecting the schedule.

Another critical factor is that the project is well anchored in the business, i.e. both in academia and administration. By involving members of the faculties' appointments boards in a reference group the project will benefit from a strategically important group, which has extensive experience of the recruitment of

teachers, and at the same time, the project becomes anchored in the organization. By involving First Stage Researcher (R1, up to doctoral degree), Recognized Researcher (R2, PhD or equivalent competence level), Established Researcher (R3, researchers who have achieved a certain level of independence) to Leading Researcher (R4, researchers leading the development of a research subject or domain) in a reference group, the project benefits from their individual perspectives and experiences of either recruiting nationally / internationally or being recruited themselves to SLU. Aspects such as gender equality and equal conditions, career development, clinical employment and legislation for legal certainty in recruitment process are met by involving various administrative functions in another reference group.

6. Time schedule

An account of the project's various elements and activities including an estimated time schedule is presented beneath.

Start: 2020-08-10
End: 2021-06-30

6.1 Decision items – Vice-Chancellor

Item	Description	Date
1.	Adoption of Project plan	October 2020
2.	Endorsement Letter	November 2020
3.	Adoption of gap analysis and action plan for the application for HR Excellence in Research Award	June 2021

6.3 Project phases
The project can be divided into three phases that will partly overlap (e.g. suggestions for activities/measures will most likely be generated on an ongoing basis), which is why dates are approximate. All phases include anchoring work, project meetings, etc. The steering group is continuously informed about the project's ongoing status.

Phase	Description	Start	End
1.	Planning and gap analysis: • Project design and project planning • Formulation of gap-analys och OTM-R checklist	2020-08-17	2020-12-31

	• Design of Endorsement Letter och related information • Endorsement letter is submitted • An interim report is compiled		
2.	Development of action plan: • Identification of potential actions • Prioritization of activities • Development of information about HRS4R on the external web begins • An interim report is compiled	2021-01-01	2021-03-31
3.	Completion of the application: • Development of information for HRS4R on the external web is completed • Preparation for implementation • The application is submitted • The project is finalized	2021-04-01	2021-06-30

7. Project organization

The project organization consists of a project manager, a steering group, a project group and a number of internal reference groups.

Project leader is Marnie Hancke, Research Advisor at the NJ faculty office. The project manager is responsible for ensuring that the work is carried out according to the project plan, to assemble meetings and ensure proper documentation (e.g. writing project plan, interim report and final report).

The steering group consists of Pro Vice-Chancellor Ylva Hillbur, Director of Human Resources Anna-Karin Olofsdotter and two or three newly internationally recruited professors. The task of the steering group is to support the project group and create good conditions for the project in the organization (both the academy and the administration).

The project group includes various competencies within the administration, such as HR specialists, recruitment officers, research coordinators and research officers. The project group shall support the project manager in the execution of the activities so that the project achieves its purposes and objectives.

Three reference groups are linked to the project in order to contribute with valuable expertise and consultation. The reference groups are extremely significant to the project. Firstly because it is an explicit requirement in the HRS4R process, secondly because it is crucial to gain a broad anchoring within SLU and understanding of what HRS4R is and what benefits it entail/brings to for the university. The reference groups can be contacted different numbers of times and

with different focus depending on their function/assignments at SLU. Meetings may be held with each group as a whole, smaller constellation or on an individual basis with the project manager. Teachers/researchers at different levels (categories 1-4) are included to make use of different types of experiences.

7.1 Project sponsor

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7.2 Project manager

Name	Marnie Hancke
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7.3 Steering group

Name	Organisational unit	Focus
Ylva Hillbur	Pro Vice-chancellor for international relations, university management	International relations
Anna-Karin Olofsdotter	Director of Human Resources, Department of Human Resources	Recruitment
Thomas Randrup	International recruited professor, LTV faculty	International recruitment
Francisco X Aguilar	International recruited professor, S faculty	International recruitment
Erika Roman	Recruited professor, VH faculty	Recruitment
Anke Fischer, professor NJ	International recruited professor, NJ faculty	International recruitment

7.4 Project group

Name	Organisational unit	Focus
Sarah Hedenskog	Faculty officer, NJ and VH faculty	Recruitment of teachers
Eva Borgert	HR-specialist, Department of Human Resources	Recruitment, ReachMee, Euraxess
Caroline Grabbe	Research Coordinator, Grants Office	EU-application
Niklas Nordquist	Research Officer, division of planning	Qualifications portfolio collaboration
Maria Bergling	HR-specialist, Division of Human Resources	Recruitment, Appointment procedures
Torleif Ljung	Faculty officer, LTV faculty	Recruitment teachers
Ulrika Ganeteg	Research officer, S faculty	Recruitment teachers
Tina Sjöström	Equal gender and opportunities administrator, S faculty	Equal gender and opportunities
Sbatie Lama	Chair ASK:s PhD Student Council	Academic leadership
Sabrina Dressel, R2-researcher, Umeå	Department of Wildlife, Fish and Environmental Studies, S faculty	Academic leadership
Aakash Chawade, R3-researcher, Alnarp	Department of Plant Breeding, LTV faculty	Academic leadership

7.5 Reference groups

Reference group 1

Name	Organisational unit	Function
Christer Björkman	Pro dean, S faculty	Chair Appointments Board, S faculty
Torleif Härd	Dean, NJ faculty	Chair Appointments Board, NJ faculty
Dirk-Jan de Koning	Vice dean, VH faculty	Deputy chair Appointments Board, VH faculty

Lena Ekelund Axelson	Vice dean, LTV faculty	Chair Appointments Board, LTV
Carolyn Glynn	Department of Crop Production Ecology	Head of Department, NJ
Lotta Rydhmer	Department of Animal Genetics	Head of Department, VH
Hans Petersson	Department of Forest Resource Management	Head of Department, S
Anders Carlsson	Department of Plant Breeding	Head of Department, LTV

Reference group 2

Name	Organisational unit	Focus
Åsa Söderberg	Head of Unit at the Division of Human Resources, Human Resources Unit	Carreer development
Olle Håstad	Research Officer, VH faculty	Clinical employments
Lotta Jäderlund	Education Officer at the Division of Planning	Carreer development
Lennart Jonsson	Head of Legal Affairs at the Vice-Chancellor's Office	Law

Reference group 3

Namn	Organisatorisk enhet	Fokus
Karin Öhman, member LFN-S faculty	Appointment Board, S faculty	Academic leadership
Seema Arora Jonsson, member LFN-NJ	Appointment Board, NJ faculty	Academic leadership
Anna Jansson, member LFN-VH faculty	Appointment Board, NJ faculty	Academic leadership
Yuval Zelnik	Chair SLU Postdoc Association	Academic leadership
Todd Johansson	Chair SLU PhD Student Council	Academic leadership
Magdalena Bieroza	Chair SLU Future Faculty	Academic leadership

8. Resources and budget

The project has no budget of its own. Members of the project perform their work within their regular employment. Any minor expenses are expected to be handled by the respective faculty after dialogue with the dean.

9. Communication/anchoring during and after the project

During the first phase of the project a communication plan will be prepared with support from the communication department. If necessary a communicator is co-opted to the project group's meetings. Information about HRS4R and the certification will be created on the employee website.

10. Approval of the project plan

Hereby the project's planning and conditions are approved and the assignment is accepted by the project sponsor and the project manager.