

Preface to the Proposed Charter for Research Managers

CARDEA

**Career Acknowledgement for Research (Managers) Delivering for the
European Area**

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How the Proposed Charter was developed: consortium co-creation and European policy direction

The proposed Charter for Research Managers has developed out of the wider European research-management work carried out through ERA Action 17, the action follow on New ERA for Research Management and CARDEA. It brings together the European policy context, the findings from CARDEA's research and the discussions and co-creation that took place across the consortium and with the wider Research Manager community. This is consistent with the broader CARDEA approach, which used document analysis, desk research, the CARDEA survey, interviews, focus groups and workshops, benchmarking and stakeholder engagement.

The starting point: existing European architecture

A key starting point was that a Charter for Research Managers should not become a separate framework sitting alongside, or competing with, the European Charter for Researchers. The 2023 Council Recommendation introduced the new European Charter for Researchers, covering the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders and policymakers. It is organised around four pillars and 20 principles and provides a common European reference point for research careers. At the same time, the research management profession is highly heterogeneous, encompassing a wide range of roles and operating across different sectors, disciplines, institutional contexts and national systems. The challenge, therefore, was to develop a Charter that could reflect the distinctive nature and diversity of research management while remaining aligned with the wider European framework for research careers.

As part of the agreed project milestones, CARDEA was tasked with developing a Charter for Research Managers that was coordinated with the existing European Charter for Researchers. The intention was not to replicate the existing Charter, but to ensure that Research Managers were recognised within the same broader European architecture while reflecting the distinctive nature of the research management profession. This meant considering areas such as rights and responsibilities, ethics, assessment, working conditions, career development and talent development specifically from a Research Management perspective.

Bringing the consortium together

CARDEA is a European consortium involving partners from Ireland, Greece, Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Poland, Romania and Catalonia/Spain, with UCC as coordinator. CARDEA also worked regularly with its sister project, RM ROADMAP. This was important in helping to avoid duplication and in building a European, bottom-up approach to research management. The Ambassador Programme helped to take the CARDEA results out to a much wider network of Research Managers.

The development of the Charter happened as part of a wider community-building and co-creation process. It was not something developed by one institution in isolation. CARDEA's methodology involved information dissemination through national and thematic Research Manager communities using focus groups and workshops. The wider ERA Action 17 Core Group also brought sponsors and experts into the process, with ideas being discussed, project work updated, and reports and recommendations drafted and revisited.

This was an iterative process. The consortium brought together different national and institutional perspectives. These were discussed against the developing European policy context and the existing European frameworks, and the principles were then shaped and refined over time.

What informed the content

- European policy and ERA Action 17 and later a New Era in Research Management.
- Existing European frameworks, particularly the European Charter for Researchers and the emerging European framework for research careers (Dec 2023).
- The CARDEA survey and other CARDEA research on the research-management profession.
- Interviews with Research Managers, HR practitioners, research-performing organisations, universities and policymakers.
- Focus groups, workshops and co-creation with national and thematic Research Manager communities.
- Benchmarking against related competence and skills frameworks, including ResearchComp and ESCO.
- Practical experience of research-management roles across different sectors, disciplines and national systems.
- Iterative consortium discussion and refinement to identify the principles that were sufficiently broad to work across the European Research Area.
- Consultation with policy officers and HRS4R experts on alignment with the European Charter for Researchers and its practical implementation

How the pillars were identified

The four pillars provided a way of taking the broad structure of the European Charter for Researchers and translating it into something that made sense for the particular role of Research Managers. The need for a clear link with the Researchers Charter was therefore the starting point, but the meaning of each area was then considered from a Research Manager perspective.

The proposed Charter for Research Managers groups the 20 principles into four pillars. This represents a simplification of an earlier working version, which had six pillars and 26 principles and treated areas such as rights and accountability, professional development, collaboration and mobility, working conditions, and recruitment and recognition more separately. The move to four pillars brought the proposed Charter for Research Managers into closer structural alignment with the European Charter for Researchers, while also making the framework clearer, more accessible and easier to apply in practice.

Why some themes are cross-cutting

The current Charter does not treat gender equality, diversity, integrity, transparency and inclusion as issues that belong to just one principle. The draft makes the point that the values in the first pillar should be reflected across all of the other principles.

This also reflects the European Charter for Researchers, where the values in the first pillar are described as transversal and are intended to be reflected throughout the other principles.

How the principles were refined

The final 20-principle structure came from consolidating and refining the earlier work. The earlier working version explored a more detailed six-pillar/26-principle model before moving to the current four-pillar/20-principle structure. In practice, related ideas were discussed, grouped and consolidated. The aim was to have a framework that was comprehensive enough to be meaningful, but still usable as a European Charter.

An important part of this refinement process was consultation with European Commission policy officers and experts in HRS4R. These consultations provided practical guidance on how the 26 principles identified in the earlier version of the Research Manager Charter could be mapped and aligned with the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers. The purpose was not simply to reduce the number of principles, but to ensure that the proposed Charter for Research Managers remained clearly connected to the existing European framework while retaining the issues distinctive to the research management profession. This alignment was also undertaken with accessibility and practical implementation in mind, enabling institutions to understand and apply the Charter and, importantly, allowing its principles to be meaningfully assessed through HRS4R processes.

Importantly, the final principles are not derived from any single source. They bring together European policy expectations, existing European frameworks, CARDEA research and development work, European Commission input, and the discussions and co-creation that took place with stakeholders and across the consortium.

The relationship between the Charter and RM Comp

The Charter and RM Comp came out of the same wider professionalisation work. RM Comp is about the competences needed for effective research management and how people can develop and progress in those competences. The Charter is answering a different question: *what principles, rights, responsibilities and conditions should underpin research management as a profession?* This distinction was important to the CARDEA partners.

The role of the European Commission

The Charter was developed in a European policy environment where the Commission and Member States were looking for stronger recognition of the Research Management profession through ERA Action 17 and its successor, A New Era in Research Management. The 2025 ERA Policy Agenda then made this direction more explicit, with a European Charter for Research Managers to be co-created in 2026. It also referred to recognition across sectors and to a triangle involving research-performing organisations, funding organisations and industry.



Principle-by-Principle

The evidence classification indicates the nature and strength of the supporting policy or framework evidence for each principle. “Direct” indicates explicit support within European policy or framework documents; “framework” indicates clear alignment with an established European framework; and “policy direction” reflects a clear direction within European policy. “Moderate” indicates that the principle is supported by the broader policy context, although it is not explicitly prescribed in relation to Research Managers.

Principle	Evidence	Rationale	Key Resources
1. Professionalism and Integrity	Strong / framework	European Charter for Researchers treats ethics and integrity as foundational. RM Comp also includes reliability, trustfulness, decision-making and strategic planning.	European Charter for Researchers; RM Comp; Council Recommendation 2023/1640.
2. Upholding Ethical Standards	Strong / direct	European Charter for Researchers supports objectivity, impartiality, independence, fairness and responsibility. The Council Recommendation supports compliant R&I.	European Charter for Researchers; Council Recommendation 2023/1640.
3. Compliance with Regulations	Strong / direct	Council Recommendation expressly identifies compliance with policy objectives, funding requirements, financial rules and legal regulations as a Research Manager function. ¹	Council Recommendation 2023/1640.
4. Open Science	Strong / direct	EU open science policy supports responsible management of outputs, FAIR principles and EOSC. The Council Recommendation explicitly lists FAIR data management among Research Manager tasks.	Council Recommendation 2023/1640; EU Open Science/EOSC.
5. Clear Definition of Roles and Responsibilities	Strong / direct	Council Recommendation calls for research management careers to be framed and recognised through relevant skills and competences, helping to foster comparability ² . RM Comp gives a common competence language.	Council Recommendation 2023/1640; RM Comp.

¹ Research managers can perform different tasks, for example: (a) streamlining or facilitating the planning, development, management, FAIR data management, administration, monitoring, communication and valorisation of research and innovation; (b) ensuring compliance with policy objectives, funding programme requirements, financial rules and legal regulations; (c) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of research and innovation projects or systems; (d) enhancing the impact of research and innovation on policy and society; (e) supporting the design and implementation of research and innovation policies, programmes and projects.

²Research management careers should be adequately framed and recognised at the level of the Union, by defining relevant skills and competences, in order to strengthen research managers’ professional capacity, to enable the development of relevant training, and to foster comparability. [OJ:C_202301640:EN:TXT.pdf](#)

Principle	Evidence	Rationale	Key Resources
6. Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment	Strong framework /	European Charter for Researchers establishes fair, transparent and talent-based recruitment and selection as an open-labour-market principle ³ .	European Charter for Researchers.
7. Fair Assessment, Recognition and Reward	Strong framework /	European Charter for Researchers supports diverse assessment and recognition. RM Comp gives competence and learning-outcome language that can support this.	European Charter for Researchers; RM Comp.
8. Measuring Impact	Moderate	EU policy also recognises broader research impact and responsible assessment, but it does not prescribe one particular system of metrics for Research Managers.	European Charter for Researchers; ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027.
9. Rights of Research Managers	Strong framework /	European Charter for Researchers is based on rights and responsibilities, and EU policy also recognises the professional status and development of Research Managers.	European Charter for Researchers; Council Recommendation 2023/1640.
10. Supportive Policies for Work-Life Balance	Strong framework /	European Charter for Researchers addresses working conditions and sustainable careers, and EU research-career policy supports work-life balance.	European Charter for Researchers; Council Recommendation 2023/1640.
11. Stability of Employment	Strong / policy direction	EU research-career policy identifies better working conditions and tackling precarity as important to attractive careers. The ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027 continues this direction.	Council Recommendation 2023/1640; ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027.
12. Responsibilities of Research Managers	Strong / direct	The Council Recommendation directly describes Research Manager functions in planning, management, compliance, efficiency, impact and policy support. RM Comp gives the competence architecture alongside this.	Council Recommendation 2023/1640; RM Comp.
13. Support for Mobility	Strong / direct	ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027 treats research careers and mobility as a structural policy issue. The Council Recommendation recognises geographical, disciplinary, inter-sectoral and inter-organisational mobility, and RM Comp gives supporting competence language.	ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027; Council Recommendation 2023/1640 ⁴ ; RM Comp.
14. Freedom to Innovate	Moderate	RM Comp includes creativity, adaptability, professional flexibility, strategic planning and problem solving. Wider ERA policy also promotes innovation.	RM Comp; ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027.

³ [EUR-Lex - 52023DC0436 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁴ [ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 | European Research Area Platform](#)

Principle	Evidence	Rationale	Key Resources
15. Accountability and Transparent Decision-Making	Strong / framework	European Charter for Researchers supports ethics, integrity and transparent practice. The Council Recommendation supports compliance and effective research management.	European Charter for Researchers; Council Recommendation 2023/1640.
16. Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Strong / direct	Gender equality and inclusiveness are structural ERA priorities. Current EU policy also includes intersectionality, inclusive GEPs and equality in recruitment and career progression.	ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027; EU gender equality policy; European Charter for Researchers.
17. Training and Development	Strong / direct	RM Comp was created to support professional development. The Council Recommendation links competence recognition with training, and the ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027 includes training in the Research Management initiative.	RM Comp; Council Recommendation 2023/1640; ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027.
18. Career Progression	Strong / direct	ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027 calls for better career prospects. RM Comp gives proficiency levels and learning outcomes, and the Council Recommendation supports recognition and comparability.	ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027; Council Recommendation 2023/1640; RM Comp.
19. Management, Supervision and Mentoring	Strong / framework	RM Comp includes Line Management and Talent Development, Communication and Cognitive Abilities. The European Charter for Researchers also supports training and mentoring.	RM Comp; European Charter for Researchers.
20. Collaboration, Networking and Public Engagement	Strong / framework	RM Comp includes stakeholder engagement and communication. EU open science policy supports public engagement ⁵ , and the Council Recommendation includes communication, valorisation and societal impact.	RM Comp; Council Recommendation 2023/1640; EU Open Science policy. ⁶

⁵ “promoting public engagement in research and innovation, bolstering citizen science and enhancing public trust in science”

⁶ [Open science - Research and innovation - European Commission](#)

Guidelines for Implementation of Charter for RM's

As part of the CARDEA project's efforts to advance the professionalisation of Research Management, this implementation framework aims to support organisations in preparing to adopt the RM Charter. Modelled after the approach used in the HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers - HR Excellence in Research), this framework serves as a tool to help institutions assess their current practices, structures, and policies against the key pillars and principles of the RM Charter as detailed above and can be found [here](#). The results will provide each organisation with a clear understanding of their strengths, areas for improvement, and readiness level for RM Charter alignment. Ultimately, this process will lay the foundation for developing a tailored action plan to support a gradual and effective implementation of the RM Charter. The structure of the implementation framework will reflect the conceptual design of the RM Charter built around the 4 key principals. **The process described below will enable organisations within the ERA to sign up to the Charter for Research Managers.**

Working Groups

As with HR Excellence in Research, working groups will play a critical role in the successful implementation of the RM Charter within organisations. These groups provide a structured medium for collaboration, diverse perspectives and ideas leading to a shared ownership of the Charter implementation project. As with HR Excellence in Research, CARDEA recommends involving RM staff across all levels of the organisation and senior leadership. Inclusive working groups also enhance transparency, build trust, and increase the likelihood of sustainable action implementation. This approach aligns with best practices in HR Excellence in Research and supports a culture of continuous improvement.

For ideas on how to structure your working group please refer to these [terms of reference](#) for a HR Excellence in Research Working Group which will assist in bringing your working group together.

The Gap Analysis

What is Gap Analysis?

The Gap analysis,⁷ in this context is a structured organisational self-assessment process that can be used by research performing organisations to evaluate the extent to which their internal policies, practices, and systems align with the principles outlined in the RM Charter. It identifies areas of full, partial, or insufficient implementation and highlights specific gaps between current institutional practices and the Charter's standards. The process also considers legal or organisational barriers and proposes initiatives to bridge these gaps. Once convened, the Working Group will then start the implementation process beginning with the Gap Analysis.

Modelled after the approach used in the HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers), an example of a survey for gap analysis helping institutions assessing their current practices, structures, and policies against the key pillars and principles of the RM Charter is given

⁷ Adapted from EURAXESS Charter and Code Checklist GAP Analysis

in Annex 1. The structure of the survey reflects the conceptual design of the RM Charter built around the 4 pillars (Ethics, Integrity, and Open Science, Assessment, Recruitment and Progression, Working Conditions and Practices, Research Management Careers and Talent Development). Each pillar is divided through a series of key principles (20 in total), which are translated into specific statements or indicators. Respondents are invited to rate their level of alignment or implementation for each principle on a structured scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Internal Gap Analysis Steps

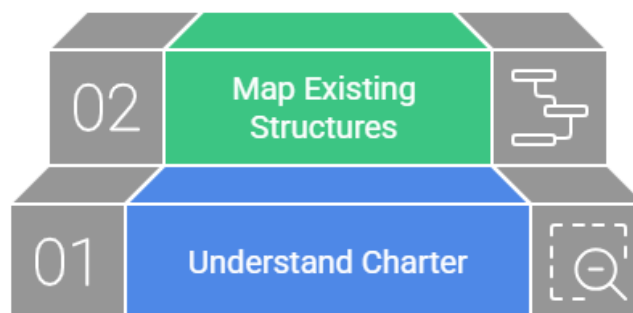
Step 1: Understand the RM Charter

- Review the full text of the **Charter for Research Managers**.
- Identify its **core principles**, such as recruitment, progression, career development, training, and talent development.

Step 2: Map Existing Structures

- Document current RM roles, career pathways, job descriptions, and HR policies.
- You can use the [CARDEA Implementation Framework](#) to assist you.
- Identify any existing frameworks (e.g. RM Comp, CARDEA tools) already in use.

Implementing the RM Charter



Step 3: Compare Against Charter Principles

- Create a comparison matrix:
 - **Column A:** Charter principle.
 - **Column B:** Current organisational practice.
 - **Column C:** Identified Gap
 - **Column D:** Suggested action to improve

Suggested Gap Analysis Template Design			
Charter Principle	Current organisational practice	Identified Gap	Action to improve
Pillar 1: Ethics, Integrity and Open Science			
Professionalism and Integrity			
Upholding Ethical Standards			
Compliance with Regulations			
Open Science			
Pillar 2: Assessment, Recruitment, and Progression			
Clear Definition of Roles and Responsibilities			
Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTMR)			
Fair Assessment and Recognition and Reward			
Measuring Impact			

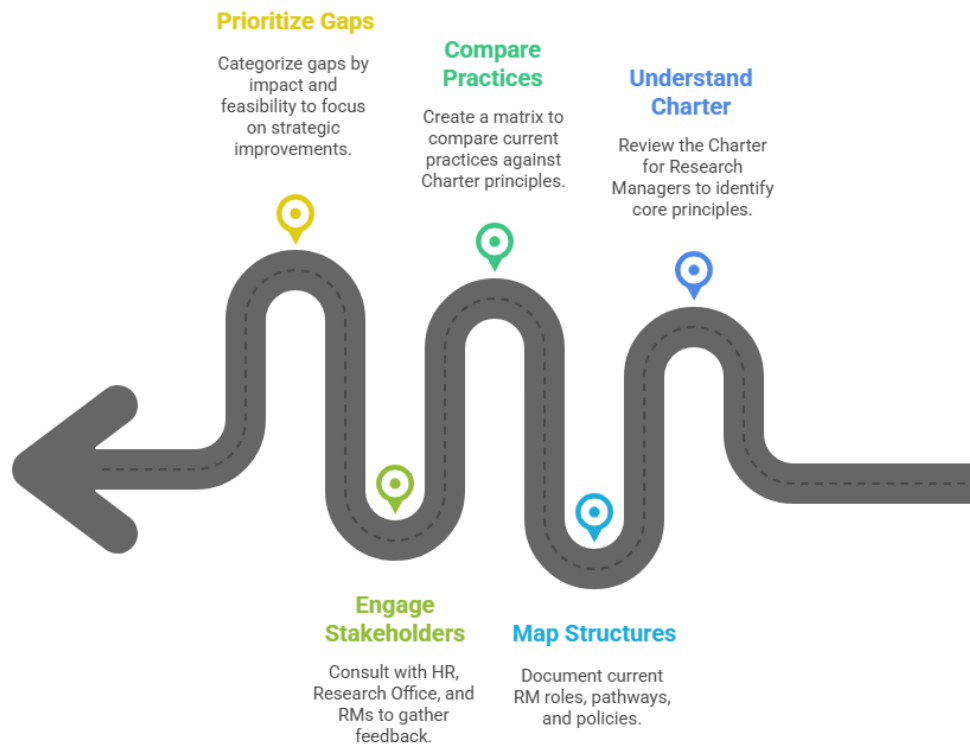
Step 4: Engage Stakeholders

- Consult HR, Research Office, Finance, and current RMs.
- Use surveys, interviews, or workshops to gather feedback on current practices and perceived gaps.

Step 5: Prioritise Gaps

- Categorise gaps by impact and feasibility:
 - **High Priority:** Strategic gaps affecting career progression or recognition.
 - **Medium Priority:** Operational gaps in training or recruitment.
 - **Low Priority:** Cosmetic or documentation-related gaps

Achieving Charter Compliance



The Action Plan

What is an Action Plan?

In the context of this report, an action plan (just like the HR Excellence in Research framework) is a structured document that outlines specific measures an institution can undertake to align its policies and practices with the principles of the Charter for Research Managers. It includes clearly defined actions, responsibilities, timelines, success indicators, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The action plan is developed following a gap analysis (as above) and serves as a roadmap for continuous improvement in areas such as recruitment, working conditions, career development, and training.

Action Plan Steps

Step 1: Develop Action Plan⁸

- For each gap, define:
 - **Title Action**
 - **Timing**
 - **Responsible Unit**
 - **Indicator/Target**
 - **Current Status**

⁸ As per HR Excellence in Research [EURAXESS | Researchers in motion](#)

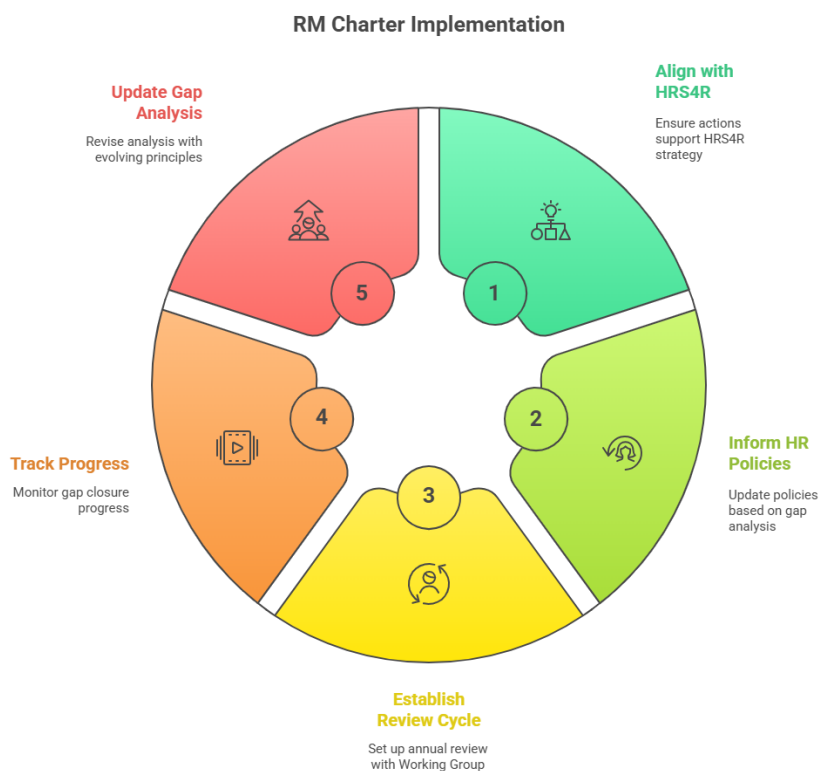
Suggested Action Plan Template				
Title Action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator/Target	Current Status
Pillar 1: Ethics, Integrity and Open Science				
Professionalism and Integrity	May 2026	HR	New Policy	New
Upholding Ethical Standards				
Compliance with Regulations				
Open Science				

Step 2: Align with HR Excellence in Research

- Ensure proposed actions support or enhance your institution's **HRS4R strategy**.
- Use the gap analysis to inform updates to your HR policies and recruitment practices.

Step 3: Monitor and Review

- Establish a review cycle working with the Working Group (e.g. annually).
- Track progress on closing gaps.
- Update the gap analysis as Charter principles evolve or institutional priorities shift.



Way Forward for Charter

Integrating the Charter for Research Managers into the HR Excellence in Research process would be highly beneficial for institutions across Europe. The HR Excellence framework already provides a robust, structured methodology for implementing the European Charter for Researchers, including gap analysis, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement. By embedding the RM Charter within this existing policy process, institutions would be positioned to engage with familiar tools and quality structures to ensure consistency of implementation. This alignment would greatly reinforce the recognition of Research Managers as essential contributors to the research ecosystem and enable them through the opportunities that would most certainly develop e.g. training and development and career progression.

Conclusion

The successful organisational implementation of the Charter for Research Managers is inspired by the structured methodology established under the HR Excellence in Research Award. Just as the European Charter for Researchers is operationalised through a rigorous gap analysis and action planning process under HRS4R, the RM Charter would greatly benefit from a similar approach. Institutions that have already embedded HR Excellence in Research principles are well-positioned to quickly adapt and extend these practices to support the recognition, development, and integration of Research Managers. This would help to ensure consistency, transparency, and coherence across research manager roles, reinforcing the broader goals of the European Research Area.

Annex 1 - RM Survey – Internal Review for RM charter implementation

Respondents are invited to rate their level of alignment or implementation for each principle on a structured scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). *(note: Responses are anonymous, please answer as honestly as you can)*

Part A: Respondent profile

1. Your role/position:

- ☐ Doctoral / early-stage researcher (R1)
- ☐ Post-doctoral / researcher (R2)
- ☐ Experienced researcher / group leader (R3/R4)
- ☐ Technical/administrative/research support staff
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. Department / Research unit / Centre:

3. Length of service in the organization

- ☐ <1 year
- ☐ 1-3 yrs
- ☐ 4-7 yrs
- ☐ 8-15 yrs
- ☐ >15 yrs

4. Employment status:

- ☐ Permanent contract
- ☐ Fixed-term contract
- ☐ Project-based contract
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. How do you see yourself in the current position, in terms of Research Manager:

- ☐ First Stage Research Manager (RM1)
- ☐ Recognised Research Manager (RM2)
- ☐ Established Research Manager (RM3)
- ☐ Senior Research Manager (RM4)

Part B: Awareness & communication of RM Charter

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree).

1. The RM Charter process was communicated to me clearly:

2. I feel sufficiently informed about how the RM Charter principles apply to my role:
3. Our organisation provides internal training about the RM Charter
4. (Optional) If you selected 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree', what could improve communication?

Part C: Implementation of the RM Charter & Code principles

For each statement, use 1–5 (1=Strongly Disagree ... 5=Strongly Agree). Select N/A if not relevant.

Ethics, Integrity, and Professional Standards

1. **(Professionalism and Integrity)** Your organization promotes and upholds high standards of professionalism and integrity among research managers in all research management activities.
2. **(Upholding Ethical Standards)** Our organization has clear policies and practices in place to ensure that research management is conducted according to recognized ethical standards.
3. **(Compliance with Regulations)** Our organization ensures that research managers are informed about and comply with all relevant legal, financial, and institutional regulations.
4. **(Open Science)** Our organization promotes and supports Open Science principles, including open access, open data, and transparency in research practices.

Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

1. **(Clear Definition of Roles and Responsibilities)** Our organization provides a clear and transparent framework outlining the roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines of research managers.
2. **(Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment)** Our organization ensures that research manager recruitment processes are open, transparent, and based on merit, attracting the best candidates.
3. **(Fair Assessment and Recognition)** Our organization applies fair, transparent, and merit-based systems for assessing and recognizing the performance and contributions of research managers.
4. **(Measuring Impact)** Our organization has mechanisms to assess and communicate the impact of research management activities on institutional performance and research quality.

Working Conditions and Practices

1. **(Rights of RMs)** Our organization recognizes and protects the rights of research managers, ensuring fair working conditions and equitable access to professional opportunities.
2. **(Supportive Policies for Work-Life Balance)** Our organization implements policies and practices that actively support the work-life balance and wellbeing of research managers.

3. **(Stability of Employment)** Our organization provides stable and secure employment conditions for research managers, promoting continuity and professional development.
4. **(Responsibilities of RMs)** Our organization clearly defines and communicates the professional responsibilities expected of research managers in supporting the research process
5. **(Support for Mobility)** Our organization supports the professional mobility of research managers across departments, institutions, and international contexts as a means of career development and knowledge exchange.
6. **(Freedom to Innovate)** Our organization encourages research managers to apply creativity and innovation in developing and improving research management practices and processes.
7. **(Accountability and Transparent Decision-Making)** Our organization promotes accountability and ensures that decisions related to research management are transparent, fair, and well-documented.
8. **(Gender, Equality, and Diversity)** Our organization fosters gender equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of research management.

Research Management, Careers, and Talent Development

1. **(Training and Development)** Our organization provides access to continuous training and professional development opportunities to enhance the skills and competencies of research managers.
2. **(Career Progression)** Our organization has clear pathways and criteria to support the career progression of research managers at different levels of experience and responsibility.
3. **(Management, Supervision, and Mentoring)** Our organization promotes effective management, supervision, and mentoring practices to support the growth and professional wellbeing of research managers.
4. **(Internal Collaboration)** Our organization fosters internal collaboration and knowledge sharing among research managers and other research support staff.
 - a. **(External Collaboration and Networking)** Our organization encourages and supports research managers in building external networks and collaborations at national and international levels.

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HR Excellence in Research

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