

THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS (HRS4R)

**NEIKER- Basque Institute for Agricultural
Research and Development**

**Implementation of the European Charter
for Researchers
&
the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment
of Researchers**

ACTION PLAN

March 2021

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1. Organisational Information

Key figures of NEIKER (Figures marked * are compulsory) STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	83
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	5
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	26
Of whom are women	48
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 ¹ = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	29
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	28
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	26
Total number of students (if relevant)	36
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	190
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	13.136.100
Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure,...)	8.053.743
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations - including EU funding)	3.425.895
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	1.656.462
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	
<p>NEIKER-Basque Institute for Agricultural Research and Development is a public company attached to the Vice Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Policy of the Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness of the Basque Government. NEIKER is committed to these objectives: • Improve productivity and competitiveness of agricultural production systems, • Develop and apply new management technologies on farms, • Satisfy quality and safety requirements of the food processing industry, its products and the consumer. NEIKER is structured into five scientific departments: a) Plant Production and Protection, b) Forestry Sciences, c) Animal Production, d) Animal Health, e) Conservation of Natural Resources.</p>	

¹

http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

1.1. Description of NEIKER management model, structure, activities and results

NEIKER develops innovative and transferable knowledge and solutions that add value to the agri-food sector and improve its competitiveness with criteria of respect for the environment, ensuring its current and future sustainability and actively contributing to the economic and social development of our environment, in line with the objectives of the Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness of the Basque Government. As a public entity with a desire to serve, our management model pursues excellence and is guided by internationally recognized quality standards, based on four commitments:

With the people. Based on principles of freedom, trust and shared leadership, promoting their involvement, motivation and responsibility, we contribute to their professional and personal development. Likewise, and in line with the values of our Government, we are deeply committed to the reconciliation of personal and work life, real gender equality and the promotion of Basque, the official language in our territory and which constitutes a key element of our cultural heritage.

With Scientific Excellence. We train professionals recognized by the international scientific community, capable of generating knowledge that contributes to improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the agri-food sector. We seek to become a global benchmark in innovation and contribute to the dissemination of knowledge through scientific publications, the participation of our researchers in forums and congresses, and the organization of dissemination sessions.

With the Agrarian Sector. Through proactive dialogue with its different actors, we collaborate in solving the challenges of the primary sector and agri-food companies, including:

- improving the profitability and sustainability of agricultural livestock farms
- the generation of new productive activities that create wealth and employment
- food safety control
- environmental sustainability.

With society. We promote best practices and allocate resources to initiatives that support balanced and supportive global development. We actively work to reduce environmental impacts derived from our activity and incorporate the concept of sustainability in our daily management. The values emanating from the ethical code of our Government are translated into the rational and transparent use of the resources entrusted to us, as well as a flexible organizational structure, managed by

processes and oriented to results, among which we highlight the increase in our level of self-financing.

NEIKER structure

NEIKER is a Public Company of the Basque Government and its governing bodies reflect this circumstance.

Board of Directors

President: Bittor Oroz Izagirre. Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agri-Food Policy of the Basque Government.

Vowels:

M^a Teresa Amezketa: Director of Services of the Department of Economic Development and Infrastructure of the Basque Government.

Peli Manterola Arteta: Director of Quality and Agrifood Industries of the Department of Economic Development and Infrastructure of the Basque Government.

Jorge Garbisu Buesa: Director of Agriculture and Livestock of the Department of Economic Development and Infrastructure of the Basque Government.

Xabier Patxi Arrieta: Director of Information Technology and Telecommunications of the Department of Public Governance and Self-government of the Basque Government.

Federico Saiz Alonso: President of BASKEGUR.

Unai Ibarzabal Goikoetxea. Harakai-Urkaiko Director.

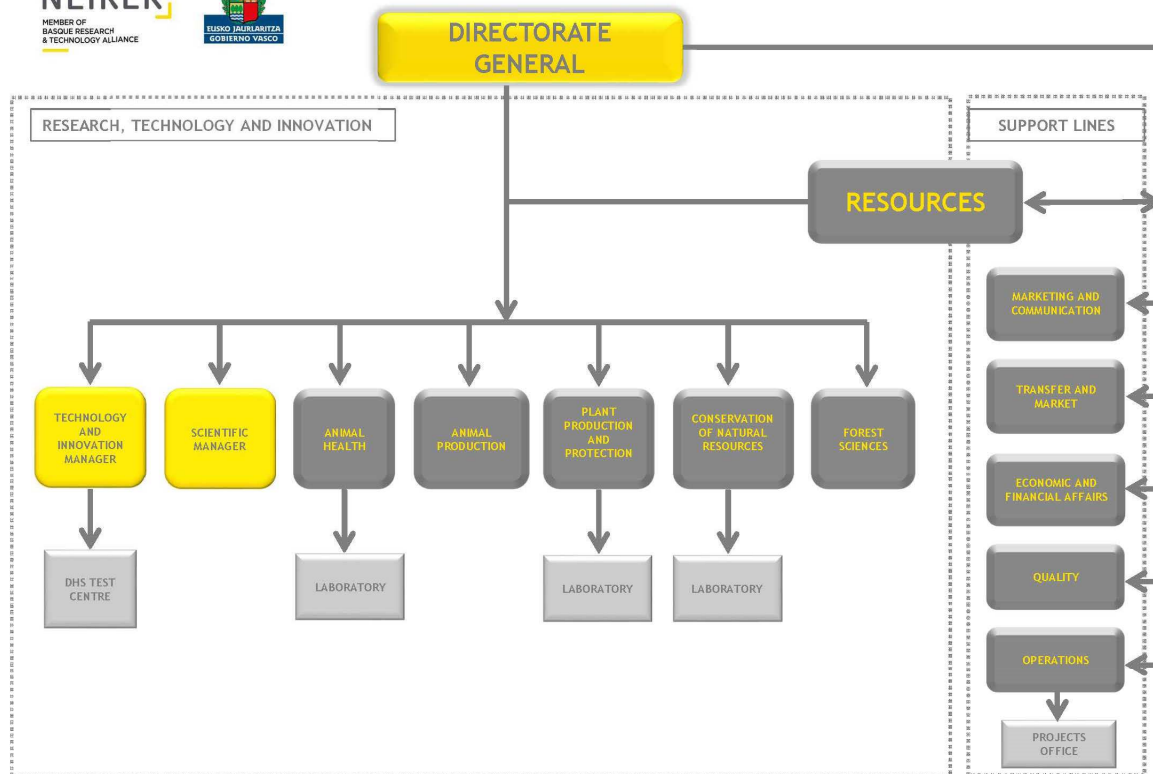
Alaitz Ortuondo Pérez. Aberekin S.A.

José Luis Fresno Santamaría. Director of Garlan S. Cooperativa.

Begoña Angulo Alonso. Representative of NEIKER workers.

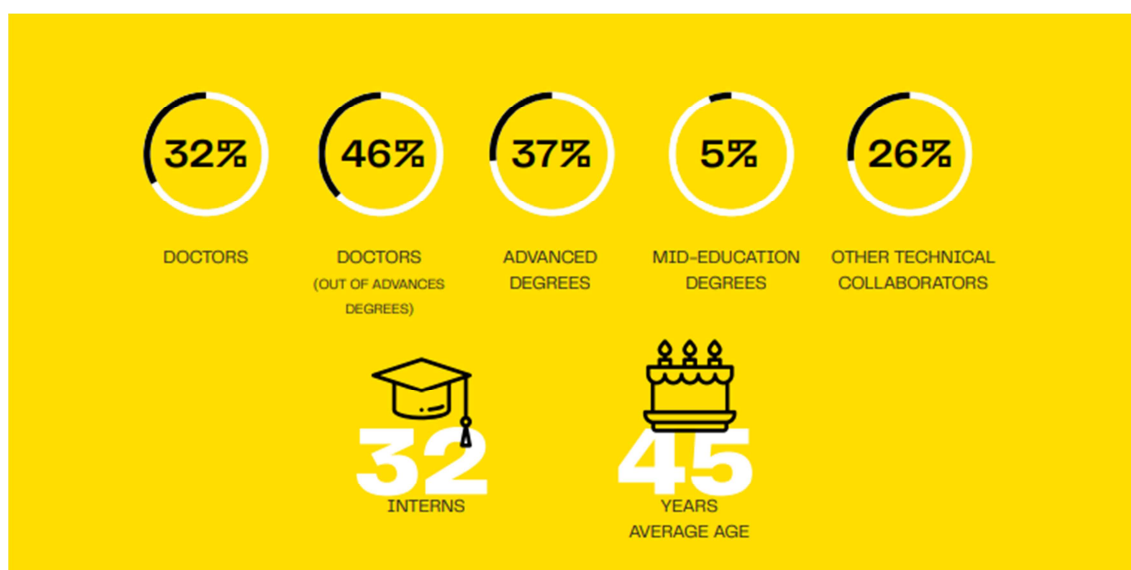
Organization chart of the centre

The organization chart of the centre under the General Directorate has: a) Research, Technology and Innovation Area, with a Scientific Manager, a Technology and Innovation Manager, and five managers from the scientific departments, and b) Resources Area with a Director of Resources led and coordinated by a Transfer and Market Manager, a Communication Manager, an Operations Manager (in charge of the Project Office), an Economics and Finance Manager and a Quality Manager.



Personnel distribution

The people working at NEIKER have a high degree of qualification with 69% with a PhD or a Bachelor Degree. There are 32 fellows who are being trained as Technologists (2-year fellowships) or as researchers (4-year contracts).



Specialization: Knowledge and technologies

NEIKER is structured into **five scientific departments**: a) Plant Production and Protection, b) Forestry Sciences, c) Animal Production, d) Animal Health, e) Conservation of Natural Resources.

Plant Production and Protection, carrying out traditional plant breeding to develop varieties adapted to the agro-environmental conditions of the Basque Country, disease resistant and better adapted to the market, especially in potato, corn and radiata pine, so as to increase yields and improve the product quality. In Plant Protection the activities are focused on epidemiology, diagnosis and control of pests and diseases in crops and forest species of interest in the Basque Country, developing detection methods for pathogens, and paying special attention to the biological control of pests and diseases. The research projects are focused on diseases and pests in field crops, as well as greenhouse crops and tree plantations.

Forestry Sciences focused on the areas of productivity, health and sustainability of tree plantations and forests. In order to do this we develop a program of genetic improvement of radiata pine based on selection assisted by markers, taking into account in particular those related to the quality of wood. Likewise, techniques of somatic embryogenesis are put in place for the clonal propagation of the improved individuals. Site maps are developed to look for those alternative species that best suit the current and future climate conditions of the Basque Country. Finally, advanced methodologies are designed, applied, and controlled to achieve more sustainable forest management in the field of control and prevention of forest decay caused by invasive and pathogenic agents.

Animal Production works in animal breeding performing systematically genetic evaluations for production traits and composition of milk and udder morphology in sheep breeds Latxa and Carranzana, as well as calving ease in Frisian cattle. In animal nutrition, the objective is to enhance local resources use, mainly through grazing and improving the quality of forage, as well as reducing GHG emissions from ruminants. In applied ethology and animal welfare, animal behavior is studied to propose improvements in management practices that lead to greater animal welfare while optimizing their productivity. All these lines of work are aimed at obtaining more efficient and sustainable production systems, both from the use of natural resources, and from the quality of the products obtained, while increasing the acceptance of livestock activity by society.

Animal Health focuses on surveillance, control and prevention of livestock and wildlife diseases including those that have a significant impact on animal health and zoonotic diseases, with the aim of improving animal health and welfare, as well as Public Health. Main objectives: development of diagnostic tools and procedures to improve the sanitary status of livestock and control zoonotic pathogens.

Conservation of Natural Resources is dedicated to agricultural production systems, such as traditional, integrated and organic are evaluated studying its viability and sustainability, quantifying the possible environmental impacts caused by agricultural

practices (erosion, pollution, loss of biodiversity, etc.) and proposing new agricultural practices to cope with climate change and allow their integration within the framework of sustainability. Climate change and the use of climatic predictions are essential to make accurate predictions on biotic and abiotic risks, which can have negative effects on crops and domestic animals. We use different models to predict soil organic matter changes, plant growth, tree growth so we can develop agricultural and forestry practices better adapted to specific conditions.

According to the 2019 projects, they are shown in Figure 1:

- Expenditure executed by Scientific Department
- Expenditure executed by activity mix: fundamental research, industrial research and experimental development (RVCTI)
- Expenditure executed by specialization: energy, food and ecosystems.
- Expenditure executed by agrarian sector: agriculture, livestock, forestry and the agri-food industry.
- Expenditure executed by agricultural subsector: general animal, radiata pine, bovine, extensive crops, etc.

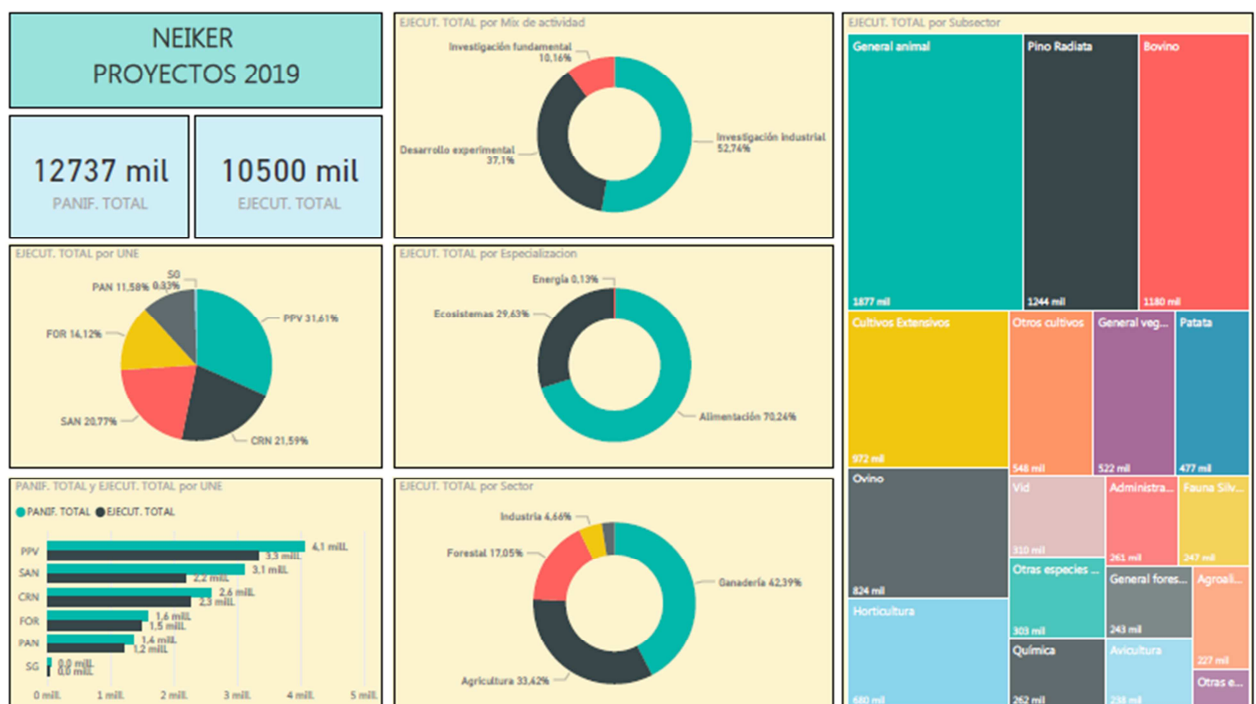


Figure 1. Allocation of expenditure by scientific department, activity mix, specialization, sector and agricultural subsector

According to the 2019 projects, they are shown in Figure 2:

- a) Expenditure executed by strategic objective
- b) Income according to source of funds

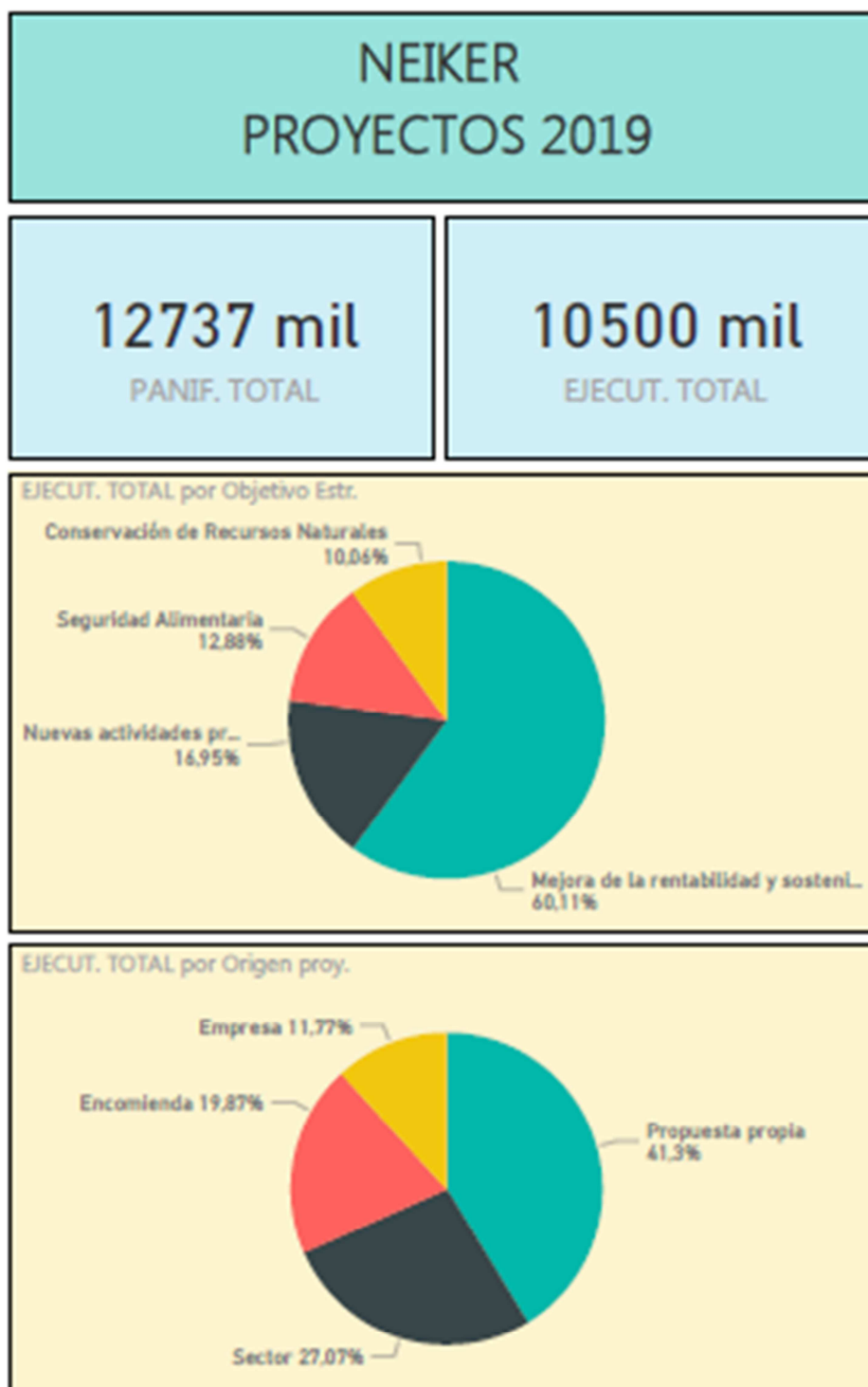


Figure 2. Expenditure executed by strategic objective and source of funds

According to the 2019 projects, they are shown in Figure 3:

- a) Expenditure executed by strategic line of research
- b) Expenditure executed by technological challenge (PT 2018-2023)

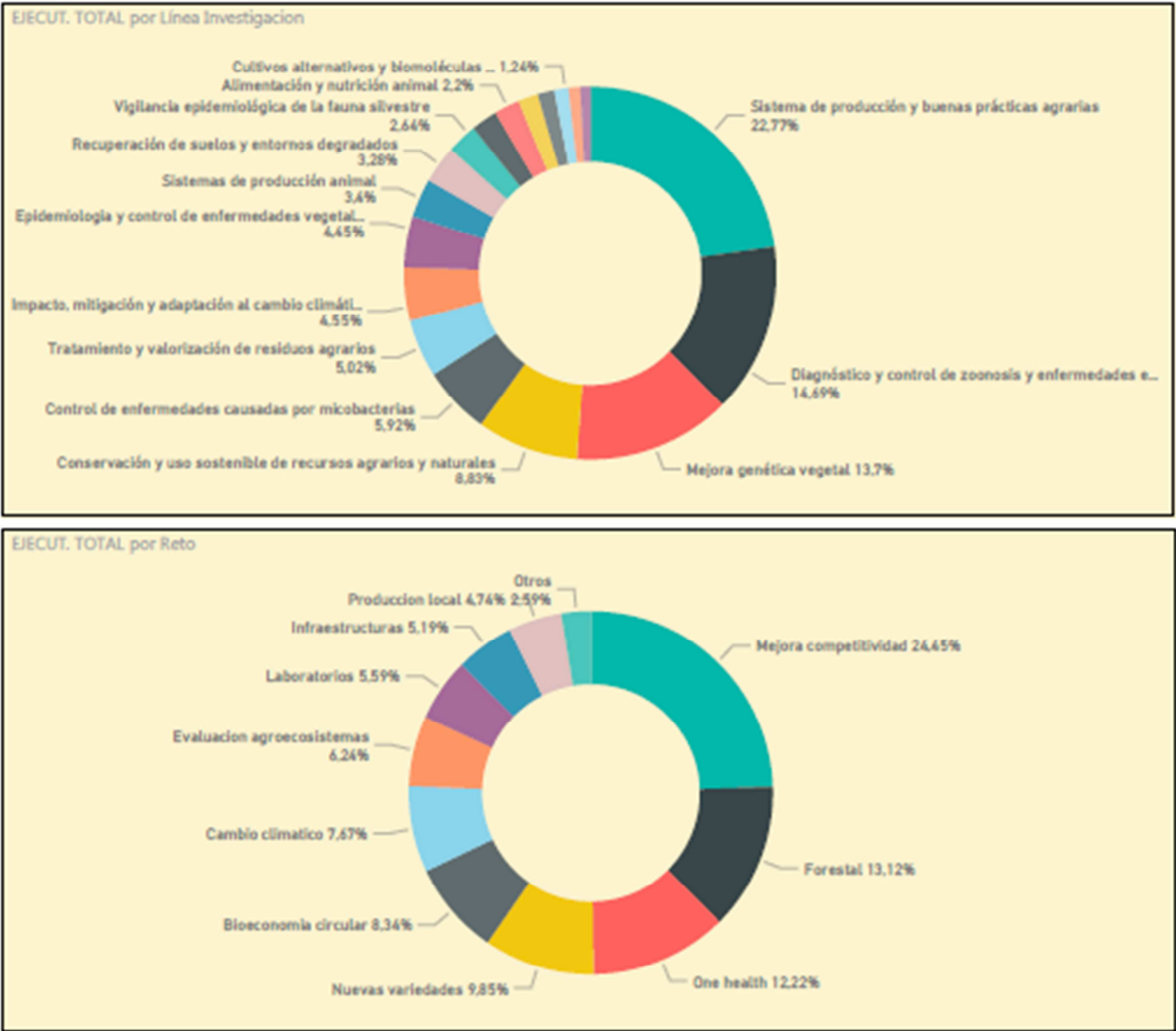


Figure 3. Expenditure executed by strategic line of research and by technological challenge (Technology Plan 2018-2023)

The activities carried out at Neiker contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals

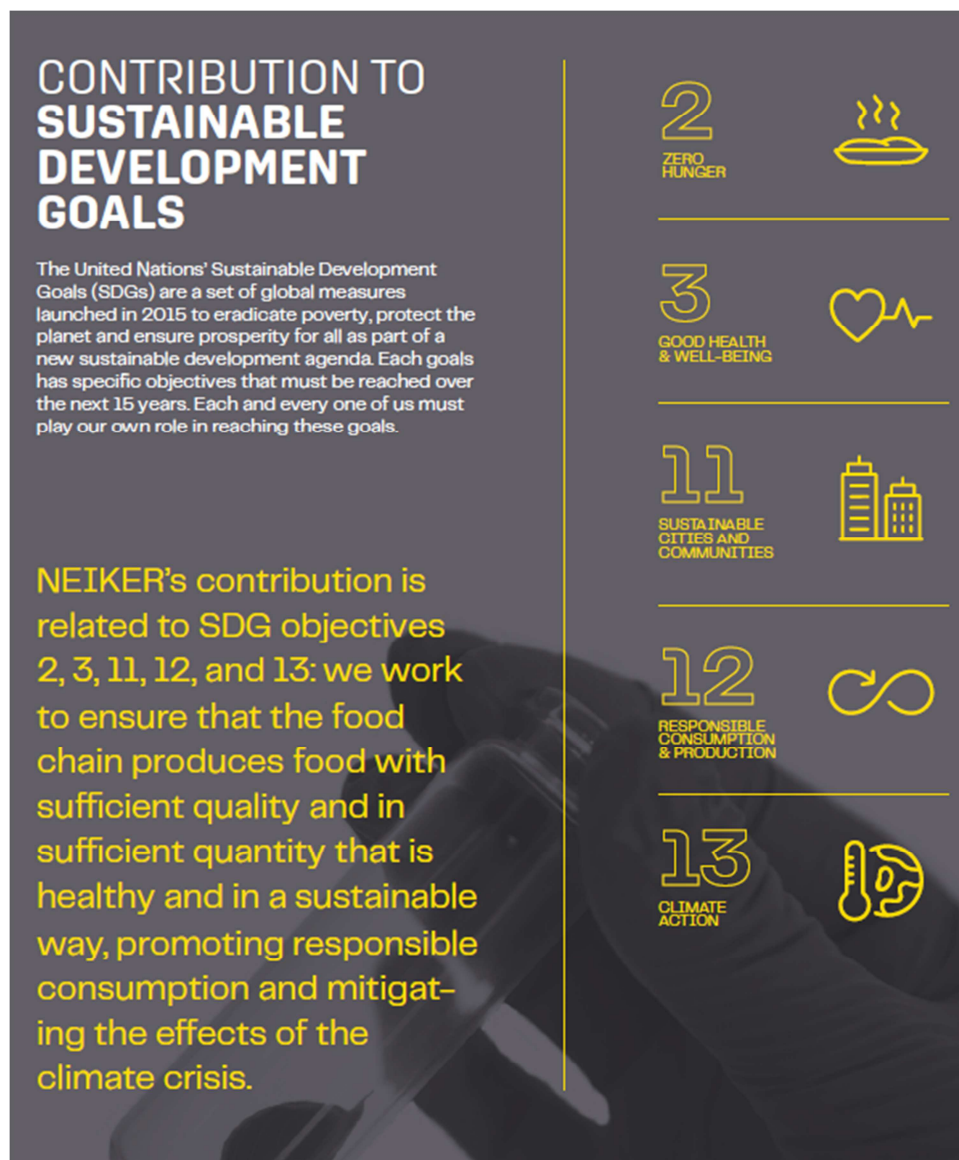


Figure 4. NEIKER contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

NEIKER is part of the **Basque Research and Technology Alliance** since December 2019. The Basque Research and Technology Alliance has been created through a collaboration agreement between 16 technology centres and cooperative research centres belonging to the Basque Network of Science, Technology and Innovation, the Basque Government, the Councils of Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa and the SPRI Group.

NEIKER IS MEMBER OF



Basque Research
& Technology Alliance



Elhuyar



European Forest
Institute



Lekunberri Dairy
Institute



Basque Foundation
for Food Safety



Basque Innovation
Agency



Center for cooperative
research in biosciences

Management model

Since 2005 we have been certified and updated under the ISO 9001: 2015 standard for the management of R&D and Technology Transfer projects for projects focused on the agricultural sector.

As for advanced management, in 2019 we have obtained under UNE 166002: 2014 the R & D & I Management Certificate at the NEIKER level, which recognizes our ability to effectively carry out research, development and innovation activities in agrifood (sectors agricultural, livestock and forestry) and in the natural environment. The implementation of these standards has allowed NEIKER activities to be organized by processes, among which, and in direct relation to the HRS4R, is the People Process.

In 2018, the Code of Conduct was launched at NEIKER and the Compliance Committee. In 2019, the operation of this Committee has been strengthened, which maintains its activity as a working group and meets periodically to analyze queries regarding applicable regulations. Furthermore, during the first half of 2019, the second Code of Conduct was internally disseminated to all NEIKER personnel.

1.2 NEIKER's Human resources Strategy

NEIKER, the Sectorial Technological Centre of the Basque Network of Science, Technology and Innovation, works to align the capacities and contributions of each person in the organization with the corporate strategy, at the same time that people have the opportunity to develop their capacities. The people development model underway allows the detection and enhancement of the capabilities of each researcher, guiding them, through their training and results, through the professional itinerary that best suits their profile. However, NEIKER's policies must be at the service of its mission: "To support, promote and contribute to the competitive improvement of the Basque agri-food sector and the conservation of the environment, generating scientific knowledge and transferable solutions that provide wealth and well-being in the Basque Country, with committed and motivated people", improving the competitiveness of the agri-food sector in the different markets it is aimed at, and facing the new challenges of Basque society in relation to having safe and healthy food.

The **NEIKER People Process**, which has been prepared and implemented, establishes the NEIKER management system with and for people, ensuring that they are developed on a personal and professional level according to the strategy of the company, and preventively ensuring the safety and health of its group.

This process includes:

1. Talent management: recruitment, selection and recruitment of people.
2. Development of training plans: preparation, control, management and measurement of training efficiency and applicability.
3. Definition, management and development of competencies and evaluation of staff performance.
4. Management of staff motivation and commitment.
5. Development and supervision of safety and health: prevention, maintenance and surveillance of systems and people's health.
6. Collaboration in the definition and revision of guidelines for the development of people.
7. Administrative management related to people management.
8. Collaboration in the analysis of NEIKER's internal and external context.
9. Collaboration in the evaluation and continuous improvement of the Management System.
10. Development of a risk map and periodic evaluation of the process.

In addition, there are a series of internal procedures developing the Management System and under whose guidelines different activities are developed related to the staff that works at NEIKER, taking into account that staff is an essential factor in the ability of NEIKER for the development of projects. R&D and must be capable and competent to carry out all activities related to projects. These activities are carried out according to the following procedures

1. PGC-MC-04 Roles and responsibilities
2. PGC-SG-01 Personnel Competences and awareness
3. PGC-SG-07 Personnel Selection
4. PGC-SG-08 Personal Training
5. PGC-SG-11 Internal and external Communication

In order to carry out personnel management effectively, NEIKER has established the aforementioned process and procedures through which it is possible to: a) ensure the definition of personnel needs and the hiring of personnel according to needs, b) ensure technical competence in the development of each of the functions, c) ensure the knowledge and understanding of these functions on the system, its location within it and the importance of its commitment to quality and continuous improvement for compliance of the Management Policy, and d) promoting a culture of innovation.

At NEIKER we are firmly committed to promoting professional development, providing a healthy work environment and ensuring an equal opportunity work environment.

As a result of the people development policy, NEIKER has professional careers for researchers and technologists, their functions and competencies being defined.

Professional development

Practically all NEIKER people carry out some type of training annually to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities. There is a biennial Training Plan that includes the training needs to deepen the sector's technological knowledge, etc. as well as in cross-cutting work tools (genomics, statistics, legislative regulations, etc.).

Commitment to equality

NEIKER, , in our commitment to equality, has developed the second edition of the Equal Opportunity Plan for Women and Men, which was drawn up after carrying out an exhaustive internal diagnosis, in which all the people who are part of NEIKER could participate through surveys or workshops.

Security and health

At NEIKER we promote a healthy and safe environment, through our Health and Safety Committee, and advised by the External Prevention Service, we deal with different prevention specialties: occupational safety, industrial hygiene and ergonomics and applied psychosociology. We have an updated Prevention Plan and the corresponding risk assessments, safety improvements in the facilities, and training is carried out to promote a preventive culture. Regarding health surveillance, in addition to the usual medical examinations, our allergy tests and the specialized analyses carried out on all NEIKER workers to ensure their safety and health stand out.

Training plan

NEIKER has established a Training Plan, which is made up of a set of training actions whose purpose is to improve present and future professional performance, increasing the capacity of people through the improvement of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

It is an ongoing, flexible and planned process, which begins with the diagnosis of training needs, continues with the preparation of the plan and ends with an assessment of the training provided throughout it.

2. Internal Gap Analysis

As mentioned throughout the 2017-2019 period, work was carried out to certify NEIKER under the UNE 166002: 2014 Standard, updating NEIKER's people process. In this sense, an intense work was carried out within the people process team to prepare a personnel policy according to the Standard, so in this next step of adapting the people policy to the 40 principles of the letter and Code, it has an important part of the advanced work.

The possibility of aligning our human resources policy for researchers with the principles of the Charter & Code was communicated to the Management Committee, and the decision was made to launch the process. The Declaration of Commitment Letter to the European Commission was signed in June 2019, and the strategy was started to develop and to be applied in December 2019 following these steps:

- Step 1: Raise awareness of the principles of the Charter & Code in the Scientific Departments of NEIKER as well as in the Department of General Services. Specific meetings were held to explain the ideas and principles behind the HRS4R strategy, so that the people surveyed later were aware of the process in which we were immersed.
- Step 2: Internal gap analysis by the institution working group following the standard template grouping all the 40 Charter & Code principles in four areas:

- A) Ethical and professional aspects, B) Recruitment, C) Working conditions and social security, and d) Training.
- Step 3: Implementation of a survey to the researchers stratified by labour category, scientific department, work centre (Derio or Arkaute) and gender.
- Step 4: Development the draft Action Plan of the HR Strategy for Researchers.
- Step 5: Contrast of the draft Action Plan with the Steering Committee
- Step 7: Incorporation of R1-R4 researchers to the Working Group and the Steering Committee following Initial Assessment recommendations.
- Step 6: Modifications in the Gap Analysis and Action Plan following Initial Assessment recommendations.

This Action Plan has a time perspective of five years, and a self-evaluation should be carried out after two years to determine the degree of progress of the process and, where appropriate, propose the necessary changes and adjustments.

Once signed the commitment to the Charter and Code, in NEIKER we informed the different departments of the Charter and Code, and the will of the organization to work for the implementation of a new people policy for the people in accordance with the principles specified in these documents.

Besides, the Working Group made up “ad hoc” has been working in the development of the Gap Analysis, completing a draft of the sections on legislation, norms and specific documents to reflect the situation of NEIKER with regard to the 40 principles.

After that, a survey was conducted to determine the importance and the level of implementation of each principle according to the researchers working at NEIKER.

With all this information a draft Action Plan was prepared detailing the organisational information, the strengths and weaknesses of the present practice, as well as the actions to be carried out in the next two years to address the needs identified as most important in relation to personnel. The draft Action Plan has been updated following Initial Assessment review by European Commission. The implementation of the Action Plan has been considered in detail establishing the team in charge of conducting the actions, the embedding of the strategy in the organization and the indicators to assure an adequate progress of the work to be conducted.

2.1. Human resource strategy development timeline

The calendar for HRS4R strategy development at NEIKER has been developed from December 2019 till July 2020. It has taken one month longer than planned because of COVID-19 difficulties to meet the working group. However, in the last three months we have made up the delay.

Table 1. Calendar for HRS4R strategy development at NEIKER

CRONOGRAMA PUESTA EN MARCHA ESTRATEGIA HRS4R (Diciembre 2019 - Marzo 2021)	DICIEMBRE				ENERO				FEBRERO				MARZO				ABRIL				MAYO				JUNIO				ENERO - MARZO 2021		
	Sem.1	Sem.2	Sem.3	Sem.4	Sem.5	Sem.6	Sem.7	Sem.8	Sem.9	Sem.10	Sem.11	Sem.12	Sem.13	Sem.14	Sem.15	Sem.16	Sem.17	Sem.18	Sem.19	Sem.20	Sem.21	Sem.22	Sem.23	Sem.24	Sem.25	Sem.26	Sem.27	Sem.28	Sem.29		
	1-8	9-15	16-22	23-31	1-5	6-12	13-19	20-26	27-31	3-9	10-16	17-23	24-29	2-8	9-15	16-22	23-29	30-5	6-12	13-19	20-26	27-3	4-10	11-17	18-24	25-31	1-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	
1. Lanzamiento del proyecto y creación del Grupo de trabajo (Training and Benchmarking)		👍																													
2. Comunicación																															
2.1. Empresa en general (Zuzenean / Evento corporativo)								✉																							
2.2. A través de reuniones departamentales								✉		✉																					
3. Preparación encuesta																															
3.1. Definir muestra personal a encuestar																															
3.2. Preparación encuesta								●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●																							
3.3. Envío encuesta y cumplimentación												✍	✍	✍																	
4. Tratamiento de datos, análisis de resultados																															
4.1. Estudio y análisis de la información recibida															⚙	⚙	⚙	⚙													
5. GAP análisis																															
6. Elaboración del Plan de Acción																															
6.1. Elaboración del borrador del Plan de Acción																								◆	◆						
6.2. Aprobación del documento definitivo																										★	★				
6.3. Envío y presentación del informe final																										📄	📄				
7. Revisión y envío nueva versiondel Plan de Acción																															

FECHAS PREVISTAS:

👍 Lanzamiento del proyecto	🌟 Estudio y análisis de la información
📅 Navidades / Semana Santa	📌 Elaboración del borrador
✉ Comunicación	★ Aprobación documento definitivo
●●●●● Logística y preparación	📄 Envío informe final
✍ Cumplimentación cuestionarios	📄 Modificación informe final

2.2. Survey design and implementation

The HRS4R working group prepared a survey to be answered voluntarily. This online survey was initially sent to 30 people, representatively covering the R1-R4 job categories, the scientific departments, the two NEIKER centres, as well as a gender balance between men and women. Following the recommendation of the initial assessment it has been sent to all researchers, and in total 76 out of 83 (92%) have answered the survey. Although there are only small differences in the quantitative evaluation of the principles between both surveys, the comments that have been provided allow us to better understand the perception of the researchers on the 40 principles, as well as to have more proposals for improvement.

The survey included an explanatory email briefly informing about the Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 regarding the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers, as well as the basic aspects of these documents.

For each principle, the following questions were asked: a) Qualitative Implementation, b) Agreement with the principle (Level of Importance), and c) Quantitative implementation (Level of Implementation).

Implementation:	How much do you agree with the principle from 0 (Nothing) to 10 (Completely)	How far is NEIKER to achieve this principle, 0 (Very Far) - 10 (We got it)
++ = fully implemented		
+/- = almost but not fully implemented	Comments / observations in case you want to explain your score	Initiatives undertaken and/or suggestions for improvement
-/+ = partially implemented		
-- = insufficiently implemented		

Taking into account the Level of Importance and the Level of Implementation, we have calculated a Priority Index (following VICOMTECH survey data treatment) as follows:

$$Pri = \frac{\text{Level of Importance}}{\text{Level of Implementation}}$$

In this way we could obtain an ordered list of the most important y least developed Charter and Code.

To assess the scores (V) we are going to establish the following criteria for the Level of Importance and the Level of Implementation:

- V > 9 Excellent
- 8 < V < 9 Very high
- 7 < V < 8 High
- 6 < V < 7 Medium
- V < 6 Low

2.3. Results of the survey

2.3.1. Ethical and Professional Aspects

In this regard, it should be mentioned that the importance given to the Ethical and Professional Aspects is excellent, with a score of 9.20 / 10 and the degree of Implementation can be considered high.

Ethical and Professional Aspects			
	Importance	Implementation	Ratio Pri
1. Research freedom	8.72	7.14	1.22
2. Ethical principles	9.26	8.12	1.14
3. Professional responsibility	9.43	7.54	1.25
4. Professional attitude	9.14	8.30	1.10
5. Contractual and legal obligations	8.33	7.41	1.12
6. Accountability	9.43	8.39	1.12
7. Good practice in research	9.20	7.62	1.21
8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	8.95	7.47	1.20
9. Public engagement	8.87	7.08	1.25
10. Non discrimination	9.55	8.71	1.10
11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems	9.22	7.51	1.23
MEDIA	9.10	7.75	1.18

The two principles with the highest Pri (> 1.25) are:

- **3. Professional responsibility**: This may be because jobs are considered to be delegated without conveying context and without providing full explanations for them to take place.
- **9. Public engagement**: This is considered important, but there may be a feeling among researchers that there needs to be an intermediary (eg communication specialist) who is responsible for taking care of or conveying the scientific results to the public or to society in general.

The researchers consider that the first outlet for research results is scientific publications and, in this sense, NEIKER should encourage publication in high quality journals and provide the means to do so, although they understand that technical publications to sectoral journals are important, and that dissemination to society, which is also important, may require dissemination specialists. At NEIKER the Communication Area is launching several initiatives to improve these aspects of external communication towards the sector and towards society.

Although slightly below the threshold 1.25 (1.23), the principle **11. Evaluation/Appraisal systems** is particularly relevant: At NEIKER we have not developed a process of evaluation of personnel competencies and performance. Only for the staff applying for labour promotion a guide for evaluation of merits is available. It seems that this is perceived as an improvement aspect in NEIKER by the respondents.

The result seems to reflect a perception that there is no specific emphasis in increasing the training of researchers or rather targeting training to specific groups of researchers and technologists. However, general training and internal seminars are considered relevant.

We have to mention that in 2019 practically everyone working at NEIKER carried out some sort of training to improve their skills and abilities, which is proof of our commitment to our team's professional progress. In 2019 we spent around 5,100 hours on training development.

On the contrary, the principles in which a lower Pri has been reached, indicating that the degree of implementation is in accordance with the degree of importance given to it, are:

- **Ethical principles**. Respondents consider that NEIKER observes the ethical practices corresponding to its disciplines.
- **Professional attitude**. Researchers consider that they know the field in which they work and that they follow appropriate practices in the performance of their work in relation to research projects.
- **Contractual and legal obligations**. All the rules and obligations that must be met are specified in all project calls, and compliance is monitored throughout the life of the project.
- **Accountability**. It is understood that most of the projects have public funding and a strict follow-up of the expenses in the project is done to optimize them.
- **10. Non discrimination**. In NEIKER researchers do not consider that there is any type of discrimination.

2.3.2. Recruitment and selection

The importance given to the principles of Recruitment and Selection is high with a score of 8.90 / 10 and the degree of Implementation, 7.15, can be considered High (in the limit with the Medium range).

Recruitment and Selection			
	Importance	Implementation	Ratio Pri
12. Recruitment	9.01	7.53	1.20
13. Recruitment (Code)	9.25	6.95	1.33
14. Selection (Code)	8.60	6.87	1.25
15. Transparency (Code)	9.17	7.21	1.27
16. Judging merit (Code)	9.07	7.37	1.23
17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	8.89	7.13	1.25
18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	8.52	6.50	1.31
19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	8.89	7.55	1.18
20. Seniority (Code)	8.68	6.91	1.26
21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	8.95	7.47	1.20
MEDIA	8.90	7.15	1.25

There are several aspects of the selection process and the evaluation of merits that are valued with low scores (Pri > 1.25):

- **13. Recruitment (Code)**. Recruitment announcements are rated with a low score (V 6.95), perhaps due to respondents considering that they are very specific the requirements that are asked to apply for the job or not offering all the information desired by the candidates about the process of selection

or the results of the process once concluded. This is related to the information on the OTM-R and discussed thoroughly there.

- **15. Transparency (Code).** Information received by candidates on the recruitment process and selection criteria, career prospects, and the strengths and weaknesses of their applications is rated with a low score (V 6.63).
- **18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code).** It is valued that mobility is not taken into account to a sufficient extent in the selection process, and that the mobility of NEIKER research staff is not promoted (stays and sabbaticals).
- **20. Seniority (Code).** The levels of qualification required must coincide with the needs of the position and not be conceived as an obstacle to access. The assessment of the implementation of this principle in NEIKER is low (Pri 1.33). The levels of requirements requested are probably considered very high in relation to the levels of the positions offered.

On the other hand, the two aspects best valued in this section are:

- **12. Recruitment.** It is positively valued within this section that NEIKER provides adequate information on the rules for access and admission of researchers, particularly at the beginning of their careers.
- **19. Recognition of qualifications (Code).** The researchers consider that the academic and professional qualifications are appropriately valued in the selection processes.

2.3.3. Working conditions and social security

The importance given to the principles of Working Conditions and Social Security is very high with a score of 9.12 / 10 and the degree of Implementation, 7.22, can be considered high.

Working Conditions and Social Security			
	Importance	Implementation	Ratio Pri
22. Recognition of the profession	9.18	7.84	1.17
23. Research environment	9.38	7.57	1.24
24. Working conditions	9.47	7.99	1.19

25. Stability and permanence of employment	9.18	7.11	1.29
26. Funding and salaries	9.54	7.68	1.24
27. Gender balance	9.34	8.92	1.05
28. Career development	8.95	6.28	1.43
29. Value of mobility	8.72	6.96	1.25
30. Access to career advice	9.12	6.71	1.36
31. Intellectual Property Rights	9.18	6.82	1.35
32. Co-authorship	8.93	7.27	1.23
33. Teaching	8.60	6.24	1.38
34. Complaints/ appeals	8.96	6.18	1.45
35. Participation in decision-making bodies	9.17	7.47	1.23
MEDIA	9.12	7.22	1.27

The principles with the highest Pri (> 1.25) are:

- **25. Stability and permanence of employment.** Since NEIKER is a Public Society of the Basque Government, the number of permanent jobs is set by the Basque Administration. This means that, in general, researchers temporarily hired at NEIKER are limited in their possible access to permanent jobs.
- **28. Career development.** This means that NEIKER must have a specific professional development strategy for researchers, including researchers with a fixed-term contract, which covers all stages of their careers regardless of their contractual situation. The strategy should consider the availability of mentors to provide support and guidance. Respondents do not consider that this principle is developed in NEIKER adequately. This is so despite having a definition of functions according to job positions and a Guide for evaluating changes in job status but only for promotion. There is not a specific professional development strategy associated to the general strategy of NEIKER in the medium and long term. A career development plan for researchers is not performed systematically but only in specific occasions and focused on the change of activity associated with changes of professional category, without visualizing a long-term career focused on the needs and perspectives of the research lines of NEIKER and in the development proposals of researchers.
- **30. Access to career advice.** It refers to the need for researchers to have access to career and employment guidance.
- **31. Intellectual Property Rights.** NEIKER must ensure that researchers benefit, at any stage of their careers, from the possible exploitation of their R&D results through adequate legal protection, especially in terms of

protection of intellectual property rights and copyright. The procedure "PGC / SG-15 Management of intellectual and industrial property" describes the system to manage the assets of the organization and achieve the desired protection of the results of the R&D&i of NEIKER, specifying that must appear as inventors those people who have contributed to the development of the idea to be protected. However, it would be needed to establish clearly the potential rights, if any, of the researchers to the results of their work.

- **33. Teaching**. This principle indicates that teaching is essential to structure and disseminate knowledge and, therefore, it should be considered a valuable option in the professional careers of researchers. NEIKER promotes the transmission of knowledge to technicians and people who work in the different agricultural subsectors, and academic teaching is facilitated if researchers wish to participate in this activity. Normally, academic teaching is unpaid or to a very low extent. Teaching is not valued in the selection process, beyond other work experience, neither for professional development at NEIKER.
- **34. Complains/ appeals**. It refers to the need for a mechanism so that investigators can transmit, preferably through an impartial person, the claims and appeals of their investigative career as well as the possible conflicts between supervisors and investigators. The NEIKER Code of Conduct establishes aspects related to this topic, although not specifically for researchers.
- On the contrary, the principle **27 Gender balance** is considered to be fully incorporated into NEIKER. As mentioned, the II Equality Plan is underway at NEIKER, and researchers think that there is no gender discrimination at NEIKER. However, an effort must be made to bring gender equality to all NEIKER activities, understanding that since we are a small institution, it will not always be possible.
- Besides, **35. Participation in decision-making bodies** (1.23), although it does not reach the cut-off value of 1.25, it has to be taken into consideration although the researchers may feel that they are represented by their Department Heads in the decision-making the committees. Besides the implementation of the process teams according to the UNE 166.002 has allowed more researchers to participate in activities aimed at guiding key aspects of NEIKER.

2.3.4. Training and development

The importance given to the principles of Working Conditions and Social Security is very high with a score of 9.15 / 10 and the degree of Implementation, 7.45, can be considered high.

Training and Development			
	Importance	Implementation	Ratio Pri
36. Relation with supervisors	9.22	7.51	1.23
37. Supervision and managerial duties	9.03	7.08	1.28
38. Continuing Professional Development	9.42	7.86	1.20
39. Access to research training and continuous development	9.13	7.52	1.21
40. Supervision	8.95	7.26	1.23
MEDIA	9.15	7.45	1.23

The principles with the highest Pri (> 1.25) are:

- **37. Supervision and managerial duties**. This principle refers to the fact that expert researchers should pay special attention to their multifaceted role as supervisors, mentors, professional advisers or communicators in scientific matters and carry out these tasks according to the highest professional standards. The respondents miss the development of this activity at a higher level. In 2019, the Scientific Committee has been established at NEIKER, which can play an important role in these aspects.
- Besides **40. Supervision** (1.23) meaning that employers and / or funders should ensure that a person can be clearly identified who can be contacted by researchers early in their careers to discuss issues related to the performance of their professional duties. NEIKER researchers consider that this principle is not completely developed at NEIKER, although logically all pre-doctoral researchers have a thesis director at NEIKER and collaborating / associate researchers are part of a research team led by a Principal Investigator, and the Head of Department plays a role of supervising and advising in all the aspects related to the operation of the department.

The principle most valued for its development at NEIKER is **38. Continuing Professional Development**, which seems to indicate that the successive training plans developed at NEIKER adequately satisfy the training needs of researchers.

In summary,

European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers			
	Importance	Implementation	Ratio
Ethical and Professional Aspects	9,10	7,75	1,18
Recruitment and Selection	8,90	7,15	1,25
Working Conditions and Social Security	9,12	7,22	1.28
Training and Development	9,15	7,45	1,23
MEDIA	9.07	7.39	1.24

All groups of principles are valued as being of very high or high importance (Recruitment and Selection), and the level of implementation is 7.39, which is a high quantitative value, but with the criterion adopted. The professional and ethical aspects are at a good level in NEIKER according to the respondents, those of Training and Development and Working Conditions and Social Security, are valued at 7.22 and 7.45, respectively, which is also adequate, and Recruitment and Selection has been rated with the lowest score, 7.15.

2.4. Comparison between survey and working group assessment

Below we can see which are the most significant differences between the two sources of information that we have used for the elaboration of the Gap Analysis.

Table 2. Principles that have been assessed as less developed in the survey and those in which we have proposed actions since they are not fully implemented according to the analysis of the working group.

SURVEY	WORKING GROUP
3. Professional responsibility	1. Research freedom
9. Public engagement	6. Accountability
11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems	7. Good practice in research
12. Recruitment	8. Dissemination, exploitation of results
13. Recruitment (Code)	9. Public engagement

15. Transparency (Code)	11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems
18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	12. Recruitment
20. Seniority (Code)	13. Recruitment (Code)
25. Stability and permanence of employment	14. Selection (Code)
27. Gender balance	15. Transparency (Code)
28. Career development	16. Judging merit (Code)
30. Access to career advice	17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)
31. Intellectual Property Rights	18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
33. Teaching	19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)
34. Complaints/ appeals	20. Seniority (Code)
35. Participation in decision-making bodies	24. Working conditions
37. Supervision and managerial duties	27. Gender balance
40. Supervision	28. Career development
	29. Value of mobility
	30. Access to career advice
	31. Intellectual Property Rights
	32. Co-authorship
	33. Teaching
	35. Participation in decision-making bodies
	36. Relation with supervisors
	37. Supervision and managerial duties
	38. Continuing Professional Development
	39. Access to research training and continuous development
	40. Supervision
18 PRINCIPLES	29 PRINCIPLES

The working group has selected 29 principles following revision after the initial assessment by reviewers and the methodology used to select principles from the evaluation of the respondents to the survey has allowed selecting 32 principles to work with. There are only three principles not taken into consideration by the working group and selected through the survey. These principles require that information be transmitted to researchers on the status of NEIKER as a Public Society of the Basque Government as well as on the internal mechanisms already in place to collect the various complaints or suggestions from NEIKER staff. Approximately 83% of the principles selected in the survey have already been selected by the Working

Group, which shows that there has been a good alignment between both approaches. So taking into account all the principles, we propose actions that cover 32 principles, that is, 80% of the total. With regard to 3 Professional responsibility; 25 Stability and permanence of employment, and 34 Complains / appeals we will make sure that the information on these aspects will be translated to all the researchers and staff of NEIKER through *short seminars or small information pills* as a general action.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

The table below shows an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at NEIKER.

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
Ethical and professional aspects	As a Public Society of the Basque Government we have developed the highest standards with regard to the ethical aspects of our management system, developing too a very intensive training programme for researchers in order to improve their specialization and skills. We have to continue working in implementing a professional development plan for researchers adapted to the expected changes in our research lines and organization. We have developed a “Code of Conduct” and an “Equal Opportunity Plan for Women and Men” covering many aspects dealt in this thematic area. We want to further stress the environmental aspects of our activity at all levels (ISO 14001) and work in the implementation and certification of the management system based on ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety. Non-discrimination is regarded as one of the highest ranking principles with regard to its implementation by researchers at NEIKER.
Recruitment and selection	We have very well developed procedures for detecting staff needs at NEIKER. Also established professional careers with competencies and skills defined, although they need an adaptation to the new roles and responsibilities expected nowadays. We conduct our selection process partially through the web page at NEIKER. The process for permanent positions hiring is based in merit assessment, an examination for evaluating knowledge related to the area of the position, and an interview to evaluate different skills and abilities related to the specific functions to be developed. However, this system has been in place for quite a long time and has the need to be updated to incorporate new merits and skills, as well as to be more informative and personnel recruitment be conducted through the development of an e-tool in NEIKER’s web page.

Working conditions	Research recognition by NEIKER is well performed for all the researcher categories R1-R4. As the organization is certified under the norms ISO9001:2015 and UNE 166.002:2014, there are a large amount of procedures dealing with many aspects related to working conditions. Stability is one main asset in NEIKER because being a Public Society of the Basque Government. However, not being an academic institution some of the researcher's needs are not well taken into consideration at NEIKER. Infrastructures and equipment need to be updated, in particular, computer system has to be rethought to face the new challenges we have undergone in later times and more especially under this pandemic situation. Funding by the Basque Government is fair for the activities carried out by NEIKER, although funding from national and European calls have to be pursued to assure all the needed resources for research project. Career development needs to be redefined to adapt to the changing research environment with regard to mobility, teaching, merit assessment, etc. so we are more in line with the guidelines in the European Research Area.
Training and development	A biennial training plan is developed and executed and researchers have the opportunity of requesting courses they are interested in. A large amount of funding and hours is dedicated to training. Although there are some mechanisms to provide career advice by thesis directors and senior researchers, it seems to be a need for more counselling given the large amount of doctoral students at NEIKER. Besides, specific personal career development plans have to be incorporated to satisfy NEIKER needs as well as researchers aspirations.

4. Actions

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy it is published on an easily accessible location of NEIKER's website.

Web link to NEIKER's HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

*URL: <https://neiker.eus/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NEIKER-ACTION-PLAN-es.pdf>

In the table below there are summarized all individual actions to be undertaken in NEIKER's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis:

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>GAP Principle(s)</i>	<i>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</i>	<i>Responsible Unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</i>
1	Include the HRS4R Action Plan developed as one of the new objectives with regard to personnel in the Strategic Plan	1. <i>Research freedom</i>	Q4 2021	General Manager (with the support of the General Services Department)	HRS4R strategy included in the Strategic Plan
2	Implement a strategic and excellent management of people clearly defining the responsibilities of personal work and teamwork	3. <i>Professional responsibility</i>	Q3 2022	Director of Resources	Work environment survey
3	Prepare a small information pill to emphasize the personnel and team responsibilities	3. <i>Professional responsibility</i>	Q3 2021	Director of Resources	Information pill distributed to 100% of researchers
4	Optimized environmental management. Development of an Environmental Management System	6. <i>Accountability</i>	Q3 2023	General manager (with the support of the General Services Department)	Certification ISO 14000
5	Update of the Transparency Portal on the Web	6. <i>Accountability</i>	Q1 2022	Head of the Communication Area	Updated version of the Web Transparency Portal
6	Efficient project management	6. <i>Accountability</i>	Q4 2021	Chief operating officer (with the support of the Project Office)	Percentage of projects without deviations

7	Involve the agricultural sector and society as a whole in the food production system through the implementation of a Living lab in Agroecology following the guidelines of the Green Deal and the Horizon Europe research program	6. Accountability	Q1 2023	Head of Technology and Innovation (with the support of the Team Scientific and Technology Excellence)	Launch of the Living Lab in Agroecology
8	Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy (Agenda 2030)	6. Accountability	Q2 2023	General manager (with the support of the General Services Department)	Updated version of the Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy (Agenda 2030)
9	Drive transformative projects based on knowledge to be important players in knowledge-based information on the agri-food sector of the Basque Country	6. Accountability	Continuous	Head of Transfer and Market	Record of transformative projects launched
10	Increase NEIKER's participation in dissemination events focusing communication on key aspects for society (climate change - healthy food - environment), thus transferring the work of NEIKER researchers to the benefit of Society	6. Accountability	Continuous	Head of the Communication Area	Record of dissemination in various publication channels
11	Improvement of creativity and knowledge management (improvement and development of communication tools and repositories) both towards NEIKER and towards our environment	6. Accountability	Q1 2023	Head of Technology and Innovation (with the support of the Team Scientific and Technology Excellence)	Record of publications and scientific and technical information registered in repositories

12	Implementation and certification of the management system based on ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety	7. Good practice in research	Q4 2022	General manager (with the support of the General Services Department)	ISO 45001 Certified
13	Promote the monitoring of the Compliance strategy guidelines and maintenance of the compliance system in this area of ethical compliance	7. Good practice in research	Q1 2022	Director of Resources	Record of follow-up cases
14	Manage Human Resources, Purchases, Suppliers and research projects in accordance with the Organic Law on Data Protection	7. Good practice in research	Q1 2023	Director of Resources (with the support of the General Services Department)	NEIKER's compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation documented
15	Transfer of research results in accordance with the Organic Law on Data Protection	8. Dissemination and exploitation of results	Q1 2022	Director of Resources	New version of the Letter of Confidentiality / Impartiality
16	Make the work of NEIKER visible and valued before institutions and society, and improve the notoriety and positioning of the brand	8. Dissemination and exploitation of results	Q2 2023	Head of the Communication Area	Number of impacts on the media
17	Promote the generation of assets protected under patents as well as the obtaining of new crop varieties with the participation of research staff in possible returns	8. Dissemination and exploitation of results	Continuous	Head of Transfer and Market (with the support of the Head of Technology and Innovation)	Record of assets under industrial and intellectual protection

18	The Communication Area will provide support to the different research teams to organize activities to disseminate scientific knowledge to the society	9. <i>Public engagement</i>	Q2 2022	Head of the Communication Area	<i>Three events held per year</i>
19	Corporate Social Responsibility Projects: donation to the Food Bank, blood donation campaigns and development cooperation)	9. <i>Public engagement</i>	<i>Continuous</i>	Director of Resources	<i>Three activities per year</i>
20	Increase the training of personnel for the excellent performance of their functions: Preparation and monitoring of the Training Plan aligned with the Strategic Plan and Technological Plan	11. <i>Evaluation/ appraisal systems</i>	<i>Continuous</i>	Director of Resources	<i>Training plan monitoring</i>
21	Develop a methodology for competence and performance evaluation of researchers	11. <i>Evaluation/ appraisal systems</i> 28. <i>Career development</i>	Q2 2022	General manager (with support of Director of Resources and Team of Process People)	<i>Updated version of the "Guide for the evaluation of job category changes"</i>
22	Summary document of the selection and hiring process at NEIKER to be displayed at the web page	12. <i>Recruitment</i>	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	<i>External document "Selection and hiring process at NEIKER" displayed in the web page</i>

23	Make a detailed scheme to include all the steps in the selection process	<i>13. Recruitment (Code)</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	<i>New version of Procedure PGC / SG-07 Personnel Selection</i>
24	Develop new criteria for Personnel selection to align our competences with the research career developed by RVCTI (Basque science, technology and innovation network)	<i>14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code)</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	<i>New version of Procedure PGC / SG-07 Personnel Selection Increased diversity of applicants to NEIKER positions Updated version of PGC / MC-04 Personnel: functions and responsibilities</i>
25	Develop a training programme for staff involved in researchers selection and hiring process	<i>14. Selection (Code)</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with support of external sources)	<i>Training of at least ten NEIKER members on the selection and hiring process</i>
26	Talent management (recruitment, retention and transfer)	<i>14. Selection (Code)</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with support of Team of Process People)	<i>Complete manual that collects all relevant aspects for the selection of the most appropriate researchers for NEIKER's needs</i>

27	The criteria for researchers' evaluation at recruitment will be updated. We will include a description of the conditions and labour rights, and of the prospects for professional development in the case of permanent positions, and publicize job offers at European level.	17. <i>Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)</i> 18. <i>Recognition of mobility experience (Code)</i> 19. <i>Recognition of qualifications (Code)</i> 20. <i>Seniority (Code)</i> 29. <i>Value of mobility</i> 33. <i>Teaching</i>	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of Team of Process People)	<i>Updated version of the "Guide for the evaluation of merits in the recruitment of researchers"</i> <i>Updated version of the PGC / SG-07 Personnel selection</i>
28	Review the legislation on teleworking and sabbatical periods, as well as the necessary economic and administrative provisions related to these issues	24. <i>Working conditions</i>	Q4 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of Team of Process People)	<i>Internal document to be subject to revision at NEIKER: "Legislation and conditions that apply to telework and stays of NEIKER researchers in other institutions and companies"</i>
29	NEIKER computer systems must be prepared for distributed work facilitating teleconferences, shared access to documents from any location, etc., ensuring the security and confidentiality of the information	24. <i>Working conditions</i>	Q1 2022	Chief Financial Officer (CFO) (with the support of the Director of Resources)	<i>Internal document to be subject to revision at NEIKER: "Strategic planning of NEIKER ICT structure and functions to favour collaborative working conditions"</i>
30	Preparation of a new Technological Plan to boost the training and knowledge of NEIKER researchers in new technologies (Geographic Information Systems,	24. <i>Working conditions</i>	Q4 2021	Head of Technology and Innovation (with the support of the Team Scientific and Technology Excellence)	<i>Technology Plan</i>

	Biostatistics, Artificial Intelligence, Immunology)				
31	Increased participation in the Basque Research and Technology Alliance (BRTA) as well as deepening the NEIKER Alliance Plan to promote the exchange of researchers between NEIKER and these centres	24. Working conditions	Continuous	Head of Technology and Innovation (with the support of the Team Scientific and Technology Excellence)	Partnership Plan
32	Increase the satisfaction, commitment and sense of belonging of researchers through an Internal Communication Plan, which includes: presentation of the annual Management Plan, department meetings and corporate seminars	24. Working conditions	Q2 2022	General manager General (with the support of the Area of Communication)	Work environment survey
33	Prepare a small information pill to remind the status of NEIKER as a Public Society of the Basque Government and the implications on permanent job positions.	25. Stability and permanence of employment	Q4 2021	Director of Resources (with the support of Team of Process People)	Information pill distributed to 100% of researchers

34	Preparation of the Equality Plan 2022-2025. NEIKER will apply for the status of equality partner company and the corresponding access to the Emakunde Bai-SAREA Network, which promotes the principles for the empowerment of women according to UN WOMEN.	27. Gender balance	Q4 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	Emakunde recognition. Membership of NEIKER at Bai_SAREA Network
35	Gender balance taken into consideration at all levels of organization of NEIKER, as for example, constitution of the different committees and working teams	27. Gender balance	Continuous	Director of Resources (with support of Team of Process People)	Rate of male / female members of the committees in NEIKER between 45-55%
36	Design of a performance evaluation system	28. Career development	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with support of Team of Process People)	New guide the performance evaluation
37	Develop the Research Staff Career Plan	28. Career development	Continuous	Director of Resources (with support of Team of Process People)	Updated PGC / MC-04 Personnel: functions and responsibilities
38	Implement Professional Development Plan	28. Career development	Q4 2022	Director of Resources (with support of Team of Process People)	NEIKER jobs manual including RVCTI criteria and HRS4R principles
39	Promote all the necessary changes in the definition of the working conditions, responsibilities and rights of researchers	28. Career development	Q1 2024	General Manager (with the support of the Director of Resources)	Update of the NEIKER Collective Agreement to collect the changes contemplated in the set of actions developed for alignment with HRS4R

40	Establish an adequate and efficient system for doctoral students including a future professional approach and mentoring activities	28. Career development	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People)	<i>Updated version of the manual of researchers competences</i>
41	Launch and start-up of the simplified model of management by competencies with the accompaniment and training in the different roles for the "Conversations for Development"	28. Career development	Q3 2022	Director of Resources (with the internal support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People as well as external support)	<i>Updated version of the manual of researchers competences</i>
42	The assessment of mobility in the evaluation of merits is already contemplated in another principle, but in this principle NEIKER will favour the mobility of its researchers to other centres in short stays and sabbatical periods	29. Value of mobility	Q1 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People)	<i>Internal document establishing mobility conditions to other centres for short stays (> 1 month) and for sabbatical years for researchers at NEIKER.</i>
43	Align technologist scholarships with the needs of the sector / companies	29. Value of mobility	Continuous	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People)	<i>Number of technologists transferred to companies</i>
44	Improve incorporation and supervision of PhD students by tutors	30. Access to career advice	Q4 2021	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	<i>New version of the "Guide for tutors of doctoral thesis" including mentorship and professional career advice development at NEIKER</i>

45	Awareness-raising of mentors as a key element in the professional development of researchers, especially at the beginning of their professional careers	30. Access to career advice	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	Short course on mentorship and career advice to established researchers at NEIKER. Participation of at least 80% of R2-R4 researchers at NEIKER
46	Review the situation with regard to the rights of researchers with respect to the protection of intellectual property generated by the work carried out in NEIKER	31. Intellectual Property Rights	Q4 2021	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People)	Updated version of the procedure PGC / SG-15 Management of intellectual and industrial property
47	Review the procedure PGC / SG-17 Knowledge management to include the recognition of scientific co-authorship in publications	32. Co-authorship 33. Teaching	Q4 2021	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People)	New version of the procedure PGC / SG-17 Knowledge management Updated version of the Guide for Recruitment
48	Prepare a small information pill to be distributed to researchers to remind them of the different channels available for solving work-related conflicts	34. Complaints/ appeals	Q3 2021	Director of Resources (with the support of the Team of Process People)	Information pill distributed to 100% of researchers

49	NEIKER will establish a mechanism so that researchers at less advanced levels of their professional careers can form part of these committees so that their contributions are counted on and their concerns are taken into account	<i>35. Participation in decision-making bodies</i>	Q4 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee and the Team of Process People)	<i>Internal document to be subject to revision at NEIKER: "Evaluation of criteria for inclusion of researchers at different stages of career development on working committees at NEIKER"</i>
50	NEIKER will favour a fair and fluid relationship between PhD students and their supervisors	<i>36. Relation with supervisors</i>	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of Scientific Committee and Team of Process People)	<i>New version of the "Guide for tutors of doctoral thesis" to establish mechanisms that promote a fair and fluid relationship between doctoral students and their supervisors</i>
51	NEIKER will favour a fair and fluid relationship between researchers at all levels of their professional careers	<i>37. Supervision and managerial duties</i>	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of Scientific Committee and Team of Process People)	<i>New version of the "PGC / MC-04 Personnel: functions and responsibilities" will include the supervision and managerial duties at each level of the researchers professional career</i>

52	NEIKER will favour that researchers at early stages of their professional career can get advice on their professional duties	<i>37. Supervision and managerial duties</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee)	<i>Set up of seminars for awareness-raising of mentors as a key element in the professional development of researchers, especially at the beginning of their professional careers</i>
53	Review of the training procedure. Design of a system to evaluate the usefulness and applicability of training.	<i>38. Continuing Professional Development</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with the support of the Scientific Committee)	<i>Internal document establishing "Mobility conditions to other centres for short stays (> 1 month) and for sabbatical years for researchers at NEIKER"</i>
54	Increase the feeling of belonging and closeness of the people who work at NEIKER	<i>38. Continuing Professional Development</i>	<i>Continuous</i>	Director of Resources (with the Team of Process People)	<i>Organize 2 corporate events a year to promote a sense of belonging</i>
55	Contribute to making the corporate aspects of NEIKER better known among the NEIKER research	<i>38. Continuing Professional Development</i>	<i>Continuous</i>	Head of the Communication Area	<i>Quarterly newsletter containing less known corporate aspects of NEIKER (mission, vision, values, history ...)</i>
56	NEIKER will favour researchers career development by establishing conditions for researchers mobility to other institutions	<i>38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	Director of Resources (with the support of Scientific Committee and Team of Process People)	<i>New version of the "Guide for tutors of doctoral thesis" to establish mechanisms that promote a fair and fluid relationship between doctoral students and their supervisors</i>

57	Training aimed at certain groups (R1-R4) to improve communication, work and team cohesion	38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	Q1 2022	Director of Resources (with external support)	Training plan monitoring
58	NEIKER will favour a fair and fluid relationship between researchers at all levels of their professional careers	40. Supervision	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of Scientific Committee and Team of Process People)	Guide for mentoring of researchers at all stages of their career development
59	NEIKER will favour that researchers at early stages of their professional career can get advice on their professional duties	40. Supervision	Q2 2022	Director of Resources (with the support of Scientific Committee and Team of Process People)	New version of the "Guide for tutors of doctoral thesis" to include the designation of an expert investigator who can advise investigators in training on doubts that may arise in relation to their professional duties

Cronograma

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>Q3 2021</i>	<i>Q4 2021</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	<i>Q1 2023</i>	<i>Q2 2023</i>
1	Include the HRS4R Action Plan developed as one of the new objectives with regard to personnel in the Strategic Plan		X						
2	Implement a strategic and excellent management of people clearly defining the responsibilities of personal work and teamwork					X			
3	Prepare a small information pill to emphasize the personal and team responsibilities	X							
4	Optimized environmental management. Development of an Environmental Management System (Q3 2023)								->
5	Update of the Transparency Portal on the Web			X					
6	Efficient project management		X						
7	Involve the agricultural sector and society as a whole in the food production system through the implementation of a Living lab in Agroecology following the guidelines of the Green Deal and the Horizon Europe research program							X	
8	Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy (Agenda 2030)								X
9	Drive transformative projects based on knowledge to be important players in knowledge-based information on the agri-food sector of the Basque Country	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10	Increase NEIKER's participation in dissemination events focusing communication on key aspects for society (climate change - healthy food - environment), thus transferring the work of NEIKER researchers to the benefit of Society	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>Q3 2021</i>	<i>Q4 2021</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	<i>Q1 2023</i>	<i>Q2 2023</i>
11	Improvement of creativity and knowledge management (improvement and development of communication tools and repositories) both towards NEIKER and towards our environment							X	
12	Implementation and certification of the management system based on ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety						X		
13	Promote the monitoring of the Compliance strategy guidelines and maintenance of the compliance system in this area of ethical compliance			X					
14	Manage Human Resources, Purchases, Suppliers and research projects in accordance with the Organic Law on Data Protection							X	
15	Transfer of research results in accordance with the Organic Law on Data Protection			X					
16	Make the work of NEIKER visible and valued before institutions and society, and improve the notoriety and positioning of the brand								X
17	Promote the generation of assets protected under patents as well as the obtaining of new crop varieties with the participation of research staff in possible returns	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
18	The Communication Area will provide support to the different research teams to organize activities to disseminate scientific knowledge to the society				X				
19	Corporate Social Responsibility Projects: donation to the Food Bank, blood donation campaigns and development cooperation)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
20	Increase the training of personnel for the excellent performance of their functions: Preparation and monitoring of the Training Plan aligned with the Strategic Plan and Technological Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>Q3 2021</i>	<i>Q4 2021</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	<i>Q1 2023</i>	<i>Q2 2023</i>
21	Develop a methodology for competence and performance evaluation of researchers				X				
22	Summary document of the selection and hiring process at NEIKER to be displayed at the web page				X				
23	Make a detailed scheme to include all the steps in the selection process						X		
24	Develop new criteria for Personnel selection to align our competences with the research career developed by RVCTI (Basque science, technology and innovation network)					X			
25	Develop a training programme for staff involved in researchers selection and hiring process			X					
26	Talent management (recruitment, retention and transfer)					X			
27	The criteria for researchers' evaluation at recruitment will be updated. We will include a description of the conditions and labour rights, and of the prospects for professional development in the case of permanent positions, and publicize job offers at European level				X				
28	Review the legislation on teleworking and sabbatical periods, as well as the necessary economic and administrative provisions related to these issues						X		
29	NEIKER computer systems must be prepared for distributed work facilitating teleconferences, shared access to documents from any location, etc., ensuring the security and confidentiality of the information			X					

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>Q3 2021</i>	<i>Q4 2021</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	<i>Q1 2023</i>	<i>Q2 2023</i>
30	Preparation of a new Technological Plan to boost the training and knowledge of NEIKER researchers in new technologies (Geographic Information Systems, Biostatistics, Artificial Intelligence, Immunology).		X						
31	Increased participation in the Basque Research and Technology Alliance (BRTA) as well as deepening the NEIKER Alliance Plan to promote the exchange of researchers between NEIKER and these centres	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
32	Increase the satisfaction, commitment and sense of belonging of researchers through an Internal Communication Plan, which includes: presentation of the annual Management Plan, department meetings and corporate seminars				X				
33	Prepare a small information pill to remind the status of NEIKER as a Public Society of the Basque Government and the implications on permanent job positions.		X						
34	Preparation of the Equality Plan 2022-2025. NEIKER will apply for the status of equality partner company and the corresponding access to the Emakunde Bai-SAREA Network, which promotes the principles for the empowerment of women according to UN WOMEN.						X		
35	Gender balance taken into consideration at all levels of organization of NEIKER, as for example, constitution of the different committees and working teams.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
36	Design of a performance evaluation system				X				
37	Develop the Research Staff Career Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
38	Implement Professional Development Plan						X		

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>Q3 2021</i>	<i>Q4 2021</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	<i>Q1 2023</i>	<i>Q2 2023</i>
39	Promote all the necessary changes in the definition of the working conditions, responsibilities and rights of researchers (Q1 2024)								->
40	Establish an adequate and efficient system for doctoral students including a future professional approach and mentoring activities				X				
41	Launch and start-up of the simplified model of management by competencies with the accompaniment and training in the different roles for the "Conversations for Development"					X			
42	The assessment of mobility in the evaluation of merits is already contemplated in another principle, but in this principle NEIKER will favour the mobility of its researchers to other centres in short stays and sabbatical periods			X					
43	Align technologist scholarships with the needs of the sector / companies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
44	Improve incorporation and supervision of PhD students by tutors		X						
45	Awareness-raising of mentors as a key element in the professional development of researchers, especially at the beginning of their professional careers				X				
46	Review the situation with regard to the rights of researchers with respect to the protection of intellectual property generated by the work carried out in NEIKER		X						
47	Review the procedure PGC / SG-17 Knowledge management to include the recognition of scientific co-authorship in publications		X						
48	Prepare a small information pill to be distributed to researchers to remind them of the different channels available for solving work-related conflicts	X							

	<i>Proposed ACTIONS</i>	<i>Q3 2021</i>	<i>Q4 2021</i>	<i>Q1 2022</i>	<i>Q2 2022</i>	<i>Q3 2022</i>	<i>Q4 2022</i>	<i>Q1 2023</i>	<i>Q2 2023</i>
49	NEIKER will establish a mechanism so that researchers at less advanced levels of their professional careers can form part of these committees so that their contributions are counted on and their concerns are taken into account						X		
50	NEIKER will favour a fair and fluid relationship between PhD students and their supervisors				X				
51	NEIKER will favour a fair and fluid relationship between researchers at all levels of their professional careers				X				
52	NEIKER will favour that researchers at early stages of their professional career can get advice on their professional duties			X					
53	Review of the training procedure. Design of a system to evaluate the usefulness and applicability of training.				X				
54	Increase the feeling of belonging and closeness of the people who work at NEIKER	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
55	Contribute to making the corporate aspects of NEIKER better known among the NEIKER research	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
56	NEIKER will favour researchers career development by establishing conditions for researchers mobility to other institutions						X		
57	Training aimed at certain groups (R1-R4) to improve communication, work and team cohesion			X					
58	NEIKER will favour a fair and fluid relationship between researchers at all levels of their professional careers				X				
59	NEIKER will favour that researchers at early stages of their professional career can get advice on their professional duties				X				

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan.

We have two procedures: PGC / MC-04 Personnel: Roles and responsibilities [31/05/2019]; PGC / SG-01 Personnel, competencies and awareness [31/05/2019] in which competences, roles and responsibilities are detailed, so personal recruitment follows these procedures, as well as the PGC / SG-07 Personnel Selection. As a Public Society all the process is very much detailed and explained to applicants. Assessment of requisites, scoring of merits and evaluations of examinations are performed precisely, and an expert from the IVAP (Basque Institute of Public Administration) participates in the interviews to the candidates. Positions are posted in NEIKER's web page, IVAP and LANBIDE (Basque Service for Employment). We wish to extend the posting of positions to an international audience through EURAXESS, IKERBASQUE..., and develop an e-tool for recruitment in order to facilitate applications by interested researchers. We want to have a clear and concise document in the web explaining the whole recruitment process. The final goal is to get the best candidates for the research positions offered by NEIKER in order to improve our scientific competence and provide to researchers from the European countries access to the information of the positions offered by NEIKER.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL:

5. Implementation

General overview of the expected implementation process:

The General Manager will take the lead of this work, starting by including the development of the HRS4R strategy in the Strategic Plan to be developed in the coming months. We are certified under the UNE 166.002:2014 and we have implemented a Team for process related personnel matters, which will be the core of the implementation process together with the Working Team, which has been in charge of putting forward the initial phase of the HRS4R at NEIKER. This combined team will carry out most of the proposed actions with the participation of the Director of Resources. Also the Head of Technology and Innovation, the Scientific Head, the Quality Manager, and a group of researchers R1-R4 will provide assistance on those matters more related to technology and science and advice on researcher's

career according to RVCTI (Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network) as well as scientific standards at the European level. We will contrast the proposed actions with the researchers at NEIKER using the usual internal communication mechanisms, based on both meetings and information exchange, as for example seminars, and subsequent collection of ideas by the teams in charge of implementing the strategy. The Steering Committee, headed by the General Manager, will make sure that the proposed actions and the new directions in the area of the research career coincide with the general strategy of NEIKER, and facilitate the fulfilment of its objectives. We will keep the Board of Directors informed of the work conducted under the HRS4R strategy and ask for their input for the implementation of the strategy.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail:

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?	<p>The Team of Process People will include for the implementation of the HRS4R strategy the Working Group, in charge of conducting the initial phase of the HSR4R strategy at NEIKER, and they will form the Implementation Committee. The working group consists of eight people: a) Director of Resources, will ensure the correct interaction between the work areas involved in this process, resource staff and research staff, b) Scientific Manager, must ensure that researchers achieve the necessary training and support for carrying out their functions, c) Resource Area technician, for support on the implementation of those aspects, linked to training, education, definition of professional careers, etc., d) Researchers and technologist, will ensure that the perspectives and expectations of these staff categories under the HRS4R strategy are taken into consideration</p> <p>The Steering Committee, which supervises the process, was appointed taking into account that: a) the General Manager must have the last glance on the development of all this work, since the strategic vision of the organization rests on this function, b) the</p>

	<p>Responsible of Technology and Innovation, heads the Technology and Market Committee, which draws up and supervises the Technology Plan. A basic aspect to ensure the accomplishment of the objectives of the Technology Plan is that the group of researchers who work at NEIKER have the appropriate competences and skills to develop technology from knowledge, as well as a professional attitude oriented toward the achievement of objectives, c) the Head of Quality, is a person who in an organization like NEIKER, which has many of its processes and activities under the UNE 166002 and ISO 9001 Standards, has an in-depth knowledge of all the processes involved in the maintenance of NEIKER activities as well as their improvement, d) Researchers and technologist, ensure that the perspectives and expectations of these staff categories under the HRS4R strategy are taken into consideration at this level.</p> <p>The Working Group initially will explain to the Team of Process People all the details of the HRS4R strategy and of the Action Plan developed at NEIKER. In this way we assure a focused work to be conducted since the beginning. Specific tasks will be assigned, which will count with different experts at NEIKER (researchers, quality area, legal area, personnel area, etc.). It is important to perform this plan with the Works Council, so the new procedures are debated, improved and accepted. Every six months we perform a review of all internal activities planned and the implementation of the HRS4R strategy will be specifically reviewed.</p>
How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?	<p>The HRS4R working group prepared a survey to be answered by researchers at NEIKER. This online survey was sent finally to all researchers at NEIKER following the Initial Assessment recommendation, so they are well aware of the details of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of</p>

	<p>Conduct. In the survey they expressed the importance they attached to each of the 40 principles and also their opinion on the degree of implementation of the principles in NEIKER. Besides, as mentioned, they received an initial presentation of the principles, and the process of implementation of the HRS4R strategy in NEIKER.</p> <p>Since there are members of all professional categories of researchers in NEIKER in the Working Group and in the Steering Group, these participants will informally consult with their colleagues to see if the proposed guidelines are of interest and in accordance with expectations of the respective groups. In addition, the Scientific Committee will also contrast the proposed changes in such a way as to ensure alignment with the points of view and perspectives of the researchers. As above mentioned we will also use the internal communication mechanisms at NEIKER, based on both meetings and information exchange, as for example seminars, and subsequent collection of ideas by the teams in charge of implementing the HRS4R strategy.</p> <p>In addition, given that these changes will affect, in general, the rights of researchers included in the Collective Agreement, the proposed changes must be contrasted with the Works Council.</p>
<p>How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.</p>	<p>Many of the principles were already in place in the actual strategy of human resources for researchers at NEIKER, or at least partially taken into consideration. Many of the actions are performed to review existing procedures on the Quality System to adapt better to the HRS4R strategy. However, we have decided to certify NEIKER under the ISO14001 and ISO 45001 norms so environment and occupational health and safety will be even more taken into account in all NEIKER research activities.</p> <p>One of the most important actions to be undertaken is the development of a</p>

	<p>methodology for competence and performance evaluation of researchers. This will be a further improvement of the actual situation in which we are trying to evaluate the performance of all staff at NEIKER, but the process is in standby at this moment.</p> <p>We also need to develop the strategy with the general ideas and specific guidelines established by RVCTI (Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network). It is also important to mention that NEIKER belongs to the BRTA (Basque Technology and Research Alliance), and as many BRTA organizations have implemented the HRS4R strategy, we believe that NEIKER will be in line with BRTA strategy in human resources.</p> <p>The OTM-R related actions will be implemented by the staff in charge of conducting the recruitment of researchers at NEIKER. This staff will closely work with the teams in charge of carrying out the implementation of HRS4R at NEIKER and they will be provided specific training to conduct the actions proposed in this area.</p>
How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?	<p>The General Manager will take the lead of this work, starting by including the development of the HRS4R strategy in the Strategic Plan to be developed in the coming months. The proposed actions will be included in the Annual Management Plan, which is reviewed twice a year. The member of the Working Team and the Team of Process people will meet regularly and will develop the corresponding actions included in the Action Plan for a given period of time. There are functions with executive roles in the teams so they will facilitate and make sure that the actions proposed will be implemented.</p>
How will you monitor progress (timeline)?	<p>We have developed a set of indicators for the different actions proposed in the Action Plan and for the OTM-R checklist. We will include those indicators as part of our MIDENET</p>

	control system, which is used for controlling the degree of advance of the Annual Management Plan. As already mentioned the Management Plan is reviewed twice a year so advances in the HRS4R implementation will be assessed and presented in the corresponding meetings.
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?	All of the actions have clear indicators, so it will be feasible to decide whether the actions have been accomplished or not, or the degree of accomplishment. The Working Team at the implementation will be in charge of preparing all the needed documents for the external review. Contrasting the action plan and the development expected with the researchers will be a very important task to keep all the researchers involved in the work being done. The Steering Committee will keep in charge of validating the degree of progress of the actions.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

The teams working at the implementation will be in charge of preparing all the needed documents for the external review. Contrasting the action plan and the development expected with the researchers will be a very important task to keep all the researchers involved in the work being done. The Steering Committee will keep in charge of supervising the degree of progress of the actions. The Board of Directors will be informed and their feedback requested.

Finally, after the Initial Assessment we have expanded the Working Group and the Steering Committee with members of all levels of researchers, expanded the principles in which actions will be carried out up to 32, and the number of actions up to 59. All this work will be facilitated by the participation of numerous NEIKER work groups, but they are also included in the challenges of the NEIKER Strategic Plan, so they are aligned with NEIKER's strategy, which ensures the correct development of the HRS4R strategy.