

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) E-Tool

Technical Guidelines for Institutions
-AWARD RENEWAL PHASE –
The Internal Review for Award Renewal Assessment
(with/without Site Visit)

March 2019

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1 INTRODUCTION

Starting 15 May 2018, the **HRS4R E-TOOL** is the European Commission's official platform, facilitating the HRS4R management process. It is an instrument developed and managed by DG RTD.

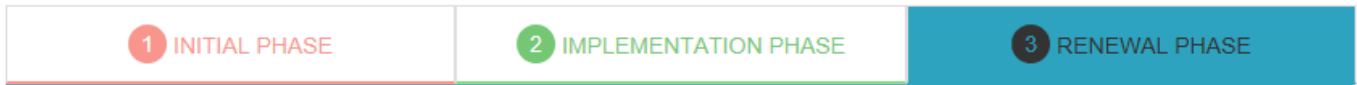
These guidelines are addressed to the institutions that obtained the "HR Excellence in Research Award", completed the Interim Assessment phase and are now preparing the Internal Review for the Award Renewal. **They are intended to be the user manual, a step-by-step technical support for the institutions when using the HRS4R E-tool for reporting, monitoring and assessment purposes.**

These guidelines are not exhaustive and aim at establishing a standardised working mechanism for all institutions. A tailored approach will be needed to match the specific case of your institution, which may be at an earlier or a more advanced stage of the C&C implementation, or which may be more creative and/or ambitious in setting objections and actions.

Should you consider that these guidelines do not cover your questions, please contact the Help Desk for technical issues: support@euraxess.org or the RTD-CHARTER team for details about the HRS4R procedure: RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu.

2 Overview of the AWARD RENEWAL PHASE:

Award Renewal is the third phase of the HRS4R procedure and takes place 5 years after the 'HR Award' was initially granted to the institution and 3 years after the Interim Assessment.



In order to renew the HR Award, the applicant institution will need to first perform a self-assessment based on the **Internal Review** template which can be downloaded from the Policy Library on the EURAXESS website [here](#).

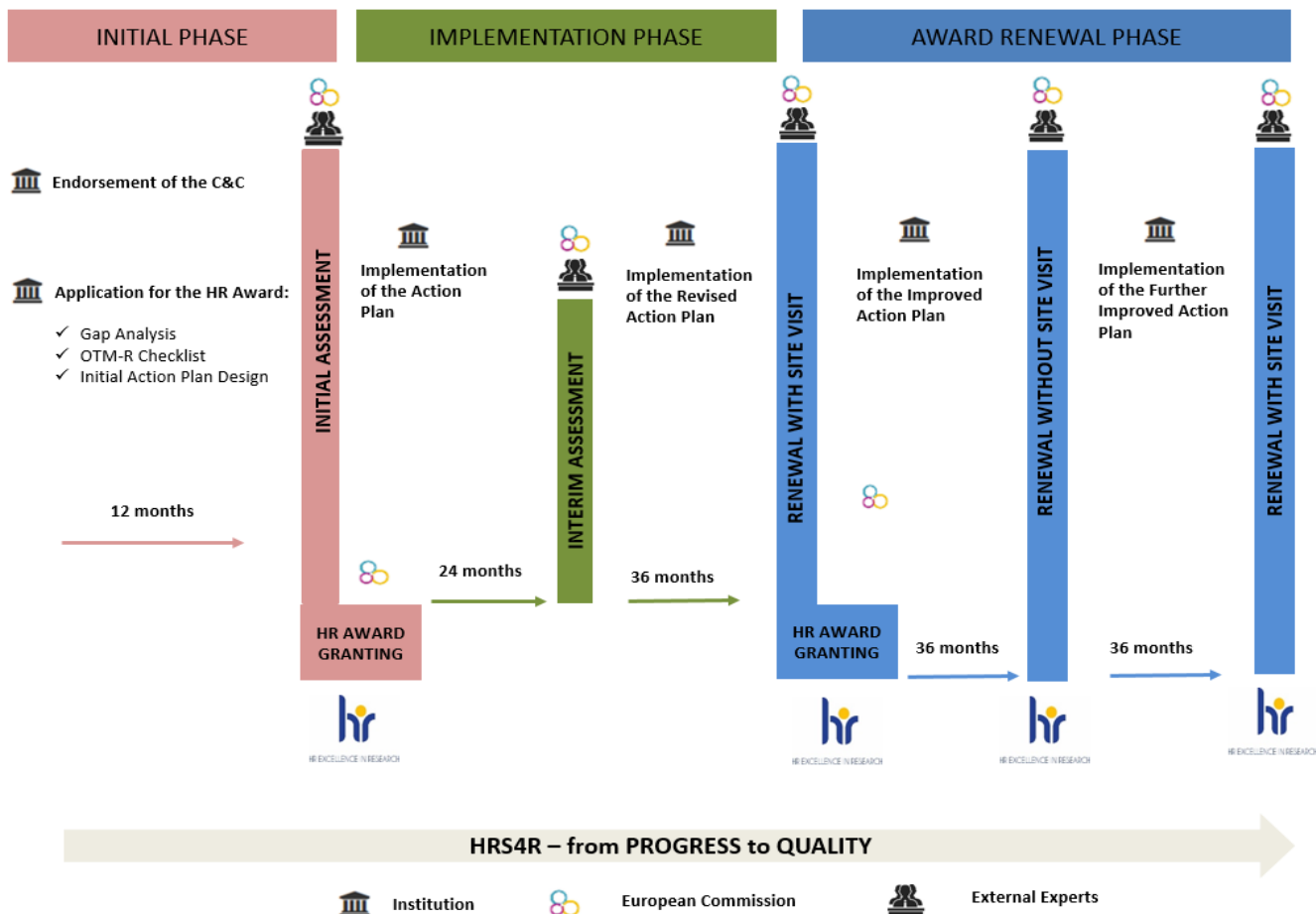
The institution indicates in the Internal Review form how it has embedded into its policies and practices the actions set in the Action Plan/HR strategy at Interim Assessment and proposes new actions for the next 3 years.

If the institution has not made its self-assessment against the **OTM-R checklist** at the Initial or at the Interim Assessment Phase (per the strengthened HRS4R in force since January 2017), it will have an additional task to perform for the Award Renewal Assessment. The OTM-R checklist can be found as a template [here](#).

The assessment process for the first cycle of Award Renewal implies besides the desk-based assessment of the application, a one-day site-visit performed by three external experts, belonging to a different country than the applicant institution. The institution will continue the implementation of the reviewed/improved action plan based on the recommendations provided by assessors in the consensus report, for the next 36 months, when a second Award Renewal cycle will follow.

The HRS4R process at Award Renewal phase runs in a cyclical way, with new Internal Reviews every 36 months (alternating the organisation of site visits).

The graphic below indicates the timeline according to which institutions are to undergo the subsequent cycles, while moving from progress to quality in Human Resources Management.



The European Commission will first screen the institution's Internal Review for administrative eligibility. The administrative eligibility check makes sure the application has all the required elements necessary for assessment. If the administrative eligibility check is not passed, the institution may be required to make corrections and resubmit the application.

Once the Internal Review is considered eligible from an administrative point of view, the European Commission will send the file for the Interim Assessment to three peer reviewers from three different countries other than the applicant country.

The assessors use standard assessment forms to ensure equal treatment for all applicant institutions.

One of the experts is assigned the role of lead-assessor for the preparation of the commonly agreed consensus report, which is shared with the institution as an official document containing pertinent recommendations.

If the institution is at the first or third cycle of Award Renewal and a one-day site-visit must be organised part of the assessment process. Please check the **HRS4R Site Visit Guidelines for Institutions** for more details.

3 Internal Review for Award Renewal

What it is:

The institution indicates in the Internal Review form how it has embedded into its policies and practices the actions set at Interim Assessment and also proposes new actions for the next 3 years.



The institution must **publish the reviewed version of the action plan/HR Strategy** (including the OTM-R policy) on the institution’s website and also provide the corresponding URL in a dedicated field of the Internal Review form.

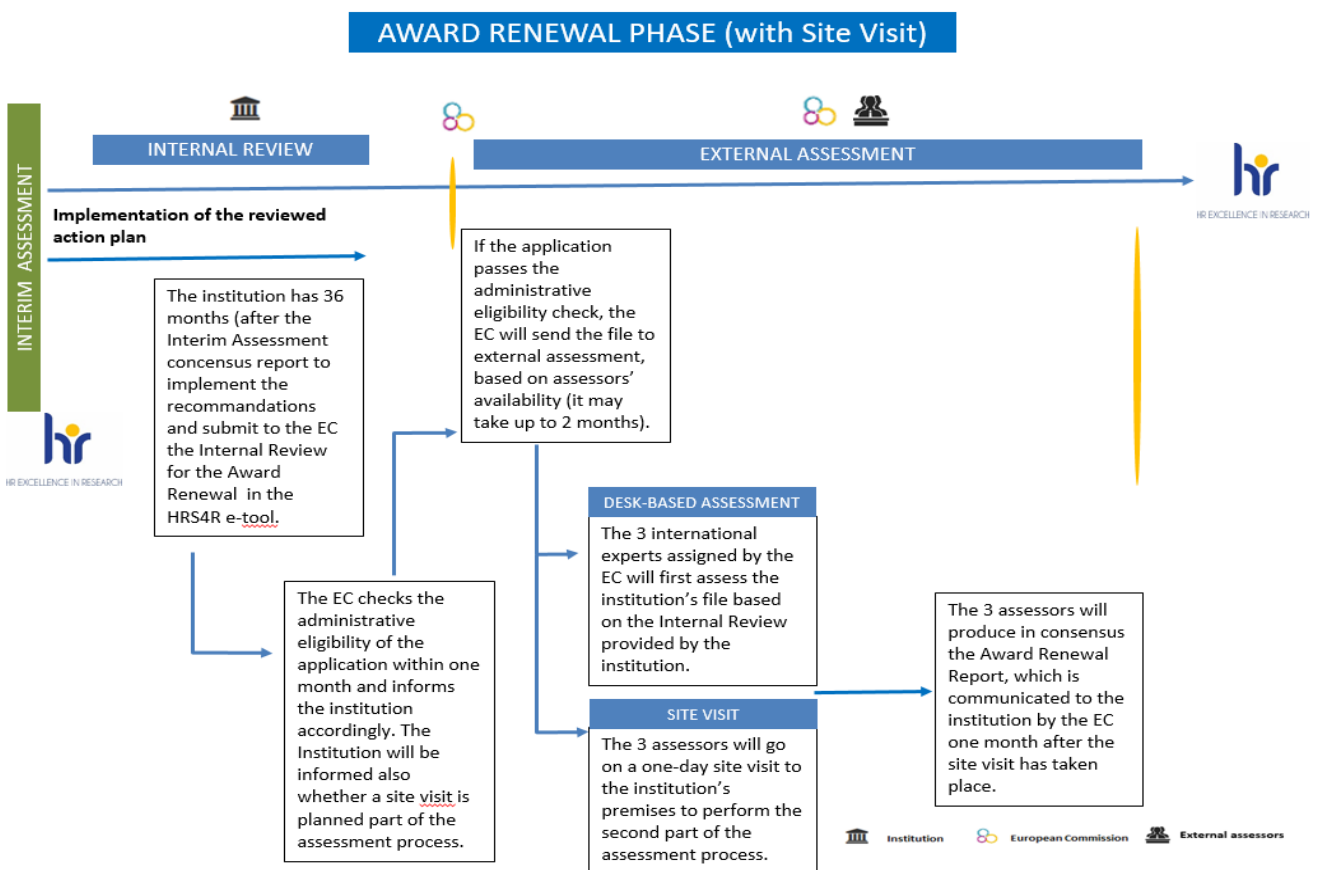
If the institution has not filled in the **OTM-R checklist** for the Initial or the Interim Assessment phases, it is mandatory to also complete this task for Award Renewal.

Why it is important:

The purpose of an internal review at this stage is to allow the participating institutions to reflect and document progress, alter actions or timing of actions (if necessary), as well as to offer the opportunity to create new actions for the upcoming years.

3.1 Tasks, responsibilities and timelines:

The graph below details the flow of the main activities performed by Institutions  and the European Commission (EC)  based on a best-case scenario.

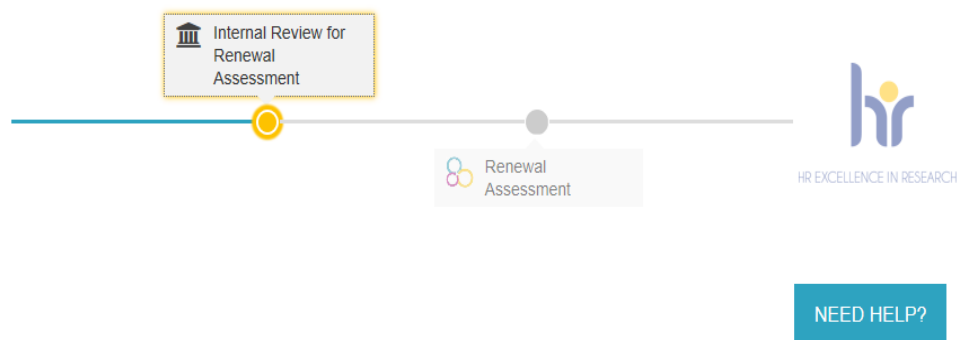
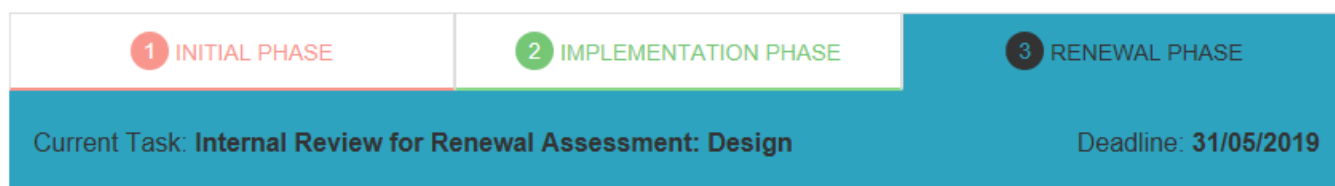


3.2. How to access the Internal Review form in the HRS4R E-Tool:

3.2.1. If your institution has used the HRS4R E-Tool for the Initial/Interim Assessment phases:

The institution's HRS4R Admin will log into the EURAXESS account and through MY EURAXESS dashboard will have access to the HRS4R E-TOOL in order to manage the reporting process.

The click on the "Renewal Phase" blue tab will illustrate as below the next task with the status "Pending" and the corresponding deadline.



The screenshot shows the HRS4R E-Tool interface. At the top, it says 'Internal Review for Renewal Assessment: Design' with a building icon. Below that, it says 'Date: Mon, 11/02/2019 - 16:24' and 'Pending' in orange. A list of tasks is shown: 'Renewal Assessment' (with a blue square icon), 'Internal Review' (with a blue square icon and a black box around it), and 'OTM-R Checklist' (with a blue square icon). The status 'Pending' is shown next to each task. A black arrow points from the 'Internal Review' task to a text box on the right.

The Internal Review file can be easily accessed at a click away.

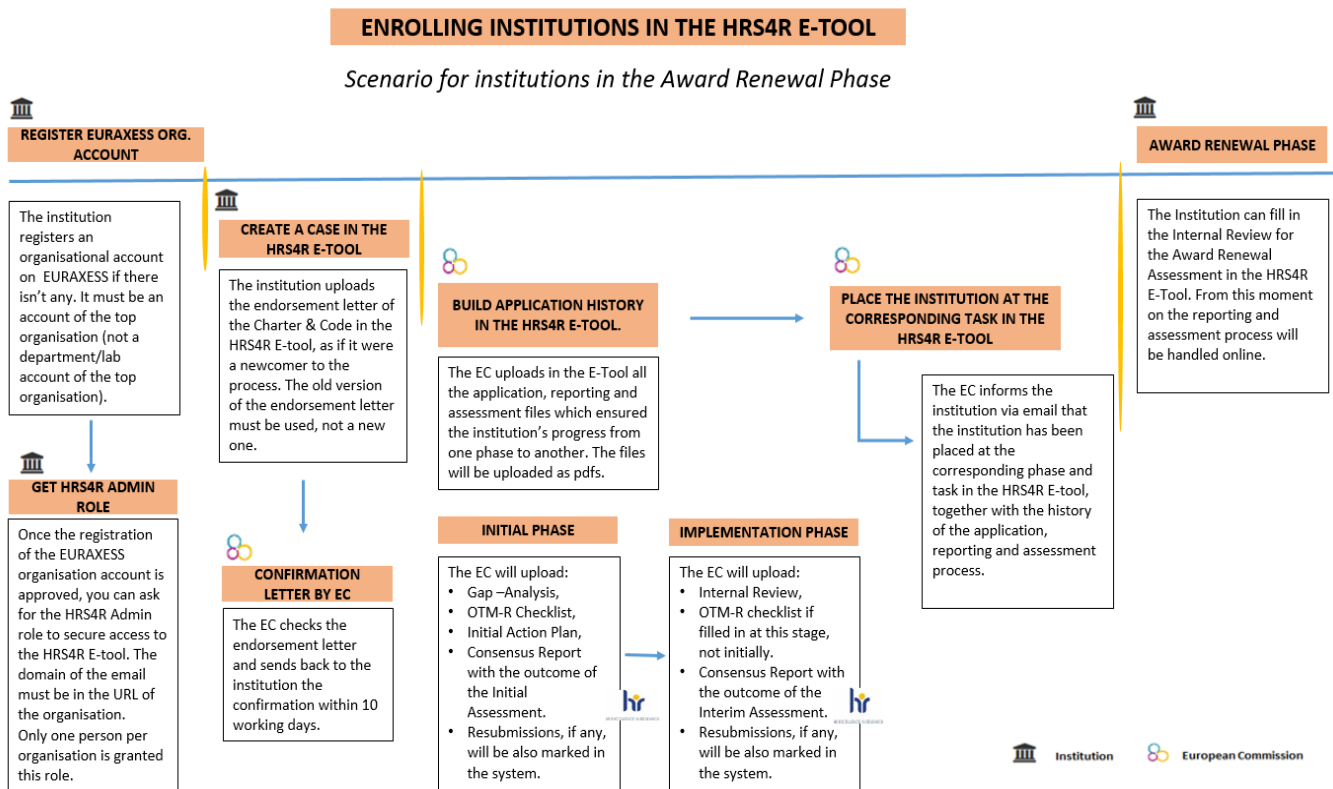
3.2.2. If your institution enrolls for the first time in the HRS4R E-Tool at Award Renewal:

The institution must register the file in the HRS4R E-tool. There are several steps to accomplish before filling in the Internal Review form in the HRS4R E-Tool.

N.B: You will receive assistance from the RTD CHARTER team at the European Commission in order to have a smooth and quick transition of your institution's application files from paper to digital, in the HRS4R E-Tool. Whenever you encounter

difficulties throughout the process, you can send an email for clarifications to RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu.

The graph below illustrates the enrolment process of institutions in the HRS4R E-tool:



a) Secure your access to the HRS4R E-Tool:

To access the HRS4R E-Tool, you must have an individual EURAXESS member account. Registration and membership are free of charge. Read below for more information:

Your institution must also have an organisation profile on EURAXESS. If your organisation does not have a EURAXESS profile, you can create an organisation profile using the organisation registration tool available in the EURAXESS dashboard:

1. Login to the EURAXESS portal
2. Navigate to the dashboard (click MY EURAXESS item in the menu)

EURAXESS

JOBS &
FUNDINGCAREER
DEVELOPMENT

PARTNERING

INFORMATION
& ASSISTANCEEURAXESS
WORLDWIDEMY
EURAXESS

3. If there is not any profile registered for the organisation that you represent, you have the option to “Search/Register” an organisation using the yellow button on the right.

Join an organisation

Based on your email (grenoble-univ.fr) you cannot auto join any existing organisation.

Search/Register

Please search for an existing organisation. You can also register a new organisation if you cannot find the organisation you are looking for.

SEARCH/REGISTER



4. Fill in the "Organisation Name" and the website "URL" of the organisation. Then click "Search". Note that you should **not enter a Department or Laboratory Name** since the HR Award applies to the whole organisation and not a subsidiary entity.

Also, you need to provide the URL starting with "http://" or "https://"

Search for an organisation

You can search for an organisation by name, department, laboratory and URL. If a match is found you can ask the administrator to add you as a member. If no match is found you can proceed and register your new organisation.

Organisation Name *

URL *

Department

Laboratory

A message will appear, to confirm that there are no exact matches and you can proceed to register a new organisation, by clicking on the "Register Organisation" button.

Register the organisation:

The fields already filled-in in the previous step are being transferred to the registration form.

At this point you will be requested to provide the "Organisation Type", "Country", "Street", "City" and optionally the "State/Province" and the "Postal Code".

Click the "Save the organisation" button to submit the organisation registration form to the Help Desk for validation. The Help Desk will check if the newly registered organisation's domain of activity is related to research and if there are duplicate registrations of the same organisation. Once the organisation account passes the administrative check performed by the Help Desk, you will be informed accordingly in a dedicated email (normally registration requests are treated within the same working day).

Become the HRS4R organisation administrator of your institution's file:

1. Log in to the EURAXESS portal
2. From [The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers](#) webpage – Implementation and Award Renewal phases, open the collapsible menus as shown below to expose the "HRS4R organisation Admin" button or click [here](#) to jump directly.
3. Click the "HRS4R organisation admin" button as shown below:

— **How to be granted the role of the HRS4R Organisation Administrator**

Please note that in order to be granted the HRS4R Admin role, your organisation should be first registered as an EURAXESS member. The following rules also apply:

- The domain of your email must be in the URL of the organisation.
- Only one user per organisation can be granted the role.

Request the role of HRS4R Organisation Administrator using the button below:

HRS4R ORGANISATION ADMIN

You now have to choose the organisation in which to become HRS4R organisation administrator. You will be presented only with top level organisation(s) (i.e. without department) whose URL match the domain of your email address. For example, if your email is user@organisation.com, the URL of the registered organisation must be of xxx.organisation.com.

You can choose only one top level organisation, even if multiple organisations are displayed in the form.

If none of the displayed organisations matches your organisation, you can proceed with registering a new organisation, or contact the support team (support@euraxess.org) using the email link presented below the form to request assistance.

b) Create an HRS4R case for the institution as if it were a newcomer to the process:

The HRS4R designated admin for the organisation account on EURAXESS will access MY EURAXESS dashboard, the HRS4R section, and by clicking on the yellow button "Create a case & apply for the HR Award" will be able to fill in the required tasks of this stage.

The application is launched in the HRS4R E-Tool the moment you fill in the first task of the Initial Phase - Endorsement of the C&C, which consists in the upload of the pdf version of the endorsement letter and you also indicate the contact persons in charge of and engaging the institution in the HR process.

Endorsement Letter *

No file selected.

[More information](#)

Contact Person for the HRS4R	Management mandated to engage the organisation
Name *	Name *
Position *	Position *
Email *	Email *
Office Telephone *	Office Telephone *

N.B:
You must upload in the system the version of the endorsement letter provided by the institution to the European Commission the moment it initially enrolled in the process.

Clicking the "Save" button saves the provided information and still allows the information to be edited before it is submitted as shown below.

The status of the application will be changed into "Pending" as shown below:

C&C Endorsement: Commitment Letter

Date updated: Fri, 13/04/2018 - 15:45 by Pending

Endorsement Letter
 test_endorsement_letter.pdf (79.78 KB)

Contact Person for the HRS4R

Contact Person
 Jane Doe HR Consultant
 Email: hrconsultant@uni.lux, Office Telephone: 0032 485 403 555

[Show more](#) v

Once the "Submit" button is clicked, the application cannot be edited any longer and the action cannot be undone. The status of the application will consequently change into "Submitted".

C&C Endorsement: Commitment Letter

Date of Submission: Fri, 13/04/2018 - 16:05 by B Submitted

Endorsement Letter
 test_endorsement_letter.pdf (79.78 KB)

Contact Person for the HRS4R

Contact Person
 Jane Doe HR Consultant
 Email: hrconsultant@uni.lux, Office Telephone: 0032 485 403 555

[Show more](#) v

- c) You receive from the European Commission a confirmation email including a case number assigned to your institution in terms of the HRS4R project.
- d) The European Commission will collect all the files already provided by your institution part of the application and acknowledgement of the “HR Award” (the Gap-Analysis, the OTM-R checklist, the initial Action Plan, the assessment consensus report) and will upload them as pdfs in the HRS4R E-Tool. Your institution will have access to all the HRS4R history of application, reporting and assessment in the online dashboard.

The European Commission will confirm by email once the files are uploaded in the tool and the HRS4R Organisation Admin can start filling in the Internal Review.

- e) The institution’s HRS4R Admin will log in to the EURAXESS account and through MY EURAXESS dashboard will have access to the HRS4R e-tool in order to manage further the reporting process.

The click on the “Renewal Phase” blue tab will illustrate as below the next task with the status “Pending” and the corresponding deadline.

1 INITIAL PHASE 2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE 3 RENEWAL PHASE

Current Task: **Internal Review for Renewal Assessment: Design** Deadline: **31/05/2019**

Internal Review for Renewal Assessment: Design

Date: Mon, 11/02/2019 - 16:24 Pending

- Renewal Assessment
 - Internal Review *Pending*
 - OTM-R Checklist *Pending*

[Document Status Explanation](#) ⓘ

[Show less](#) ^

The Internal Review can be easily accessed at a click away. If the institution has already filled in the OTM-R checklist at previous phases, there is no need to fill it again at this stage.

3.3. How to fill in the Internal Review form in the HRS4R E-Tool:

The Internal Review template to be used for the reporting in the HRS4R E-Tool is similar in structure to the one filled in for the planning of the initial action plan or for the reviewed action plan at Interim Assessment. It comprises four separate parts:

1. **Organisational information**
2. **Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice**
3. **Actions**
4. **Implementation/Embedding the HRS4R process.**

Key elements to consider:

3.3.1. Organisational information:

This section is intended to illustrate the larger context in which the institution performs, its structure, its impact upon the communities it serves, as well as the resources managed.

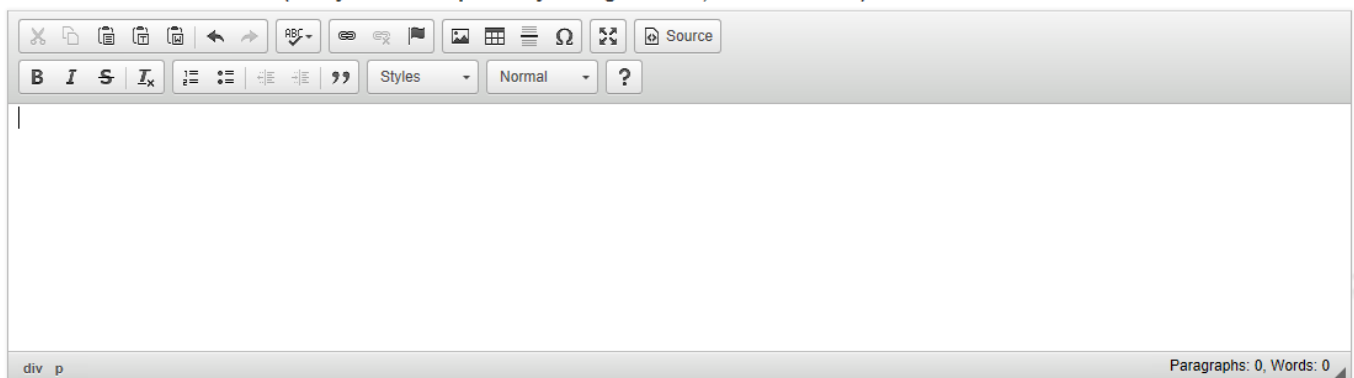
There are two categories of data required:

- Staff indicators to be presented as full-time positions (FTEs), and
- Budget and funding, if applicable, to be expressed as amounts in euro.

The dedicated table for filling in the data will already contain the organisational information provided at the Initial Phase/Interim Assessment (if the institution has used the HRS4R E-Tool for the previous stages), with the possibility to update it for the current situation.

The same approach is also for the “Organisational Profile” text block. The information will be retrieved automatically from the previous stages if the institution has filled in the initial/reviewed action plan in the HRS4R E-Tool.

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)



3.3.2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice:

In this section, the institution must provide an overview of its current state and practice under the four thematic headings of the C&C (Ethical and Professional aspects, Recruitment and Selection, Working Conditions and Social Security, Training and Development). Information on current practices related to OTM-R should be also included here.

Ethical and professional aspects	▼
Recruitment and selection	▼
Working conditions	▼
Training and development	▼

We strongly recommend elaborating on both strengths and weaknesses (although there is only one text block provided for both), as they will highlight the institution's rationale for setting and implementing actions.

Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter & Code to open the editor and provide your answers. There will be three blocks for each heading:

- Strengths and weaknesses (expressed in the Initial Phase for the application to the award),
- Strengths and weaknesses at Internal Review for the Interim Assessment,
- Strengths and weaknesses at Award Renewal Phase.

N.B:

The information regarding the “Strengths and weaknesses” expressed at the Initial Phase/Interim Assessment will be retrieved automatically from the system if the institution has filled in the previous applications in the HRS4R E-Tool. Otherwise, these text blocks will be empty.

The institutions enrolled in the HRS4R E-Tool at the Award Renewal Phase will have to fill in only the text block regarding the “Strengths and weaknesses at Internal Review for Award Renewal”.

The screenshot shows a web-based editor interface for the 'Ethical and professional aspects' section. The interface includes a title bar, three text input areas, a rich text editor toolbar, and a status bar.

- Title Bar:** 'Ethical and professional aspects*' with a close button.
- Section 1:** 'Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)' containing a text block with placeholder text: 'Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nunc vitae purus ac ex hendrerit tempus eget vitae justo. Duis dignissim tellus sed tortor commodo consequat. Quisque consequat sem hendrerit luctus ultrices. Integer quis convallis nisi. Praesent dignissim eu massa et laoreet. Quisque eget quam hendrerit, euismod neque eget, consequat velit. Sed ut porttitor felis. Donec ornare finibus felis, et tristique ipsum dictum a.'
- Section 2:** 'Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)' containing a text block with placeholder text: 'Ut auctor pellentesque quam, et ullamcorper lectus finibus non. Aenean dolor turpis, volutpat fringilla eros nec, interdum egestas orci. Nam vulputate, dui id luctus egestas, nibh massa placerat erat, ut condimentum justo lacus in nisi. Morbi ultricies, lacus nec ultricies dapibus, lectus augue tincidunt dolor, non finibus sapien nibh semper ex. Integer id eros et ligula facilisis rutrum eu eu arcu. Donec cursus elit augue, sed blandit lorem vestibulum sed. Ut eget eros est. Nulla facilisi. Phasellus et mauris sed ipsum consequat faucibus. Pellentesque eu dolor et urna lacinia ornare vitae eu nibh. Nullam maximus eu libero a condimentum. Donec luctus condimentum turpis sit amet volutpat.'
- Section 3:** 'Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *' containing a rich text editor toolbar with icons for undo, redo, bold, italic, strikethrough, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, source code, and a 'Source' button. Below the toolbar is a text block with placeholder text: 'Proin a nisi erat. Donec felis eros, ullamcorper vel nisi id, cursus rutrum ante. Proin porta purus in pretium dapibus. Donec tristique sodales metus eu dapibus. Integer eu dignissim ligula. Praesent eleifend fringilla condimentum. Cras volutpat urna leo, et congue neque interdum at. Integer posuere augue ut sapien molestie ultricies. Pellentesque dignissim eros nisi, sit amet gravida arcu mollis nec. Aliquam erat volutpat.'
- Status Bar:** 'Paragraphs: 1, Words: 63'

If the institution is willing to provide more information about the way the strengths and weaknesses context evolved or changed from the Initial to the Implementation and Award Renewal phase, there is a “Remarks” section within each of the tabs corresponding to the four headings of the C&C that can be used for this purpose.

The institution is also required to provide answers to specific questions regarding the way the organisation has operated after the acknowledgement of the ‘HR Award’ and the Interim Assessment stage. A text block is offered for the following questions:

- Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?
- Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?
- Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

The mention to limit the answer to the above questions to 500 words maximum is only indicative. There is no technical limit/block if the institution wants to write more than indicated.

3.3.3. Actions

For the third section of the Internal Review – Actions, the institution has to report on the status of achievement for each of the actions planned in the Initial/Interim Assessment phases, alter actions or timing of actions if necessary, also to add new actions to be implemented in the next 36 months, for the second Award Renewal.

N.B. The actions, as well as the remarks on the status of achievement should be concise, but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement and implementation. The institution should strive to provide a detailed plan, not only an enumeration of actions.

Mandatory requirements at this stage:

- ✓ **The institution has to publish on the website the extended version of the reviewed/improved action plan/HR Strategy** (including the OTM-R policy) and provide the URL to the corresponding webpages in a dedicated field of the Internal Review.
- ✓ If the institution has not made its self-assessment against the **OTM-R checklist** at the Initial/Interim Assessment phases (per the strengthened HRS4R in force since January 2017), it will have an additional task to perform for Award Renewal.
- ✓ The Actions file also includes a **dedicated section to OTM-R policy and practices**. Although there may be some overlap with a range of the actions already planned as emerged from the Gap Analysis, the institution must provide a short commentary demonstrating the

implementation of the OTM-R policies and practices, since the acknowledgement of the 'HR Award' to the moment of the Internal Review. The institution will have to make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan in a free text section.

A different procedure to fill in the Internal Review Actions may apply based on two situations:

- A. Institutions that used the HRS4R E-Tool for the Initial Phase/Interim Assessment,
- B. Institutions that use the HRS4R E-Tool

A. Institutions that used the HRS4R E-Tool for the Initial Phase/Interim Assessment:

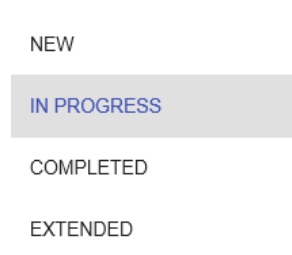
There are 2 tasks to perform at this stage:

- a) Establish the status of achievement of the actions already planned in the previous phases,
- b) Add new actions to the action plan for the next 36 months.

Key elements to consider for the above-mentioned tasks:

- a) The institutions that filled in the action plan in HRS4R E-Tool at the Initial Phase/Interim Assessment will find in the Internal Review form automatically retrieved from the Initial Phase, the list of planned actions, the gaps/the principles they address, the timing, the indicators and the responsible unit.

For each of the actions already set, the institution will have to establish the status of achievement in the column called "Current State", selecting from the options below:



NEW
IN PROGRESS
COMPLETED
EXTENDED

If the status is "In progress" or "Extended", the institution has to update also the timing of achievement.

Details can be included for each action and corresponding status of achievement in the column for "Remarks".

- b) The institution can customise planning based on its own priorities and creativity. There is the possibility to add as many new actions as needed. The click on "Add another row" will create a new field in the form for the addition of a new action.

The principle of planning new actions at the Internal Review is similar to the Initial Phase/Interim Assessment. The proposed actions can address either individual or multiple principles. In order to ensure all the gap principles will be addressed by the institution based on own priorities, the list of Gap principles not selected in any action so far, will be provided for reference.

The selected gap will be automatically accompanied by the rating already set in the Gap Analysis:

++ fully implemented
+/- almost but not fully implemented
-/+ partially implemented
-- insufficiently implemented

The timeline should cover at least 36 months up to the second internal review for award renewal. Timing should be indicated by quarters of a year.

The actions should reflect a balance between short-term interventions (i.e. such as organising a workshop) and long-term systemic actions that bring about culture change.

B. Institutions enrolled in the HRS4R E-Tool at Award Renewal:

There are 2 tasks to perform at this stage:

- a) Establish the status of achievement of the actions already planned in the previous phases,
- b) Add new actions to the action plan for the next 36 months.

a) The Actions section of the Internal Review form will be empty, in the sense that the institution will not find automatically imported the list of actions set in the previous phase (as it is the case of the institutions which have used the e-tool for the application to the 'HR Award' or for the Interim Assessment).

In order to report on the status of achievement, the institution will have to fill in first the actions set in the previous version of the action plan, with the details provided at that time (the gap it addresses, timing, responsible unit, indicators (KPIs), etc. If the status is "In progress" or "Extended", the institution has to update the timing of achievement.

An action can address multiple gap principles. The "Select principle" menu will provide the opportunity to quickly select from the 40 principles of the C&C the one(s) the action addresses. The status of achievement will be set using the 4 options of the "Current Status". Details on the implementation process, difficulties or challenges encountered can be added in the "Remarks" column.

A list of Gap principles not selected in any action, is provided in order to facilitate planning and keeping an easier track of the principles which has to be addressed throughout the implementation and award renewal process.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Proposed ACTIONS". On the left, there is a large empty box labeled "Action 1". To the right, there is a table with the following structure:

GAP Principle(s)		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Select principle				
Current Status		Remarks		
NEW				

Below the table, there is a button labeled "Add another row +".

Note: Use "Add another row" button to add a new "proposed action".

- Unselected principles:
- 1. Research freedom
 - 2. Ethical principles
 - 3. Professional responsibility
 - 4. Professional attitude
 - 5. Contractual and legal obligations
 - 6. Accountability
 - 7. Good practice in research
 - 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results
 - 9. Public engagement
 - 10. Non discrimination
 - 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems
 - 12. Recruitment
 - 13. Recruitment (Code)
 - 14. Selection (Code)
 - 15. Transparency (Code)
 - 16. Judging merit (Code)
 - 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)
 - 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
 - 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)
 - 20. Seniority (Code)
 - 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)
 - 22. Recognition of the profession
 - 23. Research environment
 - 24. Working conditions
 - 25. Stability and permanence of employment
 - 26. Funding and salaries
 - 27. Gender balance
 - 28. Career development
 - 29. Value of mobility
 - 30. Access to career advice
 - 31. Intellectual Property Rights
 - 32. Co-authorship
 - 33. Teaching
 - 34. Complain's/ appeals
 - 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

b) Once you have finalised the self-assessment regarding the status of achievement of the actions already planned in the previous phases, you can proceed with adding new actions to be further implemented in the next 36 months.

The institution can customise planning based on its own priorities and creativity. There is the possibility to add as many new actions as needed. The click on "Add another row" will create a new field in the form for the addition of a new action, the Gap principle it addresses, the timing of implementation, the responsible unit and the KPI(s). For the new actions the "Current Status" will be "New".

This is a duplicate of the screenshot above, showing the "Proposed ACTIONS" form with the same table structure and "Add another row +" button.

There must always exist a match between the gaps identified in the Gap Analysis at Initial Phase and the actions planned in such a way as make sure all gaps are addressed throughout the HRS4R process, based on the institution's own priorities and tactics.

3.3.4. Implementation / Embedding the HRS4R process:

This section must include information on how the HRS4R was implemented and embedded inside the institution through working groups, alignment with HR policies/internal mechanisms, etc.

Besides describing the overall implementation process in a free text field, there is also a mandatory checklist with questions to answer, as below. The answer to each question should be detailed in maximum 500 words (the limit is indicative, not blocking the intention to write more).

Should the same answer be applicable to more than one question, please state clearly if this is the case instead of duplicating replies.

How have you prepared the internal review?*	▼
How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?*	▼
Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?*	▼
Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy	* ▼
How has your organisation ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented?*	▼
How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?*	▼
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?*	▼
How do you expect to prepare for the external review?*	▼

If needed, the institution can also add details on the implementation process in an additional text block created specifically on this purpose, as below.

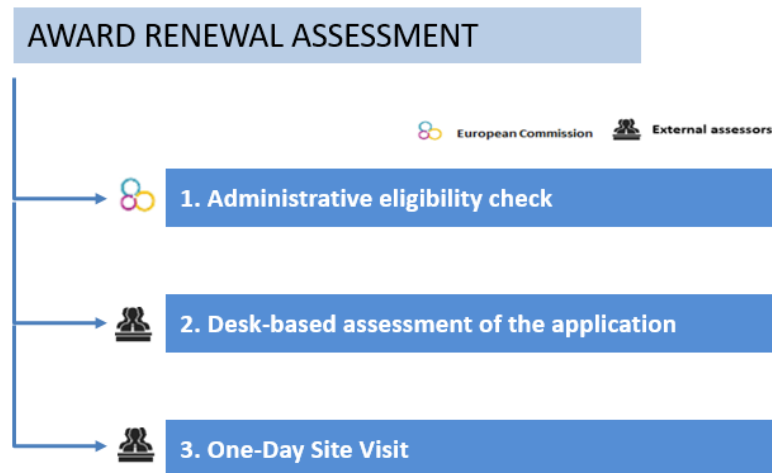
Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for undo, redo, bold, italic, strikethrough, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, source, and help. Below the toolbar is a large empty text area for input.

4 Award Renewal Assessment

4.1 Description and timeline of the assessment process

After the successful submission of the Internal Review using the HRS4R E-Tool, the institution proceeds to the next level of the process, which consists of three separate steps if the institution is at the first/ third Award Renewal, which includes the organisation of a site visit.



1. The administrative eligibility check is intended to validate an application in terms of its compliance with the application procedure (i.e. all formal requirements are met; i.e. templates are completed in the HRS4R E-tool: the OTM-R Checklist was also filled in by the institutions which joined the process before 2017 when the strengthened procedure entered into force; i.e. templates contain sufficient information for the application to be further assessed, etc.). The check has nothing to do with the quality of the data provided, but with the quality of the application as a whole, as suitable or not for the interim assessment.

The institution will be informed if the application is compliant and has passed the administrative eligibility check within four weeks after submission.

If the application is considered non-compliant, the institution will be required to update it based on the feedback provided by the EC. In this case, the institution's task is moved backwards on the process flow and the templates of the initial application can be further edited.

If required to make changes in the application templates, the institution will have to resubmit the updated version of the application within two months, after it receives the outcome of the administrative eligibility check.

2. The desk-based assessment of the application is the second step of the Award Renewal phase and can only be initiated if an application has passed the administrative eligibility check.

If a **site visit** will be organized part of the assessment process, the EC will inform the institution accordingly and will stay in contact to establish a convenient date. Please check the **HRS4R Site Visit Guidelines for Institutions** for more details.

How the experts are selected:

It is intended that the institution's Internal Review is assessed by the same assessment team responsible for the Initial Assessment, who acknowledged the 'HR Award' to the institution in the Initial Phase.

The experts are selected by the EC in a transparent process through the HRS4R E-Tool on the basis of the following criteria:

- Personal competence and experience in the HRS4R field or any similar HR strategy development/implementation;
- Geographical distribution;
- Institutional spread (i.e. research institutions, universities, research funders etc.)

Prior to the involvement of the experts in the assessment, they receive appropriate training on all issues and requirements. Also, prior to any assessment, the experts sign a declaration of confidentiality covering issues such as performance, obligation of impartiality and of confidentiality. These confidentiality obligations are binding on the expert unless the confidential information becomes public through disclosure of the confidential information by the institution or the Commission services.

How the assessment process is organised:

Each application will be assessed by three experts/individual peer reviewers (ideally the same involved in the Initial and Interim Assessment phases).

The experts use standard templates and criteria for all applications in order to ensure fair treatment for all institutions.

N.B. The template used by the individual assessors can be found in the Annex. It is strongly recommended to look into it carefully before submitting the Internal Review, in order to make sure every specific requirement has been considered.

At this stage, progress and quality of the actions and accompanying measures (such as embedding the HRS4R process) are assessed by the experts.

The assessment at this stage consists of a detailed assessment followed by recommendations.

The detailed assessment is subdivided as follows:

1. Quality (of progress) Here the experts assess the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended and obtained by the institution.
2. Strengths and weaknesses of the HR strategy - On the basis of the information submitted and taking into account the institution's national research context, experts will weigh/judge the HR strategy's strengths and weaknesses.
3. Recommendations will be issued by the experts referring to the state of the art of institution's OTM-R policy, with regard to progress and quality of actions and their evidence etc.

4.2. The outcome of the Award Renewal Assessment

One of the three individual peer reviewers will be assigned the role of lead-assessor and will prepare the commonly agreed consensus report integrating the input provided in the individual assessments.

The consensus report is the official feedback that the institution will receive in terms of their Internal Review. It is also based on a standard template, and it includes customised recommendations in terms of their implementation of the HRS4R procedure.

The institution will have access to the consensus report within three months after the confirmation of the administrative eligibility check.

If the Award Renewal assessment implies the organisation of a site-visit, the institution will have access to the consensus report within one month after the site visit has taken place.

The general assessment, provided as part of the consensus report, indicates whether the institution was granted the renewal of the 'HR award. Three outcomes may be possible:

- **Accepted**

The application meets the criteria and the EC renews the 'HR award'.

The experts may comment on the submission asking for future focus on a particular aspect/criterion, if appropriate. For example, they may say that they would like to see something addressed in the longer term but acknowledge that the submission meets the criteria for Award Renewal.

- **Accepted pending minor modifications**

The institution broadly meets the criteria, but the external assessors have some concerns/questions about specific areas, in which case the institution is moved backwards on the HRS4R process flow in order to reflect on the feedback and act upon it.

The institution should consider for immediate action the recommendations mentioned as mandatory in order to have the award renewed. The other recommendations can be addressed during the next phase of the HRS4R process.

The institution is required to update the documentation in the HRS4R E-tool and resubmit the application for review **within two months**.

The assessors will review only how the institution has followed up on their feedback, which is why it is strongly recommended to act upon the specific recommendations and clearly detail the actions in the revised application.

Should the institution face difficulties in complying with the deadline, there is always the possibility to ask for a deadline extension provided that the deadline is not overdue. The request should be made in the HRS4R E-tool and must be previously accepted by the EC. The extension is offered only once, and it is standard for all institutions (one month from the previously set deadline).

- **Declined (major revisions)**

The institution does not meet the criteria to have the 'HR award' renewed and is required to make the appropriate changes taking into account the recommendations of the assessors. In this case the

institution is moved backwards on the HRS4R process flow in order to implement what is requested.

The institution is required to update the documentation in the HRS4R E-tool and resubmit the revised application for review **within 12 months**.

The institution should consider for immediate action the recommendations mentioned as mandatory in order to have the award renewed. The other recommendations can be addressed during the next phase of the HRS4R process.

The assessors will review only how the institution has followed up on their feedback, which is why it is strongly recommended to act upon the specific recommendations and clearly detail the actions in the revised application.

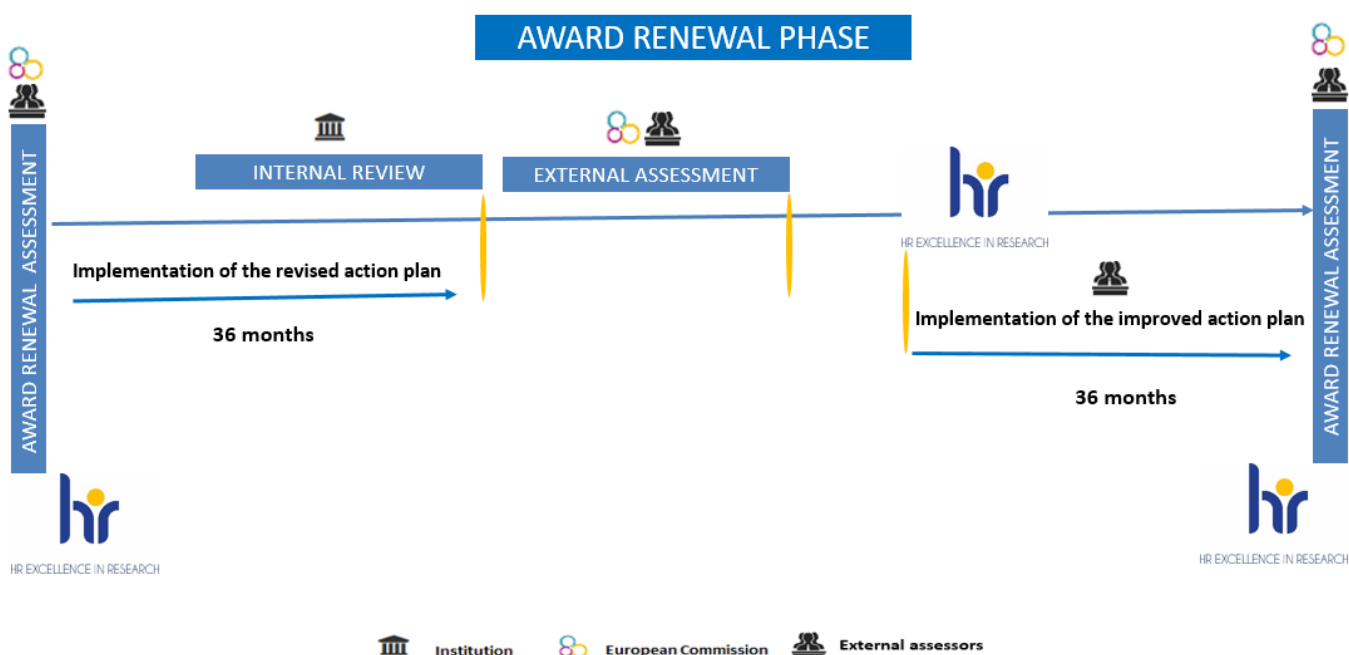
N.B: Special attention is needed when resubmitting the revised application as only two resubmissions are allowed at this stage.

Should the institution face difficulties in complying with the deadline, there is always the possibility to ask for a deadline extension provided that the deadline is not overdue. The request should be made in the HRS4R E-tool and must be previously accepted by the EC. The extension is offered only once and it is standard for all institutions (one month from the previously set deadline).

5 What's next?

The institution will continue the implementation of the reviewed/improved action plan based on the recommendations provided by assessors in the consensus report, for the next 36 months.

The HRS4R process will further run in a cyclical way, with new Internal Reviews every 36 months for Award Renewal (alternating the organisation of site visits).



6 Annex

6.1 Templates

The following templates can be found on EURAXESS in the Policy Library under “Research Careers > Strengthened HRS4R process”:

- [Internal Review](#)
- [OTM-R Checklist](#) (only for the institutions which have not filled it in for the Initial Phase).

The templates used by the peer reviewers for the Award Renewal phase can be also downloaded from [here](#).

6.2. Abbreviations

The Charter and Code (C&C)	The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers – 2 documents adopted by the European Commission in 2005 containing 40 principles that applicant institutions to the "HR Excellence in Research Award" must endorse and commit to implement: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter
EURAXESS Organization Admin	Staff representative who registered a EURAXESS organization account in order to publish offers on behalf of the institution on EURAXESS.
EC	European Commission
FTEs	Full-time employees
HRS4R	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r
HR Award	The European Commission's "HR Excellence in Research Award" giving public recognition to research institutions that have made progress in aligning their human resource policies with the principles set out in the "Charter & Code"
HRS4R E-tool	The official platform of the European Commission to apply for the "HR Excellence in Research Award" and manage the institution's HRS4R process. It can be accessed from the EURAXESS website by users with the appropriate permissions: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/my/hrs4r
HRS4R Organisation Admin	Staff representative assigned by the management of the applicant institution to fill in the application for the HR Award and manage the institution's HRS4R process in the HRS4R E-tool.
OTM-R	Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment of Researchers https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process
R1-R4	The European Framework for Research Careers profiles: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors