EMME-CARE

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN MIDDLE EAST – CLIMATE & ATMOSPHERE RESEARCH CENTRE

D2.4 Mid-term Report on working environment, performance evaluation, career development

February 2023
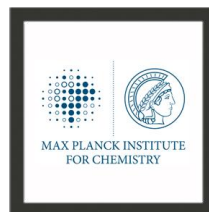
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V1	19/01/2023	Initial version		CYI
V2	06/02/2023	Amendments/ Revisions throughout document	Inputs/ Revisions by CARE-C RISO's HR-Office	CYI
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Introduction

The CARE-C Centre of Excellence established on 1st of January 2020 under the Grant Agreement of the **"Eastern Mediterranean Middle East – Climate and Atmosphere Research" Project** *(EMME-CARE, H2020 GA no.856612)* provides scientific, technological and policy solutions through the establishment of a world-class Center of Excellence focusing on environmental challenges.

The Deliverable at hand, as per the GA, represents the "**Mid-term Report on working environment, performance evaluation, career development**", outlining the status of the CARE-C CoE activities in regards to **Task 2.3 Working Environment, Performance Evaluation and Career Development** led by CyI, and more specifically:

1.   *Implementation of an optimal/attractive working environment:* health and safety, gender and diversity (with ethics panel), General Assembly, customised support for practicalities of living and working;
2.   *Performance evaluation (including KPIs, meetings with committee, written reports)*;
3.   *Career development:* Counselling and customised/ personal career development plans (education, training).

The CyI and the CoE value the wellbeing of its employees, therefore an optimal/attractive working environment is a primary concern and of great importance. This has been further validated also by the European Commission, through the accreditation of the "HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy 4 Researchers" excellence-logo, hence proving the CyI/CARE-C working environment as one of high attractiveness in terms of fairness, ethics, diversity, support for practicalities and non-work-related issues.

The CoE, in coordination with the CyI-HR-Department, has been developing and enhancing further the above over the years, through the HRS4R two (2) year Action Plan 2020-2022, the revised HRS4R Action Plan 2022-2025 and the EMME-CARE R&D Mobility Programmes, which are also in line with CyI's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 and HR Strategy, aiming to enhance the capabilities of the CoE to attract top international talent and support scientists to solidify successful careers. CARE-C continues to pursue its staff members' development, progression, job satisfaction and welfare.

In addition, within EMME-CARE'S RISO, the function of "Physical Infrastructure" takes care of any Health-&-Safety (H&S) issues, in direct support of the CyI's H&S Office established in 2020, while in terms of participatory representation, the EMME-CARE's General Assembly was established and elected its Representative to the EMME-CARE Management Board.

1. Implementation status of an optimal/attractive working environment

During the past forty-two (42) months of implementation of the EMME-CARE project, the clear commitment of CyI, and CARE-C in particular, towards fostering an attractive working environment in the CoE and in the Institute in general, and the overall attention to the wellbeing of staff, has been showcased through various actions and initiatives. A "Flexible Working Hours Scheme" and a "Working from Home Scheme" have been in place since the start of the COVID19 Pandemic and have been adjusted to the new reality (1 working day from home is included).

More recently, in the framework of improving the Institute's conditions concerning inclusion, environment adjustment and general wellbeing, the HR Office in May 2022 initiated a volunteers' group (with the active contribution of staff members from all ranks) which focuses on fostering all the below referred activities. The CARE-C HR dedicated officer and CARE-C staff actively contribute to this initiative.

1.1. EURAXESS Services

As a EURAXESS Service Centre, personalized support is provided to all employees through guidance, information and hands-on help with paperwork, in regard to:
1) Accommodation;
2) Banking;
3) Departure conditions/formalities;
4) Entry conditions/visas;
5) Health insurance;
6) Intellectual Property Rights;
7) Job opportunities;
8) Social Insurance, Tax registrations and work permits;
9) Access to the culture of the host country/language courses

In addition, since the beginning of 2023 **a new "Buddy system" for newcomers** is being rolled out to enhance the above personalized support provided. Colleagues will be liaising with newcomers of roles similar to their own to better learn and adjust to their working environment. The initial plan was to create a "traditional" buddy system as described in literature, however, the amount of staff currently involved in this initiative, as its fairly new (initiated in 2023), is not sufficient for the system to be implemented thoroughly yet.

Instead, the HR Office in cooperation with the CARE-C HR dedicated officer, adopted a new model of informing the whole Centre/Department that the international newcomer will be part of, and asking for volunteers to support the newcomer. This was deemed more effective, as the members of staff are more kin to engage with newcomers that will be eventually part of their group. Once a key individual is identified, HR is responsible to explain the task, provide the necessary training and information, to brief the volunteer (buddy) and bring the two parties in contact even before the arrival of the new employee. Upon arrival, the initial meeting is organized and then onwards the buddy will be responsible for the smooth adjustment and the inclusion of the new colleague to the team and the CyI community. Regular meetings with the HR Office (within the first month upon arrival) and the two parties will be taking place in order to ensure that the system runs smoothly.

1.2. Social events and activities

Community activities and events based on common interests with the goal to improve inclusiveness and the social life of our community members are often organized. These social events aim to enhance social engagement and include movie and music nights (2020), Yoga classes (2020-2021), Dance classes (2023), Cultural evenings, group sports activities, reading groups, tree planting event (upcoming) as well as an 'International Food Day' (currently 30 nationalities at CyI);

Furthermore, the CyI HR Office within 2022 initiated discussion sessions every other Friday, open to all members of staff, under the initiative called *"Coffee time with HR"*, in which the dedicated CARE-C HR officer is participating. Through these sessions, staff members can get to know their colleagues, socialize, express common concerns and get to know the HR team and its functions better.

1.3. Health and Safety activities

CARE-C's commitment to occupational Health and Safety is upheld by the RISO's Office/Function of "Physical Infrastructure". This Office/Function takes care of Health-&-Safety (H&S) issues, in direct support of the pertinent CyI's H&S Office (which was established in 2020) as well as of the relevant activities of the CyI's HR Department. Extensive H&S inductions, First Aid and Fire Safety trainings are organized in a manner customized as per the employees' duties and line of work i.e office, labs, in-situ/on-field:

Training Title	Date	No. of participants
Fire Safety	15/04/2021	24
First Aid at the Workplace, and AED – Automatic External Defibrillator	3&9&11&15/6/2021	10
Short First Aid Course focused on Possible Dangers faced during Fieldwork	15/06/2021	16
Desk ERCISE Seminar	16/05/2022	17
Fire Safety	08/12/2022	8
First Aid at the Workplace, and AED – Automatic External Defibrillator	21&25/10/2022	17
Health and Safety Induction	Sessions every months	All newcomers

Further to the inhouse trainings, the CyI is now collaborating with iHASCO online training platform (since 2022), offering free trainings specialised to individuals' kind of work and activity. Finally, CyI began cooperating with an accredited Occupational Doctor who monitors the health of all staff through regular sessions and consults CyI for the promotion of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in the workplace.

1.4. Wellbeing activities

Coaching and mentoring programmes have been initiated for all employees, with the first professional webinar (pilot) on wellbeing held in December 2020. Furthermore, in 2021 CyI provided an Emotional Regulation Seminar, followed by a Wellbeing and Mental Health Survey (including personal interviews with employees) from a Professional Psychological Consulting Company in 2022. The Report received includes specific recommendations which will feed the formulation of the overall Wellbeing policy (expected to be finalized by the end of 2023) being rolled out in the framework of the HRS4R Action plan (see D2.3 – Section 3.1). Following the aforementioned survey results and suggestions received by members of staff, the HR Office organized a Conflict Management Seminar in November 2022 (31 participants) and a Stress Management Seminar in December 2022 with a professional coach and psychologist, where 24 members of staff participated, including CARE-C staff.

1.5. Gender Equality and Advanced partners contribution

As already mentioned in D2.3 - Section 3.3, CyI was awarded the renewed certification of "Employer of Gender Equality" from the Cypriot Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance on the 17th of May 2021. Furthermore, in December 2021 the Cyprus Institute introduced the CyI Gender Equality Plan, with considerable input from CARE-C (the CoE has leveraged its Advanced partners to exchange best practices in the field as indicated in D2.3), while the CARE-C HR Officer was assigned as the Officer responsible for the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan.

The Gender Equality Action Plan includes the following actions:

1) Work- Life Balance and organisational culture;
2) Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision Making (Diversity and Inclusion at the Workplace seminar, 16/06/2022, 20 participants);
3) Gender Equality in Recruitment;
4) Gender Equality in Career Progression;
5) Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching content;
6) Measures against Gender-Based Violence including Sexual Harassment;
7) Gender Equality in Scientific Publications and Media Outreach.

2. Performance Evaluation

The CyI already has policies and procedures on annual performance evaluation. These policies are still under review in 2023, due to the fact that in past 3 years, there has been a constant shift in Top Management (the CyI has changed three (3) Presidents), thus influencing decisions in rolling-out various policies and initiatives especially related to HR issues (career advancement, salary review, grids-scales, performance evaluation etc).

2.1. Review of Evaluation Processes

As already mentioned, with the implementation of the current HRS4R Action Plan, the CyI plans to Review of Evaluation processes, for Research Staff, Faculty on tenure-track and Senior Faculty. More specifically for:

1. **Research Staff:** the established process needs to be reviewed and a more structured approach should be adopted in conducting it.
2. **Faculty on tenure-track:** a procedure for periodic performance reviews other than the ones relating to their evaluation for tenure is currently underway with the aim to be finalised within the next few months;
3. **Senior Faculty:** a procedure for periodic performance reviews is currently under development by the CyI Top Management and the Board of Trustees.

2.2.   Tools for Performance Evaluation

During the last two years, new Evaluation forms (see ANNEX) were introduced in order to improve the procedure that include KPIs and better identification of training needs and soft skills needs. However, under the Revised HRS4R Action Plan (2022-2025) the CyI aims to develop a new performance management system based on *Management by Objective System;* the system is to be piloted mid-2023 and aim to have it formalised by next evaluation period (December 2023). This will improve the fairness and transparency of the Institute's evaluation, development and advancement processes which will be based on objective and tangible results.

Further to the above the CyI HR Office with the active contribution of the CARE-C HR Officer are in the process to transfer the Performance Evaluation procedure to an online version through the new HR Software (Exelsys - see Annex II, D2.3) in order to be able to better identify training and development needs for all employees through an automated algorithm from the software. A pilot was initiated late 2022 and currently it's at the stage of being introduced to the various Departments. At this time, the HR Office is looking into options for online training platforms in order to provide employees with the opportunity to do trainings on their own time as well and is exploring to extend the use of the iHASCO platform to other topics of training other than H&S.

3. Career Development

The CyI already offers the opportunity to all staff to engage in training programs (organised internally and/or externally) in order to enhance their career development. Under the HRS4R Action Plan, different actions were proposed including, among others, personal and professional coaching and mentoring, personalised training programs (according to seniority and responsibility), development and establishment of an internal training centre and salary review policy. Many of these actions are already initiated and expected to be introduced to the CyI community soon.

In addition, the Board of Trustees released in June 2022, two (2) new policies regarding Career Advancement which frame the career development and career paths of personnel and allow the personnel to excel and develop in their roles. More specifically:

- new policy on Career Advancement for Research staff (changes in conditions for process initiation, rolling appointment, more specific requirements promoted);
- updated policy on Career Advancement of Administrative and Research Support Staff (current employees will be able to advance up to the position of Senior Manager through internal promotions instead of open recruitment which was the case until recently).

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Confidential Performance Evaluation Form for Administration and Research Support Staff

Employee Name:	Job Title/Rank:	Department/Centre:

Period of Assessment:	Purpose for Evaluation: (Annual Evaluation/Contact Renewal)	Date of employment:

Name of Supervisor:	Other Evaluators:

All supervisors/evaluators should refer to the CyI Guide - How to Effectively complete your Employees' Evaluation Process - found in the Staff Manual-Development and Advancement, CyI Intranet for completion of the process

Instructions for completing the Evaluation Form

Targets & Objectives (Section I): This part should be completed and agreed by both parties at the end of the evaluation session. Objectives set should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. This should be taken into account at the next annual evaluation to be completed concerning the staff member's performance for the period of assessment.

Self-Evaluation (Section II): By completing each question included in the Self-Evaluation Form, each staff member has the opportunity to reflect on their own working experience and performance throughout the year by expressing their concerns, developmental and career aspirations and factors that have influenced their performance both positively and negatively. At the end of the evaluation session, a plan of further development, improvement and objectives for the year should be developed and agreed with direct supervisors.

Performance Evaluation (Section III): The direct supervisor completes each section and chooses the ranking that best describes the performance of the employee to be evaluated during the specific year. Supervisors should complete the evaluation form based on objective and fair criteria aiming on the employee's improvement and further development. For each section and rating, the supervisor must provide details and comments to support his/her judgement, where and as needed.

Supervisory skills (if applicable): This part is only completed in case the Employee being evaluated has Supervisory duties.

Overall Evaluation Result and Comments: The overall evaluation result should reflect the employee's rankings in the various sections. Overall comments should reflect the employee's general performance and target achievements based on the last period's action plan.

Improvement & Training/Development (Section IV): At the end of this evaluation, supervisors are required to provide goals and objectives for the year which will help enhance the employee's personal development and performance.

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Recording of Completed Form: The original and signed form is submitted to and kept at the HR Department for the employee's file. A copy can be provided to the employee upon request.

Rating Scale Guide

Supervisors and other evaluators should rate the employee to be evaluated based on the below:

(1) **Very Poor:** Consistently fails to meet job requirements; performance clearly below minimum requirements; set objectives not met. Immediate action plan for improvement is mandatory.

(2) **Poor:** Frequently fails to meet job requirements; performance clearly below minimum requirements; set objectives not achieved. Immediate action plan for improvement is mandatory.

(3) **Below Average:** Performance meets some of the job requirements. However, most key job elements are performed unsatisfactorily. An immediate and sustained improvement in quality and/or quantity of work is necessary. Some of the set objectives may have been achieved. Action plan for improvement is mandatory.

(4) **Average:** Performance meets the position's requirements but improvement is recommended for optimal achievement of performance. Some of the set objectives have been achieved. Action plan for improvement is suggested.

(5) **Above Average:** Performance meets the position's requirements and reflects what is needed of a fully qualified and experienced person for the position. Some aspects of performance may need some improvement; most of the set objectives were achieved.

(6) **Very Good:** Frequently exceeds job requirements; most of the set objectives were achieved.

(7) **Exceptionally Good:** Contribution to the Institute consistently exceeds what is normally expected of the individual and goes beyond what is required of the job. All or a significant number of the set objectives were achieved above the established standards and accomplishments were made in unexpected areas as well.

Evaluators: In the case that an employee has more than one supervisors the evaluation procedure can be carried out by all the supervisors or by one main supervisor. The Evaluator may also decide to request feedback from other staff members that can contribute based on their interactions with the employee.

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Section I

Targets & Objectives set in previous assessment (if applicable)

Individual objectives set for previous year to meet departmental goals for the year

Key Individual Objectives	Key Departmental Objectives	*Performance Indicators
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

*__Performance Indicators:__ *Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the critical (key) indicators of progress toward an intended result.*

Section II

Employee Self Evaluation

1. **DEFINITION OF JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:** Briefly list your main job duties and responsibilities during the period of assessment

2. **TARGET ACHIEVEMENTS:** Describe your overall performance based on your achievements, your targets and job description for the last year **taking into consideration the Section I of the evaluation form as well.**

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3. **STRENGTHS/DEVELOPMENT:** Describe your strengths and your skills development throughout the year

4. **IMPROVEMENT/DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND PLANS:** Identify the most critical needs for development and responsive suggestions for improvement, including job expansion if appropriate

5. **PERFORMANCE FACTORS:** State which organizational or job related factors affect your performance either negatively or positively and why

6. **JOB/CAREER GOALS:** Please refer to your job and career aspirations

Employee Signature: **Date:**

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Section III

Performance Evaluation *(use 1 – 7 ratings as indicated on page 2)*

CORE COMPETENCIES	COMMENTS	RATING
A. PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS / ELEMENTS		
1. Job knowledge: Level of knowledge, skills and experience related to job requirements		
2. Quality of Work: Level of quality delivered of tasks and activities (i.e. neatness, accuracy, clarity, professionalism)		
3. Productivity/Promptness: Degree of effectiveness, volume of work provided under normal circumstances and task completion efficiency		
4. Problem Solving: Level of ability in analysing tasks, judgment and creativity in finding alternative and better solutions for the most effective completion of tasks.		
5. Organizational/Planning skills: Degree of ability in setting priorities effectively towards meeting job requirements and for timely achievement of tasks		
6. Communication skills: Level of effective communication both in verbal and in writing. Business writing skills and competency		
7. Innovation/Creativity: Level of innovation and creativity brought by staff member when carrying out tasks		
Total Scoring for PART A		

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B. BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS		
8. Teamwork/Cooperation/Interpersonal Relations: Degree of honest interest for his/her fellow employees and their needs, level of cooperation with others in a constructive and professional manner		
9. Accountability/Dependability: Degree of independence in taking initiatives, delivering tasks, reliability, trustworthiness, acceptance of responsibility		
10. Flexibility: Degree of willingness to contribute in extraordinary tasks and activities, time flexibility		
11. Professionalism: Degree of understanding and adherence to professional conduct, punctuality, honesty and trustworthiness		
Total Scoring for PART B		
C. TARGET & OBJECTIVES		
12. Target and Objectives Achievement for the period of assessment Please add the rating which corresponds to your assessment considering **section I of the evaluation form.**		
Total Scoring for PART C		
Total Scoring for PART A-C		
Average Scoring for PARTS A - C		

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Supervisory skills (if applicable) *(Use 1 – 7 ratings as indicated on page 2)*
This part is only completed in case the Employee being evaluated has Supervisory duties.

CORE COMPETENCIES	COMMENTS	RATING
1. Leadership: Promoting a productive, creative environment where people strive for quality of service; fostering a commitment in colleagues for achieving organization goals		
2. Decision Making: Ability to make decisions affecting the work unit which are timely and reasonable in the light of available facts, circumstances and applicable standards		
3. Policy and Procedure Knowledge: Knowledge of job procedures, policies and responsibilities, thorough understanding of how to perform regular work assignments and how those assignments relate to other areas.		
4. People Development: The ability to coach and develop subordinates; enhancing development and ability to contribute more effectively		
5. Evaluating Employees: Ability and promptness in assessing job performance of subordinates and to provide constructive feedback to the employees		
6. Motivation/Teambuilding skills: Ability to inspire, encourage and move employees to perform to and beyond work requirements; channelling subordinate efforts towards the accomplishment of common objectives		
7. Delegation ability: Ability to entrust authority to subordinates enabling them to act on their behalf in carrying out projects or assignments		
Total Points for Supervisory Skills		
Average Scoring for PARTS A - C plus Supervisory skills (if applicable)		

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Overall Performance Rating

Overall (Average) Performance Rating	

Supervisor's Comments:
Refer to the staff member's general performance and accomplishments based on Section I (Targets and Objectives-if applicable) of the previous period of assessment:

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Section IV

Improvement and Training/Development

The Cyprus Institute recognises the value and importance of providing opportunities to its staff in all categories and ranks to develop their job-related knowledge and skills for personal and professional growth. Furthermore, the CyI expects that through training and development individual performance will increase and will lead to a higher overall performance on a departmental and organizational level.

Action Plan for Improvement and Training/Development

In the below table, list the main areas for improvement for the coming year based on the evaluation for each section. Also suggest a Specific Action for improvement and further development.

Training/development Needs	Suggested Action

Please note that this is an important part of the Employees' Evaluation Form and further Development and must be always completed.

Agreed Targets & Objectives set for next period of assessment

Individual objectives agreed and set for the next assessment period to meet departmental goals for the year.

Key Individual Objectives	Key Departmental Objectives	*Performance Indicators
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

***Performance Indicators:** Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the critical (key) indicators of progress toward an intended result.*

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Comments

Supervisor's Comments:

Employee's Comments:

Comments by the Centre Director/VPR/VPO/President:

Comments by HR:

Signatures

Employee: **Date:**

I have read and discussed this evaluation with my supervisor and I understand its contents.

Supervisor(s):   **Date:**