

## HR Excellence in Research

# Action Plan

### Action Plan

**Case number**

2024RO267643

**Name Organisation under review**

National Institute for Research and Development in Informatics – ICI Bucharest

**Organisation's contact details**

8-10, Mareşal Averescu, Bucharest, Sector 1, 011455, Romania

**Submission date to the European Commission**

22/08/2025

## 1. Organisational Information

*Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. 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 *	141
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	0
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	0
Of whom are women *	53
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	18
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	20
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	20
Total number of students (if relevant) *	10
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	261
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	

**RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)**

€

Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)

Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research

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

Established in 1970, ICI Bucharest is Romania's leading institute in research, development, and innovation (RDI) in information and communication technology (ICT). It functions under Government Decision no. 1621/2003, as a legal entity with economic management and financial autonomy, coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Government. ICI Bucharest's core mission is to conduct and implement RDI projects in ICT, actively contributing to the advancement of the information society across Romania.

Note

Total researchers: R4, R3, R2, R1, assistant researchers + programmers, analysts, engineers involved in research

Total number of staff: full time + part time

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please provide 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 your organization.

**Note:** Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code to open the editor and provide your answer.

Ethical and professional aspects\*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)****STRENGTHS:**

- **strong ethical framework and compliance:** adherence to national legislation and European best practices in research ethics (e.g., Law no.183/2024, GDPR); existence and accessibility (in both Romanian and English) of institutional ethical code and regulatory documents.
- **research freedom and autonomy:** guaranteed freedom to pursue independent research topics and initiate research proposals; institutional culture supportive of scientific innovation, creativity, and intellectual autonomy; researchers' freedom to collaborate nationally and internationally across various disciplines.
- **professionalism and performance culture:** researchers' strong commitment to continuous development, as they actively contribute to strategic objectives through initiative, interdisciplinary collaboration, and adherence to high ethical and professional standards; clear performance evaluation guidelines incorporating quality of scientific output, project management, and leadership capabilities; strong orientation toward continuous improvement, scientific excellence, and relevance to societal and market needs.
- **capacity for relevant research:** strong national and international partnerships and participation in collaborative research projects; alignment of research themes with global scientific trends and societal challenges; proven ability to produce applicable, relevant, and highquality research for both national and international community.
- **fully commitment to legal compliance and a culture of accountability:** strong adherence to all contractual and legal obligations, embracing a culture of accountability through transparent project management and responsible conduct throughout research activities.
- **strong institutional commitment to nondiscrimination and equal treatment:** comprehensive policy framework through implementation of internal robust instruments, ensuring that nondiscrimination and dignity are central to institutional culture and daily operations; the presence of a designated *gender equality officer* highlighting the institute's strategic focus on promoting equality and providing resources to foster a more inclusive workplace.

**WEAKNESSES**

- **not systematically addressed ethical and professional responsibility training:** lack of ongoing awareness of the entire research community.
- **absence of clear regulation on emerging professional standards:** lack of guidelines addressing new professional practices such as open science, open data, professional attitude, etc.
- **insufficiently consolidated public engagement:** limited focus on communicating research outputs to a general audience, which may reduce the societal visibility and broader impact of research activities.

- **early-stage implementation of the recent legal updates regarding evaluation/ appraisal systems:** the specific requirements of Law no.183/2024 are being gradually integrated, with full institutional alignment still underway.

## Recruitment and selection\*



## Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

## STRENGTHS

- **full compliance with applicable laws and regulations:** strict adherence to national regulations governing the recruitment process, as well as all applicable sector-specific and branch regulations.
- **transparent and meritbased recruitment:** open, transparent, and based on merit recruitment processes, in line with national legislation and internal regulations; clear evaluation criteria, including scientific output, project leadership, international recognition, and overall career pathways.
- **inclusive and structured selection bodies:** selection commissions members appointed to ensure quality, fairness, objectivity and gender diversity.
- **internationalization and accessibility:** key recruitment documents available in English on the institute's website, adding transparency for foreign applicants.
- **comprehensive evaluation:** recruitment and assessment processes considering not only bibliometric indicators (e.g., impact factor, citation counts), but also qualitative achievements like leadership, creativity, research impact, etc.

## WEAKNESSES

- **limited international visibility and accessibility:** job announcements often published only in Romanian on the institute's public website and national media channels, reducing accessibility for foreign applicants.
- **low attractiveness of research careers for young graduates:** research careers perceived as less attractive due to low remuneration compared to other sectors.
- **absence of a postdoctoral formalized framework:** absence of postdoctoral studies or postdoctoral research programmes as these do not fall within the institute's core area of activity; lack of formal reference within the current institutional framework.
- **structural and administrative barriers:** bureaucratic burdens stemming from national legislation; systemic challenges due to recognition of degrees, administrative barriers, etc.

Working conditions\*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)****STRENGTHS**

- **researchers' recognition:** strong institutional culture of fairness and respect, which reinforces researchers' identity and value as professionals within the scientific community; equal treatment and consistent professional recognition across all career stages; full compliance with applicable laws, ensuring that recognition of the research profession is not only institutional but also aligned with broader legal and ethical standards.
- **highquality research infrastructure:** some of the most modern and advanced research infrastructure in Romania, particularly in IT&C field; access to national and international scientific platforms (e.g., participation in national consortia ANELIS+); accredited Continuous Training and Professional Development Center.
- **collaborative and inclusive work culture:** positive and stimulative research environment that promotes intellectual curiosity, professional growth, and motivation; supportive atmosphere that encourages innovation, critical thinking, and continuous development throughout all stages of careers; robust employment stability, ensuring a secure professional environment.
- **accessibility and wellbeing:** support for researchers with family responsibilities through flexible hours and remote work options; inclusive infrastructure for disabled staff (ramps, elevators); regular safety trainings for all staff and designated safety officers.
- **gender equality and inclusivity:** balanced gender representation, with equitable opportunities for promotion and leadership roles; advancing equal opportunity policies across all recruitment, promotion, supervision, and management areas.
- **governance, participation, and transparency:** transparent and participatory decisionmaking processes involving researchers; regular communication and internal meetings at institutional level to ensure clarity and accountability; structured governance bodies, including researchers' representation (Scientific Council, Steering Committee, Administration Council, and Employees' Union).

**WEAKNESSES**

- **lack of a formalized career development framework:** absence of a formal regulatory framework for career progression and professional development; lack of formal structure of mentoring programs for earlycareer researchers.
- **not fully leveraged the career development opportunities:** external constraints limiting access to professional development initiatives and opportunities.

Training and development\*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)****STRENGTHS**

- **committed support for professional development:** financial and institutional support for participation in needed trainings through various means, including inhouse and e-learning; accredited Continuous Training and Professional Development Center.
- **institutional culture of professional guidance and supervision:** strong base of toplevel researchers, with extensive academic, professional, and research experience; ongoing informal guidance and support from highly experienced senior researchers to earlycareer researchers.
- **practical engagement with students:** coordinated guidance provided to students during their internships at the institute; active efforts to integrate students into research activities and help them develop relevant skills.

**WEAKNESSES**

- **lack of a formalized career development framework:** absence of a formal regulatory framework for supervision and professional development; lack of formal structure of mentoring programs for earlycareer researchers; lack of formal designated mentors to guide researchers on career planning and development opportunities.
- **financial constraints:** access to external training hindered by funding limitations.

### 3. Actions

The Action Plan and HR Excellence in Research strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

**Please provide the web link to the organization's Action Plan/HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s). Multiple links must be comma separated.**

<https://ici.ro/en/hrs4r/> (<https://ici.ro/en/hrs4r/> )

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HR Excellence in Research to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis. The listed actions should be concise, but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement and the expected implementation process. The institution should strive to provide a detailed plan, not just an enumeration of actions.



**Note:** Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the GAP Analysis with their ratings.

**Proposed ACTIONS**

Action 1		Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)
(A1) Organize periodic workshops in the field of research ethics, considering also ethical implications in AI emerging trends	<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	
	(+/-) 2. Ethical principles	Quarter 2 & 4/2026 Quarter 2 & 4/2027 Continuously
	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	
	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>	
	Commission of Ethics IT architectures, technologies and artificial intelligence Unit	- 2 annual workshops; - number of researchers attending the workshops.

**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 2**

(A2) Develop a Policy for Open Science

**Timing (at  
least by  
year's  
quarter/  
semester)****GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results

Semester  
1/2026**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**Designated  
working  
group on OS- 1 written policy; - 1 translated Guide in English; -  
Romanian and English versions published on the  
institute's website.

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 3

(A3) Populate the institutional web repository

#### GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results

#### Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)

Update - Semester

2/2026 Sustain - Continuously

#### Responsible

##### Unit

##### Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific Director

- Level of up-to-date content in the institutional web repository / 100%; - Number of documents available / 50 new documents per year.

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 4

(A4) Organize periodic Open Science refresher sessions

#### GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results

#### Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)

Semester

2/2026

Semester

2/2027

Continuously

#### Responsible

##### Unit

##### Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Designated

working

group on OS

- 1 annual refresher session on OS.

**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 5**

(A5) Organize targeted sessions regarding research strategic goals, contractual/legal obligations and accountability to ensure the researchers are informed about the latest changes/evolution of the applicable regulatory frame

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(++) 6. Accountability

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)**

Semester

1/2026

Semester

1/2027

Continuously

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Scientific

Director

Financial

Unit Legal

Unit

- 1 annual session; - Number of researchers attending the sessions.

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 6

(A6) Develop dedicated sections on the institute's website to support the commercialization and promote the research results, including explainer presentations about new technologies

#### GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results

(+/-) 9. Public engagement

#### Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)

Semester

1/2026

Continuously

#### Responsible

##### Unit

##### Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Commercial  
Director

- 2 dedicated website sections; - 20 partnership agreements signed per year; - Organize 5 events per year; - Participation in 15 events (conferences, technology fairs, or business forums, hackathons, etc.) per year; - 1 live demonstration to showcase the functionality of an important research result (platform, prototype, etc.) per year.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 7

(A7) Develop OTM-R policy

Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 10. Non discrimination

(+/-) 12. Recruitment

(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)

(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)

(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)

(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)

(++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)

Semester 2/2026

(+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)

(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

(++) 20. Seniority (Code)

(+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)

(++) 27. Gender balance

## Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Human Resources Unit HRS4R Responsible	- 1 written policy; - 1 translated OTM-R policy in English; - Romanian and English versions published on the HRS4R section on the institute's website.



**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 8**

(A8) Organize OTM-R trainings

**Timing (at  
least by year's  
quarter/  
semester)****GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 12. Recruitment

(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)

(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)

(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)

(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)

(+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)

(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

(++) 27. Gender balance

Semester

2/2026

Semester

2/2027

Continuously

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**Human  
Resources  
Unit- 1 annual training in the area of OTM-R; - Number of staff  
following trainings in the area of OTM-R.

**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 9**

(A9) Develop Quality Control Mechanisms Framework for OTM-R Policy

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)**

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 12. Recruitment

(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)

(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)

(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)

(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)

(++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)

Semester  
2/2026

(+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)

(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

(++) 20. Seniority (Code)

(+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

## Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible	
Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Human Resources Unit HRS4R Responsible	- 1 written reference document.

**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 10**

(A10) Develop Report on Recruitment Transparency and Diversity Metrics in Research

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)**

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 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)

Semester 1  
every year  
starting 2027

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

**Proposed ACTIONS****Responsible  
Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

HRS4R  
Responsible

- 1 reference framework for future improvements in the area of OTM-R including statistics on the indicators detailed in the OTM-R checklist: Number of trainings in the area of OTM-R; Number of staff following trainings in the area of OTM-R; Number/share of job calls published annually on web-based tools; Share of applicants from outside the institute; Share of applicants from abroad; Share of applicants among underrepresented groups (frequently women); Share of applicants who meet or exceed the defined selection criteria, based on documented evaluation of all candidates suited for advertised positions; Statistics on the composition of commissions; Statistics on gender balance in the composition of commissions; Statistics on complaints/appeals. - 1 written report on Recruitment Transparency and Diversity Metrics in Research.

## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 11

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(A11) Elaborate Guide of career development in Research

**GAP Principle(s)**

**Timing (at  
least by  
year's  
quarter/  
semester)**

**Proposed ACTIONS**

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)</b>
(++) 1. Research freedom	Semester 1/2027
(+/-) 4. Professional attitude	
(+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	
(++) 22. Recognition of the profession	
(-/+ ) 28. Career development	
(+/-) 29. Value of mobility	
(+/-) 30. Access to career advice	
(+/-) 32. Co-authorship	
(++) 33. Teaching	
(+/-) 36. Relation with supervisors	
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties	
(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development	
(++) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	
(+/-) 40. Supervision	

## Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
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Human Resources Unit Scientific Council	- 1 written guide; - 1 translated Guide in English; - Romanian and English versions published on the institute's website.
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Proposed ACTIONS

Action 12		Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)
(A12) Develop an internal procedure to formalize mentors' activity for each stage of research career	<div>GAP Principle(s)</div> <div> <div>(-/+ ) 28. Career development</div> <div>(+/-) 36. Relation with supervisors</div> <div>(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties</div> <div>(+/-) 40. Supervision</div> </div>	Semester 2/2026
	<div>Responsible Unit</div> <div>Human Resources Unit Scientific Council</div>	<div>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</div> <div>- 1 written internal procedure; - Appointment of Mentoring Support Unit.</div>

**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 13**

(A13) Conduct regular trainings on professional development including opportunities for improvement

**GAP Principle(s)**

(-/+ ) 28. Career development

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)**

Semester

2/2026

Semester

2/2027

Continuously

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Mentoring

Support Unit

- 1 annual training; - Number of researchers following trainings.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 14

(A14) Conduct advisory sessions for researchers to receive personalized advice and plan their professional growth, especially those in early career stage

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 30. Access to career advice

Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)

Semester 2/2026  
Semester 2/2027  
Continuously

Responsible

Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Mentoring Support Unit      - 1 annual training; - Number of researchers following trainings.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 15

(A15) Conduct regular refresh sessions to keep researchers informed about the latest regulatory changes and framework conditions in the area of intellectual property rights and co-authorship

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 31. Intellectual Property Rights
- (+/-) 32. Co-authorship

Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)

Semester 2/2026  
Semester 2/2027  
Continuously

Responsible

Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Technology Transfer Unit Legal Unit	- 1 annual session; - Number of researchers attending trainings; - Share of early-career stage researchers attending trainings.

**Proposed ACTIONS****Action 16**

(A16) Conduct refresh sessions to keep researchers informed about governing internal/ external regulations

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)**

Semester

2/2026

Semester

2/2027

Continuously

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Legal Unit  
Commission  
of Ethics

- 1 annual training; - Number of researchers following trainings.

**Unselected principles:**

(++) 7. Good practice in research    (+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems    (++) 23. Research environment    (++) 24. Working conditions

(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment    (++) 26. Funding and salaries    (++) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HR Excellence in Research 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. (max.

1000 words) \*

The institute's commitment to open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) is a key pillar of its Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). The design of the OTM-R framework is based on the GAP Analysis conducted during the HRS4R application, which identified both existing strengths and areas for development. It is further shaped by extensive consultations with researchers, HR staff, and leadership to ensure practical relevance and institutional accountability, while the OTM-R Checklist serves to benchmark current practices and define key implementation priorities. This consultative, data-driven approach ensures that the adopted measures are not only compliant but also strategically aligned with the institute's mission.

The integration of OTM-R principles is fundamental to attracting top talent, fostering research excellence, and enhancing the institute's international reputation. While the current recruitment practices already comply with national legislation and uphold ethical standards such as transparency, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination, they are not yet formalised within a distinct OTM-R policy. Recognising this opportunity for improvement, the institute has made the development and operationalisation of a comprehensive OTM-R framework a top strategic priority during the HRS4R implementation phase.

The OTM-R Toolkit will be used to guide the design, standardisation, and enhancement of recruitment processes across the institute. Key actions will include:

- **Policy development and publication** (draft, approve, and publish a formal OTM-R policy in both Romanian and English, defining the principles, procedures, and responsibilities involved in recruitment; the policy will be finalised and implemented during the implementation phase of the HRS4R Action Plan).
- **Harmonize internal guidelines and procedural tools** (ensure formal alignment with OTM-R principles across all recruitment procedures for all institute's regulations/ methodologies/ processes).
- **Strengthen e-recruitment tools** (increase the use of EURAXESS to enhance transparency, accessibility, and international reach).

The fully implementation of the OTM-R framework will follow a structured, phased approach, aligned with both the HRS4R strategy and institutional needs, as follows:

- **Advertising and application phase:** All job announcements will follow standard templates and include clear references to institutional policies, eligibility criteria, evaluation methods, etc. To enhance outreach and attract international applicants, all documents are made available also in English, in cases where English language skills are a prerequisite or operationally necessary for the position. In addition, the use of EURAXESS will be maximized. To reduce unnecessary bureaucratic burden, application requirements will be limited to legally necessary documentation. Furthermore, proactive steps will be taken to reduce potential administrative obstacles and remove avoidable barriers to ensure a smooth and accessible process.
- **Selection and evaluation phase:** Selection commissions are formed with balanced representation, including scientific seniority and gender diversity, and external experts when applicable. All members are guided by clearly defined roles and will be trained in OTM-R-aligned procedures. Both quantitative metrics and qualitative indicators are considered using structured evaluation tools to ensure

transparency and fairness. All applicants are informed of the outcome and selected candidates receive individualised feedback upon request. A grievance procedure is available to support appeals or complaints.

- **Appointment phase:** Successful candidates receive clear documentation outlining their rights, obligations, and relevant institutional policies before signing the contract.

Training will be provided for all staff involved in the recruitment & selection process to ensure consistent application of OTM-R practices. Ongoing updates and refresher sessions will be offered to reflect evolving standards and regulations.

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of OTM-R practices, the institute will implement a robust quality control system. Periodic internal reviews of recruitment processes will be conducted (**Report on Recruitment Transparency and Diversity Metrics in Research**) to assess compliance, transparency, and efficiency, using performance indicators.

The institute views the adoption of OTM-R as more than a regulatory requirement – it is a strategic investment in institutional excellence. Key anticipated benefits include enhanced attractiveness to top researchers both nationally and internationally, greater diversity, inclusivity, and fairness in recruitment, improved institutional reputation aligned with European research standards, and a stronger research culture rooted in merit, competence, and transparency.

By the end of the initial implementation phase, the institute aims to have a fully operational OTM-R system supported by trained personnel, tailored tools, and formalised procedures. Guided by the OTM-R Toolkit and integrated into the HRS4R strategy, this framework will support the long-term competitiveness of the institute within the European Research Area.

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. Multiple links must be comma separated:

**URL:** Not yet. The formal recruitment strategy implementing OTM-R principles will be developed during Action Plan implementation and will be published on: <https://ici.ro/en/hrs4r/> (unsafe:Not yet. The formal recruitment strategy implementing OTM-R principles will be developed during Action Plan implementation and will be published on: <https://ici.ro/en/hrs4r/> )

## 4. Implementation

### General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan: (max. 1000 words)

The implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) within ICI Bucharest marks a strategic commitment to align

internal policies and practices with the principles laid out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The ultimate objective is to create a supportive, inclusive, and competitive research environment that fully adheres to open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) principles and fosters continuous professional development. Following the completion of the GAP Analysis and the OTM-R Checklist, a structured Action Plan has been developed. This Action Plan outlines specific actions that address the areas of improvement which were identified during the initial assessment phase and will guide the full compliance with the Charter and Code.

To ensure coordinated and effective implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan, a multi-level governance structure has been established, involving the following key bodies:

- **HRS4R Steering Committee (HRS4R-SC):** The Steering Committee will act as the central coordinating body for HRS4R implementation. It is responsible for overseeing progress, validating outputs, facilitating internal alignment, and ensuring that the institutional strategy remains consistent with the evolving requirements of the European Research Area. The HRS4R-SC is composed of high-level representatives from across the institution, including: Scientific Director, Technical Director and Economic Director, all R&D department Heads, Head of Management Office appointed as HRS4R Admin, Head of the Human Resources and Payroll, President of the Union of employees. The HRS4R-SC meets periodically to evaluate implementation status, resolve bottlenecks, and approve recommendations from HRS4R Working Group (HRS4R-WG) / Implementation Committee.
- **HRS4R Working Group (HRS4R-WG) / Implementation Committee:** The Working Group serves as the operational body of the implementation process. It includes researchers across all career stages (R1 to R4), administrative personnel, and the gender equality officer. The group reflects the diversity of institutional roles and ensure inclusive participation. Key responsibilities of the HRS4R-WG include: conducting in-depth policy reviews, monitoring the progress of individual actions, collecting and analyzing insights from dedicated working groups, preparing communication materials, providing oversight and recommendations. The HRS4R-WG operates closely with the HRS4R-SC and is empowered to consult directly with the research community to ensure alignment with day-to-day realities and staff expectations.

The dedicated working groups will involve both research and administrative staff, ensuring not only legal compliance but also strong staff engagement, as every department and staff category will have the opportunity to provide feedback during the process.

The participation of researchers is central to successful HRS4R implementation. Their involvement will be secured through several structured mechanisms:

- **Researchers' representation:** Researchers at all levels (R1–R4) are represented on both HRS4R the Steering Committee and the Working Group.
- **Feedback loops:** Various workshops, refresher sessions, and training activities facilitate the structured collection of feedback and insights on HRS4R progress and the research community's satisfaction. The input is analysed by the HRS4R Working Group to identify areas for improvement which are subsequently submitted to the Steering Committee for review and strategic decision-making.
- **Scientific Council authority:** As the body responsible for coordination of the entire research activity, the Scientific Council will play a key



role in aligning HRS4R goals with scientific priorities and in endorsing internal regulations.

The HRS4R implementation is designed to be fully embedded into the institution's existing governance and administrative structures, ensuring alignment with broader organizational goals and legal obligations. All updates to recruitment and career development procedures will be closely coordinated with the HR and Legal units. The aim is to ensure that policies reflect OTM-R principles and national legislation while also being practical, efficient, and fair. Existing rules and regulations on recruitment, promotion, performance evaluation, professional development, and ethics will be reviewed and upgraded where necessary. Drafts of these updated regulations will be circulated among dedicated working groups for consultation and revised as needed.

Professional development and career guidance efforts will focus on creating a formalized structured career development plan with clear pathways, mentoring, and training opportunities. These will be complemented by the promotion of international mobility, dedicated support for early-stage career researchers, and the development of intellectual property and co-authorship policies to strengthen research output and collaboration.

To ensure accountability and continuous progress, internal assessments of HRS4R strategy's implementation will be carried out in order to identify possible adaptations needed for meeting the objectives and to identify possible corrective actions.

Ensuring clear and consistent communication will foster awareness and engagement across the institution. Therefore, HRS4R updates and successes will be shared through newsletters, while the dedicated HRS4R section on the institute's webpage will host all relevant documents and progress updates.

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

**Note:** Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

The implementation of the HRS4R strategy is overseen through a two-tier governance structure that ensures both strategic oversight and operational follow-through. The HRS4R Steering Committee (HRS4R-SC) serves as the central coordinating body, composed of high-level institutional leadership including directors, department heads, HR representatives, and staff representatives. The committee meets periodically to evaluate implementation status, resolve bottlenecks, validate deliverables, and ensure strategic alignment with the evolving priorities of the European Research Area.

Working in close coordination with the Steering Committee, the HRS4R Working Group (HRS4R-WG) / implementation committee - which includes researchers at all career stages, administrative staff, and the Gender Equality Officer - acts as the operational arm of the implementation process. The implementation committee is responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of progress, reviewing policy alignment, collecting structured feedback from stakeholders, and preparing progress communications and recommendations.

Regular feedback loops, such as workshops, training sessions, and researchers' community consultations, are used to gather insights from the research community. These inputs are analysed by the HRS4R Working Group and submitted to the HRS4R Steering Committee for review and strategic decision-making. This cyclical process ensures that progress is not only tracked and reported but also continuously evaluated in light of institutional needs and staff expectations. Through this coordinated approach, both bodies ensure systematic oversight, transparency, and responsiveness throughout the implementation lifecycle. Also, management of challenges encountered, and continuous needed adjustments will ensure alignment with the broader strategic objectives of the institute and maintain flexibility to revise actions in response to internal feedback or external developments.

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

The HRS4R Steering Committee and the implementation committee include representatives from all levels of the research career path (R1–R4), as well as from administrative and support departments. These representatives are not only involved in decision-making but also act as direct liaisons between their respective departments and the committees, ensuring a two-way flow of information and feedback. Their presence guarantees that the research community's perspectives are integrated into all stages of implementation.

Regular meetings and consultations will be held at the research group and department level to discuss specific actions, identify practical challenges, and collect input on proposed measures. These activities will be carried out to gather feedback on the progress of the Action Plan and on the effectiveness of implemented measures. Regular updates will be shared through internal communication channels, and researchers will be encouraged to propose improvements or raise concerns at any time. This inclusive approach ensures that reforms are not only aligned with the European Charter and Code but also rooted in the day-to-day realities of researchers at our institution.

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. \*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

The alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R is a structured and continuous process, designed to ensure that the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code) are fully integrated into the institution's human resources and research strategies.

To ensure institutional recognition of the HRS4R as the overarching HR policy, the principles will be formally integrated into the organisation's Research Strategy. This strategic document will be updated to reflect a clear commitment to the Charter & Code, with references to how the HRS4R will guide the institution's approach to recruitment, professional development, performance evaluation, and research integrity. Senior management has formally endorsed this approach, and the implementation committee will work in close collaboration with both HR Unit and Scientific Council to ensure policy coherence.

This alignment of organisational policies with the principles of the HRS4R will be also carried out by conducting a systematic review of all relevant HR and research-related policies. Where gaps are identified, updates are made to ensure consistency with the Charter & Code.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

To ensure that the proposed actions are effectively implemented, there have been assigned clear responsibilities for each action item to relevant units or individuals, accountable for its timely and effective execution. The responsible persons will communicate progress directly to the implementation committee, which will compile regular updates and submit them to the HRS4R Steering Committee for review. This system ensures clear ownership of tasks, transparency, and accountability. A detailed implementation timeline has been developed, including specific milestones and deadlines. Measurable indicators have been defined for each action to provide objective evidence of achievement and allow for accurate progress evaluation.

The implementation committee will meet regularly to review progress, identify potential delays, and propose corrective measures when needed. In addition, updates will be shared with senior leadership and the research community to ensure transparency and foster institutional engagement. The implementation process is also integrated into ICI Bucharest's broader strategic cycle, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities.

Communication and engagement will be key elements of implementation. Regular meetings, emails, and internal events will ensure that the entire research community remains informed and involved.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

Progress will be monitored against a detailed implementation timeline, which outlines the milestones, deadlines, and responsible units for each action. We will develop a tracking tool (e.g., action monitoring matrix) that uses a traffic-light system to visually monitor progress. Each responsible unit or action leader will use a common reporting template to assess and document progress. This standardized approach will facilitate consistent data collection and enable clear comparisons across different units and activities. All reported data and updates will be centrally compiled and integrated into a digital dashboard to support real-time oversight and informed decision-making.

The implementation committee will meet regularly to review the status of all actions. Joint meetings with the HRS4R Steering Committee will address any delays or necessary adjustments.

Regular internal communications will be issued and shared with senior management and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and accountability. This monitoring cycle will allow to stay on track, adapt as needed, and ensure timely delivery of HRS4R objectives.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

Progress will be measured using a set of predefined indicators aligned with the actions in our HRS4R Action Plan. These include both quantitative metrics (number of issued documents, number of training/ sessions, number of participants, etc.) and qualitative indicators (assessment report), tailored to each action or thematic area (e.g., recruitment, career development, working conditions). Additional qualitative data will be gathered through interactions, workshops, and when needed feedback sessions aimed at evaluating how well the HRS4R principles have been integrated into everyday research practice and institutional culture.

The implementation committee will continuously collect and analyse progress data, to identify delays, adjust timelines or resources, and refine actions where needed. The findings are submitted to the HRS4R Steering Committee for strategic validation and decision-making. This evidence will form the basis of the internal review and reporting for the next evaluation stage, ensuring a clear overview of what has been achieved and where further work is needed.

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

The proposed implementation of the HRS4R strategy at the institute is progressive and well-grounded. It is seen as both a challenge and a strategic opportunity to enhance visibility, competitiveness, and research excellence.

The GAP Analysis was conducted with reference to all 40 principles outlined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

ICI Bucharest has already embraced and integrated key principles of good governance and responsible research management into its day-to-day operations. While some of these practices are currently applied in an informal manner, they reflect a strong institutional culture of transparency, accountability, and commitment to excellence. Building on this solid foundation, the next stage will focus on the full formalization of these principles into internal regulations and operational frameworks, further strengthening coherence and institutional maturity.

All institutional current practices described are in direct conjunction with the applicable European, national, and sector-specific legal frameworks (as referred to), ensuring that legal compliance is not only observed but fully embedded into the operational culture of the institute. The integration of these legal standards into day-to-day activities reflects a deliberate and proactive approach, whereby regulatory requirements shape and inform every aspect of institutional functioning. This close alignment guarantees that all processes are ethically sound, legally

rigorous, and aligned with the highest standards of responsible research conduct.