

HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan

Action Plan

Case number

2024RO186712

Name Organisation under review

C. D. Nenitzescu Institute of Organic and Supramolecular Chemistry, Romanian Academy

Organisation's contact details

Splaiul Independentei 202B, Bucharest, 060023, Romania

Submission date to the European Commission

26/11/2025

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 *	45
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	2
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	27
Of whom are women *	44
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	8
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	5
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	15
Total number of students (if relevant) *	17
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	85
 RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	 €
Total annual organisational budget	2805962
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	1777791

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)	1028171
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Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	0
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ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

"C. D. Nenitzescu" Institute of Organic and Supramolecular Chemistry (ICOS) is a prestigious research institute of the Romanian Academy, with a long tradition in organic chemistry. Established in 1949 by the famous Professor Costin D. Nenitzescu (1902-1970), the Institute has a long history in fundamental and applied organic synthesis and characterisation, as well as in the study of chemical reaction mechanisms. In 2022, it has become the "Costin D. Nenitzescu" Institute of Organic and Supramolecular Chemistry (ICOS), a new organization of the research activity being implemented. <https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/> (<https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/>)

C. D. Nenitzescu" Institute of Organic and Supramolecular Chemistry (hereby named ICOS) aims to promote the values of freedom, meritocracy, equal opportunities and gender balance in its activity. As such, ICOS has taken steps in this direction through the establishment of non-discriminatory procedures: The Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Equality Plan 2023 – 2025 (<https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/ro/informatii-publice/strategie-plan-egalitate-de-gen>) prior to the introduction of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The internal self-assessment regarding the C&C principles, conducted in 2024, has shown positive results on all four categories (see Tables 1 and 2), with small exceptions that are going to be addressed within the proposed actions. Although the general score for all categories was high, indicating that within ICOS there is a positive trend regarding the application of the C&C principles, few respondents have given lower scores at certain points/principles. As such, we intend to address these results as potential weaknesses and to take the recommended steps for improving those scores.

Table 1. Overall results of internal analysis regarding the application of C&C principles

General score for Charter and Code	9.88
General score for The European Charter for Researchers	9.89

General score for The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers	9.88
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Table 2. Results of the internal analysis regarding the application of C&C principles, per category

Ethical and professional aspects	9.89
Recruitment and selection	9.88
Working conditions and social security	9.88
Training and development	9.88

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.

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**Results on the Internal Analysis: 9.89 score**

According to the internal self-evaluation, through the HRS4R survey, the results show a high level of satisfaction regarding “Ethical and professional aspects” area, principles 1 – 11, section I of the C&C, with some exceptions at the principles no. 5, 8 and 11, that are going to be remedied.

Strengths:

- Researchers within ICOS enjoy their freedom of thought and expression, recognizing at the same time the limitations that could arise as a result of particular circumstances (either situational or operational).
- Within ICOS the research activity is in compliance with the recognized ethical principles and practices.

Weaknesses:

- There is a need for an improvement of the researchers' knowledge regarding the legislation framework
- Insufficient knowledge regarding national/sectoral regulations concerning project funding, patent, technology transfer, training and/or working conditions
- There should be more actions regarding the dissemination of research results (commercial exploitations and public disseminations); researchers at ICOS should be more active in communicating the research activities to society at large
- Within ICOS an improved system in charge with the assessment of the professional performance of the researchers is recommended

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Results on the Internal Analysis: 9.88 score

According to the internal self-evaluation, through the HRS4R survey, the results show a high level of satisfaction regarding “Recruitment and selection” area, principles 12 - 21, section II of the C&C. All aspects will be improved.

Strengths:

- In ICOS the recruitment procedures are clear, within the framework of the current national legislation, specific to the public research sector, and in accordance with the regulations of the Romanian Academy.
- The selection process is transparent and merit-based and takes into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates (including internship in other countries/regions, in public/private sectors).

Weaknesses:

- Although the recruitment procedures are clear, updates of the methodology are recommended, in order to be comparable to the international procedures.
- When establishing the selection committee, a gender balance distribution should be taken into consideration
- During the recruitment and selection procedures, both quantitative (such as number of publications) and qualitative criteria (training, teamwork, innovation, etc) should be taken into consideration

The methodology concerning postdoctoral competitions needs updating.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES*



Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Results on the Internal Analysis: 9.88 score

According to the internal self-evaluation, through the HRS4R survey, the results show a high level of satisfaction regarding “Working Conditions” area, principles 22 - 35, section III of the C&C, with some exceptions that are going to be remedied.

Strengths:

- The working conditions enable research performance, the institute benefiting from changes in regard to laboratory equipment, access to information and academic databases
- Within ICOS there is the possibility to develop a flexible working schedule, adapted to situations such as parental leave, annual leave, part-time activity, etc.

The stability of employment conditions contributes to the research performances; the research activity is not undermined by the instability of employment contracts.

Weaknesses:

- There is a need for ICOS to improve its communication regarding the methodologies for personnel recruitment/promotion
- A revision of the guidelines for recruitment of postdoctoral researchers (including the duration and objectives) would be recommended.
- Insufficient remuneration, due to the national legislation financial constraints. The insufficient funding can create difficulties regarding the research activity and professional development; as a state entity, ICOS has limited control regarding the salaries of its researchers
- Even though ICOS acknowledges the importance of gender balance, a slight gender imbalance at organizational and management level was observed.
- There is a need for ICOS to improve its approach to career development and guidance for all researchers. As such, there is a need for the development of a strategy regarding the career advancement for researchers, regardless of their contractual situation
- The policies and practices regarding the protection of intellectual property rights need to be actively communicated
- Deficient mentoring/training programs, inadequately remunerated; at the same time, teaching activities should be taken into account in the evaluation/appraisal system
- An update on the procedures for analyzing and resolving labor conflicts is recommended.

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**Results on the Internal Analysis: 9.88 score**

According to the internal self-evaluation, through the HRS4R survey, the results show a high level of satisfaction regarding “Working Conditions” area, principles 22 - 35, section III of the C&C, with some exceptions that are going to be remedied

Strengths:

- The organizational structure within ICOS encourages young researchers to work under the guidance of senior researchers, enabling the transfer of knowledge and facilitating professional development

Weaknesses:

- There is a need to promote more actively the development of skills and competences (by means of consulting literature, training through courses, participation in scientific/informational events)
- An increased awareness on the existing funding mechanisms for research projects and training opportunities would be recommended.
- Researchers at ICOS need additional support regarding the supervision/mentoring early-stage researchers

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://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/public-information/hts4r-en> (<https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/public-information/hts4r-en>)

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

Increase the researchers' knowledge regarding the legislation framework concerning project funding, patent, technology transfer and contractual obligations.

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(-/+) 31. Intellectual Property Rights

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

Starting in Q4 2025 – than annually till 2027

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific
secretary
Department
Leadres
Director

At least one participation per year to a seminar pertaining the legislation framework concerning project funding, patents, technology transfer, dedicated to young and senior researchers. - ≥ 1 seminar per year on legislation and contractual aspects of project funding, patents, technology transfer, IPR. - Participation of $\geq 70\%$ of R2–R4 and $\geq 50\%$ of R1 researchers. - Short pre/post questionnaires to measure average self-reported knowledge score (Lickert 1–5 scale).

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 2

Improve the researchers' skill regarding the exploitation of research results (e.g. introduction of new technologies or services resulted from research activity on market.
Development of new guidelines and regulations to support research dissemination.

GAP Principle(s)

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

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

- Guidelines by Q2 2026 - Trainings annually from 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director;
Scientific
Secretary;
Department
Leaders

- Updated internal guideline/regulation on dissemination & exploitation approved and published (RO & EN). - ≥1 training/year on commercialization / technology transfer, focusing on senior researchers (≥50% of R3–R4 attend at least once per cycle). - ≥1 annual event (conference or brokerage event) with industry / societal stakeholders (target ≥30 participants and ≥5 ICOS senior researchers).
- ≥1 workshop/year on scientific writing and dissemination (min. 5–10 senior participants).

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 3

Improvement of the assessment system regarding the professional performance of the researchers. Revised evaluation criteria so that not only quantitative but also qualitative criteria are taken into consideration

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 6. Accountability

(-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

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

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

- Revised guidelines by Q2 2026 - First full cycle under new system in Q4 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director; HR
Department;
Scientific
Council

Updated internal procedures to ensure they meet the mandatory requirements of the OTM-R. - Updated performance evaluation procedure emphasising both quantitative (outputs) and qualitative aspects (mentoring, outreach, tech transfer, leadership). - Clear published timeline (e.g. annual review, plus 5-year comprehensive evaluation). - ≥90% of researchers evaluated according to new criteria from 2026. - Updated operational procedure for monitoring research projects (including definition of “research failure” and corrective actions).

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 4

Revising of the recruitment process to ensure that the recruitment procedures are internationally comparable

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code)

01.03.2025

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director
Human
Resources
Department

Updated recruitment and selection methodology;
Publication of the new methodology for personnel recruitment and promotion on ICOS official page.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 5

Improve the gender balance at all levels (organizational and management), on the basis of quality and competence criteria, on equal opportunity policy.

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 10. Non discrimination

(-/+) 27. Gender balance

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

- Monitoring system by Q2 2026 - Measures implemented starting with Q2 2026 and ongoing

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific Secretary; Steering Committee; HR Department

IRegular monitorization of the representation of women and men across employment and management levels. ICOS has implemented the gender equality strategy where the issue regarding the gender balance in selection and evaluation committees is stipulated. <https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/ro/informatii-publice/strategie-plan-egalitate-de-gen> - Annual gender balance report (R1–R4, leadership, committees). - Gender Equality Plan updated and published (RO & EN). - At least one awareness activity/year on equality, diversity & inclusion. - Simple, accessible discrimination reporting; mechanism described on the website / internal documents.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 6

Improve the researchers' skills to better communicate their results to the general public.

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 9. Public engagement

Starting with 2025

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director
Scientific
secretary
Steering
Committee
Researchers

Annual seminars for researchers concerning the importance of public engagement. Annual participation to events (such as Researcher Night) aimed at informing the general public about the research activities. Annual participation at events aiming to promote chemistry in schools. In this regard, ICOS has already taken corrective steps, increasing the visibility of researchers activity and communication towards the general public via ICOS official facebook page and on ICOS official website: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61566428501132> <https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/research> <https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/recent-publications> <https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/news> with the involvement of senior and junior researchers.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 7

Revising the guidelines for recruitment of postdoctoral researchers, including the duration and the objectives of these positions

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code)

Q2 2026

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

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific
Council
Human
Resources
Department

Updated recruitment guidelines for postdoctoral positions and posting it online.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 8

Ensure a professional appraisal for researchers

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 22. Recognition of the profession

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

starting with Q2 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director;
Scientific
Council

Seminars/meetings (at least 2 per year) between ICOS Director and group leaders on research project financing programs. Revised Evaluation framework to ensure a balanced consideration of all relevant aspects

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 9

Organize training sessions regarding funding mechanisms mobility opportunities in order to increase interdisciplinary, national and international collaboration. Develop a strategy regarding the career advancement for researchers

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

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 28. Career development

01.03.2025

(-/+) 30. Access to career advice

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific Council;
Group Leaders;
Director

Regular monitoring of the current funding opportunities. ≥1 annual meeting between research group leaders/ scientific council and researchers to support the external mobility. ≥1 annual networking meeting dedicated to young researchers to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations. Development of a guide dedicated to the good practices within research activity.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 10

Updating the existing policies and practices regarding the protection of intellectual property rights.

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(-/+) 31. Intellectual Property Rights

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

- Policy update by Q2 2026 - annual training from 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific Council;
Director;
Group
Leaders

- Updated IPR policy integrated into project procedures and contracts. - ≥ 1 annual seminar on IPR for all researchers, with $\geq 60\%$ attendance. - IPR clauses explicitly included in all new project agreements.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 11

Promoting the mentoring/training program. Teaching duties taken into account in the evaluation/appraisal system

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

(-/+) 33. Teaching

(++) 36. Relation with supervisors

(++) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

- Policy update by Q2 2026, than continous

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Scientific Council; Group Leaders; Director	Periodical update of ICOS activity related to achievements, internship programs and vacancies, in order to increase the visibility of the mentoring/training program. It is worth mentioning that ICOS is part of the Internship Program in collaboration with the Faculty of Chemistry, University of Bucharest. Public information regarding achievements, internship programs and vacancies can be found at: https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/news and https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/public-information/vacancies respectively - Internship and mentoring activities described and visible on website (updated at least annually). - Teaching/mentoring formally included as a criterion in performance appraisal. - During internships, minimum 2 meetings per internship cycle to monitor balance between teaching and research tasks.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 12

Update on the existing procedure for analyzing and resolving labor conflicts

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals

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

- Policy update by Q2 2026, than continuous

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director

Scientific

Secretary

Human

Resources

Department

Updated Code of Ethics At least 1 annual meeting involving all researchers, on the internal regulations and structures for solving complaints/conflicts, pointing out the activity and role of the ethical committee

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 13

Organize training sessions regarding funding mechanisms for research projects, and mobility opportunities in order to attenuate inadequate remuneration as a result of national legislation financial constraints

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 22. Recognition of the profession

(+/-) 26. Funding and salaries

(-/+) 38. Continuing Professional Development

(-/+) 39. Access to research training and continuous development

Starting with Q4 2025

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Director Scientific Secretary	<p>Bi-annual seminars/meetings between researchers and their group leaders, in order to increase awareness on the existing funding mechanisms for research projects or training opportunities. Our goal is to increase the access to research training and continuous development The development of a policy on research activity development.</p> <p>Since 2022 ICOS has organized periodical seminars, inviting researchers from different areas. Information regarding the seminars are public and can be found at: https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/en/seminars Currently, researchers at ICOS have unrestricted access to several journals (ACS, RSC, Wiley) and databases (Reaxys) and the Scientific Secretary is providing via email additional information regarding available research stages, scientific/informational events.</p>

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 14

Improve the Researchers's support regarding the supervision/ mentoring of early-stage researchers and formalise supervision duties.

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 36. Relation with supervisors

(++) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

(-/+) 40. Supervision

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

Integration into Career Development Strategy by Q2 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director;

Scientific

Secretary;

Heads of

Department;

Group

Leaders

- Clear description of supervisory duties for group leaders
- For early-stage researchers: at least 2 formal supervision, documented meetings/year. - Supervision quality becomes part of senior researchers' appraisal (e.g. feedback from supervisees in aggregate form).

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 15

nsure a professional appraisal framework and better recognition of the research profession, linked to funding opportunities.

GAP Principle(s)		Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)
(-/+) 22. Recognition of the profession		From Q1 2026, ongoing
(+/-) 26. Funding and salaries		
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)	
Director Scientific Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A minimum of 2 meetings/year between Director/ Scientific Secretary and group leaders focusing on research financing programmes and strategic positioning.- Increasing the number of proposals submitted to national/EU calls (baseline 2024; with a % realistic target by 2027).	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 16

Strengthen career development support and access to career advice, including mobility.

GAP Principle(s)

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

(+/-) 28. Career development

(++) 29. Value of mobility

(-/+) 30. Access to career advice

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

- Career Development Strategy and good practices Guide by Q2 2026 - Implementation from Q3 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific Council; Director; Scientific Secretary; Group Leaders	- Career Development Strategy (info on promotions, mobility, training, mentoring, individual career plans). - ≥1 annual career development meeting (info session) for all researchers. - ≥1 networking event/year aimed at young researchers to foster interdisciplinary collaboration. - Guide on research career development + Good practices guide in research available in RO & EN on IQOS website
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Proposed ACTIONS

Action 17

Improve and clarify the complaint and appeal system, including information and training.

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals

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

- Procedure update by Q2 2026 -
Training from q2 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director; Scientific Secretary; HR Department; Ethics Committee	- Updated written procedure describing steps, responsible bodies, deadlines and appeal options. - Procedure available on website - ≥1 annual information session for all staff explaining complaint and appeals channels, with explicit role of the Ethics Committee. - Recording / monitoring of complaints and their resolution (confidentially). =Annual report of the ethics committee.
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Proposed ACTIONS

Action 18

Broaden participation in the HRS4R Working Group and Steering Committee.

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals

(++) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies

(++) 36. Relation with supervisors

(-/+) 40. Supervision

By Q2 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director;
Scientific
Secretary

- HRS4R WG includes at least one representative from each major research group and at least one early-stage researcher (R1/R2). - Composition and roles will be published on HRS4R webpage. - WG meets at least twice per year; brief minutes archived.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 19

Developing an internationalisation and support policy for incoming foreign researchers (information in EN, relocation support).

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code)

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

(++) 29. Value of mobility

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

- Draft by Q2 2026 -
Implementation from Q3 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director; HR
Department;
Scientific
Secretary

- English information published on website on ICOS,s recruitment process, contact person for internationals,. - At least 1 dedicated support contact identified for international researchers. - 100% of research job adverts available in EN; aim for increasing number of international applicants (baseline 2024; target +20% by 2027, if data allows).

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 20

Update and maintain the ICOS HRS4R webpage updated

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

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 40. Supervision

ongoing

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director;
Scientific
Secretary; IT

IQOS HRS4R webpage will contain: - description of process - endorsement letter - strategy, - GAP Analysis - Action Plan (RO, EN) - OTM-R policy - GEP = IQOS regulations and guides (RO and EN)

Unselected principles:

(+/-) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (-/+) 12. Recruitment

(-/+) 14. Selection (Code) (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)

(++) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code) (++) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions

(+/-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (++) 32. Co-authorship

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) *

As a research institute of the Romanian Academy, working within the framework of the national legislation concerning recruitment and selection, ICOS is fully aware of importance of these processes, and thus is committed to improving its procedures. Following the assessment of recruitment practices and procedures and addressing the potential weaknesses, ICOS aims to establish a fully compliant OTM-R Recruitment policy. As such, our goal is to ensure that the recruitment process within the institute is transparent and based on the assessment of professional skills and experience, as well as on equality, objectivity and confidentiality criteria, on the candidate's suitability for the vacant post in terms of objectively assessed aptitudes, skills and qualifications. We aim to maintain fair and transparent selection procedures, to ensure equal opportunities, without considering gender, ideology, belief, ethnicity, religion or other direct or indirect discriminatory grounds.

During HRS4R process ICOS has formed two working groups Steering Committee (SC) and Working Group (WG), consisting of researchers and human resources personnel, in order to detect eventual weaknesses and to propose specific actions to address them. Within the framework of the proposed action plan ICOS is working on updating its evaluation/appraisal system for all researchers, in order to ensure a regular and transparent assessment of professional performance based on both quantitative and qualitative criteria, through a gender-balanced committee, aims to update its existing policies and practices regarding the protection of intellectual property rights, to promote mentoring/training program and to take into account teaching duties in the evaluation/appraisal system, to ensure additional support regarding the supervision/mentoring of early-stage researchers.

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: <https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/ro/informatii-publice/hrs4r>
(<https://icoscdn.ro/index.php/ro/informatii-publice/hrs4r>)

4. Implementation

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

The ICOS's HR strategy proposal is a reflection of its focus on ethical principles and transparent processes, supporting the fundamental principles of autonomy and academic freedom. At the same time, the HR strategy of ICOS is fully aware of the changes that appear periodically

regarding the research system, at national and international levels.

As part of ICOS's HRS4R process, a Steering Committee (SC) and a Working Group (WG) have been formed in 2024, following the submission of the letter of commitment, coordinated by the director of ICOS and the Scientific Secretary and fully supported by the Department Leaders and the Human Resources department. The WG, supervised by the Scientific Secretary and composed of two researchers and a human resources representative, has conducted a gap analysis, assessed the current situation and proposed specific actions meant to address potential weaknesses. The SC, supervised by director of ICOS, will oversee the implementation of the proposed steps, to ensure that these actions are in line with the proposed schedule. The SC be in continuous dialogue with the Department Leaders and the Researchers, in order to regularly inform the research staff about the principles of the C&C and OTM-R, as part of its commitment to research excellence. As such, the research staff will be involved in the implementation phase and will be able to point out if a certain principle is not fully met, thus ensuring the application of corrective steps. A monitoring system will ensure that the principles in the C&C and OTM-R are implemented and will identify areas where improvements can be made.

ICOS will continue to implement the Action Plan and provide any documentation requested by the European Commission in order to provide a clear picture of the current state of implementation, while awaiting the external review.

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 Working Group (WG) and the Steering Committee (SC) will have periodical meetings in order to discuss the development and implementation plan. For every action described in the Action Plan a responsible person has been assessed, in order to ensure a continuous dialogue with the Research staff and to make sure that the indicators are fulfilled in the propose timeframe.

In order to perform the initial assessment, WG and SC developed a 40 questions questionnaire, based on the 40 principles and general conditions of the Charter and Code, focusing on four sections: (1) Ethical and professional aspects; (2) Recruitment; (3) Working conditions and social security; (4) Training. In order to determine the status of the implementation of HRS4R strategy, periodically self-assessment will be performed, *via* survey. The results will be discussed and new solutions will be proposed in order to address eventual weak points, in periodical meetings between SC, WG and Department Leaders.

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 preparation and implementation process involves the contribution of all research staff. Throughout the implementation phase, the WG and SC, formed by considering different levels of researchers and relevant administrative staff in order to ensure that the needs of all levels are taken into account, will be the main means of consultation with the researchers. The implementation process will be closely monitored by responding to surveys, and all the weaknesses and their respective solutions will be discussed during the periodical meetings between WG, SC and department leaders.

The indicators/targets described in the Action Plan include seminars, workshops and other events that involves the participation of the research community.

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 Methodologies, Strategies and Procedures included in the present HRS4R are consistent with the other organizational policies of ICOS. Accordingly, the HRS4R policies are recognized as the overarching HR policy. In this process, the institute's relevant guidelines, procedures or codes will be assessed in order to be in line in with the organizational policies of HRS4R.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Working Group and Steering Committee will ensure the timely and successful implementation of the Action Plan. The WG will oversee the implementation, will relate the performance indicators and will propose remedial steps. Through its members (Director of ICOS and the Scientific Secretary), the SC will ensure the institutional support and take the necessary steps required for the implementation. At the same time, for each action a responsible unit was designated, in order to ensure the remediation of the weak points.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The progress will be monitored during the regular meetings established between WG and SC. Periodically, the status of the reported actions will be evaluated and future actions will be discussed and implemented.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The periodical evaluation will consist in new round of questionnaires and meetings between WG, SC and Department Leaders. The new surveys will be followed by reports concerning the status of the targets, that will be prepared by the WG and analyzed during the meetings. During these regular meetings, the overall progress will be discussed, and any necessary adjustments will be decided.

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

ICOS recognizes the importance of the HRS4R strategy at organizational level and will take the necessary steps to ensure the implementation of the present Action Plan