

HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan

Action Plan

Case number

2024RO298710

Name Organisation under review

The National Institute for Research & Development in Chemistry and Petrochemistry ICECHIM
Bucharest

Organisation's contact details

202 Splaiul Independentei, Bucharest, 060021, Romania

1. Organisational Information

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Fields marked with * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, doctoral candidates either full-time or part-time involved in research *	84.58
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	1
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	0
Of whom are women *	62.05
Of whom are R3 or R4 = established or leading researchers with a large degree of autonomy (e.g. holding the status of principal investigator or professor) *	35.37
Of whom are R2 = recognised researcher (e.g. postdoctoral researcher, junior researcher) *	26.50
Of whom are R1 = first stage researcher (e.g. doctoral candidate, research apprentice) *	22.71
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff) *	122.04
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	4094483
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	0
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	3862467

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)

€

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

58629

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

ICECHIM Bucharest was established in 2004 as a national research institute, continuing the activity of the Institute for Chemical Research (established in 1950), focusing on chemical and petrochemical research and development. It is governed by public law and operates under the coordination of the National Authority for Research.

Its current key research areas include bioeconomy, advanced materials and emerging technologies. Bioeconomy focuses on bio-nanotechnologies and sustainable bioresource utilization. Advanced materials research develops competitive products, as well as emerging technologies through multidisciplinary collaborations. The institute also provides analytical services, technological transfer, consultancy, and accredited laboratory testing (ISO 17025).

The HRS4R process is embedded in the Institutional Strategic Development Plan 2025–2029 and its Implementation Roadmap. The Roadmap includes a dedicated objective on human-resources development (OS5), explicitly foresees full HRS4R implementation, and establishes institutional targets for recruitment, doctoral and postdoctoral involvement, international mobility, annual staff training and retention. The same Roadmap establishes six-month monitoring of indicators, a mid-term update in 2027 and a final evaluation in 2029.

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 European Charter for Researchers at your organisation.

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

Ethics, integrity, gender, and open science*



Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths

- ICECHIM has a long-standing institutional commitment to the European Charter for Researchers and its principles are referenced in internal HR documentation.
- The Code of Ethics, Ethics and Research Integrity Commission regulations, the Regulation on scientific performance assessment and the professional Code of Ethics/Conduct were updated and approved in 2025.
- Researchers report a generally high level of confidence in ethics and integrity practices, and no major structural gender-equality problem was identified.
- Open Science, Open Access and responsible research practices are supported through research contracts, institutional publication arrangements and project-level Data Management Plans.
- Sustainability is an explicit institutional strategic priority.

Weaknesses / areas for improvement

- The updated ethics framework needs to be embedded through concise, regular awareness and onboarding measures.
- Knowledge and practical application of FAIR principles remain uneven across the research community.
- The Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2025 require updating for the next institutional cycle, including continued attention to unconscious bias.
- R1–R2 researchers perceive less freedom than R3–R4 in selecting/developing research topics, suggesting a need for greater practical involvement of early-career researchers in research-idea development.
- ICECHIM still needs proportionate practical tools for sustainability assessment and integration in research management.

Researchers assessment, recruitment, and progression*

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

- Recruitment and promotion are governed by national law, institutional regulations and Quality Management System procedures.
- Research positions are filled through public competition and selection criteria are established and published in advance.
- Selection panels are formally appointed according to competence and seniority; equal opportunity and non-discrimination principles apply.
- Dedicated website sections exist for competitions and promotions, and updated institutional recruitment/promotion regulations are publicly available.
- Candidate feedback and appeal mechanisms are provided for in the applicable procedures.

Weaknesses / areas for improvement

- OTM-R requirements are currently distributed across several procedures and regulations rather than consolidated in one public bilingual OTM-R Policy.
- Electronic recruitment needs further simplification and standardisation, within national legal requirements.
- EURAXESS is not yet used systematically for all externally open research vacancies.
- Vacancy information and key applicant information need broader availability in English to improve international attractiveness.
- Evidence of systematic OTM-R/unconscious-bias guidance for selection committees should be strengthened.

Working conditions and practices*

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

- Permanent employment is the general rule, including for early-career researchers, except where a position is necessarily project-funded.
- Employees receive statutory social, medical and pension protection; flexible working hours and part-time arrangements are available.
- ICECHIM operates an ISO 9001 quality-management system and has a modern research infrastructure.
- The institute has an accredited Technology Transfer Office and formal procedures for intellectual property, research-result registration and licensing.
- Mobility and international collaboration are actively supported.

Weaknesses / limitations

- Funding predictability and salary attractiveness are constrained by the national research-funding environment and public-sector rules.
- Remote work is necessarily limited by the experimental/laboratory profile of ICECHIM; sabbaticals are not provided for in the national framework.
- R1–R2 researchers perceive somewhat less employment stability and access to opportunities than R3–R4.
- Information on key HR, recruitment and applicant procedures in English remains incomplete.

Research careers and talent development*

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

- ICECHIM has a comprehensive researcher-assessment system recognising a wide range of research, project, innovation, mentoring, editorial, teaching and institutional activities.
- Annual training needs are identified under PS-10 Competence/Performance and professional-development plans are centralised institutionally.
- The Institutional Strategic Development Plan 2025–2029 and Roadmap include explicit measures for mentoring, leadership, young researchers, international mobility, recruitment and retention.
- Career progression rules and scientific-performance assessment have been updated.

Weaknesses / areas for improvement

- Long-term individual career planning is not yet implemented consistently across all research groups.
- Mentoring exists, but its structure and visibility vary between research groups; R1–R2 perceive mentoring/team-management support less favourably than R3–R4.
- Training effectiveness should be measured through simple outcome indicators, not only participant numbers.
- Information on professional-development, mobility and career-diversification opportunities can be better consolidated for early-career researchers.

3. Actions

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

Please provide the web link(s) to the organisation's action plan / strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

<https://icechim.ro/ro/cariera/hrexellenceinresearch/>, <https://icechim.ro/en/career/hrexellenceinresearch-en/>
(<https://icechim.ro/ro/cariera/hrexellenceinresearch/>, <https://icechim.ro/en/career/hrexellenceinresearch-en/>)

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HR Excellence in Research strategy to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the gap analysis. It is recommended that the listed actions are concise but detailed enough for the assessors to determine the level of ambition, engagement, and planning for the implementation process. Please ensure that you provide a detailed plan, with precise and quantifiable KPIs, not just an enumeration of the institution's action.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the gap analysis with their ratings.

Proposed actions

Action 1	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Research Ethics and Integrity: consolidate implementation of the revised ethics framework. The Code of Ethics and the Regulations of the Ethics and Research Integrity Commission were updated and approved in 2025. The next implementation step is to embed the revised framework through concise annual/onboarding information on research integrity, complaint/reporting channels, confidentiality and responsibilities.	(+/-) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY	Q4/2025 – regulatory update completed; awareness/onboarding measure from 2026 onward, reviewed annually
	Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)	
	Scientific Director (Action Owner) Support: Scientific Council, Legal Office, Human Resources • Updated Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission Regulations approved and published (completed output). • Concise ethics/integrity information integrated into annual staff information and/or onboarding from 2026. • 100% of new research staff receive access to the updated ethics/integrity information. • Ethics-related implementation evidence is reviewed annually, while confidentiality of individual cases is maintained.	

Proposed actions

Action 2

FAIR Data, Open Science and Responsible Research: provide practical internal support on FAIR principles, Open Science and Open/Responsible Research and Innovation, building on INSPIRE/REINFORCING experience and existing project requirements. Related topics will be combined in one annual module to minimise administrative burden.

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

(+/-) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(++) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

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

Q4/2026 for first integrated module; then annually

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Technology Transfer Office / HRS4R Working Group Coordinator (Action Owner)	• At least 15% researchers participate in the first FAIR/Open Science module. • At least 70% of participants successfully complete a short knowledge check. • Strategic Roadmap indicators used as institutional impact measures: 100% of relevant projects with a Data Management Plan by 2029; >80% Open Access publications by 2029; at least 20 FAIR datasets published by 2029. • Progress reviewed through the six-month HRS4R monitoring cycle and annual Roadmap review.
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Proposed actions

Action 3

Update the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for the next institutional cycle. The updated framework will maintain existing equality and anti-discrimination measures and include a proportionate awareness component on unconscious bias, integrated into OTM-R/selection-committee guidance wherever possible.

GAP Principle(s)		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(++) 4. GENDER EQUALITY		Q4/2026, annual monitoring
(++) 5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY		
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)	
HRS4R Working Group Coordinator / Gender Equality focal point (Action Owner) Support: Human Resources, Scientific Council	• Updated Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan adopted and published. • At least one concise unconscious-bias awareness session/module delivered to a minimum of 10 staff involved in recruitment/selection. • Gender balance in selection committees reviewed annually, taking account of the available specialist expertise.	

Proposed actions

Action 4

Integrated OTM-R, simplified e-recruitment and international applicant information. Consolidate existing recruitment regulations, procedures and the OTM-R Checklist into a single bilingual OTM-R Policy. Standardise vacancy information, strengthen systematic use of EURAXESS, enable secure electronic application wherever legally feasible, and provide concise English-language information for international applicants. Online interviews will be used where legally and practically feasible.

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 10. RECRUITMENT

(+/-) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

(+/-) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

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

Q4/2026 – simplified electronic application and standard vacancy information
Q2/2027 – integrated bilingual OTM-R Policy and international applicant information

Responsible Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Head of Human Resources (Action Owner)
Support: Quality Management, IT, Legal Office, HRS4R Working Group

- One public bilingual OTM-R Policy adopted.
- Secure electronic submission available for all research vacancies where legally feasible.
- At least 80% of research vacancies open to external candidates published on EURAXESS; justified exceptions documented.
- 100% of vacancies submitted to EURAXESS published in English as well as Romanian.
- Standard vacancy template includes key working conditions, selection criteria and career-development information.
- Concise English-language information for international applicants published.
- Annual OTM-R indicators compiled using existing HR records (e.g. recruitment duration, candidates/vacancy, EURAXESS use, electronic applications, appeals).

Proposed actions

Action 5

Internal awareness on Industrial Property Rights and technology transfer procedures, with particular attention to early-career researchers. Replace frequent stand-alone training with one annual session and on-demand specialist advice through the IP/Technology Transfer structures.

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

(++) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

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

Annual, starting in 2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Head of Industrial Property (Action Owner) Support: Technology Transfer Office, Legal Office

- Minimum 15% researchers participate annually.
- At least 70% of participants demonstrate improved knowledge through a short post-session check.
- Participant feedback target: at least 80% rate the session useful/very useful.
- Technology-transfer and invention-disclosure activity continues to be monitored through existing TTO/IP records and the Institutional Roadmap (including technology-licensing targets).

Proposed actions

Action 6

Proportionate research career development and mentoring. Finalise/update the career-development procedure and introduce a short career-discussion template linked to existing annual assessment/training processes. Pilot the approach in selected research groups before wider implementation. Strengthen mentoring for early-career researchers, with a clearly identified mentor for new R1 researchers where feasible.

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER
- (++) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION
- (+/-) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
- (++) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- (+/-) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

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

Q4/2026 – template/procedure and pilot Q4/2027 – wider implementation; annual review thereafter

Proposed actions

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Scientific Director (Action Owner) Support: Scientific Council, Human Resources, research-group leaders	• Career-development procedure and maximum two-page career-discussion template adopted. • Pilot completed in selected research groups before institute-wide extension. • At least 80% of R1–R2 researchers have a documented annual career discussion within 12 months of full implementation. • A mentor is identified for 100% of new R1 researchers where organisationally feasible. • At least 70% of participating R1–R2 researchers rate the career discussion/mentoring support as useful. • Existing Roadmap indicators are used for institutional impact: minimum 20 newly recruited researchers, 20 doctoral researchers involved, 15 postdoctoral researchers, 15 international mobilities by 2029, >80% staff trained annually and >75% CDI staff retention.

Proposed actions

Action 7

Sustainability in research practice. Develop proportionate internal capacity for integrating sustainability into project design and management. Instead of requiring complex assessments for every project, introduce a concise sustainability checklist, one practical workshop and pilot use in a small number of projects. Advanced LCA/LCC expertise will be used where relevant and resources allow.

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH

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

Q4/2027 – checklist, workshop and pilot
2028 – review and wider use where relevant

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

General Manager
(Action Owner)
Support: Scientific Director, Technical Manager, project managers, HRS4R Working Group

- One concise sustainability checklist developed and approved for pilot use.
- Minimum 10 project managers/researchers participate in the practical workshop.
- Checklist piloted in at least 3 projects.
- At least one applied sustainability assessment (e.g. LCA/LCC or equivalent proportionate assessment) completed by 2028 where technically relevant.
- Lessons from the pilot documented and the instrument revised before wider use.

Proposed actions

Action 8

Formalise proportionate HRS4R governance, monitoring and risk management within existing institutional structures. The Working Group has already been extended by Decision of the Director General to include R1 and R3 representatives, ensuring R1–R4 representation. Progress will be monitored every six months; a consolidated annual report will be prepared and the Action Plan will be reviewed annually. The HRS4R Risk Register will be reviewed within the same six-month cycle.

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER
- (+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES
- (++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT
- (+/-) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

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

Q3/2026 – revised Working Group composition completed Six-month monitoring from 2026 onward Annual report and Action Plan review

Responsible Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

HRS4R Working Group Coordinator (Action Owner) Support: General Manager, Steering/Management Committee, Quality Management (risk assessment)

- Working Group includes representatives of R1, R2, R3 and R4 and relevant institutional functions (completed output).
- Two formal HRS4R implementation reviews per year.
- 100% of Action Plan actions have an updated status (on track / at risk / delayed / completed) at each six-month review.
- Risk Register reviewed at least twice per year and corrective measures recorded for material risks.
- One consolidated annual HRS4R progress report.
- Action Plan reviewed and, where necessary, updated once per year.

Proposed actions

Action 9

Embed HRS4R implementation and continuous improvement in the Institutional Strategic Development Plan 2025–2029 and its Roadmap. This is not a parallel HR strategy: HRS4R is implemented through the existing strategic objective on human-resources development (OS5) and related objectives on internationalisation, digitalisation/Open Science and institutional performance. Researchers' perceptions will be periodically reassessed to monitor cultural/organisational change, not only document adoption.

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS

(++) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

(++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

(++) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

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

2025–2029;
reviewed annually;
institutional
Roadmap mid-term
update in 2027

Proposed actions

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
General Manager/ designated Strategic Development coordinator (Action Owner) Support: Scientific Council, HRS4R Working Group, Human Resources	• HRS4R remains explicitly included in the Institutional Strategic Development Plan/Roadmap. • HRS4R progress is considered during the annual institutional strategy review. • Existing Roadmap HR KPIs are used as institutional outcome indicators rather than duplicated in HRS4R reporting (>80% staff trained annually; >75% retention; recruitment, doctoral/postdoctoral and mobility targets). • Researcher consultation repeated periodically (normally every two years or at the HRS4R interim assessment) to assess changes in perceptions across R1–R4.

Proposed actions

Action 10

Improve public visibility and transparency of the HR Excellence in Research process. A dedicated Romanian HR Excellence in Research section has been created and includes explanatory information and relevant regulations/strategic documentation. Complete and maintain the bilingual public information, ensure links to current GAP Analysis, Action Plan, OTM-R documentation, governance information and research vacancies, and keep the section updated after each annual review.

GAP Principle(s)		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(+/-) 3. OPEN SCIENCE		Q4/2026 – complete bilingual structure Annual update thereafter
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)	
Communication / IT responsible for the HR Excellence in Research webpage (Action Owner) Support: HRS4R Working Group, Human Resources	• Dedicated HR Excellence in Research webpage active (completed, pending all documents available in both Romanian and English). • Page includes current links to GAP Analysis, Action Plan, OTM-R documentation, relevant regulations/strategy documents, governance information and research vacancy pages. • Website content checked and updated at least annually following the HRS4R Action Plan review.	

Unselected principles:

The establishment of an open recruitment policy is a key element in the strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the OTM-R toolkit and how you intend to implement / are implementing the principles of OTM-R. It is helpful to include a brief commentary demonstrating this implementation even if there is some overlap with the actions listed above. If this is the case, please link the OTM-R checklist with the overall action plan (max. 1000 words).*

The establishment of an integrated OTM-R Policy is a key element of ICECHIM's revised HR Excellence in Research strategy. ICECHIM already operates public recruitment and selection procedures under national law and its Quality Management System. Vacancies are published on institutional and public research-job channels, and EURAXESS is used for relevant positions. Selection criteria are defined in advance, panels are formally appointed and candidates are informed of results; appeal mechanisms are available.

The revised Action Plan addresses the remaining OTM-R gaps through Action 4. Existing procedures, recruitment regulations and the OTM-R Checklist will be consolidated into one public bilingual OTM-R Policy. Vacancy information will be standardised, secure electronic applications will be accepted wherever legally feasible, EURAXESS use will become systematic for externally open research vacancies, and key information will be made available in English for international applicants. Selection-committee guidance will also include concise OTM-R and unconscious-bias information.

ICECHIM will implement these measures proportionately and within national legal requirements. A complex dedicated recruitment platform is not treated as a precondition for compliance: a secure, standardised electronic submission channel can be used where it achieves the same objective with lower administrative burden. Recruitment indicators will be compiled annually from existing HR data and reviewed within the six-month HRS4R monitoring cycle.

URL: <https://icechim.ro/ro/cariera/hrexellenceinresearch/>

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of OTM-R, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

URL:

https://icechim.ro/wp-content/uploads/Regulament_concurs_examen-INCDGP-ICECHIM-Bucuresti-final-rev-1.pdf (https://icechim.ro/wp-content/uploads/Regulament_concurs_examen-INCDGP-ICECHIM-Bucuresti-final-rev-1.pdf)

4. Implementation

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

ICECHIM will implement the revised Action Plan through existing institutional governance and Quality Management System structures, avoiding a parallel administrative system. HRS4R is explicitly linked to the Institutional Strategic Development Plan 2025–2029 and its Implementation Roadmap, particularly OS5 – Human Resources Development, as well as objectives on internationalisation, digitalisation/Open Science and institutional performance.

Several actions from the initial submission have already progressed substantially: the ethics framework and researcher-assessment regulations have been updated; recruitment/promotion regulations have been approved and published; dedicated competition/promotion sections and a more visible, dedicated HR Excellence in Research webpage accessible directly from the main homepage have been created; and the HRS4R Working Group has been formally extended to include R1 and R3 representatives, thereby covering all career stages R1–R4.

The revised plan focuses therefore on completing and embedding these changes: an integrated OTM-R Policy and simplified e-recruitment; proportionate career-development and mentoring arrangements; FAIR/Open Science support; an updated Gender Equality framework; sustainability tools; international applicant information; and systematic monitoring of implementation and organisational impact.

Each action has one clearly identified Action Owner. Supporting departments contribute through their existing responsibilities. Formal monitoring is carried out every six months, a consolidated progress report is prepared annually, and the Action Plan is reviewed annually. The HRS4R Risk Register has been prepared and will be reviewed in the same six-month cycle. Institutional Roadmap indicators are used wherever they appropriately measure HRS4R outcomes, avoiding duplicate indicators and reporting.

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 justification (max. 500 words)

The HRS4R Working Group coordinates operational implementation and receives evidence from the Action Owners. It performs a formal review every six months using a concise dashboard containing: action status, indicator/target status, evidence, key risks, corrective measures and the next six-month milestone.

The Steering/Management Committee receives the consolidated six-month review and decides on resource allocation, significant changes in timing and corrective measures that exceed the authority of individual Action Owners or the Working Group. Additional meetings can be convened when a material delay or risk requires a decision.

The Working Group composition now includes representatives of all career stages R1–R4. The HRS4R Risk Register is reviewed together with the six-month implementation dashboard. This monitoring rhythm is aligned with the institutional Strategic Development Roadmap, which also provides for six-month indicator monitoring.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Researchers are involved through several complementary mechanisms. The HRS4R Working Group includes R1, R2, R3 and R4 representatives together with relevant institutional functions. Updated procedures and regulations continue to pass through existing governance and Quality Management System mechanisms that include researchers and scientific-management bodies.

The 2025 researcher consultation (63 respondents) has been reanalysed by aggregated career stages R1–R2 and R3–R4, allowing differentiated views and needs to inform implementation. Researchers will be involved in relevant pilots (career-development/mentoring and sustainability tools), training/awareness activities and consultations on major revised policies.

A full researcher survey will not be repeated every six months. To minimise consultation fatigue, perception-based consultation will normally be repeated every two years or at the HRS4R interim assessment, while operational progress is monitored through existing evidence and indicators.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HR Excellence in Research award process? Make sure it is recognised in the organisation's research strategy as the overarching HR policy. *



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

HRS4R is embedded in the Institutional Strategic Development Plan 2025–2029 and its Implementation Roadmap. The Roadmap's OS5 objective is specifically dedicated to human-resources development and explicitly includes full HRS4R implementation, mentoring and leadership, attraction of researchers from the diaspora and programmes for young researchers. Related institutional objectives cover internationalisation, Open Science/digitalisation, research infrastructure, innovation and societal impact. The Roadmap already defines institutional targets relevant to HRS4R, including recruitment, doctoral/postdoctoral involvement, international mobility, annual staff training and retention, as well as Open Science indicators. These institutional indicators will be used as HRS4R outcome evidence wherever relevant, rather than creating a parallel set of KPIs. Policies and procedures will be reviewed for consistency with the Charter during their normal institutional review cycle and through the annual HRS4R Action Plan review.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Each action has a single Action Owner with clear responsibility for coordinating implementation and collecting evidence. Supporting units are explicitly identified but do not dilute accountability. Actions are integrated into existing departmental responsibilities, the Quality Management System and the Strategic Development Roadmap. Progress is reviewed every six months. Any action identified as delayed or at risk must include a corrective measure and, where necessary, a revised milestone approved by the appropriate institutional authority. The Risk Register supports early identification of implementation barriers. Several actions are also supported by statutory or institutional obligations, while all actions are subject to management approval as part of the HRS4R process.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Formal monitoring will take place every six months. Each Action Owner will provide a concise status update to the HRS4R Working Group, using existing evidence wherever possible. The Working Group will consolidate the information in a one-page dashboard and review the Risk Register at the same time.

One consolidated HRS4R progress report will be prepared annually and the Action Plan will be reviewed once per year. The annual review may adjust targets, deadlines or actions if justified by evidence, changes in legislation, institutional priorities or identified risks. This cycle is aligned with the institutional Roadmap's six-month monitoring process.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Progress will be measured using a combination of documented outputs and outcome indicators. Outputs include approved procedures/policies, published information, training/awareness activities, implemented tools and documented career/mentoring processes. Outcome indicators include knowledge/feedback results, coverage of career discussions/mentoring, OTM-R implementation measures and relevant HR/Open Science indicators.

Where appropriate, ICECHIM will use indicators already adopted in the Institutional Strategic Development Roadmap, including staff training (>80% annually), CDI staff retention (>75%), recruitment and mobility targets, Data Management Plans, Open Access publications and FAIR datasets. This avoids duplicate reporting and links HRS4R directly to institutional performance.

Evidence will include approved documents, website records, HR/QMS data, anonymised aggregate monitoring data, attendance/knowledge checks, Risk Register updates and periodic researcher-consultation results.

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

ICECHIM is a relatively small public research institute with substantial statutory, project and Quality Management System reporting obligations. The revised HRS4R implementation model is therefore deliberately proportionate: it strengthens accountability and evidence while avoiding unnecessary parallel structures, duplicate indicators and excessive meeting/reporting frequency. The revised approach also reflects the progress already achieved since the initial submission. The purpose of the Action Plan is not simply to produce additional documents, but to embed the Charter principles in routine recruitment, career development, mentoring, Open Science, research integrity, sustainability and institutional strategic management. Six-month operational monitoring, an annual public report and annual Action Plan review provide a sustainable governance cycle for the 2025–2029 strategic period.