

HR Excellence in Research

GAP Analysis (Charter and Code Checklist)

GAP Analysis (Charter and Code Checklist)

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

Date endorsement charter and code

09/12/2024

GAP Analysis overview

The Charter and Code provides the basis for the Gap analysis. In order to aid cohesion, the GAP Analysis principles have been renumbered under the following headings. Please provide the outcome of your organisation's GAP analysis below. If your organisation currently does not fully meet the criteria, please list whether national or organisational legislation may be limiting the Charter's implementation, initiatives that have already been taken to improve the situation or new proposals that could remedy the current situation. In order to help the organisation's recruitment strategy, a specific self-assessment checklist is provided for Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment.

European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers : GAP analysis overview

- **Status** : to what extent does this organisation meet the following principles?
- **Implementation (++, +/-, -/+, --)** :
 - ++ fully implemented
 - +/- almost but not fully implemented
 - -/+ partially implemented
 - -- insufficiently implemented
- **GAP** : In case of --, -/+, or +/-, please **indicate the actual “gap”** between the principle and the current practice in your organisation.
- **Implementation impediments** : If relevant, please list any national/regional legislation or organisational regulation currently impeding implementation.
- **Initiatives undertaken/new proposals** : If relevant, please list any initiatives that have already been taken to improve the situation and/or new proposals that could remedy the current situation.

Status

PILLAR 1 – ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE

Status

1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: ICECHIM has updated its Code of Ethics and the Regulations of the Ethics and Research Integrity Commission in line with Law 183/2024 and the revised institutional framework. The Ethics Commission and reporting/complaint mechanisms are formally established. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: The differentiated survey did not show significant differences between R1–R2 and R3–R4 regarding reported ethics-related situations. However, some responses indicated situations where adequate measures were perceived as missing, supporting continued awareness of reporting channels, confidentiality and resolution mechanisms. R3–R4 also identified continued ethics training as a relevant need. Actual gap: The regulatory framework has been updated, but systematic awareness and evidence of consistent use of the revised framework still need to be consolidated. Implementation impediments: None beyond the need to embed the revised framework in routine practice.	Initiatives undertaken: Updated Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission Regulations approved and published; relevant documents are available through the dedicated HR Excellence in Research webpage. New proposals: Provide concise annual/onboarding information on research integrity, reporting channels, confidentiality and responsibilities, integrated where possible with other mandatory institutional information. Monitoring: Six-month implementation review; annual summary of ethics-related implementation evidence, respecting confidentiality.

Status**2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: Researchers are free to develop research ideas and submit proposals to national and international calls within ICECHIM's institutional research scope. There is no institutional censorship of research ideas and proposal development is supported institutionally. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, with particular relevance for R1–R2. Views and needs: Limited access to research funding was the main barrier identified in the survey. The differentiated analysis also showed that R1–R2 perceived freedom to choose research topics less favourably than R3–R4. This points mainly to a need for greater practical involvement of early-career researchers in developing research ideas and accessing opportunities, rather than to a formal institutional restriction. Actual gap: No formal institutional restriction was identified. The main limitation is external funding availability; an internal perception gap remains for R1–R2. Implementation impediments: Limited and unpredictable external research funding.	Initiatives undertaken: Institutional support for proposal preparation and access to funding information; research teams involve researchers in project development according to competence and project needs. New proposals: Encourage research groups to discuss research ideas, calls and opportunities with R1–R2 researchers during existing team meetings, without creating a new administrative structure. Monitoring: Career-stage perceptions will be reviewed through the periodic HRS4R survey and annual HRS4R review.

Status**3. OPEN SCIENCE**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: ICECHIM provides access to scientific databases, supports Open Access publication and implements data management requirements arising from national and European research projects. Open and Responsible Research and Innovation practices have also been supported through the INSPIRE/REINFORCING activities. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: Around seven in ten respondents identified a need for better knowledge of FAIR principles. This need is common across career stages. Researchers also need practical guidance on data management, Open Science and responsible engagement. Actual gap: FAIR principles are not yet applied through a single institutional standard across all research activities; knowledge and practical application are uneven. Citizen Science and SSH integration remain project-dependent. Implementation impediments: Different funder requirements and heterogeneous research data types.	Initiatives undertaken: Open Access support, project-level Data Management Plans, access to databases and ORRI/RRI activities. New proposals: A concise institutional FAIR/Open Science guidance resource and one integrated annual awareness module covering FAIR, Open Science and RRI, with simple knowledge/feedback assessment. Monitoring: Participation and effectiveness reviewed annually; implementation considered in the six-month HRS4R review. The Roadmap for Strategic Institutional Development 2025-2029 includes specific FAIR KPIs: Projects with Data Management Plan - 100% Open Access Publications >80% FAIR datasets published - minimum 20

Status**4. GENDER EQUALITY**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: Gender equality and non-discrimination are embedded in internal regulations, the Collective Labour Agreement and the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. Reporting mechanisms for discrimination and harassment are in place. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: Researchers assessed gender equality very positively. No major structural gender gap was identified through the consultation. Actual gap: The 2022–2025 Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan require updating for the next period and the renewed framework should include continued attention to unconscious bias and monitoring. Implementation impediments: None identified.	New proposals: Adopt and publish the updated Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for the next cycle; integrate a short unconscious-bias component into OTM-R/selection committee guidance rather than creating a separate training programme. Monitoring: Annual review of implementation and relevant recruitment/committee data.

Status**5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: Discrimination on grounds including gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation and other protected characteristics is prohibited by internal rules and the Collective Labour Agreement. Complaint and disciplinary mechanisms exist. Researchers concerned: R1–R4 and job applicants. Views and needs: The survey did not identify a major perceived structural discrimination problem. Nevertheless, formal non-discrimination rules do not by themselves exclude unconscious bias. Actual gap: Awareness and practical prevention of unconscious bias can be strengthened, especially in recruitment, assessment and team management. Implementation impediments: None identified.	Initiatives undertaken: Existing non-discrimination rules, complaint mechanisms and Gender Equality framework. New proposals: Integrate concise diversity and unconscious-bias guidance into selection committee information and management/mentoring awareness activities. Monitoring: Annual review through HR/quality processes and HRS4R reporting.

Status**6. THE RESEARCHER**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: ICECHIM researchers work in research teams and participate in competitive national and international projects. Responsibilities and accountability are defined through job descriptions, project contracts and internal procedures. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, particularly R1–R2. Views and needs: R1–R2 reported less favourable perceptions than R3–R4 regarding autonomy in choosing research topics and team management. Their needs include greater involvement in the development of research ideas, clearer access to opportunities and constructive feedback. Actual gap: Participation in conception of research and responsibility for knowledge creation is not perceived uniformly across all research groups. Implementation impediments: Differences in project structure, seniority, funding conditions and research-group practices.	Initiatives undertaken: Team-based research structure, annual assessment and existing supervisory responsibilities. New proposals: Encourage group leaders to include R1–R2 researchers in discussions on new ideas, calls and project development through existing team meetings; integrate this expectation into career/mentoring guidance. Monitoring: Periodic survey by career stage and annual review of career-development implementation.

Status**7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: ICECHIM supports geographical, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility and has multiple international collaborations. The Strategic Development Plan 2025–2029 and Roadmap include mobility and internationalisation targets. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, with particular relevance for early-career researchers. Views and needs: Mobility is generally perceived positively, but R1–R2 need clearer information on mobility, funding and career-diversification opportunities. Actual gap: Mobility experience is supported but is not yet consistently reflected as a positive element in all assessment/career-development practices. Implementation impediments: Funding availability and national/institutional assessment requirements.	Initiatives undertaken: Participation in international projects, COST Actions, bilateral cooperation, secondments and mobility schemes; institutional Roadmap target for international mobility. New proposals: Improve visibility of mobility opportunities and consider mobility explicitly in career-development discussions and future revisions of assessment criteria where legally feasible. Monitoring: Use existing Roadmap mobility indicators and annual HRS4R review.

Status**8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: Sustainability is a strategic research orientation of ICECHIM and is reflected in research topics, institutional events and the Strategic Development Plan. However, systematic tools for assessing sustainability at project/practice level are not yet routinely used. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, especially project managers and senior researchers responsible for project design. Views and needs: The survey did not provide a detailed career-stage measure for this principle; the gap derives mainly from institutional/documentary assessment. Actual gap: Limited internal capacity and common practical tools for integrating and assessing sustainability in research management and project design. Implementation impediments: Limited specialist capacity and resources for advanced sustainability assessment.	Initiatives undertaken: Strategic commitment to sustainable development; research portfolio aligned with sustainability priorities. New proposals: Develop a simple sustainability checklist, organise one practical workshop and pilot the checklist in a small number of projects before wider use. Monitoring: Pilot results reviewed within the six-month HRS4R cycle and annually through strategic monitoring.

PILLAR 2 – RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Status**9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: Annual employee assessment is performed under PS-10 Competence/Performance, complemented by the institutional Regulation on Scientific Performance Assessment. The system considers a broad range of activities, including publications, projects, proposals, international cooperation, mentoring, patents, evaluation, teaching and institutional contributions. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: The system is generally perceived as fair and comprehensive. No specific survey evidence supports a major structural gap in the assessment framework. Actual gap: No material gap requiring a dedicated HRS4R action is currently identified. Continuous review remains necessary to ensure alignment with the revised Charter and recognition of diverse contributions. Implementation impediments: National minimum criteria for certain research grades constrain some assessment elements.	Initiatives undertaken: Updated assessment regulation, annual performance process and quality-management controls. New proposals: Continue periodic review of assessment criteria, including appropriate recognition of mobility, mentoring and diverse research contributions where legally and institutionally feasible. Monitoring: Existing annual assessment and QMS review mechanisms.

Status**10. RECRUITMENT**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: Research positions are filled through public competition under national law and ICECHIM regulations/procedures. Vacancy information is published on the institutional website. Recruitment rules cover transparency, equal treatment and objective criteria. Researchers concerned: R1–R4 and external applicants. Views and needs: R1–R2 assessed recruitment less favourably than R3–R4, indicating a need for clearer and more accessible information on recruitment and career opportunities. Actual gap: The OTM-R framework is not yet consolidated into a single public bilingual policy; vacancy information does not yet consistently provide the full range of working conditions, career-development information and international-applicant information. Systematic EURAXESS use and simplified electronic submission require strengthening. Implementation impediments: National documentary requirements and resource constraints for full e-recruitment.	Initiatives undertaken: Updated recruitment regulations and QMS procedures; dedicated HR Excellence in Research webpage; institutional vacancy pages. New proposals: Adopt a concise integrated bilingual OTM-R Policy; use a standard bilingual vacancy template; systematically use EURAXESS for externally open research vacancies; provide electronic submission through a secure standardised channel wherever legally feasible. Monitoring: Six-month review of OTM-R implementation and annual recruitment indicators.

Status**11. SELECTION**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: Selection criteria are defined before publication and selection panels are formally appointed with relevant scientific expertise. Anti-discrimination rules apply. External experts are included where required by law. Researchers concerned: R1–R4 and external applicants. Views and needs: The differentiated consultation supports a need for transparent recruitment and selection information, particularly for R1–R2. Actual gap: Selection practices can be broadened and standardised further; online interviews are not consistently available; evidence of systematic OTM-R training/guidance for selection committees needs strengthening; gender/diversity considerations should be monitored. Implementation impediments: Legal requirements for certain competitions and practical constraints on interview formats.	Initiatives undertaken: Recruitment/selection procedures, formal panel appointment and published criteria. New proposals: Integrate selection requirements in the OTM-R Policy; provide a short OTM-R/bias guidance module for committee chairs and HR staff and concise guidance to all committee members before selection; use online interviews where legally and practically feasible. Monitoring: Annual review of committee guidance, recruitment data and candidate process feedback where available.

Status**12. CAREER PROGRESSION**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: Career progression is governed by national minimum criteria and ICECHIM institutional regulations. Researchers may compete for higher positions when eligibility criteria are met and resources allow. Scientific performance is assessed periodically. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, particularly R1–R2. Views and needs: R1–R2 reported less favourable perceptions of career advancement than R3–R4. They need clearer information on advancement pathways, criteria, mobility and professional-development opportunities. Actual gap: Mobility and some broader career contributions included in the charter are not recognised by national law for career progression. Implementation impediments: National promotion criteria and budgetary capacity for higher-grade positions.	Initiatives undertaken: Updated competition/promotion regulations and scientific performance assessment regulation; Strategic Development Plan measures for talent development. New proposals: Introduce a proportionate career-development approach based on a short career-discussion template, initially focused on R1–R2; provide a simple public/internal explanation of career stages, criteria and available development opportunities. Monitoring: Annual career discussion/review; career-stage survey evidence; existing Roadmap HR indicators.

PILLAR 3 - WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

Status**13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: Permanent employment is the general rule; employees receive statutory social, medical and pension benefits. Flexible hours and part-time work are available under the Collective Labour Agreement. Salaries are governed by institutional and national rules and are strongly influenced by project funding. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: R1–R2 reported somewhat less favourable perceptions than R3–R4 regarding employment stability and access to opportunities. Open comments highlighted financial predictability as a concern. Actual gap: Some Charter expectations, such as extensive remote work or sabbaticals, cannot be fully implemented in the current experimental and national legal/financial context. Funding predictability remains an external structural constraint. Implementation impediments: Experimental laboratory work limits remote work; sabbaticals are not provided for in the national framework; public research funding and salary ceilings are externally regulated.	Initiatives undertaken: Permanent contracts as standard practice, flexible working arrangements, social protection and transparent salary framework through the Collective Labour Agreement. New proposals: Maintain transparent information on working conditions in recruitment materials and OTM-R documentation; monitor staff perceptions and retention using existing institutional indicators. Monitoring: Existing HR monitoring, Roadmap retention indicator and annual HRS4R report.

Status**14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: ICECHIM generally offers permanent positions, including to early-career researchers, except where positions are necessarily project-based. Career progression is available through competition when legal criteria and financial resources permit. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, especially R1–R2. Views and needs: R1–R2 perceived employment stability less favourably than R3–R4. Open responses also referred to the need for greater financial stability and predictability. Actual gap: Employment contracts are generally stable, but individual career planning and follow-up are not yet fully formalised, while financial sustainability depends substantially on competitive project funding. Implementation impediments: National research funding levels and project-based financing.	Initiatives undertaken: Permanent-employment policy, annual performance review, Strategic Development Plan and Roadmap targets for recruitment and retention. New proposals: Implement proportionate career discussions/plans and mentoring for early-career researchers; use the existing Roadmap retention KPI rather than creating a parallel HRS4R indicator. Monitoring: Six-month HRS4R monitoring and annual review against institutional HR/retention data.

Status**15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: ICECHIM has procedures for intellectual/industrial property, technology transfer, data security and contractual compliance. Relevant procedures are available internally and specialist advice is available. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, with particular relevance for R1–R2 and project managers. Views and needs: Researchers identified continuing needs for practical information and training; differentiated analysis supports stronger access to information for R1–R2. Actual gap: Awareness of IP, contractual obligations, data/security requirements and related procedures is not uniform; some national/funder documentation is available only in Romanian. Implementation impediments: External funder documents and national templates may be issued only in Romanian.	Initiatives undertaken: (PP-PI-01) industrial property and technology-transfer procedures; internal access to regulations; specialist IP/TTO/legal support. New proposals: One annual integrated awareness session plus on-demand advice, with a strong R1–R2 component; translate or summarise key applicant/employee information in English where useful and feasible. Monitoring: Participation/feedback reviewed annually; IP/valorisation activity monitored through existing TTO records.

Status**16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: ICECHIM disseminates publicly funded research through publications, conferences, fairs, exhibitions, annual reports and the institutional register of research results. Patent information is publicly available and ICECHIM maintains dedicated technology/result dissemination channels. Formal procedures govern patenting, valuation and technology transfer, and licensing agreements have been concluded. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: No major structural gap was identified. Early-career researchers may still benefit from continued practical awareness of IP and valorisation. Actual gap: No material institutional gap requiring a separate action; continuous awareness and improvement are appropriate. Implementation impediments: Confidentiality, IP protection and funder/partner contractual obligations may legitimately limit immediate dissemination in specific cases.	Initiatives undertaken: PP-PI-01, PP-TT-01, PP-TT-04, licensing practice, annual activity reporting, technology/result platforms and public engagement activities. New proposals: Continue integrated IP/knowledge-valorisation awareness and on-demand TTO support, particularly for R1–R2. Monitoring: Existing annual activity reporting and TTO/IP indicators.

PILLAR 4 -RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Status**17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: ICECHIM supports interdisciplinary, intersectoral and geographical mobility and encourages international cooperation, entrepreneurship and technology-transfer activities. The Strategic Development Plan and Roadmap include measures for attracting and developing researchers. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, particularly R1–R2. Views and needs: R1–R2 need clearer access to information on mobility, training, funding and alternative career-development opportunities. Actual gap: Opportunities exist but are not always visible or systematically incorporated into individual career-development discussions; diverse career contributions can be recognised more explicitly. Implementation impediments: Funding availability and national career-assessment criteria.	Initiatives undertaken: International partnerships, COST participation, mobility opportunities, TTO/entrepreneurship support and Roadmap targets for doctoral, postdoctoral and mobility participation. New proposals: Include mobility, entrepreneurship, knowledge valorisation and other career options in the concise career-development information and annual career discussions. Monitoring: Existing Roadmap indicators and periodic R1–R4 consultation.

Status**18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: Annual individual assessment includes recommendations by team leaders, and team-leader responsibilities include guiding researchers for career planning. A more formal career-plan approach has been under development. Researchers concerned: R1–R4, with initial priority for R1–R2. Views and needs: R1–R2 reported less favourable perceptions regarding career advancement, access to information, continuous training and mentoring. They need practical, transparent and proportionate career guidance rather than an administratively heavy system. Actual gap: Long-term individual career planning and structured career advice are not yet implemented consistently across research groups. Implementation impediments: Limited administrative capacity and the need to keep the system proportionate to the size of the institute.	Initiatives undertaken: Annual assessment, PS-10 competence/performance process, Strategic Development Plan provisions for talent development. New proposals: Pilot a maximum two-page career-discussion template in selected groups, then extend an annual career discussion primarily to R1–R2; optional use for R3–R4. Link career discussions to existing annual assessment/training processes. Monitoring: Annual implementation review and usefulness feedback from participating researchers.

Status**19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	Current practice: Training needs are identified annually under PS-10 and professional-development plans are centralised institutionally. The Strategic Development Plan supports master's/doctoral studies and professional training, and the Collective Labour Agreement contains a professional-development framework. Researchers concerned: R1–R4. Views and needs: R1–R2 reported less favourable perceptions of continuous training and access to information than R3–R4. Open responses identified professional development, access to funded training and new software/AI skills as priorities. Actual gap: The institutional framework exists, but information on opportunities and evidence of training effectiveness can be improved; access is partly dependent on available funding. Implementation impediments: Financial resources and workload constraints.	Initiatives undertaken: Annual training-needs assessment and training plan under PS-10; support for formal studies and professional training. New proposals: Improve consolidated communication of training opportunities; where HRS4R-specific training is organised, use simple post-session feedback/knowledge checks rather than measuring participation only. Combine related topics where possible to minimise administrative burden. Monitoring: Existing annual training plan plus six-month HRS4R review; use Roadmap training indicators where applicable.

Status**20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	Current practice: Research teams are led by senior researchers and provide an existing supervisory structure for R1/R2 researchers. The Strategic Development Plan explicitly supports improved mentoring and attraction of doctoral/postdoctoral researchers. Researchers concerned: R1–R4; R1–R2 as beneficiaries and R3–R4 as mentors/supervisors. Views and needs: The survey identified differences between research groups. R1–R2 perceive mentoring and team-management support less favourably than R3–R4, while R3–R4 need practical tools and continued support for their mentoring/leadership role. Actual gap: Mentoring exists but is not sufficiently consistent or visible across all groups; expectations and access to a mentor are not uniformly formalised. Implementation impediments: Variation in research-group size, workload and availability of senior researchers.	Initiatives undertaken: Existing team leader/deputy structure and Strategic Development Plan provisions on mentoring. New proposals: Identify/assign a mentor for new R1 researchers where feasible; provide a concise mentoring guide and a short module for group leaders/mentors integrated into existing meetings; connect mentoring with the proportionate career-discussion process. Monitoring: Annual review of mentoring coverage/usefulness, with career-stage feedback in the periodic HRS4R survey.