

# Action Plan

**Institute of Microbiology of the Czech Academy of Sciences**

**HRS4R Case Number 2023CZ53621**

January 18th, 2024; revised June 20th, 2024

## HR Excellence in Research

# Action Plan

### Action Plan

**Case number**

2023CZ53621

**Name Organisation under review**

Institute of Microbiology of the Czech Academy of Sciences

**Organisation's contact details**

Vídeňská 1083, Praha 4, 142 00, Czech Republic

**Submission date to the European Commission**

20/06/2024

## 1. Organisational Information

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

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	395,6
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	102,45
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	0,5
Of whom are women *	220,95
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	98,85
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	113,7
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	183,05
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	580,46
<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)</b>	<b>€</b>
Total annual organisational budget	30678000
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	12663000

**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)	13154000
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	1021000

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

The main activity of the Institute of Microbiology of the Czech Academy of Sciences is comprehensive, scientific research of microorganisms, such as bacteria, yeasts, fungi, algae with regard to basic research questions and their prospective practical use in medicine and industry. The main interests are cellular and molecular microbiology, genetics and physiology of microorganisms including bacterial pathogens and resistance to antibiotics, production of microbial metabolites and their biotransformation and grading of production strains by genetic modification; soil ecology, ecotoxicology and microbial degradation of organic pollutants, and, last but not least, the role of microorganisms in immunological processes and pathogenesis.

**2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice**

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

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

## Ethical and professional aspects\*

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


## STRENGTHS:

- 1) The Institute of Microbiology CAS (IMIC) runs currently in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences, which fully complies with all general Charter and Code (C&C) principles.
- 2) Intellectual property protection and technology transfer services are supported by the Technology Transfer Department. The institution has contacts with either national technology transfer agencies (e.g. Czechinvest, CzechBio and PragueBio) or regional ones (South Bohemian Science and Technology Park (<https://www.jvtp.cz/>), South Bohemian Agency for Innovation Promotion (JAIP) (<http://www.jaip.cz/>), Biological Centre - Institute for Technology Transfer, Czech Biotechnology Platform - CEPIO, or Innovation Commission of the South Bohemian Region). IMIC has concluded contracts with SOTIO Biotech (CZ), a.s., Biosynth GmbH (DE), Nurix Therapeutics, Inc. (US), Nested Therapeutics, Inc. (US) and others.
- 3) The Project Management Department assists with project administration and is also searching for available funding and scholarship opportunities.
- 4) The Human Resources Department provides full support in the recruitment of new employees, including foreigners. Since the autumn of 2023, the Human Resources Development Department has been strengthened by an additional English-speaking employee.
- 5) The Institute has extensive co-operation with the universities and many students participate in research activities of particular research groups. Together with lecturing at universities, that allows direct knowledge transfer from researchers to students.
- 6) The web page (<https://mbucas.cz/en/hrs4r/> (<https://mbucas.cz/en/hrs4r/>)) provides information on the Institute's accession to the Bonn Declaration on Research Freedom and the status of the HRS4R process.
- 7) An externally managed channel for employee complaints has been established and is being maintained.

## WEAKNESSES:

- 1) The Code of Ethics of the Institute of Microbiology of the CAS is missing. This year, however, the Scientific Council of the CAS proposed and the Academic Council and the Academic Assembly approved an updated Code of Ethics for Scientific Research of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Prof. Ondřej Prášil, an employee of our Institute, also contributed to this document. Hence, our Institute does not have to create its own code, but after some slight modifications it will adopt the code approved by this year's Assembly of the CAS.

- 2) The Institute is multidisciplinary and is located in several geographically separated places (Prague, Vestec, Nový Hrádek, Třeboň). This often leads to a reduced sense of belonging to the Institute and a tendency to present the laboratories as separate entities. Over time, the laboratories have developed their own graphic identity and often their own mechanisms of internal or external communication. This should be unified and regulated by clear constitutional rules.
- 3) Most of the internal documents are only in the Czech language. Translation of basic documents into English is done in an unsystematic and ad hoc manner.
- 4) The Institute's internal website is mostly in Czech only. The website should be simplified and updated to become bilingual.
- 5) Awareness of the support available and the work carried out by the Technology Transfer Department and of the rules governing the protection of intellectual property is not high.
- 6) Although it is clearly defined how to proceed in case of any ethical problem, discrimination or conflict, our researchers are not fully aware of their options because the related rules are scattered in a number of different documents.

Recruitment and selection\* **Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

## STRENGTHS:

- 1) Selection procedures are governed by the legislation in force (Labour Code).
- 2) Advertisements are published on the Institute's website, jobs.cz, vedavyzkum.cz, or EURAXESS.
- 3) The Institute of Microbiology CAS (IMIC) has an up-to-date New Employee Handbook in both Czech and English languages; this is regularly updated. It is distributed to new employees in printed form and is also available on the intranet.
- 4) A HR-related website has been created (mbucas.cz/HRS4R (<https://mbucas.cz/HRS4R>)). A link to the Rules of the IMIC OTM-R Selection Procedure ([https://intranet/images/RULES\\_OT\\_THE\\_IMIC\\_OTMR\\_SELECTION\\_PROCEDURE.pdf](https://intranet/images/RULES_OT_THE_IMIC_OTMR_SELECTION_PROCEDURE.pdf)) been added to the recruitment page (mbucas.cz/en/kariera/ (<https://mbucas.cz/en/kariera/>)).

## WEAKNESSES:

- 1) Rules of the IMIC selection procedure are not published in full. A composite document should be created and published in both Czech and English languages.
- 2) A detailed description of the recruitment process including the composition of selection committees is missing.
- 3) The IMIC lacks a standardised onboarding process during which all new employees would be trained to become fully functional members of the team.

## Working conditions\*

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

## STRENGTHS:

- 1) Within internal rules, working hours can be chosen with different starts, as agreed with the supervisor. Only the monthly pool of hours worked is monitored.
- 2) The IMIC offers part-time positions.
- 3) The use of sports facilities and loans from the social fund, etc. are available to all employees..
- 4) As well as GDPR and whistle-blowing regulations, we have formulated a Gender Equality Plan (<https://mbucas.cz/en/about-institute/gender-equality-plan/>) and it is being implemented. A regular gender audit by an external company is planned.
- 5) According to the Career Regulations of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (the official version of this legally binding document is available only in Czech), the performance of researchers (R2 - R4) is evaluated regularly (usually once a year) according to established criteria. This evaluation applies to and is mandatory for all employees in the given categories, regardless of their workload during the attestation period and regardless of the duration of their employment, with exceptions defined only by the Career Regulations of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The Attestation Committee is responsible for collecting and reviewing the data and recommending the career progression/step of individual employees, and then submitting the results to the Director of the institution, who will evaluate the Attestation Committee's proposal and draw employment consequences if necessary.
- 6) The IMIC Council has developed the RULES FOR EFFECTIVE FUNDING OF IMIC LABORATORIES and the METHODOLOGY FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH PERFORMANCE OF LABORATORIES (in Czech only), according to which part of the institutional funds (excluding salary funds) is allocated to individual laboratories each year. It provides laboratory managers with an overview of the amounts allocated for laboratory operations in a given year. These funds may be used to supplement the non-wage component of the salary (personal appraisals) or annual bonuses for laboratory staff.

## WEAKNESSES:

- 1) The level of salaries paid to staff is low. The fact that salaries in the academic field are below average compared to other EU countries is a hard fact, and any correction is beyond the power of IMIC or CAS management. Nevertheless, the Institute should strive to ensure fair salaries in all departments and to eliminate inconsistencies.
- 2) Information about the evaluation and reward system is not fully known.



- 3) Some tools to balance work and family life better could be improved (e.g., home-office rules and others; see GEP for more), but this is tied to the new and expected changes in state legislation to be adopted in 2024. The Institute does not yet have binding rules on the work of pregnant women; these should be prepared and adopted (The rules will be in line with those of other experimental institutes).
- 4) Despite IMIC's efforts to reduce paperwork, not all agendas have been fully converted to electronic processing. The gradual expansion of this option will certainly facilitate working conditions, especially for laboratory managers.
- 5) The current intranet is unclear and much information is difficult to find. Although it has both a Czech and an English section, not all documents are available in English. The platform on which the intranet runs is outdated. The intranet should be updated both operationally and in terms of content and should be more intuitive.
- 6) Although it is clearly defined how to manage any ethical problem, discrimination or conflict, our researchers are not fully aware of their possibilities/rights because the related rules are scattered in different documents.
- 7) We also perceive a certain new weakness in the slight isolation of scientists and laboratories, resulting from the limitation of mutual contacts during the covid period and the lukewarm response to jointly organised events at the Institute.

## Training and development\*

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

## STRENGTHS:

- 1) Combined with their individual abilities, the scientific development of researchers is facilitated by the overall culture of freedom of research at IMIC.
- 2) Via the mailing list and the intranet, all researchers are regularly informed about the offer of specialist courses and lecture series.
- 3) Young researchers have the opportunity to apply for participation in national and international development programmes.
- 4) The Institute offers free participation in English courses for local researchers and Czech courses for foreign researchers.
- 5) Every year, the Institute announces competitions and rewards the best student work.

## WEAKNESSES:

- 1) There is no comprehensive training system based on the specific needs of the nature of work in a research institution. The range of courses could be expanded based on questionnaire responses.
- 2) Some managers lack appropriate leadership and management skills. A training or workshop on the use of AI in administration or project documentation would also be a suitable challenge.
- 3) There is no career development system (except a document offering career development opportunities at IMIC).
- 4) The Institute needs to strengthen its PR department and make it more efficient and effective.

### 3. Actions

The Action Plan and HRS4R 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):**

<https://mbucas.cz/en/hrs4r/> (unsafe: <https://mbucas.cz/en/hrs4r/>)

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R 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 implementation ratings.

### Proposed ACTIONS

#### Action 1

The Code of Ethics

#### GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 1. Research freedom
- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (+/-) 4. Professional attitude
- (+/-) 10. Non discrimination
- (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)

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

Q4 2024

#### Responsible

Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)

HR Award Team Director	Target: Filling a gap in the Institute's rules: adoption of the CAS Code of Ethics with only minor modifications. Communication of the Code among the institution's staff. Indicator: Publication of the IMIC Code of Ethics on the intranet.
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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 2

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Establishment of the institution of the Ombudsman

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(++) 1. Research freedom

(+/-) 2. Ethical principles

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals

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

Q2 2025

#### Responsible

##### Unit

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

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HR Award  
Team  
Director

Target: Introducing the institution of the Ombudsman as the highest constitutional authority in resolving ethical conflicts. Indicator: Appointment of the Ombudsman. Publicising the contact details of the Ombudsman within the institution.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 3

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New web pages of the IMIC

#### GAP Principle(s)

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- (+/-) 4. Professional attitude
- (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations
- (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results
- (+/-) 9. Public engagement
- (+/-) 12. Recruitment
- (+/-) 23. Research environment

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

Q4 2024

#### Responsible

Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
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HR Award Team Director	Target: Create a new modern and dynamic IMIC website based on a new graphic identity (see Action 4). Restructure the website and make information more accessible, including information on scientific achievements or job vacancies. Indicator: New web pages.
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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 4

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Completion of the new graphic identity of the Institute

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 23. Research environment

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

Q2 2024

#### Responsible

##### Unit

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

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Director

Target: To consolidate and unify the fragmented graphic design of documents and the external presentation of individual laboratories and other organisational units of the Institute. Indicator: Completion of the Institute's new graphic identity and new logo. Creation of the IMIC logo and graphic identity manuals and their publication on the intranet.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 5

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Translation of all important internal rules into English

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

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

Q2 2026

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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Secretary

Target: In order to facilitate the orientation of foreign employees in the Institute's rules and regulations, all necessary information will be made available in English.  
Indicator: Translation of all important documents into English and their publication, bilingual minutes of the Institute's management meetings.

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**Proposed ACTIONS**

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**Action 6**

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Implementation of OTM-R principles

**GAP Principle(s)**

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

(+/-) 12. Recruitment

(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)

(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)

Q2 2024

(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)

(+/-) 28. Career development



## Proposed ACTIONS

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Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
HR Award Team Director	<p>Target: Introduce clear rules for selection procedures under the OTM-R, combining the Labour Code legislation, the Career Development Rules for CAS Employees with a University Degree and existing internal regulations into one basic document, together with detailed instructions. Improve the entire selection process by harmonising the form and content of vacancy announcements, the methods of publication, the procedure and composition of selection committees, the rules for selecting the most suitable candidates, etc. Indicator: Preparation of binding RULES OF THE IMIC OTM-R SELECTION PROCEDURE and PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS AT THE INSTITUTE OF MICROBIOLOGY CAS documents and their publication on the intranet.</p>

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## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 7

Regular training of HR staff

#### GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 12. Recruitment
- (+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)
- (+/-) 14. Selection (Code)
- (++) 16. Judging merit (Code)
- (++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)
- (++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
- (++) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)
- (++) 20. Seniority (Code)

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

Continuously

#### Responsible

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

HR Staff	Target: Regular training of HR staff on HR regulations and their updates. To improve the assistance given to new employees, including foreigners, in order to familiarise them with the normal functioning of the Institute and its internal rules. Indicator: Number of training sessions and persons trained per year.
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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 8

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New Employee Handbook

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 10. Non discrimination

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development

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

Q1 & Q3 2024 Q1 &  
Q3 2025 Q1 & Q3  
2026

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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HR Staff  
Director

Target: Provide new staff with as much up-to-date information as possible about the day-to-day running of the Institute, the rights and obligations of staff and help them to deal with common situations. Indicator: Regular updates of the handbook (twice a year or as required).

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 9

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Onboarding Plan

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 12. Recruitment

(+/-) 23. Research environment

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

(+/-) 40. Supervision

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

Q1 2025

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

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Heads of  
Units  
Director

Target. To provide a simple guide for managers to facilitate the first steps in the Institute for all new staff in research units. Indicator: Development of rules for mentoring new staff ("Onboarding plan" with checklist of tasks/activities to be explained or introduced), published on the intranet and distributed directly to laboratory managers (heads of units).

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 10

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Improvement of the intranet

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 7. Good practice in research

(++) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

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

Q2 2026

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

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Secretary  
HR Staff IT  
Department

Target: Gradually improve the existing intranet to make it more user-friendly and intuitive. Complete revision of content and removal of obsolete standards and regulations. Key documents, manuals and work-related information at the click of a button. Upgrade the existing software platform. Indicator: New version of the intranet.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 11

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Establish clear rules on home office

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

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

Q4 2024

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

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Secretary  
Director

Target: Establishment of clear and transparent rules that take into account current amendments to the Labour Code or other regulations of the CAS, and information to researchers. Indicator: Internal Regulations of the Director published on the intranet.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 12

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Evaluation of researchers

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(++) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

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

(-/+) 26. Funding and salaries

(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development

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

Q3 2025

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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IMIC  
Council  
Director

Target: Analysis of the current way in which individual R2-R4 staff are evaluated: periodicity, criteria - both measurable scientific production, e.g. in terms of number or quality of publications (e.g. IF, Quartils) - and contribution to the institute in terms of managing the necessary infrastructure, teaching, PR activities, etc. and, if necessary, modification of the current rules and criteria for attestation. Indicator: Update of the attestation rules (document). Simplification of the attestation form.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 13

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Simplify administration

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(++) 1. Research freedom

(+/-) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

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

2025 Q2

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

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Deputy  
Director

Target: Convert as much of the remaining paper agenda as possible into an electronic form to minimise the administrative burden (e.g. proposals for leave, resignation, recruitment). Indicator: Application for leave on the intranet. Request for termination of employment, request to start recruitment using the intranet.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 14

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Looking for ways to improve the stability of working conditions at IMIC

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

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

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

Q4 2025

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

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Director  
Trade Union

Target: Through discussion with the trade union, seek ways to further improve the stability of current working conditions. Indicator: Preparation of a document Report on the analysis of the current possibilities for improvement of the stability and duration of employment in IMIC and its publication on the intranet.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 15

Potential for salary increase

#### GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(++) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

(-/+ ) 26. Funding and salaries

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

Q1 2026

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director HR  
Staff Board  
of the  
Institute

Target: Competitive salaries for employees. The first step is to analyse the current remuneration system at IMIC - an overview of the legal options, i.e. the scope and validity of the salary scales, the determination of the basic salary and the regulations on the additional financing from grant funds. Indicator: Preparation of a document Analysis of the current remuneration system in IMIC and proposal for a new remuneration system and its publication on the intranet.

## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 16

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The best PhD and Diploma work award, The best scientific paper award

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 23. Research environment

(-/+ ) 26. Funding and salaries

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

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Q1 2024 Q1 2025

Q1 2026

#### Responsible

##### Unit

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

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Board of the Institute Laboratory Heads

Target: To promote student interest in laboratory work and in science in general. Indicator: Continue to announce annual competitions and reward the best student work.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 17

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Intellectual Property Protection

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights

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

Q2 2025

#### Responsible

##### Unit

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

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Deputy  
Director PR  
Manager  
Laboratory  
Heads

Target: Raising awareness of intellectual property protection among scientists and updating intellectual property documents in light of the new CAS internal rules.  
Indicator: Update of the IMIC Intellectual Property Policy directive and its publication on the intranet in both Czech and English versions.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 18

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Mobility rules

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 29. Value of mobility

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

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

Q2 2025

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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Deputy  
Director PR  
Manager  
Laboratory  
Heads

Target: All staff and trainees will have easy access to the rules for different types of short and long term scientific placements. Emphasis will be placed on Erasmus-type internships and others supported by the Academy of Sciences and grant agencies. Indicator: Rules for short and long term mobility are developed and published.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 19

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Gender Equality Plan

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 9. Public engagement

(+/-) 10. Non discrimination

(+/-) 27. Gender balance

(+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals

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

(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

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

Q1 2024 Q2 2025

Q3 2026

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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Deputy

Director PR

Manager

Laboratory

Heads

Target: In all activities, the Institute should transparently follow the Gender Equality Plan (available on the intranet in CZ and EN), evaluate its implementation annually, and amend it if necessary. Indicator: Annual report on the activities of the Gender Equality Team.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 20

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Internal rules for expectant mothers

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 27. Gender balance

(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development

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

Q1 2026

#### Responsible

Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
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HR Staff Gender Equality Team Laboratory Heads Director	Target: The Institute does not yet have any binding rules on the work of pregnant women. It only complies with the Labour Code. Since almost all workplaces are considered to be risky, the possibilities of working in such cases are limited, but they do exist, although awareness of them is low. Indicator: Summary of rules for pregnant workers at IMIC and their publication on the intranet.
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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 21

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Occupational health care

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

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

Q4 2024 Q4 2025

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

Q4 2026

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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Target: Monitor the satisfaction of foreign and Czech employees with the newly appointed doctor. Ensure that foreign researchers undergo entrance, periodic and exit medical examinations without unnecessary difficulties.  
Indicator: Satisfaction questionnaires and their analysis.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 22

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Management training programme

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(++) 1. Research freedom

(++) 6. Accountability

(+/-) 28. Career development

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

(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

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

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

Continuously

#### Responsible

##### Unit

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

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HR Staff  
Deputy  
Director  
Laboratory  
Heads

Target: As part of management skills, managers should be trained in e.g. time management, assertive communication skills in practice, and interested parties should also be trained in e.g. presentation skills, full use of Researchgate and LinkedIn options, etc. The current big challenge is the critical use of AI in all relevant domains, which will also be the subject of discussion workshops. Indicator: Lectures or workshops on the above topics: meeting dates and number of participants.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 23

Increased use of e-learning tools

#### GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 7. Good practice in research

(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development

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

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

Q2 2025

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Director  
Deputy  
Director  
Secretary

Target: Facilitate workers' participation in mandatory training by converting it into an electronic form: create e-learning courses in e.g. occupational health and safety, fire protection, GDPR and institutional resilience that can be completed at any time, for example over a two-week period, rather than at a set time. Indicator: E-learning system with final test and certificate for each trainee.

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 24

Co-authorship

#### GAP Principle(s)

(++) 32. Co-authorship

(+/-) 36. Relation with supervisors

(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties

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

Q4 2024

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Deputy  
Director  
IMIC  
Council

Target: Although the GAP analysis did not reveal any significant problems with co-authorship, guidelines for authorship of professional or scientific publications based on the CAS Code of Ethics will be prepared and published on the intranet. Indicator: Preparing and publishing Guidelines for Authors of Professional or Scientific Publications in Czech and English and publishing them on the intranet.

## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 25

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Encourage early career researchers

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(++) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)

(++) 22. Recognition of the profession

(+/-) 28. Career development

(++) 30. Access to career advice

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

Q1 2026

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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Laboratory  
Heads IMIC  
Council  
Director

Target: Facilitate the start of doctoral/postdoctoral research careers; develop a mentoring programme methodology. Explore training opportunities suitable for early-stage researchers, whether national or international, e.g. using the EURAXESS Startup Hub, which offers a series of webinars for researchers (mainly PhD students) on leadership skills and the basics of a start-up enterprise.  
Indicator: Design of a mentoring module for young researchers, including training activities aimed at acquiring and consolidating the knowledge and skills necessary for scientific work.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 26

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Reporting on the activities of the Transfer Technology Department

#### GAP Principle(s)

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- (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations
- (++) 6. Accountability
- (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results
- (+/-) 9. Public engagement

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

Continuously

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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TTD Head

Target: Communicating the initiatives and results of the TT Department's activities to the Institute's staff and the public. Indicators: Regular press releases published on the Institute's website. Inclusion of this item on the agenda of regular meetings of director's college and meetings of laboratory heads.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 27

Increased PR activities

#### GAP Principle(s)

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

(+/-) 9. Public engagement

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

Continuously

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

PR  
Department  
Laboratory  
Heads  
Director

Target: To "personalise" information for the press, politicians, the professional and lay public and students, and to increase public awareness of the Institute's research results. Indicators: Regular publication of a newsletter and press releases dedicated to the achievements of IMIC scientists. Participation in national and regional popularisation events. Annual report on contributions to media and popularisation journals.

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 28

Teaching Activities

#### GAP Principle(s)

(++) 33. Teaching

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

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

Continuously

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Deputy  
Director  
Laboratory  
Heads

Target: Support the involvement of the Institute's staff in teaching at secondary schools and universities, to enable contact between students and the Institute's postgraduate students and scientists. Organising and participating in summer schools and courses. Facilitating internships for high school and university students at the Institute. Promoting the activities and results of the Institute among young people at every opportunity. Looking for ways to help them develop their interest in science. Indicators: Annual review of teaching activities and participation in summer schools and courses; number of diploma and PhD students working at the IMIC; number of new students and graduates.

## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 29

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Prevention of gender-based violence and intolerance

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 2. Ethical principles

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(+/-) 36. Relation with supervisors

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

Q1 2026

#### Responsible

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

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Laboratory  
Heads

Target: To prevent all forms of intolerance and the possible occurrence of gender-based violence. To remind laboratory managers and supervisors of their responsibility to resolve and prevent potential conflicts in the workplace. To improve the interpersonal relations in the workplace through the promotion of informal meetings and events.  
Indicators: Adoption of the Code of Conduct in the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Adoption and publication of a methodology for gender-based violence prevention and resolution procedures at IMIC. Organisation of informal events for PhD students, such as get-togethers, barbecues, sports events, etc., leading to closer mutual acquaintance.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

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### Action 30

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Feedback

#### GAP Principle(s)

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(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(+/-) 28. Career development

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

Q1 2025 Q1 2026

#### Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

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HR Staff

Target: Feedback to the HR Award Steering Committee and the Institute management. Indicator: Regular online surveys - Satisfaction with the changes that have been made and suggestions for the future. Incorporation of realistic comments into institutional rules and possibly implementation of suggested specific actions.

**Unselected principles:**

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R 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 the statutory representative, the director of the institution is responsible for personnel policy in IMIC. The selection of scientific workers for the IMIC is further governed by Act No. 283/1992 Coll. on the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, as amended by Act No. 420/2005 Coll. and the Statutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (including the Career Code of University-Educated Employees of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic). Although the main principles of the "European Charter for Researchers" and the "Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers" are taken into account in practice when conducting selection procedures, not all recommendations of the OTM-R policy are applied at the level of internal regulations.

The implementation of the new OTM-R policy will take place through close co-operation of the Personnel department and HR Steering Committee with the employees of the institute responsible for recruitment - especially the heads of selection committees, heads of individual departments/laboratories and the management of the institute. The implementation process, based on the requirements listed in the OTM-R Toolkit, or OTM-R Report and following on from the initial analysis of the current state captured through the "OTM-R Checklist", will be monitored in the form of fulfilling the indicators listed.

All suggestions from the GAP analysis and the OTM-R checklist have been taken into account in the action plan. The links between the OTM-R checklist and the Action Plan are clearly evident from the need to develop the "RULES OF THE IMIC OTM-R SELECTION PROCEDURE" and the "PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS AT THE INSTITUTE OF MICROBIOLOGY CAS" to which the OTM-R checklist refers in points 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. One of the main objectives will be the minimisation of administrative burdens and the electronic transmission of supporting documents and the development of an e-recruitment tool. RULES OF THE IMIC OTM-R SELECTION PROCEDURE and PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS AT THE INSTITUTE OF MICROBIOLOGY CAS (Action 6) are currently being prepared. We also consider the regular publication of a New Employee Handbook and the development of an on-boarding plan (Actions 8 and 9) to be very important. The former is already published in both language versions (CZ/EN) on the intranet and distributed in printed form by the Personnel Department upon entry, and the latter is under development. All activities marked as ongoing (Actions 7, 16, 28 and 30) are continuously fulfilled.

Indicators are the clarification and updating of the intranet and the publication of all institutional documents in English, the creation of new binding OTM-R related documents mentioned above, the On-boarding Plan, and the IMIC Graphic Manual. Additional indicators are: the establishment of the institute of Ombudsman, and the adoption of IMIC Code of Ethics; conducting a regular gender audit; updating the New Employee Handbook; publishing a regular Newsletter; raising awareness of benefits and career development opportunities; continuing to announce prizes for the best research and student papers.

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:

**URL:**

<https://mbucas.cz/en/kariera/> (<https://mbucas.cz/en/kariera/>)

## 4. Implementation

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

The implementation phase starts in Q1/2024 with an introductory presentation to the entire IMIC research community. We are aware that good communication and collaboration with stakeholders is essential for a good understanding of the HRS4R principles and for achieving the goals. Therefore, all researchers (the Research Assembly) from R1-R4 were invited to this meeting, where initial discussions on the implementation of the first actions were held. The results of the GAP analysis and the action plan for the next two years (now extended to the end of 2026) were also presented. All planned actions will be continuously consulted, revised and updated according to the discussion between the HR Award team, the Research Assembly and specific staff (managerial, scientific or administrative).

We will use online questionnaires, face-to-face discussions and meetings as tools for these discussions. The working group will meet regularly to evaluate progress and potential risks. The Steering Committee will supervise the Working Group, coordinate and approve the implementation of the HRS4R principles in the institution. It will also be involved in fundamental strategic decisions. The Steering Committee will discuss the materials provided by the Working Team, define objectives and suggest how to implement them.

First of all, we will start with the revision of the OTM-R policy at the institution, which includes the creation of an OTM-R webpage (<https://mbucas.cz/en/kariera/>, [mbucas.cz/HRS4R](https://mbucas.cz/HRS4R)) to improve the recruitment process, e.g. a webpage with all relevant information related to the OTM-R, the creation of the Rules of the MBU OTM-R Selection Procedure and the Manual for the Recruitment and Selection of University-educated Staff in the Research Units of the IMIC (currently being finalised). According to the principles of the OTM-R, the current rules need to be revised and updated, in particular the composition of the selection committees and the related training. A checklist will be developed to provide feedback on the recruitment process. Most posts will be advertised through international channels. All these steps will make the selection process at IMIC more transparent. We plan to implement most of these measures in 2024 and 2025. Next, we will develop or adopt a code of ethics for the Institute. This work will continue in 2025 and 2026, together with other areas such as career development, working conditions, social security and welfare, and ethical and professional aspects. Most of these actions should be fully implemented by the end of 2026, but some may be fully implemented in the next period due to new and expected changes in Czech legislation. The redesign of the website and intranet will also require some investment in hardware and software, so it will not be a matter of weeks.

Awareness of new documents and regulations will be regularly monitored at the end of the year in which they are implemented. Employee satisfaction with the implementation of the Action Plan will also be monitored annually through anonymous online questionnaires, which will allow researchers to voice their concerns. These questionnaires will allow us to identify potential problems and ensure that we are moving in the right direction. Researchers will also have the opportunity to raise concerns directly with members of the Working Group or the Steering Committee throughout the implementation process.

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 Steering Committee coordinates the implementation of the HRS4R principles. It is responsible for proposing strategic decisions. During its meetings, the Committee discusses the proposals presented by the Working Group. The members of the Steering Committee are mostly the same as those of the Directors Collegium. Proposals relating to the documents, measures or actions prepared are presented to this committee. The Committee will then give feedback.

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



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

Researchers of all categories (R1-R4) are involved in all stages of implementation. They can discuss their suggestions and comments with their laboratory heads or directly with the members of the Director's College (meetings every 14 days). Important comments and suggestions are dealt with by the Board of IMIC (which meets monthly). If necessary, the GET team or the trade union are involved in the discussion.

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)**

Most of the HRS4R principles are already included in the functioning of the Institute. As mentioned in the GAP Analysis, the majority of C&C rules have been fully (15 of 40) implemented or almost but not fully (22 of 40) implemented. A procedure for the implementation of the other rules is defined in the Action Plan. Full implementation of HRS4R is planned up to Q4 2026. Within the strategic development of the Institution, HRS4R is fully considered.

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



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

From its beginning, the project has been and is highly supported by the wide management of the Institute. The Director participates in the Working Group and the Steering Committee and approved and supported the Action Plan. The Steering Committee and Working Group will be mainly responsible for the implementation of proposed actions within Action Plan, together, where appropriate, with the Institute's Board, Laboratory Heads and the Gender Equality Team or Trade Union. Implementation of the HRS4R principles is also supported by researchers from all categories who participated in the preparation of the GAP analysis. Most of the researchers consider the implementation of Action Plan as an excellent opportunity to improve the functioning of the Institute. The final establishment of the principles will be approved in accordance with the Organisational Rules of the IMIC.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?\*



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

The members of the working group are responsible for implementing the action plan, updating it and adhering to the schedule. The working group will analyse risks on a quarterly basis and propose steps to address them. The work of the Working Group will be monitored by the Steering Committee. As some members of the Steering Committee are also members of the Director's College, which meets regularly, progress will also be evaluated at the College meetings.

The members of the working group are in daily contact with other employees and are constantly analysing risks and proposing steps to eliminate them. The work of the Working Group is overseen by the Steering Committee.

The Director regularly informs the members of the College (which meets every 14 days) and the Board of the Institution (which meets every month) about the current status of the process, and adopted documents or rules are continuously published on the intranet.

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



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

For each action, we have defined indicators and targets which we would like to reach. We have also determined by when we would like to accomplish implementation. The Steering Committee will control and oversee the whole process.

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

All actions mentioned in the Action Plan are based on the developed GAP analysis, the OTM-R checklist and the GEP documents and will be further implemented according to new needs and realities as they arise.

Please note: Universities in the Czech Republic have their own legal framework, which differs significantly from that of research institutions. The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic is a research institution whose functioning is defined by its own law. Within the Czech Republic, institutes of the Academy of Sciences do not have the status of a higher education institution (educational institution), but may employ part-time students. The status of students in relation to the institute is an "employee" - "employer" relationship.