HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan

Action Plan

Case number

2024RO200614

Name Organisation under review

INCDTIM

Organisation’s contact details

Donat, 67-103, Cluj-Napoca, CLUJ, 400293, Romania

Submission date to the European Commission

28/06/2026

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 *	171
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	10
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	0
Of whom are women *	89
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) *	77
Of whom are R2 = recognised researcher (e.g. postdoctoral researcher, junior researcher) *	52
Of whom are R1 = first stage researcher (e.g. doctoral candidate, research apprentice) *	42
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff) *	236

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)	**€**
Total annual organisational budget	9352459
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	668265

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)	€
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	8478814
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	0

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

We are a Research and Innovation (R&I) institute with more than 75 years of expertise in technological progress. Our organization has a proven track record of providing advanced solutions across various scientific fields, encompassing fundamental research, applied sciences, and technology transfer. We concentrate on a broad spectrum of research domains, including Materials Science, Stable Isotopes, Food Safety, Renewable Energy and Environment, Nanofabrication, and Quantum Computing.Our interdisciplinary methodology, bolstered by cutting-edge facilities, enhances our adaptability and aligns us with current EU research priorities. We possess significant experience and expertise in tackling intricate challenges and promoting innovation.

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:

Freedom of Research: One of INCDTIM's strengths is maintaining a balance between research freedom and ethical responsibilities. Researchers enjoy the freedom to conduct research activities, supported by a well-defined regulatory framework that promotes respect for the rights of individuals involved in research.

Adherence to Ethical Principles and Research Integrity: *Research activities are supported by an updated institutional framework based on the Code of Ethics and Integrity (updated in 2025), which promotes transparency, fairness and responsible conduct in research. Internal monitoring mechanisms, including the Ethics and Integrity Committee and managerial oversight, contribute to ensuring compliance with ethical standards and institutional rules.*

Prevention of Plagiarism and Self-Plagiarism: INCDTIM has a strict policy against plagiarism and self-plagiarism. These practices are actively prevented and strictly sanctioned, while researchers are encouraged to adhere to the highest standards of scientific integrity.

Professional Responsibility: The INCDTIM Code of Ethics explicitly prohibits plagiarism and protects copyright. Special emphasis is placed on including all individuals who have made significant contributions to a scientific work. These measures support the development of a culture of professional responsibility and help strengthen trust in the integrity of research conducted within the institute.

Financial Management and Internal Control: INCDTIM has an internal managerial control system (SCIM) that ensures transparency and efficiency in the use of financial resources. The Financial Management Office and the Legal Office are responsible for ensuring financial and contractual compliance, providing support to researchers in fulfilling financial obligations. This system contributes to the more efficient use of resources, a crucial aspect for the success of research activities.

Support for researchers' development : INCDTIM actively supports continuous professional development through training opportunities, mentoring activities and institutional support mechanisms. Beginning with 2026, the International Projects Office contributes to strengthening researchers' access to European and international funding opportunities and supports participation in collaborative networks and project development initiatives.

Weaknesses:

Financial constraints: Dependence on national research, development and innovation (RDI) funding programmes, together with the limited predictability of funding opportunities, may affect the continuity of research activities and long-term strategic planning.

Need to strengthen institutional guidance on good research practices: *Although INCDTIM has an established institutional framework for research ethics and integrity, including the Code of Ethics, regulations on intellectual property rights, and applicable national guidelines, further development of practical guidance for researchers is needed to address aspects such as recognition of scientific contributions, responsible authorship, mentoring, Open Science, and research data management.*

Limited awareness regarding knowledge transfer and intellectual property rights (weakness – recalibrated 2026): *While Intellectual Property (IP) clauses are integrated into employment contracts, there is a need to transition from mere contractual compliance to an active culture of research valorization. Staff awareness regarding the practical application of these rights and knowledge transfer mechanisms requires further reinforcement through targeted training.*

Need to further integrate new research practices into internal procedures : *Current procedures require updating to provide practical guidance to researchers regarding modern concepts such as Open Science, Open Data, and ethics in co-authorship.*

Need for continuous training on research integrity: *Following the successful digital dissemination of the Code of Ethics (2024–2025), INCDTIM is now transitioning towards interactive professional development. As of 2026, the focus shifts to organizing periodic seminars and practical workshops to address complex ethical dilemmas, ensuring a robust and consistent culture of research integrity across all research groups.*

Researchers assessment, recruitment, and progression*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths:

Compliance with national and international legislation: The recruitment process is fully aligned with national legislation, including Law No. 183/2024 on the Status of Research, Development, and Innovation Personnel, ensuring legal compliance and a fair, transparent selection framework. In the 2025–2026 period, internal rules on recruitment, selection, promotion, and the OTM-R policy were updated and strengthened; however, their practical implementation is still being consolidated. These provisions define clear and transparent procedures, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and decision-making mechanisms governing all recruitment processes.

Accessibility and transparency of recruitment announcements: Recruitment advertisements are published on highly visible platforms, such as the official INCDTIM website, the Ministry of Education and Research portal (jobs.research.gov.ro), and Euraxess. Publishing through multiple channels ensures wide dissemination and accessibility for candidates from various parts of the world.

Transparent selection process: Recruitment announcements include clear information on job descriptions, required qualifications and competencies, the competition timeline, and specific job responsibilities. Competition results are published on the institute's official website, ensuring full transparency throughout the selection process.

Gender diversity and balance: The selection process promotes gender balance, supporting diversity and ensuring a fair, non-discriminatory recruitment framework. This is a key strength, particularly in research, where diversity enhances innovation and leads to more robust scientific perspectives and solutions.

OTM-R recruitment and selection policy: INCDTIM applies the updated (2026) principles of Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R), in line with current institutional regulations and European research staffing standards. These principles ensure open competition, equal opportunity, and selection based strictly on merit, competencies, and professional achievements, contributing to a high-quality research environment.

Equal access for all candidates: Recruitment competitions are open to all individuals who meet the specific job requirements, without discrimination of any kind. This reinforces inclusiveness and guarantees a fair and equitable selection process.

Postdoctoral and career development opportunities: INCDTIM provides structured opportunities for postdoctoral researchers, supporting continuous professional development and encouraging participation in both national and international research projects. These opportunities strengthen scientific careers and foster long-term research excellence.

Weaknesses:

Complexity of attracting researchers from abroad: *Attracting international researchers is a relatively complex and time-consuming process, influenced by administrative, procedural, and international mobility factors. This may lead to longer recruitment and integration timelines and requires ongoing efforts to simplify and optimize international recruitment procedures.*

Management of international applications submitted via Euraxess: In accordance with national legislation, recruitment is carried out exclusively through a dossier-based competition, which is mandatory for all candidates, including international applicants. Applications received via the Euraxess platform are often initially submitted in CV format, requiring candidates to subsequently complete the full application dossier in line with legal requirements. This additional step may result in extra administrative procedures and longer processing times, highlighting the need for clearer instructions and standardized communication regarding the mandatory submission of a complete application dossier for international candidates.

Insufficiently formalized post-selection feedback mechanism: *Although recruitment outcomes are published in a transparent manner, the provision of detailed individual feedback to candidates, upon request, is not yet regulated through a standardized procedure. Strengthening this aspect would support full alignment with OTM-R best practices and enhance the overall candidate experience.*

Working conditions and practices*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths

- Early Professional Recognition: Young researchers are employed with individual employment contracts within research projects, thus gaining access to continuous training, mentoring, and adequate resources (financial, educational, and infrastructure-related).

- Stimulating Research Environment: Investments in modern equipment and infrastructure contribute to creating a suitable environment for high-quality research. National and international collaborations are supported, and research topics are diverse. The Technology Transfer Center, accredited by the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization, provides support to researchers for valorizing their research results.

- Promotion of Work-Life Balance: INCDTIM ensures equal opportunities and treatment for women and men in their careers by providing fair working conditions and a balance between professional and personal life. This includes maternity protection, parental leave, and flexible working hours, in line with the provisions of the institute's collective labor agreement, gender equality strategy and action plan, and applicable legislation.

- Job Stability: Institute employees benefit from job stability, with most researchers employed under permanent individual labor contracts. Employees with fixed-term contracts enjoy the same rights and have the same obligations as those with permanent contracts. A procedure is in place to transition fixed-term contracts into permanent ones.

- Performance-Based Funding and Salaries: Salaries are determined based on performance within research projects, which motivates researchers to contribute actively and improve research outcomes. Researchers also benefit from social protection measures (paid leave in case of temporary work incapacity, maternity/paternity leave, pension and unemployment insurance contributions) in accordance with national legislation.

- Career Development Support: Training and mentoring are provided for early-career researchers, along with personalized guidance in project writing through the International Projects Management Office.

- International Mobility: Researchers are supported in participating in international exchanges and conferences, strengthening international collaboration networks.

Weaknesses:

Financial Fluctuations: Financial fluctuations hinder the implementation of a predictable salary system, as they may cause changes in available funds, affecting the stability of the salary fund.

Instability of Employment Contracts: Fixed-term contracts within research projects can create a sense of uncertainty in researchers' careers.

Lack of a Formal Feedback Mechanism: There is no formal mechanism for periodic feedback to gather suggestions from researchers, which would allow for continuous improvement of working conditions and career development.

Limited External Budget for Training: Although many internal training opportunities are offered, access to external specialized courses or international mobility may be limited due to the availability of funds.

Administrative and Bureaucratic Barriers: Excessively bureaucratic administrative processes may overwhelm researchers with administrative tasks, reducing the time they can devote to actual research activities.

Research careers and talent development*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths:

Continuous professional growth: INCDTIM facilitates researchers' access to various continuous training opportunities, including workshops, courses, seminars, and training sessions that cover not only scientific skills but also soft skills such as communication, project management, and leadership. This helps researchers stay up to date with the latest trends in their field and improve their transversal skills.

Development of transferable skills: Training in essential skills for the long-term success of researchers, such as career management, grant writing, research ethics, and science communication. These competencies are crucial for researchers to grow into leaders in their field.

Opportunities for International Professional Growth: Through researcher mobility and international exchanges, researchers gain global experience. Participation in international conferences and collaboration with external institutions significantly contribute to their professional growth.

Acknowledgment of Achievements and Performance Assessment: A transparent performance evaluation system provides researchers with constructive feedback on their achievements. This evaluation process supports career development and helps identify areas where additional training may be beneficial.

Weaknesses:

Limited access to training opportunities – access to training opportunities may be restricted based on researchers' status (junior vs. senior) and the available funding sources.

Insufficient financial resources for training – this represents a significant barrier for researchers, especially those at the beginning of their careers or employed on short-term contracts, who lack the budgets to attend external courses or international conferences.

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://en.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/ / https://ro.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/ (https://en.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/ / https://ro.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/)

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)
1.1 Ensuring the operational continuity of the Steering Committee (SC) and the Working Group (WG) Maintaining the revised institutional composition of the Steering Committee and Working Group as established in 2026 to ensure stable governance throughout the HRS4R process. 1.2 Execution of quarterly monitoring and reporting workflows. The Working Group develops progress reports, and the Supervisory Committee validates updates and communicates findings to the Scientific Council. 1.3 Updating the website with relevant information regarding the implementation of the HRS4R strategy.	(++) 1. Research freedom (++) 2. Ethical principles (++) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (++) 6. Accountability (-/+) 7. Good practice in research (++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 9. Public engagement (++) 10. Non discrimination (-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (++) 12. Recruitment (++) 13. Recruitment (Code) (++) 14. Selection (Code) (++) 15. Transparency (Code)	Continous (Updated June 2026)

Proposed actions

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(++) 16. Judging merit (Code)	
(++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	
(++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	
(++) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	
(++) 20. Seniority (Code)	
(++) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	
(++) 22. Recognition of the profession	
(++) 23. Research environment	
(++) 24. Working conditions	
(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment	
(++) 26. Funding and salaries	
(++) 27. Gender balance	
(+/-) 28. Career development	
(++) 29. Value of mobility	
(++) 30. Access to career advice	

Proposed actions

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(++) 31. Intellectual Property Rights	
(++) 32. Co-authorship	
(++) 33. Teaching	
(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals	
(-/+) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	
(-/+) 36. Relation with supervisors	
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties	
(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development	
(-/+) 40. Supervision	

Proposed actions

	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	A 1.1. President of the Scientific Council - Process Coordinator Steering Committee Working Group A 1.2 . Working Group, Supervisory Committee A 1.3 Human Resources Specialist – communication of information to the INCDTIM Database Manager	A 1.1 Formal decision/decree designating the personnel actively involved in the HRS4R process. A 1.2 100% of progress reports developed and validated quarterly Documents / Deliverables - Meeting minutes, validated progress reports A 1.3 Maintaining a constantly updated bilingual web portal Documents / Deliverables: RO: Portal web bilingv activ (https://ro.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/). EN: Active bilingual web portal (https://ro.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/).

Proposed actions

Action 2	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Ethical and Proffesional Aspects - Implementation of the updated institutional framework on ethics and research integrity. A 2.1 Annual digital information campaigns and reconfirmation of the Code of Ethics acknowledgment.	(++) 2. Ethical principles (++) 3. Professional responsibility (-/+) 7. Good practice in research	Permanent / Annually (starting 2026); integrated into the induction process.

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
President of the Ethics Committee Suport - HR Specialist, Legal Advisor	100% of R&D staff informed regarding the Code of Ethics; Annual reports by the Ethics Committee. Documents / Deliverables: Digital acknowledgment forms, updated Code of Ethics, Annual Ethics Committee reports.

Proposed actions

Action 3	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
A 3.1 Occupational Risk Management and OSH Monitoring / Managementul riscurilor profesionale și monitorizarea SSM A 3.1.1 Enhancing safety in laboratories and optimizing OSH Committee (CSSM) activities. A 3.1.2 Finalizing risk assessments for all staff categories, updating protocols for precursors/hazardous substances, and monitoring compliance through joint annual inspections. A 3.2 OSH Training Program and International Researcher Inclusion A 3.2.1 Implementation of the flexible OSH training program and linguistic adaptation. A 3.1.2 Organization of periodic differentiated training sessions and mandatory English training for non-EU staff.	(-/+) 7. Good practice in research (++) 10. Non discrimination (++) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions	Permanent (Finalizing risk assessments by S2 2027)

Proposed actions

	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	A 3.1 Responsible: OSH Risk Assessor / OSH personnel. Support: Department Heads, Occupational Health and Safety Committee (CSSM). A 3.2 Responsible: OSH personnel, Department Heads. Support: Human Resources Department.	A 3.1 KPIs / Target 1. 100% risk assessments; 2. 4 CSSM meetings/year + 1 annual review; 3. 100% laboratories inspected annually. Documente / Deliverables: Risk assessment reports, Precursors protocol, specific OSH instructions (IPSSM), CSSM meeting minutes and control reports. A 3.2 1. Participation rate >80-100% via flexible mechanisms; 2. 100% of international researchers trained in English before starting activity. Documente / Deliverables: Annual training plan, Individual training records signed in two phases, English support materials.

Proposed actions

Action 4	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Integrated IT Governance and Cybersecurity - Development and implementation of an integrated procedure for IT administration and security Securing digital infrastructure through access regulation, research data protection, and business continuity (aligned with the NIS2 Directive)	(-/+) 7. Good practice in research (++) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions	S1 2027 (with annual monitoring and auditing)

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
A 4 Responsible: Head of IT / Data Center, IT Department. Support: SCIM Manager, Data Protection Officer (DPO)	KPIs / Target Action 4 1 integrated procedure approved via SCIM; 2. Min. 1 internal IT audit/year; 3. 0 unaddressed major security incidents. Documente / Deliverables: IT procedure (NIS2 aligned), Backup and Disaster Recovery Plan, Access and incident logs, Internal audit reports.

Proposed actions

Action 5	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Development of a methodology regarding data protection (GDPR)	(-/+) 7. Good practice in research	S 2 / 2027

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: Data Protection Officer (DPO) Support: IT / Data Center Department, Legal Department	Institutional GDPR methodology, Proof of dissemination (Google Forms confirmation)

Proposed actions

Action 6	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Strengthening Participation in Innovation Clusters and Networks Proposed Action Strengthening INCDTIM's participation in innovation clusters and national/international thematic networks Description Leveraging institutional structures (CTT and International Projects Office) to increase the impact and exploitation of research results	(++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (-/+) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	Permanent

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Lead responsible unit - International Projects Office Suporting units - General Director, Scientific Council, Technology Transfer Centre	Number of new partnerships

Proposed actions

Action 7	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2026–2029 / Strategia privind Egalitatea de Gen 2026–2029 Proposed Action Drafting the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2026–2029 Description Developing the official institutional strategy and raising researchers' awareness regarding gender equality and equal opportunities principles within INCDTIM.	(++) 10. Non discrimination	Q4 2026

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: Legal Advisor - Gender Equality Officer.	KPIs / Target 1. 100% research staff informed; 2. Official adoption of the GEP by leadership Documente / Deliverables: Approved GEP 2026–2029, Information/dissemination materials, Validation meeting minutes.

Proposed actions

Action 8	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Scientific Performance Evaluation Regulation Proposed Action Finalization and approval of the Scientific Performance Evaluation Regulation (in accordance with Law 183/2024) Description Drafting the regulation in line with Law 183/2024 and the European Charter for Researchers, followed by submission to ANC for endorsement	(-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties (-/+) 40. Supervision	S2 / 2025 – 1 / 2026 – S2 / 2026 – S1 / 2027

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: President of the Scientific Council. Support: Scientific Council, HR Specialist, Legal Advisor	Regulation drafted, approved, and applied; transparent evaluation criteria for R&D staff (100% aligned with Law 183/2024) Documents / Deliverables: Proof of submission to ANC; Regulation endorsed by ANC and approved by the Board; Publication on the internal portal.

Proposed actions

Action 9	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Alignment of Employment Contracts (CIM) with Law 183/2024 Proposed Action Alignment of individual employment contracts with Law 183/2024 regarding R&D staff evaluation Description Introducing clauses regarding individualized R&D objectives and sanctioning clauses into employment contracts/addenda, correlated with the 3-year cycle and the principle of non-cumulative criteria	(++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems	S1 / 2028 (Subsequent to ANC endorsement of the evaluation regulation)

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: HR Specialist. Support: Legal Advisor, Scientific Council	100% of employment contracts updated/compliant within 90 days of the new Evaluation Regulation entry into force Documents / Deliverables: Updated templates for employment contracts/addenda, Implementation procedure

Proposed actions

Action 10	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Monitoring Compliance with Law 183/2024 and OTM-R Principles Proposed Action Monitoring the implementation of Law 183/2024, HG 1568/2024, HG 1569/2024, and INCDTIM regulations Description Ensuring legal compliance, transparency, non-discrimination, and meritocracy in the recruitment, selection, and career advancement of R&D staff	(++) 2. Ethical principles (++) 10. Non discrimination (-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (++) 12. Recruitment (++) 13. Recruitment (Code) (++) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 28. Career development	Permanent / Annual reporting starting Q1/2027

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: HR Specialist. Support: Legal Advisor, Ethics Committee, Scientific Council.	100% of recruitment competitions and promotion exams organized in full compliance with the new methodological norms. Documents / Deliverables: Annual summary reports on recruitment competitions (Art. 21 HG 1568/2024) and promotion exams (Art. 18 HG 1569/2024)

Proposed actions

Proposed actions

Action 11	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Maintaining OTM-R Policy Implementation Proposed Action Maintaining the implementation of the OTM-R Policy harmonized with the European Charter for Researchers. Description Ensuring the continuity and rigorous application of OTM-R standards across all stages of attracting, selecting, and integrating research staff.	(++) 2. Ethical principles (++) 10. Non discrimination (-/+) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (++) 12. Recruitment (++) 13. Recruitment (Code) (++) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 28. Career development	Permanent / Ongoing

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: HR Specialist. Support: Legal Advisor, Ethics Committee, Scientific Council.	1. Mandatory publication on EURAXESS/website; 2. Diversity in selection committees; 3. 100% recruitment procedures OTM-R compliant Documents / Deliverables: Updated 2026 OTM-R Policy, Competition reports, Evaluation grids, Minutes, Final compliance reports.

Proposed actions

Action 12	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Continuous Training of Competition Committee Members Proposed Action Mandatory delivery (email) of the OTM-R Guide and evaluation instructions (avoiding bias, recognizing mobility) alongside the Appointment Decree	(++) 12. Recruitment (++) 13. Recruitment (Code) (++) 16. Judging merit (Code)	Permanent (for every organized competition)

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: HR Specialist	1. 100% receipt of training package; 2. 100% acknowledgment rate; 3. Guide integrated into the digital workflow. Documents / Deliverables: Standardized emails and written acknowledgments (attached to the competition file)

Proposed actions

Action 13	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Development of the Internal Guide for Best Practices in Research Proposed Action Development and implementation of an Internal Guide for Best Practices in Research Description Developing a complementary document providing practical guidance on: research integrity, co-authorship, mentorship, Open Science/Data, and professional responsibility.	(++) 2. Ethical principles (++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 22. Recognition of the profession (+/-) 28. Career development (++) 30. Access to career advice (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties (++) 38. Continuing Professional Development (-/+) 40. Supervision	Q4 / 2027 (with periodic review)

Proposed actions

	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Responsible: Scientific Director, President of the Scientific Council. Support: HR, CTT, Ethics Committee.	1. Guide endorsed/approved; 2. 100% researcher access; 3. Min. 1 annual training session; 4. Periodic review. Documents / Deliverables: Internal Best Practices Guide, Participation reports for training sessions, Evidence of review

Proposed actions

Action 14	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Actiunea 14 Enhancing Awareness of Knowledge Transfer and Intellectual Property Proposed Action Enhancing Awareness of Knowledge Transfer and Intellectual Property Rights. Description Organizing training/information sessions for R&D staff regarding IPR, knowledge transfer, and best practices in dissemination	(++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (++) 32. Co-authorship	Annually

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: Technology Transfer Center Coordinator.	1. Min. 1 annual session on IPR/patenting; 2. Min. 60% participation of active R&D staff (R1-R4) Deliverables Training materials (IPR guides), Attendance lists, Monitoring of registered patents (indirect indicator)

Proposed actions

Action 15	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Actiunea 15 Increasing Decision-Making Transparency Proposed Action Increasing decision-making transparency through the annual balance-sheet meeting Description Integrating open dialogue sessions into the balance-sheet meeting to explain decision-making flows and mechanisms for influencing institutional strategy.	(-/+) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	Annually (Q1 / Q2).

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: General Director	1. One annual meeting organized; 2. Min. 80% active R&D staff participation. Deliverables Visual materials/PPT on decision-making flow, Annual Activity Report published on the website.

Proposed actions

Action 16	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Anonymous Reporting System Proposed Action Implementation of an anonymous reporting system for irregularities Description Implementation of a secure and confidential channel for researchers to report irregularities, unethical behavior, or seek procedural clarifications.	(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals	Q4 2026 – Q1 2027

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible: Ethics Committee, Integrity Officer.	1. Technical implementation of the platform; 2. 100% of reports analyzed per internal procedure; 3. Confidence level measured via surveys Deliverables Internal procedure (whistleblower protection), Annual statistical report (anonymized), Information guides

Proposed actions

Action 17	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Action 17 Strengthening the Mentoring System and Professional Development of Early-Career Researchers (R1/R2) A 17. 1 Develop and approve an institutional Mentoring Guide defining mentor and researcher roles, meeting frequency and monitoring mechanisms A 17. 2 Formal assignment of mentors to each R1/R2 researcher and organization of regular mentoring meetings A 17. 3 Develop and implement a digital Individual Development Plan (IDP) A 17.4 Organize training courses and workshops on mentoring, scientific leadership and research management	(+/-) 28. Career development (++) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	A 17.1 S 1 / 2027 A 17.2 S 1/ 2027 A 17. 3 S 1/2027 start ongoing A 17.4 2027 - 2029

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Responsible Unit Scientific Director Support Scientific Council R3/R4 Coordinators Human Resources Department	A 17.1 KPIs / Target Mentoring Guide approved and implemented Documents / Deliverables Mentoring Guide; internal procedure A 17.2 KPIs / Target 100% of R1/R2 researchers assigned a mentor; minimum 4 meetings/year Documents / Deliverables Internal assignment decisions; progress reports A 17. 3 KPIs / Target IDP template implemented; minimum 90% annual completion rate Documents / Deliverables IDP template; digital platform; annual reports A 17. 4 KPIs / Target Minimum 2 sessions/year; participation ≥70% Training programmes; attendance lists; certificates

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).*

Commitment to OTM-R Principles

*INCDTIM is fully committed to the **Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)** framework, regarding it as a cornerstone of our human resources strategy and an essential element for achieving institutional excellence. By integrating the OTM-R Toolkit into our organizational culture, we ensure that our selection procedures are not only compliant with European standards but also optimized to attract high-caliber researchers.*

Key Implementation Measures:

- ***Systemic Transparency:** We guarantee the mandatory publication of all research positions (R1–R4) on both institutional platforms and international portals (e.g., EURAXESS), ensuring global visibility and increasing the diversity of the candidate pool.*
- ***Standardized Meritocracy:** Each vacancy is accompanied by a detailed description of responsibilities, requirements, and selection criteria. This approach eliminates ambiguity and provides candidates with a clear understanding of the institute's expectations from the application stage.*
- ***Objective Evaluation Framework:** We utilize standardized evaluation grids and multi-stage selection procedures. This mechanism ensures that every candidate is assessed exclusively based on professional competencies, thereby guaranteeing impartiality and objectivity.*
- ***Continuous Improvement Cycle:** We consider recruitment to be a dynamic process. We periodically review our procedures to identify potential bottlenecks and refine our approach, ensuring consistent alignment with both OTM-R principles and current national legislation.*

Integration into the Action Plan:

*The **OTM-R Checklist** served as a diagnostic tool to identify current gaps, which we have directly addressed within our **Institutional Action Plan**. Specifically, our commitments regarding the maintenance of recruitment policies (**Action 11**) and the mandatory training of selection committees (**Action 12**) form the operational bridge between OTM-R requirements and our daily practice.*

The implementation of these measures is monitored by a dedicated working group that reports directly to the Steering Committee, ensuring that OTM-R principles remain not merely formal policies, but are actively integrated into the long-term strategy of our institution.

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:

4. Implementation

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

The implementation of the INCDTIM HRS4R Action Plan is a strategic institutional priority, built upon a structured governance framework and a culture of continuous dialogue. Following the revision of our HRS4R documentation in May–June 2026 (WP5), we have refined our operational mechanisms to ensure effective progress monitoring and cross-departmental coordination.

Governance and Coordination Mechanisms

The implementation is overseen by two specialized bodies, updated in 2026 to ensure institutional continuity:

Steering Committee (SC): Acts as the strategic authority, responsible for validating revisions to the Action Plan and monitoring implementation progress. The SC meets quarterly, with regular sessions scheduled in March, June, September, and December, and decisions are formally documented in meeting minutes.

Working Group (WG): Responsible for the operational implementation of all actions. The WG collects and analyzes data, monitors key performance indicators (KPIs), and prepares progress reports. The WG also meets quarterly, with dedicated working sessions for each strategic action area.

Liaison and Reporting: The President of the Scientific Council serves as the process coordinator, acting as the primary liaison between the SC and the WG. To ensure an efficient flow of information, progress documents and implementation updates are submitted to the SC at least seven days prior to each quarterly meeting, and the coordinator participates in SC meetings as a rapporteur. Minutes from SC and WG meetings are distributed to all relevant members within three to five working days.

Implementation Roadmap and Sustainability

Building on the progress achieved between April 2025 and June 2026, the implementation process is structured to ensure that HRS4R principles become embedded in our institutional daily operations.

Operational Integration: Our Action Plan is structured around three strategic priorities: ethical/professional aspects, recruitment/career development, and institutional visibility/excellence.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Success is measured through specific indicators and the ongoing review of implementation progress. The SC maintains the authority to adjust the Action Plan based on reports provided by the WG, ensuring the strategy remains responsive to the needs of the research community.

Transparency: All HRS4R documents, including the Action Plan and progress updates, are published on our dedicated institutional website (https://en.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/ (https://en.itim-cj.ro/hrs4r/)), with direct access provided from the institute's homepage to ensure full transparency for all stakeholders.

Commitment to Excellence

INCDTIM views the implementation of the Charter and Code as a dynamic process rather than a static administrative requirement. By maintaining rigorous communication channels between our governance bodies and ensuring broad engagement from R1 to R4 researchers, we remain committed to fostering a meritocratic, supportive, and transparent research environment.

Risk Management and Mitigation

To ensure the successful implementation of the Action Plan, INCDTIM has adopted a proactive approach to risk management, ensuring that potential operational challenges are addressed through our established governance structure:

Risk of Departmental Misalignment: This is mitigated by the coordinating role of the President of the Scientific Council, who acts as the primary liaison between the Steering Committee (SC) and the Working Group (WG), ensuring a unified approach across all research departments.

Risk of Implementation Delays: We manage this through our mandatory quarterly monitoring system. Progress reports are submitted to the SC at least seven days prior to our fixed quarterly meetings (March, June, September, December), allowing for the early identification of bottlenecks.

Risk of Declining Stakeholder Engagement: This is addressed through annual balance-sheet meetings and open-dialogue sessions. Furthermore, we maintain full transparency by publishing all HRS4R documentation on our dedicated website, with direct access from the institute's homepage.

Risk of KPI Non-compliance: The Steering Committee holds formal authority to review progress reports and validate corrective actions. This ensures that if any performance indicator is at risk of not being met, the SC can reallocate resources or adjust methodologies to keep the Action Plan on track.

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 Steering Committee (SC) and the Working Group (WG) oversee the progress of the Action Plan through the following regular mechanisms:

Quarterly Meeting Schedule: Both the Steering Committee and the Working Group meet on a quarterly basis, with regular sessions scheduled in March, June, September, and December of each implementation year.

Progress Reporting: The Working Group is responsible for preparing progress reports, which are submitted to the Steering Committee at least seven days prior to each quarterly meeting.

Documentation and Transparency: All decisions made by the Steering Committee and the progress updates are documented in formal meeting minutes.

Communication Flow: Minutes from these meetings are distributed to all members of the Steering Committee and the Working Group within three to five working days following each meeting.

Coordination Mechanism: To ensure effective oversight, the President of the Scientific Council acts as the process coordinator and participates in all Steering Committee meetings as a rapporteur to maintain a direct flow of information.

Corrective Authority: The Steering Committee has the authority to review these progress reports and validate any necessary revisions or adjustments to the Action Plan to ensure the institutional objectives are met.

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

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

INCDTIM intends to involve the research community in the implementation process through the following methods and structures:

Continuous Engagement via Dedicated Working Group (WG): The WG, which is responsible for the operational implementation of the HRS4R process, includes researchers from R1 to R4, ensuring that the research community is directly represented in data collection, documentation, and the monitoring of implementation indicators.

Structured Feedback Loops: The institute utilizes quarterly working sessions to address each strategic action area, allowing researchers involved in the WG to provide ongoing feedback and input.

Annual Balance-Sheet Meetings: As established in the implementation roadmap, the institute holds annual balance-sheet meetings with integrated open-dialogue sessions to maintain an open communication channel with the broader research community.

Institutional Representation: The President of the Scientific Council acts as the process coordinator, serving as a liaison to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of researchers are channeled from the working levels to the Steering Committee.

Transparency and Open Information: All HRS4R documents, including the Action Plan and progress updates, are published on the dedicated institutional website, with direct access from the homepage, ensuring that all stakeholders remain informed about the implementation status.

Corrective Participation: By providing these open forums and feedback mechanisms, the institute ensures that the Action Plan remains a "living document" that adapts to the evolving needs and priorities identified by the research community.

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)

INCDTIM ensures the alignment of organizational policies with HRS4R through a structured integration process that embeds these principles into the core institutional strategy. The approach involves the following steps:

Integration as an Overarching HR Policy: The HRS4R strategy is recognized as the cornerstone of our human resources policy, ensuring that all recruitment, training, and career development initiatives are aligned with the principles of the Charter and Code.

Alignment with Institutional Strategy: The Steering Committee (SC) ensures that HRS4R priorities are integrated into organizational planning and governance mechanisms, thereby positioning it as the overarching framework for the institute's research strategy.

Gap Analysis as a Diagnostic Tool: The OTM-R Checklist and the Gap Analysis served as foundational diagnostic tools to identify inconsistencies between existing practices and European standards, which were subsequently addressed and synchronized within the formal Institutional Action Plan.

Legislative and Internal Synchronization: The Working Group (WG) ensures that all internal policies remain compliant with current national legislation (such as Law 183/2024) while simultaneously maintaining strict adherence to HRS4R principles.

Validation and Oversight: The Scientific Council and the management bodies review implementation feasibility, ensuring that HRS4R-related changes are consistently applied across all research departments and administrative structures.

Transparent Communication and Visibility: By publishing all HRS4R documents, including the Action Plan, on the institute's website with direct homepage access, INCDTIM confirms the organizational commitment to HRS4R as the primary HR policy for the research community.

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

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

To ensure the effective implementation of the proposed actions, INCDTIM utilizes a rigorous governance and monitoring framework:

Dedicated Governance Structure: The Steering Committee (SC) provides strategic oversight and validates revisions, while the Working Group (WG) manages the operational implementation of all actions.

Quarterly Monitoring: Implementation is tracked through mandatory quarterly meetings (March, June, September, and December), where progress is formally assessed.

Reporting and Liaison: The Working Group submits progress reports to the Steering Committee at least seven days prior to each quarterly meeting. The President of the Scientific Council acts as the process coordinator and rapporteur, ensuring a continuous flow of information between the groups.

Formal Decision-Making: All progress and decisions are documented in meeting minutes, which are distributed to members within three to five working days. The Steering Committee holds the authority to validate adjustments or corrective actions to keep the Action Plan on track.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

To monitor progress effectively, INCDTIM follows a structured timeline based on the following framework:

Quarterly Reviews: Implementation progress is tracked through mandatory quarterly meetings scheduled for March, June, September, and December.

Structured Reporting: The Working Group prepares and submits progress reports to the Steering Committee at least seven days before each quarterly meeting.

Documentation and Feedback: Meeting minutes, which document the status of actions and any necessary adjustments, are distributed to the Steering Committee and Working Group members within three to five working days following each session.

Oversight Coordination: The President of the Scientific Council acts as the process coordinator and rapporteur to ensure a consistent flow of information and maintain adherence to the established timeline.

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

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

To measure progress in the HRS4R action plan, specific indicators will be used for each action or goal outlined in the plan.

- Number of vacancies published on the EURAXESS portal (for recruitment-related actions).
- Percentage of researchers attending training sessions (for capacity-building actions).
- Percentage increase in satisfaction among internal stakeholders (for overall organizational improvement).
- Number of mentoring programs and career development plans implemented (for actions related to career development).
- Survey results or feedback from external candidates (for assessing attractiveness and mobility).

These indicators will be reviewed periodically (semi-annually) to assess progress toward achieving the objectives of the HRS4R action plan.

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

The implementation of the Action Plan at INCDTIM will involve collaboration across all departments within the institute, with each department head being responsible for ensuring the fulfillment of specific objectives. INCDTIM considers the implementation of the Charter and Code a collective effort, not the responsibility of a single individual or a small group. Researchers will be actively involved in the implementation process through the organization of informational sessions, workshops, and discussions on relevant topics. Many of these sessions will be available online on the institute's virtual platforms, ensuring accessibility for the entire community. This collaborative approach will allow the Working Group and the Steering Committee to collect continuous feedback from internal staff, guiding the progress evaluation process and facilitating real-time adjustments where necessary.

Continuous monitoring of progress is essential for ensuring transparency and compliance with international standards. Thus, INCDTIM will implement a periodic internal monitoring system, which will enable the evaluation of the effectiveness of measures and support the preparation process for external evaluations. In this way, it will ensure that the Action Plan remains relevant and aligned with the institution's strategic objectives.

By aligning the Action Plan with the principles of the Charter and Code, INCDTIM strengthens its commitment to excellence in research, development, and international engagement. This alignment reflects the institute's desire to foster a progressive and collaborative environment, essential for its vision of becoming a leader in applied scientific research, particularly in the institute's fields of interest.

To support the attraction of a more diverse candidate pool and to enhance the quality of research teams, INCDTIM will implement measures aimed at increasing the visibility of job opportunities. These measures will include, among others, the continued promotion of job offers on international recruitment platforms such as EURAXESS. Additionally, international mobility of researchers and knowledge exchange will be encouraged, contributing to the improvement of research quality.

The implementation and integration of the OTM-R checklist in the Action Plan will ensure that all recruitment and selection processes are in line with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This initiative underscores INCDTIM’s commitment to creating a fair, diverse, and high-performance work environment