

## Internal Review

**Case number:** 2023RO111493

**Name Organisation under review:** Institutul National de Cercetare-Dezvoltare pentru Fizica Materialelor

**Organisation's contact details:** Atomistilor 405A, Magurele, Ilfov, 077125, Romania

Date endorsement charter and code: 12/06/2023

### 1. Organisational Information

Please provide an update of the 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 *	230
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	32
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	24
Of whom are women *	115
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	77
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	73
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	70
Total number of students (if relevant) *	-
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	294

<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)</b>	<b>€</b>
Total annual organisational budget	11,754,188
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research infrastructure)	359,236
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	11,179,024
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	215,928

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

Institutul National de Cercetare-Dezvoltare pentru Fizica Materialelor (English name is National Institute of Materials Physics-NIMP) is a self-funding government research organization.

Its mission is:

- The preparation, characterization and study of the physical properties of new materials connected to high technology products and devices
- The development of analytical techniques and methods applied in materials science
- Training of young scientists, PhD and MSc students, students and technicians
- Supply the public institutions and companies with the Institutes R&D know-how and expertise
- Collaboration with the universities and other higher education establishments
- Development of international collaboration, especially based on EU funded projects



## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the four thematic areas of the Charter and Code, as provided by your organisation in the initial assessment phase. When doing so, you should do not only look back, but also consider new priorities, strategic decisions, etc. which may further influence the action plan. Please also provide a brief commentary in the "Remarks" column if major changes have occurred versus the initial plan.

**Ethical and professional aspects:**

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

NIMP is an elite research institute in Romania, recognized both nationally and internationally for its highly specialized human resource and performant research infrastructure. The institute adhered to the highest ethical standards in the research activity, in conformity with the national legislation (law 183/2024) and European good practices. It has an internal ethical code (see <https://infim.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/REGULAMENT-ETICA.pdf>) and a working ethical commission. The ethical code is also translated in English, see at <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/>.

The main strength is that all the researchers follow the ethical rules, in the last 10 years being one single case to judge for the ethical commission (see <https://infim.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/decizia-comisiei-de-analiza.pdf>).

No weakness is foreseen.

Remarks (max 500 words)

**Recruitment and selection:**

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

The main strength is that NIMP has implemented in the last 10 years an open, transparent and merit based recruitment plan. There are specific rules and regulation for employing researchers of different degrees, starting from assistant researcher up to equivalent professors or principal investigators, as well as engineers working as auxiliary personnel in R&D activities (see <https://infim.ro/en/rules-and-regulations/>, for the research personnel, these rules and procedures are translated in English and available at <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/>; for engineers a new procedure has to be adopted in the next year, to comply with the new law 183/2024 that abolished former positions of engineer for technological development and introduced positions for research engineers). The new law differentiates now between hiring new personnel on vacant positions and promoting already employed personnel on a superior position. Minimum modifications are foreseen in the internal rules and procedures when the general methodologies for hiring and promotion will be adopted by Government decision. The new law 183/2024 explains the equivalence between the Romanian hierarchy of researchers (scientific researchers rank I, II, III and simple scientific researcher) and the nomenclature used in EU (R4, R3, R2, R1, see <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors>). In Romania there is a position, assistant scientific researcher (ACS) that is not present in the EU nomenclature, and that refers to peoples having bachelor or master degree and that are not yet enrolled as PhD students. For hiring ACS, the most promising candidates are selected based on the results in the high education institution, a presentation of their bachelor or master dissertation and an interview. The selected candidates are employed for limited term and have to follow training courses, with examination after 6 months. After this first filter, the successful candidates start to work in research under the supervision of a senior researcher. After two years they present their results and a decision is taken if the contract end or is transformed in a permanent one. For R1, R2, R3 and R4 specific rules apply, in agreement with national regulations for R3 and R4 (new law 183/2024 and Ministry Order 6129/2016), and internal rules and procedures for R2 and R1 (see more explanations in the document entitled **“Recruitment and Selection Policy of Personnel at the National Institute of Materials Physics (Institutul National de Cecetare-Dezvoltare pentru Fizica Materialelor in Romanian, acronym in English is NIMP)”**, available at [https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/ together with internal rules and procedures for hiring/promoting researchers](https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/together-with-internal-rules-and-procedures-for-hiring/promoting-researchers)). The required level of expertise is detailed in the advertise for the open position. The main criterion for hiring/promotion is the merit, considering all aspects of a research career (publications, highlights of the most important results, PI in projects, training abilities for young researchers, international visibility, citations, invited lectures, prizes, etc.). All these procedures are functioning well and the governing bodies of the institute are satisfied with the results, including the fact that more and more researchers from abroad are attracted to work in the institute, especially from the less developed countries in Africa, Asia or countries that are not member of EU.

The new law 183/2024 clarify also the post-doc level in Romania, which corresponds to Scientific Researcher rank III (CS III-obligatory to have a PhD title) or to a Scientific Researcher (CS) holding a PhD title. The new law sets also the number of members in the evaluation/selection commissions to 5 for R3 and R4 (CS II and CS I in Romania, see articles 21(3) and 22(2), out of which 3 members are from outside NIMP. For R1 and R2 the commissions are set to 4 members in the internal rules and procedures for hiring/promotion, one being from outside NIMP. The commissions are proposed by the Scientific Director, approved by the Scientific Council and the Administration Council, and nominated by decision of the General Director. Although no gender balance is imposed by the law, NIMP has taken care that at least one member of the commission is female (on average were 2 members at the last three exams for promotion or competitions for hiring).

The main weakness is that the announcements advertising the open positions published on the NIMP’s web page are only in Romanian, this aspect will be corrected in the future and the announcements will be published both in Romanian and English. However, we are obliged to publish announcements on Euraxess also, and these announcements are in English also, see for example <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/group/6102/nodes>).

Other weaknesses: the 3 years limit for limited term contracts (see [https://www.codulmuncii.ro/titul\\_2/capitolul\\_6\\_1.html](https://www.codulmuncii.ro/titul_2/capitolul_6_1.html)); complicated procedures to obtain visas and work permits for researchers coming from outside EU; the absence of independent members (not employed in the institute) in the Scientific Council, to have an objective view over the recruitment procedures.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Taking into consideration all the aspects mentioned above, we feel that there are only a few aspects that need to be addressed in the action plan: 1) conceiving a data management plan for the primary experimental data and other sensitive data; 2) conceiving a procedure to monitor all the projects at the level of Scientific Council, without impeding the freedom of researchers to apply for funding at different calls; 3) reinforce the internal regulatory code and nominating a commission to take care of disciplinary actions against those who do not respect the internal rules; 4) conceiving a procedure for protection of personnel data and a procedure to decide which data may be subject to IPR applications; 5) conceive a plan for professional development; 6) improve the actions for public engagement (e.g. by newsletters and posts on social media); 7) select honorary members in the Scientific Council to help NIMP in keeping good practices in the strategic development, including HR policy; 8) publish the open positions in Romanian and English; 9) yearly monitoring of OTP-R policy, with all its aspects.

### **Working conditions:**

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

The working conditions are nearly excellent in NIMP. The working environment is friendly and encouraging cooperation between the staff members. A collective work agreement is negotiated every 2 years between the institute top management and the representatives of the union of researchers, including the salaries and other benefits. There is also a procedure to evaluate the professional performance of the researchers, already accepted and working very well for more than 10 years. The evaluation is performed in the first quarter of each year, considering the results of the previous 3 calendar years (it is considered that the research work has many unknown variables, e.g. the calendar for project calls, the number of publications, patent requests, conference participations, other activities, one year can be with better results than another, therefore the performance is weighted for a period of three years to allow a proper and correct evaluation). The procedure is based on criteria and quantitative indicators and thresholds, taking into considerations all the aspects of the research activity (ability to attract funds, publication number and the scientometric indicators of the journals where the work was published, citations, patent and patent applications, other activities with impact on the institutional evaluation results). The indicators are refined periodically, after negotiation with the research personnel represented by the Scientific Council. The last version, translated in English, is available at <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/>. The results of the evaluation reflect in bonuses to salary for the next 12 months, until the next evaluation. A similar procedure is in place for the auxiliary and administration personnel.

Another strength is the equilibrated gender balance with almost equal numbers of female and male researchers. The males are somewhat dominant at R3 and R4 level (the average age is also higher, reflecting somehow the mentality of the past, when more males were working in research), while female are dominant at R1 and R2 level. However, this situation will change in the coming years, considering that many of the male researchers at R4 and R3 level will retire, while many of the females at R1 or R2 level will promote to higher positions. The institute cannot impose gender quota; this will be totally against a merit based selection. What can do the institute is to organize periodically, preferably yearly, promotion exams for those fulfilling the required criteria and thresholds for promotion on a superior position.

The institute has a good IT infrastructure, ensuring email and internet access to all employees. The IT infrastructure is periodically updated and is served by 4 specialized persons.

The institute ensures very good working conditions for disabled persons (ramps, elevator). Also, is taking care of female or male researchers with child, or having in care other persons, ensuring flexible working hours, including remote work from home when necessary (these facilities are stipulated in the collective work contract and in the internal regulatory code, available at <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/>). Sabbatical leave is also possible for up to 12 months, without affecting the position at NIMP (the individual work contract is suspended for the period of sabbatical leave).

Each new employee is instructed on the safety rules in the institute, as well as with specific safety rules that apply to the working place, if necessary (e.g. working with lasers or with cryogenic equipment). Periodic safety trainings are held by a persons nominated by the top management of NIMP to take care with the implementation of the safety and security rules in NIMP.

Another strength is that NIMP is ensuring periodic medical tests (these are imposed by the national Code of Work), to assess the health status of the personnel. The costs are supported by NIMP and helps the employees to detect in time potential health problems that may aggravate if not correctly tackled. Efforts were made to separate the experimental labs from offices. Now, all the researchers have places in offices, each one having a desktop or laptop to work. The offices are separated from the experimental labs, avoiding in this way potential health problems produced by long exposure to noise for example, produced by vacuum pumps. Of course, any researchers going to labs to perform experiments has to obey the specific safety rules for that specific lab (e.g. wearing noise protections on the ears or protection glasses for lasers).

In conclusion, we think that NIMP has taken all the measures to ensure very good working conditions for the personnel. We do not see any weakness for

this issue.

Remarks (max 500 words)

### Training and development:

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

NIMP is not part of a higher education institution. Therefore, in principle, there are no teaching obligations except those of the PhD supervisors associated to the doctoral schools of the Bucharest University. However, training activities are included among the obligations of the senior researchers. As mentioned above, all the newly employed assistant researchers has to follow a set of internal courses addressing basic knowledge in the field of condensed matter physics and materials science, including principles of the main experimental methods used in the institute.

The career path is known by all researchers, from the moment when they apply for an open position in the institute, including the rules and regulations to promote from one stage to another. The speed of promotion is a personal choice and depends very much on the individual effort to achieve, sooner or later, the thresholds for the next stage. One has to mention that the new law for researchers, 183/2024, has eliminated the obligation to spend a number position on a certain research position before applying for a superior one. Now, to be hired on R3 and R4 positions, or to promote on these positions, the candidates have to fulfill the minimum thresholds established by Ministry Order 6129/2016, plus the supplementary criteria and thresholds established by each research institution in agreement to their profile and goals for excellence. It is clear that institutions seeking excellence in research will ask for higher thresholds than the minimum ones imposed at national level if they want to hire the best experts in their envisaged research fields. The management of the institute take care to ensure for everybody equal chances for promotion, supporting submission of project proposals, implementation of the won projects, professional development by access to relevant literature (NIMP is part of the ANELIS+ consortia, who ensure access to scientific literature at national level, NIMP covering some co-funding quota), through specific training activities, and by organizing each year promotion exams according legal documents mentioned above and local rules and regulations approved by the management of the institute (see <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/> and <https://infim.ro/reguli-si-reglementari/>).

Depending on available funding sources (e.g. the Core Program or the projects won in the frame of the program supporting the institutional excellence), NIMP is encouraging the researchers, especially the young ones, to go for short work stages abroad. Longer term stages for PhD studies or post-doc positions are also encouraged but cannot be financially supported by NIMP. If a young researcher is successful in applying for a PhD or post-doc position in another institution in Romania or abroad, usually the costs are supported by the host institution. However, the successful person retains the position at NIMP for the period of the stage abroad (but not longer than 5 successive years), with the work contract suspended.

Weaknesses: there is no specific plan for activities envisaging the professional development, even the possibility of such a plan is mentioned in the collective work agreement. Another weakness is the reduced interest for mobility. Historically speaking, a large brain drain was registered during 1990-2000 period, when many skilled researchers have left the country due to very low salaries. Some of these researchers returned after 2005-2006, when the working conditions in research started to improve and the incomes become decent. They are now the senior researchers. After adhering to EU, the interest for PhD studies abroad decreased, even for post-doc positions. Young researchers prefer to follow PhD studies in Romania and then follow a research career in universities or research institutes, especially considering that the infrastructure has been considerably improved and the salaries in many research organizations are competitive with average salaries in other EU countries.

We can conclude that NIMP ensures conditions and funding, when available, for training and professional development. A plan will be conceived each year, in agreement with the collective working contract and after negotiation with the syndicate leaders. All the foreseen training and development activities will be discussed with envisage personnel for acceptance, becoming part of the individual work agreement. However, we have to strongly underline the following aspects:

- 1) NIMP cannot impose training courses or work stages to any researcher if the researcher does not want to go, even if the training is in her/his interest and for the benefit of NIMP, which cover the costs; such behavior can be considered an infringement of the work agreement and can be subject of a disciplinary inquiry if the refuse is not fully justified;
- 2) NIMP cannot be held responsible if refuses someone request for a training and development activity based on the lack of funds. In such cases, the irrespective person can support the costs with the engagement of NIMP to reimburse the costs when the fund are available in the same calendar year.

**Remarks (max 500 words)**

- The description provides researchers at NIMP with a clear career path that includes guidelines for advancement from one level to the next. This clarity can provide researchers a feeling of purpose and drive to grow in their professions.
- By helping researchers with project submissions, professional growth, and promotion exam scheduling, the institute's management guarantees that all researchers have an equal opportunity to advance. This dedication to equity promotes an institute-wide merit-based culture.
- Newly hired assistant researchers must complete internal courses that include fundamental concepts in materials science and condensed matter physics. This focus on growth and training shows a dedication to producing a workforce with the necessary skills.
- Structured mentorship programs and continuous support networks for researchers are not as frequently mentioned as support for professional development, such as training events and resource access. For early-career researchers in particular, mentoring can be extremely important for skill development and career advancement.

**Have any of the priorities for the short and medium term changed? (max 500 words)**

At NIMP level, the priorities remained the same. The main priority is to have an excellent human resource and to take care to keep it at NIMP.

**Have any of the circumstances in which your organization operates changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy? (max 500 words)**

Initially, we had job summary position fiches that emphasized publications, project submissions, and patents. Now, these fiches consider a broader range of aspects, including the balance between personal and professional life, as well as employees' involvement in both intra and extra-institutional collaborations. They contain many more factors, from titles A to D:

## A. General Aspects

## A.1. Basic Knowledge

## A.2. Creativity

## B. Professional Activity/Duties

## B.1. Finance, Funding, and Resources

## B.2. Management and/or Leadership of Research Activities

## B.3. Continuous Professional Development

## C. Involvement, Influence, and Impact

## C.1. Collaborations and Teamwork

## C.2. Communication and Dissemination

## C.3. Involvement and Impact

## D. Ethical Aspects

## D.1. Good Conduct and Ethics in Activities

All the relevant document regulating the internal life in NIMP are available also in English at <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/>.

**Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?** (max 500 words)

Several strategic decisions are underway that may influence the action plan for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) at NIMP:

- The new law 183/2024 and the subsequent documents to be approved soon by Government Decisions may have some impact on the present internal rules and regulations, especially on the criteria and thresholds used for selection/promotion if the OM 6129/2016 is changed.
- Bilingual Job Advertisements: Future job openings will be advertised bilingually in both English and Romanian, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and attracting candidates from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Expansion of Job Posting Platforms: The institution intends to improve its recruitment strategy by sharing job openings on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. This expansion aims to increase visibility and attract a broader pool of candidates.

### 3. Actions

Please consult the list of all actions you have submitted as part of your HR Strategy. Please add to the overview the current status of these actions as well as the status of the indicators. If any actions have been altered or omitted, please provide a commentary for each action. You can also select new objectives.

**Note:** Choose one or more of the principles from the GAP Analysis with their implementation ratings: New, In Progress, Completed, Extended

#### Proposed ACTIONS

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##### Principles:

(X) 1. Research freedom (X) 2. Ethical principles (X) 3. Professional responsibility (X) 4. Professional attitude (X) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (X) 6. Accountability (X) 7. Good practice in research (X) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (X) 9. Public engagement (X) 10. Non discrimination (X) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (X) 12. Recruitment (X) 13. Recruitment (Code) (X) 14. Selection (Code) (X) 15. Transparency (Code) (X) 16. Judging merit (Code) (X) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) (X) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) (X) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) (X) 20. Seniority (Code) (X) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) (X) 22. Recognition of the profession (X) 23. Research environment (X) 24. Working conditions (X) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (X) 26. Funding and salaries (X) 27. Gender balance (X) 28. Career development (X) 29.



Value of mobility (X) 30. Access to career advice (X) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (X) 32. Co-authorship (x) 33. Teaching (x) 34.

Complains/ appeals (x) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies (x) 36. Relation with supervisors (x) 37. Supervision and managerial

duties (X) 38. Continuing Professional Development (X) 39. Access to research training and continuous development (x) 40.

### Supervision

Action no. and name	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicators/Target(s)
ACTION 1 Data management plan and procedure for storing and sharing data.	<b>(3) Professional responsibility</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2025	Legal Department; Scientific Council IT Department	One server will be purchased and allocated for the storage of the experimental data and other sensitive data of NIMP. A Data Management Plan will be conceived explaining the procedure to store primary experimental data, who has access to those data and in which conditions <b>KPIs</b> -one written DMP and one data manipulation procedure, available both in Romanian and English; -8 informative meetings, one for each laboratory.
ACTION 2 Procedure for evidence of the research projects	<b>(4) Professional attitude</b> <b>(10) Non-discrimination</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2025	Scientific Council IT Department	One procedure to formally approve, monitor and archive projects. <b>KPIs</b> - one written procedure in Romanian and in English; - 8 informative sessions, one in each laboratory
ACTION 3 New position fiches. Nomination of a commission to analyze disciplinary issues.	<b>(5) Contractual and legal obligations</b> <b>(19) Recognition of qualifications</b> <b>(20) Seniority</b> <b>(21) Postdoctoral appointments</b> <b>(22) Recognition of the profession</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2025	HR Officer; Legal Department	Updated position fiches for researchers. Disciplinary measures against those who do not obey the internal regulations, according the law and collective work agreement. A commission will be nominated to analyze the disciplinary issues. <b>KPIs</b> -6 Job Descriptions -1 disciplinary commission
ACTION 4 Procedures to handle results with	<b>(7) Good practice in research</b> <b>(31) Intellectual Property Rights</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2025	Administration Council; HR Officer; Legal	Procedure to handle research output with IPR potential; GDPR procedure <b>KPIs</b>

IPR potential; procedure to protect personnel data in agreement to GDPR rules.	<b>(32) Co-authorship</b>		Department	-one procedure to handle the research outputs with IPR potential; -one procedure to protect personnel data in agreement with GDPR rules.
ACTION 5 Newsletters.	<b>(9) Public engagement</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester 2025	PR responsible	A newsletter will be posted on the webpage every 3 months, with the most interesting results and activities from the previous trimester. Most important results and activities will be advertised on media channels (FB, YouTube and similar); <b>KPIs</b> -4 newsletters per year; -at least 8 posts per year on social media channels -a dissemination commission
ACTION 6 Selection of honorary members in the Scientific Council.	<b>(11) Evaluation/ appraisal systems</b>	3 quarter 2025	Administration Council; Scientific Council	Selection of independent members from Romania and abroad in the Scientific Council. They will help in framing the institutional development plan, with a HR policy in line with best practice at EU level (Charta and Code). <b>KPI</b> -at least 6 honorary members
ACTION 7 Open position advertised in Romanian and English	<b>(15) Transparency (16) Judging merit (19) Recognition of qualifications (20) Seniority (21) Postdoctoral appointments (22) Recognition of the profession</b>	2 quarter 2025	HR Officer	Advertising the open positions both in Romanian and in English on NIMP's webpage. The announcements on EURAXISS are already in English. <b>KPI</b> -number of advertisements for one specific position
ACTION 8 Yearly plan with actions for professional development.	<b>(28) Career development (29) Value of mobility (38) Continuing Professional Development (39) Access to research training and continuous development (30) Access to career advice (33) Teaching (36) Relation with supervisors (40) Supervision (16) Judging merit (18) Recognition of mobility experience</b>	2 quarter 2025	Direction Committee; Scientific Council	A Plan for Professional Development (PPD) will be conceived, in agreement to the collective work contract. This will contain: possible work stages, training courses for researchers but also for administration, access to relevant literature through ANELIS+. <b>KPIs</b> -about 5 person-months per year for work stages, depending on available funding; -4 training stages on average, involving about 12-15 persons

ACTION 9 Report on OTM-R policy implementation status.	<b>All Gap principles</b>	4 quarter 2025	Direction Committee; Scientific Council	Annual Report on OTM-R policy, summarizing: new hiring/promotions (how the procedures were applied, if there were problems encountered and how these were solved); if there were problems in implementing the principles from Charta and Code and how these were tackled; actions for disseminations, IPR, public engagement, etc. <b>KPI</b> -one report on OTMR policy implementation status -one questionnaire regarding the perspective on the research career within NIMP
ACTION 10 Ethics and professionalism standards	<b>(2) Ethical principles</b> <b>(3) Professional responsibility</b> <b>(4) Professional attitude</b> <b>(6) Accountability</b> <b>(10) Non-discrimination</b> <b>(27) Gender balance</b>	2 quarter 2025	Ethics Commission	Researchers should adhere to ethical standards maintain accountability and commit to good scientific practices <b>KPIs</b> -1 annual training in ethics principles -1 annual research misconduct report
ACTION 11 Optimized researchers working conditions	<b>(12) Recruitment</b> <b>(24) Working conditions</b> <b>(23) Research environment</b> <b>(25) Stability and permanence of employment</b> <b>(26) Funding and salaries</b>	4 quarter 2025	Direction Committee; Scientific Council	Fair, transparent recruitment based on merit is currently implemented. Research working conditions, especially from an infrastructure point of view, are improved regularly. <b>KPIs</b> -annual open positions -working satisfaction survey with 90% satisfaction rate as target.
ACTION 12 Implement regular and comprehensive training programs on ethical standards and regulatory compliance for all employees.	<b>(2) Ethical principles</b> <b>(17) Variations in the chronological order of CVs</b> <b>(14) Selection</b>			Regular updates to the internal regulations and guidelines <b>KPI</b> -1 training session per year; - understanding of ethical standards
ACTION 13 Update the internal procedures related to internal complains	<b>(34) Complain/ appeals</b> <b>(10) Non discrimination</b>	4 quarter 2025	Procedure Development Committee Legal Department HR Department Ethics Committee	Regular updates to the internal regulations and guidelines <b>KPI</b> -1 info session per year
ACTION 14 Establish a procedure for mentor activities and design structured training	<b>(35) Participation in decision-making bodies</b> <b>(36) Relation with supervisors</b> <b>(37) Supervision and</b>	2 quarter 2026	Procedure Development Committee Legal Department HR Department	Improve the mentor-student/young researcher relationship by supporting through trainings and communication programs. Improve the scientific output of the students/young researchers <b>KPI</b> -1 training program

programs to support their development.	<b>managerial duties (38) Continuing Professional Development (39) Access to research training and continuous development (40) Supervision</b>			-1 survey on feedback mentor-student/young researcher relationship
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**Note:** Add as many actions are needed.

**The extended version of the reviewed HR Strategy for your organisation for the next 3 years, including the OTM-R policy must be published on your organisation's website.** Please provide the link to the dedicated webpage(s) on your organisation's web site \*:

**URL:** <https://infim.ro/en/hrs4r-2/> (English version) and <https://infim.ro/en/rules-and-regulations/>

If your organization has already filled in the OTM-R checklist in the Initial Phase, please also indicate how your organization is working towards / has developed an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above in the action plan (as emerged from the Gap Analysis), please provide a short commentary demonstrating the progress of the implementation versus the initial phase.

#### **Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles**

For implementation the OTM-R principles the National Institute of Materials Physics have a good and appropriate strategy:

The Steering Committee includes key stakeholders involved in the recruitment process, such as the Scientific Director, Economic Director, HR Officer, Legal Adviser, and others. This ensures representation from various departments responsible for different aspects of recruitment.

Regular Meetings and Discussions: The Committee meets regularly to discuss the progress of the recruitment process and make recommendations for improvement. This fosters transparency and allows for feedback from multiple perspectives, contributing to the openness of the process.

Finalized documents are presented to the Scientific Council and Administration Council, the top management body of the institute, for adoption. This demonstrates recognition and support from senior leadership, adding credibility to the process.

Ideally, the extended version of the reviewed OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the OTM-R dedicated webpage(s) if it is different than the one where the reviewed HR Strategy is located.

**URL:** <https://www.yoursite.com>

## 4. Implementation

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

In line with the HRS4R guideline, NIMP has proposed 14 actions with their associated tasks for the implementation of Action Plan. During the time leading up to the HR Award application, key members were identified who would be involved in the document development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.

A Steering Committee was appointed by decision of the General Director. The Committee includes relevant players in the process of recruitment: 1) Scientific Director-by law (319/2003) is the president of selection commissions for all recruitment procedures, 2) Economic Director-is signing the work contracts, taking care of the financial aspects and other material benefits, 3) Director of CIFRA-CIFRA, acting as an independent unit inside the institute; it has to follow the same recruitment rules as NIMP, 4) President of the Scientific Council-the Scientific Council is the governing body conceiving the internal recruitment rules and regulations, respecting the legal documents in force at national level, law 319/2003, law 206/2004 and Ministry Order 6129/2016, 4) HR Officer-is preparing the contracts and implements any changes in the work contract, 5) Legal Adviser-is taking care that all the recruitment procedures and rules established at the level of the institute are following the national legislation in the field of work conditions and relations

The SC has nominated and Working Group (WG) composed of academic (R1- R4) and administrative staff, which has as duties, gap analysis and OTM-R evaluation of the current situation and afterwards the development of the Action Plan which is approved by the SC. The working group members have knowledge of rules and regulation that applies research environments, training, working conditions, ethics committees, and recruiting in alignment with HRS4R principles.

The SC will ensure that the initiatives are implemented promptly and evaluate progress for the following two years after the European Commission approves the plan of action

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist, which you will need to describe in detail:

### How have you prepared for the internal review? \*

Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

To prepare for the internal review, NIMP has taken several proactive steps in line with the HRS4R guidelines. Firstly, the institution proposed 14 actions with associated tasks for the implementation of the Action Plan, ensuring a structured approach to addressing HR-related challenges. Key members were identified and appointed to be involved in the document development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.

A Steering Committee (SC) was established by decision of the General Director, comprising relevant stakeholders involved in the recruitment process. These stakeholders include the Scientific Director, who presides over selection commissions, the Economic Director responsible for financial aspects, the Director of CIFRA overseeing recruitment procedures, the President of the Scientific Council, governing internal recruitment rules, the HR Officer managing contracts, and the Legal Adviser ensuring compliance with national legislation.

Furthermore, the SC nominated a Working Group (WG) consisting of academic and administrative staff (R1-R4), tasked with conducting a gap analysis and evaluating the current situation regarding Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R). The WG then developed the Action Plan, which was subsequently approved by the SC. Members of the WG possess expertise in research environment regulations, training, working conditions, ethics committees, and recruitment, aligning with HRS4R principles.

Moving forward, the SC will oversee the prompt implementation of initiatives and evaluate progress over the following two years following approval by the European Commission. This comprehensive approach ensures that NIMP is well-prepared for the internal review, demonstrating its commitment to enhancing HR practices in line with HRS4R standards.

### How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process? \*

The preparation and application procedure for HRS4R is a collaborative effort that encompasses the entire research community at NIMP.

NIMP aims to ensure active involvement of the research community, encompassing its principal stakeholders, in the implementation process. Recognizing the significance of broad participation and diversity of perspectives, the NIMP will develop consultation mechanisms that includes surveys, interviews, workshops, training programs, seminars, and e-mail announcements. The HRS4R website serves as a central repository, providing updates on implementation progress. Additionally, regular articles in internal press releases and on the NIMP website offer insights into ongoing developments.

Human resources procedural changes are implemented in an inclusive manner, ensuring that all stakeholder groups are informed and provided with opportunities to provide feedback. Internal consultations and feedback sessions with the research community and stakeholder enable improvement of the implementation of processes.

The composition of the Steering Committee and working group (which involve researcher R1-R4 and administrative staff) reflects the institution's commitment to diversity, ensuring that all voices are heard in the implementation process.

In essence, the NIMP's approach to involving the research community and its stakeholders in the implementation process is characterized by transparency, inclusivity, and a commitment to diversity.

**Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress? \***

We prioritize an inclusive and collaborative approach to overseeing the implementation of the HRS4R. While we don't have a specific implementation committee or steering group in the traditional sense, we ensure regular oversight of progress through a variety of mechanisms. Our approach involves active involvement of the entire research community and principal stakeholders in the implementation process. We employ consultation mechanisms such as surveys, interviews, workshops, training programs, seminars, and e-mail announcements to gather feedback and insights from our stakeholders. Additionally, the HRS4R website serves as a central repository for updates on implementation progress, and we regularly share insights into ongoing developments through internal press releases and our website.

Human resources procedural changes are implemented inclusively, ensuring that all stakeholder groups are informed and provided with opportunities to provide feedback. Internal consultations and feedback sessions with the research community and stakeholders enable continuous improvement of implementation processes.

The composition of our Steering Committee and working group reflects our commitment to diversity, with representation from researchers and administrative staff across different levels (R1-R4). This ensures that all voices are heard in the implementation process.

**Is there any alignment of organizational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organization's research strategy, overarching HR policy**

While NIMP research community is not yet fully-informed about HRS4R, national legislation and existing internal procedures are predominantly in accordance with the HR policies of the Charter and Code. Academics, researchers, and recruiters will undoubtedly become more informed about the new regulations and procedures as a result of the consultations that will occur throughout the action plan's implementation.

Efforts to implement the HRS4R process will be sustained by the management team (SC) and the following collective decision-making body, by revising relevant policy documents, guidelines and codes and/or creation of new regulations.

**How has your organization ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented? \***

To sustain efforts in implementing the HRS4R process, our management team and collective decision-making body, including the Steering Committee (SC), are actively involved. They will oversee the process by revising relevant policy documents, guidelines, and codes, as well as creating new regulations where necessary. This collective decision-making approach ensures that the proposed actions are not only developed but also effectively implemented.

Furthermore, our commitment to aligning with national legislation and existing internal procedures, which are predominantly in accordance with the HR policies of the Charter and Code, provides a strong foundation for the successful implementation of the proposed actions.

**How are you monitoring progress (timeline)? \***

At our organization, we have established robust monitoring mechanisms to track progress and ensure timely completion of tasks. Regular meetings of the Steering Committee (SC) will be held to deliberate on forthcoming actions, milestones, coordination, and monitoring of action implementation. These meetings will occur at least every six months, with the flexibility to convene more frequently if required. Additionally, annually, the Head of the SC will provide updates to the Administration Council about the statement of progress, ensuring transparency and accountability at the highest level.

To further ensure the successful and timely completion of each task, we will implement a comprehensive checklist outlining the activities and corresponding timeline. This checklist will serve as a guide to track progress and ensure that tasks are completed within the specified timeframe. In alignment with our action plan, quarterly meetings will be organized by the Working Group to assess progress and guide subsequent actions as necessary. These meetings will provide opportunities to review our progress, identify any challenges or delays, and make necessary adjustments to ensure we stay on track.

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

To measure progress and ensure effective assessment for the next evaluation, we will employ a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluation mechanisms as outlined in our action plan.

The primary method for evaluating progress will involve the use of indicators that are explicitly defined in our action plan. These indicators serve as measurable criteria for assessing the advancement of tasks and objectives. They provide a clear framework for tracking progress and identifying areas where additional attention may be required. Additionally, the Working Group may establish additional quantifiable sub-indicators that align with the objectives outlined in the action plan. These sub-indicators will provide further granularity and specificity in measuring progress and ensuring that tasks are advancing successfully. In addition to the use of indicators, evaluations will be conducted at quarterly meetings and four seminars to assess adherence to the specified timeline. These evaluations will provide an opportunity to review progress, identify any deviations from the planned timeline, and take corrective actions as necessary. Prominent members of the Steering Committee will oversee these evaluations and provide guidance on modifications to address any setbacks or delays encountered during the implementation process.

**How do you expect to prepare for the external review? \***

Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

Preparation for an external review should begin well in advance, preferably a full year before the review visit. The institute arranges for a special meeting, or series of meetings, and/or a retreat to discuss what they hope to get out of a review. At this point, the department should begin collecting the information and creating the materials it intends to provide for the reviewers. This process usually includes working with the Director of Assessment and Program Review, who can help departments think through their goals for the review and can assist with the collection of certain kinds of information.

Preparation for an external review entails a careful internal review of the department's program(s) relative to the following goals: assembling evidence and collecting data; assessment of goals and initiatives, curriculum and young researchers learning process. The core of the external review preparations will be data collection (feedback from employees, statistics regarding the OTMR process). A Self-Study Conclusions will be drawn and an Agenda for the External Review will be decided addressing the main questions: What general and specific issues or questions does the department wish the external reviewers to examine? What does the department hope to gain from the external review? How does the department compare to other departments at similar institutions?

**Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process**

Detailed description and duly justification (max 1,000 words)