

TEMPLATE 4: ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2022BG765736

Name Organisation under review: **Roumen Tsanev Institute of Molecular Biology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences**

Organisation's contact details: Bulgaria, Sofia, Acad. G. Bonchev str. Bl. 21

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DATE ENDORSEMENT CHARTER AND CODE: 7 APRIL 2022

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

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

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	56
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	1 (3 from the total staff)
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	1 full 6 partially =7
Of whom are women	34
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	18
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	20
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	15
Total number of students (if relevant)	15
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	101
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	1900000
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	950000
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	300000
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	0

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

IMB is the leading research institution in molecular and cellular biology in Bulgaria. The institute was founded in 1960 and, since its beginning, has been an institution with a vibrant scientific environment and researchers striving to be at the forefront of current trends in life sciences. The mean age of its staff is 35 - the youngest in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences - indicating that IMB, as it has always been, is attractive to young people as a place for work and career development. The IMB offers a wide range of core facilities including imaging, flow cytometry, next-generation sequencing and mass spectrometry.

2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE:

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

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
Ethical and professional aspects	IMB already has many internal regulations related to ethical and professional aspects. The researchers are evaluated not only based on their scientific research but also on applied science, teaching, organizational and expert activities. Some improvements are needed regarding professional responsibility, dissemination and exploration of results, and public engagement.
Recruitment and selection	The recruitment process at the institute will benefit from publishing the advertisements not only in Bulgarian but also in English. Using specific templates and posting on international platforms will improve it too. The selection process is transparent with clear evaluation criteria. All candidates are evaluated by a specially appointed for each open position committee, that prepares written evaluations of the professional merit of each candidate. They are in Bulgarian and English and are published on the institute's website.
Working conditions	The academic staff of IMB is appointed to permanent positions with out fixed working hours and big vacations. However, relatively low salaries make it difficult to attract foreign scientists as well as to keep men employees to continue their academic careers within the institute. Governing body at IMB is the General Assembly (GA), the Scientific Council (SC) and the Director. All scientists holding an academic position or owning a scientific degree are in the GA whereas the members of the SC are associate and full professors.

Training and development	There are clear rules according to which PhD students at the institute are trained. More than 400 specialized courses, 10 IT courses and 3 language courses are offered to researchers within the Doctoral Programme of BAS. Many courses will be available also as part of the ERA chair project: Project management, Technology transfer; Financial advising; Writing competitive proposals for EU funding; Advanced molecular and cellular methods and techniques; Transferable skills to researchers; Ethical aspects of research work; Innovations and Intellectual Property knowledge.
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3. ACTIONS

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the organization's HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

*URL: <http://www.bio21.bas.bg/imb/?id=179>

Please fill in a sum up list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis:

Proposed ACTIONS	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Integration of the principles of research integrity and responsible research in IMB internal documents.	<i>IMB has no internal Rules and procedures for verification of the originality and authenticity of dissertations, prevention, and sanctioning of exam fraud and plagiarism.</i>	Q2 2023	Director Working group (WG)	Approval of the Internal rules by the Scientific Council of IMB
Stimulation of public engagement of the researchers	<i>Communication of the institute's scientific results with the public needs improvement. The website of the institute is not properly updated. Other communication channels are not effectively used such as social media. Very few scientists from IMB have regular media appearances.</i>	Q3 2023 Q3-2023- Q4 2024	Director PR specialist Communications board (CB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A communications board (CB) of the institute will be created. • To improve communication with society IMB will organize regular science lectures (3-4 per year) for the public (high school and university students) and DORES OPEN DAY once a

		Q1/Q2 2024	ERA chair project administrator	<p>year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMB will organize workshops in the frame of the ERA chair project to present the results tailored specifically to medical or industry stakeholders as well as policymakers. • The website will be updated. Social media channels will be used to share the latest scientific achievements of the institute.
		Permanently	PR specialist System administrator	
Increasing competitiveness of the research staff	<p>The salaries at IMB include all social security provisions but are not attractive relative to average salaries in Europe. Young scientists are often supported with additional scholarships through different national programs or projects. The budgetary subsidies for science in Bulgaria are very low-only 0.81% of GDP in comparison with 2.27% for the EU.</p> <p>Intellectual Property knowledge is essential to all scientists as at some point their research can reach a patenting stage.</p> <p>Patenting or commercialization of research results at the level of the institute is low.</p>	Q3-Q4 2023 Q1-Q4 2024	ERA chair project administrator	<p>Training in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Technology transfer • Financial advising • Writing competitive proposals for EU funding • Innovations and Intellectual Property knowledge- <p>courses available through the ERA chair project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an office for Technology Transfer
Encouraging industrial mobility of the academic staff	<p>Researchers are highly supported to join international courses, training, and specializations. The Career Center of TC-BAS regularly organizes information webinars for Maria-Sclodowska Curie actions, ERASMUS+, and EURAXESS mobility. Coordinators for each program at BAS level provide support to all interested staff members. Industrial mobility however is very low.</p>	Q1/Q2 2024	Technology Transfer officer	<p>Contacts between the scientists and medical or industry stakeholders that will be created during the workshops that IMB will organize in the frame of the ERA chair project will help to enhance the industrial mobility of the academic staff.</p>
Reducing the administrative burden of the researchers	<p>The researchers use a substantial part of their time complying with bureaucratic requirements, such as reports, budgets, and more instead of doing research or supervising.</p>	Q3-Q4	Director HR officer	<p>Appointing additional administrative staff to help the scientists with non-scientific work to have more time for supervision and scientific work.</p>

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please

provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan.

All of the regulations as well as OTM-R policy will be posted on IMB web site in English and will be publicly available.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL: <http://www.bio21.bas.bg/imb/?id=75>

4. IMPLEMENTATION

General overview of the expected implementation process:

(free text, 1000 words maximum)

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

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?	SC will organize 2-3 meetings per year to discuss the progress as well as to plan the next steps.
How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?	IMB's researchers at all levels were informed and participated in the discussion during a seminar dedicated on HRS4R award application. Their feedback was considered during the writing of the Gap analysis as well as the Action plan.
How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.	The necessary changes in Internal regulatory documents will be made in order to align them with the Charter and the Code and the revised documents will be approved by the Scientific Council of the institute.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?	The progress will be monitored by amended documents coherent with the Charter and the Code as well as by the Minutes of the meetings of the WG and SC.
How will you monitor progress (timeline)?	SC will organize 2-3 meetings per year to discuss the progress as well as to plan the next steps. At the end of each year, SC will prepare a report on the progress.
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?	<p>Progress will be measured by the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ organized courses ➤ trained employees and their feedbacks ➤ attracted scientists from abroad ➤ posts and news published on institute's website and social media accounts ➤ organized public events ➤ scientists performed mobility ➤ advertisements published on international platforms <p>as well as the overall satisfaction of scientific staff based on yearly questionnaire.</p>

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

We plan to use a regular questionnaire to obtain the staff's opinion about the recruitment process.