

## HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

Name Organisation under review: Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia (RIC)

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Web link to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan:

<http://www.proakademia.eu/en/about-us/hr-excellence-in-research/>

**UPDATE DATE:** 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

### 1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	13.995
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	0.00
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	0.00
Of whom are women	8.54
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	4.055
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	2.0
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	7.94
Total number of students (if relevant)	0.0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	18.805
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year - 2019) <sup>1</sup>	€
Total annual organisational budget	1,242,231.57
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	0.00
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	1,002,180.99
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	240,050.50
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	
<p>RIC is a small independent non-profit private research organisation, registered as a Public Benefit Organisation, specialising in industrial research and experimental development in sustainable energy, environmental engineering, food processing, and economy. 20 permanent staff work in RIC today (18.8 FTE) and over 200 external experts have been collaborating with us over the last 24 years. In the evaluation ran by Polish Ministry of Science in 2017 we were ranked as the 2nd most effective among all 992 Polish research organisations in terms of material effects of research. In 2020, we are implementing 18 R&amp;D projects (including 2 H2020 projects).</p>	

<sup>1</sup>Average reference rate published by European Central Bank for 2019: 1 EUR = 4.2568 PLN

## 2. NARRATIVE

### Introduction

The Charter and Code Deployment Task Force, consisting of: Dr Ewa Kocharńska (chair, R4), Dr Maria Buła (R2), Katarzyna Korczak, a doctoral candidate (R1), and Monika Stojan – Head of the Management Board Office, carefully analysed and compared the Charter and Code statements in terms of their execution in RIC. As a result, the Strategy and Action Plan developed in 2018 was updated and published at RIC's website in September 2020.

Part of the rules has been already regulated by Polish law, especially the Code of Labour, as well as by RIC's internal regulations, i.e. Statute, Ethical Code, Rules of Labour, and Rules of the Intellectual Property Management. Several rules are also implemented within RIC's Quality Management System related to design and provision of research services, certified for compliance with PN-EN ISO 9001:2015 by PCC-CERT Ltd.

The gap analysis has been made in line with the template published at the EURAXESS website.

### Ethical and Professional Aspects

The current policy guarantees the researchers at RIC freedom in many different aspects, both in theory and practice: starting from the freedom of thought and the freedom of speech of the researcher, to the possibility of defining the research scope and choosing the research methodology adequate to the research problem. Nevertheless, they recognise and respect the limitations of the research freedom, which follow the necessity of respecting the copyright, intellectual property rights, or infrastructural, budget and personal limitations. All of them are formulated in the Researcher's Ethical Code.

The researchers are also obliged to respect the principles and regulations formulated in the Code. RIC recognises the universality of such principles and ethical values as: honesty in presenting the research objectives and intentions, objectivism appearing itself in basing the interpretations and conclusions only on facts, impartiality in the approach to the problem, independence of external influences on conducting of the research, openness in discussions on own research, teamwork reliability, criticism to results of the own research, and transparency of the data collection, analysing and interpretation.

The main stream of the research carried out at RIC is being adjusted to and remains oriented at targets set by the European Commission, in particular in the Horizon 2020 programme and Polish National Smart Specialisation in the field of sustainable energy, environmental engineering, food processing and economy. Therefore, it is definitely useful for society as it aims at achieving public good, especially in the area of sustainability and environmental friendliness of the industrial sector and eco-innovation. Thus, we have no doubts about our high level of professional responsibility.

Every researcher employed at RIC has been acknowledged with the strategic aims of the Centre and with the research financing mechanisms. If the permissions are required, they are obtained before commencing the research.

All the RIC Pro-Akademia employees are conscious of their responsibility for the efficient management and use of the financial resources allocated for the research or project implementation. All the purchases of commodities and services are made in line with the correct and sound spending of the resources. Financial management and accounting in RIC are held in line with the accounting act of 29.09.1994 (Polish JoL 2009 no. 152, pos. 1223 with later amendments). An internal document for the Centre is the Accounting Policy.

The scientific staff implementing the project works is up to the requirements. The works are subject to an internal and external control (financing institutions). In the RIC Pro-Akademia the rule of quarterly project internal control applies, aka. internal audit. RIC Pro-Akademia also has always put big emphasis on applied projects deployed together with the business or commissioned by the entrepreneurs.

Under current policy the educational activities for the schools and universities, as well as the open dialogue with the local community by organizing the RES TTC open-door days, are the important part of activities of the RIC. With the new policy the scale of all of these is further enhanced, so that they could grow to the greater scale. Furthermore, RIC Staff is increasing its efforts in publishing research results in high impact factor journals.

Although the SharePoint platform which creates backup files in the cloud automatically is in common use in the RIC, following the action plan from 2018, a backup creation strategy as an element of RIC's Safety Policy was introduced. RIC's standard job contract has a document called "Equal treatment in employment" attached. However, because of the small scale of the institution, there are no regulations or special bodies preventing the institutional discrimination in the RIC.

Information about projects implemented by RIC is available on the website: <http://www.proakademia.eu/en/projects/> while the publication record is available in the Knowledge Database: <http://www.proakademia.eu/baza-wiedzy/> (available in Polish and English).

### Recruitment and Selection

Under the current policy RIC publishes its job advertisements on its website as well as other channels, such as pracuj.pl and Euraxess. Following the gap analysis, the current template includes a description of career development perspectives, yet in practice not always this type of information is included in the job advertisements.

On balance, the Recruitment and Selection categories are real tangible strengths of RIC. The organisation has clearly formulated standards of employing the researchers. The Centre guarantees respecting such values as equal treatment of all the candidates, regardless of their sex, background, political orientation etc., as well as an openness and transparency of the recruitment process. In 2020, OTM-R policy was published on RIC's website. RIC during the staff selection process takes into account the entire scope of experience of the candidate. Except the evaluation of their general potential as researchers, the level of independence and creativity is also included. Among the assessment criteria, regarding the experiences and competences, scientific and practical achievements are responsible for a half of the final result each.

### **Working Conditions and Social Security**

RIC manages the Renewable Energy Sources Technology Transfer Centre – an interdisciplinary centre for research on sustainable energy, environmental engineering, food processing and economy. The RES TTC consists of 7 Laboratories aiming at knowledge and technology transfer, equipped with the modern instruments and specialised software for analysing the outcomes. Even though RIC participates in several international projects (including several H2020 projects), the institution does not participate in any COST research network. Even though RIC's two researchers applied for joining a suitable COST network in 2019, the application was not successful and a resubmission is planned in 2021. Compliance with the national and industrial occupational healthcare and safety regulations is a duty of the employer.

In RIC there is a huge flexibility and support for working from home, if necessary. All of the workplaces are fully accessible for the disabled. There are 13.995 FTE research positions in RIC now (core R&D personnel), but the institution has been collaborating within various projects with many other researchers affiliated to different institutions. Usually external experts (consultants) are engaged based on a task-based commission (not employment contract), which greatly increases the scope of competences offered in our projects.

All of the research, technical and administrative workers have full, adequate and equitable social security provisions guaranteed by Polish law. Mentoring procedures, value of mobility, and IPR protection support are another clear strengths of the Centre. However, at the moment there is no formal career development or career advice strategy for researchers, regardless of the kind of contract. Nevertheless, the researchers are mentored in an informal way. Furthermore, as part of the Action Plan, further improvements of the working conditions (e.g. introduction of Employee Capital Plans, a programme of savings for retirement) are planned.

### **Training and Development**

Relation with supervisors, supervision and managerial duties, continuing professional development, access to research training and continuous development, and supervision are in general good. The quarterly evaluations of all of the researchers will be continued. Technical aspect of the evaluation forms will be improved so that RIC researchers have no problems with updating their research achievements in a timely and easy manner.

### **Summary**

The internal analysis performed 2 years after award of HR Excellence in Research logo, proved that the majority of the principles stated in the Charter and the Code are obeyed by RIC and further improvements were implemented in the last 24 months. Meanwhile, several questions where the actions of RIC are more or less incoherent with the statements of the Charter and the Code emerged during the updated analysis.

Main strengths:

- Ethical and Professional Aspects
- Training and Development
- Value of mobility appreciated, collaboration approach rewarded in the employee evaluation system

Main weaknesses:

- Frequent abstaining from publishing the job advertisements at the most popular nationwide websites or Euraxess
- Limited number of publications published in high-impact factor journals

### 3. ACTIONS (01.04.2018-31.12.2023)

Priority <sup>2</sup>	Action no.	Action name	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)	Status as of September 2020
<b>A. Ethical and Professional Aspects</b>						
1	A1	A detailed backup creation strategy as an element of RIC Pro-Akademia's Safety Policy will be prepared and added to the "Employee Handbook".	Q2 2018	Information Security Administrator	0 files unintentionally lost, starting from June 2018	Completed
	A2	Recommendations for the researchers to prepare and update a scientific publications plan, as well as a conference, seminars & another scientific events plan – as a part of "Employee's Scientific Effectiveness Profile".	Q2 2019 Q3 2019 Q4 2019 Q1 2020 Q1 2021 Q1 2022 Q1 2023	RIC President and the heads of the laboratories	Plans from 90% of research staff included in the "Employee's Scientific Effectiveness Profile"	In progress
	A3	Improvement of technical aspect of the evaluation forms in "Employee's Scientific Effectiveness Profile" so that RIC researchers have no problems with updating their research achievements in a timely and easy manner.	Q1 2021	Management Board Office	Positive feedback from RIC researchers during internal workshops in September 2020	Extended (from Q2 2018 to Q1 2021) due to the regulatory changes (New Law on Higher Education and Science)
2	A4	RIC Staff will increase efforts in publishing research results in high impact factor journals.	Q4 2018 Q4 2019 Q4 2020 Q4 2021 Q4 2022 Q4 2023	The heads of the labs	Each laboratory will submit at least one article in high impact factor journal a year	In progress
	A5	Formal rules for purchases funded from institutional sources will be created and added to the "Employee Handbook".	Q3 2020	RIC Vice President	rules for purchases funded from institutional sources added to the "Employee Handbook"	Completed
	A6	Appropriate procedures in case of detecting the discrimination will be updated and included in the "Employee Handbook".	Q4 2020	Legal Team	Anti-discrimination procedures published, shared with all employees, and implemented	Completed
3	A7	Continuing scanning of the submitted manuscripts with the anti-plagiarism system	Continuous	scientific secretary of RIC's Journal: Acta Innovations	100% of submitted manuscripts scanned with the PlagScan system	In progress

<sup>2</sup> Scale: 1 - very important and urgent; 2 - important; 3 - already being done, but should be reinforced/maintained

	A8	Preparation of the information about possibilities of financing the scientific and research works (open call for proposals schedules)	Q2 2018 Q3 2018 Q4 2018 Q1 2019 Q2 2019 Q3 2019 Q4 2019 Q1 2020 Q2 2020 Q3 2020 Q4 2020 Q1 2021 Q2 2021 Q3 2021 Q4 2021 Q1 2022 Q2 2022 Q3 2022 Q4 2022 Q1 2023 Q2 2023 Q3 2023 Q4 2023	RIC Vice President	Schedule for open calls for proposals in the following quarter delivered to all researchers on RIC's SharePoint Platform	In progress
	A9	Continuing activities for the schools and universities on an enhanced scale	Q2 2018 Q4 2018 Q2 2019 Q4 2019 Q2 2020 Q4 2020 Q2 2021 Q4 2021 Q2 2022 Q4 2022 Q2 2023 Q4 2023	RIC Vice President	10% more people engaged in the event	In progress
	A10	Continuing the open dialogue with the local community by organizing the RES TTC open-door days on an enhanced scale	Q2 2018	Broker of Innovations	10% more people engaged in the event	Completed
	A11	The quarterly evaluations of all of the researchers will be continued.	Q2 2018 Q3 2018 Q4 2018 Q1 2019 Q2 2019 Q3 2019 Q4 2019 Q1 2020 Q2 2020 Q3 2020 Q4 2020 Q1 2021 Q2 2021 Q3 2021 Q4 2021 Q1 2022 Q2 2022 Q3 2022 Q4 2022 Q1 2023 Q2 2023	Management Board Office	100% researchers with completed "Employee's Scientific Effectiveness Profile" and mentoring meetings attended per quarter	In progress

			Q3 2023 Q4 2023			
	A12	Review the progress in action plan implementation in the area A (Ethical and Professional Aspects)	Q2 2018 Q4 2018 Q2 2019 Q4 2019 Q2 2020 Q4 2020 Q2 2021 Q4 2022 Q2 2023 Q4 2023	HRS4R Task Force, participation of all employees via workshops	Review report, updated action plan (if necessary)	In progress

### B. Recruitment and Selection

	B1	Update templates for the job advertisements by including section for: researcher career profiles, selection criteria, number of available positions, career development perspectives.	Q4 2018	Science marketing team	Templates containing the description of career development perspectives	Completed
	B2	Improvement of the Internet channels for the RIC's advertisements	Q3 2020	Science marketing team	At least 3 new internet distribution channels for the advertisements will be tested, including EURAXESS	Completed
2	B3	The external expert (e.g. external member of RIC's Scientific Council) will be invited for interviews with job candidates. It is of high importance to invite the representative of e.g. companies if the candidate is applying for a job in a project which is ordered by the company.	Q2 2022	Science marketing team together with the Principal Investigators	External experts participating in the interviews with senior research job candidates	Extended (from Q2 2019 to Q2 2022) as no senior level recruitments were started since Q3 2018
	B4	The recruitment of all researchers (including unsuccessful applications) will be supplied with the feedback about strengths and weaknesses of candidates' applications. The records of the selection and evaluation process, together with "Interview Assessment Form" and all CVs, accordingly to The European Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), are permanently deleted by destroying or sending back to candidates, with whom RIC's has not	Q2 2019 Q2 2020 Q2 2021 Q2 2022 Q2 2023	Management Board Office	All candidates that reached interview phase are supplied with feedback	In progress

		decided to conclude an employment contract, after completing the recruitment process.				
	B5	Update the internal guide on OTM-R procedures and practices by including the evaluation criteria which are applied at an early stage of the application evaluation (before a job interview).	Q2 2019	Management Board Office	Internal guide on OTM-R procedures and practices updated	Completed
	B6	Update the rules referring to researchers from abroad, accordingly to new opportunities of funding	Q2 2021	Management Board Office	Internal guide on OTM-R procedures and practices updated	Extended (from Q2 2019 to Q2 2021) as no appointment of researcher from abroad took place at RIC since Q2 2019.
	B7	Set clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees	Q2 2019	Management Board Office	Internal guide on OTM-R procedures and practices updated	Completed
	B8	Make sure that in each selection committee a sufficient gender balance is provided.	Q3 2019	Management Board Office	Internal guide on OTM-R procedures and practices updated	Completed
	B9	Update the guidelines for selection committees by including more merit and quantitative criteria.	Q3 2019	Management Board Office	Guidelines for selection committees updated	Completed
	B10	Advise Recruitment Committees to monitor gender balance and make efforts towards ensuring it in the gender structure of RIC staff.	Q4 2018	Management Board Office	Guidelines for selection committees updated	Completed
	B11	Develop and publish OTM-R online on the RIC's website, based on the review of all improvement actions undertaken in area B of the action plan	Q3 2020	HRS4R Task Force	OTM-R online on the RIC's website	Completed
3	B12	Review the progress in action plan implementation in the area B (Recruitment and Selection)	Q2 2018 Q4 2018 Q2 2019 Q4 2019 Q2 2020 Q4 2020 Q2 2021 Q4 2022 Q2 2023 Q4 2023	HRS4R Task Force, participation of all employees via workshops	Review report, updated action plan (if necessary)	In progress
<b>C. Working Conditions and Social Security</b>						
1	C1	Removal of the OHS shortcoming concerning gas cylinders. Review of OHS in RIC for conformity of the procedures with the national standards.	Q2 2018	Infrastructure team	Validated 100% conformity of the procedures with the national standards	Completed

	C2	Certification of the Quality Management System for conformity with the new version of the standard – PN-EN ISO 9001:2008 – the certification will take into consideration the updated process no. 10 (HR management) that is now in line with HRS4R rules.	Q1 2020	Management Board Office	QMS incl. H4S4R procedures certified by external audit	Completed
	C3	Evaluation of the needs of the researchers for the flexible working hours (e.g. work during weekends when biomethane generation tests are running) as well as work from home.	Q2 2018	RIC Vice President	At least 10 researchers at RIC presented their needs during the workshop	Completed
	C4	Updating legal arrangements concerning work from home and flexible working hours will be re-evaluated in collaboration with RIC's legal counsellor.	Q2 2021	RIC Vice President and the Legal Counsellor	Updated legal provisions (e.g. in the employment contracts, if necessary)	Extended (from Q2 2018 to Q2 2021) as changes in Polish Labour Code are expected in the coming months (directly affecting working from home rules)
2	C5	Proposing the rules of the bonus/reward system for researchers involved in H2020 projects and consulting it with RIC research staff.	Q3 2018	Management Board, Task Force	Rules of the bonus/reward system for staff participating in H2020 projects prepared and consulted	Completed
	C6	Introduction of reward/bonus system that would be fully responsive to the motivations of employees.	Q1 2019	Management Board's Office	Bonus/reward system implemented	Completed
	C7	Organising monthly all-staff meetings over breakfast, stimulating discussion on factors affecting staff satisfaction from work at RIC.	Ongoing	Management Board's Office	Monthly meetings enabling discussion of all personnel held	In progress
	C8	Application for joining the most suitable COST network to further intensify RIC's transnational research collaboration.	By Q4 2018	Science marketing team	At least 1 application to join the existing COST network (or to create a new one)	Completed
	C9	Appoint an Ombudsman ("Rzecznik Zaufania"), a person outside the RIC Management Board and Management Board Office, who will evaluate complaints and appeals of all employees in an	Q3 2020	Management Board	Ombudsman appointed	Completed



		impartial manner. Persons turning to the Ombudsman will be granted full confidentiality and informal way of conflicts and complaints resolution. Further steps of conduct will be determined with interested persons depending on circumstances. In case of the observed irregularities, the Ombudsman will provide recommendations to the relevant members of RIC Team in order to prevent bad practices and to introduce the necessary corrections.				
3	C10	Review the progress in action plan implementation in the area C (Working Conditions and Social Security)	Q2 2018 Q4 2018 Q2 2019 Q4 2019 Q2 2020 Q4 2020 Q2 2021 Q4 2022 Q2 2023 Q4 2023	HRS4R Task Force, participation of all employees via workshops	Review report, updated action plan (if necessary)	In progress
1	C11	Providing employees with additional personal protective equipment (masks, gloves etc.) in relation to the Covid-19 threats	Q2 2020 Q3 2020 Q4 2020 Q1 2021	OHS team and Management Board's Office	All employees equipped with PPE that is adequate for the current epidemic situation	New - In progress
2	C12	Joining of all interested researchers to Employee Capital Plans	Q4 2020	Management Board Office together with the representative of the employees	All employees interested in joining PPK are enrolled to the programme	New - In progress

#### D. Training and Development

1	D1	Arrange and finance participation of RIC's staff in language trainings, technical skills trainings and certified project management courses	Q2 2018 Q3 2018 Q4 2018 Q1 2019 Q2 2019 Q3 2019 Q4 2019 Q1 2020 Q2 2020 Q3 2020 Q4 2020 Q1 2021 Q2 2021 Q3 2021 Q4 2021 Q1 2022 Q2 2022 Q3 2022 Q4 2022 Q1 2023	Management Board's Office	At least 5 external trainings attended by RIC Staff per year	In progress
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			Q2 2023 Q3 2023 Q4 2023			
3	D2	Trainings for the newly employed staff about the research financing mechanisms	Ongoing	RIC Vice President	100% of newly employed researchers trained about the research financing mechanisms	In progress
	D3	Further monitoring of the career development needs of the researchers. The quarterly reviews based on "Employee's Scientific Effectiveness Profile" will be extended with more focus on career advice, allowing for better and more structured career planning of RIC's research employees.	Q2 2018 Q3 2018 Q4 2018 Q1 2019 Q2 2019 Q3 2019 Q4 2019 Q1 2020 Q2 2020 Q3 2020 Q3 2020 Q4 2020 Q1 2021 Q2 2021 Q3 2021 Q4 2021 Q1 2022 Q2 2022 Q3 2022 Q4 2022 Q1 2023 Q2 2023 Q3 2023 Q4 2023	Management Board's Office, Management Board	Quarterly reviews of the career development needs of all researchers, including individual mentoring meetings organized	In progress
	D4	Review the progress in action plan implementation in the area D (Training and Development)	Q2 2018 Q4 2018 Q2 2019 Q4 2019 Q2 2020 Q4 2020 Q2 2021 Q4 2022 Q2 2023 Q4 2023	HRS4R Task Force, participation of all employees via workshops	Review report, updated action plan (if necessary)	In progress

### **Actions addressing the implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles:**

According to the results of the Gap Analysis performed in 2018, RIC has implemented already then 21 out of 23 OTM-R principles (9 principles were implemented, but not fully). Two principles were not implemented at all then, which concerned the OTM-R System (aspect #1 - no published OTM-R policy online) and the selection and evaluation phase (aspect #17 - no clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees).

The following progress was reached since then:

- 1) OTM-R System – #1: progress from “No” to “Yes, substantially”. We have published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in English). However, the national language version is yet to be published.
- 2) OTM-R System – #2: progress from “Yes, substantially” to “Yes, completely”. We have updated our OTM-R policy with the requirement of setting clear evaluation criteria which should be established at an early stage of the application evaluation (before a job interview).
- 3) OTM-R System – #4: progress from “Yes, substantially” to “Yes, completely”. We have started using not only our website, but also supporting e-recruitment tools, available at Euraxess and pracuj.pl, the largest national job search portal (paid service).
- 4) OTM-R System – #10: progress from “Yes, substantially” to “Yes, completely”. We have updated our evaluation rules of the application process, especially regarding the monitoring of the share of researchers applying from abroad.
- 5) Advertising and application phase - #12: progress from “Yes, substantially” to “Yes, completely”. We have updated our OTM-R policy with the requirement of including all elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit in the job advertisements, especially for the elements that were missing in our previous practices, i.e.: researcher career profiles, selection criteria, number of available positions.
- 6) Advertising and application phase - #13: progress from “Yes, partially” to “Yes, substantially”. We have increased the share of job adverts posted on EURAXESS, yet still not all advertisements are published there.
- 7) Selection and evaluation phase - #16: progress from “Yes, partially” to “Yes, substantially”. We have set clear rules concerning the appointment of selection committees. The rules have been defined in our OTM-R policy.
- 8) Selection and evaluation phase - #17: progress from “No” to “Yes, completely”. We have set clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees. The rules have been defined in our OTM-R policy.
- 9) Selection and evaluation phase - #18: progress from “Yes, substantially” to “Yes, completely”. We have set clear rules concerning the gender balance of selection committees. The rules have been defined in our OTM-R policy.
- 10) Selection and evaluation phase - #19: progress from “Yes, substantially” to “Yes, completely”. We have set clear rules concerning the ‘merit’ judgement – guidelines for selection committees. The rules have been defined in our OTM-R policy.
- 11) Overall assessment - #23: no progress from “Yes, substantially”. The system for assessing whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives is in place, but the assessment is not systematic, i.e. taking place in set intervals of time, formalised in a way going beyond the interim review linked with the HR Excellence in Research Award.

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

The Task Force preparing the Gap Analysis plays the roles of an implementation committee and steering group and is regularly overseeing the progresses in OTM-R strategy implementation. The RIC's research community has its representatives in the Task Force (researchers at all career development stages are involved). It will not be the only form of their participation in the implementation process, as their opinion will be checked and taken into account in monthly all-staff meetings that are regularly organised as semi-formal events over joint breakfast.

HRS4R has been included in the Quality Management System of RIC (certified for conformance with PN-EN ISO 9001:2015), as a part of the process no. 10: HR Management. Furthermore, for increasing the internal visibility of HRS4R implementation, the Action Plan has been included in the first section of the "Employee Handbook", an online resource available as a key support tool for all employees on the internal SharePoint portal of RIC. For increasing the external visibility for HRS4R implementation, the Action Plan has been published on RIC's website (section "About Us"). Therefore, there are several forms of evidence proving alignment of the HRS4R process.

RIC is committed to gaining and maintaining the HR Excellence in Research Award and will do its best to positively pass the planned external control. In order to make sure that the actions listed in the Action Plan are truly implemented, all of them have been already transferred and are updated through RIC's Task Management System – Asana, where all employees plan and monitor their all daily tasks (not only related to organisational issues, but also research-related aspects) – all employees are able to observe, engage in and support the progress of the "project" already placed in RIC's task management system: "HR Excellence". All actions have also specific person assigned as in charge of implementation or coordination of implementation. Therefore, all of the actions intended to be implemented are tangible and consequently they will leave deliverables which will become an evidence of completing particular tasks in the future.

The internal review of the process, performed in September 2020, was ran in parallel to the ISO internal audits that are held at least twice a year and managed by RIC's Finance and HR Team. The internal review of HRS4R implementation was performed by the Task Force (majority of members of this group was engaged in the Gap Analysis in 2018).

Within three years, RIC will implement and monitor the proposed actions according to the revised action plan incorporating feedback from the interim assessment. After three years, the external assessment will be conducted in two subsequent stages: an internal review conducted by RIC and assessed by external experts appointed by the EC, followed by a site visit to RIC Headquarters. Three years after the successful assessment and site visit by the external experts, the Task Force will submit an internal review of how RIC's Action Plan has progressed and gained in quality.