

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH ACTION PLAN

Case number 2025CZ296000
 Name Organisation under review Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences
 Organisation's contact details Vídeňská 1083, Praha, 14200, Czech Republic
 Date endorsement charter and code 21.02.2025

1. Organisational Information

STAFF AND STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	295,00
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	109,150
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	0
Of whom are women	162,10
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor	66,40
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	80,20
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	148,40
Total number of students (if relevant)	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	496,03

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	Eur
Total annual organisational budget	49 636 383
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	14 499 464
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	31 793 191
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	3 343 728

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

The Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences (<http://www.img.cas.cz/>) conducts scientific research in the area of cell and molecular biology and genetics. Currently, there are a total of 27 research groups operating at IMG in the fields of molecular and cellular biology, molecular immunology, functional genomics and bioinformatics, study of oncogenes, developmental molecular biology, structural biology, and receptor signalling mechanisms. The complexity of the research fields and their interconnection with research infrastructures make the IMG an exceptional world-class institution. Cooperation with important foreign partners requires a flexible response to changing social and cultural trends and establishment of a creative working environment that reflects changes in society and is attractive to foreign researchers.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

The source for defining the strengths and weaknesses of the individual pillars of the Charter for Researchers was a questionnaire survey and structured interviews among scientists conducted in 2025, which formed the basis for the GAP analysis of the IMG.

ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER, AND OPEN SCIENCE**Strengths:**

- Employees adhere to professional standards when working on projects.
- All legislative requirements are incorporated in internal regulations and guidelines.
- The Institute has state-of-the-art technical and high-quality administrative facilities.
- Ethical principles are fully implemented in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and an Ethics Committee is also available.
- Any disputes are resolved through legal channels.
- Researchers view the establishment of rules for institutional culture and integrity positively.
- The existence of an Ombudsman at IMG.
- The IMG supports freedom of thought, opinion and expression in research, which is confirmed by the vast majority of respondents.
- The IMG covers the sustainability of initiated topics from institutional funds when it is not possible to finance the group's scientific activities from grant funds.
- Open science is viewed positively by the scientific community, but high costs are a barrier.
- Issues of discrimination and equal access are well addressed in accordance with the law and the implemented Gender Equality Plan.
- Temporary accommodation is available in the Institute guesthouse.
- Existence of the IMG kindergarten and the children's group of the Academy of Sciences.
- A major positive aspect of IMG is bilingual communication – internal materials are mainly in English, and the language barrier is minimal.
- Low to non-existent cultural barriers within IMG and the offer of social events by IMG.
- The possibility of an online part of the selection process, reimbursement of travel expenses for management positions.
- A major benefit is the assistance offered by the Economy Department in processing the specifics of foreign employees.

- Mobility is supported at IMG (participation in the Erasmus, PhD programmes is welcome).
- Research sustainability is addressed at IMG, and applicable laws are complied with due to work with laboratory animals.

Weaknesses:

- The IMG Ethics Committee is established on an ad hoc basis; the willingness to set up an ad hoc ethics committee and consider the expertise of its members and the specificity of the committee now depends entirely on the decision of the Institute Director.
- There is little awareness of the existence of ethics committees among scientific staff, and there is no feedback channel to explain the findings and recommendations.
- The directive on the protection and handling of intellectual property has not been updated for a long time. There is no centralized system for addressing ethical issues – ethical standards vary between departments, and there is still no uniform guidance beyond the Code of Ethics.
- There is low awareness of the Ombudsman's agenda and functioning. It is unclear where to turn when it is necessary to report/address/consult on unethical or discriminatory behaviour.
- Managers have a high degree of autonomy; decisions are decentralized without training and frameworks created by the IMG, and there is a lack of effort to centralize.
- Lack of awareness of the possibility of using institutional funds to finance open access.
- So far, there has been no use of the possibility of involving citizen science in projects.
- There is a prevailing lack of consensus on the existence and need for the position of Data Steward.
- There is a slight resistance to gender issues – researchers are not inclined to provide education in this area.
- There is inequality in career advancement—women disappear from higher positions (for family reasons).
- There is a lack of systemic support after returning from a career break:
 - The management of maternity and parental leave depends entirely on the group leader;
 - Career breaks have a negative impact on grants and evaluations;
 - There are barriers for caregivers;
 - There is a perceived lack of support for part-time work, and flexibility depends on group leaders rather than the institution.
- Systemic support for foreign workers is weak:
 - There are differences between the level of information available to employees from abroad and the potentially discriminatory treatment that results from this, because the Czech scientific environment has a number of specific features;
 - There is no formal diversity policy, problems are solved on an ad hoc basis, and there is no institutional framework for diversity;
 - Insufficient awareness of the benefits offered to foreign researchers, which results in some information being overlooked or difficulties persisting in communication in English;
 - Dependence on the individual approach of managers.
- There are concerns about a brain drain due to financial conditions.
- There is a strong focus on the individual responsibility of managers, which may increase differences in the performance of individual teams.
- There is no internal system for training researchers and further developing this area across the entire IMG. Information about strategic goals in the research area in individual departments depends on the heads of research groups.
- There is no comprehensive programme for postdoctoral positions, including mobility.
- There is no broader research sustainability strategy:
 - There are no internal regulations, investigations are more economic than ecological;
 - There is an incomplete perception of sustainability on the part of employees.

EVALUATION, RECRUITMENT, AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCHERS

Strengths:

- The recruitment process at IMG is in line with the Labour Code in force in the Czech Republic.
- The recruitment process is comparable to the practice of similar institutions (across the Czech Academy of Sciences) in the Czech Republic.
- The IMG is able to secure sufficient scientific, technical and administrative staff to ensure the functionality, stability and development of individual IMG departments.
- Positions are advertised nationally and internationally, but not strictly in accordance with OTM-R policy.
- The IMG has the tools to attract excellent foreign experts – an excellent environment and technical equipment at individual IMG departments.
- Low employee turnover, stable employee portfolio not only in the area of scientific staff.
- An evaluation questionnaire (certification questionnaire) exists, but the evaluation process needs to be better communicated and the motivation of researchers strengthened, and the evaluation process made more transparent.
- There is a high degree of openness and autonomy in the area of career planning and advancement.

Weaknesses:

- Gaps in the evaluation of researchers:
 - There is a lack of connection between the evaluation of researchers and career advancement, it is not comprehensive enough and is not sufficiently communicated;
 - There is a lack of recognition for above-standard performance by researchers;
 - The current evaluation questionnaire has no motivational effect;
 - The evaluation system set up by the Czech Academy of Sciences is unsatisfactory and rather formal in nature, tends to take an individual approach and is not set up as a systematic process.
- Long-term planning of the number of employees is complicated by grant funding.
- The IMG lacks an OTM-R policy:
 - Recruitment and selection are decentralized and fully dependent on managers;
 - HR is perceived more as administrative support;
 - The HR department has no strategic influence on personnel planning, yet there is a strong need for development in this area;
 - There is a lack of transparent processes and training in the area of HR for managers;
 - There is a lack of methodological guidance in the development of HR skills.
- Career planning is not uniform and has gaps:
 - There is no clear career path;
 - There is no pressure for rapid advancement, which can lead to an unclear career trajectory;
 - There is no systematic approach to the adaptation process and no established buddy system, even in management positions;
 - Most employees do not have a career plan.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

Strengths:

- The Institute provides researchers with state-of-the-art technical equipment and facilities.
- Employees have a high degree of autonomy in their research.
- Support for women in leadership.
- Administrative processes are electronic.
- Job stability:
 - Transition of employment relationships to indefinite terms;
 - Internal IMG policy of supporting job stability – support for up to one year if funding is not obtained.
- Support for work-life balance (legislative anchoring of working from home, flexible working conditions in terms of time, kindergarten on site, preparation of return grants).
- Legal obligations related to research are fulfilled and complied with, similarly to the implementation of other scientific and non-scientific activities.
- Existence of events for the development of young scientists and popularization of science, and voluntary support for the popularization of science by scientists involved in popularization events.

Weaknesses:

- The motivational component of remuneration does not have clear rules:
 - Within the remuneration directive, there is a wide variation in personal assessment;
 - There are also large differences in remuneration between groups;
 - Managers have very limited options for remunerating people in their teams;
 - There is a significant variable component of wages that depends on projects.
- Dependence on grants indicates job instability.
- There is a lack of clear communication of the rules and obligations associated with compliance with basic legislation and directives, a complex system, and extensive descriptions of processes and directives.
- Low support for the popularization of science from the IMG:
 - Lack of institutional support;
 - Lack of PR support;
 - Lack of a system for rewarding involved individuals and departments; popularization takes place only on a voluntary basis;
 - Lack of a system for organizing and subsequently recording events and participating teams.

RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Strengths:

- Positive assessment of linear career progression by researchers.
- Readiness of the return grant system for pilot testing of the programme.
- Existence of training opportunities, but unsystematic – selected departments implement career development and lifelong learning for researchers, but on an ad hoc basis.
- Functional mentoring and support for further education and development within PhD studies.

- Positive and open approach on the part of researchers to selected educational activities such as practical training, IT skills (working with digital technologies, CHatGPT), part of the scientific community is aware of the need for training in soft skills.
- Managers see themselves as mentors and also seek out mentors outside the IMG. This need for mentoring stems from their own experiences at IMG.

Weaknesses:

- There is no comprehensive career development system based on regular evaluation:
 - o There is no comprehensive mentoring and counselling system for researchers, the current range of training opportunities is not centralized and all agenda items are directed to department heads;
 - o There is little support for senior researchers in terms of their career growth and development, and there is a lack of systematic development for them;
 - o There is no systematic support for postdoctoral researchers and higher scientific categories in terms of their career growth and development, and there is a lack of systematic development for them;
 - o The current concept of career development is based on hierarchical growth;
 - o There is a lack of educational strategies and descriptions of educational programmes, including systematic educational offerings;
 - o The current system of education provision is not transparent and does not specify the conditions for participation;
 - o Part of the scientific community is resistant to training in soft skills and imposition of obligations;
 - o Some internal supervisors – mentors lack managerial skills.
- Insufficient appreciation of career diversity due to inadequate training of the selection committee.
- No support for returning from a career break – no compensation for career breaks in grant projects from the IMG, poor communication when introducing return grants.

3. Actions

Action 1

Creation of a draft HR policy strategy and implementation of the policy into the IMG strategy

The main objective of the IMG HR policy is to attract, develop, support and retain high-quality researchers and to create conditions for their long-term professional growth, responsible research and satisfaction at IMG. The HR policy will cover the agenda of the individual professional stages of employees so that the partial strategic objectives of the HR policy are fulfilled, namely:

Supporting excellence in research

- Create conditions for high-quality research results
- Strengthen the professional autonomy and responsibility of researchers
- Value quality, openness and cooperation, not just quantitative outputs and performance

Transparent and fair treatment of employees

- Ensure equal opportunities without discrimination
- Apply open and fair selection procedures
- Clearly define rules for evaluation and career advancement

Supporting career development and employability

- Provide predictable career paths
- Support professional and transferable development of skills
- Increase the long-term employability of researchers outside academia

Responsible and ethical environment

- Strengthen a culture of research integrity
- Ensure protection of ethical principles, individuals and data
- Prevent conflicts of interest and unethical behaviour

Good working conditions and well-being

- Supporting work-life balance
- Prevent burnout and mental stress
- Enable flexible working arrangements according to the nature of work

Supporting internationalization and diversity

- Actively promote international cooperation, including mobility
- Actively support cross-sector cooperation
- Integrate foreign workers
- Create an inclusive and respectful work environment

Action 1 is one of the 3 priority actions of the plan and creates the whole – the structure of the entire Action Plan. As part of Action 1, IMG will develop detailed individual phases that accompany employees in their work process and growth at IMG:

1. Recruitment and selection of employees
2. Onboarding and adaptation
3. Career plan
4. Employee performance evaluation
5. Training and professional development
6. Remuneration, benefits, working conditions and work organization
7. Research environment
8. Interaction and communication within the Institute
9. Termination of employment and departure from the organization

GAP principle:

ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY
FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
OPEN SCIENCE
GENDER EQUALITY
EMBRACING DIVERSITY

THE RESEARCHER
FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS
SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH
RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT
RECRUITMENT
SELECTION
CAREER PROGRESSION
WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES
STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT
CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS
DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS
VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Time schedule: Q1 2026

Responsible department/person: Economy Department (HR Office)

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Created policy describing the professional stages of IMG employees

Action 2

Creation of a draft OTM-R policy

The OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) policy at IMG is essential within the HRS4R process because:

- It improves the quality of recruitment – the selection of employees is based on professional competence, which leads to better scientific results.
- It strengthens transparency and fairness – clear rules reduce the risk of bias and increase trust within the institution.
- It facilitates international competitiveness – open procedures attract talents from abroad and promote researcher mobility.
- It supports the acquisition of European grants – compliance with OTM-R is a key element in obtaining the HR Award (HRS4R) certificate, which strengthens reputation and chances of funding.
- It improves institutional culture – establishes professional, clearly described processes and increases the overall effectiveness of human resource management.

Action 2 is one of the 3 priority actions of the plan and has a significant impact on the OTM-R policy of IMG. This Action will include the following steps:

- Analysis of existing processes and steps
- Definition and development of an OTM-R policy as part of HR policy to meet OTM-R standards, including the creation of templates (calls for applications, advertisements, evaluation criteria, selection procedure minutes, etc.)
- Formal approval of OTM-R principles by IMG management
- Anchoring OTM-R in the institution's HR policy and strategy

- Clear definition of responsibilities (management, HR, research group leaders)
- Establishment of the selection committee structure (including setting rules for the composition of selection committees, including gender and professional diversity).

GAP principle:	RECRUITMENT SELECTION
Time schedule:	Q1 2026 – Q3 2026
Responsible department/person:	Economy Department (HR Office), head of laboratory – Working Group member (science representative from the “senior staff” group), Administrative Team
Indicator(s) / Objective(s):	OTM-R policy including annexes (individual templates)

Action 3

Pilot verification of the draft OTM-R policy

The IMG considers it very important to pilot test the functionality and settings of individual templates, and thus the implementation of the OTM-R policy, before implementing it across the entire Institute. Pilot verification of the recruitment process (OTM-R policy) standardization is therefore a logical step before full implementation. As part of the pilot verification, a group of three departments (laboratories) will be selected where the recruitment and selection process will be tested in accordance with the OTM-R policy.

Action 3 is one of the 3 priority actions of the plan and has a significant impact on the subsequent implementation of the OTM-R policy of IMG. Action will include the following steps:

- A group of three departments (laboratories) will be selected to test the recruitment and selection process in accordance with the OTM-R policy;
- The established procedure will be pilot-verified within the annual functioning of procedures according to the OTM-R policy;
- An evaluation of the pilot verification will be carried out;
- Any comments, changes and shortcomings will be incorporated into the documents corresponding to the OTM-R policy (especially into individual templates).

GAP principle:	RECRUITMENT SELECTION
Time schedule:	Q4 2026 – Q4 2027
Responsible department/person:	Economy Department (HR Office), head of laboratory – Working Group member (science representative from the “senior staff” group), Administrative Team

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): OTM-R policy including annexes (individual templates) developed based on evaluation after pilot verification

Action 4

Welcome Office

Given the diversity and high number of foreign employees at IMG, it is important to provide support to newly arrived scientists. The aim of the Welcome Office is to facilitate the arrival, integration and overall comfort of researchers so that they can focus on their scientific work as quickly as possible. The IMG will have an official central contact point where researchers can obtain quick, comprehensible and consistent information.

The Welcome Office will offer them:

- Administrative support – assistance with visas, residence permits, health insurance, labour law documents and accommodation;
- Orientation within the institution – familiarization with rules, safety, IT systems, laboratories;
- Support in practical matters of life – kindergartens, schools, transportation, bank accounts, language courses;
- Social and integration activities – welcome events, networking, cultural programme.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Establishment of the Welcome Office tool as administrative and technical support for IMG during onboarding.
- Creation of a document serving as a manual for onboarding foreign and national employees, which will facilitate the employee's familiarization with the Institute, culture, rules and processes at IMG.
- Creation/updating of a document serving as a manual for PhD students, which will facilitate the employee's familiarization with the Institute, culture, rules and processes at IMG.
- Information campaign about the existence and official establishment of the Welcome Office at IMG.

GAP principle: EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Time schedule: Q4 2026 – Q2 2027

Responsible department/person: Administrative Team, Office of the Director

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Welcome Office activities defined, activities published on available channels (IMG website and intranet), onboarding manual for new employees, manual for PhD students

Action 5

Career planning at IMG

The career plan at IMG is a strategic tool that supports the professional growth of researchers at all career levels (R1 – R4), increases their motivation and performance, and helps the Institute manage talent, retain know-how and achieve top scientific results.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Description of career roles and levels (definition of individual career positions and profiles, including a description of expected competences, responsibilities and typical outputs)
- Determination of the competences and roles of the employees involved in monitoring career progression (HR staff, management, department heads)

GAP principle: CAREER PROGRESSION
VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Time schedule: Q4 2026 – Q4 2027

Responsible department/person: Economy Department (HR Office), Office of the Director, heads of individual laboratories

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Description of individual positions at IMG, overview of employees involved in monitoring career progression, and description of their competences and roles in career planning

Action 6

Career break – dealing with returns from career breaks

The IMG is introducing a new tool to facilitate the return of researchers from career breaks. This tool – known as Return Grants and the associated LAB Stop programme – eliminates talent drain from science, unequal conditions for parents and caregivers, gender inequalities, and barriers between family and professional life, thereby ensuring a fairer and more competitive scientific environment.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Introduction of mechanisms to facilitate returns from career breaks (creation of the Return Grants tool and the Lab Stop programme)
- Monitoring the integration of people into activities after a career break
- Pilot verification of Return Grants and the Lab Stop programme

GAP principle: GENDER EQUALITY
THE RESEARCHER
THE RESEARCHER
RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT
CAREER PROGRESSION
WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES
STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Time schedule: Q1 2026 – Q1 2028

Responsible department/person: Economy Department, IT Department, selected scientific departments (laboratories)

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Announcement of a pilot grant call, support for selected projects within the framework of Return Grants, implementation of selected Return Grants, implementation of Lab Stop

Action 7

Evaluation of the performance of IMG employees

Regular evaluation of scientific and senior scientific staff is key to ensuring the quality of research, team effectiveness and long-term development of the Institute. In particular, the level of scientific performance, the ability to acquire and manage projects, professional growth, cooperation, and leadership are monitored. The aim is to identify in a timely manner the strengths, areas for improvement, and support or training needs of individual researchers. The evaluation also enhances transparency, motivation and strategic human resource management at IMG.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Analysis of the current situation at IMG, describing the existing situation and pointing out differences between individual departments. The analysis will also include proposals from individual group leaders for implementing and streamlining the evaluation process of IMG employees. This document will serve as the basis for further proposals and discussion on the introduction of transparent employee evaluation.
- The results of the analysis will be gradually incorporated according to positions (R*).

GAP principle: RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

Time schedule: Q2 2027

Responsible department/person: Economy Department, selected scientific departments (laboratories)

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Analysis of the current situation

Action 8

Education and professional development

The IMG considers the education and professional development of researchers to be a key prerequisite for long-term excellence, responsible research and an open working environment.

This Action will include the following step:

- Establishment of a programme for education and professional development of employees and its areas according to focus:
 - Professional development (specialized scientific and non-scientific training, conferences)

- Management training (leadership, mentoring, conflict resolution, assigning work tasks and checking their fulfilment, feedback and work team evaluation)
- Support of soft skills (communication skills, time management, project management)
- Other training (language skills – Czech and English language lessons, internal training – operational matters, information systems and software, IT)
- Implementation of selected training and development events in the period 2026–2028 – pilot testing of part of the training plan.

GAP principle: CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Time schedule: Q2 2026 – Q1 2028

Responsible department/person: Administrative Team, IT Department, Economy Department, heads of individual laboratories

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Established development and training plan, implemented information campaigns (Ombudsman, Data Steward, whistleblowing, etc.), participation in conferences (overview of conferences attended) and other professional events, language training (English, Czech – overview of participants in the given period), management training for managers, soft skills training

Action 9

Remuneration, benefits, working conditions and work organization

A properly set up remuneration system is essential for the motivation, stability and long-term performance of scientific and non-scientific staff, as it creates a sense of fairness, recognition, and a link between individual contribution and reward. Benefits play a major role in retaining talent – they promote well-being, enable a better work-life balance, and often compensate for the limited flexibility of salary levels in the research environment. Working conditions and work organization (clear roles, realistic workload, access to equipment, support from the IMG administrative background, opportunities for professional growth) directly influence the effectiveness, quality of research and work performance, and employee satisfaction. Together, these elements form a comprehensive system that strengthens the organization's performance, retains key experts and increases its attractiveness in a competitive scientific environment.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Analysis of current salary scales, salary structures and criteria for providing bonuses at IMG, followed by a proposal for a new remuneration system aimed at increasing fairness across departments.
- Ensuring that new employees are informed about benefit options upon joining the Institute and ensuring that all employees are informed in the event of an expansion or reduction of benefits or other changes to the benefit system.
- Systematic support for a safe working environment as required by law (implementation of regular training on occupational safety for employees, ensuring protection of personal data) and maintaining a

safe environment beyond the requirements of the law - Ombudsman and Whistleblowing agenda and Gender Equality Plan.

- The results of the analysis will be gradually incorporated according to positions (R*).

GAP principle: WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

Time schedule: Q2 2026 – Q1 2028

Responsible department/person: Economy Department, Administrative Team, Office of the Director

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Analysis of the current situation, proposal of a new solution in the area of remuneration, information campaign on the benefit system, maintenance of the Ombudsman and Whistleblowing agendas, GEP monitoring

Action 10

Data Steward

The IMG is prepared to create the position of Data Steward, which is a key role in the field of research data management. The newly created position will ensure that the data generated at the scientific institution is of high quality, well organized, long-term storable and reusable.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Creation of the position at IMG.
- Introduction of the position of Data Steward – definition of its activities and competences in supporting researchers in data management, ensuring quality standards and FAIR principles, and providing support in data storage, sharing and archiving.
- Raising awareness of the Data Steward's activities – ensuring that the scientific community is informed about these activities.

GAP principle: OPEN SCIENCE

Time schedule: Q2 2026 – Q4 2026

Responsible department/person: Administrative Team, IT Department

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Creation of position, preparation of Data Steward job description, number of information campaigns

Action 11

Strengthening cooperation with business entities and technology transfer

Cooperation with business entities and technology transfer enable the IMG to apply research results in practice, strengthen innovation and ensure their economic evaluation, as they allow acquisition of additional financial resources through industrial projects, licenses, patents, or spin-off companies, thereby increasing the Institute's long-term sustainability, competitiveness and financial stability.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Searching for new opportunities and developing procedures to expand the portfolio of opportunities
- Information campaign among individual departments

GAP principle: WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

Time schedule: Q4 2027

Responsible department/person: Administrative Team

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Expansion of the cooperation portfolio, information campaign on cooperation with business entities, and technology transfer with an impact on strengthening the economic self-sufficiency of IMG

Action 12

Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee is an independent body operating within the IMG, appointed by the Director on an ad hoc basis, whose task is to ensure research ethics, integrity and protection of participants in scientific studies. The aim of this Action is to establish a permanent ethics committee with clearly defined rules of operation as set out in the directive on copyright and intellectual property.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Creation and implementation of the Copyright and Intellectual Property Directive includes the steps of creating and issuing the directive, including its subsequent implementation after issuance
- Establishment of an Ethics Committee with a specified composition and given competences, respecting gender and professional balance

GAP principle: ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Time schedule: Q2 2026 – Q3 2026

Responsible department/person: Administrative Team, Office of the Director

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Creation of a directive (Copyright and Intellectual Property) and its publication, appointment of an ethics committee, including definition of its composition

Action 13

Popularization of science

The popularization of science is necessary and beneficial for IMG, provided it is carried out responsibly and to a high standard. It is essential to strike a balance between comprehensibility for the public and maintaining scientific accuracy. It is also important to organize events systematically and regularly in order to increase the number of young people who choose to study this field in the future.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Proposal for a science popularization programme at IMG, incorporating existing events and proposing new ones. The plan will include a schedule for individual events and a budget for each event. It will specify the persons/departments responsible for implementing the event, including the number of people needed to ensure its success.
- Systematic provision of support by PR specialists in the area of communication with schools and universities in the field of science popularization.

GAP principle: DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

Time schedule: Q2 2026 – Q3 2026

Responsible department/person: Administrative Team, Office of the Director

Indicator(s) / Objective(s): Creation of a plan with a breakdown of event budgets and responsibilities, list of participating institutions with which the IMG is in contact

Action 14

Outboarding

Outboarding within IMG is key to ensuring research continuity, preserving know-how, building reputation and professional relationships, including, for example, creation of future cooperation not only within the scientific environment but also, for example, within the framework of cooperation with business entities and technology transfer. Outboarding and its establishment has a direct impact on the effectiveness, security and future ability of IMG to grow, collaborate and retain talent.

This Action will include the following steps:

- Establish rules for various forms of employment termination (contractual, project-based, fixed-term) as part of HR policy and the employee's professional life cycle.
- Monitor methods of employment termination.

- Ensure a clearly described process when terminating an employee's employment at IMG (checklist of steps).
- Ensure the transfer of agenda, data and knowledge.
- Systematically introduce exit interviews (voluntary, confidential) and monitor the reasons for departures and identify structural problems, which will then be used to adjust HR policies and working conditions.

GAP principle: WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING, AND SALARIES
STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT
CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Time schedule: Q2 2027

Responsible department/person: Economy Department (HR Office), heads of individual laboratories

Indicator(s) / Objective (s): Description of forms of employment termination, statistics on forms of employment termination, description of the departure process, records of exit interviews

4. Implementation

The implementation of the Action Plan is structured into actions that address the fundamental shortcomings identified in the GAP analysis (e.g., career plan, OTM-R policy, evaluation system, training needs, support for scientific research).

Overview of the HRS4R Action Plan implementation process

1. Management and organizational arrangements for the process

1.1 Establishment of a management and executive structure

During the preparation process, the following were established:

- A Steering Committee, which includes all relevant IMG bodies in accordance with their competences as defined in the Organizational Rules, namely the Director, the Institute Council, IMG research teams (laboratories) and the Administrative Team.
- A Working Group, which also includes all relevant IMG bodies and roles, namely the Economy Department (including HR), the Office of the Director, the IT Department, IMG research teams (laboratories) and the Administrative Team.

The roles and responsibilities of both groups were also defined as part of their appointment. Both groups will continue to operate during the implementation of the Action Plan.

- Furthermore, an institutional HRS4R coordinator was appointed, a contact email address (hraward@img.cas.cz) was set up as a point of contact for the HR Award agenda, and a Steering Committee secretary was appointed.

1.2 Involvement of the Institute management

The IMG management is part of the Steering Committee in order to maintain the flow of information as effectively as possible and to emphasize the strategic position of the Steering Committee. The IMG management will thus be primarily responsible for:

- Formal approval of the Action Plan,
- Ensuring the strategic anchoring of HRS4R in the human resource management policy and the Institute as a whole,
- Allocation of the necessary resources (time, personnel, budget).

2. Communication and participation phase

2.1 Informing internal stakeholders

The IMG is aware of the importance of communicating the implementation of individual actions of the Action Plan. Without informing about the flow of individual steps, the implementation schedule would not be effective. The Steering Committee will ensure:

- Systematic information for employees about the objectives of HRS4R,
- Effective use of internal channels (website, intranet, newsletters, meetings),
- Emphasizing the benefits of implementing individual steps of the Action Plan for both researchers and the institution.

2.2 Active involvement of researchers

The IMG expects that individual stakeholder groups will participate in the entire implementation process, to varying degrees:

- Involvement of researchers in the implementation of specific measures resulting from the actions set out in the Action Plan (familiarization with established policies, procedures, directives, compliance with implementation, training, and dissemination of ideas);
- Involvement of researchers – members of the Working Group and Steering Committee in the preparation of materials for the implementation of individual actions;
- Involvement of individual groups of researchers (50+, career break group, students, postdocs, group leaders) in the evaluation of individual steps and processes.

3. Implementation of Action Plan measures

3.1 Implementation of measures by thematic area

Actions, i.e., measures addressing shortcomings identified in the GAP Analysis, are structured according to thematic areas. Each action has a set schedule, a department responsible for its implementation, or

a responsible person. Furthermore, each action has set measurable goals. Each action also has a Charter principle that is positively influenced by that action.

3.2 Integration into existing processes

The department responsible for a given action will, together with the Steering Committee, oversee the updating of internal directives and regulations, integration with HR processes (recruitment, evaluation, training) and, last but not least, the use of digital tools and, in the future, e.g. HR systems as well.

3.3 Time schedule

The Steering Committee will oversee the ongoing monitoring of milestones and adherence to the established schedule. If necessary, it may also modify the existing schedule (need to prioritize another action, need for more time to implement the action).

4. Monitoring and evaluation of progress

4.1 Ongoing monitoring

During the individual phases of the HRS4R process, the responsible department will monitor the implementation of individual actions and the fulfilment of objectives and will provide the Steering Committee with regular internal reports for the IMG management and further processing within the HR Award agenda, including PR. It will also monitor risks in the implementation of activities and steps within the plan. It will continue to work with potential risks and modify the plan schedule, staffing requirements for each activity or financial support requirements for individual activities.

4.2 Incorporation of feedback

Each department concerned will collect feedback from researchers and forward it via the Working Group to the Steering Committee, which will then adjust the measures based on actual practice and ensure transparency of the changes.

5. Internal self-assessment and updating of the Action Plan

5.1 Regular evaluation

(the first after two years, i.e., 2028), which will include a comprehensive review of the progress achieved and an assessment of the effectiveness of measures implemented. The GAP analysis, or identification of remaining gaps, will also be revised.

5.2 Updating of the Action Plan

After evaluation of the progress made, the Action Plan will be updated to include proposals for new measures or modifications/additions to existing actions. The update of the Action Plan will also take into account any changes in the institutional, national, or European context. After the update, the Action Plan will be approved before further implementation. The implementation process of the updated Action Plan will mirror the process of the first Action Plan.

6. External evaluation and sustainability

6.1 External evaluation (European Commission audit)

The Working Group, led by the Steering Committee, will prepare documentation for the external evaluation, communicate with the evaluators, and respond to their recommendations.

6.2 Long-term sustainability of HRS4R

The implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan is a cyclical and continuous process that combines strategic management, researcher participation, systematic implementation of measures, regular evaluation and long-term anchoring of HR Excellence principles in the institution. From the perspective of long-term sustainability, it is necessary to ensure institutionalization of the HRS4R principles and their integration into the long-term strategy of IMG so that the working conditions of researchers are continuously improved.

Regular monitoring of progress by the Steering Committee

The entire implementation phase of the Action Plan, the subsequent revised Action Plan and the European Commission audit will be managed by the Steering Committee appointed by the IMG management, which already oversaw the preparation of all processes prior to the submission of the HRS4R Action Plan. The Steering Committee also includes the research community (from R1 to R4), which greatly speeds up and optimizes the transfer of information and, in the future, the implementation of activities.

Area of defined competences:

- Setting the strategy in the area of HR Excellence in Research
- Monitoring the progress of the vision and subsequent implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
- Ensuring that the Action Plan and HR strategy (HRS4R) are in line with the institution's strategic plans, and subsequent assessment and approval of the GAP analysis, OTM-R policy (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) and Action Plan
- Monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan and evaluating its effectiveness
- Accepting recommendations from the European Commission and deciding on their incorporation into the strategy
- Advisory body for the Working Group, which prepares background materials and implements measures
- Coordinating the Working Group
- Ensuring communication between the Institute Council, researchers, and administration
- Overseeing the preparation of materials for regular evaluation by the European Commission.

Form of operation:

- Regular meetings (in person and online) at least four times a year, or more often as needed, especially in the early stages of implementation.

The composition of the Steering Committee was defined to include all relevant IMG bodies in accordance with their competences as defined in the Organizational Rules, in particular representatives of the following departments:

- Director
- Institute Council
- IMG research teams (laboratories)
- Administrative Team

The main coordinator of the agenda and contact person for HRS4R is Martin Polák, MSc, and the secretary of the Steering Committee is Leona Krausová.

Involvement of researchers in the process

- Researchers will be kept informed about implementation milestones through informative emails and IMG website (HRS4R section), as well as through members of the Steering Committee and heads of individual departments (laboratories).
- All information will be published in both Czech and English.
- Newly created internal directives and other binding documents will be announced in the standard manner as all internal regulations and will be available to employees on the IMG intranet.
- Researchers will also be informed about support services (training, consultations).
- Where deeper analysis or feedback is needed, representative groups of researchers will be involved (surveys, interviews, focus groups), as was the case with the GAP analysis. As part of the process, the IMG will respect the division of researchers into focus groups – students, postdocs, 50+, group leaders, people returning to work after a career break).

IMG and HRS4R

The IMG has already recognized the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers as a fundamental value framework in its Letter of Endorsement and Commitment. The IMG is committed to implementing the principles of the European Charter and Code and integrating HRS4R into the Institute long-term strategy. The IMG is aware that HRS4R must not function as an isolated "HR project", but as a strategic framework for human resource management in research. It is important to avoid duplication of individual policies within the Institute and to build a comprehensive system that will accompany human resource management in research along with other areas such as gender strategy, codes of ethics, Open Science, etc.

Key documents relating to the remuneration system, OTM-R policy, including its directive, career plan, etc., are being prepared by the Working Group appointed by the IMG management, whose members represent the Economy Department (including HR), the Office of the Director, the IT Department, the IMG research teams

(laboratories) and the Administrative Team. The documents are then submitted to the Steering Committee for approval and subsequent submission to the Institute Council (strategic documents – OTM-R, career plan, etc.).

Ensuring the implementation of individual actions within the process

The implementation process of individual actions is supervised by the Steering Committee, which is responsible for implementation in the context of the entire Institute. It provides information to the Institute management on the progress and ensures resolution of any problems, e.g., with the time schedule or with modification and prioritization of the measures.

The responsible department (or responsible person), which is part of the Working Group or cooperates with the Working Group, is responsible for implementing individual actions set out in the Action Plan and provides it with materials for processing partial documents into the main strategic output for subsequent submission to the Steering Committee or the Institute management (Institute Council).

The roles of the Steering Committee and the Working Group were defined at the beginning of the process and approved by the IMG management.

Monitoring the time schedule

The implementation process will be monitored by:

- The established Steering Committee, whose functioning is anchored in the letter of appointment and which also participated in the HRS4R preparation process. The Steering Committee has regular meetings (in person and online) at least four times a year. Due to the higher level of interest in monitoring the implementation of the measures arising from the Action Plan, more frequent meetings are expected, preferably once a month.
- The Working Group will meet regularly, either in person or online, so that it can effectively prepare requirements and documents for the Steering Committee. It will regularly collect requirements from the responsible departments or persons implementing the individual measures of the Action Plan. There are no restrictions on the collection of this information, other than the working hours of individual employees.
- The IMG Council, as the body responsible for compliance with policies related to the HR Excellence in Research award process.

Compliance with the time schedule for **individual actions within the process will be monitored by:**

- The Working Group in the first phase, as the Working Group processes the outputs from individual actions and is thus best placed to monitor their timely completion. It can also respond effectively to any adjustments to the schedule in response to unexpected obstacles during implementation, which must be taken into account.

- The Steering Committee in the second phase, as it is responsible for implementing progress and is informed by the Working Group of any deviations (including time deviations) from the established process.

The Schedule was designed with regard to the operation of the entire IMG and the parts of the year when the administrative burden for individual involved persons is increased (the period of submitting national projects, the end of the year associated with the accounting) are, on the contrary, less occupied with activities.

In the event of the need to prioritize selected activities within individual Actions, we expect to adjust the timetable for Actions 11 and 13, which do not have the highest priority within the current plan.

Measuring progress

Progress will be evaluated by comparing it with the initial situation described in the GAP analysis using the same tools – questionnaires and structured interviews within focus groups – students, postdocs, 50+, group leaders, people returning to work after a career break.

For newly created documents and established policies, progress will consist of their approval and implementation (directives, documents, strategic policies, career plans, etc.) at IMG.

Annex 1 – Schedule of activities (actions) within the Action Plan

Action	2026				2027				2028
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q
1 Creation of a draft HR policy strategy and implementation of the policy into the IMG strategy									
2 Creation of a draft OTM-R policy									
3 Pilot verification of the draft OTM-R policy									
4 Welcome Office									
5 Career planning at IMG									
6 Career break – dealing with returns from career breaks									
7 Evaluation of the performance of IMG employees									
8 Education and professional development									
9 Remuneration, benefits, working conditions and work organization									
10 Data Steward									
11 Strengthening cooperation with business entities and technology transfer									
12 Ethics Committee									
13 Popularization of science									
14 Outboarding									