

Internal Review

Case number

2019PL432751

Name Organisation under review

Institute of Nature Conservation Polish Academy of Sciences

Organisation's contact details

Al. Mickiewicza 33, Kraków, Poland, Małopolska district , 31-120, Poland

Submission date to the European Commission

13/05/2023

1. Organisational Information

Please provide an update of the 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 *	61
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	7
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	12
Of whom are women *	29
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	21
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	31
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	9
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	92

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

The Institute of Nature Conservation is an institution of Division II (Biological Sciences) of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Institute carries out research in the fields of ecology, conservation biology, and geology.

The main task of the Institute of Nature Conservation is to create the scientific basis for modern nature conservation and environmental protection.

The Institute's work is centered around two integrating issues: "Prospects for protection of the natural heritage through sustainable development" and "Protection and conservation of the natural (biological and geological) biodiversity of Poland". Those issues are studied on species, population and ecosystem levels.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code, as provided by your organisation in the initial assessment phase. When doing so, you should do not only look back, but also consider new priorities, strategic decisions, etc. which may further influence the action plan. Please also provide a brief commentary in the "Remarks" column if major changes have occurred versus the initial plan.

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter & Code to open the editor and provide your answers in the Internal Review for Interim Assessment dedicated section.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)**Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

Strengths:

- great research freedom and no limitations to research topics,
- belonging to the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), one of the leading scientific institutions in Poland, INC PAS guarantees compliance with the principles contained in The Code of Ethics for Research Workers and other regulations which are fully accepted, implemented and abided by INC PAS,
- access to regulations, documentation and legal advice regarding the intellectual property rights, industrial property rights, and principles of scientific and applied research results commercialization,
- INC PAS is a socially engaged institution, taking active part in events, such as the Science and Art Festival or the Garden Festival. Institute's employees share knowledge and promote our research findings not only through scientific publications, but also *via* interviews on TV and radio, various presentations, including for children and elderly people in nursing homes, hospitals, special-needs schools etc.

Weaknesses:

- not sufficient employees' knowledge and awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS,
- limited soft skills, especially related to HR, human resource management among senior researchers and PhD supervisors.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths:

1. great research freedom and no limitations to research topics, followed by the freedom of thought and expression,
2. belonging to the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), one of the leading scientific institutions in Poland, INC PAS guarantees compliance with the principles contained in The Code of Ethics for Research Workers and other regulations which are fully accepted, implemented and abided by INC PAS,
3. access to regulations, documentation and legal advice regarding the intellectual property rights, industrial property rights, and principles of scientific and applied research results commercialization,
4. INC PAS employees unequivocally admit that the Institute adheres to the recognized ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles as documented in the appropriate legislation,
5. INC PAS employees unequivocally admit that the Institute does not discriminate researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition,
6. safe working practices, including the trainings of the safety measures at work, as well as introducing proper back-up strategies,
7. INC PAS is a socially engaged institution, taking active part in events, such as the Science and Art Festival or the Garden Festival. Institute's employees share knowledge and promote our research findings not only through scientific publications, but also *via* interviews on local, national and international TV and radio, various presentations, including those for children and elderly people in nursing homes, hospitals, special-needs schools etc.

Weaknesses:

1. limited funds to provide more trainings and workshops on the soft skills, especially related to HR, human resource management among senior researchers and PhD supervisors,
2. still limited knowledge and awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS among the Institute's employees.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)**Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

Strengths:

- the rules and standards are clearly specified in the Regulations on the recruitment of new researchers for INC PAS and other documents available in the Institute,
- all advertisements are submitted to the Euraxess portal and published on the Institute's website and all candidates are informed after the recruitment process about the final decision together with short feedback,
- selection committees consist of experts in a specific field, and the committee is carefully selected for each recruitment,
- INC PAS takes into account career breaks related to maternal/parental leaves, periods of sickness or recovery benefit.

Weaknesses:

- OTM-R Policy is not yet available on the institute's website.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths:

1. OTM-R policy development and publication,
2. rules and requirements for employment on all of the research and technical positions at INC PAS were adopted by the Director's orders (all documents available at the internal Institute's server),
3. the entry and admission standards for researchers at all career stages are clearly specified and available both at the Institute's internal server as well as by the HR officer,
4. all job advertisements and recruitment procedures are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable, and are tailored to the type of positions advertised,
5. all job advertisements are submitted to the Euraxess portal and published on the Institute's website and all candidates are informed after the recruitment process about the final decision together with a short feedback,
6. selection committees consist of experts in a specific field, and the committee is carefully selected for each advertised position,
7. career breaks due to parental leaves, periods of sickness or recovery benefit are taken into account while revising or evaluating the researcher's career.

Weaknesses:

1. Gender Equality Plan is not yet fully recognized by the staff members,
2. Insufficient funds to raise salaries to a level that will satisfy and attract the best researchers.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)**Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

Strengths:

- requirements for employment on the research and technical positions at INC PAS were adopted,
- Research Development Specialist was appointed and is currently responsible for the issues of (1) informing on national and international external grants and projects opportunities, (2) administrative care over research projects, (3) mediations and facilitations of contacts between Institute's administration and research staff, as well as institutions such as the „National Science Centre" or the „National Centre of Research and Development";
- creation of new and modernization of existing laboratories and office space,
- increased salaries.

Weaknesses:

- limited office and laboratory space.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths:

1. rules and requirements for employment on all of the research and technical positions at INC PAS were adopted by the Director's orders (all documents available at the internal Institute's server),
2. Research Development Specialist is continuously responsible for (1) informing on national and international external grants and projects opportunities, (2) administrative care over research projects, (3) mediations and facilitations of contacts between Institute's administration and research staff, as well as institutions such as the „National Science Centre" or the „National Centre of Research and Development",
3. while possible, modernization of existing laboratories and office space,
4. increase of salaries, in accordance with current national regulations and labor legislation,
5. possibility of remote work in accordance with the current regulations,
6. attempts to propose permanent position contracts to most of the research staff, yet openness to the external researchers employed as the post-doc on fixed-term contracts,
7. recognition of all researchers as professionals, regardless their career stage.

Weaknesses:

1. limited office and laboratory space,
2. insufficient statutory funds to increase research mobility,
3. insufficient funds for creation of Research Development Department and hiring additional person at the position of the Research Development Specialist, which would meet the demand of the career advice and development expressed by the Institute's employees,
4. insufficient funds to raise salaries to a level that is highly satisfactory for researchers.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)**Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

Strengths:

- three Institute's funds were created: 1) or the distribution of subsidies for young scientists and PhD students conducting base or applied scientific research, financed in the internal competition procedure, 2) for conducting base or applied scientific research, financed in the internal competition procedure - "mini-grants", 3) for participation in scientific internships and trainings, financed in the internal competition procedure - "mini-internships and training",
- organization of semi-formal meetings, dedicated especially for young researchers, where in friendly atmosphere they can discuss ideas for new projects, train presentations before the conference, ask for advice on their research, get help in preparing for interviews, etc.,
- conducting discussions with all researchers by Institute's principals (Director and Deputy Director) on the strategy, requirements and expectations for their current stage of a career, and proposed clear consecutive steps for career development.

Weaknesses:

- limited financial resources for trainings.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths:

1. Four Institute's funds have been established and their operation is being maintained. All the four funds have its own regulations and procedures and are financed in the internal competition procedure:
 1. internal grants for the scientific research for all the researchers (in 2023 the budget of 100 000 PLN, with the limit of 50 000 PLN per one project),
 2. grants for the conduct of scientific research or related tasks for the development of young scientists and participants in doctoral studies and doctoral school (in 2023 the budget of 10 000 PLN, with the limit of up to 5 000 PLN per one project),
 3. grants for conducting base or applied scientific research, "mini-grants" (in 2023 the budget of 60 000 PLN, with the limit of up to 9 000 PLN per one project),
 4. grants for participation in scientific internships and trainings, financed in the internal competition procedure - "mini-internships and training" * (In 2023 the budget of 30 000 PLN, with the limit of up to 6 000 PLN per one project).
2. Organization of semi-formal meetings, dedicated especially for young researchers, where in friendly atmosphere they can discuss ideas for new projects, train presentations before the conference, ask for advice on their research, get help in preparing for interviews, etc.
3. Organization of numerous training, both applying to soft skills development, as well as the European grants acquisition.
4. Conducting discussions with all researchers by Institute's principals (Director and Deputy Director) on the strategy, requirements and expectations for their current stage of a career, and proposed clear consecutive steps for career development.
5. Establishing the clear rules of employment for all the positions at the Institute, according to the national and European legal requirements, publishing all the Director's orders at the internal Institute's server.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited financial resources allowing for more internal and external trainings organization.
2. Limited recognition of the "Charter & Code" European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and "Human Resources Excellence in Research" award among the Institute's employees.

Remarks (max 500 words)

INC PAS does not have sufficient funds to provide individual or small group training by excellent trainers. In addition, the trainings that are available are often conducted by people with insufficient experience in working with scientists or in the scientific community (the training market in Poland is mainly based on trainings for corporations/large multinational companies with many employees). The COVID 19 pandemic has led to the cancellation of some scheduled training courses or the delivery of training online, which has reduced their positive impact.

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

For the current (2023) award renewal we revised 17 action proposed in the previous interim report. We consider 11 actions, mainly regarding research environment, participation in decision-making bodies, intellectual rights (i.e. GAP Principles 17, 19, 23, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35) as completed, yet all the necessary activities and required by law updates are being continuously carried on.

We decided to extend two actions regarding supervision and access to career advice (GAP Principles 30 and 40), as the results of the internal evaluation proved that both young and more experienced researchers would profit from the trainings and information on the perspectives of professional career development. The continuous support in both national and European grants acquisition would be necessary, as well as the soft skills trainings (like how to be good supervisor, career advisor etc., and how to build proper relationships with early stage researchers). The actions in this respect will be continued.

We consider 4 actions being still in progress of implementation. Those are action requiring improvement of staff awareness of C&C. We continue working on the informing on the rules for the complaints and appeals (GAP Principle 34). We work on the improvement of the position of the guardian for young researchers (GAP Principle 37), as apparently such guidance and trainings would be welcome. We also continue working on the stability and permanence of employment, especially on the maternity / paternity leaves and other regulation concerning the fixed-term employees (GAP Principle 25). We continue working on improving information actions on the perspectives of professional career development through applications for national and European grants and funds. The administrative unit employees improve their skills as well, in order to support in the process of applying for research grants, mobility stays, etc. (GAP Principle 39).

In addition, we have proposed 4 new actions that directly address the areas identified for improvement by INC PAS staff. These areas are: dissemination and exploitation of research results (GAP Principles 8 and 9), recruitment process (GAP Principles 12-21 and 27), access to career counseling and career development (GAP Principle 30), scientific supervision (GAP Principles 36 and 40).

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

The Institute follows and implements the current legislation regarding the functioning of the scientific institutions in Poland and EU, as well as the labor legislation, including for ex. the new provision on the remote work. All the new requirements are being regularly implemented and available at the internal server for all the employees. The Directors regularly update all the employees on the assumptions and regulations for the evaluation of researchers and scientific institutions.

INC PAS operates within the structure of the Polish Academy of Sciences - a state scientific institution that carries out activities for the development, promotion, integration and dissemination of science. At the beginning of 2023, the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences will change, which will lead to future changes in the functioning of the units within the PAS network. A new strategy for the functioning of the PAS is currently being developed and discussed.

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

As explained above, the Institute follows and implements the current legislation regarding the functioning of the scientific institutions in Poland and EU, thus all the decisions are embedded in law and presented as such to the employees.

3. Actions

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

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 1	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>Training how to be good supervisor, career advisor etc., and how to build proper relationships with early stage researchers. Professional training should be conducted.</p>	40. Supervision	Q4 2017	Director, Administration	Trainings how to be good supervisor and career advisor to be conducted

Current Status

Remarks

EXTENDED	<p>Actions taken till 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director and Scientific Director conducted individual talks with PhD promoters and leaders of research teams and groups; - funds for appropriate trainings have been reserved in the Institute's budget. <p>ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Good promoter. Good leader' training course was organized: 18-19.10.2021; - 'Effective communication' the training course was organized: 23.03.2022 r. and 17.11.2022; - 'Team building' the training course was organized: 14.04.2022; - one-to-one talks/consultations on being a good promoter/leader and helping to solve problems in teams with an external coach were organized; - individual discussions between the Director and the Scientific Director with PhD promoters and leaders of research teams and groups were continued; - Each year, special funds were allocated for training purposes. The selection of training courses depended on current needs and suggestions from researchers/staff. <p>Comments: The working group for the implementation of HRS4R has been established and continuously work on the including all teh required issues into the Institute's HR policy, including preparing and making available the rules and regulations, organizing trainings and workshops.</p> <p>Future actions: - organization of trainings for supervisor and team/group leaders</p>
----------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Action 2

Creation of a list of available equipment and of new scopes of responsibility. Applying for grants focused on the purchase of new equipment. Modernisation of the existing research environment by creating new laboratories.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
23. Research environment	Q1 2018	Director, Administration	Modernisation of research environment by optimising existing space and by creating new laboratories

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

Actions taken till 2019:

- applying for equipment grants to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education;
- an inventory and update of the list of available equipment completed;
- a person responsible for providing information on the equipment and helping in this regard was appointed;
- the chemical laboratory modernized and retrofitted; - the laboratory of the Department of Ecosystem Conservation modernized;
- a new eco-physiological laboratory established;
- the Institute's library modernized and published materials Digitization Unit created;
- ongoing modernization of the office rooms.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- renovation of office spaces (painting, renovation of wooden floors) was carried out, combined with the replacement of some equipment;
- renovation of the social room;
- reorganization of workplace layout combined with optimization of space utilization;
- an application has been submitted to obtain funding for the modernization of the conference room;
- updating and developing a more detailed equipment list.

Comments: The headquarters of our institution is located in an old, antique building in the centre of Krakow and therefore the amount of office space and possibilities of creating new laboratory space are limited. Despite that, the Institute's principals take actions and initiatives focused on a better use and transformation of existing space.

Future actions: -continuing to improve the available space - applying for funds to purchase new modern equipment -modernization of the conference room

Action 3	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>Improve access to training for fixed-term employees and ensure that fixed-term employees are informed about a permanent job during the maternity period and out of it.</p>	<p>25. Stability and permanence of employment</p>	<p>Q4 2017</p>	<p>Director, Administration</p>	<p>Trainings for fixed-term employees to be conducted</p>
<p>Current Status</p>	<p>Remarks</p>			
<p>IN PROGRESS</p>	<p>Actions taken till 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institute's principals (Director and Deputy Director) held interviews with young researchers and technical assistants employed under civil law contracts for a longer time or fixed-term employment contracts and offered to change the contract to a more stable one after meeting certain conditions; - due to personal changes in the HR Department, a better access to information related to this issue was assured. <p>ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Good promoter. Good leader' the training course was organized: 18-19.10.2021; - 'Effective communication' the training course was organized: 23.03.2022 and 17.11.2022; - 'Team building' the training course was organized: 14.04.2022; - the training course about 'Horizon 2020' and 'Horizon Europe' programme was organized: 18.12.2019 and 25.01.2023; - the training course about 'Funding & Tenders' portal was organized: 24.03.2023; - 'Mobbing and discrimination in the workplace - ways of counteracting' the training course was organized: 26-27.02.2020; - one-to-one talks/consultations on being a good promoter/leader and helping to solve problems in teams with an external coach were organized. <p>Comments: In October 2019, an amendment to the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences was adopted. It guarantees better working conditions for researchers. INC PAS has adapted internal regulations to the amended Act.</p> <p>Future actions: - trainings for fixed-term employees will be conducted</p>			

Action 4	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Encourage researchers to apply for different types of grants/projects that allow for an increase of funding and salaries. Provide all types of information about seeking for external grant/project contractors. Improve the reward system for the best researchers and for publishing in good scientific journals.	26. Funding and salaries	Q1 2017	Director, Administration	Number of researchers applying for / receiving research projects. Number of publications in good scientific journals.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	<p>Actions taken till 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Development Specialist was appointed and is currently responsible for the issues of (1) informing on national and international external grants and projects opportunities, (2) administrative care over research projects, (3) mediations and facilitations of contacts between Institute's administration and research staff, as well as institutions such as the „National Science Centre“ or the „National Centre of Research and Development“; - Institute's managerial staff and administration have been providing information on the new grant calls formal and legal issues; - new regulations for scientific publications bonus have been adopted (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 21/2019); -salaries for researchers have increased according to new Law on Higher Education and Science in Poland. <p>ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - salaries for researchers have increased according to the new Law on Higher Education and Science in Poland: 01.2023 - the Institute's management and administration continue to provide information on new grant calls, formal and legal issues, and possible free workshops; - each year, a new regulation on bonuses for scientific publications is adopted (announced by order of the Director of INC PAS); - the Institute's management conducts individual interviews and advises on project opportunities. <p>Comments: Improvements related to this issue were one of the most important actions for researchers and were prioritized.</p> <p>Future actions: -continuation of actions taken in this respect</p>

Action 5	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>Developing of a strategy for researchers at all stages and all kinds of employment. Special attention should be paid to young employees and fixed-term contracts. Familiarising all employees with the requirements and expectations for every stage of a career, and working out clear consecutive steps for achievement of the next career step. Adoption of Regulations for Course of Action for PhD in INC PAS.</p>	28. Career development	Q2 2017	Director, Deputy Director, HR unit	Employment requirements for individual scientific and technical positions at INC PAS to be adopted.
Current Status	Remarks			
COMPLETED	<p>Actions taken till 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an internal Institute's fund was created and a board was appointed for the distribution of subsidies for young scientists and PhD students conducting base or applied scientific research, financed via the internal competition procedure (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 4/2019, INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 5/2019); - a fund was created and a board was appointed for the distribution of subsidies for all research and technical staff members for conducting base or applied scientific research, financed via the internal competition procedure - "mini-grants" (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 6/2019, INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 7/2019); - a fund was created and a board was appointed for the distribution for all research and technical staff members for participation in scientific internships and trainings, financed via the internal competition procedure - "mini-internships and training" (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 8/2019, INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 9/2019); - requirements for employment on the research and technical positions at INC PAS were adopted (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 22/2019); - Institute's principals (Director and Deputy Director) discussed the strategy, requirements and expectations for their current stage of a career, and proposed clear consecutive steps for career development with all employees; <p>- INC PAS, together with four other institutes, created in 2019 the Doctoral School and developed its regulations, allowing for better education of PhD students. The Doctoral School aims at providing excellent education, possibility of gaining experience and guarantees better working conditions for young researchers (scholarships, insurance, pension and retirement contributions).</p> <p>ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Institute's directors (Director and Deputy Director) continue to discuss strategies, requirements, and expectations for the current career stage and offer clear next steps for career development to all staff and advise on research funding opportunities (individual talks); - each year, a special fund is created for the conduct of research and internships, and regulations concerning 'mini-grants'; 'mini-internships and training' are updated (by the relevant INC PAS Director Ordinances) - in addition, new funds called 'INC PAS grants' and 'youth grants' have been created by the Management to raise the level of research carried out in the unit and to provide development opportunities for scientific staff. A special council has been set up to distribute the funds allocated for this purpose, based on the INC PAS internal competition ((by the relevant INC PAS Director Ordinances) Comments: Actions related to the development of researchers' scientific careers were recognized as priorities in 2019 and 2023 evaluation. <p>Future actions: - continuation of actions taken in this respect</p>			

Action 6

Improving of information actions on the perspectives of professional career development through applications for Polish and international grants/projects. Improving administrative support in the process of applying for research stays.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
39. Access to research training and continuous development	Q3 2017	Deputy Director, Administration	A person providing administrative support for researchers will be appointed. Various trainings to be conducted.

Current Status

Remarks

IN PROGRESS

Actions taken till 2019:

- Research Development Specialist was appointed (see Action 4)
- Institute's researchers and technical assistants have been regularly updated on the newly released grant calls, internships and trainings, announced by both national (National Science Centre, National Centre of Research and Development, Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange) and international bodies;
- three regular trainings in the statistical methods using SPSS and R were organized;
- three new internal funds were created and commissions were appointed for conducting base or applied scientific research and for participation in scientific internships and trainings (see Action 4);
- Deputy Director together with the scientists from other PAS Institutes regularly organizes semi-formal meetings, dedicated especially to young researchers, where they can discuss, in friendly atmosphere, ideas for new projects, rehearse presentations, ask for advice on their research, get help in preparing for interviews, etc.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- the training course about 'Horizon 2020' and 'Horizon Europe' programme was organized: 18.12.2019 and 25.01.2023;
- the training course about 'Funding & Tenders' portal was organized: 24.03.2023;
- each researcher who applies for a grant is allowed to present his/her idea at the Institutes' seminars and has the opportunity to consult the proposal with the Directorate/colleagues. In addition, the researcher is provided with assistance in preparing the financial part of the proposal.

Comments: INC PAS plans to organized regular trainings for employees matched to their current needs. INC PAS also encourages employees who have participated in external training to share their newly acquired knowledge and skills with their colleagues.

Future actions: - soft skills trainings will be organized - continuation of actions taken in this respect

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 7	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Improving of information actions on the perspectives of professional career development through applications for Polish and international grants/projects. Improving administrative support in the process of applying for research stays.	30. Access to career advice	Q3 2017	Deputy Director, Administration	A person providing administrative support for researchers will be appointed.

Current Status	Remarks
EXTENDED	<p>Actions taken till 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Development Specialist was appointed (see Action 4); - Institute's principals (Director and Deputy Director) discussed the strategy, requirements and expectations for their current stage of a career, and proposed clear consecutive steps for career development (see Action 5), with all employees; - Deputy Director together with the scientist from other PAS Institutes regularly organizes semi-formal meetings, dedicated especially for young researchers (see Action 6) . <p>Comments: INC PAS is a relatively small institute, where direct contact between the employees and principals is easily possible. None of the researchers remains anonymous, which is important in matters of access to career advice and development. Senior researchers are open for support, advice and help for younger colleagues, yet continuous support for researchers at all stages of their careers is needed and expected in this respect.</p> <p>Future actions: - continuation of actions taken in this respect</p>

Action 8

Placing the Regulations of Intellectual Property Protection etc. on the website of the Institute in order to inform all employees about the existing regulations. Circulating information about the appointment of a Disciplinary Action Commission.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
31. Intellectual Property Rights	Q1 2017	Director, Administration, IT Network Administrator	Regulations of the Intellectual Property Rights to be adopted. A commercialization coordinator to be appointed

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

Actions taken till 2019:

- appropriate rules and procedures for the qualification and documentation of services performed for the Institute, for which remuneration is paid as income, securing and regulating authors' intellectual property rights was adopted (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 1/2018)
- regulations for the management of intellectual property rights, industrial property rights, and principles of scientific and applied research results commercialization have been adopted (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 3/2018);
- four trainings and workshops on Intellectual Property Rights and possibilities of scientific research results commercialization were conducted by lawyers specialized in those issues and by technology brokers;
- individual consultations with lawyers on intellectual property rights have been made possible for the Institute's employees;
- a commercialization coordinator was appointed;
- properly prepared and secured storage space was created on the Institute servers, to store and secure items, to which INC PAS holds the copyright.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- continuous upgrading of the institute's server;
- the Institute provides support for the preparation of a data management plan and its implementation;
- efforts to protect intellectual property and data protection continue.

Comments: Actions related to the intellectual property rights and scientific research results commercialization were recognized as one of the priorities in previous evaluations and thus are continued.

Future actions:

- regular update on the issues related to intellectual property rights and scientific research results commercialization
- organisation of training on intellectual property rights

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 9	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Appointing a guardian for young researchers.	37. Supervision and managerial duties	Q2 2017	Deputy Director	A guardian for young researchers to be appointed.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	<p>Actions taken till 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- an advisor and supervisor to young researchers was appointed (Agnieszka Bednarska, associate professor);- Deputy Director regularly organizes semi-formal meetings dedicated mainly to young researchers and PhD students, where in friendly and informal atmosphere they can discuss ideas of ongoing and new research and applied projects, train presentations, get help in preparing for interviews, etc.;- Research Development Specialist regularly updates young researchers on funding opportunities and provides information on possibilities of scientific career development at INC PAS. <p>ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'Good promoter. Good leader' training course was organized: 18-19.10.2021;- 'Effective communication' the training course was organized: 23.03.2022 and 17.11.2022.; <p>Comments: INC PAS aims on providing best possible working conditions for young researchers, putting special attention to their career development. During the evaluation of the 2016 Action Plan, young researchers and PhD students expressed their acceptance and satisfaction with the changes introduced in INC PAS related to "HR Excellence in Research" award.</p> <p>Future actions: - organization of trainings for young researchers and PhD students supervisors</p>

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 10

Adding a new criteria to the Regulations of the evaluation of researchers.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
33. Teaching	Q4 2016	Deputy Director	Criteria connected with teaching to be added to the "Regulations of the evaluation of researchers".

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

Actions taken:

- criteria related to teaching were included in the requirements for employment on the research and technical positions at INC PAS (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 22/2019);
- teaching is one of the additional issues in the individual researchers evaluation (Regulations of 20.09.2018 approved by the Vice President of the Polish Academy of Sciences -Resolution RN / 3/2018).

Comments: The INC PAS by definition is not an institution providing education for regular students and teaching is not a part of the basic activity of the Institute's employees. Although teaching is not imposed in the researchers' duties, yet it is necessary to achieve higher degrees of scientific career. INC PAS adopted its regulations, so teaching was recognized as an additional researchers' activity.

Future actions: No further action is needed.

Action 11

Formulating the rules of lodging a complaint/appeal. Designation of a person who will assist in resolving work-related conflicts, with special attention paid to solving the problems and conflicts between early stage researchers and supervisors. Formulating a regulation for solving problems and conflicts between all employees of INC PAS.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
34. Complain/appeals	Q3 2017	Director, Deputy Director	A person who will assist in resolving work-related conflicts to be appointed. Rules of the internal anti-mobbing procedure have to be introduced.

Current Status

Remarks

IN PROGRESS

Actions taken till 2019:

- a person facilitating and assisting Institute's employees in work-related conflicts was selected in a democratic voting. Dr. Agnieszka Bednarska (associate professor) was appointed for this position;
- Disciplinary Commission chosen in the democratic voting was appointed (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 14/2019);
- rules of the internal anti-mobbing procedure were introduced (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 19/2019);
- Anti-mobbing Board was chosen in the democratic voting was appointed (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 20/2019);
- regulations related to work-related conflicts were included in rules and regulations of the newly established Doctoral School.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- new Disciplinary Commission chosen in the democratic voting was appointed;
- new Anti-mobbing Board was chosen in the democratic voting was appointed;

Comments: INC PAS principals have always aimed to provide excellent, transparent and stable working conditions, also in relation to dealing with personal issues. INC PAS appointed appropriate persons and commissions to handle potential conflicts and ease the communication between conflicted parties.

Future actions: - elaboration of a good practice guide related to complaints and appeals in INC PAS

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 12

Improving the knowledge of employees about relevant representatives in a decision making-body.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
35. Participation in decision-making bodies	Q4 2016	Deputy Director	The knowledge of employees about relevant representatives in a decision making-body to be improved.

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

Actions taken till 2019:

- INC PAS employees are regularly updated by e-mails on the on-going Institute's activities, both scientific and administrative;
- Institute's Director regularly convenes the general assembly, obligatory for all the Institute's staff members, where most important issues are discussed and voted in a democratic voting;
- all the senior researchers (associate professors, holding the "dr hab." degree) were invited to the INC PAS Scientific Council, which is the higher decision-taking body at the Institute;
- young researchers and PhD students in democratic voting elected their representatives for the INC PAS Scientific Council;
- INC PAS employees are informed by e-mail, several days in advance, about the INC PAS Scientific Council assembly and are invited to present their notions and requests.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- regular information on the Institute's current activities, both scientific and administrative (by e-mail and during institute meetings);
- taking into account staff suggestions in decision-making (choice of training, distribution of funds, modernization of spaces, etc.).

Comments: INC PAS Scientific Council and the Director are responsible for decision-taking at the Institute, yet they aim on ensuring open and democratic principles of Institute's governance. Both, senior and young researchers have their representatives in the INC PAS Scientific Council and each and every employee is allowed to submit an issue to be discussed.

Future actions:

- regular updates on the ongoing Institute's activities, both scientific and administrative
- taking into account Institute's employees notions and requests

Action 13

Conducting dedicated meetings for the Institute's employees to improve staff awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	Q1 2017	Director	Meetings for the Institute's employees to improve staff awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS to be held.

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

Actions taken till 2019:

- Institute's Director with help of Research Development Specialist organised three general assembly meetings (obligatory to all the INC PAS staff), dedicated to presenting, incorporating and evaluating C&C principles at the Institute.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- information about 'C&C principles' and "HR Excellence in Research" was provided numerous internal Institute's meetings and training courses;

- materials on the subject are available on the Institute's internal server.

Comments: The Interim Assessment showed that INC PAS employees' knowledge and awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS has not been sufficient, therefore further action and emphasis will be put to familiarize researchers and technical assistants with the Charter and Code regulations.

Future actions: - continuing the process of improving staff awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS through dedicated meetings and "HR Excellence in Research" open day organization.

Action 14

Obtaining information for appropriate assessment and evaluation of the academic and professional qualifications, including non-formal qualifications, of all researchers, in particular within the context of international and professional mobility. Distributing the obtained information to all researchers about the procedures and standards governing the recognition of qualifications.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	Q3 2017	Deputy Director, IT Network Administrator	Employment requirements for individual scientific and technical positions at INC PAS to be adopted.

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

Actions taken till 2019:

- requirements for employment on the research and technical positions at INC PAS were adopted (INC PAS Director Ordinance No.22/2019);
- rules for creating independent research teams were adopted (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 23/2019);
- INC PAS Director organised numerous meetings dedicated to the issue of assessment and evaluation of the academic and professional qualifications.

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- each year the institute allocates a special fund to enable researchers to undertake mini-internships;
- each researcher has a small fund each year which he or she can also use for mobility purposes;
- the researchers can participate in training courses on how to acquire mobility projects and how to integrate mobility into their regular research projects;
- the researchers also have the opportunity to invite researchers from abroad to the institute (with the funds secured by the Polish Academy of Sciences)

Comments: New Law on Higher Education and Science in Poland has been implemented in Poland. Those changes apply to all scientific institutions, including universities and institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences. This Law and its implementing regulations, form the comprehensive and substantial change of attitude to education and research conducted at universities and institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences governance. Due to those changes, the Institute has adapted relevant internal regulations and schemes of assessment and evaluation of the academic and professional qualifications to the new law, in line with national regulations and C&C principles.

Future actions: - monitoring and establishing new actions if necessary

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 15		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Establishment of a "Research Development Specialist" position	GAP Principle(s)			
	23. Research environment			
	30. Access to career advice	Q1 2018	Director	"Research Development Specialist" position to be established.
39. Access to research training and continuous development				

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	<p>Action taken till 2019: - Research Development Specialist position was assigned and a person was appointed to this position.</p> <p>ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019: - research development specialist's work is continued</p> <p>Comments: Research Development Specialist has been appointed and is currently responsible for informing on national and international external grants and projects opportunities, administrative care over research projects, facilitation of contacts between Institute's administration and research staff. She also assist scientists in their scientific careers development by organizing appropriate trainings and workshops and supporting them in formal issues and requirements while applying for grants or higher scientific degrees.</p> <p>Future actions: -adjusting the scope of Research Development Specialist duties, depending on the current needs of researchers and Directors if necessary</p>

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 16

Improvement of staff awareness of C&C

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
1-40	Q1 2020, Q1 2021, Q1 2022	Research Development Specialist	"HR Excellence in Research" open day at the INS PAS to be organized annually.

Current Status

Remarks

IN PROGRESS

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- information about 'C&C principles' and "HR Excellence in Research" was provided during some institute meetings and part of training courses;
- all the materials on the subject are available on the institute's internal server.

Comments: The Interim Assessment showed that employees' knowledge and awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS is not sufficient. Researchers at various levels of career development have shown interest and willingness to know more, and are open for regular updates on C&C principles implementation in INC PAS.

Future actions: -continuing the process of improving staff awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS through organization of dedicated meetings and "HR Excellence in Research" open days

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 17

To develop and publish on the website the OTM-R policy in the form of a single document collecting the existing rules and regulations

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
13. Recruitment (Code)			
14. Selection (Code)			
15. Transparency (Code)			
16. Judging merit (Code)			
17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	Q2 2020	Director, Research Development Specialist, HR Specialist	OTM-R policy available on the website in Polish and English
18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)			
19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)			
20. Seniority (Code)			
21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)			

Current Status

Remarks

COMPLETED

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER 2019:

- an OTM-R policy has been developed and is published on the INC PAS website.
 - a number of documents available and implemented in INC PAS fully correspond to the requirements of the "Charter & Code"

Future actions: -continuing the process of improving staff awareness of the C&C principles and their implementation at the INC PAS through organization of dedicated meetings and "HR Excellence in Research" open days

Action 18		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Improvement of dissemination of results		GAP Principle(s)		
	8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Q2 2023 - Q4 2026	Director, Education and promotion specialist, Research Development Specialist	More efficient dissemination of research findings
	9. Public engagement			
Current Status	Remarks			
NEW	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proposed action addresses one of the areas identified for improvement by INC PAS staff in a survey conducted in April 2023 <p>Future actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a person will be appointed to help disseminate the results, - trainings on dissemination of results will be conducted, - proposals for projects that take into account the improvement of the process of dissemination of results will be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science, - a practical guide to facilitate the dissemination and communication of research results will be developed. 			

Action 19		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Improving communication between young researchers and supervisors		GAP Principle(s)		
	36. Relation with supervisors	Q1 2024	Director, Deputy Director	Improving communication between young researchers and supervisors
	40. Supervision			
Current Status	Remarks			

NEW	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proposed action addresses one of the areas identified for improvement by INC PAS staff in a survey conducted in April 2023 - the proposed action is a continuation of activities in this area and is directly linked to Action 1 and Action 9 <p>Future actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organization of trainings for young researchers and PhD students supervisors, - proposals will be developed to improve communication between young researchers and their supervisors and advisor appointed under Action 9. 			
-----	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 20	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Increased knowledge and awareness of GEP and OTM-R policies	12. Recruitment			
	13. Recruitment (Code)			
	14. Selection (Code)			
	15. Transparency (Code)			
	16. Judging merit (Code)			
	17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	Q1 2024	Director, Research Development Specialist, HR Specialist	Increased knowledge and awareness of GEP and OTM-R guidelines and their application
	18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)			
	19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)			
	20. Seniority (Code)			
	21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)			
	27. Gender balance			

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	<p>Comments: - the proposed action addresses one of the areas identified for improvement by INC PAS staff in a survey conducted in April 2023</p> <p>Future actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trainings on GEP and OTM-R policy will be conducted, - best practice in this area will be collected and shared

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 21

Preparation of a practical guide for the planning of the development of a research career

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
30. Access to career advice	Q2 2024	Deputy Director, Research Development Specialist	Provide a practical guide to career planning for researchers

Current Status

Remarks

NEW

Comments:

- the proposed action addresses one of the areas identified for improvement by INC PAS staff in a survey conducted in April 2023
- the proposed action is a continuation of activities in this area and is linked to Action 7

Future actions: - a practical guide for planning the development of a research career will be prepared, explaining typical research career paths and sources of research funding, and including a collection of good practices in this area.

The extended version of the reviewed HR Strategy for your organisation for the next 3 years, including the OTM-R policy must be published on your organisation's website.

Please provide the link to the dedicated webpage(s) on your organisation's web site *:

URL *:

http://www.iop.krakow.pl/europejska_karta_naukowca_i_kodeksu_postepowania_hr_excellence_in_research__1_538.html
 (http://www.iop.krakow.pl/europejska_karta_naukowca_i_kodeksu_postepowania_hr_excellence_in_research__1_538.html)

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

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Initial Phase)

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Internal Review for Interim Assessment)

A number of documents available and implemented in INC PAS fully corresponds to the requirements of the "Charter & Code", but are not collected in one document and are not available on the Institute's website. Changes in this area will be given priority.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Internal Review for Award Renewal)

The Polish laws and regulations applicable to INC PAS fully comply with the requirements of the Charter & Code. An OTM-R policy has also been prepared and published in line with current and applicable regulations.
 At INC PAS, the majority of vacancies are for research projects. Researchers are recruited taking into account all the requirements of the specific project or programme and under the conditions specified therein (duration of employment, salary, etc.). The experience of the recruitment processes carried out does not indicate any problems in this area. However, scientists point out that, in particular, the financial conditions under which scientists are employed at INC PAN are not attractive to outstanding or high-performing scientists.

Please be aware that your OTM-R policy should be 'embedded' into the institutional HR strategy at the award renewal phase. The extended version of the reviewed HR strategy including the OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website.

4. Implementation

General overview of the implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

Institute of Nature Conservation Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow continues its efforts to provide excellent, transparent and stimulating work conditions for researchers and supporting, technical staff. Following its standards, in 2016 Institute started the procedure to endorse principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. We carried out internal survey among the INC PAS employees, based on the European Charter guidelines, resulting with the gap analyses and proposed Action Plan. Results of the gap analysis and proposed Action Plan were presented and discussed with the Institute's employees on the general assembly, obligatory for all the Institute's staff members. We planned performing self-assessment by the end of 2018, however, due to a protracting procedure of appointing a new director and changes in the positions of Director and Deputy Directors, we postponed that action and performed Action Plan evaluation and self-assessment in 2019.

Principles and requirements of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers recognized in the Action Plan triggered organizational and administrative changes in the Institute's functioning.

In January 2018 Working Group for European Charter Implementation was established at the Institute. Following the INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 22/2019, new employment requirements for individual scientific and technical positions at INC PAS were adopted. Additionally, in October 2019, an amendment to the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences and new Law on Higher Education and Science was adopted, which guarantees better working conditions and salaries for researchers employed in the Academy. Our Institute is adapting its internal regulations to the amended Act. The Institute's Scientific Council recommended and the Director endorsed regulations for scientific publications bonus (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 21/2019) to promote highest standards for publishing study results. To ensure and ease career development, three new internal funds and subsidies were established within the Institute: (1) fund for young scientists and doctoral students conducting base or applied scientific research (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 4/2019, INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 5/2019), (2) fund open for all research and technical staff members for conducting base or applied scientific research (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 6/2019, INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 7/2019), (3) fund open for all research and technical staff members for participation in scientific internships and trainings (INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 8/2019, INC PAS Director Ordinance No. 9/2019) – all the funds are financed in the internal competition procedure.

The solutions adopted have been well received by the scientific community and will be continued through the annual Director's Orders.

The Director assigned a Research Development Specialist position and appointed a person responsible for providing formal and substantive information research and applied projects, on calls for external grants, mediations and contacts between administrative units (internal and external) and scientists.

In summer 2019, we carried out focus group interviews with three groups of research staff: (1) young scientists (without PhD), PhD students and technical assistants, (2) researchers with PhD degree, (3) independent researchers (adjuncts, associate professors and professors). The results of those interviews served as an insight to the Institute's employees opinions on the Action Plan implementation, as well as the source of information for the new action to be undertaken.

In April 2023 we conducted a survey among employees of the Institute. The survey included 45 statements grouped into five thematic areas. For each statement, the respondents had to indicate the most accurate rating on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree); the respondents could also mark the answer "I don't know". Respondents were also asked to specify whether each statement is significant, insignificant or indifferent to them. The survey was conducted online and directed to 92 employees and PhD students working at IOP PAN. 47 filled surveys were collected (51% response rate).

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

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How have you prepared the internal review?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Gap Analysis in 2016 was conducted on the basis of a survey/questionnaire distributed among the scientific and technical staff. In subsequent conversations with researchers it turned out that the survey in some cases was not received positively, due to the lack of understanding of some questions and their background, difficult language and the time necessary to complete the questionnaire. Institute's Working Group for European Charter Implementation decided that the evaluation of the undertaken actions should be based researchers' opinions, using focus group interviews as a method, as well as during formal and informal meetings and discussions with the managerial staff.

In August 2019 all the Institute's research and technical employees were invited to participate in the facilitated focus group interviews, in order to evaluate and give insight to the actions proposed in the 2016 Action Plan. Interviews were conducted separately for three groups of employees: young researchers (R1), researchers with PhD degree (R2) and experienced researchers (R3/R4), in order to provide participants with the possibility of free expression of their opinions and insights. Twenty-six researchers (R1=10, R2=10, R3/R4=6) participated in the study.

The Internal Review was focused on the level of implementation of all C&C principles, with a particular focus on those, which received the lowest overall satisfaction scores in the Gap Analysis and on those where improvements and changes were required. The aim of the Internal Review was to assess what actions have been completed, which ones are in progress and should be continued and what actions should be added, as well as what topics should be a subject of particular attention in HRS4R implementation in INC PAS during the next three years and should be included in the revised Action Plan.

In April 2023 all the Institute's staff, including administrative, research and technical employees were invited to participate in the evaluation survey. The main aim of the survey was to explore employees opinions on the extent to which the functioning of the Institute of Nature Conservation is consistent with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The online questionnaire contained 45 questions divided into 5 blocks. The results were then analyzed in order to evaluate and give insight to the actions proposed in 2019 and optionally propose new actions, extend or continue already proposed ones. Basing on the results obtained, we evaluated the proposed actions, analyzed strengths and weaknesses and the importance of the actions and GAP Priorities to the Institute's staff. All the results were summarized in the report which was presented to the Institute's staff.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

As stated in the 2019 Internal review, the Institute's managerial staff has always considered its priority to create an atmosphere of democratic governance of our institution. The participation of the research community in the implementation process relies mainly on involvement in decision making related to the Institute's activities (INC PAS Scientific Council) and various open discussions during seminars, meetings and individual and group discussion. Researchers are always encouraged to openly express their opinions on the newly proposed solutions, planned new actions, changes in the Institute's regulations, propose their own solutions or propose topics for necessary HR-related trainings. Some researchers actively engaged in the Action Plan implementation, some were appointed new roles (like the mediation, mentoring of young reserachers and PhD students) and some became involved in the particular boards and committees appointed by the Institute's Director.

Lawyers specializing in intellectual property rights, technology brokers, HR specialists cooperating with the Institute have been involved in the preparation of trainings and workshops. They also assisted Institute's Directors on elaboration of new regulations (concerning intellectual property rights, etc.).

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

In **June 2016**, the Working Group for European Charter Implementation (WGECI) was established as follows:

Prof. Henryk Okarma – Director of the Institute
Dr hab. Elżbieta Wilk-Woźniak – Deputy Director
Dr Wojciech Solarz – research staff representative
Dr Jan Urban – other employees representative

In **January 2018**, the position of the Director and Deputy Director of INC PAS changed and the new Working Group for European Charter Implementation (WGECI) was established as follows:

Dr hab. Elżbieta Wilk-Woźniak – Director of the Institute
Dr hab. Piotr Skórka – Deputy Director
Dr Agnieszka Olszańska – research staff representative
MSc Katarzyna Chrzęścik – Research Development Specialist

In **January 2023**, the position of the Director and Deputy Director of INC PAS changed and the Working Group for European Charter Implementation (WGECI) was established as follows:

Dr hab. Elżbieta Wilk-Woźniak – Director of the Institute
Dr hab. Piotr Skórka – Deputy Director
Dr Agnieszka Olszańska – research staff representative
Dr Agata Pietrzyk-Kaszyńska – research staff representative
MSc Katarzyna Chrzęścik – Research Development Specialist

Meetings of the whole team or some particular members take place once a year or more often if needed. During the meetings, the state-of-play of HRS4R implementation is discussed, progress is monitored and evaluation of the accomplished actions is talked over. The group discusses and proposes actions for the new Action Plan, both overall implementation and individual tasks, proposes to widen or introduce new actions to better address the issues identified by the Institute's employees and managerial staff. Research Development Specialist is mainly responsible for regular overseeing of the progress and convening the whole group when necessary.

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

*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The national labor regulations and requirements are conscientiously observed at the Institute. Most of the national regulations follow the rules of European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, however the Institute attempts for improvement and optimization of the organizational policies to increase its compliance with the HRS4R. The OTM-R policy is an example of this approach.

How has your organisation used the proposed actions would be also implemented?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Working Group for European Charter Implementation (WGECI) includes both, Director and Deputy Director, persons responsible for decision taking at INC PAS, which guarantees their acceptance and the support the new Action Plan elaboration and implementation.

The HRS4R implementation process is coordinated by Research Development Specialist, who is in contact with managerial staff, researchers and technical assistance staff. Undertaken actions are presented and discussed with the Institute's employees on the compulsory assemblies convened once or twice a year, during which one can oversee implementation progress, propose new solutions and necessary actions.

How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Research Development Specialist together with the Directors and representatives of the Institute's employees monitor the progress of the Action Plan implementation. Each year, a summary of undertaken actions is prepared to inform Institute's employees about progress regarding the implementation of HRS4R by Working Group for European Charter Implementation (WGECI). The monitoring of the progress is based on targets and indicators set out in the Revised Action Plan. The employees are also informed about the results of the evaluation, prepared before the Interim report preparation. The employees suggestions and remarks are included in the revised Action Plan.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

To date we were testing two methods for the Action Plan evaluation. Those are evaluation survey through an anonymous questionnaire, and focus groups dedicated to the given groups of the Institute's employees. Both methods could give reliable results, yet we are prone to continue the evaluation with the online survey, as that is much easier way for the employees to express their opinions and concerns. In 2023 evaluation survey over 50% of the Institute's employees filled the questionnaire and commented on the several issues. If that method will be used in the next assessment, the results obtained this year (i.e. 2023) will be comparable with the future ones. This will not only give us possibility to assess the opinions on the perception of the GAP Priorities, and their importance for the employees, but also will give us valuable comparisons of the effectiveness and importance of the undertaken actions in relevance to the HRS4R award.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Preparation for the external review will consist mostly of the regular works, including monitoring of the progress and documents collection. INC PAS will take appropriate steps: (1) facilitate understanding of the Institute's situation in the context of applicable law and higher education structures in Poland by external assessors, (2) present the implementation process of HRS4R at INC PAS (both already achieved action and planned activities).

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