HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan

Action Plan

Case number

2025RO390501

Name Organisation under review

Cantacuzino National Military Medical Institute for Research and Development

Organisation’s contact details

Splaiul Independentei 103, Bucharest, Bucharest, 050096, Romania

1. Organisational Information

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

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, doctoral candidates either full-time or part-time involved in research *	66
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	0
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	0
Of whom are women *	49
Of whom are R3 or R4 = established or leading researchers with a large degree of autonomy (e.g. holding the status of principal investigator or professor) *	13
Of whom are R2 = recognised researcher (e.g. postdoctoral researcher, junior researcher) *	26
Of whom are R1 = first stage researcher (e.g. doctoral candidate, research apprentice) *	27
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff) *	99

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	34029963
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	829948
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	3509943
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	0

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

The "Cantacuzino" National Institute for Medical-Military Research and Development is a strategic public institution protecting population health safety. With over a century of experience, it conducts vital microbiological research, produces vaccines, and manages epidemiological surveillance. The institute hosts the National Collection of Microbial Strains while providing public health guidance through its Reference Centers. Additionally, it drives medical education by hosting courses and practical internships for students and resident doctors in partnership with Bucharest's "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

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

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers to open the editor and provide your answer.

Ethics, integrity, gender, and open science*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths: INCDMM "Cantacuzino" already has an ethics and professional deontology framework, an Ethics Commission, rules on professional conduct, non-discrimination and workplace harassment, and strong representation of women among researchers. Research dissemination is supported, and since 2024 affiliated researchers, academic staff and doctoral candidates can publish eligible Open Access articles without publication fees through ANELIS Plus agreements with selected publishers.

Weaknesses: The procedures exist, but they are not always easy for researchers to find or use in daily work. Open Science still needs a clearer institutional framework covering open access, research data management, FAIR principles and reproducibility. Measures for international researchers and inclusion can be made more practical. Green Lab and sustainability practices are still at an early stage and depend partly on external funding and national rules.

Researchers assessment, recruitment, and progression*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths: Researcher recruitment, selection, annual assessment and promotion are governed by formal methodologies based on national legislation and merit-based criteria. Selection procedures and appeal mechanisms are already established.

Weaknesses: Recruitment information needs better international visibility, bilingual accessibility and alignment with OTM-R. Researcher assessment could better recognise different types of contributions and career-stage differences. Career directions and progression criteria should be communicated more clearly and linked more systematically to appraisal, mentoring and professional development.

Working conditions and practices*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths: Researchers benefit from employment stability, formal contractual protections, established research infrastructure and national/internal rules on working conditions, equal treatment and employee rights. Researchers also have institutional access, through the ANELIS Plus consortium, to major scientific literature, bibliographic, bibliometric and specialist databases from publishers such as Elsevier, Springer Nature, Clarivate, Wiley, ACS and BMJ. This supports access to current scientific knowledge and evidence-based research activity.

Weaknesses: Administrative workload and non-research duties can limit time available for research. Researcher support, recognition and accessibility of some working environments can be improved. International mobility remains constrained by administrative and institutional requirements. Dissemination and exploitation policies require additional operational guidance.

Research careers and talent development*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths: Formal promotion and assessment frameworks exist and researchers already participate in scientific training, projects and professional-development activities.

Weaknesses: Career development, mentoring and supervision are not yet organised through a consistent institution plan. Continuous Professional Development is not yet based on a regular annual needs assessment, plan and follow-up. Early-stage researchers would benefit from clearer career advice, R1-R4 pathways, formal mentoring and better visibility of mobility and training opportunities.

3. Actions

The Action Plan and HR Excellence in Research strategy must be published in an easily accessible location of the organisation’s website.

Please provide the web link(s) to the organisation's action plan / strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

- (-)

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HR Excellence in Research strategy to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the gap analysis. It is recommended that the listed actions are concise but detailed enough for the assessors to determine the level of ambition, engagement, and planning for the implementation process. Please ensure that you provide a detailed plan, with precise and quantifiable KPIs, not just an enumeration of the institution's action.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the gap analysis with their ratings.

Proposed actions

Action 1	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Make ethics and research integrity easier to understand and use in practice. Update the visible information on ethics procedures and reporting channels; add integrity, conflict-of-interest and professional ethics topics to onboarding; and organize regular awareness or training activities.	(+/-) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY	Q2-Q8

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Ethics committee; HR; HRS4R workgroup	Updated ethics/integrity information package by Q2; ethics and integrity topics added to onboarding checklist by Q3; at least 1 awareness/training activity per year; at least 90% of research staff reached by Q8.

Proposed actions

Action 2	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Prepare a practical institutional framework for Open Science and responsible dissemination. It should cover open access, research data management, FAIR principles, reproducibility and the rule "as open as possible, as closed as necessary", including security and confidentiality exceptions.	(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE (+/-) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS	Q2-Q6

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Scientific Council; Legal; IT	Open Science guidance approved by Q4; project-level checklist approved by Q6; at least 1 Open Science information session per year; implementation evidence reviewed annually.

Proposed actions

Action 3	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Prepare a realistic research sustainability / Green Lab roadmap covering waste, energy use, procurement, travel, digital workflows and everyday laboratory practice.	(--) 8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH	Q3-Q8

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Administration; Lab Management	Sustainability draft by Q4; roadmap approved by Q6; at least 3 feasible sustainability measures piloted by Q8; indicators reviewed annually.

Proposed actions

Action 4	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Adopt and publish a bilingual institutional OTM-R policy and a practical recruitment guide that brings existing procedures together. Add OTM-R guidance/training for staff involved in recruitment and use a short quality review after each procedure.	(-/+) 10. RECRUITMENT	Q1-Q4

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
HR; management; HRS4R workgroup	OTM-R policy published in Romanian and English by Q4; practical OTM-R guide approved by Q4; all staff directly involved in research recruitment receive OTM-R guidance/training by Q4; OTM-R review used for each research recruitment procedure after implementation starts.

Proposed actions

Action 5	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Make research recruitment easier to access from outside the Institute and from abroad. Introduce a bilingual vacancy template, use EURAXESS where eligible, improve candidate information, notify applicants individually and offer structured feedback to interviewed candidates.	(+/-) 5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY (-/+) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS (-/+) 10. RECRUITMENT	Q2-Q8

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
HR; website (IT); management	All externally advertised research vacancies available in Romanian and English from Q3; all externally advertised research vacancies will be published on EURAXESS by Q3; any exception required by applicable legal, security or confidentiality rules will be documented and justified; applicant-source metrics recorded for competitions; all applicants informed of final outcome; feedback offered to interviewed candidates.

Proposed actions

Action 6	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Review researcher assessment so it reflects career stage, institutional responsibilities and different types of contribution, not only traditional bibliometric outputs.	(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT (-/+) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS	Q3-Q6

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Scientific Council; HR; Management	Assessment guidance reviewed by Q4; revised guidance covers at least 5 contribution categories, such as publications, projects, mentoring, technology transfer, training or public engagement; revised expectations communicated before the next evaluation period.

Proposed actions

Action 7	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Make career pathways clearer by preparing an R1-R4 career map that links promotion requirements, appraisal, skills development, mentoring and mobility opportunities.	(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION (+/-) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE	Q2-Q6

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
HR; Scientific Council; HRS4R workgroup	R1-R4 career pathway document prepared by Q4; access provided to researchers by Q5; at least 1 career-information session per year; career-development information reviewed annually.

Proposed actions

Action 8	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Set up a mentoring and supervision framework, especially for R1-R2 researchers, with clear roles, expectations, links to onboarding and periodic follow-up.	(+/-) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE (-/+) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING	Q3-Q8

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
management; department heads; R3/R4 researchers; HR	Mentoring/supervision framework approved by Q4; at least 80% of R1-R2 researchers offered a mentor/supervisor arrangement by Q6; mentoring activity reviewed annually; satisfaction monitored, with a 70% positive-response target by Q8.

Proposed actions

Action 9	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Introduce an annual Continuing Professional Development and mobility-support cycle, based on training-needs assessment and a visible programme of scientific and transversal-skills opportunities.	(-/+) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS (+/-) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE (-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Q2-Q8

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
HR; management; department heads	Training-needs assessment completed each year; annual CPD program prepared; at least 2 institutional training/information activities per year; at least 70% of researchers participate in one CPD activity per year; mobility opportunities communicated at least twice per year.

Proposed actions

Action 10	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Review workload, administrative burden and accessibility of the working environment, then implement feasible simplification or support measures within public-sector and military rules. Salary and funding matters outside institutional control will be documented, not treated as internal promises.	(+/-) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (-/+) 6. THE RESEARCHER (+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES	Q1-Q8

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Management; HR; administration	Baseline consultation/workload review by Q2; 60% researcher response target for annual HRS4R survey; prioritized improvement list by Q3; at least 2 administrative simplification/support measures implemented by Q6; accessibility needs review documented by Q4 and followed up by Q8.

Unselected principles:

(++) 4. GENDER EQUALITY (++) 11. SELECTION (++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

(++) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The establishment of an open recruitment policy is a key element in the strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the OTM-R toolkit and how you intend to implement / are implementing the principles of OTM-R. It is helpful to include a brief commentary demonstrating this implementation even if there is some overlap with the actions listed above. If this is the case, please link the OTM-R checklist with the overall action plan (max. 1000 words).*

INCDMM "Cantacuzino" already uses formal public recruitment procedures, including published competitions, defined committees, evaluation criteria and appeal steps. What is missing is a simple institutional OTM-R package that consolidates these rules, making them easier to use and explain. During the implementation period, the Institute will publish a bilingual OTM-R policy and prepare a practical recruitment guide. The guide will cover vacancy templates, EURAXESS use where eligible, candidate information, individual notification of final results, feedback for interviewed candidates, OTM-R training for recruitment staff, and a short quality review after each research recruitment procedure. Recruitment monitoring will gradually include basic indicators such as the number and origin of applicants, eligible applicants, external/international candidates, vacancies filled and feedback requests. Information on working conditions, salary framework and development opportunities will be presented as clearly as possible within Romanian public-sector and military rules. The OTM-R checklist will be reviewed during HRS4R monitoring and will remain linked to the Action Plan.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of OTM-R, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

URL:

4. Implementation

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

Implementation will cover the first 24 months after institutional approval, with Q1 defined as the first quarter of implementation. A designated HRS4R Steering Committee or similar working structure will coordinate the work, with action owners from scientific, HR, ethics, quality, administrative and technical areas. Each action will have a lead, deliverables, deadlines and evidence. Progress will be recorded in one central tracker and reviewed at least every six months. The review will look at milestone status, KPI evidence, delays, dependencies and any legal, budgetary or security constraints. Researchers will be involved through career-stage representation, consultations, information sessions and an annual survey. Draft policies that directly affect researchers, such as OTM-R, Open Science, mentoring, CPD and career development, will be circulated for feedback where institutional rules allow. The aim is to embed HRS4R in normal HR and research-management practice, not to create a separate paperwork exercise.

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

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

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

To keep implementation manageable, the existing HRS4R Steering Committee will oversee the Institute's efforts by maintaining a close communication with all the other involved groups. Proposed action owners are:
1. Ethics and integrity (Action 1): Ethics Commission, Professional Deontology structure and HR.
2. Open Science (Action 2): Scientific Council, Legal and IT support.
3. Sustainability / Green Lab (Action 3): Administration and laboratory management.
4. OTM-R and recruitment (Actions 4 and 5): HR, Management and Website/IT support.
5. Researcher assessment, careers, mentoring and CPD (Actions 6-9): Scientific Council, HR, Management, department heads and senior researchers.
6. Workload, accessibility and support measures (Action 10): Management, HR and Administration.

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Researchers will be involved throughout implementation, not only at the assessment stage. The Institute will seek representation from different researcher career stages (R1-R4) in the HRS4R structure and/or consultation groups. An annual researcher survey, focused consultations and information sessions will collect feedback on recruitment, assessment, mentoring, CPD, workload, mobility and working conditions. Draft policies with direct impact on researchers will be shared for comment before approval where feasible. Relevant administrative and scientific stakeholders will also be consulted depending on the action. Key feedback themes and the institutional response will be documented so researchers can see how their input contributes to implementation and future revisions.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HR Excellence in Research award process? Make sure it is recognised in the organisation’s research strategy as the overarching HR policy. *

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The HRS4R Action Plan will be linked to the Institute's research and human-resources management framework and treated as the main roadmap for implementing the European Charter for Researchers. New or revised measures developed under HRS4R, including the OTM-R policy, career-development map, mentoring framework, CPD cycle, Open Science guidance and assessment improvements, will be incorporated into the appropriate institutional regulations, procedures or guidance documents. A simple policy cross-reference register will show which internal documents implement each HRS4R action and when they were approved or revised. The HRS4R/HR Excellence in Research strategy will be published in an accessible section of the institutional website and will be formally recognized in the Institute's research strategy as the overarching HR policy framework for researchers and as the main institutional roadmap for implementing the European Charter for Researchers.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Each action will have a named institutional lead, deliverables, target dates and KPIs. A central implementation tracker will record ownership and progress. Deliverables requiring formal approval will follow the Institute's normal approval workflow, while training, communication and monitoring activities will be included in annual operational planning. The Steering Committee will review delays and barriers and agree corrective measures, revised sequencing or escalation where needed. Actions affected by national legislation, staffing approvals, funding or security requirements will be documented separately so the Institute can distinguish controllable tasks from external constraints. Evidence of completion will be retained for every action, including approved documents, publication records, meeting minutes, training attendance, recruitment statistics, surveys and monitoring reports.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The 24-month Action Plan will be monitored against month-based milestones (quarters; Q1-Q8). Action owners will update a central tracker on an ongoing basis, and the Steering Committee will hold a formal review at least every six months. Each action will be marked as not started, on schedule, delayed, completed or requiring revision. Reviews will compare actual progress with planned milestones and record reasons for delay, dependencies and revised completion dates where justified. An annual progress summary will be prepared around Q4, and a pre-assessment review will take place around Q6-Q7 to identify remaining evidence gaps. By Q8, the Institute will complete an internal self-assessment against the GAP analysis, OTM-R checklist and Action Plan indicators.

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

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Progress will be measured through the quantitative and documentary KPIs assigned to each action. Indicators include approved policies or guidance documents, the share of research vacancies published bilingually and on EURAXESS where eligible, applicant notification and feedback coverage, participation in OTM-R/ethics/CPD activities, the share of R1-R2 researchers offered mentoring, sustainability measures piloted, annual training-needs assessment, researcher survey response and satisfaction measures, and completion of workload/accessibility reviews. Baseline values will be recorded when an indicator is first introduced. Evidence will be kept in a structured HRS4R repository and reviewed at least every six months. Before the next assessment, indicator results will be compared with the original GAP ratings and OTM-R checklist to identify improvements, unresolved gaps and priorities for the next Action Plan cycle.

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

The implementation plan is intentionally ambitious, but it must remain realistic for INCDMM "Cantacuzino" as a public military medical research institution. Some improvements, especially those linked to staffing levels, salary frameworks, administrative procedures, international mobility and publication of sensitive information, may depend on national legislation, budget decisions, security requirements or confidentiality obligations outside the direct control of the HRS4R team.

These constraints will not be used as a substitute for action. Where full implementation is not possible, the Institute will document the limitation, identify what remains within institutional control and implement a proportionate alternative. For Open Science and internationalisation, this includes applying the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary".

The Action Plan should be treated as a living implementation framework. Changes to deadlines, responsibilities or indicators may be made when objectively justified, but they will be recorded, approved through the appropriate governance process and reflected in the evidence prepared for the interim assessment.