

ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2020CZ488509

Name Organisation under review:

Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS (official name: Ústav termomechaniky AV ČR, v. v. i.)

Organisation's contact details: Dolejšková 1402/5, 18200 Praha, Czech Republic

SUBMISSION DATE: 29 MARCH 2021

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	117.55
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	16
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	0
Of whom are women	17.85
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	59.2
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	24.55
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	33.8
Total number of students (if relevant)	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	195.43
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	8,969,330
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	4,588,192
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	2,962,616
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	235,840
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	
<p>The Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS (Czech Academy of Sciences) is a non-university research institution conducting multidisciplinary basic research in applied physics, with applications in mechanical, electrical, material, power and environmental engineering. The institute has 6 research departments focused on 3 areas: Fluid and Thermal Science, Solids and Mechanical Systems, and Electrical Engineering and Electrophysics. The Institute does not award PhD degrees but PhD students are employed by the Institute as R1 researchers and can be supervised by the Institute's researchers. For more visit https://www.it.cas.cz/en.</p>	

2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE:

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
Ethical and professional aspects	<p>STRENGTHS: The Institute has an almost 70-year-long tradition in conducting research. As a member of the Czech Academy of Sciences, it maintains high standards of professionalism, giving its scientists the necessary research freedom to explore the frontiers of knowledge. The Institute is regularly audited by its founding body (Czech Academy of Sciences) and by the funding agencies providing financing for its research grants and has built strong foundations for professional responsibility at all levels of staff with sharp focus on contractual and legal obligations and researchers' accountability. The Institute actively engages with the society via numerous channels promoting its research results and science in more general terms.</p> <p>WEAKNESSES: We have identified gaps in the area of awareness of various internal regulations and strategies (ethical principles, IP rights protection, strategic objectives, research funding mechanisms, data backup strategies, dissemination/exploitation of results, evaluation system. The internal regulations are not available in English. In addition, we have identified a need for a plan to support adequate representation of female researchers at all levels. Another gap to close is the quality of feedback provided to the researchers from the evaluation system. The evaluation system can be improved to recognize more researcher merits and researchers should receive better feedback to help them advance their career. The feedback from superiors/managers must also be improved, especially for new hires and senior researchers.</p>
Recruitment and selection	<p>STRENGTHS: Researchers at all levels are appointed on the basis of an open public selection process. Open positions are advertised on the Institute website and other national online recruitment channels and most full-time positions are advertised on Euraxess. The job ads contain information about the selection, benefits and remuneration and information about requirements, including the required qualification degrees. Career breaks or variations are not penalized and candidates are free to present all their achievements and qualifications relevant to the post. The applications are reviewed by ad-hoc selection committees who take into consideration a range of candidate qualities such as mobility experience, supervision, research project leadership or experience from industry. The selection committee recommends the best candidates for appointment to the director. The director can determine the employee grade based on the qualifications of the candidate to ensure that an insufficient formal qualification is not a</p>

	<p>barrier to entry. Similarly, if the candidate offers higher qualifications than the required ones, the director can determine a higher employee grade. In recent years, selection committees of most research departments have been shortlisting candidates for interviews and informing the shortlisted candidates about the result. The reputation of the institution awarding the candidate’s degree is not considered as a barrier to entry providing that the degree is recognized by the relevant national recognition procedures. The duration of postdoctoral appointments is limited to 5 years from the award of the PhD degree. The Institute actively supports long-term career prospects of postdoctoral researchers to develop its own core research staff.</p> <p>WEAKNESSES: Although the recruitment and selection is principally open, transparent and merit-based, the Institute does not have a dedicated guideline aligned with all requirements for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment detailing its procedures, admission standards, selection criteria, merits for judging, career development prospects, handling disadvantaged groups, requirements on the gender balance/diversity of selection committees, rules for the recognition of variations in the career chronology and mobility experience. There are areas where the current recruitment and selection practice is not fully aligned with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Although many Code principles are observed in full or at least partially, such as evaluating a wide range of merits and communicating the selection rules and results to candidates, the practice differs from department to department. Objectives of postdoctoral appointments are not set and communicated to the postdoctoral researchers in a written form. The staff engaged in recruitment and selection does not have full understanding of the available procedures to assess the academic qualifications of international researchers.</p>
Working conditions	<p>STRENGTHS: The researchers are treated fairly and with respect by the Institute and by supervisors/managers. The Institute provides the researchers with the necessary resources (material, research infrastructure, laboratory/office spaces, access to research networks, amenities etc.) and observes the national legislation for occupational health and safety. The Institute offers numerous extra employee benefits and social security provisions beyond the national legislation to create stimulating research environment and boost its attractiveness as an employer. High level of employment stability and research continuity is provided to researchers at all levels. The Institute opens annual calls for internally funded 1-year research grants to allow researchers to bridge periods without project funding for their research. If the length of employment contract exceeds the length of a grant project from which the researcher’s salary is funded (fully or partially), the</p>

	<p>employment contract is honored to its entire length (including permanent), the researcher's salary is covered from the institutional funds and the employee's working hours are usually not reduced. The Institute actively supports mobility of its researchers from public grants. The rights of the researchers to their results are observed and the procedures for their exploitation are clearly defined. The rights of all researchers to co-authorship are ensured. The researchers are adequately represented in the Institute's decision-making bodies.</p> <p>WEAKNESSES: We have identified gaps in the awareness about available research funding, mandatory safety training, employee benefits and intellectual property rights protection. There are still areas where working conditions can be improved (for example for parents after parental leave). Only a small fraction of female researchers are in the most senior category and female researchers are not adequately represented at all levels. The Institute needs a more detailed career development strategy. Although young researchers have full access to their mentors to seek advice and guidance, the Institute needs to offer career advice to researchers at all levels.</p>
Training and development	<p>STRENGTHS: The Institute considers young researchers as one of the pillars for its future research excellence and has measures to monitor their progress (committee for PhD students) and provide them with feedback (annual seminars for PhD students). The vast majority of researchers consider feedback regarding their professional growth and development from their supervisor/manager as constructive. A great fraction of the researchers are interested in developing their skills and competencies. The researchers are allowed to attend courses during work hours. The Czech Academy of Sciences offers subsidized or free courses (such as language courses, courses on academic writing etc.) and a weekly newsletter with information about available training and networking. The Code of Ethics of the CAS regulates the relations with students and co-workers with the emphasis on correctness, fair leadership, transfer of skills and providing support. Young researchers have full access to their mentors to seek advice and guidance.</p> <p>WEAKNESSES: Some trainee researchers have more than one supervisor/manager which can make their supervision fragmented. Many supervisors employ good practices in training and establish a structured relationship with their trainee researchers, however, the supervisors do not have supporting tools for efficient supervision, such as Training and Supervision Plans or project coordination tools. The Institute does not provide active support to leading researchers to develop their managerial and supervisory skills or centralized access to measures for the continuous development of its researchers.</p>

3. ACTIONS

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

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

*URL: <https://www.it.cas.cz/en/hrs4r>

Proposed ACTIONS	GAP Principle(s)	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
A1. Strengthen awareness of internal regulations (Code of Ethics, regulations on intellectual property rights and their protection, dissemination and exploitation of results, evaluation process/rules) by moving them from the intranet to the Institute website and making them available in English.	2, 3, 8, 11	31/12/2021	Office of Research Support	Ethics Code, IP regulations, regulations on exploitation of results, evaluation process/rules <u>published</u> on the Institute website in Czech and English
A2. Appoint an external independent ombudsman to improve impartiality in resolving ethical disputes, work-related conflicts, issues of fair treatment and discrimination. Adopt an internal regulation to define the ombudsman's statute.	2, 10, 34	31/12/2021	Director	External ombudsman <u>appointed and statute defined by internal regulation</u>
A3. Develop the Institute's mission statement defining the key strategic goals of the organization and recognizing the HRS4R strategy as one of the tools to achieve the goals and communicate it on the Institute website to ensure researchers at all levels can familiarize themselves with the strategic goals of the organization.	4	31/12/2022	Director, Vice Director for R&D, International Advisory Board, Office of Research Support	Mission statement <u>published</u> on the Institute website
A4. Organize an annual all-Institute seminar to allow the research department leaders to share their strategic goals across all research departments, facilitate inter-department collaborations and raise awareness of the research strategies among researchers at all levels.	4	30/06/2022	Vice-director for R&D, Office of Research Support	All-institute seminar <u>organized every year</u>
A5. Communicate a link to a mental health counselling service to streamline access to mental health assistance for researchers	7	30/06/2021	Office of Research Support, WG1 of the HRS4R implementation team	Contact to mental health counselling service <u>published</u> on the Institute website

A6. Adopt and communicate a guideline for secure backup of research and confidential data stored in personal computing devices and provide the necessary software solution	7	30/06/2022	IT department, WG1 of the HRS4R implementation team	Data backup guideline adopted and <u>published</u> on the intranet
A7. Translate key internal regulations and training materials into English to enable access of researchers with foreign nationality to the same scope of information as provided to local researchers. This will include safety training materials, information about available research funding, and regulations on intellectual property rights and their protection, dissemination and exploitation of results (commercialization and knowledge transfer). Provide the translated safety training materials to the Safety Officer.	7, 23, 31	31/12/2021	Office of Research Support, Safety Officer	Regulations and training materials <u>translated and regularly updated</u>
A8. Adopt and communicate a guideline on commercialization, knowledge transfer and intellectual property rights protection consolidating fragmented internal regulations on exploitation of results	8, 31	31/12/2022	Office of Research Support, Chairman of the Commercialization Board, Director (to adopt)	Commercialization guideline <u>adopted and published</u>
A9. Entrust the chairman of the trade union to negotiate improved working conditions for researchers endangered by discrimination (including female and elderly researchers) and to allow researchers to apply for a temporary reduction of workload (part-time working) for personal (family etc.) reasons either by means of the Collective Agreement or by internal regulation	10, 24	31/12/2021	Chairman of the trade union, WG1 of the HRS4R implementation team	Trade union chairman <u>entrusted</u>
A10. Update the evaluation methodology to extend the evaluation criteria to include national/international collaboration, administrative duties, public awareness activities, all types of mobility) during regular evaluations of researchers' performance and improve feedback quality (by adding a career advice note in the evaluation report).	11, 29, 30	31/12/2022	Evaluation Committee, Vice-director for R&D	Evaluation methodology <u>updated</u>
A11. Create an orientation kit for new researchers, which will include information about evaluation process/rules, code of ethics, access to research funding, mandatory	23, 24, 28, 11	31/12/2022	Office of Research Support, WG2 of the HRS4R implementation team	Orientation kit <u>created</u>

<i>safety training, employee benefits and social security provisions, and career development strategy/rules. The orientation kit will be provided to new hires (in electronic or paper form) after their admission to accelerate their orientation in the Institute's policies and guidelines and to help them familiarize with the internal processes.</i>				
<i>A12. Develop and adopt a gender action plan to encourage adequate representation of both genders at all levels of staff, and propagate the gender equality culture. Establish cooperation with a dedicated organization for this purpose.</i>	27	31/12/2022	WG3 of the HRS4R implementation team	<u>Gender action plan developed and adopted</u>
<i>A13. Develop, adopt and communicate the Institute's own Career Development Strategy describing the prospects the researchers can expect in the Institute and the milestones to reach them. The strategy will include provisions on the role of all types of mobility in the career development and access to career advice by means of consulting the supervisors/mentors. Communicate the strategy to all researchers including via the Institute website and the orientation kit.</i>	28, 29, 30	30/06/2022	WG3 of the HRS4R implementation team	<u>Career Development Strategy adopted and communicated</u>
<i>A14. Design and implement "training and supervision plans" (TSPs) for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. The plans will include a clearly defined schedule, objectives, milestones and the first (immediate) and other supervisors. The plan must be signed by the researcher and his supervisors and regularly reviewed/updated with the frequency defined in the plan. The competency of the first supervisor will be endorsed by the signature of the department head.</i>	36, 40	30/06/2022	WG4 of the HRS4R implementation team, Director (to adopt)	<u>Training and Supervision Plans for all doctoral and postdoctoral researchers created and signed, updated at intervals defined in the plan</u>
<i>A15. Develop a Training & Development site with training resources (links to training materials, online or class-based courses organized by the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Institute or third parties, e-learning etc.) covering all aspects of researchers' skills including: managerial/supervision skills,</i>	37, 38, 31, 3, 8	31/12/2022	Contact person for Training and Development	<u>Education & Training site launched and regularly updated</u>

<i>academic writing, writing proposals, intellectual property rights protection, language skills, presentation skills, negotiation skills etc. The site will include information about mobility opportunities and institutional funding (subject to availability).</i>				
<i>A16. Implement a tool/solution for project management/team coordination to support a more efficient leadership of early-stage researchers and research/project teams. Make the tool available on the intranet.</i>	37	31/12/2022	<i>IT department, WG4 of the HRS4R implementation team</i>	<i>Project management tool <u>implemented and made available</u> on the intranet</i>
<i>A17. Appoint a contact person for Training and Development for all requests/queries related to access to training and measures for the continuous development of research staff (including mobility opportunities). The person will be responsible for developing training plans for different researcher roles/groups and developing/maintaining the Training & Development site (see action above).</i>	39, 2, 3, 8, 31	31/12/2021	<i>Director</i>	<i>Contact person for Training and Development <u>appointed</u></i>
<i>A18. Adopt a guideline for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment and selection of researchers at all levels aligned with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and recommendations in the OTM-R toolkit. Communicate it on the Institute website and using other channels. The guideline will: consider issues of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups, define admission rules for all career levels, career development prospects, selection criteria/merits, rules for recognizing the value of mobility and variations in the career chronology, rules for postdoctoral appointments, composition of selection committees, a complaint mechanism and feedback. A quality control system for OTM-R will also be implemented on the basis of supervision by staff knowledgeable in the Institute's OTM-R policy and archiving selection templates. The guideline will include a provision ensuring efficient communication of open permanent positions to</i>	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 25	31/12/2022	<i>WG2 of the HRS4R implementation team, Office of Research Support, Director</i>	<i>OTM-R guideline <u>adopted and communicated</u></i>

<i>researchers with fixed-term contracts.</i>				
<i>A19. Develop an evaluation template for selection committees to assist them in applying the provisions of the OTM-R guideline during the evaluation of candidates. The template will also include guidelines for selection committees and for interviewers, rules for recognizing the value of the mobility experience and variations in the career chronology of candidates and provide reference information on the procedure for the recognition of academic qualifications (including the national legal framework, national recognition tools and other available channels such as enic-naric.net). The template will be made available on the intranet.</i>	<i>14, 16, 17, 18, 19</i>	<i>31/12/2022</i>	<i>WG2 of the HRS4R implementation team</i>	<i>Evaluation template <u>developed</u> and made available to the selection committees on the intranet</i>

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan.

The Institute strives for scientific excellence and considers the quality of its researchers as the key element to achieving its goals. By improving its recruitment and selection practices in recent years, the Institute has been able to attract high-quality researchers from abroad. As a result, the fraction of researchers of foreign nationality has increased 10 times (in FTE terms) in the last 7 years.

The Institute management is aware that further improvements of these practices are needed to maintain the current course and to ensure that prospective candidates can experience the expected European standards when applying for research roles in the Institute.

The key proposed measure to establishing an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment process is adopting an internal guideline for recruitment and selection of researchers aligned with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the recommended OTM-R policies as set out in the Report of the ERA-SGHRM Working Group on Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers ("Report"). The guideline will address the gaps identified in the gap analysis with the help of feedback from all stakeholders, whilst respecting the existing provisions of the Statutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Career Development Rules of the Czech Academy of Sciences. It will be prepared by the Workgroup for Recruitment and Selection of the HRS4R Implementation Team and the process will be overseen by the HRS4R Steering Committee

and the Institute director.

The adoption of the guideline will not be immediate, instead, it will be ensured that its provisions can be fully implemented once the guideline is adopted. This will allow the HRS4R Implementation Team to communicate the proposed provisions with the stakeholders involved in the recruitment and selection process, namely the supporting administrative staff and research department heads, who are responsible for the development of department personnel. The key aspects of the proposed provisions will be applied to ongoing recruitments across all research departments to enable a smooth transition and wide adoption among the stakeholders once the guideline is approved and adopted.

An equally important measure is the development of the toolkit for enabling the implementation of the guideline provisions. This will include a bilingual template for selection committees and intranet tools for job requisition. The template will assist selection committees in applying the provisions of the recruitment guideline during the evaluation of the candidates and will include guidelines for interviewers and information on the recognition of academic qualifications. The responsible unit is again the Workgroup for Recruitment and Selection with the support of IT office.

The final implementation step is communicating the new recruitment and selection policy on the Institute website in both Czech and English and using other channels, most importantly during research department meetings.

The OTM-R toolkit has already been used extensively to complete the OTM-R checklist. The HRS4R Implementation Team will continue consulting the OTM-R toolkit and will use the rationale described in Article 4.1 of the Report to facilitate smooth adoption of the OTM-R policies and practices.

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

URL:

4. IMPLEMENTATION

General overview of the expected implementation process:

INTRODUCTION

The implementation process will be carried out by the HRS4R Implementation Team of the Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS. The team was established in January 2020 and in June 2020 all its members attended a comprehensive 2-day online training on the HRS4R process given by Mary Kate O'Regan from the University College Cork. The team members received training on the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and on the good practice for conducting gap analysis and developing a sustainable action plan, on the key aspects of the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment and on the good practice

for communicating the HRS4R Strategy. The implementation team prepared the gap analysis and the action plan and during the process it has established a strong relationship with the Institute researchers and other stakeholders.

THE TEAM

The HRS4R Implementation Team consists of 4 work groups and the Steering Committee. The work groups coordinate the action plan implementation with the responsible units and the process is overseen by the Steering Committee. The four work groups are as follows: WG1 – Work Group on Ethical Aspects, WG2 – Work Group on Recruitment and Selection, WG3 – Work Group on Working Conditions and WG4 – Work Group on Training and Supervision. The members of the WGs (total of 13 members) ensure a wide representation of all stakeholders (researchers at all levels, management, females, departments, administrative staff, foreign researcher, trade union etc.). The Steering Committee consists of representatives of each work group, an external consultant, management and administrative staff. The composition of the work groups and the Steering Committee is described in detail in the Gap Analysis – process.

THE PROCESS

The implementation process has already started and some actions have been commenced. By the end of May 2021 the work groups will determine the time schedule for each action to ensure the timely completion of each task. The work groups will work with the responsible units to involve stakeholders in the implementation process (researchers, trade union, management, administrative staff). The involvement of stakeholders will include individual consultations and ad-hoc focus groups. The work groups are responsible for observing the existing internal regulations and policies to facilitate a smooth adoption of measures and policies. The work groups, via their representatives in the Steering Committee, will report the progress of each action to the Steering Committee during monthly meetings to allow the Steering Committee to monitor the implementation progress. The Steering Committee members, who are representatives of the Institute management, will discuss the reported issues with the Institute's director during regular management meetings and issue corrective actions back to the work groups. To improve the efficiency of monitoring the progress meeting minutes will be taken.

The national legislation for non-university public research institutions and regulations of the Czech Academy of Sciences give the power to enact new or update existing internal regulations, directives and policies to the Institute director. The policies, when finalized by the work groups and approved by the Steering Committee, will be submitted to the director for approval and adoption/implementation.

Many actions will be implemented gradually, before the end of the implementation period. The implementation team will work to raise the awareness of the ongoing implementation of the HRS4R Strategy among the researchers. A survey will be conducted in 2022 to verify the awareness of the HRS4R Strategy and newly adopted policies/measures.

The implementation progress will be reported on the HRS4R web page of the Institute at <https://www.it.cas.cz/en/hrs4r>.

FUNDING

The Institute has secured public funding for the HR Award application covering the implementation period via the project “Strategic Management Development of the Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS (HR Award)” (2020-2022) of the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education (OP RDE) of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports, reg. no. CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/18_054/0014697. The project is managed by the Head of Office of Research Support and provides funding for the development and implementation of the HRS4R, a training programme for researchers in managerial/supervisory positions on different aspects of the HRS4R and translating selected internal regulations, sample contracts/agreements, the intranet (requisition forms and other services) and the orientation kit to support the internationalization of the Institute.

TRAINING

The project mentioned in the previous section includes a budget for a one-time training programme on HRS4R-related topics to complement the sustainable measures proposed in the action plan:

- (Q2/2021) Ethical and Professional Aspects in Research, 8 hours, all researchers in managerial/supervisory roles
- (Q4/2021) Intellectual property protection, data confidentiality and research data ownership, 8 hours, all researchers in managerial/supervisory roles
- (Q2/2022) Research management skills, 8 hours, all researchers in managerial/supervisory roles
- (Q2/2022) Selection of candidates, interviewing, 8 hours, research department heads, members of the Workgroup for Recruitment and Selection
- (Q2/2021) Specialized English language courses, 24 hours, 5 administrative workers dealing with foreign researchers of the Institute

The training programme will reinforce critical competencies among researchers in managerial and supervisory positions (department and laboratory heads and their deputies, project leaders, directors of branch offices) and improve English language skills of administrative staff serving foreign researchers. It will equip the critical stakeholders with knowledge and competencies required to implement the HRS4R strategy and OTM-R policies and enable these stakeholders to transfer the knowledge onto other stakeholders.

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

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?	The Steering Committee will continue to work in the same composition and format as before, i.e. during the gap analysis process and the preparation of the action plan. The Steering Committee will meet regularly (at least once a month) to discuss inputs reported by the representatives of the four workgroups. The Steering Committee members who are also members of the management team will report the outcomes to the Institute director for approval

	<p>during management meetings and communicate the results back to the workgroups who will implement the approved solutions. The Steering Committee will also ensure that the implementation of the proposed actions is in accordance with the existing regulations of the Institute's umbrella organization (Czech Academy of Sciences), the national legislation and internal policies.</p> <p>This way it will be ensured that the actual implementation steps are always approved by the Institute director who has many powers under the national legislation for public research institutions and that compliance with other existing policies is maintained.</p>
<p>How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?</p>	<p>The researchers will be involved in two ways – by interaction with the four workgroups implementing the action plan and by communicating the implementation steps from the HRS4R Implementation Committee to them during regular research department meetings (and collecting feedback). The interaction of the research community with the workgroups can have two directions. In the first direction, the workgroups will meet with the relevant stakeholders (department heads, laboratory heads, female researchers, trade union representatives, PhD students etc.) to collect information relevant to the implementation of the actions. As for the second direction, all researchers were advised in January and February 2020 to continuously submit proposals, queries and comments relevant to the HRS4R process to the workgroups. Such proposals and comments will also be duly considered during the implementation process.</p>
<p>How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.</p>	<p>One of the actions in the action plan is to develop the Institute's mission statement defining the key strategic goals of the organization and recognizing the HRS4R strategy as one of the tools to achieve the goals. Defining the HRS4R as one of the cornerstones of the Institute's research strategy will facilitate the alignment of organizational policies with the HRS4R. The process will have the following steps: i) by the end of May 2021, the work groups will determine the time schedule for each policy to be developed/updated according to the action plan, ii) the responsible units will start working on the policy changes, with the work groups involving the stakeholders in the process and taking into account the existing internal regulations and policies, iii) the</p>

	<p>responsible units will report to regular Steering Committee meetings to allow the Steering Committee to monitor progress against the set time schedule and decide corrective actions, iv) the management representatives of the Steering Committee will report the progress to the Institute’s director during regular management meetings, v) the changed policies will be submitted in due time for approval and adoption to the Institute’s director who has the power to enact new or update existing internal regulations and directives.</p>
<p>How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?</p>	<p>During the gap analysis process the HRS4R Implementation Team confirmed with the stakeholders and by consulting the national legislation, the Czech Academy of Sciences regulations and the Institute lawyer that the proposed actions are implementable. Besides this, the Institute leadership is highly motivated to implement the HRS4R Strategy because it is central to the Institute’s long-term internationalization efforts. The action plan has been discussed in detail and approved by the Institute management and is considered binding. In an unlikely scenario that an action is deemed non-implementable (for example due to circumstances outside the Institute’s control or not foreseeable at the time of its approval), the HRS4R Implementation Team will propose an alternative action to address the corresponding gaps found in the gap analysis.</p>
<p>How will you monitor progress (timeline)?</p>	<p>The timeline of all actions will be determined by the work groups by the end of May 2021 and the implementation progress will be monitored by the Steering Committee during monthly Steering Committee meetings. In case of occurrence of obstacles or delays, the Steering Committee will issue corrective actions and adjust the timeline. The minutes from the Steering Committee meetings will be communicated to the Institute director.</p>
<p>How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?</p>	<p>The progress of the implementation can be monitored in the Action Plan Implementation Progress chart on the HRS4R web page at https://www.it.cas.cz/en/hrs4r. The progress for each action will be indicated as “ongoing” or “completed (date of completion)” (i.e. the target has been reached and confirmed by the Steering Committee in the meeting minutes).</p> <p>The indicators proposed in the action plan are simple and</p>

	<p>easily measurable. Actions focused on communication of information or tools are indicated either by the act of publishing on the Institute website/intranet/bulletin boards or adding them to the training or orientation materials. The progress for this type of actions will be monitored during the regular Steering Committee meetings and the completion will be confirmed before the set deadline by adding the confirmation to the Steering Committee minutes and updating the Action Plan Implementation Progress chart on the HRS4R web page.</p> <p>Actions requiring a development/update of policies will be considered as completed once the policy is adopted and communicated using the proposed channels. Again, the confirmation will be published in the Steering Committee minutes and the Action Plan Implementation Progress chart will be updated.</p> <p>Actions requiring an appointment of a role will be considered as completed when the appointment letter is issued by the Institute director to the appointed person. This will be confirmed by the Steering Committee using the same procedure as above.</p>
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Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

<p>The dedication of the Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS to the HRS4R Strategy is a key part of the Institute's long-term effort to strengthen its scientific excellence and increase its participation in research projects funded by the European Commission. In recent years, the Institute has implemented a number of measures to support internationalization, such as new recruitment and selection procedures and tools aimed at foreign researchers, appointment of the International Advisory Board and support for international mobility of postdoctoral researchers. As a result, the number of foreign researchers has increased dramatically, the age structure of the research staff has improved and the Institute has recorded its first H2020 successes.</p> <p>Embracing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers will reinforce the Institute's current efforts and enable a sustainable development of its research staff. The Institute has an enthusiastic, ambitious and motivated HRS4R Implementation Team to drive this process. We believe that implementing the proposed action plan will lead to attracting and retaining high-quality staff, improved research performance, better funding and ultimately making the Institute a more successful and attractive workplace.</p>
