

Action Plan

Case number: 2023RO161304

Name Organisation under review: University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest

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Date endorsement charter and code: 17.11.2023

1. Organisational Information

*Please provide a limited number of 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 *	508
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	15
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	0
Of whom are women *	287
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	36
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	32
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	18
Total number of students (if relevant) * - Academic year 2023-2024	11,254
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	1013

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year) - Financial year 2023	€
Total annual organisational budget	52,454,074.00
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	348,667.00
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	1,243,908.00
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	93,719.00

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

Established in 1852, the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest (USAMV) is a prominent educational institution and the leading agricultural university in Romania. It enrolls 11,254 students (2023-2024), supported by 1,013 faculty members (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff). USAMV comprises 7 faculties, 28 bachelor's degree programs, 33 master's programs, 5 programs taught in English, and 1 in French, 2 doctoral schools across 7 scientific fields, 11 research centers within the faculties, and 2 teaching and research-development stations: Moara Domneasă Didactic and Agricultural Research-Development Station and Didactic and Research Development Station for Fruit and Viticulture Pietroasa – Istrita.

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 Charter and Code at your organization.

Ethical and professional aspects *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

USAMV Bucharest demonstrates substantial strengths in upholding ethical and professional standards, evidenced by rigorous adherence to research freedom, ethical principles, and accountability. Areas like professional responsibility, contractual obligations, and good research practices are supported by structured internal regulations and continuous initiatives to promote a collaborative and ethical research culture. Nevertheless, minor gaps indicate opportunities for improvement.

Strengths:

- Research freedom is a central value at USAMV, protected by robust internal regulations and alignment with national laws. Academic freedom is fully supported by administrative structures such as the Scientific Council, the Vice-Rectorate for Scientific Research, and dedicated departments for project management and research support. This ensures that researchers have autonomy and institutional backing for pursuing innovative projects.
- Ethical principles at USAMV are upheld by a dedicated Ethics Committee and a Code of Ethics that outlines professional conduct. Ethical training is integrated across academic levels, with mandatory ethics courses for PhD and Master's students and regular staff workshops funded by institutional projects. This emphasis on ethics and academic integrity fosters a culture of accountability and moral responsibility among researchers.
- USAMV actively promotes professional responsibility, with support from the Center for Technology Transfer, established to guide researchers on intellectual property rights and technological transfer. Access to plagiarism detection software like Turnitin and a strategy to prevent plagiarism underscore USAMV's commitment to integrity in research. Recent workshops focusing on task alignment with team competencies have also enhanced professional responsibility.
- USAMV promotes a proactive professional attitude by providing researchers with resources on funding opportunities and organizing training on project management. Internal research grants encourage collaboration, and interdisciplinary initiatives aim to bridge knowledge across faculties. These efforts cultivate a professional environment where researchers are encouraged to innovate and share knowledge.

- Contractual and legal obligations are clearly outlined in employment contracts, ensuring that researchers at USAMV are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Accountability is prioritized at USAMV, with transparent procedures for financial and technical project management. The institution's ISO-certified internal management system adds credibility to its operational practices. Performance-based incentives and additional remuneration for research achievements help ensure that staff are recognized for their contributions, motivating high accountability standards.
- Good research practices are reinforced through training sessions on occupational safety, health, and personal data protection. These are supported by USAMV's Information Technology and Communications Department, which provides backup options and data security protocols aligned with national regulations. The institution also provides extensive GDPR training, ensuring compliance with data protection standards.
- Dissemination of research is a core practice at USAMV, underscored by annual performance evaluations and a centralized online platform for tracking research contributions. The institution's active involvement in conferences and media outreach facilitates the widespread dissemination of research findings. Programs like the International Conference "Agriculture for Life, Life for Agriculture" contribute significantly to promoting USAMV's research.
- USAMV actively upholds non-discrimination through policies that guarantee equal opportunities regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or other factors. The Gender Equality Strategic Plan and inclusive recruitment processes reflect a commitment to diversity. The institution also ensures gender-balanced recruitment and assessment panels, which promotes fairness in academic and research roles.
- USAMV's evaluation system includes clear criteria and a digital platform for tracking performance, allowing for standardized annual appraisals. Researchers' contributions are assessed based on national criteria, ensuring consistency across evaluations. The Prometheus platform further consolidates information on individual achievements, publications, and other professional milestones.

Weaknesses:

- While research freedom is fully supported, there is an opportunity to enhance interdisciplinary collaborations and also, ensure that emerging researchers have more accessible pathways to research programs, hence fostering a more dynamic and cross functional environment for scientific advancement.
- Though ethical principles are firmly implemented, additional initiatives could reinforce the practical application of these principles in day-to-day research activities.
- While there is strong institutional support, integrating a more formalized mentoring program for professional development could strengthen this area, especially for early-career researchers. Guidance on aligning professional responsibilities with career progression could also benefit the university's research community.
- Better visibility and communication about the research facilities available at USAMV, particularly to external partners, can improve collaboration and ensure more efficient use of resources across the institution.
- Continuous updates to internal guidelines and contracts reflecting changing national and EU regulations could further reinforce compliance and adapt to emerging legal standards.
- Internal methodologies for occupational safety, health, and data management could be expanded with detailed procedures and translated versions for international staff. A disaster recovery plan, covering data management backup strategies and continuity planning, would also enhance resilience.

- While dissemination practices are well established, more structured efforts to foster public engagement and dialogue could enhance awareness of research impact among broader audiences, including local communities and industry stakeholders.

The current appraisal system could benefit from more detailed guidelines to ensure uniform application and transparency in the evaluation process. Additionally, introducing structured feedback from evaluated researchers could improve the system's responsiveness and relevance to career development needs.

Recruitment and selection *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

USAMV Bucharest demonstrates a strong commitment to transparent, merit-based recruitment and selection, evidenced by fair, well-documented procedures and inclusive recruitment practices. However, addressing identified gaps such as support for returning researchers, clearer guidelines for evaluating interdisciplinary contributions, and enhanced feedback mechanisms could further strengthen recruitment outcomes. By formalizing procedures for recognizing mobility and diverse career paths, providing training for selection committees, and updating merit criteria to emphasize collaboration, USAMV can align more closely with both national standards and the European Charter and Code, positioning itself as a leading institution in fair and transparent recruitment.

Strengths

- USAMV employs a transparent recruitment process, where all relevant documentation and job listings are made publicly accessible on the university's website. The institution has a structured approach to hiring that emphasizes merit-based selection and open competition. By posting vacancies on EURAXESS and other platforms, USAMV ensures broad visibility of job opportunities. This commitment to transparency is in line with best practices and supports the institution's goal of attracting high level personnel.
- USAMV's recruitment processes comply fully with the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. By advertising roles that specify working conditions, career development opportunities, and timelines, the institution demonstrates a proactive approach to setting expectations for potential candidates. The use of transparent timeframes for recruitment stages helps candidates plan effectively, and clear descriptions of positions promote realistic understanding of job requirements.
- USAMV's selection processes are defined by clear, fair methodologies tailored to the specific requirements of each job role. Selection committees are gender-balanced, incorporate members from multiple sectors, and include individuals with diverse expertise. This diversity within committees promotes a holistic evaluation of candidates, ensuring that a broad range of competencies and backgrounds are considered. USAMV's commitment to publicizing selection outcomes aligns with its transparent approach, as candidates are informed of selection results immediately after exams or interviews. Transparency in Selection Outcomes: Results of recruitment exams and interviews are publicly communicated, with feedback provided to candidates to foster an environment of openness and support.
- Transparency in recruitment at USAMV is highly commendable, with clear communication of selection criteria, career prospects, and feedback for candidates following exams. The university's promotion procedures are easily accessible online, enabling candidates and internal staff to familiarize themselves with potential career pathways. By providing feedback on applications, USAMV promotes a supportive recruitment environment and helps candidates understand areas for improvement in future applications.
- USAMV values diverse career paths, including non-linear and mobility-enhanced career experiences, in line with the European Charter for Researchers. The institution's approach to evaluating CV variations recognizes the unique skills brought by non-traditional career trajectories and supports an inclusive view of professional development. This non-discriminatory stance enables USAMV to attract candidates with rich, varied experiences that contribute to a dynamic academic environment.
- USAMV's merit-based recruitment is based on a comprehensive evaluation of candidate qualifications. The institution has methodologies for merit judgment that align with national standards, ensuring fairness and consistency. By prioritizing broad qualifications and diverse experiences, USAMV's recruitment process fosters an inclusive academic community.

Weaknesses

- The recruitment process does not currently include targeted provisions for researchers re-entering their careers after breaks. This gap may lead to an underutilization of experienced talent among candidates returning to academia.
- While transparency is a strength, there could be a more explicit articulation of selection criteria, particularly regarding interdisciplinary skills, collaborative experience, and leadership potential.
- Position advertisements, while thorough, could benefit from expanded information on long-term career development opportunities, onboarding, and available mentoring resources.
- Current selection criteria prioritize individual achievements, potentially overlooking valuable interdisciplinary and team-based skills critical in academic and research settings.
- Although feedback is provided, candidates in advanced stages of recruitment could benefit from more detailed, constructive feedback. This would allow applicants to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, particularly those reaching interview stages.
- Although diverse experiences are valued, there is no formal process to consistently evaluate the contributions of mobility experiences and interdisciplinary work, which can lead to variability in candidate assessments.

Current merit criteria focus primarily on individual achievements, with less emphasis on collaborative research, mentoring, and team-oriented contributions—key elements in contemporary academic and research environments.

Working conditions ***Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

USAMV Bucharest demonstrates a strong commitment to providing a supportive and inclusive working environment, underpinned by robust infrastructure, health and safety standards, and non-discriminatory policies. However, areas such as structured feedback mechanisms, enhanced non-financial benefits, and more inclusive career development programs would further strengthen working conditions for researchers. Addressing these weaknesses can help ensure a consistent, transparent, and supportive work environment, benefiting staff at all career stages and enhancing the university's alignment with European best practices.

Strengths

- USAMV provides a supportive working environment, featuring state-of-the-art research infrastructure and advanced facilities accessible to faculty and students. These resources contribute to a conducive environment for research and collaboration across disciplines. The university's commitment to accessibility is demonstrated through facilities that accommodate researchers with disabilities, which aligns with European standards for inclusive work environments.
- Health and safety regulations at USAMV align with both national and EU standards, ensuring a secure and well-maintained working environment for researchers. Regular training sessions on occupational safety and health, along with clear protocols for emergency situations, contribute to a culture of safety and responsibility. Moreover, the institution actively implements European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards, ensuring that data privacy and protection are prioritized, particularly in research projects involving sensitive information.
- USAMV has established a culture of transparency and inclusivity, encouraging open communication among researchers and staff. The university provides regular channels for feedback on various aspects of work life, allowing employees to voice their concerns or suggestions for improvement. Additionally, departmental meetings and project management structures promote an open forum for discussion, which can foster a collaborative atmosphere.

- USAMV follows national labor laws closely, offering transparent employment contracts that prioritize stability and career growth for academic staff. The institution's low turnover rate highlights a commitment to employee retention, and efforts to convert temporary positions into more permanent roles demonstrate support for long-term career planning. These practices align with EU standards, promoting a sense of security and continuity within the academic community.
- USAMV recognizes the importance of non-financial benefits, such as opportunities for career development, participation in conferences, and support for publication fees in reputable journals. By offering additional resources for professional growth, the institution demonstrates its commitment to advancing the careers of its researchers. Moreover, USAMV ensures equitable access to resources, regardless of the researchers' position or department, thus promoting inclusivity and equal opportunity.
- USAMV supports gender equality, guided by a Gender Equality Strategic Plan that ensures fair access to positions, resources, and benefits for both men and women in academia. The university's recruitment processes emphasize non-discrimination, with gender-balanced selection and promotion committees. This commitment to inclusivity promotes a diverse academic environment and ensures that gender balance is reflected in leadership positions as well as research and teaching roles.
- USAMV offers career development opportunities through its Career Counselling and Guidance Center, which provides resources for both early-career and more senior researchers. Various workshops and training sessions cover both research-specific and transferable skills, which can facilitate transitions into industry or other roles outside of academia. These structured support mechanisms help researchers expand their skills and explore diverse career paths.

Weaknesses

- Researchers may encounter some difficulties accessing resources for interdisciplinary or international projects, and administrative processes can occasionally divert focus from research, especially for early-career staff.
- Health and safety protocols are in place, but training could be expanded and offered in multiple languages; mental health support would benefit from structured initiatives, such as workshops and counseling services.
- Feedback mechanisms are available but could be more structured, particularly to better represent early-career researchers' concerns.
- Employment stability is generally strong, but for some positions, especially for postdoctoral researchers, dependent on project-based funding, contract renewals may introduce occasional uncertainties.
- Non-financial benefits are limited, with few formal recognition programs, and career advancement pathways are not always clearly communicated. Senior researchers have limited access to career development resources tailored to their needs, especially in advanced leadership, project management, or non-academic career transitions.

Training and development *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

USAMV Bucharest has established a solid foundation in training and development, offering accessible workshops, interdisciplinary collaborations, and resources for early-career researchers. The institution's emphasis on professional development aligns with its mission to foster an innovative research environment. However, by addressing existing gaps—such as the lack of structured programs for senior researchers, standardized supervisory training, and formal evaluation of training programs—USAMV could further enhance the impact of its training initiatives.

Strengths

- USAMV offers a range of training programs designed to support researchers at various stages of their careers. These programs are made available through internal workshops, seminars, and interdisciplinary events, often funded by institutional projects or European mobility programs like Erasmus+. The Career Counseling and Guidance Center at USAMV is a central resource that provides training and career support to students and early-career researchers. Furthermore, the institution supports mobility programs, facilitating exchanges that enrich researchers' experiences and foster the integration of new skills and perspectives into their work.

- USAMV has taken steps to support career development through structured programs and accessible resources. Institutional projects help fund workshops on essential skills that extend beyond academic research, such as project management, networking, and career transition planning. These initiatives provide early-stage researchers with foundational skills that are applicable in both academic and non-academic settings. Through international programs like the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, USAMV encourages researchers to gain exposure to various career paths, which enriches their professional development and broadens their career options
- The university has implemented some mentorship initiatives to support researchers in developing managerial and supervisory skills. PhD supervisors, for example, guide doctoral students in research projects, which contributes to a knowledge-sharing culture. Additionally, USAMV provides guidance to early-career researchers, fostering skills related to academic and research responsibilities.
- USAMV provides internal workshops, seminars, and courses on a range of research skills, ensuring that researchers stay informed about current methodologies and practices. Many of these opportunities are free of charge, with fees often covered by institutional funds, making them widely accessible to all researchers. The university's emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration also encourages researchers to expand their knowledge across fields, which can enhance their adaptability in a rapidly evolving research environment.
- The institution is open to feedback, as evidenced by the use of surveys and assessments to estimate researchers' interest in training sessions, conferences, and workshops. This responsiveness allows USAMV to align its training initiatives with staff preferences and professional demands. Researchers are encouraged to participate in identifying their own development needs, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and active engagement.
- USAMV recognizes the importance of continuous professional development, with participation in training programs considered in annual performance evaluations. Researchers are encouraged to document their involvement in workshops, conferences, and other professional development activities, which contributes to a holistic evaluation of their professional growth. This practice encourages researchers to actively pursue development opportunities and signals that their efforts in this area are valued.
- Through its Career Counseling and Guidance Center, USAMV offers resources aimed at helping students and early-career researchers explore a range of career paths. International mobility programs and institutional collaborations provide exposure to non-academic careers, fostering adaptability and flexibility in professional development. These initiatives underscore USAMV's commitment to equipping researchers with skills that extend beyond academia.

Weaknesses

- Although training opportunities are available, there is no formal procedure to monitor and assess their effectiveness, making it difficult to ensure alignment with researchers' evolving needs. Additionally, structured programs for senior researchers or those interested in leadership roles are limited, leaving gaps in support for advanced professional development.
- The absence of a formalized career development framework for mid- and senior-level researchers limits guidance on career progression, particularly for those looking to transition to non-academic roles, where targeted resources are minimal.
- Mentorship initiatives are in place, but a lack of standardized training for supervisors results in inconsistencies in the quality of guidance provided across departments, which can affect the professional growth of early-career researchers.
- Research skills development is prioritized, but current offerings focus mainly on fundamental skills, leaving experienced researchers with fewer advanced courses on topics like innovation management, data analytics, and emerging research methodologies.
- While feedback mechanisms exist, they lack a structured approach, limiting the ability to assess the long-term impact of training programs on professional growth or institutional goals.
- Participation in training programs is acknowledged in annual evaluations, yet there is limited quantification or clarity on how these activities contribute to career progression, reducing their perceived importance.

Although USAMV supports career diversity through international programs and collaborations, specific resources for non-academic career transitions are lacking, particularly for researchers beyond the early stages of their careers.

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 organization's Action Plan/HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

<https://usamv.ro/hrs4r-human-resources-strategy-for-researchers/>

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organization's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis. The listed actions should be concise, but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement and the expected implementation process. The institution should strive to provide a detailed plan, not just an enumeration of actions.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles retrieved from the GAP Analysis.

Proposed ACTIONS

Principles:

1. Research freedom 2. Ethical principles 3. Professional responsibility 4. Professional attitude 5. Contractual and legal obligations
 6. Accountability 7. Good practice in research 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results 9. Public engagement 10. Non discrimination
 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code)
 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20. Seniority (Code) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) 22. Recognition of the profession
 23. Research environment 24. Working conditions 25. Stability and permanence of employment 26. Funding and salaries
 27. Gender balance 28. Career development 29. Value of mobility 30. Access to career advice 31. Intellectual Property Rights
 32. Co-authorship 33. Teaching 34. Complains/ appeals 35. Participation in decision-making bodies 36. Relation with supervisors

(x) 37. Supervision and managerial duties (x) 38. Continuing Professional Development (x) 39. Access to research training and continuous development (x) 40. Supervision

	ACTION	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicators/Target(s)
1.	Enhance accessibility and communication for research collaboration	4. Professional attitude 7. Good practice in research 8. Dissemination and exploitation of results 39. Access to research training and continuous development	Continuously Q4/2025	Vice-Rector for Scientific Research, Innovation, and Technology Transfer, Vice Deans for Research, Head of Research Center, Head of Research Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage section on strategic research directions, main research teams, and facilities for each faculty and research units • 80% positive feedback from foreign partners and staff; • 2 open days per year for foreign partners and local communities
2	Establish structured mentorship and career development programs	11. Evaluation/Appraisal systems 37. Supervision and managerial duties	Q4/2025 Q4/2026	Quality assurance committee Doctoral School Board Vice Deans for professional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured evaluation procedures • Mentorship program for early-career researchers with 80% positive feedback; • Career development workshops
3	Expand training for project and financial management and leadership skills	6. Accountability 23. Research environment 37. Supervision and managerial duties 40. Supervision	Continuously	Vice-Rectorate for Coordination and Project Management Department for Project Promotion, Management, and Monitoring Department of project economic management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One project management and financial training session per year; • 2 leadership workshops for supervisors annually.
4	Enhance working conditions through non-financial benefits, mental health support, and open communication policies	24. Working conditions 29. Value of mobility	Continuously Q4/2026	HR Department Committee for Evaluation and Quality Assurance Career Guidance and Counselling Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job descriptions expanded to include non-financial benefits • Biannual mental health workshops and counseling access, with a target of 80% satisfaction on well-being resources. • Regular feedback surveys on working conditions, with 75% participation and 90% of early-career researchers feeling comfortable sharing concerns
5	Improve public engagement and	4. Professional attitude 9. Public engagement	Continuously	Informatics and Communications Service,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold two public engagement and stakeholders' events annually

	community outreach on research impact			Department for Project Promotion, Management, and Monitoring, Career Guidance and Counseling Center, Research Center Vice-Rectorate for Coordination and Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% satisfaction from local communities on outreach initiatives.
6	Implement recruitment practices for diverse career paths	12. Recruitment	Q4/2026	HR Department Career Guidance and Counseling Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment procedure updated with clear provisions for returning researchers • Feedback system to assess whether OTM-R grants open, transparent and merit-based recruitment • 80% positive feedback from candidates on transparency and inclusivity
7	Improve researchers' accessibility by providing multilingual procedures and protocols	4. Professional attitude 6. Accountability 7. Good Practice in Research 24. Working Conditions	Q4/2026	Research center HR Department, IT Department Emergency Situations and Fire Safety Department Vice Rectorate of Internationalization, students' relation and alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All core procedures and protocols in multiple languages (i.e. occupational safety, health and data protection); • 80% satisfaction among international staff; • Update the university's main research pages, research center websites, and www.qlab.ro with full English versions to improve accessibility
8	Conduct regular workshops on ethical principles and professional responsibility	4. Professional attitude 6. Accountability 32. Co-authorship 34. Complains/ appeals 36. Relation with supervisors	Continuously Q2/2025 Q2/2026	Doctoral School Board Vice-Rectorate for Coordination of Activities Supporting University Ethics and Deontology, Decision Transparency, and Relations with the Senate, Vice Rectorate for Scientific Research, Innovation, and Technology Transfer Vice Deans for Research, Scientific Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four workshops per year with 85% positive feedback; • Video and infographic materials available online on Research HelpDesk section within academic.usamv.ro

9	Advancing continuous training for senior researchers	18. Recognition of mobility 30. Access to career advice 38. Continuing professional development 39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision	Continuously Q4 2026	Vice Rectorate for Scientific Research, Innovation, and Technology Transfer Vice Deans for Research Doctoral School Board Head of Research Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One advanced training program for middle and senior researchers annually. • 75% of senior staff report improved skills. • Yearly training for evaluators to include mobility experience in assessment of merit, leadership and mentorship
10	Enhance awareness about university research teams and facilities	4. Professional attitude 9. Public engagement 23. Research environment	Q1/Annual Q4 2026	Center for Technology Transfer Vice Rectorate for Scientific Research, Head of Research Center IT Department Scientific Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report published on current resources and capabilities. • At least two Info-sessions per year • Establishment of a platform for dialogue and co-creation for external actors and the research community • 90% staff and research community awareness
11	Promote interdisciplinary cross-departmental collaborations	16. Judging merit 23. Research environment 24. Working conditions 32. Co-authorship	Continuously	Department for Project Promotion, Management, and Monitoring Communication department Department of International Relations and Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biannual interdisciplinary workshops • Networking events for strengthening cross-departmental collaboration • 75% satisfaction rate regarding the impact of these events on fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.
12	Standardize research data management and security protocols	6. Accountability 7. Good practice in research 24. Working conditions	Q4/2029	IT Department Department for Project Promotion, Management, and Monitoring Communication department Vice-Rectorate for Coordination of Activities Supporting University Ethics and Deontology, Decision Transparency, and Relations with the Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular training on data security and GDPR compliance. • Ensure 100% Backup Coverage: • Disaster Recovery Plan • Active Directory / Cloud Storage for user accessibility and storage management • 70% user satisfaction on data accessibility and ease of use
13	Implement leadership development program for supervisors	34. Complains/ appeals 36. Relation with supervisors 37. Supervision and managerial duties	Q2/Annually	Doctoral School Board HR Department Vice-Rectorate for Coordination of Activities Supporting University Ethics and Deontology, Decision Transparency, and Relations with the Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership training on team management, mentoring, and conflict resolution • 85% completion rate by supervisors annually.

14	Establish an Ombudsman-like structure for impartial complaint handling and a formal complaints procedure.	34. Complains/ appeals 36. Relation with supervisors 37. Supervision and managerial duties	Q4 2027	Career Guidance and Counseling Center Vice-Rectorate for Coordination of Activities Supporting University Ethics and Deontology, Decision Transparency, and Relations with the Senate HR Department Legal Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman-like structure within Career Guidance and Counseling Center • Conflict management trainings yearly or whenever the situation requires • 80% satisfaction rate among researchers, doctoral students, supervisors on conflict management • Annual reports on complaints handled, including anonymized data on types of conflicts and resolution timelines
15	Update, develop and implement internal regulations, procedures and methodologies	6. Accountability 7. Good practice in research 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 12. Recruitment 16. Judging merit 18. Recognition of mobility experience 21. Postdoctoral appointments 24. Working conditions 29. Value of mobility 32. Co-authorship 33. Teaching 34. Complains/ appeals 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous	Q4 2025 Q4 2026 Q4 2027 Q4 2028 Q4 2029	HR Department Legal Department Vice Rectorate for Scientific Research, Head of Research Center IT Department Vice-Rectorate for Coordination of Activities Supporting University Ethics and Deontology, Decision Transparency, and Relations with the Senate Vice-Rectorate for Coordination and Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous update of internal regulations, procedures and methodologies to align with evolving standards and best practices. • Newly developed regulations, procedures, and methodologies published on the University's website • At least one annual information session and one feedback session for staff on HRS4R progress • Annual survey for researchers regarding the clarity and accessibility of the newly developed procedures, aiming for a 75% satisfaction rate • Annual specialized training on updated regulations for all staff with at least 80% attendance • Yearly review of feedback from the surveys and sessions to make necessary adjustments on newly developed internal procedures. • The OTM-R policy will be developed within the first 2 years of the Action Plan and published (in Romanian and English) on the USAMVB website
16	Establish a tailored career advice & transition program for	30. Access to career advice	Q4 2027 Q4 2028 Q4 2029	Career Counseling & Guidance Center (lead) HR Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 30 researchers/year receive tailored career advice; • At least 30% of beneficiaries are

	researchers (with dedicated tracks for mid/senior staff and non-academic pathways)			Vice-Rectorate for Research	<p>mid/senior researchers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 dedicated training sessions/year on non-academic career pathways; Implement a feedback mechanism to continually assess the effectiveness of the career services and make necessary adjustments to ensure that the needs of researchers at all levels are being met.
17	Promote ethical awareness and balanced practices in co-authorship	32. Co-authorship 36. Relation with supervisor 37. Supervision and managerial duties	Q4/2026 Q4 2027 Q4 2028 Q4 2029	Doctoral School Board Vice-Rectorate for Scientific Research, Ethics Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual workshop on ethics of authorship (mandatory for PhD students and supervisors); At least 40% of doctoral students encouraged to submit independent publications (e.g. reviews, conference proceedings) beyond their thesis work; At least 75% satisfaction in annual survey regarding fairness of authorship practices.
18	Provide funded training in pedagogical and psychosocial skills for researchers	33. Teaching 28. Career development 30. Access to career advice	Q4/2026 Q4 2027 Q4 2028 Q4 2029	Career Counseling & Guidance Center (lead) HR Department Vice-Rectorate for Research Vice-Rectorate for Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 annual training sessions on pedagogical and psychosocial skills for researchers, PhD students and post-doctoral researchers; Funding provided for at least 20 researchers/year to complete the psycho-pedagogical trainings; ≥70% satisfaction rate in annual survey regarding support for teaching involvement.
19	Improve clarity and efficiency of recruitment procedures	12. Recruitment 15. Transparency	Q4/2026 Q4 2027 Q4 2028 Q4 2029	HR Department, Vice-Rectorate for Scientific Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment announcements published bilingually (RO/EN); Survey applied after each recruitment process with at least 75% positive feedback on clarity, transparency, and efficiency of procedures; At least 70% completion rate of candidate feedback survey.
20	Update merit evaluation criteria and train evaluation committees	11. Evaluation/appraisal systems 16. Judging merit	Q4 2027 Q4 2028 Q4 2029	HR Department Quality Assurance Committee Scientific Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Recruiting Methodology updated and published (RO & EN) with new merit criteria;

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 annual training sessions for evaluation committees; • Internal methodology developed to assess whether OTM-R objectives are met; • At least 70% satisfaction rate in annual survey regarding fairness of merit evaluation.
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Note: Add as many actions as needed.

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. (max. 1000 words) *

As part of our commitment to achieving HRS4R certification, USAMV Bucharest has conducted a thorough evaluation of our recruitment practices to assess alignment with the Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) principles. Our internal policies already incorporate many OTM-R standards, promoting fairness, transparency, and merit in the recruitment and selection of researchers. The HRS4R certification process has provided a valuable opportunity to review and enhance our recruitment practices, supporting the continuous development of our human resources in both research and education.

To further integrate OTM-R principles, we have outlined specific actions in our Action Plan, including:

- (a) Updating recruitment and evaluation criteria: we will revise our recruitment and evaluation criteria to acknowledge diverse academic and professional experiences, including international mobility and non-traditional career paths. This approach ensures that candidates with varied backgrounds, such as those with PhDs from institutions outside USAMV or unique professional journeys, are fully valued in the recruitment process.
- (b) Enhancing policy transparency and accessibility: to demonstrate our commitment to OTM-R principles, we will develop and publish a comprehensive OTM-R policy document in both Romanian and English. This document will outline our dedication to open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment and serve as a guide for selecting research staff.
- (c) Training recruitment staff on OTM-R standards: specialized training will be provided to all staff involved in recruitment to ensure the consistent application of OTM-R principles. This training will cover key aspects of open and transparent recruitment practices, equipping staff with the skills to effectively implement these standards.
- (d) Developing an OTM-R Guide and templates: an internal OTM-R guide will be created to standardize recruitment and selection processes across departments. This guide will include templates and guidelines to streamline job advertisements, making recruitment processes clearer and more accessible for all candidates.

Through these initiatives, USAMV Bucharest aims to increase the visibility and accessibility of job opportunities, attracting a broader, more diverse applicant pool. These measures will strengthen the quality of our research teams and support broader objectives like knowledge exchange, international mobility, and ongoing quality improvements in research. Aligning the OTM-R checklist with our Action Plan also reaffirms our commitment to advancing human resource practices that are fully integrated with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

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: <http://www.yoursite.com>

4. Implementation

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

At the institutional level, strategies and operational plans have been approved by the senate, known by the entire academic community and currently into implementation.

As mentioned above, HRS4R principles are already integrated into USAMV strategies as well as existing structures and procedures. Awarding the "Excellence in Human Resources in Research" would underline the importance of these principles and highlight past and future efforts to improve working and research conditions.

The outlined HRS4R action plan is in line with the Gap Analysis previously carried out within the HRS4R process, being developed by proposals, observations and comments coming from USAMV researchers from across the disciplines and with varied levels of experience.

Therefore, the action plan presented here is not only the result of our GAP Analysis, but also serves to fulfil our institutional development policy. In addition, our future OTM-R policy will be incorporated into USAMV's recruitment and selection procedures and in future scientific research strategy.

In other words, the action plan:

(a) was drafted with specific proposals in mind coming directly from the interested parties - and was guided by the Gap Analysis;

(b) has been discussed, in terms of the measures' feasibility on a short-to-medium term, with the administrative members of the working group and the Steering Committee; and

(c) has been signed off by the Vice-Rector for Research.

The action plan will be implemented under the supervision of the Steering Committee, headed by the Vice-Rector for Research and consisting of a representative of each relevant administrative department involved in key measures of the Action Plan. Each measure in the Plan will be assigned to a responsible unit. Where relevant, academics themselves will be involved directly via the faculty deans, department heads, and/or research centers.

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

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Steering Committee will establish, in its initial meetings:

- an implementation calendar for each measure;
- milestones for all measures wherein defining such stages is appropriate;
- one or several members within the responsible units tasked with the execution of each measure;
- Committee members will be in charge of monitoring the progress of proposed measures.

The Steering Committee will meet periodically to review the progress of the implemented measures, receive updates from the Working Group members, and make necessary decisions to ensure effective implementation. In addition, the HRS4R process will be presented at regular meetings of Administrative Council and, if it is necessary, the timeline, targets and indicators of Action Plan could be adjusted to ensure proper implementation.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The entire academic community will be informed (by institutional email) on the HRS4R process and will be directed towards the dedicated webpage to access in-dept information.

All proposed actions will be planned, organized and implemented together with the university's researchers and relevant internal and external stakeholders. Periodical updates on the progress will be disseminated using the university communication channels (emails, social media, newsletter, etc.). All members of the research community will be encouraged by the Working Group to provide feedback on actions and to submit proposals for the long-term sustainability of the process.

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.

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

As resulted from the Gap Analysis and proposed in the Action Plan, there are current internal regulations, methodologies, procedures, and practices which need to be aligned with the HRS4R principles. The changes will be integrated in the current process of documentation updating, with a short timespan for some documents and a longer one for others (as, for example the Strategic Plan of the University which is drafted for a period of 5 years). As all management departments directly or indirectly responsible for researchers' HR-issues are involved in the implementation, they will act as key actors for the internal harmonization of regulations and practices.

In view of the institutional changes at the management level of the university and research structures, the composition of the Steering Committee and the Working Group will be periodically revised. The review also aimed to include new community members from all academic-research levels.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The proposed actions have been developed in close collaboration with representatives of the departments and services directly involved and approved by the Administrative Council.

For each proposed action, a coordinator will be appointed and a detailed schedule will be drafted by the Working Group. By continuous monitoring and periodical assessment of the progress, delays will be identified if occurred, and corrective measures will be taken by the Working Group and the Steering Committee.

The Head of the Steering Committee (HRS4R Coordinator) will maintain constant contact with all members of the Working Group and will hold regular meetings to discuss future actions, milestones and possible new actions for the next evaluations.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Based on the detailed calendar of the implementation, each action will be assessed in terms of timeframe and quality of feedback received from the participants (in case of events) or actors involved in decision-making processes (in the case of documentation updates and/or development). By regular meetings of the Implementation Committee and the Steering Committee (at least one per quarter), the progress will be assessed, and corrective measures will be identified. Two reports (one interim, after the first year of implementation and one after the second year) will be drafted by the Implementation Committee and approved by the Steering Committee.

For a sensitive monitoring system, the following actions will be carried out:

- 1) The detailed calendar will be developed by the Implementation Committee (each action will be accompanied by specific dates, designated person in charge, resources needed, expected outputs, etc.) and will be approved by the Steering Committee
- 2) At least once per quarter, the Implementing Committee will discuss the advancements, possible dysfunctionalities, and foreseen risks. Corrective actions will be proposed by the Implementation Committee and approved by the Steering Committee to eliminate dysfunctionalities and/or to reduce risks.
- 3) The Steering Committee will act as the decision-making body responsible for the on time and efficient implementation of the Action Plan.
- 4) Feedback from the researchers on the implementation advancements will be collected by quantitative and qualitative tools. One survey will be conducted per year, while semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups and informal discussions will take place on a continuous basis, according to needs. Members of Implementation Committee will contribute to data collection and reports development.
- 5) Researchers will be encouraged to participate in consultations by pointing out the importance of their input and by following the professional practices in social research (anonymity, when possible, confidentiality for all respondents).

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?***Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

Implementation Committee will monitor each proposed action through quantitative indicators. The qualitative impact of these actions will be evaluated using customized measurement tools, such as events feedback and satisfaction questionnaires. Additionally, the overall mid- and long-term impact of the HRS4R will be measured by the university's interest of external candidates and the satisfaction levels of internal staff.

An annual progress report on the indicators outlined in the Action Plan will be presented to the Head of the Steering Committee, the Vice-Rector for Scientific Research, Innovation, and Technology Transfer. The Vice-Rector will then submit this report to the Administrative Council for approval. If any deviations from the scheduled deadlines for achieving these indicators are observed, the Vice-Rector may propose additional measures to the Administrative Council for review and approval, ensuring the successful attainment of the Action Plan's goals.

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

The implementation of the Action Plan at USAMV Bucharest will involve collaboration across the University's primary divisions, with each division head responsible for the successful completion of designated actions. These leaders will report directly to the Vice-Rectors and the University Administration Council, ensuring accountability and alignment with the University's broader mission. Integrated within USAMV's annual operational plans, the Action Plan will engage the entire University community, fostering a shared commitment to its goals.

USAMV views the implementation of the Charter & Code not as the sole responsibility of an individual, the Steering Committee, or the Working Group but as a collective effort shared by all members of the academic and research community. Researchers and PhD students will be actively involved in the process through targeted informational events, workshops, and discussions, with many sessions available online through the University's virtual platforms. This inclusive approach enables the Working Group and Steering Committee to collect vital insights from the University community, guiding assessment of the progress made, and allowing for timely adjustments to address identified gaps effectively.

Ongoing internal monitoring of these actions is essential to prepare for external evaluations, ensuring transparency and adherence to the highest standards. By aligning the Action Plan with the Charter & Code principles, USAMV Bucharest strengthens its commitment to advancing its strategic objectives in research excellence, development, and global engagement. This alignment reflects the University's dedication to fostering a progressive and collaborative environment, integral to its vision of leadership in agricultural and veterinary sciences both nationally and internationally.

Through these initiatives, USAMV Bucharest aims to increase the visibility and accessibility of job opportunities, attracting a broader, more diverse applicant pool. These measures will strengthen the quality of our research teams and support broader objectives like knowledge exchange, international mobility, and ongoing quality improvements in research. Aligning the OTM-R checklist with our Action Plan also reaffirms our commitment to advancing human resource practices that are fully integrated with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.