



‘Sharing experience to better implement
the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers’

Consensus Report
(to be filled by the lead assessor)



RENEWAL PHASE¹ – assessment with a SITE VISIT

Name of the Organisation under assessment: ...Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology.

This assessment is composed **in CONSENSUS** by the assessors on: ...April 9th 2019...

DETAILED ASSESSMENT

1. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the **quality of progress** intended and obtained by the organisation.

1A. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

	YES	NO
Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?	X	
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation’s priorities in HR-management for researchers?		X
Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions’ current status, additions and/or alterations?		X
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organisation’s management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	X	
Is the OTM-R policy² in place and publicly available?	X	

Look ahead at the questions to be addressed during the site visit, listed in part 1B:

¹ Last update 2.2.2018

² During the **transition period special conditions** apply:

Institutions having started the HRS4R implementation prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015) may not have prioritised actions implementing the OTM-R principles yet. In this case, they should not be penalised but strong recommendations should be made to address these principles appropriately.

Does the internal assessment of the institution give **rise to any issues you wish to explore** in more detail during the site visit?

Which elements of the HR Strategy and Action Plan would **you like to focus on** during the site visits?

Where is the updated action plan on the website?

How is the monitoring process carried out by the HR and recruitment office?

The link between the initial assessment and the survey is not evident. Can you please make it clearer? It seems that most of the principles were not to be addressed but was this a result of the internal survey or of other processes?

How do the disputes settling through an external mediator takes place? Are there any real cases to be analyzed? If so, can we talk to the people involved in the dispute?

Is it possible to go through the documentation of some recruitment cases to check how the commission was composed? And how many times the composition was in accordance with the C&C criteria?

Why there are no actions beyond 2017? More ambition is needed.

How often are training programs carried out for all staff and researchers? Is there any evidence of participation?

Are researchers given the opportunity to sit on decision making bodies in the institution?

What is the national policy framework for salaries and pension rights?

Do researchers notice any improvement since the implementation of the HRS4R? Is there any evidence of that?

Can OTMR untrained staff sit on the interviews?

It is unclear if there is any document citing the HRS4R implementation in the institution and thus how it is formally embedded.

Indicators are missing in many actions. The action plans are available to the committee but are not available on the website. However they are missing of KPIs and most points of the C&C are not addressed.

1B. SITE-VISIT BASED Assessment (to be **completed jointly by the assessors after the site visit**)

Please provide a brief answer to the following questions:

1. Does the **site visit** confirm the impression made by the written self-evaluation report?

No. It does not, because the institution has not well represented the whole process on its website with appropriate documentation (particularly what was available to assessors). During the site visit it was explained that most of the documentation was available but on the staff intranet.

2. What have been the **benefits** of implementing an HR Strategy in the organisation under review? How do you judge its overall impact and achievements?

The benefits are mostly about the implementation of a very well organized OTM-R policy, which appears a best practice. For the rest, we consider that the institution already meets most of the C&C principles but it does not sufficiently prove it through appropriate documentation (i.e. a proper action plan with KPIs) available on the

website.
3. How do you judge the organisation's level of ambition with regard to its HR strategy for researchers, taking into account the initial state of play?
The level of ambition is not high because they have a good system in place and they have a good working environment and the institution provides good opportunities for attracting funds due to the reputation, infrastructures and personnel.
4. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Ethical and Professional Aspects of Researchers ?
This appears not sufficiently implemented. This aspect could be improved a lot especially for the early stage researchers.
5. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Recruitment of Researchers ? Is an OTM-R policy in place?
The OTM-R policy is in place and is very good. We could say it is a best practice. We did not receive clear evidence of the dissemination of this information. Also we had no proof that information about HRS4R is disseminated properly within the organisation.
6. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Researchers' Working conditions and Social Security ?
That's dictated from the polish law, but the Institute has freedom to provide richer salaries based on performance especially in terms of funding attraction. However range of salaries is fixed and is not high as compared to other countries. Senior heads of Labs are evaluated every 5 years and can be fired if they do not perform well. Social security is in place and ruled by the law.
7. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding Researchers' Development and Training ?
This aspect could be improved a lot. There is no specific and systematic training for PhDs about transferrable skills and ethics in research. No training on plagiarism. No dissemination about professional opportunities outside/inside research and career development paths. There is not an annual training programme for early or mid-career researchers at the Institute. There is no career development plan and associated training in place for Researchers at Nencki.

Please list one or more **elements of good practice** that you would recommend to other organisations – either in terms of action or in terms of coordination/process.

The OTM-R policy is in place and appears really well developed and clear. The document provided is extensive and considers all aspects of recruitment. As far as what we could observed from the people we met that went through this selection policy, they were happy with it and considered the whole procedure fair and efficient.

2. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the information submitted and taking into account the organisation's national research context, how would you as an assessor judge the HR Strategy's **strengths and weaknesses**?

If relevant, please provide **suggestions for alterations or revisions** to the (updated) HR strategy:

Nencki is a very high quality research Institute with strong traditions. The institute at the beginning of the process through the implementation committee judged that most of the C&C points were already addressed inside the institution. However, even if research performance appears quite good due to the capacity to attract funding, there are some issues about attracting high quality researchers especially from other countries, which need to be addressed. These issues are probably related to external factors, like salaries, but also from internal factors, such as the visibility (through the website and social media) of policies for career development, research environment and reputation.

Strengths:

- 1) The institution produced a very comprehensive and effective OTM-R policy which is well supported by documentation.
- 2) Nencki was the first Institution in Poland to receive the HR Logo from the Commission, which is commended. The Institute was successful in getting the recognition of the HR logo into the national regulations for research institutions in Poland. This is a great achievement
- 3) The Institute is designing a Structured PhD School for transferrable skills in collaboration with other institutes. However, this is mandatory due to the new legislation.
- 4) The Institute ensures excellent professional environment, pleasant atmosphere in the labs and very modern facilities. The Institute provides a dynamic working environment.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of dissemination of the HRS4R strategy and Charter and Code principles for internal staff.
- 2) Lack of documentation of the good work the Institute has done for the external environment or Researchers who would like to apply to Nencki.
- 3) Lack of action plan on the website and lack of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 4) Lack of structured training on ethics in research, research integrity, social security, job opportunities outside/inside the research world. Some educational events / training programmes are happening, but they are not structured and disseminated among supervisors and researchers. Education about ethics in research concerning technical aspects related to experiments is provided at laboratory level.

Recommendations:

After the site visit, the following recommendations can be given to Nencki Institute:

- 1) To implement a structured PhD transferrable skills training programme annually. This could be provided by joining with other nearby Institutions.
- 2) To connect dissemination of transferrable skills/actions at all levels of career to the logo and the charter and code, thereby increasing visibility of the C&C among Researchers at the Institute.
- 3) To improve mediation issues resolution. There is a need for an external/independent mediator for handling issues between PhD students and supervisors. This is currently performed by the Head of Graduate Studies.
- 4) To better showcase the good actions, related to the Charter and Code, the Institute has undertaken to date, even those organised independently from the HRS4R process.

5) To add information to the HRS4Rs webpage for externals with particular reference to the C&C implementation. This will be valuable also for Researchers who would want to apply to Nencki Institute. Values of the Institution should be evident from the website.

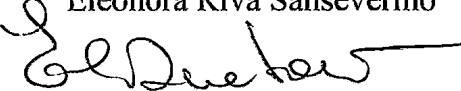
6) To create a permanent monitoring of progress about HRS4R in the institution. This would be best carried out by people who are not from the Implementation Committee (perhaps by gathering feedback through a questionnaire).

7) Provide support for researcher career development. Develop and provide annual Researcher Career Development training to support Researchers for valuing their knowledge even outside the Institute. Training on IPR and start-up creation, etc., are advisable and could be integrated in the initiative in point 1).

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Which describes the organisation's progress most accurately?	Additional comments	TICK the right option
<p>1. The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.</p> <p><i>The next assessment will take place in 36 months.</i></p>		
<p>2. The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.</p> <p><i>The institution is requested to submit within 1-2 months a revised file taking into account the recommendations of the assessors.</i></p>	<p>The institution is asked to submit on the website a revised action plan with timelines, responsibilities and KPIs.</p> <p>The institution is asked to provide evidence of the process on the website, providing links to all the relevant documentation which are currently only available on the intranet.</p>	X
<p>3. The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.</p> <p><i>The institution is requested to submit within 12 months a revised file taking into account the recommendations of the assessors.</i></p>		

Until then, the HR award will be put as 'pending'.

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