

TEMPLATE 4: ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2021BG606909

Name Organisation under review: Medical University of Varna “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” (MUV)

Organisation’s contact details: 55 “Marin Drinov” Street, Varna 9002, Bulgaria;

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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	*828+147=975
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	*12
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	*25
Of whom are women	*639
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	*170+79=249
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	*193
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	*533
Total number of students (if relevant)	6190
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	*1416
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	36 634 239
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	252 051
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	1 426 702
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	-
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	
<p>Medical University – Varna (MUV) founded in 1961 is currently among the most modern and technologically advanced universities in Bulgaria. Over 6000 students study in its four Faculties, College, and three Affiliates in different Bulgarian cities. MUV offers education in 62 doctoral and 30 master and bachelor degree programmes in 6 professional fields of three areas of higher education. Attractive multinational environment, state-of-the-art training, and sports and recreation facilities make MUV internationally attractive for students and researchers from over 50 countries.</p> <p>The university maintains active relations with business, conducts research on numerous projects and recently acquired the status of “Research University”.</p>	

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.

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
Ethical and professional aspects	<p>One of the strengths of MUV is the close observance of the principles of professional and ethical research. MUV adopted strategic research thematic priorities and its Research Institute has a structure corresponding to them. MUV researchers have freedom of thought and research, although research priorities impose certain limitations. A number of MUV internal regulations guarantee the authenticity of scientific results, research based on competence, prevention of plagiarism, and respect for intellectual property. The university publishing house uses anti-plagiarism software and implements double-blind review process. MUV procedures ensure an objective assessment and open, transparent, and sound financial project management. The control is at different stages - from the development of research projects to the publication of results. Ethical aspects of research are peer-reviewed by the Ethics Committee of MUV. It works to improve the skills of research teams to resolve ethical dilemmas in research practice, develops standard operating procedures, guidelines and forms for assessing the ethical aspects of research and good clinical practice.</p> <p>MUV applies strictly the GDPR regulations of the EC and has a Data Protection Officer. Reports of irregularity or discrimination are reviewed by respective officers, depending on the case. MUV plans to appoint an ombudsperson to act on complaints brought by the academic staff.</p> <p>MUV pursues a consistent policy to promote the research results. Its own publishing house issues 11 open access scientific journals, referenced in international databases. MUV's own television broadcasts to the public university activities and events. Expert activities of MUV researchers, personalized Google Scholar profiles, shared results at European databases, and the institutional repository as a part of the DART Europe portal augment visibility and guarantee openness and accessibility of research. The Strategy for research development of MUV (2021-2025) envisages intensification of the relationships science-business-society, through implementation of translational research projects. Upon adoption of Regulations on the Commercialization and Transfer of Research Results, but MUV is yet to open a Technology Transfer and Innovation Unit.</p> <p>The GAP analysis identified as a weakness the lack of an effective financial system of incentives for the overall research achievements, outside the funding from research grants. In this regard, recently the Academic Council adopted an amendment to the Internal Remuneration Rules, providing additional financial support for authorship in referenced/indexed in the global database Web of Science journals.</p> <p>MUV pursues the policy of discrimination-free working environment, in</p>

	<p>accordance with the Regulations for the Internal labour Order and the Law on Protection against Discrimination. In job call competitions, the evaluating criteria are professional experience and competencies. MUV's working and educational environment favours researchers and students with diverse needs, physical access to all resources and infrastructure is provided, the Library accommodates a station for users with visual impairment.</p> <p>MUV applies regular attestation of the academic staff, in accordance with the Higher Education Act and the Regulations for attestation. There is a need to develop criteria and a procedure for regular evaluation of technical staff. A national reform is needed to ensure equal opportunities, evaluation and career development of researchers from different professional fields.</p>
Recruitment and selection	<p>The recruitment and selection of MUV researchers and the appointment of the selection committees is regulated by the national and the University legal framework. The Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and related documents impose minimum national requirements for each scientific position. The selection of staff is done on a competitive basis based on merit. R2-R4 Researchers are employed on a permanent basis, while R1 researchers – with a fix term contracts. Upon a return from a parental or long-term sick leave, R2-R4 researchers are assisted for reintegration into the working environment. In 2021, the Rectors of the medical schools in Bulgaria proposed nation-wide legal changes to facilitate reintegration of R1 researchers after long leave suggesting to extend the duration of the employment contracts of R1 researchers by the period of their absence.</p> <p>A positive aspect for the selection procedures is that all positions are announced and conducted in accordance with the legal base, using standard procedures and requirements for the applicants. Vacancies are specific to the relevant field of higher education, professional field, specialty, faculty, department and teaching and research sector. Applicants are informed whether they meet the minimum requirements specified in the job call, in a written notice. The selection process is based on merit assessment, a combination of education and qualifications, research output, project management experience and doctoral students' supervision. Interruptions in applicant's research careers or professional development are acknowledged and not penalized. Additional requirements may be specified, such as medical postgraduate specializations. In full compliance with the Charter and the Code the seniority requirement is not an obstacle to the entry of new staff at all academic levels.</p> <p>All job calls are published in the State Gazette, on MUV's website, in a regional edition of a national daily newspaper and in the National Center for Information and Documentation. A weakness is that MUV does not publish all vacancies on specialized sites in this field, such as the EURAXESS postal. The GAP analysis revealed that international and other types of mobility of the applicants are not evaluated as an independent criterion. Further, the recognition of "micro-qualifications", experience in other sectors, innovation and patenting would provide better opportunities for future personal development and career. Managerial capacity is underestimated. In this sense,</p>

	<p>actions will be included in the Action plan to improve MUV's OTM-R policy.</p> <p>The support to postdoctoral researchers is one of the goals of MUV. Special attention is paid on university programs that support young researchers and those at an early stage of their careers. A weakness of the regulatory framework is that it does not regulate the postdoctoral position and the career opportunities for these researchers. The professional development of postdoctoral researchers at MUV typically evolves toward taking assistant professor/senior assistant professor positions, after a competitive job call according to the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.</p>
Working conditions	<p>The Labour Code, the Higher Education Law, the Collective Labour Agreement and the internal rules regulate the contracts of all level MUV researchers, working hours, holidays and sick leave. Additional parameters that are subject of regulation are the maximum number of working hours per week, the option to combine maternity and paternity leave with work, part-time employment, the use of business and creative leave. The possibilities of introducing flexible working hours and remote work/home office need to be further employed.</p> <p>The legal framework guarantees the professional development of scientists throughout their career and defines the roles of all level scientists based on qualification and competences. MUV provides access to information, financial support through research and mobility funds, infrastructure and other resources, incl. within its research networks and partnerships. Shortcomings are related mainly to irregular supply of research consumables and equipment, due to nationally regulated public tender procedures. Fixed-term and permanent staff are on an equal footing in terms of working conditions, access to training and funding. MUV provides working conditions that guarantee health and safety, as well as working environment adapted to researchers with disabilities.</p> <p>MUV guarantees remuneration, social security and pensions providing attractive working conditions for its employees and a consistent growth of remunerations – increase of salary rates and of remunerations for scientific degrees and specialties are determined by the Academic Council.</p> <p>According to the regulations career development criteria for MUV researchers include teaching experience. MUV has introduced a specialized software to monitor teaching. Internal standards regulate teaching workload for each level of the academic staff, taking into account clinical work. Extra working hours are additionally remunerated.</p> <p>MUV provides an additional opportunity for financial stability and career development through the conclusion of employment and civil contracts for work on various programs and projects. A disadvantage is that mentoring is not remunerated. MUV does not systematically treat mentoring and the current MUV practice is based on delegating the responsibility for professional development to the head of the respective department. There is a need to improve the current MUV's regulations with regard to this issue.</p> <p>Attestation takes into account teaching activities in the assessment of career</p>

	<p>paths. One weakness is that pedagogical skills are not specifically assessed. The ratio between teaching and research activities of every researcher is not regulated either.</p> <p>The research and teaching staff of MUV is represented in all governing bodies of the university and thus actively participates in defining and achieving the strategic goals of the institution to build and maintain a good working environment. MUV applies an Equal Opportunities Policy which aims at providing equal treatment of academic, technical and administrative staff irrespective of their race, sex, political and personal views. Following the internal regulations, the Rector, Deans and departmental Heads deal with the complaints of researchers in accordance with the principles of fairness. It is a shortcoming that there is no independent institution (ombudsperson) to which employees can refer their complaints independently of the MUV leadership.</p>
<p>Training and development</p>	<p>Continuous professional development and carrier growth of the MUV staff is an utmost priority of the University. The Postgraduate Training Department, together with the practical training units, provides specializations and continuing qualification in over 100 different specialties for the clinical practice, education, and research management, without age or career stage restrictions and regardless of the type of employment contract. Trainings are offered in the form of courses, on individual applications, trainings on highly specialized activities, on legal capacity, language skills and others, as participations in scientific exchange programs and scholarships.</p> <p>Periodic attestations guarantee the strict monitoring of the careers of each of the academic staff. The work of the academic staff is assigned individually by the Head of the respective department and is accountable to the Department Council. The procedures are clearly defined and there are feedback mechanisms (reports, attestations). With the exception of mentoring of doctoral and postgraduate students, the departments do not perform the role of mentoring in relation to young scientists and postdoctoral students, which is needed to guarantee more detailed follow-up and career training of the academic staff. A number of documents adopted by MUV support our efforts to establish a structured and regular relationship between early stage researchers and supervisors and MUV governance representatives.</p> <p>Pursuing its goal of continuous professional development of its researchers, the university annually organizes and holds scientific conferences and forums, regularly invites world-renowned and highly esteemed specialists as guest speakers and promotes the performances on its website, including through the University television MuVi-tv. The possibilities for participation of MUV researchers in national, European and other international project calls and competitions as well as at conferences are regularly reviewed. The selected proposals are presented in a regularly updated newsletter, which is distributed to researchers and is available on the MUV website and through which the academic community is informed about upcoming training opportunities.</p> <p>MUV is in the process of developing a strategy for partnership with business, which will provide more opportunities for additional training.</p> <p>The overall policy of MUV in this direction contributes to the development of</p>

	human potential and the retention of research staff at the university.
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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.mu-varna.bg/BG/AboutUs/Pages/hrs4r.aspx

Please fill in a sum up list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis:

Proposed ACTIONS	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<i>Free text -100 words max</i>	<i>Retrieved from the GAP Analysis</i>			
Ethical and Professional Aspects				
<i>Update current internal regulations of MUV on funding of frontier research projects.</i>	1. Research freedom	2022/Q3	<i>Department of Academic Organization for Clinical Trials and representatives of the Project activity Department, Academic Council</i>	<i>Amendments in the regulations on the structure and activity of MUV Science Fund and Internal regulations on research projects</i>
<i>Update current internal regulations on commercialization and transfer of research results of MUV.</i>	8. Dissemination , exploitation of results	2022/Q4	Research Institute, with the help of Legal Department	<i>Internal regulations on the commercialization and transfer of research results updated</i>
<i>Establish an office for Technology Transfer and Innovations to the Research Institute to provide counselling in applied knowledge and technology transfer.</i>		2022/Q2	Research Institute, with the help of Legal Department and Human Resources Department	<i>Established Office for Technology Transfer and Innovations</i>
<i>Provide training in research</i>		2022/Q4	Human Resources	<i>Trainings conducted,</i>

<i>management and entrepreneurship</i>		<i>+ annually</i>	Department, with representatives of the PhD School and Research Institute	<i>satisfaction feedback</i>
<i>Update data management policy and guidelines on cybersecurity for researchers.</i>	2. Ethical principles 4. Professional attitude 7. Good practice in research	2023/Q1	Information and Technology Department, Academic Council	<i>Data management policy and guidelines on cybersecurity for researchers updated, approved and disseminated among MUV's researchers</i>
<i>Provide training in ethics in research</i>		2022/Q4 <i>+ annually</i>	Career Development Department, with representatives of the PhD School and Ethics Committee	<i>Training programme, number of trainings and participants, satisfaction feedback</i>
<i>Provide foreign reviewers' involvement in the evaluation process for the MUV University Publishing Department</i>	3. Professional responsibility	2022/Q4 <i>+ and onward</i>	<i>University Publishing Department</i>	<i>Number of foreign reviewers involved in the review process of research manuscripts submitted to MUV scientific journals.</i>
<i>Develop a procedure that meets Horizon Europe eligibility criterion to support equality in research and innovation and formally regulate the issues related to various forms of discrimination</i>	10. Non-discrimination 27. Gender balance 34. Complains/appeals	2022/Q2 - 2022/Q4	Research Institute with the support of Legal Department; Academic Council, General Assembly of MUV	<i>Equal Opportunities Policy document created</i>
<i>Develop a procedure for independent investigation of every reported act of discrimination and establishment of a position for the role (ombudsperson/mediator).</i>		2023/Q2	Research Institute with the support of Legal Department; Human Resources; Academic Council, General Assembly of MUV	<i>The ombudsperson institution established at MUV via an amendment in the Regulations on the activity of MUV. Person employed as an ombudsperson. Procedure for resolving conflicts and reported acts of inequality and discrimination integrated in Equal Opportunities Policy.</i>
<i>Update the Directive on attestation of MUV researchers with regard to: - ensure comparable criteria and equal opportunities for professional development and career growth of scientists from different professional fields; - create evaluation criteria for postdoctoral researchers</i>	11. Evaluation/appraisal systems 28. Career development	2023/Q1 - 2023/Q3	<i>Quality Management and Accreditation Department, with representatives from Human Resource, Career Development and Legal Departments; Academic Council</i>	<i>Updated Directive on attestation of MUV researchers in coherence with the Charter and Code</i> <i>Updated attestation templates.</i>

- implement pedagogical training as an integral part of the attestation of young researchers at MUV. - generate and implement criteria for evaluation of the technical research staff and develop an appraisal procedure for them				
Recruitment and Selection				
Update current policy of MUV concerning the involvement of representatives of the private and public sectors and international scientists in the evaluation and selection process.	14. Selection (Code) 10. Non-discrimination	2023/Q4	Career Development Department with a the help of the Legal Department, Academic Council	Updated internal Regulations on the Academic Staff Development at MUV in accordance with the C&C.
Extend the practice of publishing vacancies for researchers on the EURAXESS website and other similar platforms. Translate internal regulations in English	13. Recruitment, (Code) 15. Transparency (Code)	2023/Q4 + and onwards 2022/Q2 + continuously	Human Resource Department Career Development Department	Publishing research positions at EURAXESS is commonly adopted Bilingual internal regulations Published English version of the internal regulations on MUV's website
Update current MUV's policy for the evaluation and career development of the academic staff taking into account: - mobility; - multidimensional careers; - recognition of "micro-qualifications"; - innovation and patenting; - public engagements.	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)	2023/Q4	Career Development Department, with the help of Legal Department; Academic Council	Updated internal Regulations on the Academic Staff Development at MUV and synchronized with the internal OTM-R policy.
Explore the utilization of an IT tool to follow career progression	As the above	2023/Q1 - 2023/Q4	Information and Technology Department	Digital template for individual career development tracking developed
Explore and assess national and	21.	2022/Q4	Human Resource	Updated MUV's policy

<i>institutional policy for offering postdoctoral appointments</i>	Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	- 2023/Q1	<i>Department, with representatives from Career Development Department and Legal Department; Academic Council</i>	<i>for offering postdoctoral appointments in the context of the national legislation and in line with the categories of EURAXESS researchers, in line with the OTM-R policy of the MUV (Regulations on the Academic Staff Development at MUV).</i>
<i>Define general principles related to the postdoctoral appointments in coherence with the Charter and the Code.</i>		2023/Q2	<i>Human Resource Department, with representatives from Career Development Department and Legal Department; Academic Council</i>	<i>Prepared a job description for the postdoctoral position. Increased number of postdoctoral researchers appointed at MUV.</i>
Working Conditions and Social Security				
<i>Develop a Strategy for career development of MUV researchers for the period 2022-2026.</i>	22. Recognition of the profession 23. Research environment 24. Working conditions 28. Career development	2022/Q4	<i>Working group of representatives from Human Resource and Career Development Departments, and the faculty and college representatives of the academic staff, Academic Council</i>	<i>Policy document.</i>
<i>Update internal labour regulations with regard to: - business leave during a mobility, - introduction of a "home office" (teleworking) and flexible working hours, specifically in the context of the current COVID pandemic environment.</i>	24. Working conditions 29. Value of mobility	2023/Q4	<i>Human Resource Development</i>	<i>Internal labour regulations updated</i>
<i>Introduce remuneration for supervision of PhD thesis.</i>	26. Funding and salaries 37. Supervision and managerial duties 40. Supervision	2023/Q4	<i>Human Resource Department with a representative from Career Development Department</i>	<i>Internal Remuneration Rules updated.</i>
<i>With regard to the newly</i>	24. Working	2023/Q3	<i>Human Resource</i>	<i>Updated job</i>

<i>acquired status of MUV as a “Research University” revise the internal rules that regulate research versus teaching work load.</i>	conditions 28. Career development 33. Teaching		<i>Department with representatives from Educational Activity Directorate and Research Institute</i>	<i>descriptions with regard to share of the working time dedicated to research.</i>
<i>Establish a company at MUV for the purposes of the economic realization of the results of scientific research and objects of intellectual property</i> <i>Initiate revision of internal regulations with a focus on licensing agreements related to results produced in a partnership with the business sector.</i>	31. Intellectual Property Rights 32. Co-authorship	2023/Q2 2023/Q2	<i>Research Institute, Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation, with the help of the Legal Department</i> <i>Research Institute, Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation, with the help of the Legal Department</i>	<i>A company established.</i> <i>Internal regulations updated (Regulations on the commercialization and transfer of research results, Regulations on the intellectual property management at MUV, or other as necessary)</i>
Training and Development				
<i>Provide training in mentoring in research and academia settings for R2-R4 researchers</i>	36. Relation with supervisors 37. Supervision and managerial duties	2023/Q3 + and onwards	<i>Human Resource Department, Career Development Department,</i>	<i>Number of trainings of participants trained. Feedback from trainees.</i>
<i>Development of a strategy for business-university relationship</i> <i>Provide training in Technology Transfer and Entrepreneurship</i> <i>Organize soft skills courses for PhD students and young researchers on an annual basis.</i>	38. Continuing Professional Development	2022/Q4 2022/Q4 + annually 2022/Q4 + annually	<i>Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation of the Research Institute</i> <i>Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation of the Research Institute, Career Development Department.</i> <i>PhD School</i>	<i>Policy document</i> <i>Number of trainings of participants trained; feedback</i> <i>Number of trainings of participants trained; feedback</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.

As a research university, the mission of MUV is, along with the training of medical and management staff for the needs of health and social care, to meet societal needs by developing basic and applied research, innovation and new technologies. In fulfilling its mission, the University is guided by the following core values: sustainable knowledge transfer; personnel-friendly environment for research and training; highly qualified scientific and teaching human potential; accessibility and equality; professional development opportunities; respect for academic traditions. The vision of the university is to become a nationally recognized leader in academic training and research, with a significant contribution to improving the nation's health, technological progress and quality of life.

The overall policy of the MUV and the internal regulations are in accordance with the national legislation, which provides to a great extent the observance of the basic principles of the Charter and the Code:

- Higher Education Law;
- Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria
- Regulations on the Implementation of the Act on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria
- Act for the Promotion of Scientific Research;
- Labour Code;
- National Strategy for Development of Research in the Republic of Bulgaria 2017 - 2030;

The human resources are a key factor for both teaching and research at MUV.

Vacancy announcements are public and available in the State Gazette and on the MUV website, they are standardized and information specific to the respective field of higher education, professional field, specialty, faculty, department and sector announcing the vacancy. The related application guidelines are available and accessible. The Act on the Development of the Academic Staff introduces minimum national criteria for the different levels scientific positions. The selection and appointment of researchers is carried out through a competition, based on criteria and procedures described in detail. Professional experience and competencies are leading criteria in the evaluation of employees, and the selection is carried out solely on the basis of criteria directly relevant to the research and teaching experience of the candidates (relevant education, professional experience, qualifications, publication record, etc.). As part of its project, MUV is developing its own electronic platform for online application for academic and doctoral positions. The project also envisages a training module for scientists at R3-R4 levels involved in the selection and recruitment process of researchers.

The national and university legal framework sets the rules for the appointment of selection committees. The committees are gender balanced and the selection criteria for their members are professional experience and competence in the scientific field of the vacant position.

At the completion of the application procedure, the candidates are informed about the result.

Some weaknesses in the selection and evaluation of candidates for research positions are related to the selection criteria, such as the recognition of "micro-qualifications", mobility and mentorship. The action plan envisages appropriate changes in the internal regulations, as well as the implementation of a long-term policy to stimulate the mobility of scientists, continuing education and mentoring.

The MUV applies regular attestation of the research and teaching staff, in accordance with the Higher Education Act and the Directive on academic staff attestation. As an amendment to the Directive, MUV plans to develop criteria for evaluation of the contribution and professional performance of the technical staff.

Reports of irregularity or discrimination are reviewed by respective officers, depending on the case. An

independent official, for whom a proposal has been made in the Action Plan to be included as a figure in the procedure, will be appointed by the representative of the organization after the relevant amendments to the Regulations on the activity of MUV are made.

Providing a work environment that stimulates research with the ability to successfully combine work with family life, regulating the postdoctoral position and appointment are some of the measures described in the Action Plan aiming at retaining scientists at the university. The University has already undertaken a number of measures to better align its own recruitment policy with the principles of the Charter and the Code, some of which are:

- MUV provides the opportunity to work in a non-discriminatory environment, and the working and educational environment at the university is favorable for researchers with different needs and physical access to all infrastructure and resources is provided for them;
- Ethics Committee acts in compliance with the Bulgarian legislation, international acts and with the principles of the World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki on ethical principles for medical research and good clinical practice; plagiarism software is used in MUV;
- The doctoral school conducts trainings of doctoral students and young scientists in research ethics, research management, etc.;
- We place a major effort to achieve greater visibility of our institution: MU-Vi.tv own university television (<http://mu-vi.tv/Pages/HomePage.aspx>) presents to the general public the scientific achievements of MUV scientists; The Museum of the History of Medicine in Varna under the management of MUV is a center of educational and promotional activities of medical science in the city and more.

The university gives increasing priority to the connection of science with education, business, government agencies and society as a whole. In support to the researchers, regulating documents related to copyright protection, protection of intellectual property (plagiarism), etc. have been created. Establishment of a company at the MUV for the purposes of economic realization of research results and intellectual property protection and revision of internal regulations with emphasis on licensing agreements on results achieved in partnership with business are provided in the Action Plan measures aimed at economic return and satisfaction of MUV researchers.

The strategy for development of researchers at MUV, stated in the Action Plan, will be formulated in a document as part of the university's strategic framework.

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:

In 2021 MUV undertook steps to adapt its internal HR- policy to the new European Research Area policy in

order to ensure that MUV is committed to fair, open, inclusive and equal opportunities for the career development paths all MUV researchers. MUV initiated a cooperation with other Bulgarian research institutions involved in the process of endorsing the Charter and Code principles and conducted online meetings with their representatives. We attended a focused workshop organized by the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) in May, 2021 for the Bulgarian research institutions. The experience shared at this meeting was extremely valuable to analyse and evaluate our current status quo with regard to compliance with the C&C principles. The questionnaire surveys and seminars carried out at MUV during the preparation of the GAP Analysis allowed us to generate a fair and objective analysis.

MUV's Action plan is set following the Gap Analysis. Areas for improvement and priority actions are identified and negotiated by the research community of the University. Quantifiable and precise indicators and specific deadlines are defined to monitor and guarantee the advancement of the Action plan in the set terms.

The Steering Committee will be responsible for the successful implementation of the Action Plan at the university level. The Steering Committee oversees the overall implementation of the Action plan, provides strategic recommendations, and monitors success. It also approves changes of the Action plan, if needed.

An Implementation Committee will also be appointed, which will be directly responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan. It will involve the Deputy Deans in Science of each faculty and representatives of the Research Institute, of Human Resource Department and of the Career Development Department. The Implementation Committee will coordinate HRS4R implementation and ensure smooth project management. It will liaise with scientists ensuring that bottom-up ideas and initiatives are translated into solutions and decisions in the Action plan and the results and achievements are communicated to scientists. We aim at developing an adaptive, non-static Action plan modifiable by the research community providing that all actions and related decisions are in coherence with ERA politics.

The University has established procedures for activities in the Action Plan related to the development of new or changes to existing policies, procedures, and practices. Departmental Councils, followed by Faculty Councils approval, will take all decisions regarding individual faculties, thus involving all R1-R4 researchers of MUV. All changes in the regulations of the university are considered and approved by the Academic Council. Changes in the Regulations for the development of MUV are approved by the General Assembly of the University. For each action a responsible unit is defined and the advancement of the implementation of the action is reported to the Implementation Committee by the head of the unit. Responsible units will form focus Working groups with regard to the specific actions. The Working groups are continuously providing and following the progress to achieve the indicators. They are flexible and may involve as many members as needed to handle the volume of work and provide high quality.

All internal regulations of MUV are published on the internal website of the university and are available to all researchers and staff. At a webpage of the Research Institute implementation results will be published and made publicly available. Planned trainings will be announced at the Career Development Department webpage.

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	Regular meetings of the Working groups will produce minutes based on which the Implementation Committee will follow the progress. The members of the working groups meet quarterly or

regularly oversee progress?	as often as needed. The Implementation Committee coordinates and manages HRS4R implementation. They will meet 4 times a year to support the successful evolution of the MUV's Action plan. Yearly reports by the Implementation Committee are submitted to, evaluated and approved by the Steering Committee, within a month following the end of every year. The Steering Committee meets once a year and reports on the progress of the Plan to the Rector and the Academic Council.
How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?	<p>MUV's researchers participate actively in the process of initiation, preparation, amendment, and adoption of all procedures, internal rules and regulations, and strategic policies, at various stages. The Departmental and the Faculty Councils are the main units developing the MUV policy and regular discussions at these levels are held. Presentations on the Action plan developments by the Vice Deans as members of the Implementation Committee before the Faculty Councils will ensure the timely information coverage and feedback. Changes in the MUV's HRS4R policy will require intensive communication from the bottom up and from the top down to ensure smooth adoption. The planned trainings will involve representatives of all faculties and from all R1 to R4 levels of researchers.</p> <p>Publicity of the decisions with regard to this policy is provided by the active MUV's channels of communication – constantly updated web page, MuVi-tv, the MUV's automated document management information system, and Intranet. We understand that only open, transparent and objective, timely provided information may bring to the culture change needed for the implementation of C&C coherent HRS4R politics.</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.	MUV's policies are regulated by Regulations on the activities of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna and the Regulations on the academic staff development at Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna. The MUV's Action Plan contains activities that envisage the amendments to the above documents in accordance with the Charter and the Code. The changes in these two documents must be considered and approved by the Academic Council and the General Assembly of the university is the collective body that votes on the Regulations on the activities of MUV upon approval by the Academic Council. The Action Plan pays also particular attention to the revision of other internal provision, such as the attestation templates, job descriptions, internal remuneration rules, and more. Amendments to these documents are also subject to approval by the Academic Council.
How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?	<p>The implementation of the activities set out in the Action Plan will be certified and their progress monitored by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amended documents coherent with the Charter and

	<p>the Code.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minutes of the meetings of the Action Groups, Implementation Committee, Steering Committee, Academic Council and the General Assembly • Periodical reports as described above • Training programmes and schedules and lists of participants in the trainings • Pictures and movies, publications in the website of MUV, MuVi-tv productions
How will you monitor progress (timeline)?	Action plan progress monitoring will be performed quarterly by the Implementation Committee. Once a year the Steering Committee will evaluate the progress and their reports will be incorporated in the Annual MUV report of the Rector to the General Assembly.
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?	As earlier mentioned, we have defined key quantifiable and precise indicators and specific deadlines to monitor and guarantee the advancement of the Action plan in the set terms. The intervals for assessing the achievements of the objectives are also specified above. Responsible units and committees are defined. Before to set up our Gap Analysis we had carried out a survey involving over 50% of the MUV's researchers. In two years we plan to conduct another one that would reflect the perception of MUV's researchers towards HRS4R policy and the success of the Action plan. The comparison between years 2021 and 2023 would be indicative of the advancements and the quality of implementation, needs still unmet and satisfaction among the MUV's research staff.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

<p>(free text, 1000 words maximum)</p> <p>MUV will adhere to and continue to develop established good practices as part of its overall policy in support of its scientists and research at the University. We intend to continue the work on the activities identified as key to the organization and included in the Action Plan, in the long run, and beyond the periods specified in the Action Plan, in close contact with the researchers of the organization. Not all possible measures can be mentioned or envisaged at this point. We accept the above Action Plan as a dynamic strategic document that will be further developed, reflecting changes in the external to the university environment and the advancement of the new technologies, but also the changing needs of MUV's researchers.</p> <p>A Gantt chart shows our activities displayed against time (Supplementary file 2).</p>
