



GAP ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2019PL380318
Name Organisation under review: National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation
Rehabilitation Organisation's contact details: Spartańska 1, Warszawa, 02-637
Submission date to the European Commission: 24/04/2019

1. Organisational Information

Please provide an update of the 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 *	95
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	0
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	1
Of whom are women *	45
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	16
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	17
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	62
Total number of students (if relevant)	45
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	482

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation)

The National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation is a unit supervised by the Minister of Health. It is a scientific research unit with a large hospital part. The Institute is a nationwide hospital focused on three specializations: geriatrics, rheumatology and rehabilitation, in which the highest level of specialization has been achieved. In addition, we educate medical staff, future doctors, nurses and physiotherapists. As a research and development unit, we employ 35 scientists and cooperate with many national research and development units.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code, as provided by your organisation in the initial assessment phase. When doing so, you should do not only look back, but also consider new priorities, strategic decisions, etc. which may further influence the action plan. Please also provide a brief commentary in the "Remarks" column if major changes have occurred versus the initial plan.

Ethical and professional aspects

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

The section on ethical and professional aspects received the highest note in the survey conducted among scientists, both in the initial phase and now. This value increased from 3.79 to 4.54 in the examined period. In the opinion of scientists, there were no issues that would require significant changes.

Many of the issues described in this section are reflected in the existing documents. The issue of freedom of scientific research, ethical principles and the principle of non-discrimination is highly appreciated. In this topic, it is important to emphasize the fact that in January 2019, the Institute introduced a new anti-mobbing policy.

In addition, work is under way on a new copyright regulation, which is adapted to the new national rules.

As part of a professional approach to conducting scientific research, scientists meet at regular scientific conferences, during which they exchange information about research carried out, designated research goals and mechanisms for financing research.

In addition, dissemination of knowledge during public engagement is one of the Institute's strengths. Researchers are involved in running monthly meetings for rheumatic patients, lecturing at universities for seniors, taking part in picnics organized for the elderly, and organizing the celebration of the World Day of Rheumatism of the elderly and children.

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Recruitment and selection

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

The recruitment and selection part in the initial phase received an average of 3.53. Currently, this value has risen to 4.29, which is a significant improvement.

Researchers praise recruitment principles that are clearly established, open and transparent. Multidisciplinary, independent commissions are appointed to select new scientific researchers.

Moreover, in this part, the evaluation of the merits of scientists was analyzed, which is carried out every 2 years for dependent employees and every 4 years for independent employees. The previous scientific employee evaluation card also contained elements of qualitative evaluation such as care over research projects, people during specialization or during student internships, lectures for students or participants of various courses, as well as information on implementations and inventions.

In the near future, it is planned to update the current employee evaluation card form. It will contain new elements, among others Information on the promoters of doctoral theses, complex grant applications and established international cooperation confirmed by a letter of intent.

The binding card is a strong point in the process of evaluating scientists.

Researchers are encouraged to participate in internships and other trips abroad, thanks to which they can broaden their horizons and establish cooperation with scientists from abroad. Information on announced competitions and the possibility of submitting applications is sent to scientists by e-mail. Recently, several scholars participated in various foreign trips, such as internships, an Erasmus trip, meetings as a visiting professor. We are also waiting for the results of the competition organized by the National Academic Exchange Agency for bilateral exchange with Italy. When submitting the application, the Scientific Secretariat often helps in completing the formal documents.

Unfortunately, due to the very numerous personnel changes at the Institute's management levels, the assumption was not made with the initial phase regarding the development and sending of feedback to people taking part in the recruitment process. The issue occupies an important place in the plans for the coming years.

It is important to underline that the new Polish national regulations, effective from July 2018, abolish the obligation of scientific promotion at a specific time, i.e. from the doctoral degree to the postdoctoral degree in 8 years. However, scientists working at the Institute will continue to be mobilized and encouraged to improve their qualifications and scientific development.

Working conditions

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

The remuneration regulations are currently being developed, which describes in detail remuneration levels, supplements, bonuses and prizes as part of research grants. Recently, scientists have obtained national and international grants for research, thanks to which their salaries have increased. Additional funding sources included grants funded by the National Science Center, the Polpharma foundation and funds from the European Commission. Therefore, this element should be slightly improved after the introduction of new regulations.

In addition, work is under way on a new work regulation that also includes elements that take into account the gender balance. Directorate to provide employees with equal treatment regarding the establishment and termination of employment, employment conditions, promotion and access to training to improve professional qualifications, in particular regardless of gender, age, race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, trade union membership, ethnicity, and confession.

Regardless of their degree, researchers employed in NIGRR are treated with due respect and attention. Young scientists at the doctoral level are considered as professionals at an early stage of their academic career.

Mobility is a value appreciated by the Directorate of the Institute. Additional resources are obtained for his purpose. Employees returning to Poland and establishing their research teams in Polish institutions are also invaluable.

The Institute does not currently carry out formalized career counseling. Nevertheless, employees can take part in competitions for scientific positions in other plants and clinics. The direct superiors -managers, supervisors of the doctoral dissertation / specialization also help.

The weakness of the Institute is the lack of implementations and patents, which should change in the near future in connection with the planned training in the field of patents and implementations and will be conducted by the Patent Attorney from the Polish Chamber of Patent Attorneys.

All forms of co-authorship are highly valued at the Institute. They are considered as a manifestation of cooperation and constructive approach to conducting scientific research. They are all the more valuable if cooperation takes place at the international level. The results of scientific and research works conducted by researchers at the initial stages of a scientific career are treated on the same basis as other researchers.

The lowest score in this section was received by funding and salaries - 0; on a scale from (-5) to (+5). Due to the poor financial condition of the Institute, there is no possibility to raise the salaries of scientists, although their expectations are growing from year to year. In the initial phase, the score was 2.65 and in the interim assessment, it was 3.73. A positive aspect is the increase of this note, however, the Institute's Directorate should still take the most actions to improve working conditions.

Training and development

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

In the last part - training and development, we also noted an increase in the rating from 3.11 to 3.97. Here it is worth emphasizing the issue related to the continuation of professional development. Researchers employed in the NIGRR have the possibility to apply for funds, which can then be used to finance training and foreign trips. In addition, courses and training also open to the employees of the Institute are organized at NIGRR. On the premises of the Institute are planned meetings with representatives of the agency announcing competitions to raise financial means for the implementation of research, as well as training in the field of implementation and patenting.

In terms of supervision and management responsibilities, as well as relations with a guardian, it should be noted that the Institute has a document - Scientific Staff Scientific Development Regulations, which imposes an obligation on persons holding a postdoctoral degree and professor to coordinate the development of young researchers. In addition, these issues are individually regulated and applied in the form of accepted good practices.

Employees starting their scientific career report to their supervisor, who provides job training and provides all the necessary information needed to undertake effective work. Carers or managers of units are involved in supervising research and provide appropriate support and assistance in the implementation of tasks.

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?

The most important priority is to raise the salaries of scientists. It is an indispensable element affecting motivating the raising of all scientific and research activities. The increase in salary will be possible thanks to the involvement of employees in obtaining additional funds for conducting research and co-financing their salaries. The improvement of the condition should also be influenced by the currently developed new remuneration regulations, which describes in detail remuneration levels, additions, bonuses and prizes. Recently, scientists have obtained national and international grants for research, thanks to which their salaries have increased. Additional funding sources included grants funded by the National Science Center, the Polpharma foundation and funds from the European Commission.

Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

The last two years have been extremely difficult for the Institute. The management staff changed several times. These changes significantly affected difficulties in implementing the planned assumptions included in Gap Analysis.

3. Actions

Action 1	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s)/Target(s)
Development of tools in assessing wide range of the candidate's skills, such as publications, teaching, supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management of research.	16. Judging merit (Code)	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	new document for researcher evaluation
	Current Status	Remarks		
	EXTENDED	<p>The previous scientific employee evaluation card also contained elements of qualitative evaluation such as: care over research projects, people during specialization or during student internships, lectures for students or participants of various courses, as well as information on implementations and inventions.</p> <p>In the near future, it is planned to update the current employee evaluation card form. It will contain new elements, among others Information on the promotorship of doctoral theses, complex grant applications and established international cooperation confirmed by a letter of intent.</p>		

Action 2	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Testing and development of new, alternative forms of employment, such as telecommuting, freelance, part-time and flextime employment.	24. Working conditions	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	updated internal Work Rules
	Current Status	Remarks		
	EXTENDED	The work regulations are updated. The employee may choose working hours adapted to the needs of the employee		

		and accepted by the direct superior. Currently, there is no possibility of working in a remote form - teleworking, but it is planned in connection with the changes in the work regulations.
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Action 3	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year´s quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Action 4	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year´s quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
1.Organization of professional training and courses for NIGRiR researches. 2.Organization of workshops for NIGRiR researchers led by prominent scientists from our institute and outside. 3.Participation of the leading researchers in the Science Festival as a platform of promotion of individual careers. 4. Extensions of duties		2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	more workshops and conferences
	Current Status	Remarks		

of the Clinical Director of the institute with job placement assistance for individual researcher's interest.		
	EXTENDED	Recently, several conferences and workshops for scientists have been organized. Additionally, in 2018, scientific employees took part in a meeting with a consultant for research and other scientific purposes in connection with current research work.

Action 5	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>1. An anonymous survey that allows NIGRiR's researchers to submit comments and complaints to the scientific director of Institute.</p> <p>2. Building mutual trust by organizing in NIGRiR information meetings. 3. Commission on Science NIGRiR will expend its activities by the ombudsman.</p>	34. Complains/ appeals	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	new policy in the field of complains.
	Current Status	Remarks		
	EXTENDED	In January 2019 new antimobbing policy was introduced in Institute. We have also ombudsmen who solves researchers problems.		

1.It is planned to give out fellowships for 2 young, outstanding researchers. 2.It is planned to	26. Funding and salaries	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	higher salaries, more external funds
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<p>increase salaries after the financial improvement of the Institute, which is a direct result of the scientific activity of researches. 3. Scientific Secretariat NIGRI will seek grants, which brings an additional source of funding and support to new ventures.</p>				
	Current Status	Remarks		
	EXTENDED	<p>Currently, the Institute is developing new work regulations and remuneration regulations, which describes in detail remuneration levels, allowances, bonuses and prizes. Recently, scientists have obtained national and international grants for research, thanks to which their salaries have increased. Additional funding sources included grants funded by the National Science Center, the Polpharma foundation and funds from the European Commission.</p>		

Action 6	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>1.The publication of reports of the meetings of the NIGRiR's Scientific Council (publication on the intranet).</p> <p>2.The publication of an internal bulletin with information on the work of the NIGRiR for circulation among NIGRiR's researches.</p> <p>3.Increase the visibility and attractiveness of individual researchers of the NIGRiR through creation of a professional portfolio of departments of the institute. 4. Establishing the scientific faculty for young researchers and residents to enable them to actively participate in workings of the institute and create their individual careers.</p>	35. Participation in decision-making bodies	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	more information available for researchers
	Current Status	Remarks		
	EXTENDED	We are still working on expanding the information available to researchers. Work is underway to improve the institute's website and the intranet available to employees, where various documents will be available. Each year Institute publishes a bulletin contains information about conducted researches.		

Action 7	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>1.Organization of professional trainings and courses for NIGRiR researches.</p> <p>2.Organization of workshops for NIGRiR researches led by prominent researchers from our institute. 3.</p>	39. Access to research training and continuous development.	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	More workshops and conferences.

Participation in national and international conferences, trainings etc.	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	<p>Recently, several conferences and workshops for scientists have been organized. Additionally, in 2018, scientific employees took part in a meeting with a consultant for research and other scientific purposes in connection with current research work. Researchers participated in many conferences in Poland and abroad.</p> <p>Conferences and workshops will be organized continuously thanks to which the development of scientists will be possible.</p>

Action 8	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<p>1. Supervision conducted by Scientific Director (SD) will focus on actual work samples.</p> <p>2. Development of methodology according to micro-training approach for the Scientific Director to conduct a series of interviews with NIGRiR researchers.</p> <p>3. Individual careers of researchers development monitoring by the Science Commission of the institute.</p>	40. Supervision	2018 (IV quarter)	Scientific coordinator	Individual approach to the scientific development.
	Current Status	Remarks		
	EXTENDED	<p>Individual approach to the scientific development of people in scientific positions - conducting conversations motivating researchers by indicating possible career paths.</p> <p>NIGRiR conduct periodic assessments of researchers (every 2 or 4 years) based on guidelines found in the Rules of Conducting Competition for Scientific Position and Scientific Organisational Units Managers. The evaluation is carried out by the designated committee for the development of researchers. Researchers receive advice for their further development.</p>		

Due to major organizational changes that have taken place over the past two years, a new document describing the detailed rules and requirements of existing scientists is being prepared. Its implementation requires approval by the decision-making bodies of the Institute.

The Institute's plans for the next 3 years include the following elements:

- quality control system
- attract underrepresented groups
- attractive working conditions for researchers
- information for all applicants at the end of the selection process
- provide adequate feedback to interviewees
- prepare an appropriate complaints mechanism in place

4. Implementation

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

1. The Institute's website was translated into English, which made it possible to establish contacts with scientific and research units from abroad (eg Spain, Italy), which also resulted in the submission of an international project.
2. Meeting with a specialist in the implementation of research projects - analysis of statutory topics of NIGRiR in terms of implementations and suitability for society.
3. Library worker training in the field of introducing an anti-plagiarism system.
4. The scientific secretariat regularly sends information on national and international grants to all scientific employees.
5. Organizing a digital library - which will improve and increase access to the library database.
6. Conducting training for students in the field of searching for medical databases.
7. The popularization of science through participation in the Science Festival and other events addressed to the public.
8. Introduction of a new policy on the protection of personal data.
9. Introduction of the internal anti-mobbing procedure.
10. Projection of periodic evaluation of scientific employees.
11. Participation of researchers in numerous trips/traineeships.

12. Purchase of the latest equipment and scientific-research apparatus - increasing the attractiveness of the place of employment.
13. Organizing periodic internal scientific meetings for the employees of the Institute to exchange knowledge.
14. Organizing periodic meetings of the Bioethics Committee.

*How have you prepared the internal review?**

The internal review was conducted among scientists in the form of the same questionnaire as in the initial phase. The survey was developed in Polish language. The survey included 40 questions divided into four sections:

1. Ethical and professional aspects,
2. Recruitment,
3. Working conditions and social security,
4. Training. A 11-points scale for responses was adopted, starting with -5 (very bad) and ending with 5 (very good). Moreover the respondents could submit an individual comment to each question.

Then, a meeting with all researchers and technicians involved in research was organised in order to present the ideas of interim review of the HR Excellence in Research award. Researchers were asked to complete the survey during the meeting. The surveys were completed anonymously and collected to the dedicated box. The meeting was organized on a most convenient day in order to ensure wide participation of researchers and technicians involved in research. This time 63% researchers took part in the survey.

How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

The research community has been included in the process of implementing the principles included in the European Charter for Researchers. Their direct involvement can be seen in completed surveys, where you can give comments and comments to individual points. In addition, during the year, researchers can submit comments to the scientific director in the context of the scientific community and the research being carried out.

Researchers also take an active part in the work of recruitment commissions, scientific conferences organized at the Institute.

Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?

In the initial phase the working group was as follows: Prof. Iwona Sudoł-Szopińska, Scientific Director of NIGRiR (chairperson), Andrzej Goworski, MSc, Scientific Coordinator of NIGRiR, Dagmara Opoczyńska-Świeżewska, MSc (secretary), Cezary Rzemek, MSc, Director for Administration of NIGRiR and Ms Justyna Skórska, employee of the Scientific Secretariat of NIGRiR. Members of the group made an overview of the existing internal documents that define human resources policy for researchers.

Due to staff changes related to the leaving of employees from the Institute, we are currently in the process of creating a new working group.

In connection with the recent changes in the composition of the Institute's directorate, the composition committee has also changed.

Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R?

Currently, the Institute does not have a written research strategy. All the rules that scientists follow during their work, as well as the Institute's management, do the most for HRS4R. It is important for the management of the National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation (NIGRiR) as well as associated scientists to maintain and continuously increase the level of scientific research, which makes it possible to sustain high level of research carried out by NIGRiR and translates into the significance of the Institute, both on national and international level.

*How has your organisation ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented?**

The new Director of the Institute fully supports the rules applicable in HRS4R documents. Issues new ordinances to facilitate the introduction of new rules and guidelines.

*How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?**

Progress in implementing the HRS4R policy objectives is monitored mainly on the basis of:

1. evaluation card for researchers
2. reports on the activities of plants and clinics
3. reports on the implementation of statutory tasks
4. meetings of the Institute's Scientific Council
5. meeting of the Bioethics Committee
6. information on the website of the NIGRiR and on the intranet, where Director's orders are placed

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

1. Training in the field of commercialization and knowledge transfer.
2. Training and individual support for PhD students and young researchers in the application for research grants.
3. The use of social networking sites for the promotion of NIGRiR research results and establishing scientific cooperation.
4. Creation on the www.spartanska.pl list of conferences and events organized in the NIGRiR as a tool supporting the dissemination of research results and interdisciplinary scientific cooperation.
5. Implementation of good practices in the recruiting process of the researchers - preparation the set of procedures and forms to handle the process and monitoring the application.

*How do you expect to prepare for the external review?**

As a new team operating from January 2019. We are planning to analyze the activities undertaken so far as part of the HRS4R policy. In addition, it is planned to extend the information contained on the website. Moreover, we also plan direct cooperation between the new working group and Human Resources Unit, Payroll Department, Administrative Division, Public Procurement Division, Scientific Secretariat, General Director's Secretariat as well as with the heads of the selected research departments and clinics.