



**The European Charter for Researchers
and
the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment
of Researchers**

**Internal Gap Analysis and Action Plan
for the period 2014 – 2016**

Report on the implementation of the recommendations
of the European Commission
in order to obtain the logo: HR Excellence in Research
by the Institute of Plant Genetics
of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IPG PAS)

2013

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Internal Gap Analysis.....	5
2.1. Process description and methodology.....	5
2.1.1. Internal analysis of documentation and practices at IPG PAS.....	6
2.1.2. Survey.....	6
2.1.3. Summary	6
2.2. Results.....	7
3. Action plan	26
4. Conclusions	27

1. Introduction

The Institute of Plant Genetics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IPG PAS) is located in Poznań, the capital of the Wielkopolska Region (Great Poland), and the country's leading agricultural region. The Institute was established in 1954, with the aim to carry out studies on genetic improvement of agricultural crops.

The Institute is, apart from agricultural universities, the only research institute in Poland concentrating on plant genetics, agrobiolology and related topics. Its research area covers genetics, cytogenetics, genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, biotechnology, resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses, biometry and bioinformatics in crops and model plants. Basic and applied research concerns cereals, grasses, legumes, oilseed rape, potato and bioenergy plants such as willows and miscanthus, as well as fungal pathogens of these crops.

The Institute has a clear structure and sound organization, facilitating an efficient decision-making process and appropriate communication between the managing group, research staff and administrative bodies. The Institute is directed by Prof. Bogdan Wolko, appointed to this position in January 2012. Deputy-directors: Prof. Zbigniew Zwierzykowski and Assoc. Prof. Piotr Kachlicki are responsible for general and scientific affairs, respectively. The quality of research activities, scientific plans, programmes, as well as annual reports are guided and controlled by the Scientific Council, at present chaired by Prof. Franciszek Dubert (Institute of Plant Physiology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow). At the moment (December 15, 2013) the scientific staff of the Institute comprises 72 researchers including 18 Professors and Associate Professors, 26 postdoctoral fellows, 10 assistants and 18 PhD students.

The Board of Directors has changed management of the Institute and greatly modified the research programmes. The Institute's Statute was revised and approved by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences in August 2012. The organizational structure of the Institute has been significantly changed to ensure staff integration within the priority directions of conducted research and since January 2013 the previously existing 10 Laboratories have been replaced by 5 new Departments:

- Department of Environmental Stress Biology – head: Prof. Tadeusz Rorat,
- Department of Biometry and Bioinformatics – head: Prof. Pawel Krajewski,
- Department of Biotechnology – head: Prof. Tadeusz Adamski,
- Department of Pathogen Genetics and Plant Resistance – head: Prof. Malgorzata Jedryczka,
- Department of Genomics – head: Prof. Wojciech Swiecicki.

Each of the above Departments has several (2-5) research teams headed by leaders with great experience and scientific achievements. Moreover, the project officer position and the EU Framework Programmes Local Contact Point have been created, Junior Researchers' Council has been appointed, as well as Senior Researchers' Board has been established. Also, an International Advisory Board has been appointed and just started its activities.

The fundamental goal of IPG PAS is to do the best quality science. This can be realized by attracting ambitious and motivated scientists both from Poland and abroad. That is why one of the most important aims of the Institute is to increase its attractiveness to researchers and offer them encouraging working conditions, high-quality research and innovation, international mobility, and a friendly and international atmosphere. IPG PAS recognizes the value of the

European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code), thus it wishes to enter into the official path of adopting the Charter and Code. Detailed scrutiny of European standards, analysis of our practices compared with European practices, and the identification and elimination of shortcomings will allow IPG PAS to promote and reinforce its recruitment practices as well as employment conditions. This five-step adjustment process will be highly beneficial for both scientists who work and wish to work at IPG PAS, as well as the Institute itself, for which the logo "HR Excellence in Research" will constitute a prestigious advance and will have other positive influence. By implementing the Charter and Code, IPG PAS intends to foster international collaboration and contributes to the development of an open and attractive Europe as a labour market for researchers.

Moreover, in May 2013 IPG PAS prepared a project entitled "The creation of the Department of Integrative Plant Biology" (acronym: BIO-TALENT) submitted to FP7-ERACHairs-Pilot Call-2013. The main objective of the BIO-TALENT proposal is the integration of the Institute's staff members with the European Research Area and strengthening its excellence through fostering human, partnership and technological capacities. The human potential of the Institute will be supported by an international team and headed by a leading researcher (ERA CHAIR holder). The outcome of the evaluation of the proposal involved in the Evaluation Summary Report has been positive and the Institute is currently in the process of negotiation of the final contract.

2. Internal Gap Analysis

For the purpose of this document the internationally recognized definition of researchers will be applied as included in the "Frascati Manual"¹: *"Professionals involved in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems and in the management of the projects."*

2.1. Process description and methodology

In December 2012, Professor Bogdan Wolko, the Director of IPG PAS, signed the declaration of endorsement of the Charter & Code. This was the first step taken by the Institute to apply for the HR Excellence in Research logo. At the outset, the participants of the Scientific Council meeting were informed that IPG PAS has adopted the Human Resources Strategy developed by the European Commission to encourage research institutions to implement the European Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Next, during the meeting with Senior Researchers' Board on April 8th, 2013 the Director announced that the implementation process of the Charter and Code had already started. Dr Anna Stachowiak-Szrejebrowska (the Scientific Secretary of the IPG PAS) explained that the main reason for all undertaken actions to obtain the HR Excellence Research logo is the improvement of working conditions for Institute's scientific staff, both already working at the Institute as well as future colleagues. The next step was to create gender-balanced HR Working Group and appoint its members - altogether 11 people. To engage various groups of employees in this process, the HR Working Group consisted of the IPG PAS staff members, representing researchers, management, and administration: Prof. Zbigniew Zwierzykowski and Prof. Piotr Kachlicki -representing Board of Directors, Prof. Malgorzata Jedryczka, Prof. Barbara Naganowska, Dr. Grzegorz Koczyk, Dr. Arkadiusz Kosmala, Dr. Tomasz Pniewski -representing 5 Departments, Dr. Malgorzata Kaczmarek -representing Postdoctoral Fellows, MSc. Judyta Strakowska (replaced by MSc. Jagoda Czarnecka in November 2013) - representing PhD Students, Mrs. Magdalena Bloch-Przybylska (Human Resources Unit), and Dr. Anna Stachowiak-Szrejebrowska (responsible for all procedures connected with the Charter and Code). The HR Working Group met twice in April 2013 to analyze to what extent the existing practices at the Institute are in line with the provisions of the Charter and Code. All principles and requirements arising from the provisions of the Charter and Code were then analyzed for their implementation. As a consequence, a questionnaire was elaborated and sent to all researchers and PhD students (end of May 2013). They were asked to answer 27 closed questions [Yes/ No answers] and give personal comments no matter which answer had been chosen. Then, the results were summarized and the HR Working Group met three times (June 14th, July 1st and 12th, 2013) to discuss all the issues arisen from the questionnaire. As it was anonymous, it was difficult to find out to which groups (Senior Researchers, postdoctoral fellows, PhD students) particular issues may be ascribed. Therefore, the Director decided to meet these groups separately to discuss the outcomes of the survey. These meetings were held on September 30th, October 2nd and 3rd, respectively. Finally, during the meeting on 12th November 2013, the HR Working Group accepted a plan of activities necessary to address the identified issues.

¹ In: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development, Frascati Manual, OECD, 2002.=

2.1.1. Internal analysis of Institute's documentation and practices

The first step in the internal gap analysis was a detailed comparison between the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C) and the Institute's practices.

This analysis was conducted internally by the HR Working group on the basis of the following documents:

- the Act of the Polish Academy of Sciences (dated April 30, 2010),
- the Institute's Statute,
- the Code of Ethics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (issued in 2013),
- Polish legislation connected with research, higher education and degrees (dated July 27, 2005 and March 18, 2011)
- the Labour Code (dated June 26, 1974 with later amendments),
- Institute's rules, regulations, as well as Director's orders,
- Institute's operating practices.

The results of this preliminary analysis were consulted with a lawyer and later discussed during two meetings of the HR Working Group. It clearly demonstrated that the majority of the principles set forth in C&C are already observed by IPG PAS. In 13 cases, all members of the HR Working Group accepted the compliance of Institute's regulations and practices with the records of the Charter and Code. Therefore, prepared questionnaire comprised only 27 instead of 40 questions.

2.1.2. Survey

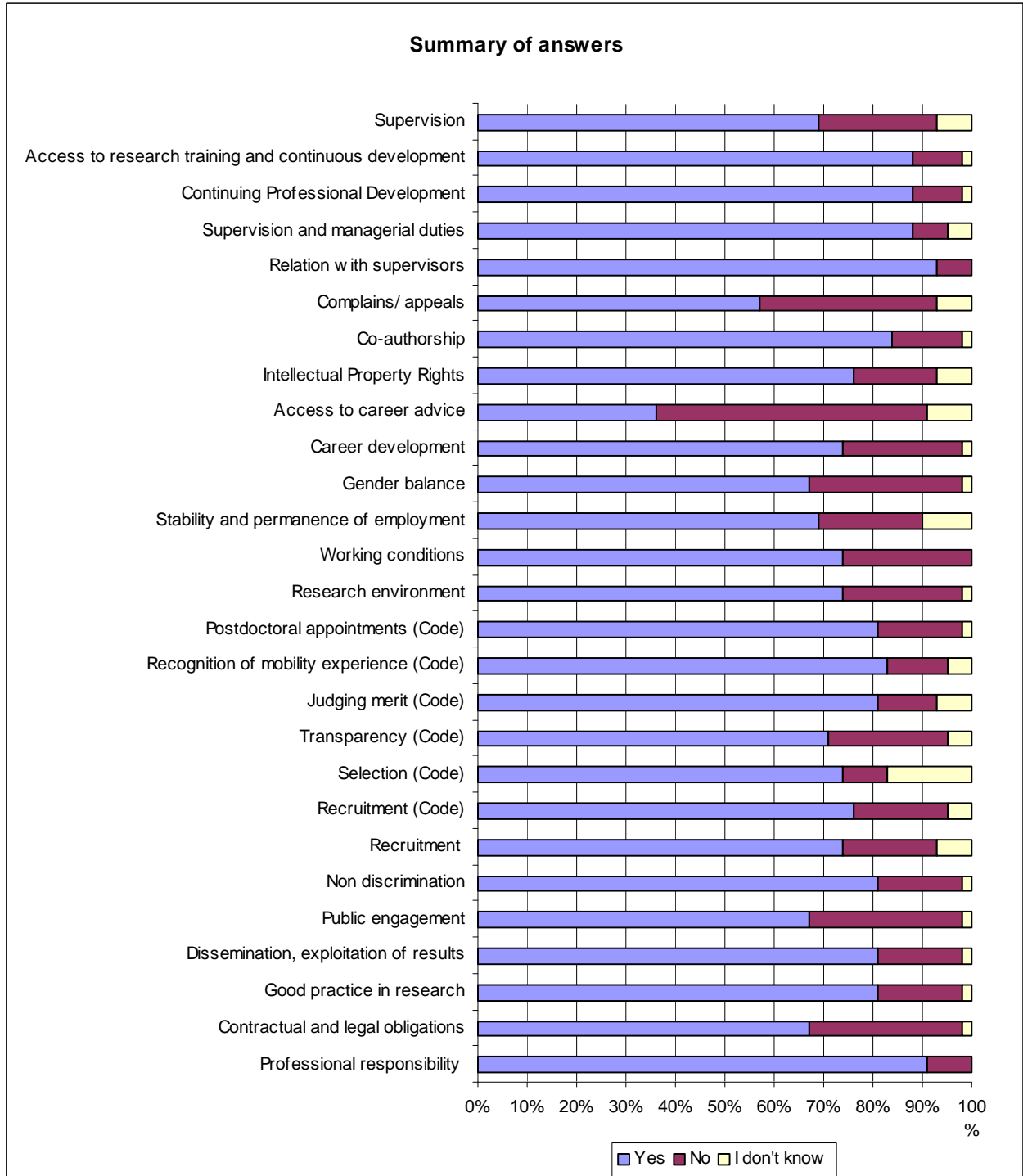
The next step of the internal gap analysis was an anonymous survey among Institute's scientific staff and PhD students. Its purpose was to evaluate the compliance of the provisions set at the Institute with the European Charter for Researchers' s and with the Code of Conduct. The survey was anonymous. It was sent via e-mail to 63 persons at the end of May 2013. They were asked to bring printed version back to the Secretariat within two weeks. Two answers were possible: Yes/ No. However, personal comments were of special value. Forty two questionnaires - 67% of all respondents - were returned, which were used to evaluate the opinions and expectations towards the Institute.

2.1.3. Summary

To sum up, a tempestuous discussion was held, among the HR Working Group members, concerning the compliance of the Institute's operations with the C&C principles. All the discrepancies were considered in detail, with emphasis on seeking out potential solutions and on the costs that introduction of such solutions would lead to.

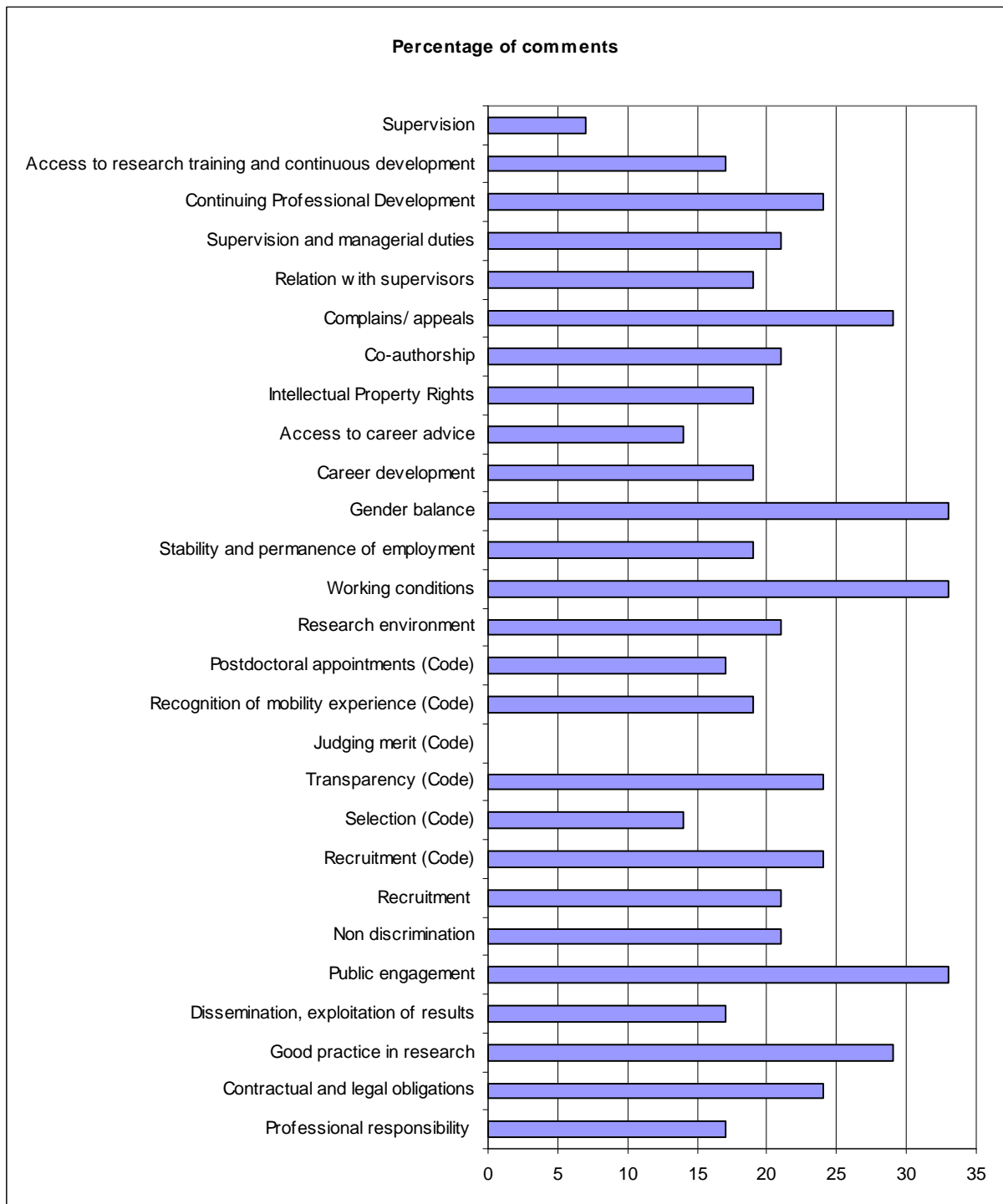
2.2 Results

The results of 42 questionnaires were carefully analyzed and discussed by the HR Working Group. The analysis of the questionnaire outcomes is presented in the chart below



As it may be noticed in almost all questions with the exception of one (Access to career advice), the majority of Institute's researchers answered positively (the scope of Yes answers ranged from 57% to 91%).

It was of great importance for the Director of the Institute to obtain personal comments of the employees . In 34 (81%) out of 42 analyzed questionnaires personal comments were given. The graph below shows the percentage of comments to each question from the questionnaire.



At it may be seen, such issues as Complains/ appeals, Gender balance, Working conditions, Public engagement or Good practice in research were of special attention of at least 25% of Institute's researchers.

I. Ethical and professional aspects

1. Research freedom

C & C principle:

Researchers should focus their research for the good of mankind and for expanding the frontiers of scientific knowledge, while enjoying the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved, according to recognised ethical principles and practices. Researchers should, however, recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise as a result of particular research circumstances (including supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g. for budgetary or infrastructural reasons or, especially in the industrial sector, for reasons of intellectual property protection. Such limitations should not, however, contravene recognised ethical principles and practices, to which researchers have to adhere.

Existing rules and practices:

The principles of freedom in research and scientific autonomy are well-established at the Institute of Plant Genetics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Institute's researchers and PhD students obey the code of ethics, especially the rules of good practices in science as they define their research problems and methods of solving them. They also recognise and accept the limits to this freedom.

Actions required: none

2. Ethical principles

C & C principle:

Researchers should adhere to the recognised ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline(s) as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different national, sectoral or institutional Codes of Ethics.

Existing rules and practices:

All researchers and PhD students of the Institute observe the provisions of the Code of Ethics. Scientists are obliged to follow the principles of good scientific work, counteract scientific dishonesty and breaches of good manners. A disciplinary commission and a spokesman, Prof. Pawel Krajewski, were appointed in 2012 to supervise compliance with these provisions.

Actions required: none

3. Professional responsibility

C & C principle:

Researchers should make every effort to ensure that their research is relevant to society and does not duplicate research previously carried out elsewhere. They must avoid plagiarism of any kind and abide by the principle of intellectual property and joint data ownership in the

case of research carried out in collaboration with a supervisor(s) and/or other researchers. The need to validate new observations by showing that experiments are reproducible should not be interpreted as plagiarism, provided that the data to be confirmed are explicitly quoted. Researchers should ensure, if any aspect of their work is delegated, that the person to whom it is delegated has the competence to carry it out.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute's staff and PhD students comply with ethical principles. Intellectual property rights to the results of research conducted by other researchers are recognized and acknowledged. Originality and high standard of conducted research are well established in the Institute's scientific community. The Institute ensures that research carried out by its team serves the public good, is not harmful to the natural environment and the mankind and contributes to the national and regional advancement and development.

Actions required: none

4. Professional attitude

C & C principle:

Researchers should be familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms, and should seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided. They should inform their employers, funders or supervisor when their research project is delayed, redefined or completed, or give notice if it is to be terminated earlier or suspended for whatever reason.

Existing rules and practices:

Regardless of the stage of their career, researchers and PhD students have to be familiar with the binding national, sector and institutional regulations referring to their work conditions as well as IPR. The Scientific Secretary was established in August 2012, to keep researchers informed about funding mechanisms, strategic goals of Polish science as well as objectives of scientific communities. Both electronic means and face-to-face seminars are used to provide new information. A declaration of respecting the applicable law is necessary for all researchers while signing any grant agreement.

Actions required: none

5. Contractual and legal obligations

C & C principle:

Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes Intellectual Property Rights regulations, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g. thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute ensures that research is conducted in accordance with adequate legislation. The Institute's staff and PhD students know and comply with the applicable laws.

Actions required: workshop on IPR, additional records in the contract of work.

6. Accountability**C & C principle:**

Researchers need to be aware that they are accountable towards their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies as well as, on more ethical grounds, towards society as a whole. In particular, researchers funded by public funds are also accountable for the efficient use of taxpayers' money. Consequently, they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and cooperate with any authorised audits of their research, whether undertaken by their employers/funders or by ethics committees. Methods of collection and analysis, the outputs and, where applicable, details of the data should be open to internal and external scrutiny, whenever necessary and as requested by the appropriate authorities.

Existing rules and practices:

Scientists carry out the research tasks in the simplest and most economical way – following the principles of diligent and effective fund management. Scientists are independent in searching for external resources for financial support of their studies as well as reasonable spending of given funds.

Actions required: none

7. Good practice in research**C & C principle:**

Researchers should at all times adopt safe working practices, in line with national legislation, including taking the necessary precautions for health and safety and for recovery from information technology disasters, e.g. by preparing proper back-up strategies. They should also be familiar with the current national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality protection requirements, and undertake the necessary steps to fulfil them at all times.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute takes the responsibility to secure safe and adequate working conditions whereas researchers and PhD students are required to comply with all applicable laws.

Actions required: purchase of data storage discs [ongoing], manual/ training on data protection

8. Dissemination, exploitation of results**C & C principle:**

All researchers should ensure, in compliance with their contractual arrangements, that the results of their research are disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred into

other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised. Senior researchers, in particular, are expected to take a lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises.

Existing rules and practices:

As cooperation between Institute's scientists and plant breeding companies is well established (especially within the frameworks of POLAPGEN project funded under Innovative Economy Operational Programme as well as the Programme for Biological Progress in Plant Production funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Areas), transfer of results to agriculture takes place. Interdisciplinary approach is promoted and all researchers are encouraged to communicate the results of their research to the public whenever possible. In addition, some activities of the IPG scientists are transferred to farmers by different means of education. A good example of such cooperation is SPEC – a system of monitoring of fungal spores in air and forecasting fungal disease danger. When practical applications are feasible, researchers are encouraged to apply for patents to claim the intellectual property rights.

Actions required: workshop on commercialisation and IPR

9. Public engagement

C & C principle:

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the public will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for science and technology and also the public's concerns.

Existing rules and practices:

Since September 2013 IPG PAS has had in its hands the presidency of the Polish Genetics Society for the period of 2013-2016. The Institute appreciates the significance of public engagement and tries to support researchers in their communication with the public. The researchers are well known for their educational and science popularisation activities, especially in cooperation with commercial companies like DuPont or BayerCropScience. The Institute participates in various initiatives such as the Biologists' Night or Fascinating Plant Day promoting awareness and understanding of science among pupils of primary and secondary schools. The IPG researchers take part in Field Days, attended by many farmers from Wielkopolska and other provinces in Poland, aimed at transfer of recent knowledge in plant science to farmers' practice. The results obtained in the Institute are presented at a separate big stand, as well as posters and other displays.

Actions required: enhancement of outreach activities to promote science and the Institute itself.

10. Non discrimination

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute in no way discriminates against researchers on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political views and social or economic condition.

Actions required: Search for funds that allow to adapt the entrance to the Institute for disabled persons.

11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should introduce for all researchers, including senior researchers, evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing their professional performance on a regular basis and in a transparent manner by an independent (and, in the case of senior researchers, preferably international) committee.

Existing rules and practices:

On the basis of legal act, the Institute regularly evaluates professional performance of all researchers. Such evaluation covers general research activity in the form of publications, patents, management of research projects and the promotion of science. Additionally, every year researchers and PhD students are assessed (in terms of quantity of papers published) using a continuous appraisal system (Director's order no 14/2012 from November 19, 2012).

Actions required: none

II. Recruitment

12. Recruitment

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the entry and admission standards for researchers, particularly at the beginning at their careers, are clearly specified and should also facilitate access for disadvantaged groups or for researchers returning to a research career, including teachers (of any level) returning to a research career. Employers and/or funders of researchers should adhere to the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers when appointing or recruiting researchers.

Existing rules and practices:

Standards for employing researchers at every stage of their professional careers are clearly stated. During the process of recruitment, the Institute adheres to principles stated in the Code of Conduct provided in the next part of this document.

Actions required: none

13. Recruitment (Code)

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should establish recruitment procedures which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised. Advertisements should give a broad description of knowledge and competencies required, and should not be so specialised as to discourage suitable applicants. Employers should include a description of the working conditions and entitlements, including career development prospects. Moreover, the time allowed between the advertisement of the vacancy or the call for applications and the deadline for reply should be realistic.

Existing rules and practices:

Recruitment procedures are open, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable as well as tailored to the position offered. Position advertisements describe the required knowledge and qualifications. They are announced on the Institute's website and Facebook, Ministry of Science and Higher Education website, as well as the EURAXESS portal.

Actions required: none

14. Selection (Code)

C & C principle:

Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise and competences and should have an adequate gender balance and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, including from other countries and with relevant experience to assess the candidate. Whenever possible, a wide range of selection practices should be used, such as external expert assessment and face-to-face interviews. Members of selection panels should be adequately trained should be realistic.

Existing rules and practices:

Members of the selection committees represent different areas of expertise and wide variety of qualifications. The Institute combines various practices for candidates' selection, including face-to-face interviews, on-line interviews and presentations.

Actions required: none

15. Transparency (Code)

C & C principle

Candidates should be informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. They should also be informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

Existing rules and practices:

Prior to the selection, the candidates are informed about the recruitment process, the selection criteria and the number of available positions. Information regarding recruitment is placed at the IPG web site. In October 2013, the Institute implemented procedures for PhD students concerning their career development prospects and applicable guidance.

Actions required: Prepare the procedure of giving feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the applications to the candidates who were not appointed. This procedure must be accepted by the Institute's Scientific Council.

16. Judging merit (Code)**C & C principle:**

The selection process should take into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence should also be considered. This means that merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results within a diversified career path and not only on the number of publications. Consequently, the importance of bibliometric indices should be properly balanced within a wider range of evaluation criteria, such as teaching, supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management of research and innovation and public awareness activities. For candidates from an industrial background, particular attention should be paid to any contributions to patents, development or inventions.

Existing rules and practices:

In the selection process, the Institute considers the candidates' overall experience. The assessment process is based on qualitative criteria, therefore candidates' creativity, managerial skills and experience, as well as the level of independence are also taken into consideration.

Actions required: none

17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)**C & C principle:**

Career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs should not be penalised, but regarded as an evolution of a career, and consequently, as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career track. Candidates should therefore be allowed to submit evidence-based CVs, reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the post for which application is being made.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute accepts evidence-based CVs reflecting all achievements and qualifications possibly relevant to the position in question.

Actions required: none

18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)

C & C principle:

Any mobility experience, e.g. a stay in another country/region or in another research setting (public or private) or a change from one discipline or sector to another, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience, should be considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher.

Existing rules and practices:

Any experience in mobility is considered by the Institute as highly valuable and important contribution to professional development of the researcher. When candidates are equally ranked, those with mobility experience are given priority. To ensure the high quality of conducted research, at least 3 months national or international mobility period (post doctorate) is demanded to be evidenced by the candidates for the postdoctoral positions .

Actions required: none

19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should provide for appropriate assessment and evaluation of the academic and professional qualifications, including non-formal qualifications, of all researchers, in particular within the context of international and professional mobility. They should inform themselves and gain a full understanding of rules, procedures and standards governing the recognition of such qualifications and, consequently, explore existing national law, conventions and specific rules on the recognition of these qualifications through all available channels.

Existing rules and practices:

Both formal and non-formal qualifications of researchers, as well as their experience are assessed. Depending on the position, the Institute's criteria may include various qualifications relevant to the required skill set and experience. In recent years, the Institute has been successfully employing young foreign researchers within the frameworks of Marie Curie training projects.

Actions required: none

20. Seniority (Code)

C & C principle:

The levels of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not be set as a barrier to entry. Recognition and evaluation of qualifications should focus on judging the achievements of the person rather than his/her circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were gained. As professional qualifications may be gained at an early stage of a long career, the pattern of lifelong professional development should also be recognised.

Existing rules and practices:

The required level of qualifications is always tailored to requirements of the specific position and does not constitute a barrier in the recruitment process. The selection process is focused on individual achievements. Candidates' qualifications are assessed on the basis of their achievements rather than the reputation of institutions where the qualifications were gained.

Actions required: none

21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)**C & C principle:**

Clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers, including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments, should be established by the institutions appointing postdoctoral researchers. Such guidelines should take into account time spent in prior postdoctoral appointments at other institutions and take into consideration that the postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long-term career prospects.

Existing rules and practices:

The Director's order No. 9/2013 regarding appointing postdoctoral researchers came into life in October 2013,. Clear rules have been set up, together with guidelines for maximum duration of the contract. Two contracts of employment for a specified period will be offered (the first for 1 year and the second for 2 years), with the possibility to obtain permanent position subsequently with some specific records put down in the contract. Such contract for an indefinite period will enable young researchers to achieve financial independence.

Actions required: none

III. Working conditions and social security

22. Recognition of the profession**C & C principle:**

All researchers engaged in a research career should be recognized as professionals and be treated accordingly. This should commence at the beginning of their careers, namely at postgraduate level, and should include all levels, regardless of their classification at national level (e.g. employee, postgraduate student, doctoral candidate, postdoctoral fellow, civil servants).

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute's staff and PhD students are recognized and treated as professionals and required to recognize the importance of scientific works and independence of other scientists, especially young researchers, regardless of their position, title, or legal status.

Actions required: none

23. Research environment

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, and that the national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research are observed. Funders should ensure that adequate resources are provided in support of the agreed work programme.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute does its best to create the most stimulating environment for conducting research and undergoing scientific training by providing appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities. The health and work safety rules and regulations are observed.

Actions required: none

24. Working conditions

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the working conditions for researchers, including for disabled researchers, provide where appropriate the flexibility deemed essential for successful research performance in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective-bargaining agreements. They should aim to provide working conditions which allow both women and men researchers to combine family and work, children and career. Particular attention should be paid, *inter alia*, to flexible working hours, part-time working, tele-working and sabbatical leave, as well as to the necessary financial and administrative provisions governing such arrangements.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute offers flexible working conditions in accordance with national legislation. The Institute also provides, as far as possible, such working conditions which allow both men and women to bring together family and work; raising children and development of professional careers being equally important.

Actions required: none

25. Stability and permanence of employment

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the performance of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts, and should therefore commit themselves as far as possible to improving the stability of employment conditions for researchers, thus implementing and abiding by the principles and terms laid down in the *EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work*.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute offers work contracts in compliance with national regulations.

Actions required: none

26. Funding and salaries

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that researchers enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or salaries with adequate and equitable social security provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. This must include researchers at all career stages including early-stage researchers, commensurate with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications and/or responsibilities.

Existing rules and practices

The Institute aims to provide scientists with adequate funding, attractive working conditions and appropriate and fair social security provisions with respect to social insurance in compliance with existing national legislation.

Actions required: none

27. Gender balance

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should aim for a representative gender balance at all levels of staff, including at supervisory and managerial level. This should be achieved on the basis of an equal opportunity policy at recruitment and at the subsequent career stages without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria. To ensure equal treatment, selection and evaluation committees should have an adequate gender balance.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute strives to maintain gender balance at all levels of staff. Among researchers and PhD students the ratio is almost ideal [34 women and 33 men]. This is achieved by implementing an equal opportunity policy during recruitment and at subsequent career stages without lowering the standards of quality and qualifications. On the contrary, the number of women employed in the Administration far exceeds the number of men.

Actions required: none

28. Career development

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should draw up, preferably within the framework of their human resources management, a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, including for researchers on fixed-term contracts. It should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers, thus motivating them and contributing to reducing any insecurity in their professional future. All researchers should be made familiar with such provisions and arrangements.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute has already developed a professional career development strategy for PhD students.

Actions required: Prepare a professional career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their careers.

29. Value of mobility**C & C principle:**

Employers and/or funders must recognize the value of geographical, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility as well as mobility between the public and private sector as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career. Consequently, they should build such options into the specific career development strategy and fully value and acknowledge any mobility experience within their career progression/appraisal system. This also requires that the necessary administrative instruments be put in place to allow the portability of both grants and social security provisions, in accordance with national legislation.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute recognizes the value of geographic, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility, as well as mobility between the public and private sectors as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at all stages of researchers' careers.

Actions required: none

30. Access to career advice**C & C principle:**

Employers and/or funders should ensure that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the institutions concerned, or through collaboration with other structures, is offered to researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of their contractual situation.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute's Scientific Secretary sends via e-mail information about job competitions and offers.

Actions required: none

31. Intellectual Property Rights**C & C principle:**

Employers and/or funders should ensure that researchers at all career stages reap the benefits of the exploitation (if any) of their R&D results through legal protection and, in particular, through appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including copyrights. Policies and practices should specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial

organisations, as possibly provided for under specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute is revising regulations on intellectual work referring to all researchers. Moreover, additional records will be put in the contracts between the Institute and PhD scholarships holders.

Actions required: The existing regulations governing benefits from results of intellectual work created at the Institute have to be revised with the assistance of a lawyer specialising in this matter.

32. Co-authorship

C & C principle:

Co-authorship should be viewed positively by institutions when evaluating staff, as evidence of a constructive approach to the conduct of research. Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s).

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute positively views co-authorship when evaluating its researchers. The Institute implements procedures enabling scientists, including scientists at the early stage of their careers. The general rule says that all persons included in the research designing, experimental work, data analysis and writing the manuscript should be its co-authors. Either omitting any of these persons or including another ones in the authors' list is strongly discouraged and regarded to be non-ethical.

Actions required: none

33. Teaching

C & C principle:

Teaching is an essential means for the structuring and dissemination of knowledge and should therefore be considered a valuable option within the researchers' career paths. However, teaching responsibilities should not be excessive and should not prevent researchers, particularly at the beginning of their careers, from carrying out their research activities. Employers and/or funders should ensure that teaching duties are adequately remunerated and taken into account in the evaluation/appraisal systems, and that time devoted by senior members of staff to the training of early stage researchers should be counted as part of their teaching commitment. Suitable training should be provided for teaching and coaching activities as part of the professional development of researchers.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute of Plant Genetics is a research institution and no teaching occupations are involved in its statutory activities. However, different types of education are carried out by the Institute as well as by its employees. The IPG is a member of a consortium of several Institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences located in Poznan that runs PhD studies in life and chemical sciences. Researchers employed in the IPG may -deliver lectures to students of different Universities in Poznan (e.g. A. Mickiewicz University, University of Life Sciences) and supervise them in obtaining Bachelor and Master of Science degrees. In all these cases remuneration is provided to them by the respective Universities. These degrees were awarded to students coming from different European countries as well as from China.

Actions required: none

34. Complains/ appeals**C & C principle:**

Employers and/or funders of researchers should establish, in compliance with national rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial (ombudsman-type) person to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and early-stage researchers. Such procedures should provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances, with the aim of promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the overall quality of the working environment.

Existing rules and practices:

The disciplinary spokesman (Prof. P. Krajewski) and disciplinary committee were both appointed in 2012, to independently investigate and assess complaints of researchers, including conflicts between scientific supervisors and early stage researchers.

Actions required: none

35. Participation in decision-making bodies**C & C principle:**

Employers and/or funders of researchers should recognize it as wholly legitimate, and indeed desirable, that researchers be represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work, so as to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the workings of the institution.

Existing rules and practices:

The Scientific Council of the Institute is the highest decision-making body responsible for the acceptance of research programmes and annual reports, awarding doctor degree and other activities. The Scientific Council consists of the staff members of the IPG (all Professors and elected representatives of researchers holding doctor degree) along with elected representatives of Polish scientific institutions dealing with plant sciences. The Director's decisions are also consulted with two other bodies: Senior Researchers' Board and Junior

Researchers' Council which ensures the protection and representation of individual and collective interests of researchers.

Actions required: none

IV. Training

36. Relation with supervisors

C & C principle:

Researchers in their training phase should establish a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and faculty/departmental representative(s) so as to take full advantage of their relationship with them. This includes keeping records of all work progress and research findings, obtaining feedback by means of reports and seminars, applying such feedback and working in accordance with agreed schedules, milestones, deliverables and/or research outputs.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute's scientific seminars and doctoral seminars are open to public and held regularly twice a month and once a week, respectively. Twice a month each Department organizes its seminar to discuss issues related to research performed. Every PhD student has a scientific tutor and often a co-supervisor with a PhD degree to get assistance in any matter they may need help with. Tutors regularly consult and evaluate progress of doctoral research and encourage PhD students to participate in such mandatory and extracurricular activities as scientific seminars, other seminar and symposia.

Actions required: none

37. Supervision and managerial duties

C & C principle:

Senior researchers should devote particular attention to their multi-faceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisors, leaders, project coordinators, managers or science communicators. They should perform these tasks to the highest professional standards. With regard to their role as supervisors or mentors of researchers, senior researchers should build up a constructive and positive relationship with the early-stage researchers, in order to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of the researchers' careers.

Existing rules and practices:

Starting academic year 2013/2014 the Institute introduced Research Development Plans for the PhD students to ensure high-quality of supervision, identification problems arising during the realisation of the individual research projects and finding solution in such cases. PhD students together with their supervisors will meet Deputy director for Scientific Affairs twice a year [February and June] to discuss progress in their doctoral programme.

Actions required: none

38. Continuing Professional Development

C & C principle:

Researchers at all career stages should seek to continually improve themselves by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies. This may be achieved by a variety of means including, but not restricted to, formal training, workshops, conferences and e-learning.

Existing rules and practices:

The Institute's researchers and PhD students have the possibility to participate in conferences, training courses, workshops, seminars and other courses.

Actions required: none

39. Access to research training and continuous development

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development and for improving their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies. Such measures should be regularly assessed for their accessibility, take up and effectiveness in improving competencies, skills and employability.

Existing rules and practices:

Since January 2013 the EU Framework Programmes Local Contact Point has been operating at the Institute. The Contact Point provides information and advice about initiatives, workshops and training opportunities provided by the Regional Contact Point and other public and commercial entities. Moreover, the Institute gives researchers and PhD students an opportunity for professional development and improving their employability through access to measures for continuing development of skills and competencies [each statutory task is allocated funds towards this purpose]. There are also workshops organised at the Institute at place (e.g. workshops on scientific communication).

Actions required: none

40. Supervision

C & C principle:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that a person is clearly identified to whom early-stage researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties, and should inform the researchers accordingly. Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisors are sufficiently expert in supervising research, have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise and commitment to be able to offer the research trainee appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms.

Existing rules and practices:

PhD students at the Institute are supervised and supported by the Deputy director for the Scientific Affairs, Prof. Piotr Kachlicki and Dr. Anna Stachowiak-Szrejbrowska. Moreover, they have their own representative participating in all meetings of the Director's advisory bodies.

Actions required: none

3. Action plan

On the basis of the internal analysis and discussions, the Institute has decided to take the following actions:

Area	Planned action	Body responsible	Timeline
Contractual and legal obligations	Workshop on IPR, additional records in the contract of work	Board of Directors, HR unit	June 2014
Good practice in research	Prepare instructions for securing and storing computer data	IT	June 2014
Good practice in research	Purchase and installation of computer external hard discs for data backup	Team Leaders, IT	ongoing
Dissemination, exploitation of results	Workshop on commercialisation	Board of Directors	December 2016
Public engagement	Enhance outreach activities	Board of Directors	December 2015
Non-discrimination	Search for funds that allow to adapt the entrance to the Institute for disabled people	Board of Directors	December 2016
Recruitment	Records on career development prospects	HR unit	ongoing
Transparency	Prepare the procedure of giving feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the applications to the candidates who were not appointed	HR unit, Scientific Secretariat	December 2014
Career development	Prepare a professional career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their careers	HR unit	December 2014
Intellectual Property Rights	Updating regulations governing benefits from results of intellectual work created at the Institute	Board of Directors	June 2014

4. Conclusions

As shown by the internal gap analysis and the results of the survey, the provisions of the Charter and the Code have already been implemented at the Institute to a large extent.

The introduction of C & C principles at IPG PAS has enabled its scientific staff and PhD students to become acquainted with the principles of the Charter and Code and to articulate the most and least important issues related to their place of work. The HR Working Group assessed the outcome of the internal gap analysis as quite constructive.

The actions proposed by the HR Working Group were widely accepted by the Institute's Director, Team Leaders, as well as representatives of Postdoctoral Fellows and PhD students. Regardless of the actions introduced and proposed in the C&C Action Plan, IPG PAS will also put into practice other improvements to enhance internal communication. On August 1, 2012 a Scientific Secretary was created at the Institute and it has an independent position within the Institute's structure and is, among other duties, responsible for external and internal communication as well as enhances the overall process of implementing the C & C Action Plan.