



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

Report on the self-assessment procedure 2 years  
after obtaining the logo: HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan for the period 2016 – 2018

Poznań, April 2016

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## 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) – the leading agricultural region in Poland. The Institute was established in 1954, with the aim to perform studies on genetic improvement of agricultural crops.

The Institute of Plant Genetics of the Polish Academy of Sciences 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, legumes, grasses, oilseed rape, potato and energetic plants.

The Institute has a clear structure and good organization, facilitating an efficient decision-making process and appropriate communication between the managing group, research staff and administrative bodies. The quality of research activities, scientific plans, programmes as well as annual reports is guided and controlled by the Scientific Council, at present chaired by Prof. Zofia Szweykowska-Kulińska (Faculty of Biology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). At the moment (March 2016) scientific staff comprises 65 researchers, including 20 Professors and Associate Professors, 20 postdoctoral fellows, 6 assistants and 19 PhD students.

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

Therefore, in May 2013 a project proposal entitled "The Creation of the Department of Integrative Plant Biology" (acronym: BIO-TALENT) was submitted to FP7-ERA Chairs-Pilot Call-2013. The main objective of the BIO-TALENT proposal was 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 contract with the EU was signed in April 2014 and now the BIO-TALENT team consists of researchers from Poland, UK, Portugal, India, Italy and Syria.

Detailed scrutiny of European standards (especially in terms of OTM recruitment), analysis of our practices compared with practices approved by the European Union, adoption of actions planned for 2014 - 2016 as well as the identification and elimination of shortcomings will allow IPG PAS to further upgrade the quality of its recruitment practices and employment conditions.

## 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"<sup>1</sup>: *"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

1. **December 2012:** Prof. Bogdan Wolko, the Director of IPG PAS, signed the declaration of endorsement of the Charter & Code.
  2. **April 2013:** during the meeting with Senior Researchers' Board the Director announced that the implementation process of the Charter and Code had already started.
  3. **April 2013:** creation of the HR Working Group – altogether 11 people representing researchers, management, and administration:
    - representatives of the Board of Directors: Prof. Zbigniew Zwierzykowski and Prof. Piotr Kachlicki,
    - representatives of 5 Departments: Prof. Małgorzata Jędryczka, Prof. Barbara Naganowska, Dr. Grzegorz Koczyk, Dr. Arkadiusz Kosmała, Dr. Tomasz Pniewski,
    - representative of postdoctoral fellows – Dr. Małgorzata Kaczmarek,
    - representative of PhD students – MSc. Judyta Strakowska (replaced by MSc. Jagoda Czarnecka in November 2013),
    - Human resources Unit – Mrs. Magdalena Błoch-Przybylska,
    - Head of the group, responsible for all procedures connected with the Charter and Code, Scientific Secretariat – Dr. Anna Stachowiak-Szrejbrowska.
  4. **December 2013:** a report on implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission in order to obtain the logo: HR Excellence in Research sent to the EC
  5. **January 2014:** acknowledgement of the Institute with the HR Excellence in Research logo
  6. **February 2016:** the first meeting of the HR Working Group committed to the self-assessment of the state of matters covered with the report of December 2013, 2 years after implementation of several procedures
  7. **February 2016:** changes in the composition of the HR Working Group:
    - representatives of the Board of Directors: Prof. Małgorzata Jędryczka and Prof. Zbigniew Zwierzykowski,
    - representatives of 6 Departments: Dr. Arkadiusz Kosmała, MSc. Hanna Ćwiek-Kupczyńska, Dr. Anetta Kuczyńska, Prof. Piotr Kachlicki, Prof. Barbara Naganowska, Dr. Karolina Stefanowicz,
    - representative of postdoctoral fellows – Dr. Magdalena Kroc,
    - representative of PhD students – MSc Katarzyna Masajada,
    - Human resources Unit – Ms. Katarzyna Płocienniczak,
    - Head of the group, Scientific Secretariat – Dr. Anna Stachowiak-Szrejbrowska.
  8. **February 2016:** a questionnaire sent to the scientific staff and PhD students (the same as at the end of May 2013)
  9. **March 2016:** five meetings of the HR group (2, 8, 9, 23, and 30 of March)
    - summary of the questionnaire results,
      - discussion on all the issues that arose from the questionnaire and setting up an action plan for the coming years,
      - acceptance of an action plan for years 2016-2018 in response to the gaps identified.
- April 2016:** acceptance of the report by all members of the HR Working Group

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<sup>1</sup> 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 and updated legal acts.

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

- the Statute of the Institute,
- the Act of the Polish Academy of Sciences (dated April 30, 2010, updated in July 2014),
- 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 14, 2003) and updated in July 2014,
- the Labour Code (dated June 26, 1974, updated in January 2016)
- Institute's rules, regulations as well as Director's orders,
- Institute's operating practices.

### **2.1.2. Survey**

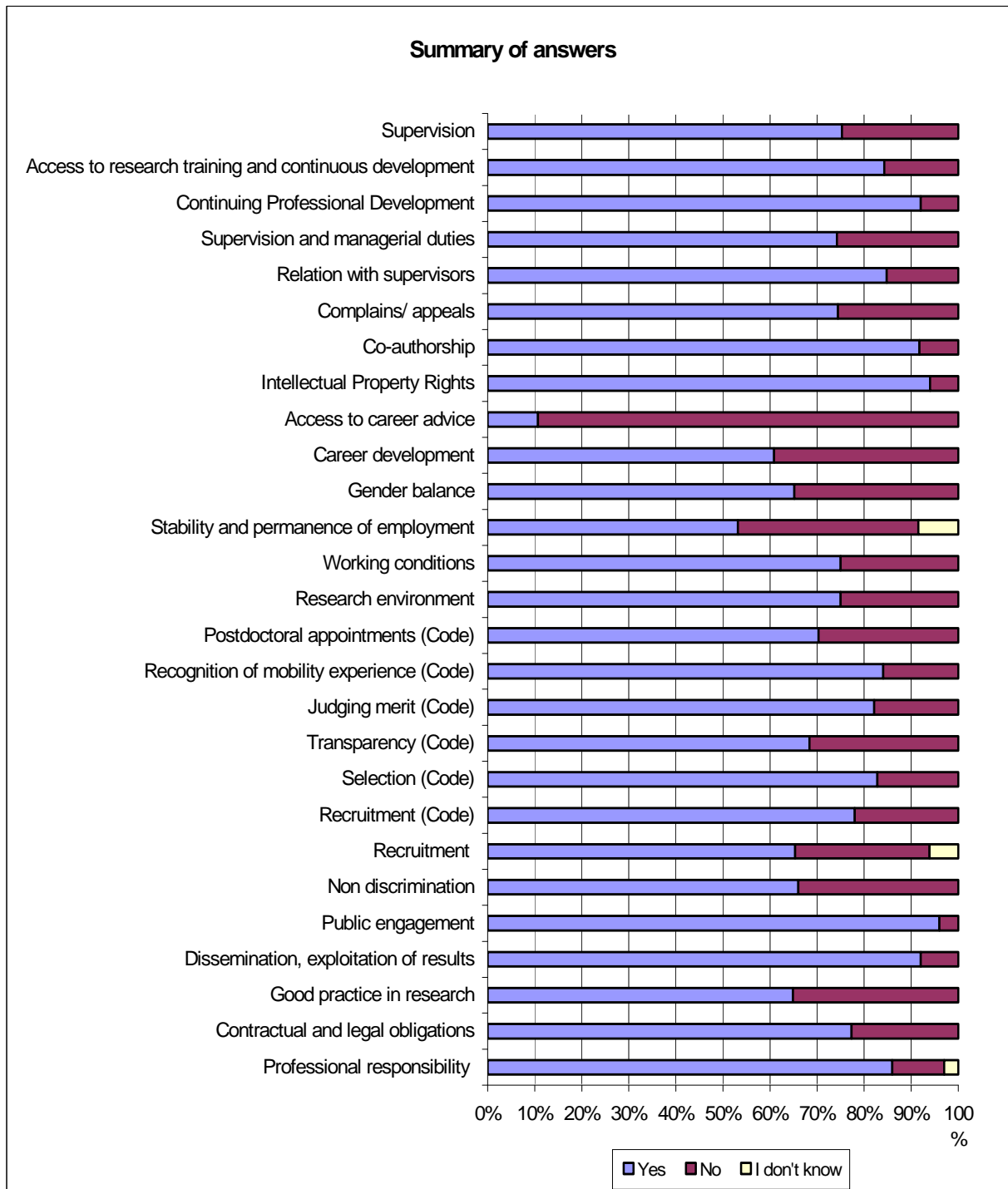
The next step of the internal gap analysis was an anonymous survey among Institute's scientific staff and PhD students. Its purpose was to evaluate the compliance of the provisions set at the Institute according to the European Charter for Researchers and with the Code of Conduct, 2 years after obtaining the HR logo. The survey was sent via e-mail to 65 people at the end of February 2016. They were asked to bring printed version back to the Secretariat within one week. Three answers were possible: Yes/No/Don't know. However, adding personal comments was possible, and these were regarded with a special attention by the HR group. Thirty six questionnaires – ~55% of the questionnaires – were returned and used to evaluate the opinions and expectations towards the Institute. No response from the foreigners employed at the Institute was received, however they have arrived to the Institute quite recently so they are not familiar with the situation. We will try to discuss the outcome of the questionnaires at the nearest joint meeting.

### **2.1.3. Summary**

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

## 2.2 Results

The results of 36 questionnaires were carefully analyzed and discussed by the HR Working Group. The analysis of the questionnaire outcome is presented in the chart below.



As it may be noticed in almost all questions with the exception of Access to career advice, the majority of Institute's researchers answered positively (the scope of Yes answers ranged from 50% to 96%).

As it may be seen, such issues as Career development, Recruitment, Non-discrimination, Good practice in research, Gender balance, Stability and permanence of employment were of special attention to many researchers.

## **I. Ethical and professional aspects**

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### **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 IPG PAS. 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 understand 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 were appointed in 2012 and 2015 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:**

- **Description of the scope of rights and duties for PhD students**

**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. As most of the documents is available in Polish only, it is necessary to provide the English version of these documents for foreigners employed at the Institute.

**Actions required:**

- **A bilingual set of documents (PL & EN) to be provided while signing the job contract**
- **Safety rules and guidelines, workplace safety toolkit as well as training in English is necessary for the foreign employees of the Institute**



## 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.

**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:**

- **On-site training for master and PhD students as well as trainees**
- **Director's order regarding on-site training with a form attached**
- **Strategy of making computer data back-ups**

## 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, transfer of results to agricultural practice takes place. Interdisciplinary approach is promoted and all researchers are encouraged to communicate the results of their research to the public whenever possible (participation in conferences, workshops etc). When practical applications are feasible, researchers are encouraged to apply for patents to claim the intellectual property rights. Moreover, in July 2016 within the pilot ERA Chair BIO-TALENT project [[www.biotalent.eu](http://www.biotalent.eu)] an innovation broker will be employed to help the research staff of the Institute in the process of commercialisation.

**Actions required:**

- **Workshop on commercialisation in 2016**

**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:**

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 Bayer. 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. Additional outreach activities promoting the Institute and conducted research are planned within WP5 Dissemination and outreach of the BIO-TALENT project. Moreover, the IPG PAS 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 on posters and other displays.

**Actions required:** none

**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. Since June 2015, when the international BIO-TALENT members arrived at the Institute, all communicates are delivered bilingual. However, not all internal documents are available in English, so there is a need to have them translated.

**Actions required:**

- **Translation of all internal regulations and communicates into English**
- **Search for technical solutions 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 Polish legal acts, 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 quality and number of papers published) using a continuous appraisal system (Director's order no 14/2012 from November 19, 2012). The appraisal system will be modified in 2016 according to the suggestions from external evaluators from the Polish Academy of Sciences as well as external members of the Scientific Council.

**Actions required:**

- **Modification of the appraisal system**

**II. Recruitment**

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**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. According to the Polish law, they have to be announced on the Institute's website, Ministry of Science and Higher Education website, as well as the EURAXESS portal.

**Actions required according to the OTM-R checklist**

- **Updated OTM-R policy PL & EN version**
- **Director's order regarding open, transparent two-step selection procedures and duties and competencies of the selection bodies**

- **Selection criteria for all types of positions – written guidelines**
- **Development of a complaint mechanism**
- **Update of the employment advertisement template**

#### **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. In October 2013, the Institute implemented procedures for PhD students concerning their career development prospects and applicable guidance.

**Actions required:** None

#### **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 of national or international mobility period 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 as well as the BIO-TALENT project.

**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 fixed-term contracts of employment will be offered (the first for 1 year and the second for 2 years), with the possibility to obtain a permanent position subsequently with some specific records put down in the contract. Such permanent contract will enable young researchers to achieve financial independence. Due to new Labour Code dated from February 22, 2016 the Director's order will be updated in terms of fixed-term appointments.

### **Actions required:**

- **Update of the Director's order 9/2013 on appointment for post docs positions**

## III. Working conditions and social security

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## 22. Recognition of the profession

### **C&C principle:**

All researchers engaged in a research career should be recognized as professionals. 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:**

- **Director's order regulating rules of common use of laboratory equipment at the Institute**
- **Reorganization of lab space in order to adapt laboratories to common use where possible**

### 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:**

- **Director's order on "home office" rules based on new Polish law regulations**

### 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 (updated Labour Code 22 February 2016).

**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:**

- **Development of new rules on social funds at the Institute on the basis of updated Labour Code and public announcement to all employees**

## 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 gender ratio is almost equal. At IPG PAS there are also comparable numbers of researchers of both sexes at every scientific career level. On the contrary, the number of women employed in the Administration far exceeds the number of men, while at the managerial level men prevail.

**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 and post docs (on the basis of legal documents regarding science in Poland).

### **Actions required:**

- **Publication of all internal documents on the website (both PL and EN versions)**
- **Update of Director's order 17/2014 on Career development**



## 29. Value of mobility

### **C&C principle:**

Employers and/or funders must recognize the value of geographical, inter-sectorial, 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, inter-sectorial, 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. According to internal Institute's regulations, to be appointed as a post doc, a researcher must have at least 3 months of mobility.

**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 provides information about job competitions and offers. Information is sent via e-mail, announced during the staff meetings etc. Employees are informed of projects, grant applications, exchange and collaboration programmes available for their stages of scientific career. Due to the size of the Institute and limited funding, such information activity is the only way we can provide career advice. On the other hand, our researcher can participate in open meetings with employers organized by the Career Offices at the universities in Poznan and dedicated meetings organized by the City Office of Poznan.

**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 has developed regulations on intellectual work referring to all researchers. Moreover, additional records are included in the contracts between the Institute and PhD scholarships holders.

**Actions required:** None

### 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 during the evaluation of its researchers. The general rule says that all persons included in the research designing, experimental work, data analysis and writing of the manuscript should be co-authors of the respective article. Omitting any of these persons or including another ones into 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.

The Institute of Plant Genetics PAS 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 Poznań that runs PhD studies in life and chemical sciences. The scientists at the Institute are involved in PhD students' training as supervisors and co-supervisors of their PhD theses, especially post docs provide day-to-day assistance to PhD students. Researchers employed in the IPG may also deliver lectures to students of different Universities in Poznań (e.g. A. Mickiewicz University, University of Life Sciences) and supervise them in obtaining Bachelor and Master of Science degrees. In all of these cases remuneration is provided to them by the respective Universities.

**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:**

There are internal regulations and procedures how to deal with complaints within Departments. Additionally, on the basis of Polish legal acts such bodies (the disciplinary spokesman and disciplinary committee) were both appointed in 2012 and 2015, 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 PAS (all Professors and elected representatives of researchers holding doctor degree) along with elected representatives of other 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

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### 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 pretty regularly. 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 seminars and conferences.

**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:**

The Institute has 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 supervisors, are obliged to prepare Personal Development Plans for each academic year and deliver them to Scientific Secretariat. Then, at the end of the academic year each PhD student prepares a report on her/his activities and research and their supervisors assess their achievements. All documents are collected by the Scientific Secretary and analysed by the Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs. PhD students together with their supervisors meet Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs once a year 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 in the Institute as well as in different national and foreign scientific/educational establishments.

**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 various research and soft skills workshops organised at the Institute at place (within BIO-TALENT WP4 Transfer of knowledge).

**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 and the Scientific Secretary. Moreover, they have their own representative participating in all meetings of the Director's advisory bodies.

**Actions required:** none

## Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers – checklist

	Answer: Yes, completely Yes, substantially Yes, partially No	Required actions
<b>OTM-R system</b>		
1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and English)?	Yes, partially (Polish version)	publish English version online
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	Yes, partially	send English version to foreign researchers employed at the Institute
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	Yes, substantially	meeting with all members of the Committee for Researchers' Development* for 2015-2018
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	Yes	
5. Do we have a good quality control system for OTM-R in place?	Yes, partially	meetings of HR working group
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	Yes	
7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	Yes	
8. Is your current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	Yes	
9. Is your current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	Yes	
10. Do you have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?	No	Comment: no means available
<b>Advertising and application phase</b>		
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates for advertising positions?	Yes	Ministry of Science and Higher Education template in PL and EN EURAXESS template [EN only]
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/ links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit?	Yes, partially	Yes: organisation and recruiting unit, job title, specifications and starting date, researcher profile (R1-R4) with required competencies, number of available positions, working conditions, workplace, entitlements, type of contract; application procedure and deadline; contact details. No: selection criteria,

		<p>professional development opportunities; career development prospects; a reference to the institution's OTM-R policy; a reference to the institution's equal opportunities policy</p> <p>Missing information must be added to the templates.</p>
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	Yes	
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	Yes	Websites: IPG PAS, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, NaturJobs, Euraxess, funding bodies [if possible], social media
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to minimum?	Yes	We accept scans of documents at the recruitment phase.
<b>Selection and evaluation phase</b>		
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees?	Yes	
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?	Yes, partially	<p>Distinguish a pre-selection committee** from the Committee for Researchers' Development</p> <p>Director's order regarding pre-selection committee and its duties and competencies</p>
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?	Yes, partially	It depends on the composition
19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?	Yes, partially	Such guidelines were for the first time used for the ERA Chair project. They will be adopted for all types of research positions at the Institute.
<b>Appointment phase</b>		
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?	Yes, substantially	It did not refer to the PhD students. Include this group.
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to the interviewees?	Yes, substantially	Detailed info is sent to those who were shortlisted. It is done by the President of the pre-selection committee
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?	No	Define such a mechanism, complaints should be addressed to the Director of the Institute
<b>Overall assessment</b>		
23. Do we have a system in place whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?	Yes, partially	HR Working Group

\* Committee for Researchers' Development for the term 2016-2019 is a gender-balanced body elected within the Scientific Council of the Institute and consists of 4 members from the Institute and 3 from other institutions:

1. Prof. dr hab. Iwona Bartkowiak-Broda – President [not from the IPG PAS]
2. Prof. dr hab. Jolanta Floryszak-Wieczorek [not from the IPG PAS]
3. Dr hab. Tomasz Pniewski
4. Dr Karolina Susek
5. Prof. dr hab. Marek Świtoński [not from the IPG PAS]
6. Prof. dr hab. Halina Wiśniewska
7. Prof. dr hab. Zbigniew Zwierzykowski

\*\* Pre-selection committee should comprise:

1. President of the Committee - Head of the Department or Principal Investigator of the project [depending on the financing source: statutory research/ external grant]
2. Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs
3. Domain expert, internal or external



### 3. Action plan

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

#### 2014-2016

Area	Planned action	Body responsible	Timeline	Comment
<b>Contractual and legal obligations</b>	Workshop on IPR, additional records in the contract of work	Board of Directors, HR unit	June 2014	Done
<b>Good practice in research</b>	Prepare instructions for securing and storing computer data.	IT	June 2014	Done
<b>Good practice in research</b>	Purchase and installation of outer memory discs	Team Leaders, IT	ongoing	Done
<b>Dissemination, exploitation of results</b>	Workshop on commercialization	Board of Directors	December 2016	autumn 2016
<b>Public engagement</b>	Enhance outreach activities	Board of Directors	December 2015	Done
<b>Non-discrimination</b>	Search for funds that allow to adapt the entrance to the Institute for disabled people	Board of Directors	December 2016	ongoing
<b>Recruitment,</b>	Records on career development prospects	HR unit	ongoing	Done
<b>Transparency</b>	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	Done
<b>Career development</b>	Prepare a professional career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their careers	HR unit	December 2014	Done
<b>Intellectual Property Rights</b>	Develop regulations governing benefits from results of intellectual work created at the Institute	Board of Directors	June 2014	Done, but with a delay due to legal changes in Poland.

**2016-2018**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Body responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Professional responsibility</b>	Description of the scope of rights and duties for PhD students	Board of Directors, Scientific Secretariat	September 2016
<b>Contractual and legal obligations</b>	A bilingual set of documents (PL & EN) to be provided by signing the job contract	HR unit Legal counsellor Scientific secretariat	ongoing
<b>Contractual and legal obligations</b>	Safety training in English	Safety officer Scientific secretariat	December 2016
<b>Good practice in research</b>	On-site training for master and PhD students as well as trainees	Supervisor HR unit	ongoing
<b>Good practice in research</b>	Director's order regarding on-site training with a form attached	Board of Directors	June 2016
<b>Good practice in research</b>	Strategy of making back-ups	IT specialist	March 2017
<b>Dissemination, exploitation of results</b>	Workshop on commercialisation	Innovation broker	December 2016
<b>Non discrimination</b>	Translation of internal regulations into English	Scientific secretariat	ongoing
<b>Non discrimination</b>	Search for technical solutions to adapt the entrance to the Institute for disabled people	Board of Directors	December 2018
<b>Evaluation/ appraisal systems</b>	Modification of appraisal system	Board of Directors	December 2016
<b>Recruitment</b>	Updated OTM-R policy PL & EN version	Scientific secretariat HR Department	December 2017

<b>Recruitment</b>	Director's order regarding pre-selection committee and its duties and competencies  Defining and publishing selection criteria for all types of positions  Development of a complaint mechanism  Update of the employment advertisement template	Board of Directors HR Department	December 2017
<b>Postdoctoral appointments</b>	Update of the Director's order 9/2013 on appointment of post docs	Board of Directors	December 2016
<b>Research environment</b>	Director's order regulating rules of common use of laboratory equipment at the Institute	Board of Directors	December 2016
<b>Research environment</b>	Reorganization of lab space in order to adapt laboratories to common use where possible	Board of Directors	December 2018
<b>Working conditions</b>	Director's order on "home office" rules based on new Polish law regulations	Board of Directors HR Unit	June 2016
<b>Funding and salaries</b>	Development of new rules on social funds at the Institute on the basis of updated Labour Code and public announcement to all employees	HR Unit Board of Directors	December 2016
<b>Career development</b>	Publication of all internal documents on the website (both PL and EN version)	Scientific secretariat	June 2017
<b>Career development</b>	Update of Director's order 17/2014 on Career development	Board of Directors	December 2016

#### **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 major extent.

The investigation of functioning of C&C principles at IPG PAS has raised awareness of its scientific staff and PhD students about their rights and privileges and encouraged them to articulate both the most and the less important issues and concerns related to their place of work. The HR Working Group assessed the outcome of the internal gap analysis as quite constructive for introducing future changes and new strategies.

The actions proposed by the HR Working Group were met with generally positive reception by the Institute's Director, Team Leaders, as well as postdoctoral fellows and PhD students.

Regardless the actions introduced and proposed in the C&C Action Plan, IPG PAS will also put into practice improvements to enhance internal communication, which was identified by the HR Working Group as a weak point, responsible for the best part of the neutral and negative answers to the questionnaire. The Scientific secretary, an independent position within Institute's structure created in 2012, enhances the overall process of implementing the C&C Action Plan and is, among others, responsible for external and internal communication. The work of collecting, translating and publishing of existing internal IPG's regulations and procedures in one place will help to resolve the majority of doubts and issues diagnosed by the HR Working Group in the Action Plan.