HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOIL SCIENCE AND PLANT CULTIVATION – STATE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FOR THE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 2026 TO OCTOBER 2029



Instytut Uprawy Nawożenia i Gleboznawstwa
– Państwowy Instytut Badawczy

Insitute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation
– State Research Institute

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Introduction

European Charter for Researchers and the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R) policy. The document also further develops the IUNG-PIB Development Strategy to 2030, which identifies the creation of attractive jobs, competence development, staff participation, effective communication, and management based on accountability and the assessment of outcomes as important conditions for the Institute's further development.

The year 2026 marks ten years since IUNG-PIB received the HR Excellence in Research Award. This provides a natural opportunity to review both the formal implementation of the adopted actions and the way in which the solutions introduced operate in practice.

For the Institute, the period 2016–2025 was a time of gradually organising and developing the systemic foundations of human resources management in research. The actions undertaken included regulations, organisational structures, tools and initiatives supporting research ethics, recruitment, working conditions and research career development. Their scope, sustainability and level of use varied.

An analysis of the experience gained to date shows that lasting formal and organisational foundations have been established in many areas. At the same time, the next stage requires greater emphasis on the consistent application of the adopted solutions, their accessibility and the assessment of the outcomes achieved. The following review therefore presents both the strengths of the existing system and areas requiring further development.

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers is based on a diagnosis drawing on multiple sources, including an analysis of the implementation of the Action Plans for 2016–2025, annual reports, the results of the staff survey conducted in 2025, consultations with the HRS4R and OTM-R Team and the HRS4R Internal Audit Team, the gap analysis, the OTM-R self-assessment of recruitment processes, and recommendations made in previous external assessments. The methodological limitations of the individual sources were also taken into account.

The 2025 staff survey at a glance

The staff survey was one of the most important sources used in the diagnosis. The table below presents the response rates for the IUNG-PIB community as a whole and for selected staff groups relevant to the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers.

Participation in the 2025 staff survey

Staff group	Number of responses in relation to the group size	Response rate
All IUNG-PIB staff	82 out of 297	**27.61%**
Research staff	38 out of 71	**53.52%**
Researchers at the earliest career stage	1 out of 9	**11.11%**

Table 1. Participation of individual staff groups in the staff survey conducted at IUNG-PIB in 2025.

Note: The figures presented represent the response rates for the respective groups. The results relate to the survey participants and, given the overall response rate, the response rate among research staff and the very low participation of researchers at the earliest career stage, should not be directly generalised to the entire IUNG-PIB community. They were treated as important diagnostic signals and considered together with the other sources used in developing the Strategy.

The combined analysis of the survey findings and the other diagnostic sources indicated that particular attention should be given to: the transparency of the rules governing assessment,

promotion and remuneration; the communication of a clear course of action in cases of suspected discrimination or mobbing; career development support, particularly for early-career researchers; the quality of administrative support for research and projects; clearer rules for the management of research data and intellectual property generated through work at the Institute; internal communication; and the monitoring of transparency in recruitment processes. At the same time, staff expect solutions adapted to different career stages and personal circumstances, including flexible work organisation and the further development of measures supporting work–life balance.

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1. Strategic framework and context

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) for the period from November 2026 to October 2029 sets the direction for further changes in human resources management and the development of the working environment at the Institute. It builds on ten years of experience in implementing the HR Excellence in Research process at IUNG-PIB, the results of staff consultations and changes taking place within the Institute and its external environment.

The principal objective of the Strategy is to move from establishing regulations and formal mechanisms towards greater consistency in their application, improved communication and the systematic assessment of whether the solutions introduced genuinely respond to staff needs and remain appropriate to the changing conditions in which the Institute operates. IUNG-PIB aims to develop a working environment in which the applicable rules are understandable and development opportunities are communicated to staff at different career stages.

1.1. Purpose, scope and status of the Strategy

The purpose of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers is to support the creation of conditions conducive to high-quality research, the professional development of researchers, and a safe, transparent and inclusive working environment. The document identifies areas in which the Institute intends to continue its existing activities and those that require further organisation, strengthening or a change of approach.

The Strategy covers researchers at all career stages, from R1 to R4, including doctoral candidates, researchers beginning to conduct independent research, experienced researchers and team leaders. It also recognises the importance of research and technical staff, engineering and technical staff, and administrative units supporting research activities. The quality of researchers' work also depends on the efficiency of project, financial and organisational processes, access to information, and support in the areas of research data, intellectual property, commercialisation and science communication.

The Strategy does not replace the applicable regulations or other internal documents. Based on an assessment of the extent to which the principles of the European Charter for Researchers have been implemented, it sets out directions for the further development of IUNG-PIB's HR policy, addressing the identified gaps and staff needs while taking into account the legal, organisational and financial conditions in which the Institute operates. Specific actions, responsibilities, timelines and indicators are defined in the Action Plan. The Strategy and the Action Plan cover a 36-month period, from 1 November 2026 to 31 October 2029.

1.2. Alignment with the IUNG-PIB Development Strategy to 2030

The IUNG-PIB Development Strategy to 2030 is based on three directions: operating effectively, responding to needs and driving development. It also identifies the creation of attractive jobs and the enhancement of staff potential and competences as important conditions for the Institute's further development.

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers further develops this aspect of the Institute's activities. It focuses on the conditions intended to enable staff to conduct research effectively, implement projects, develop their competences and assume new research, expert and organisational roles. It also reflects the direction set out in the IUNG-PIB Development Strategy to 2030 towards management based on participation, feedback and improved information flow.

The results of staff consultations show that the implementation of these objectives is not yet equally visible in the day-to-day operation of the entire Institute. Staff point to insufficient transparency in some decisions, unclear or inconsistent communication and limited knowledge of how procedures are applied. This concerns, among other matters, assessment, promotion, remuneration,

involvement in projects and access to information about development opportunities. One of the principal directions of the Human Resources Strategy is therefore to reduce the gap between the provisions of institutional documents and staff experiences. The Institute aims to improve communication and provide clearer explanations of the reasons underlying decisions that affect the professional situation of its staff.

The Human Resources Strategy is also intended to support a broader understanding of professional achievements. In addition to scientific publications, project, implementation, expert, organisational, mentoring and science communication activities are also important. Better recognition of these different forms of activity may contribute to a more appropriate assessment of staff contributions and help align their development with the Institute's actual needs.

1.3. External conditions and directions of change

IUNG-PIB's HR policy is shaped by the operating conditions of public research institutes in Poland. The research funding system affects remuneration levels, opportunities for employment stability and the resources available for staff development. The growing importance of project-based funding also results in periodic changes in staff workloads, the need for cooperation between organisational units and the need to combine research activities with organisational, administrative and reporting duties.

The Institute's operations are also influenced by changes in legislation and the rules governing the evaluation of scientific activity. These affect staff assessment criteria and the importance attached to publications, projects, implementation activities, expert work and the dissemination of research results. At the same time, competition for qualified staff means that not only financial conditions but also development opportunities, the quality of the working environment, recruitment transparency and flexibility in work organisation are becoming increasingly important.

Another factor is the evolution of European research policy, including developments related to the European Charter for Researchers, the implementation of Open Science principles and the growing importance of research data management, cybersecurity, intellectual property and the responsible use of artificial intelligence. In parallel, increasing attention is being given to equal treatment, psychological safety, the prevention of mobbing and work–life balance.

IUNG-PIB's activities also remain closely linked to the changing needs of agriculture, the economy and public administration. This requires the development of interdisciplinary competences, the effective implementation of projects and the assumption of research, implementation and expert roles by staff. These conditions, as well as changes in legislation, provide the context for the selection of the Human Resources Strategy priorities and define the framework within which the actions for the period from November 2026 to October 2029 have been planned.

2. Ten Years of HRS4R at IUNG-PIB – strengths and weaknesses

The implementation of HRS4R during the period 2016–2025 enabled IUNG-PIB to establish the foundations of an HR policy aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. During this period, the Institute introduced regulations, procedures, tools and organisational solutions concerning, among other areas, research ethics, equal treatment, recruitment, professional development, project support and working conditions.

The ten-year review of HRS4R implementation also shows that the degree to which individual solutions have become embedded in the Institute's operations varies. Some have become part of its day-to-day functioning, while others remain fragmented or periodic, or require improved monitoring and communication. Some actions will be continued in a modified form, adapted to current needs and organisational conditions while retaining their original purpose. The review covers both the strengths of the existing system and areas requiring further development.

2.1. Review methodology

The gap analysis forms part of the continuous improvement of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers at the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – State Research Institute. Its purpose was to systematically assess the extent to which the regulations, practices and solutions currently in place at the Institute correspond to the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers, including those concerning Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R), and to identify areas requiring further improvement. The review of actions implemented during 2016–2025 was one of the sources used in this assessment.

The analysis combined the management and expert perspectives with staff experience. In particular, it considered:

- ✓ comments submitted by members of the HRS4R and OTM-R Team and the HRS4R Internal Audit Team;
- ✓ the results of the staff survey conducted in 2025;
- ✓ key recommendations made by European Commission assessors at different stages of the HRS4R process implemented at IUNG-PIB;
- ✓ the results of the internal analysis of the status and outcomes of the actions set out in the Institute's Action Plans and HR Strategies for 2016–2025;
- ✓ the internal assessment, based on the OTM-R checklist, of the compliance of recruitment procedures with the OTM-R principles.

A comparative analysis of solutions implemented by other research organisations in Poland provided an additional reference point and made it possible to assess the consistency of the adopted measures at national level.

A detailed account of the implementation of the 51 actions included in the previous Action Plans, covering the status of each action, the outcomes achieved and the available evidence of implementation, forms part of the Internal Review documentation for the Renewal Assessment. It is supplemented by the *Gap Analysis for Award Renewal*. The findings of this review and the gap analysis were used to develop the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and the Action Plan for the period from November 2026 to October 2029.

This Strategy presents the principal findings in a concise form. Of the 51 actions included in the previous Action Plans and covered by the review, 40 were assessed as completed, while 11 required further implementation or a change of approach or scope. Actions requiring continuation or further development were included in the new Action Plan in an updated form, adapted to the current

diagnosis, staff needs and the present operating conditions of the Institute. A detailed account of the actions and their links to the new Action Plan is provided in the separate review referred to above.

The gap analysis follows the current four-pillar structure of the European Charter for Researchers:

- Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science;
- Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression;
- Working Conditions and Practices;
- Research Careers and Talent Development.

This approach enabled a comprehensive assessment of both the formal regulatory framework and its practical application. It also supported the identification of areas in which the Institute has already completed the stage of systemic implementation and those requiring further organisation, improved monitoring or a stronger focus on outcomes. The findings of the analysis provide the basis for the Action Plan for the period from November 2026 to October 2029, which is intended to consolidate the progress achieved to date and further develop an organisational culture aligned with the HRS4R principles.

2.2. Analysis of the Institute's strengths and areas for improvement

PILLAR 1. Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science

Strengths

During the implementation of HRS4R in 2016–2025, the Institute focused on establishing robust and sustainable ethical frameworks and professional standards for conducting research. The adoption of the Code of Ethics, the implementation of anti-plagiarism systems and regulations addressing the prevention of discrimination and mobbing, complemented by the Gender Equality Plan, created a system supporting research integrity and protecting staff rights. These arrangements are embedded in formal internal acts and operate through permanent roles and bodies, which ensures their stability and continuity.

Areas for improvement

The results of the 2025 staff survey and the findings of the HRS4R Internal Audit Team indicate that staff awareness of the existing ethical mechanisms and perceptions of their accessibility vary. Some respondents reported that they were unfamiliar with the applicable procedures or had doubts about their practical application.

During the consultations, staff also identified a need for practical support in research data management and the protection and use of intellectual property. This applies in particular to the handling of data, research results and confidential information when preparing publications, implementing projects and cooperating with external partners.

Researcher mobility also remains an area requiring further strengthening. Mobility periods and research visits undertaken to date have generally been arranged individually or linked to specific projects. A more structured mechanism is needed to support national research placements and the exchange of experience with other research organisations.

The survey responses concerning discrimination and mobbing also indicate a need to strengthen preventive and information activities. Planned measures include a review of the existing arrangements, training for staff, and the provision of practical information on what support is available and which reporting routes should be used, as well as the further development of these forms of support. An additional reason for reviewing the existing arrangements is the amendment to the Labour Code, effective from 5 November 2026 and strengthens employers' obligations concerning

the systematic prevention of workplace mobbing, discrimination and breaches of the principle of equal treatment. The new approach includes prevention, identification of irregularities, appropriate response, remedial action and support for persons affected by inappropriate behaviour.

PILLAR 2. Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

Strengths

Recruitment and assessment of research staff are among the areas in which IUNG-PIB has made significant progress. The Institute has regulations governing selection procedures, periodic staff assessment and the requirements applicable to individual research positions. During 2016–2025, the formal and organisational foundations for recruitment in accordance with the OTM-R principles were further developed. Calls for research positions are published on the Institute's website and on EURAXESS, while the applicable procedures define the basic rules governing the work of selection committees and the assessment of candidates.

The findings of the internal OTM-R checklist and the consultations conducted indicate that the next stage should focus on the accessibility of information and the systematic analysis of recruitment processes.

Areas for improvement

Data on recruitment procedures are not yet systematically collected and analysed through aggregated annual OTM-R monitoring. This limits the Institute's ability to assess the accessibility and outcomes of its recruitment processes and the effectiveness of measures intended to attract candidates.

More consistent preparation of selection committee members for the application of the OTM-R principles is also required. This should include equal treatment, impartiality, merit-based assessment and the mitigation of unconscious bias.

The accessibility of information for international candidates also requires further development. The existing materials do not yet present in one place the complete application process, the required documents, basic information on employment conditions and starting work at the Institute, or the available forms of support.

In the area of assessment and career progression, the rules governing this area require more accessible communication. The diagnosis also indicates a need to present more clearly the applicable rules concerning the individual components of remuneration, taking into account the applicable legislation and the Institute's Collective Labour Agreement. This does not imply a change in remuneration policy, but rather improved accessibility and clarity of information. More systematic monitoring of research staff development is also required.

PILLAR 3. Working Conditions and Practices

Strengths

During the period under review, IUNG-PIB developed solutions intended to ensure working conditions that comply with the applicable legislation and respond to the Institute's needs. Measures increasing flexibility in the organisation of work were gradually introduced, including remote working, flexible starting and finishing times, individual arrangements concerning working time and social support instruments, including nursery fee subsidies.

Research staff also receive administrative support at the stages of project preparation, implementation, monitoring and financial reporting. Support for the commercialisation of research results is also available, including through the Innovation Brokers Team and the database of technologies and research results intended for practical application. The information security audit

conducted in 2026 and the applicable internal regulations, including the Information Security Policy, provide a foundation for data protection and risk management.

Areas for improvement

The Institute does not currently conduct a systematic assessment of the quality, accessibility and usefulness of administrative and organisational support for research and project activities. There is also no periodic assessment of the extent to which flexible working arrangements and work–life balance measures are known, accessible and useful to different staff groups.

Information and documents concerning HRS4R are currently dispersed, and the structure of the relevant section of the Institute's website is not sufficiently intuitive. Moreover, not all key documents are available in up-to-date Polish and English versions.

Further action is required to implement the recommendations arising from the information security audit and to prepare staff for the responsible use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence. Practical guidance is needed that addresses data protection, confidentiality, intellectual property, verification of generated content and research integrity, together with relevant information and training activities.

The scope and delivery of support provided by innovation brokers and the regular updating of the database of technologies and research results also require further improvement. It will be important to increase the accessibility of this support and create conditions conducive to the practical application and commercialisation of IUNG-PIB research results.

PILLAR 4. Research Careers and Talent Development

Strengths

During 2016–2025, IUNG-PIB implemented measures supporting the development of researchers' competences, including project-related and specialist training. It also provided access to support from innovation brokers and staff responsible for project administration, covering the entire project cycle: from preparing and submitting proposals, through project implementation and monitoring, to financial reporting and settlement. These measures broadened the Institute's development offer and made it easier for staff to access support for research, project and implementation activities.

An important addition to the existing support system was the launch of the JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES programmes, under which statutory research topics are financed from the subsidy allocated to maintaining research capacity. JUVENILIS and SENIORIS establish separate categories corresponding to the applicants' career stage and research experience. This allows applicants to compete for funding within the group appropriate to their career stage, ensuring that early-career researchers are not directly compared with researchers who have an extensive record of scientific achievement. PROGRES supports the further development of project proposals that received high scientific scores in external calls but were not awarded funding.

Areas for improvement

The results of the 2025 staff survey, the consultations conducted and the assessors' comments indicate that the Institute's development offer remains partly fragmented. Information on the available forms of support and possible career pathways is not yet presented in a sufficiently structured and easily accessible manner. This applies particularly to researchers at earlier career stages, who have limited access to clearly visible career guidance and information supporting their further development. A clear guide to career pathways and available forms of support should therefore be developed, preceded by consultation with representatives of R1 and R2.

Training activities have so far been organised by different units and have frequently arisen from the needs of individual projects. They require improved coordination, adaptation to the needs of researchers at career stages R1–R4 and a coherent evaluation approach. The offer should cover,

in particular, digital competences, research integrity and responsible conduct of research, leadership competences, and the creation of a safe and equal working environment.

Further development is also needed in the monitoring of the outcomes of internal research support programmes. Annual summaries of the number of funded research topics and their outcomes will make it possible to assess the use of the JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES programmes and their contribution to the development of research staff.

The mentoring arrangements currently operating at IUNG-PIB are partly informal, and the rules governing participation, the matching of mentoring pairs and the documentation of outcomes are not sufficiently clear. The current mentoring arrangements, participant needs and experience of mentors should be assessed. On this basis, transparent rules should be established concerning participation in the programme.

The gap analysis shows that IUNG-PIB is moving from the establishment of formal frameworks towards managing their effectiveness. The Action Plan for the period from November 2026 to October 2029 will therefore focus on:

- continuing actions that have established sustainable systemic foundations;
- modifying selected instruments to improve their consistency and the monitoring of outcomes;
- introducing new actions responding to clearly identified needs.

3. Strategic diagnosis 2025–2026

The strategic diagnosis identifies the key development needs that should be addressed in the Strategy and the Action Plan for the period from November 2026 to October 2029. It covers both the operation of the existing solutions and the way in which they are communicated, applied and perceived by staff.

The materials collected identify areas requiring greater transparency, easier access to information, more systematic support or improved assessment of the outcomes of the actions undertaken.

3.1. Methodology and limitations of the diagnosis

The diagnosis was developed on the basis of:

- ✓ the survey conducted among IUNG-PIB staff in 2025;
- ✓ consultations and meetings of the HRS4R and OTM-R Implementation Team, and the HRS4R Internal Audit Team recommendations;
- ✓ an analysis of the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plans for 2016–2025;
- ✓ annual reports on the implementation of the Strategy;
- ✓ the OTM-R checklist completed in December 2025;
- ✓ the applicable internal regulations and documents;
- ✓ comments and recommendations made by assessors during previous stages of the HRS4R assessment.

The survey was available to all staff for one month in 2025 and was conducted anonymously in electronic form. It was completed by 82 of the Institute's 297 employees, corresponding to a response rate of 27.61%. Among research staff, the response rate was 53.52%. At the same time, the group representing the earliest research career stage was poorly represented: only one response was received from the nine doctoral candidates enrolled in the Doctoral School and staff members undertaking doctoral proceedings.

The survey results do not reflect the views of all professional groups and researchers at career stages R1–R4 to the same extent. Nevertheless, they provide an important source of information on staff experience and issues requiring attention. The findings relating to early-career researchers were interpreted taking into account the small number of responses received from representatives of the earliest career stage.

The OTM-R checklist constituted an internal self-assessment. It identified both elements operating within an established regulatory framework and issues requiring improved documentation, standardisation or monitoring.

3.2. Key findings of the diagnosis

Remuneration and incentive mechanisms. Remuneration, bonuses and allowances were among the topics most frequently raised in the survey. The findings relate to a diverse group of respondents, including both research staff and other professional groups, whose access to remuneration components financed from project funds differs. They indicate a need to present the applicable rules concerning the individual components of remuneration, including project-funded components, more clearly. At the same time, the Institute's remuneration policy is determined by the public research funding model, applicable legislation, the provisions of the Institute's Collective Labour Agreement and the Institute's financial capacity.

Staff assessment, promotion and career progression. IUNG-PIB conducts periodic staff assessments and has regulations defining the requirements applicable to research positions. The consultations indicate a need to present the assessment and promotion rules in a more accessible manner. More systematic monitoring of research staff development is also needed, including, among other matters, academic degrees and titles obtained, promotions to higher positions and mobility.

Psychological safety and equal treatment. The Institute has procedures and designated persons and bodies responsible for preventing workplace bullying and discrimination. However, the survey results show that the mere existence of formal arrangements does not fully address the needs identified in this area. Awareness and accessibility of the arrangements, confidence in the way cases are handled and assurance that appropriate support will be provided remain important. Psychological safety should be addressed through information, prevention, training and monitoring activities.

Development of early-career researchers, internal support programmes and mentoring. The support provided through the Doctoral School constitutes a positive reference point. At the same time, information on career opportunities, mentoring and other forms of support is not yet presented in a structured and easily accessible manner. A guide to research career pathways will help early-career researchers make informed decisions about their further professional development. These measures will be complemented by more systematic monitoring of research staff development through periodic reports covering, among other matters, academic degrees and titles obtained, promotions and mobility. The JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES programmes should be further developed, while their use, relevance to different groups of researchers and the results of the funded research topics should be systematically assessed.

Support and training at different career stages. Development needs concern researchers at all career stages from R1 to R4, including persons performing management and project-related roles. The training offer should take into account differences in experience, responsibilities and career plans. It should cover organisational and management competences, digital competences, research integrity and responsible conduct of research, and the creation of a safe and equitable working environment.

Support for project activities. The Research Support Department, innovation brokers and project-related training provide important support for staff preparing and implementing projects. Further measures should therefore focus primarily on strengthening the existing forms of support and adapting them to staff needs.

Research data, intellectual property and Open Science. IUNG-PIB has experience in protecting intellectual property, providing repository-based access to publications and managing project documentation. However, the complexity of consortium agreements, data-sharing rules and Open Science requirements creates a need to update institutional knowledge in this area and compile practical information on rights to data and the storage, sharing and reuse of research data.

Internal communication. Information concerning HRS4R, recruitment, training, projects and professional development is available through various channels. Its dispersion may make it difficult for staff to find the relevant content quickly. In particular, HRS4R information should be organised and presented in an accessible format in one easily identifiable location on the Institute's official website.

Flexibility and work–life balance. The Institute provides arrangements concerning, among other matters, remote working, individual organisation of work and selected family-related benefits. Further assessment is needed of the needs of individual staff groups and the possibilities for supporting persons returning after longer breaks from work or a research career.

Monitoring outcomes. The activities of the HRS4R and OTM-R Implementation Team and the HRS4R Internal Audit Team, together with the reports prepared, provide the basis for monitoring the implementation of actions. In the next period, monitoring will be supplemented — where permitted by the nature of the action and the availability of data — by an assessment of the accessibility, use and usefulness of the solutions introduced. This will support decisions on their continuation, modification or further development.

Recruitment and the OTM-R policy. IUNG-PIB has regulations governing selection procedures, standardised job advertisements and forms, and publishes vacancies in Polish and English, including through EURAXESS. The OTM-R policy is described in Section 7 of this Strategy. Further work should focus on the consistent application of the adopted principles, the preparation of selection committee members, the accessibility of information and the regular analysis and aggregation of recruitment data.

Internal communication and accessibility of information. Information concerning HRS4R, recruitment and projects is available through various channels. Its dispersion and the non-intuitive structure of parts of the HRS4R section of the website may make it difficult to find the relevant content quickly. The HRS4R section of the Institute's official website should be reorganised and updated, missing materials should be added, and key documents should be made available in up-to-date Polish and English versions.

4. Direction for the development of the working environment

During the period from November 2026 to October 2029, IUNG-PIB will focus on developing conditions conducive to research, improving access to information and support, and better aligning development activities with the needs of researchers at different career stages.

4.1. Priorities for the period from November 2026 to October 2029

The five priorities of the Strategy respond directly to the principal findings of the diagnosis. Each priority has been assigned an expected strategic outcome and the numbers of the related actions. The scope of the actions, responsibilities, timelines, indicators and target values are defined in the Action Plan for the period from November 2026 to October 2029, which constitutes an integral implementation document accompanying the Strategy and is published together with it.

Priority 1. A safe and respectful working environment

Priority 2. Working conditions, flexibility and access to information

Priority 3. Improvement of recruitment processes in accordance with the OTM-R principles

Priority 4. Career and competence development at all career stages R1–R4

Priority 5. Responsible conduct of research and support for project activities

Priority 1. A safe and respectful working environment

IUNG-PIB has regulations and designated persons and bodies responsible for equal treatment and the prevention of workplace bullying and discrimination. The consultation findings indicate a need to increase awareness of the available arrangements, strengthen prevention and training, and regularly assess the way in which the adopted mechanisms operate. Changes in labour law, which reinforce employers' obligations concerning systematic prevention, response, remedial action and support for persons affected by inappropriate behaviour, provide an additional reason for their review.

The expected outcome of this priority is the adaptation of the existing arrangements to current requirements, their more systematic application and review, and easier staff access to information on appropriate responses, reporting routes and available forms of support.

Objectives

1. Increasing staff awareness of equal treatment principles, appropriate responses, available reporting routes and forms of support.
2. Strengthening information, training and preventive activities concerning workplace bullying, discrimination, conflict and psychological safety.
3. Regularly assessing the operation of procedures concerning equal treatment, the prevention of workplace bullying and discrimination, and the handling of complaints.
4. Developing the competences of management staff in team management and conflict prevention.

Main directions of actions

- reviewing and adapting the existing regulations and their practical application to current requirements;
- providing training and information activities for staff and management;

- assessing the confidentiality, impartiality and accessibility of reporting mechanisms, as well as the protection and support available to reporting persons;
- disseminating practical information on available assistance and reporting inappropriate behaviour.

Related Action Plan actions: 3-T3 and 3-T13.

Priority 2. Working conditions, flexibility and access to information

Some employment conditions are determined by the rules governing the financing of public research institutes, applicable legislation and the provisions of the Institute's Collective Labour Agreement. In areas within IUNG-PIB's responsibility, actions will focus on improving access to information on employment conditions, assessment and promotion, and remuneration rules; developing researcher mobility; assessing the quality of administrative and organisational support; and providing arrangements that respond to the diverse needs of staff.

The expected outcome of this priority is more structured access to information on working conditions and available forms of support, the development of national mobility, and the use of feedback to improve administrative support and the organisation of work. The analysis also found that HRS4R information on the Institute's website is dispersed and presented in a non-intuitive manner, making it difficult to find current documents and information quickly. This area requires reorganisation and the ongoing updating of content in Polish and English.

Objectives

1. Organising and improving the accessibility of information on working conditions, assessment, promotion and remuneration rules, and professional development.
2. Developing opportunities to gain research experience at other universities and research organisations, particularly within the region.
3. Identifying the needs of individual staff groups concerning administrative and organisational support and assessing the accessibility and usefulness of existing arrangements.
4. Monitoring the implementation of information security recommendations and developing principles for the responsible use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence.

Main directions of actions

- organizing and disseminating information on assessment, promotion, and remuneration processes, as well as on available forms of support;
- developing agreements and initiatives supporting mobility;
- assessing the accessibility and usefulness of administrative and organisational support;
- developing and regularly updating the bilingual HRS4R section of the official IUNG-PIB website.

Related Action Plan actions: 3-T2, 3-T4, 3-T7 and 3-T8.

Priority 3. Improvement of recruitment processes in accordance with the OTM-R principles

The fundamental principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment have been incorporated into IUNG-PIB's regulations and selection documentation. Further actions will focus primarily on their consistent application, the preparation of selection committee members, information prepared for candidates, and monitoring the conduct and outcomes of recruitment procedures.

The expected outcome of this priority is a consistently applied and documented recruitment process, supported by practical guidance for selection committees, structured information for international candidates and regular analysis of aggregated recruitment data.

Objectives

1. Providing selection committee members with practical information on the OTM-R principles, equal treatment, impartiality, merit-based assessment and the mitigation of unconscious bias.
2. Improving candidates' access to information on the recruitment process, employment conditions, development opportunities and the support available when starting work at IUNG-PIB, including information for international candidates.
3. Collecting and analysing data enabling periodic assessment of recruitment processes.

Main directions of actions

- developing and providing selection committee members with practical guidance on conducting recruitment procedures in accordance with the OTM-R principles;
- preparing a bilingual guide for international candidates;
- systematically collecting data on recruitment procedures;
- preparing an annual report on the monitoring of OTM-R Policy implementation.

Related Action Plan actions: 3-T5, 3-T6 and 3-T8.

Priority 4. Career and competence development at all career stages R1–R4

Training, mentoring and project-related activities constitute an important part of staff support. However, information on the available opportunities is dispersed, and the outcomes of some instruments are not yet systematically monitored. Development needs concern both early-career and experienced researchers, team leaders and project managers.

The expected outcome of this priority is structured information on R1–R4 career pathways, a more transparent mentoring programme, a coordinated competence development system, and systematic documentation of research staff development and the outcomes of internal research support programmes.

Objectives

1. Organising information on research positions, promotion opportunities and available forms of development.
2. Better adapting the training offer to the needs of researchers at individual career stages R1–R4.
3. Evaluating the existing formal and informal forms of mentoring and developing the programme as an accessible and practical form of support for research and professional development.
4. Systematically assessing the usefulness of training, mentoring and the JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES programmes for individual groups of researchers.

Main directions of actions

- preparing a bilingual guide to career pathways and available forms of support, preceded by consultation with representatives of R1 and R2;
- reviewing and updating the rules governing employment, assessment and promotion, preparing information on remuneration rules and compiling aggregated reports on research staff development;

- further developing and monitoring the JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES programmes, including assessing the use, usefulness and results of the funded research topics;
- evaluating the existing forms of mentoring, developing programme rules and collecting feedback after the completion of mentoring cooperation;
- coordinating training activities in four areas: digital competences; research integrity and responsible conduct of research; management, mentoring and supervisory competences; and a safe and equitable working environment.

Related Action Plan actions: 3-T4 and 3-T11–3-T14.

Priority 5. Responsible conduct of research and support for project and implementation activities

Conducting research requires effective cooperation between researchers, administrative staff and support units. It is also important to provide staff with access to practical information concerning projects, research ethics, research data, intellectual property, the use of research results and the safe use of digital tools.

The expected outcome of this priority is more accessible support for research and project activities that can be periodically assessed, complemented by practical solutions concerning data, intellectual property, commercialisation and digital security.

Objectives

1. Developing knowledge and competences concerning research ethics, research integrity, intellectual property and research data management.
2. Assessing the quality, accessibility and usefulness of administrative and organisational support for research and project activities and using the findings to improve that support.
3. Improving innovation brokerage support and developing the database of technologies and research results intended for practical application and commercialisation.
4. Monitoring the implementation of information security recommendations and developing principles for the responsible use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence.

Main directions of actions

- training and seminars on research integrity, intellectual property and research data management;
- conducting a pilot assessment of administrative and organisational support for research and project activities;
- improving the scope of support provided by innovation brokers and regularly updating the database of technologies and research results;
- monitoring the implementation of recommendations arising from the information security audit and undertaking activities to increase staff awareness;
- disseminating principles for the responsible use of artificial intelligence tools in research, publications and project proposal preparation, taking into account data protection, confidentiality, intellectual property and research integrity.

Related Action Plan actions: 3-T1, 3-T7, 3-T9, 3-T10 and 3-T13.

5. Implementation, monitoring and accountability

5.1. Governance model

Strategic oversight of the implementation of the Strategy rests with the Director of the Institute together with the Deputy Directors, hereinafter referred to as the IUNG-PIB Management Board. This oversight includes approving the main directions of action, making decisions concerning resources, and approving significant changes and corrective actions.

The HRS4R Coordinator is responsible for organising the Strategy implementation process, coordinating the flow of information, maintaining consolidated monitoring and preparing reporting materials on the basis of the data obtained. In this respect, the Coordinator cooperates with the persons and units responsible for individual actions and with the entities providing the relevant data and documentation.

Individual actions are implemented by the action owners identified in the Action Plan. Depending on the scope of the action, these may include the relevant organisational units, teams, officers or persons responsible for specific processes. Other units possessing the relevant competences or data may also be involved in implementation.

The HRS4R and OTM-R Implementation Team analyses progress, discusses issues requiring further action and submits recommendations concerning the implementation of the Strategy and the OTM-R policy to the IUNG-PIB Management Board. The HRS4R Internal Audit Team conducts periodic reviews of action implementation, analyses the available evidence and feedback, and formulates comments and recommendations. The Scientific Council reviews the outcomes of the Strategy and provides opinions on matters falling within its remit.

The detailed allocation of responsibility for implementing actions, providing data and collecting evidence is defined in the Action Plan.

5.2. Monitoring and risk management

Monitoring will be conducted on an ongoing basis. A formal review of the status of the actions will take place at least twice a year, while a consolidated annual summary of Strategy implementation will be prepared and submitted to the IUNG-PIB Management Board after discussion with the entities involved in its implementation and monitoring. The six-month review will be used to verify the status of actions, data availability, the completeness of evidence and any risks identified.

The principal monitoring tool will be an internal monitoring table, adapted where necessary to the scope of the actions being implemented. It will include, in particular:

- the status of each action;
- the entities responsible for its implementation and for providing data;
- baseline and target values of indicators;
- measurement deadlines and frequency;
- results achieved;
- evidence of implementation;
- identified risks;
- agreed corrective actions.

Risk monitoring will consider, in particular, resource availability, legal and organisational changes, dependence on external funding, data availability and the level of staff participation. The scope of the risks analysed will be updated in line with the progress of Strategy implementation.

Each corrective action will have a designated owner responsible for its implementation and a completion deadline. Its status will be reviewed during the subsequent monitoring cycle. Monitoring will be based on the indicators, target values and evidence specified in the Action Plan. Depending on the nature of the action, the assessment will cover its implementation, the reach or use of the solution introduced and, where reliable data can be obtained, the outcome for the target groups or the relevant process.

5.3. Communication and participation

The Strategy, the Action Plan and key HRS4R documents will be made available in one designated location on the official IUNG-PIB website. The principal documents and information intended also for international candidates will be available in English. Following surveys addressed to the Institute's community and formal consultations, staff will receive a summary of the key findings and information on how they have been used.

The forms of consultation will be selected according to their purpose and target group. In addition to electronic surveys, they may include short thematic meetings or consultations conducted in smaller groups. Due to the limited number of responses from representatives of the earliest career stage in the 2025 survey, at least one dedicated consultation with representatives of R1 and R2 will be conducted in accordance with the Action Plan, under Action 3-T11. Its findings will be considered in the next annual review of the Strategy.

The report on the implementation of this Strategy forms part of the Institute's annual activity report. Other information will be made available as appropriate and communicated to the groups directly concerned.

6. Institutional commitment

The IUNG-PIB Management Board recognises the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers for the period from November 2026 to October 2029 and the accompanying Action Plan as a framework for the further development of the working environment, research conditions and support for research careers. The Institute will provide an organisational framework for the implementation of the Strategy, designate action owners and periodically assess the outcomes achieved. Decisions concerning resources will be taken with due regard to the funds available, applicable regulations and the Institute's other commitments.

The Action Plan may be updated on the basis of monitoring results, staff consultations and legal, financial or organisational changes. Significant changes will be documented and approved in accordance with the adopted governance model.

7. Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers Policy of the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – State Research Institute in Puławy

General Information

The Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R) Policy defines the principles governing recruitment procedures intended to ensure equal access to employment, objective assessment of candidates and transparency of decision-making.

The OTM-R standard is based on three complementary principles:

- **Open** – ensuring broad access to information on employment opportunities and equal opportunities to participate in recruitment procedures. This includes publicly advertising vacancies, eliminating unjustified barriers to applying for employment and remaining open to candidates from different research communities, institutions and countries.
- **Transparent** – providing clear, understandable and accessible information on position requirements, assessment criteria, the conduct of the procedure and the rules governing employment decisions. Transparency also includes informing candidates about the outcome of the procedure and the basis for the assessment made.
- **Merit-based** – conducting a fair and impartial assessment of candidates that takes into account their scientific and professional achievements, competences, experience and research potential. The assessment should consider both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the candidate's achievements, as well as the nature of the position and the candidate's research career stage.

The OTM-R principles support the quality of recruitment processes, promote equal opportunities, facilitate researcher mobility and recognise diverse professional development pathways. The principal European reference document is the European Charter for Researchers, set out in Annex II to the Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe. The principles governing the recruitment and selection of researchers are included in the second pillar of the Charter, which concerns Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression.

The OTM-R Policy forms an integral part of the IUNG-PIB Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and establishes standards for attracting and employing research staff. Its implementation takes into account the applicable legislation, the Institute's internal regulations and the directions for improvement defined in the HRS4R Action Plan.

I. Basis for Applying the OTM-R Principles at IUNG-PIB

The Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – State Research Institute conducts the recruitment of research staff in accordance with the applicable national legislation, the Institute's internal regulations, the European Charter for Researchers and the OTM-R principles.

The recruitment process is based on an assessment of candidates' qualifications, achievements, experience and competences, taking into account the requirements applicable to the position concerned. The Institute aims to ensure equal treatment of all participants in the procedure, impartial assessment and transparency at each stage of recruitment.

The internal rules governing selection procedures are based, in particular, on:

- **Order No. 020-31/2020 of the Director of IUNG-PIB of 24 June 2020**, amending the Regulations governing the principles and procedures for conducting open competitions for

research positions at IUNG-PIB, together with the consolidated text of the Regulations. The Regulations define, among other matters, the appointment of selection committees, the assessment of candidates, documentation of the procedure, communication of results and the appeal procedure.

- **Order No. 020-43/2020 of the Director of IUNG-PIB of 29 June 2020**, concerning the principles and criteria for employment in research and research-and-technical positions at IUNG-PIB. It defines the qualification requirements and employment criteria applicable to individual positions.
- **Orders of the Director of IUNG-PIB concerning individual recruitment procedures**, which define the subject of the procedure and appoint the selection committee.

As part of the implementation of HRS4R, the Institute undertakes measures to improve its recruitment standards, with particular emphasis on the accessibility of information for candidates, the transparency of assessment criteria, support for international candidates and strengthening the competences of persons participating in selection procedures.

II. Scope and Implementation of the OTM-R Policy

The OTM-R Policy applies primarily to the recruitment of research staff to the positions specified in Article 43(1) of the Act of 30 April 2010 on Research Institutes:

- professor;
- institute professor;
- assistant professor;
- assistant.

Vacancy notices published in international databases include the relevant R1–R4 research career profile corresponding to the requirements of the position and the expected level of research independence.

The principles of openness, transparency and merit-based assessment also provide a reference point for the recruitment of research-and-technical staff, taking into account the nature of the position and the applicable legislation and internal regulations. Research staff are recruited through open competition procedures.

A. Advertising Vacancies and Submitting Applications

An open competition for a research position is announced by the Director of IUNG-PIB, either on the Director's own initiative or at the request of the head of the relevant organisational unit or project. For each recruitment procedure, the Director appoints a five-member selection committee by means of an internal order and designates its chair.

The committee includes the Director or a Deputy Director, the head of the unit requesting the recruitment and other persons designated by the Director. When determining the composition of the committee, gender balance and the competences required to assess the candidates are taken into account.

A vacancy notice includes, in particular:

- the name of the Institute and the organisational unit conducting the recruitment, together with the contact details of the person responsible for the procedure;
- the title and description of the position, including the relevant R1–R4 research career profile;
- qualification requirements and candidate assessment criteria;
- a list of the required documents and information on how and where they should be submitted;

- an application deadline of no less than two months from the date on which the competition is announced;
- the expected employment start date and the date on which the results will be announced;
- information on working conditions and remuneration;
- information on professional and research development opportunities.

Information on the initial level or range of remuneration is provided to candidates in accordance with the rules and deadlines specified in Article 18³ca of the Labour Code. Including this information in the vacancy notice supports the transparency of employment conditions.

Vacancies for research positions are published in Polish and English on the IUNG-PIB website, in the Public Information Bulletin on the website of the minister responsible for higher education and science, and on the European EURAXESS portal. Information on open competitions is also displayed on the Institute's notice board.

For other positions, the scope and channels used to publish vacancy notices are adapted to the nature of the recruitment procedure. These may include the ePraca portal, public employment services and other channels enabling the Institute to reach external candidates.

The content of vacancy notices and the terminology used for positions follow the principle of gender neutrality. Requirements for candidates remain directly related to the nature and scope of the duties associated with the position.

Application documents are submitted in the manner specified in the vacancy notice. Recruitment documentation is processed and stored in accordance with the principles of confidentiality, personal data protection and the applicable regulations governing employee records and archiving.

The Institute provides recruitment information in English to enable international candidates to familiarise themselves with employment conditions, the recruitment process and the rules governing the commencement of employment at IUNG-PIB.

B. Selection and Assessment of Candidates

Candidates are assessed by the selection committee on the basis of the requirements set out in the vacancy notice and the rules established in the applicable Regulations governing open competitions.

The procedure includes:

- formal verification of the application documents;
- assessment of candidates' achievements and qualifications;
- an interview;
- preparation of an employment recommendation.

In particularly justified cases, the committee may ask a candidate to submit additional documents confirming their qualifications or achievements, in accordance with the Regulations governing open competitions.

Candidates who meet the formal requirements are assessed against the criteria applicable to the position using the prescribed assessment and selection forms. The assessment takes into account research achievements, research and professional experience, competences and preparedness to perform the duties associated with the position.

In accordance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, achievements should be assessed holistically. In addition to scientific publications, other outcomes of research and professional activities may also require consideration. Depending on the nature of the position and

the adopted selection criteria, these may include participation in projects, research cooperation, implementation and innovation activities, teaching and organisational activities.

The candidate's career stage and the diverse course of research careers are taken into account when assessing research achievements. Career interruptions, interinstitutional and international mobility or experience gained outside the academic sector do not in themselves constitute grounds for lowering a candidate's assessment.

The committee applies the same predefined assessment criteria to all participants in a given recruitment procedure. The assessment of documents and the interview are documented using the applicable selection forms and minutes.

On the basis of the assessment results, the committee formulates a recommendation concerning the employment of a candidate and submits it to the Director of IUNG-PIB.

C. Outcome of the Procedure and Employment

Following completion of the procedure, the selection committee prepares minutes documenting the conduct of the competition, the assessment criteria applied and the outcome of the candidate selection process. The chair of the committee submits the minutes to the Director of IUNG-PIB.

At the request of the Director, the Scientific Council issues an opinion on the qualifications of the candidate recommended for employment, in accordance with Article 29(2)(12) of the Act on Research Institutes. After obtaining the Scientific Council's opinion, the Director makes the employment decision.

If the competition does not result in the selection of a candidate, a new procedure is announced in accordance with the applicable Regulations.

Informing Candidates about the Outcome

All participants in the recruitment procedure are informed of its outcome. Candidates who were not admitted to subsequent stages or were not recommended for employment receive written information explaining the reasons why they were not selected, in accordance with the Regulations and the applicable document templates.

Feedback provided to candidates who participated in an interview refers to the results of their assessment and respects the personal data protection requirements applicable to the other participants in the procedure.

Appeal Procedure

A candidate who was not recommended for employment has the right to submit a written appeal to the Director of IUNG-PIB within 14 days of the announcement of the competition results. The appeal may also be submitted by email in accordance with the applicable Regulations.

Information on the right to use the appeal procedure is provided to participants in the recruitment procedure.

III. Doctoral School

IUNG-PIB participates in the operation of the Doctoral School of Quantitative and Natural Sciences, led by Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. As part of this cooperation, the Institute participates in doctoral education in the discipline of Agriculture and Horticulture and provides conditions for conducting research and preparing doctoral dissertations.

Admission to the Doctoral School is governed by separate regulations and admission rules adopted by the relevant UMCS bodies, taking into account the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science. The principles of openness, transparency and merit-based assessment, which form the basis of the OTM-R Policy, also provide an important reference point for the Institute's activities concerning the recruitment and support of persons beginning their research careers.

As a partner involved in operating the Doctoral School, IUNG-PIB cooperates with UMCS in providing information on doctoral education opportunities, proposed research topics, the organisation of research activities and support for doctoral candidates' research development, in accordance with the allocation of responsibilities between the institutions.

Admission to the Doctoral School constitutes a separate process from the employment of research staff. Consequently, IUNG-PIB's Regulations governing open competitions for research positions do not apply directly to admission to the Doctoral School.

Since 1 October 2019, doctoral candidates associated with IUNG-PIB have been educated within the Doctoral School of Quantitative and Natural Sciences. Education under the former doctoral study programme operated independently by IUNG-PIB ended in 2023. Since 2019, new doctoral candidates have been admitted exclusively to the Doctoral School of Quantitative and Natural Sciences.

The Doctoral School is operated by Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin as the lead institution, jointly with:

- the Bohdan Dobrzański Institute of Agrophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Lublin;
- the Jerzy Haber Institute of Catalysis and Surface Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences;
- the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – State Research Institute.

The Doctoral School provides education in seven disciplines:

- Agriculture and Horticulture;
- Biological Sciences;
- Chemical Sciences;
- Information and Communication Technology;
- Mathematics;
- Physical Sciences;
- Earth and Environmental Sciences.

The discipline of Agriculture and Horticulture is represented by IUNG-PIB and the Institute of Agrophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Admission takes the form of an open competition conducted through the UMCS Online Recruitment System. It includes formal verification of application documents, an interview combined with a presentation of the research concept, assessment of the candidate's achievements and preparation of a ranking list. IUNG-PIB proposes research topics and participates in recruitment in the discipline of Agriculture and Horticulture.

The doctoral education programme lasts eight semesters and may be conducted in Polish or English. The Doctoral School is open to international candidates who meet the formal and language requirements. Doctoral candidates are classified as R1 researchers and receive a doctoral scholarship. Courses are conducted primarily at UMCS, while research and preparation of dissertations related to IUNG-PIB research topics take place at the Institute.

Further information:

- https://www.iung.pl/szkola-doktorska/
- https://www.umcs.pl/en/disciplines,21209.htm

IV. Responsibility for Implementing the OTM-R Policy

The following bodies and organisational units are responsible for implementing the OTM-R Policy at IUNG-PIB within their respective areas of competence:

- **Director of IUNG-PIB** – announces open competitions, appoints selection committees, approves their composition and makes employment decisions after obtaining the opinion of the Scientific Council.
- **Selection committee** – conducts the formal verification and assessment of candidates, organises interviews, documents the procedure and submits an employment recommendation.
- **HR and Payroll Department** – provides administrative support for recruitment procedures, supports the preparation and publication of vacancy notices, maintains recruitment documentation and participates in communication with candidates.
- **Scientific Council of IUNG-PIB** – issues opinions on the qualifications of candidates for research positions in accordance with the applicable legislation and internal regulations.
- **HRS4R and OTM-R Implementation Team, HRS4R Internal Audit Team and HRS4R Coordinator** – support the alignment of the Institute's recruitment policy with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the implementation of improvement actions defined in the HRS4R Strategy and Action Plan.
- **IUNG-PIB Doctoral School Coordinator** – supports cooperation with UMCS concerning doctoral education and research conducted by doctoral candidates at the Institute.

V. Information for Candidates and Contact Details

Information on current open competitions for research and other positions at IUNG-PIB is published on the Institute's website.

IUNG-PIB HR and Payroll Department
Czartoryskich 8
24-100 Puławy, Poland
Email: kadry@iung.pulawy.pl

Current vacancies:

- https://www.iung.pl/konkurs-na-stanowisko/
- https://en.iung.pl/vacancies/

Information on the Doctoral School:

- https://www.iung.pl/szkola-doktorska/

Legal Basis and Reference Documents

- Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (C/2023/1640), Annex II – European Charter for Researchers.
- European Commission, *Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R)*, 2015 – guidance, tools and checklist package.
- Act of 30 April 2010 on Research Institutes (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2026, item 741, as amended), in particular Article 29(2)(12) and Article 43.
- Act of 26 June 1974 – Labour Code (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2026, item 1245, as amended), in particular the provisions concerning equal treatment in employment and Article 18³ca.

- Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science, with respect to doctoral education and admission to doctoral schools.
- Statutes of IUNG-PIB.
- Order No. 020-31/2020 of the Director of IUNG-PIB of 24 June 2020, together with the consolidated text of the Regulations governing the principles and procedures for conducting open competitions for research positions at IUNG-PIB.
- Order No. 020-43/2020 of the Director of IUNG-PIB of 29 June 2020 concerning the principles and criteria for employment in research and research-and-technical positions at IUNG-PIB.
- IUNG-PIB Human Resources Strategy for Researchers together with the Action Plan.
- Regulations of the UMCS Doctoral School of Quantitative and Natural Sciences and the relevant resolutions of the UMCS Senate governing admission procedures.

ACTION PLAN
OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOIL SCIENCE
AND PLANT CULTIVATION – STATE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FOR THE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 2026 TO OCTOBER 2029



Instytut Uprawy Nawożenia i Gleboznawstwa
– Państwowy Instytut Badawczy

Insitute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation
– State Research Institute

2026

The Action Plan is an integral implementation document of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers of the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute (IUNG-PIB) for the period from November 2026 to October 2029 and covers only the actions planned for implementation during these 36 months.

Thematic training activities arising from Actions 3-T1, 3-T3 and 3-T9 are planned and evaluated within the common competence development system described in Action 3-T13.

PILLAR 1. ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE

Action No.	Action title	Scope	Status of action	Link to previous actions	Responsible units	Indicator(s)	Target(s)/timing
3-T1	**Research integrity and responsible conduct of research** (principles 1 and 3)	Delivery of training sessions or seminars on research ethics, intellectual property and research data management, coordinated within the competence development system described in Action 3-T13.	NEW	T2, T4	Head of the Scientific Secretariat	Number of training sessions or seminars.	At least one training session or seminar during the Plan realisation period.
3-T2	**National research mobility scheme for IUNG-PIB researchers** (principle 7)	Support for national research mobility initiatives undertaken by IUNG-PIB researchers at universities and research organisations, particularly within the region, on the basis of individual placement agreements.	NEW	T21	IUNG-PIB Management	Number of placement agreements and completed placements; number of outputs resulting from placements, including joint publications or project proposals.	At least five completed placements by 31 October 2029; annual summary of collaborative outputs resulting from placements.

3-T3	**Adaptation of procedures for preventing workplace mobbing and discrimination, and protecting wellbeing to new regulations, and information activities** (principles 5 and 13)	Review of the existing regulations and their practical application, followed by the development and implementation of a procedure aligned with the new national regulations. The procedure will address, in particular, confidentiality and impartiality, the accessibility of reporting channels, and the protection, information and support available to reporting persons. Information activities will explain where and how staff can report workplace bullying, discrimination or other inappropriate behaviour and what support is available. The review will also assess whether an additional reporting channel or external support should be introduced. Training in this area will be coordinated under Action 3-T13.	NEW	T10	IUNG-PIB Management Board	Number of regulations adapted; number of information and training activities; assessment of the confidentiality, impartiality and accessibility of reporting channels; percentage of staff declaring awareness of the procedures and reporting routes and confidence in the confidentiality of the process.	Review of regulations by May 2027; at least one information activity and one training activity during the Plan realisation period; staff survey - baseline measurement by the end of 2027 and follow-up measurement by the end of Q3 2029.

PILLAR 2. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Action No.	Action title	Scope	Status of action	Link to previous actions	Responsible units	Indicator(s)	Target(s)/timing
3-T4	**Review and update of recruitment, assessment, promotion, remuneration rules information, and research staff development reporting** (principles 9, 12 and 13)	Review and update of the rules governing the employment, assessment of achievements and promotion of research staff, including the development, adoption and implementation of new regulations and the provision of clear information to staff on the applicable rules. Preparation and dissemination of accessible information for research staff on the applicable remuneration rules. Preparation of an aggregated research staff development report covering, among other matters, academic degrees and titles obtained, promotions and mobility.	NEW	T11, T17, T18, T41	IUNG-PIB Management; Head of the Scientific Secretariat, with the support of the Head of the Research Support Department, the Scientific Council Committee for Research Staff Development and the HR Officer	Number of reviews completed; research staff development report; **a**vailability of up-to-date information on assessment, promotion and remuneration rules	Review of the rules by the end of Q3 2027; research staff development reports for 2027 and 2028; current and updated recruitment, assessment and promotion rules, together with communication of staff remuneration rules, by the end of Q3 2027; updates following significant changes in legislation or internal regulations.
3-T5	**Complete implementation of OTM-R**	Systematic collection of aggregated data on recruitment procedures and annual assessment	EXTENDED T30, T33, T35, 2-T4	T30, T33, T34, T35, 2-T4	HR Officer; HRS4R Coordinator	Guidance material for selection committees;	Guidance prepared by the end of Q2 2027;

	monitoring and practical guidance for selection committees (principles 10 and 11)	of the implementation of the OTM-R policy. A short practical guide will also be prepared for selection committee members, covering OTM-R principles, equal treatment, impartiality, merit-based assessment and the mitigation of unconscious bias. The guide will be provided to all committee members before each selection procedure begins.				percentage of procedures in which the provision of the material to all committee members before the committee began its work was documented; percentage of procedures covered by OTM-R monitoring; annual summary of monitoring results.	guidance provided and data collected for 100% of recruitment procedures for research positions launched from Q3 2027; one report for each full year of implementation.
3-T6	**International accessibility of recruitment processes** (principle 10)	Development of measures to improve the transparency and accessibility of recruitment processes for international candidates, including a review, reorganisation and completion of existing information in Polish and English, and preparation of a practical guide for international candidates. The guide will describe the application and recruitment process, required documents, basic information on	EXTENDED T39	T27, T34, T38, T39, T40	HR Officer; HRS4R Coordinator; Head of the Science Communication Department	Guide for international candidates in Polish and English; publication of the guide on the official IUNG-PIB website.	Guide published in both language versions by the end of Q4 2027; review and update, where necessary, at least once a year.

		employment and starting work, and contact details of the persons or units providing support. It will be published on the official IUNG-PIB website.					

PILLAR 3. WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

Action No.	Action title	Scope	Status of action	Link to previous actions	Responsible units	Indicator(s)	Target(s)/timing
3-T7	**Pilot assessment of the quality of and needs for administrative and organisational support for research and project activities** (principle 13)	Development of a methodology and implementation of a pilot assessment of the quality, accessibility and usefulness of administrative and organisational support for research and project activities, taking into account the perspectives of research staff and other users of these services. The assessment will also cover the accessibility and usefulness of selected organisational arrangements supporting work–life balance. The findings will be summarised together with recommendations for further action.	NEW	Assessors' recommendations	IUNG-PIB Management	Assessment methodology or tool developed; number of assessments completed.	Methodology or tool developed and at least one pilot assessment cycle completed during the Action Plan period; findings and recommendations prepared by the end of Q3 2029.

3-T8	**Development and ongoing updating of the Polish and English HRS4R section of the Institute's website** (principles 16, 18, 19)	Reorganisation, completion and ongoing updating of the central HRS4R section on the official IUNG-PIB website, covering key documents, information for researchers, doctoral candidates and applicants, and current news. Relevant documents will be translated into English and published in the dedicated section.	EXTENDED T27, T36, T40, 2-T9	T36, T37, T38, T39, T40, 2-T9	HRS4R Coordinator; Head of the Science Communication Department	Availability of HRS4R information on the Institute's website.	100% of key documents available in the required language versions by the end of Q3 2027; documents and information updated following their adoption or amendment.
3-T9	**Enhancing cybersecurity, data security and responsible use of digital tools, including AI** (principle 15)	The action uses the information security audit conducted in 2026 and the applicable Information Security Policy as its baseline. It includes monitoring post-audit measures, raising staff awareness, and developing and disseminating principles for the responsible use of AI in research, publications and grant proposals, with due regard to data protection, confidentiality, intellectual property and research integrity.	EXTENDED 2-T10	T7, 2-T10	Information Security Officer; Head of PULMAN; IUNG-PIB Management	Degree of implementation of post-audit recommendations; principles for the responsible use of AI tools developed; number of information or training activities.	Implementation of post-audit recommendations monitored; principles for the use of AI tools developed by the end of Q4 2027; at least one information or training activity covering information security and the responsible use of AI delivered by the end of Q4 2027.

3-T10	**Enhancement of innovation brokerage support and development of the technology database** (principle 16)	Enhancement of the scope and delivery of support provided by the Institute's existing Innovation Brokers Team, together with the development and updating of the database of technologies and research results intended for practical application and commercialisation.	NEW	T4, T8, 2-T6	Innovation Brokers Team; Head of the Research Support Department; IUNG-PIB Management	Number of current descriptions of technologies or research results available in the database for practical application and commercialisation.	At least 10 current descriptions available by the end of Q4 2027; database updated annually.

PILLAR 4. RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Action No.	Action title	Scope	Status of action	Link to previous actions	Responsible units	Indicator(s)	Target(s)/timing
3-T11	**Development and dissemination of a research career pathways model at IUNG-PIB** (principle 18)	Development and publication of a bilingual guide describing possible career pathways and available forms of support for R1–R4 researchers. The work will be preceded by at least one consultation with representatives of R1 and R2 concerning their information needs, barriers to career development and expected forms of support. The consultation findings will be used in the development of the guide.	NEW	T13, T16, T20	IUNG-PIB Management; Scientific Council Committee for Research Staff Development; Head of the Scientific Secretariat; HRS4R Coordinator; Head of the Science Communication Department	Consultation with R1 and R2 representatives completed; Polish and English guide prepared; number of information activities.	At least one consultation with representatives of R1 and R2 completed by the end of Q3 2027; guide published in Polish and English by the end of Q4 2027; at least one information activity following its publication.

3-T12	**Development and monitoring of the JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES internal research support programmes** (principle 18)	Development and monitoring of existing internal research funding instruments. JUVENILIS covers research topics led by early-career researchers, while SENIORIS covers topics led by experienced researchers. This division enables proposals to be assessed within groups corresponding to the applicants' career stage, so that early-career researchers do not compete directly with researchers with many years of scientific achievement. PROGRES supports the further development of projects that received high scientific scores in external calls but were not funded. Results will be monitored after completion of the research topics.	NEW, baseline: programmes operating since 2026**.**	Programmes operating at IUNG-PIB since 2026 – 2026 baseline	IUNG-PIB Management; Head of the Scientific Secretariat	Number of funded research topics in each category; number of completed topics with a report; results of completed topics.	Annual summary of the number of funded research topics and their results, reported separately for JUVENILIS, SENIORIS and PROGRES.
3-T13	**Competence development programme** (principle 19)	A competence development programme comprising four areas: digital competencies, including information security and the	NEW	T32, 2-T3	HR Officer; Head of the Scientific Secretariat;	Number of training activities in each area; number of participants;	At least two training activities in each full year of implementation; at least one training

		responsible use of digital tools and artificial intelligence; research integrity and responsible conduct of research; managerial, mentoring and supervisory competencies, including support for researchers at earlier career stages; a safe and equitable working environment. The offer and its scope will be adapted to the needs of researchers at career stages R1–R4. The system will support the joint planning and evaluation of training activities also provided under the related Actions 3-T1, 3-T3 and 3-T9.			Research Support Department; Science Communication Department; IUNG-PIB Management	percentage of training activities evaluated.	activity in each of the four areas during the Action Plan period; 100% of training activities organised by the Institute within the system covered by a short participant evaluation.
3-T14	**Evaluation and development of the mentoring system** (principle 20)	Evaluation of the formal and informal forms of mentoring support currently available at IUNG-PIB, including the way support is provided, the needs of R1 and R2 researchers, mentors' experiences and the usefulness of existing	EXTENDED T20	T20	Mentoring Team; IUNG-PIB Management	Evaluation of existing forms of support completed; recommendations and programme rules developed; number of applications; number of active mentoring pairs;	Evaluation of existing forms of support and recommendations completed by the end of Q4 2027; programme rules made available by the end of Q3 2028.

		arrangements. Based on the evaluation findings, rules for the programme's further operation will be established, including the registration of participants and mentors, matching of mentoring pairs, setting development goals, duration of cooperation, confidentiality and collection of feedback. Information on the available forms of mentoring will be made accessible to staff.				number of completed cycles covered by feedback on goal achievement.	