HR Excellence in Research

Internal Review

Internal Review

Case number

2018SK336383

Name Organisation under review

Slovak Academy of Sciences

Organisation's contact details

Stefanikova 49, Bratislava, 814 38, Slovakia

1. Organisational Information

*Please provide an update of the key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.*

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	2223
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	435
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	130
Of whom are women *	1044
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	2008
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	215
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	502
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	3623

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	135000000
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	111000000
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	27400000
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	8800000

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

The Slovak Academy of Sciences (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en) (SAS), founded in 1953, is a self-governing institution comprising 45 research organisations across technical, natural, medical, social, and human sciences. SAS advances knowledge internationally, addresses societal needs, participates in education, and trains young researchers in collaboration with universities. The HRS4R strategy is centrally coordinated by the Department of Research and Development at Office SAS, the HRS4R Working Group, with local coordinators at each participating institutes (33 of 45). Two part-time team members oversee the agenda, ensuring progress and alignment. SAS was awarded with the HR Excellence in Research logo on 13 June 2020.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

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

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter & Code to open the editor and provide your answers in the Internal Review for Interim Assessment dedicated section.

ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE*　　　⌄

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Strengths

Research freedom is respected to a high degree, research topics are most often given by upcoming and implemented projects. Ethical aspects are covered by the SAS, which has also adopted the Code of Ethics for the entire academy. Individual SAS Institutes have a relatively large freedom to set their own processes. After evaluation in 2016, individual SAS Institutes prepared their strategic and action plans, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and defining the strategic areas of their research for the near future. Individual SAS Institutes and their employees adhere to ethical practices and principles of scientific work and responsibly approach the publication of research results and related issues of co-authorship, plagiarism and intellectual property protection. Employees actively engage in popularization activities and public information. In most cases, SAS Institutes have comprehensive employee assessment systems in place.

Weaknesses

Procedures within SAS Institutes are not unified, there is a lack of best practice sharing. Multiple documents in English are missing, which reduces the openness of organizations to foreign employees. Insufficient guidance and training in the subject areas. Direct and active public engagement is not well developed. Missing standards for secure data backup. There is no formalized procedure to address ethical issues and to settle them.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

Strengths

Research freedom is respected to a high degree, research topics are most often given by upcoming and implemented projects – thanks to the International Advisory Board, established after the 2019 Regular Evaluation of SAS Research Institutes, several Institutes started to follow their own research strategy according to which they select the research topics. Ethical aspects are covered by the SAS, which has also adopted the Code of Ethics for the entire academy. There is a new formalized procedure to address ethical issues and to settle them. Individual SAS Institutes have a relatively large freedom to set their own processes. After 2016 Regular Evaluation, individual SAS Institutes prepared their strategic and action plans, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and defining the strategic areas of their research for the near future. Individual SAS Institutes and their employees adhere to ethical practices and principles of scientific

work and responsibly approach the publication of research results and related issues of co-authorship, plagiarism and intellectual property protection. SAS employees actively engage in popularization activities and public relations. In most cases, SAS Institutes have comprehensive employee assessment systems in place.

Weaknesses

Overall, there is still no strategic approach towards the selection of research topics which are often selected on an ad hoc basis with no systemic approach. Similarly, the SAS Institutes are not following a coherent approach and they do not align their processes often which leads to inconsistencies and double work. Procedures within SAS Institutes are not unified, there is a lack of best practice sharing. Employees are not aware of their rights with regards to the Code of Ethics which is in place but not adequately implemented. Even though much has been done, multiple documents in English are still missing, which reduces the openness of organizations to foreign employees. Popularization activities are not updated and brought to the 21st century. Direct and active public engagement is not well developed.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths

SAS continues to uphold a high standard of research freedom, ensuring that scientists can pursue their work independently and responsibly. At the beginning of 2023, the regular evaluation of SAS research organizations for the period 2016 – 2021, was conducted throughout 2022 by international panels, the assessment covered all aspects of science and research, including quality and productivity, societal relevance, strategy, and development.

One of the key measures to support and improve research at the SAS in 2024 was the introduction of a performance-based contract incentive program. Implemented as part of the National Research, Development and Innovation Strategy until 2030, this system introduces a new funding model built on future performance commitments. It allows institutions to increase their budgets, provided they meet the specified performance targets over the subsequent three years. SAS created an original system of parameters for public research institutions, divided into four thematic areas: excellent research, quality research environment, social impact, and quality management. Each area includes specific indicators such as major publications, patents, grants, doctoral and postdoctoral training, internationalization, gender balance, public engagement, education, strategy, and governance.

SAS has been a member of CoARA (https://www.coara.org/) since 2025.

The SAS Ethical Committee (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&commission_no=16) plays a key role in upholding ethical standards across the institution. While many SAS institutes and centres have established their own Ethical Committees to address cases of unethical behaviour internally, these local bodies operate within their institutional structures and are often the first

point of contact for resolving ethical concerns. In circumstances where the issue remains unresolved at the institutional level, it may be referred to the central Ethics Committee for further review.

To promote transparency and accessibility, the SAS Ethical Committee has introduced a standardized reporting tool titled "Report of Violation of the SAS Code of Ethics." This form is publicly available on the institutional website (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&folder_no=562) and is designed to simplify the process for researchers and staff to report concerns or suspected breaches.

In 2024, the Government of the Slovak Republic took a significant step by approving the national Code of Research Integrity and Ethics, which was officially adopted by SAS in August through its central Ethics Committee on August 28, 2025.

SAS is actively involved in science outreach and popularization. As part of this effort, SAS has launched a popularization initiative called "Open Academy (https://otvorenaakademia.sav.sk/)", which offers seminars, workshops, podcasts, and other activities aimed at making science more accessible to the public. The Central Library of SAS (https://uk.sav.sk/), which serves as the responsible unit and coordinator for Open Access activities, continues to provide training focused on plagiarism prevention and raising awareness about predatory media. Since 2020, SAS was recognized as the most trusted institution in Slovakia, reflecting its credibility, transparency, and commitment to public engagement.

Weaknesses

Since receiving the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2020, SAS has made substantial progress in strengthening ethical and professional standards across its research environment. However, we recognize that maintaining high standards requires ongoing effort, and we remain committed to continuous improvement.

Further comments are provided in the remarks section.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Continuing of Weaknesses:

SAS has established key structures to support ethical conduct, including the Ethical Mediator (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/new-role-of-ethical-mediator-at-sas-supporting-trust-and-dialogue/), Confidential Counsellors (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-gender), and Ethics Committees. These mechanisms provide researchers with safe and trusted channels for consultation and reporting. Still, we acknowledge that research integrity is a cornerstone of our reputation as Slovakia's leading public research institution.

To reinforce this commitment, we are implementing a comprehensive approach to ethics management. This includes the rollout and monitoring of the newly adopted Code of Ethics, regular training sessions for researchers (R1-R4), and the activation of institutional committees to oversee compliance. Clear internal policies are being developed to guide behaviour and ensure accountability.

These efforts aim not only to prevent ethical breaches but also to support individuals who may need guidance or wish to report concerns. Our goal is to foster a transparent, respectful, and responsible research culture.

Remarks

Results from the 2025 internal survey indicate that 86.2% of respondents are familiar with the rules and principles outlined in the SAS Code of Ethics, as well as the ethical standards that underpin scientific work. Furthermore, 75% of respondents reported that, in the event of a breach of the Code of Ethics, they would know whom to contact within their institute or centre for support or consultation.

This marks a significant improvement compared to the 2018 survey, in which 59% of respondents stated they did not know the designated contact person for ethical concerns. The growing awareness reflects the positive impact of targeted communication, training, and institutional support mechanisms, including the SAS Ethics Committee, existing Ethics Committees across SAS institutes, as well as the newly created Ethics Committees within individual SAS institutes. In 2025, SAS appointed an Ethical Mediator, formally integrating ethical mediation into the life of the institution. The role of ethical mediation is to help resolve disputes outside the formal proceedings of the Ethics Committee, particularly in cases where both parties are willing to seek reconciliation. However, mediation is not suitable for all types of cases—for example, those involving gender-based harassment.

SAS has also designated three Confidential Counsellors who provide consultation and support in reporting and addressing cases of sexual harassment. These advisors serve as trusted points of contact for individuals seeking guidance in sensitive situations.

https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-gender (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-gender)

https://www.sav.sk/uploads/dokumentySAV/sas-gender/Reporting_procedures_for_SH_SAS.pdf (https://www.sav.sk/uploads/dokumentySAV/sas-gender/Reporting_procedures_for_SH_SAS.pdf)

Over the past four years, the Ethics Committee has handled 10 cases, while an additional 3 cases were addressed either by the Committee for Equality or by the Confidential Counsellors.

Results from the 2025 internal survey indicate that 88,8% of respondents participate in science popularization activities organized by the SAS, and 57,5 % of respondents consider that the science popularization activities carried out by your institute/centre have a real impact on the public and contribute to raising the visibility of science.

Results from the 2025 internal survey indicate that 55% of respondents are not aware of the HRS4R strategy at SAS, and 65% are unaware that their institutes are among the participants in the HR Award initiative. In comparison, the 2018 survey showed that 59% of respondents lacked knowledge about the HR strategy. We proposed a new action for the Action Plan to increase awareness of the HR

strategy and the European Charter for Researchers.

RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION* ⌄

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Strengths

Applicants are vastly selected on the basis of a personal interview with the selection committee. Applicants are assessed comprehensively, career breaks are not evaluated to the detriment of the applicant. The value of mobility is recognized and the different types of mobility are evaluated positively, in the context of other qualifications. The principle of service age is fully respected. Accepted applicants receive the necessary training.

Weaknesses

Recruitment and selection procedures are not formalized under the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R). Selection committee members are not trained in the OTM-R principles. Advertising on EURAXESS or other portals is being used to a small extent. Selection criteria for individual positions are not defined. Career plans and career development options are not published. The postdoctoral position is not formally recognized.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

Strengths

Applicants are vastly selected on the basis of a personal interview by the selection committee. Applicants are assessed comprehensively; career breaks are not evaluated to the detriment of the applicant. The value of mobility is recognized and the different types of mobility are evaluated positively, in the context of other qualifications. The principle of service age is fully respected. Accepted applicants receive the necessary training. SAS has established a Euraxess Point which helps foreign PhD students and scientist with relocation to Slovakia.

Weaknesses

Recruitment and selection procedures are not formalized under the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R). Procedures within SAS Institutes are not unified, there is a lack of best practice sharing. Selection committee members are not trained in the OTM-R principles. Advertising on Euraxess or other portals is being used to a small extent. Selection criteria for individual positions are not defined. Career plans and career development options are not published. The postdoctoral position is not formally recognized.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths

SAS has taken a significant step toward strengthening transparency, fairness, and consistency in its recruitment practices by implementing a comprehensive policy document titled "Principles of Recruitment and Selection of Employees in Public Research Institutions of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (OTM-R SAS (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/recruitment/))." This policy fully integrates OTM-R principles and represents an important first step in our ongoing effort to embed these principles consistently within our recruitment practices.

The document outlines clear guidelines for all recruitment activities across SAS, covering both researchers and other staff positions. It mandates a standardized selection process for every job vacancy, ensuring that all candidates are evaluated fairly and consistently.

To enhance visibility and accessibility of research opportunities, the policy requires that all vacancies be published on the EURAXESS profiles of public research institutions.

To support the effective and consistent implementation of the recruitment policy, the document includes a detailed process map outlining each step of the recruitment cycle. Additionally, seven standardized templates have been developed for use by process owners. These templates cover key stages such as job advertisement, candidate evaluation, interview invitations, and final communication with applicants.

The policy also clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and authority of the Selection Committee. It sets out the procedures for evaluating candidates, making decisions, and documenting outcomes.

Implementation of the policy has become a binding standard for all participating SAS institutes in HR strategy, centres, and the central SAS Office. It reflects the Academy's commitment to excellence in human resources management and its alignment with European best practices. By embedding OTM-R principles into institutional procedures, SAS continues to foster a transparent, inclusive, and merit-based research environment that attracts top talent and supports long-term career development.

Weaknesses

Input from institute coordinators and HR representatives has highlighted the need to revise the policy to keep it relevant and aligned with evolving requirements. For example, clear guidelines for recruiting candidates for project-based job vacancies need to be established. This gap in policy maintenance has prompted the inclusion of a revision task in the next phase of the Action plan.

Additionally, the absence of a structured monitoring and quality control system for OTM-R implementation presents a challenge to consistent application across all participating institutes. Without clear oversight, there is a risk of uneven adherence to recruitment standards and reduced transparency. To address this, the development of a monitoring framework has been added as a priority in the updated Action Plan.

It is necessary to continue developing additional documents and steps in the recruitment process. The subsequent steps are the adaptation process (onboarding) and offboarding procedures. These have been included as new objectives in the updated Action plan.

Our analysis revealed a significant lack of awareness of the HR strategy among employees, highlighting the need for enhanced communication and engagement efforts.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Results from the 2025 internal survey indicate that 75.4% of respondents had a job interview for their current position. Additionally, 63.1% reported having access to information about currently open positions and selection procedures within their organizations. When asked about the impact of OTM-R principles, 31.4% of respondents considered them beneficial for ensuring quality and fairness in research-related selection processes, while 66.2% stated they were unable to assess their impact. The OTM-R was implemented immediately following its approval in March 2025. To support its adoption, additional training and guidance will be provided to institutes, an e-learning video has been produced, and concise guidance brochures have been distributed among institutes.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES*   ⌄

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Strengths

Working conditions are in accordance with the applicable Slovak legislation. Researchers are recognized as experts and treated accordingly. SAS Institutes' infrastructure and instrumentation are at a high level. SAS Institutes are keen to balance career and family life. In general, there is a gender balance among employees. SAS Institutes recognize and support employee mobility. Intellectual property rights are respected, co-authorship is perceived positively. Many employees participate in the teaching process at universities. Employees have opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.

Weaknesses

Many regulations and documents are available only in the Slovak language, foreign employees can hardly become familiar with them. Also, communication with administrative and technical staff is often limited to the Slovak language. Gender representation in decision-making bodies and management is unbalanced, to the detriment of women. A career development strategy and a strategy to support and take into account mobility are absent. Missing internal rules on intellectual property rights. Procedures for complaints and appeals are not formalized.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

Strengths

Working conditions are in accordance with the applicable Slovak legislation. Researchers are recognized as experts and treated accordingly. SAS Institutes' infrastructure and equipment are at a high level. SAS Institutes try to balance career and family life. In general, there is a gender balance among employees, although less in decision making bodies. The Gender Equality Policy was introduced in 2022. SAS Institutes recognize and support employee mobility. Intellectual property rights are respected, co-authorship is perceived positively. Internal rules on intellectual property rights have been approved. Many employees participate in the teaching process at universities. Employees have opportunities to participate in decision-making processes – they could participate in the election of both Institutes directors and members of SAS Presidium. Employees can also complain via formalized procedures for complaints and appeals.

Weaknesses

Many regulations and documents are still available only in the Slovak language, foreign employees can hardly become familiar with them. And even if the English documents are available, communication with administrative and technical staff is often limited to the Slovak language. There are no language courses in place or anyhow supported. Gender representation in decision-making bodies and management is unbalanced, to the detriment of women. Gender balance among employees is not result of targeted approach but more an unintended result and an outcome of lower salaries in SAS when compared to the other employers in Slovakia – which consequently attract more women in a society with its own gender equality problems. A career development strategy and a strategy to support and consider mobility are absent.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths

Working conditions remain in full compliance with applicable Slovak legislation, and legal standards are strictly upheld. Researchers are recognized as experts and treated with the respect their professional status deserves. SAS maintains a high standard of infrastructure and equipment. The institutes actively support a balance between career and family life.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) at SAS for 2025 – 2029 has been formally approved by the Presidium of SAS. Its adoption and implementation are being carried out in close collaboration with best practices in gender equality and institutional development. The Institute for Research in Social Communication SAS participated in the Horizon 2020 ATHENA project (https://project-athena.eu/), which focused on implementing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in research organizations. The project supported structural changes to advance gender equality across the Academy.

The language barrier has been significantly reduced, with key documents translated for broader accessibility. The incoming generation of employees brings stronger language skills, further strengthening communication and integration across the institution.

To enhance staff development and institutional effectiveness, the following support programmes have been introduced: for early-stage researchers (R1), DoktoGrant (https://doktogrant.sav.sk/en), recognised researchers (R2) PhD PostdokGrant (https://postdokgrant.sav.sk/), and the Štefan Schwarz Supportive Fund (https://schwarz.sav.sk/Shell/Home/FrontPage). For more advanced stages (R3–R4), schemes such as Impulz (https://impulz.sav.sk/en) and SASPRO 2 (https://saspro2.sav.sk/indexEn.html) (MSCA) are available. Additionally, SAS offers a dedicated scheme to support researchers returning from maternity or parental leave - SAS Return Project Scheme for Parents Returning to Work after Maternity or/and Parental Leave (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-return). The program schemes are entirely coordinated in English.

SAS institutes have implemented the directive "Rules for the Evaluation of Researchers," with each institute adapting internal guidelines to reflect the specific nature of its research focus. These adaptations account for disciplinary differences, such as those between the social sciences and humanities versus the natural and technical sciences. All evaluation rules are publicly accessible on the institutes´ websites.

Functioning as an external educational institution, SAS hosts students formally enrolled at accredited Slovak universities, who conduct their research within SAS institutes under established agreements. This collaborative framework fosters a symbiotic relationship, with SAS researchers actively contributing to university teaching. Moreover, SAS organizations strongly promote the exchange of best practices and actively support researcher mobility, reinforcing a dynamic and internationally connected research environment.

Since 2018, the representation of women in leadership positions at SAS has increased significantly. During the previous Presidium term (2021–2025), two women served among fourteen members. In the current term, the SAS Presidium includes four women among thirteen members. Within the 33 institutes participating in the HR strategy, nine are led by female directors. The same positive trend is visible in the composition of the SAS Scientific Board, where the number of female members has been steadily increasing over recent years.

Weaknesses

Researchers are typically employed on fixed-term contracts with the possibility of extension. This employment model has been partially mitigated by expanding the number and scope of SAS funding schemes available to researchers. In 2022, SAS organizations were transformed into public research institutions in line with Slovak legislation, which has granted them greater flexibility in employment practices, including the structuring of contracts. A persistent challenge in Slovakia is the gender pay gap, affecting salary equity between men and women. While women researchers often have comparable qualifications and contributions, potential disparities in compensation may exist. However, no comprehensive data is currently available for the SAS to evaluate the extent of these differences. Addressing possible structural barriers remains a key priority to ensure fairness and equal opportunities in research careers.

Remarks (max 500 words)

The 2025 internal survey reveals positive trends across multiple areas of institutional performance, reflecting improvements since the 2018 survey.

Gender Equality: A strong number of respondents (87.2%) consider gender equality a priority within their institute and believe that women´s representation in governing bodies and management is adequate. This marks a substantial increase from 73% in 2018, demonstrating growing awareness and perception of gender equality initiatives.

Mobility and Sharing of Best Practices: 70% of respondents assessed mobility and the conditions for sharing best practices at SAS as either very good or good, compared to 65% in 2018. This suggests gradual progress in fostering researcher mobility and the exchange of practise.

Equal Opportunities: Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that equal opportunities are ensured and respected across the institution, highlighting an area for continued focus and improvement.

Research Evaluation and Doctoral Teaching: 86% of respondents confirmed that their institute has adopted the "Rules for the Evaluation of Researchers" and implements them in practice. Additionally, 69% rated the teaching of doctoral students positively, up from 64% in 2018, reflecting an enhancement in supervision quality and doctoral education.

Research Infrastructure: The survey shows that 22% of respondents rate the availability of technical equipment and the quality of research infrastructure as excellent, indicating that modern and accessible resources fully meet research needs. A further 56% rated infrastructure as good, suggesting that while equipment is functional and sufficient, access to specialized technology can occasionally be limited.

Summary: Overall, the 2025 survey demonstrates meaningful improvements in gender equality, researcher mobility, doctoral teaching, and the adoption of evaluation procedures, alongside generally positive perceptions of research infrastructure. These results underscore SAS´s ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive, well-equipped, and high-performing research environment, while highlighting areas – such as equal opportunities and specialized infrastructure – where further enhancement could be targeted.

RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT* ⌄

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Strengths

Employees can advance their professional development and education. Teams/departments meet regularly, report on work progress and results; their staff get feedback. PhD students can contact their supervisor or scientific secretary of the organization. Qualified advisors are assigned to PhD students. Individual training of employees is supported.

Weaknesses

Procedures are not formalized. Advisory process for PhD students is not formalized, nor is management training for (senior staff) employees.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

Strengths

Employees can advance their professional development and education. Teams/departments meet regularly, report on work progress and results; their staff get feedback. PhD students can contact their supervisor or scientific secretary of the organization. Qualified advisors are assigned to PhD students. Individual training of employees is supported. There are training schemes in place – for management skills, gender policy, ethical issues and PhD students.

Weaknesses

Procedures are not formalized but based on "this is how it was always done". Advisory process for PhD students is not formalized, nor is management training for (senior staff) employees. There are not enough trainings in place and those which are held are not being attended by enough participants – especially the training on ethical issues. Generally, there is a low interest in non-directly-research-related areas – which can be an outcome of abundance of research tasks and no motivation to participate in these trainings.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, max 500 words) *

Strengths

Key strengths have been consistently maintained. Throughout the year, a series of targeted workshops and training sessions were delivered across diverse areas, including first aid and fire safety, technology transfer, intellectual property and patent protection, Open Access principles, research result dissemination, or predatory publishing awareness.

Between 2021 and 2025, doctoral students had access to a centrally organized Doctoral School (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-school), offering a structured programme of lectures, seminars, and training to support academic development and transferable skills. The accompanying table allows students to plan participation across the years of their doctoral studies. As part of this initiative, a pilot Slovak language course was introduced for international doctoral candidates, facilitating their integration and effective communication within the academic environment.

In 2024 - 2025, a tailored management skills development program was launched for institute directors under the initiative and successfully extended to SAS Office department heads, strengthening leadership capacity across the organization.

Links to the Development Programs:

Completion of the Development Program for SAS Institute Directors – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/completion-of-the-development-program-for-sas-institute-directors/)

Application Workshop with FBE Slovakia – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/application-workshop-with-fbe-slovakia/)

Development of Leadership Skills at the Office of SAS – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/development-of-leadership-skills-at-the-office-of-sas/)

Weaknesses

Overall, researcher participation in training remains low. Training activities are decentralized, with each department organizing its own sessions, including those by the Technology Transfer Office, EU Project Support Office, ethics and GEP trainings, Euraxess point SAS sessions or Young Scientists workshops. Due to limited financial resources, the focus has primarily been on delivering soft skills training, highlighting the need for more coordinated and strategically funded professional development opportunities.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 1

To translate the SAS Code of Ethics into English and publish it on the SAS website	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
	(++) 4. Professional attitude		SAS Office - Department of Research and Development	I-1.1 Publication of the translated SAS Code of Ethics / T-1.1 To inform researchers
	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research	2019 Q3		
	(+/-) 10. Non discrimination			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	The SAS Code was translated and published on the website on 10th September 2019: https://www.sav.sk/php/download_doc.php?doc_no=9079. Update 2025: The former SAS Code of Ethics was translated and published on the website on 10th September 2019. In addition, on August 28, 2024, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Code of Research Integrity and Ethics in Slovakia, which was developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic by more than 15 experts from the research and academic community. In August 2025 was this Code was implemented by the SAS Ethical Committee, also translated to English, and was published on the organization web site: Code of Ethics: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&folder_no=141. SAS Ethics Committee: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&commission_no=16.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 2 To conduct regular ethics trainings	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**
	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2019 Q4 and further	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium, SAS Ethics Committee	I-2.1 Number and frequency of trainings on ethical issues / T-2.1 To inform researchers about ethical issues

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Ethics trainings are regularly organized by the SAS Ethics Committee, e.g.: https://www.embassy.science/wiki/Guide:Bbe860a3-56a9-45f7-b787-031689729e52. Training on scientific integrity and ethics of scientific work – attending of this training is one of the eligibility criteria for all grant applicants within the Grant programme for SAS PhD Students: https://doktogrant.sav.sk/CurrentCall. Update 2025: Ethics trainings are regularly organized by the SAS Ethics Committee, e.g.: Training in responsible research practices has been conducted since 2020 (the first in-person session took place in February 2020, followed by an online session in the autumn). The Ethics Committee of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) collaborates with 11 trained and certified trainers of the VIRT2EU concept (https://embassy.science/wiki/Guide:Bbe860a3-56a9-45f7-b787-031689729e52), all of whom are SAS employees. The lead trainer is Prof. Juraj Koppel, DrSc., and each training is delivered by a pair of trainers. In 2022 and 2023, the trainings were held during the autumn term (four Slovak-language groups of approximately 12 PhD students each, and one English-language group of 12 PhD students). In 2024 and 2025, sessions were organized in both spring and autumn terms (spring: four Slovak groups and one English group; autumn: two Slovak groups and one English group; in 2025, two English groups were held due to the growing number of international students). The format combines online and in-person sessions. The target group is PhD students. Participation is open to all interested doctoral candidates; however, for applicants to the DoktoGrant scheme, completion of the training is mandatory. In 2022, at the request of the national science support institution CVTI (Centre for Scientific and Technical Information), SAS trainers led by Prof. Koppel conducted "Train the Trainers" sessions for Slovak universities and research institutions. As part of this initiative, three additional female trainers from SAS institutes were trained, although they currently provide training only within their own institutes and not at a central level. Kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 3 To establish ethics committees in individual SAS Institutes	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**
	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(++) 4. Professional attitude		SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Ethics Committee, SAS Institutes	I-3.1 Establishment of ethics committees / T-3.1 To give researchers an opportunity to solve ethical issues directly in a SAS Institute
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations	2019 Q3 and further		
	(+/-) 6. Accountability			
	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
	(+/-) 23. Research environment			
	(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals			

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task is also performed by the SAS Ethics Committee and is ongoing. In 2021, a questionnaire was prepared for the SAS research institutes in order to understand the current status of this issues within the SAS research institutes. Update 2025: According to the SAS Code of Ethics, ethical issues should be resolved directly within the organization, provided the issue does not extend beyond it (e.g., if it is a broader societal concern, a conceptual problem with academy-wide implications, or if the director is involved in the dispute). Ethical committees are established at several SAS institutes. Some have general competencies, while others focus almost exclusively on assessing the compliance of scientific project proposals with the Code of Ethics and other relevant legal or regulatory documents. In line with national guidelines, the SAS Code of Ethics and the SAS Ethics Committee also recognize the possibility of addressing potential ethical violations through ad-hoc institutional ethics committees, which may be appointed by the director of the organization. The SAS Ethics Committee serves as an appellate body and addresses cases that cannot be resolved within the organization itself. https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/SAS-Institutes_ethical-committees-1.pdf.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 4

To adopt internal
ethical rules

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
(++) 4. Professional attitude		SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Ethics Committee, SAS Institutes	
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
(+/-) 6. Accountability	2019 Q3		I-4.1 Adoption of internal rules (document) / T-4.1 To inform researchers and set rules for the SAS Institutes
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals			

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task was performed by the SAS Ethics Committee. The document with implementation of ethical principles have been produced and published online: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=sk&doc=sas-commission&folder_no=104. Update 2025: This task was performed by the SAS Ethics Committee. The document with the implementation of ethical principles has been produced and published online: https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Implementation-of-Ethical-Principles-and-the-SAS-Code-of-Ethics.pdf.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 5

To formalize the procedure for ethical issues complaints and appeals

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
(++) 4. Professional attitude		SAS Office, SAS Ethics Committee	I-5.1 Formalized procedures for ethical issues complaints (document) / T-5.1 To simplify and clarify the procedure for dealing with ethical issues
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research	2020 Q1		
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task was also performed by the SAS Ethics Committee. The form for reporting ethical issues is now available online: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&folder_no=562.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 6

To prepare a welcome information package both in Slovak and English	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 10. Non discrimination (++) 24. Working conditions	2020 Q3, 2020 Q4, and further	SAS Office	I-6.1 Published Slovak version of the welcome package; I-6.2 Published English version of the welcome package; I-6.3 Regular update of the welcome package / T-6.1 For new employees, to receive the necessary information; T-6.2 For employees, to be informed about the content of the welcome package which can be useful for them.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	The Slovak and English version of the information package was published online. Update 2025: The Slovak and English version of the information package has been prepared and is being sent to new employees via email. It is also published online: https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Onboarding-leaflet_SAV_final_2page_ENG.pdf.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 7	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**
To prepare a feasibility study of the central data storage system	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 24. Working conditions	2020 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Centre of Operations	I-7.1 Publication of the feasibility study of the central data storage system and action plan / T-7.1 To identify the best possible options of data storage

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	The study was done and published on the website: https://csc.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/uploaded/download/studia-uskutocnitelnosti/SU_FINAL_web_pages.pdf. Repository of Slovak Academy of Sciences can be accessed online: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/institucionalny-repozitar-sav/. Update 2025: The study was done and published on the website: https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Open-Science-policy-SAS-eng.pdf. https://csc.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/uploaded/download/studia-uskutocnitelnosti/SU_FINAL_web_pages.pdf. Devana Supercomputer: https://vs.sav.sk/en/services/supercomputer-devana/. Repository of the Slovak Academy of Sciences can be accessed online: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/institucionalny-repozitar-sav/. Documents are only in Slovak.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 8

To translate important documents, regulations and templates into the English language	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
	(+/-) 10. Non discrimination			I-8.1 Documents available for download on internet or intranet; I-8.2 Up-to-date documents / T-8.1 To provide foreign employees with comprehensible information; T-8.2 To reduce administrative burden for employees; T-8.3 To attract more foreign employees
	(+/-) 23. Research environment	2020 Q3	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development	
	(++) 24. Working conditions			
	(+/-) 29. Value of mobility			
	(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	This is on ongoing effort – several key documents have been already translated into English: SAS Code of Ethics, SAS Gender Equality Policy, welcome information package, etc.. Update 2025: Key strategic documents have been translated into English, including the SAS Code of Ethics, SAS Gender Equality Policy, welcome information package, internal rules and guidelines, employment contracts, onboarding questionnaire, cooperation agreements between universities and SAS, as well as documents from the Technology Transfer Office and the Central Library. All documents are published online. All funding programs are fully managed in English. Additionally, SAS provides bilingual websites and operates a Euraxess SAS contact point to support international researchers before and after arrival in Slovakia. Translation of strategic documents into English has become standard practice at SAS. Examples: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&commission_no=16. https://ktt.sav.sk/en/for-sas-employees/internal-regulations-of-sas/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 9

To provide active support for management of international and European projects

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 24. Working conditions	2019 Q3	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development	I-9.1 Support mechanism for project management / T-9.1 To reduce administrative burden for researchers

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	There are several project schemes for this purpose: IMPULZ – https://impulz.sav.sk/en. MoRePro – https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-morepro. SASPRO 2 – https://saspro2.sav.sk/indexEn.html. Doktogranty – https://www.doktogrant.sav.sk/en. Štefan Schwarz Fund – https://schwarz.sav.sk. Euraxess point SAS – https://euraxesspoint.sav.sk/domov-english/. Update 2025: On April 2022, the EU Project Support Office was established within the SAS Office, Department of Research and Development. Website: https://euprojects.sav.sk/en/home/. Overview of activities: kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors". Overview of individual fellowships: https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/overview-of-individual-fellowships/. There are several project schemes of SAS for this purpose: IMPULZ – https://impulz.sav.sk/en. MoRePro – https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-morepro. SASPRO 2 – https://saspro2.sav.sk/indexEn.html. DoktoGrant – https://www.doktogrant.sav.sk/en. PostdocGrant - https://postdokgrant.sav.sk/en. Štefan Schwarz Fund – https://schwarz.sav.sk/Shell/Home/FrontPage. Euraxess point SAS – https://euraxesspoint.sav.sk/domov-english/. Department of International Cooperation - https://oms.sav.sk/en/category/open-calls/. SAS Return Project Scheme for Parents Returning to Work after Maternity or/and Parental Leave - https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-return.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 10

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To prepare a feasibility study of the online tool for project management and financial reporting	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 24. Working conditions	2022 Q4	SAS Office, SAS Presidium, SAS Centre of Operations	I-10.1 Published feasibility study of the online tool for project management and financial reporting / T-10.1 To improve project management and financial reporting

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	A new EU Project Support Office was created in April 2022 at the Department of Research and Development which is currently working on this task. Moreover, a new financial coordinator will be hired in September 2022. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=activity-euprojects. Correction 2025: A feasibility study was conducted in response to the mandatory transition of all public institutions in Slovakia to the Central Economic System (CES). CES is a unified digital platform developed by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. It is designed to centralize and streamline financial management, budgeting, accounting, asset tracking, human resources, and reporting across government institutions. CES plays a key role in Slovakia's eGovernment strategy, promoting transparency, efficiency, and compliance in public sector operations. The study evaluated the technical and operational requirements for integrating an online tool for project management and financial reporting with CES, ensuring alignment with national standards and digital infrastructure. Study is available here: kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 11

To create a project management guide

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions	2022 Q4	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Office	I-11.1 Published version of the guide (document) / T-11.1 To provide employees with better information; T-11.2 To reduce administrative burden

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	A new EU Project Support Office was created in April 2022 at the Department of Research and Development which is currently working on this task. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=activity-euprojects. Update 2025: The study was conducted by an external company in 2022; its content has not been publicly released, and the access link is available in the document titled "Evidence for Assessors." The guide was prepared by the EU Project Support Office SAS in 2025. It is currently in the approval phase of the Presidium and has not been publicly released. The access link: kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors". The guide will be translated into English.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 12

To create a strategy and internal rules for secure data backup	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(++) 4. Professional attitude	2022 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Centre of Operations, SAS Presidium	I-12.1 Published strategy and internal rules (document) / T-12.1 To inform researchers; T-12.2 To unify data backup procedure; T-12.3 To increase data security
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
	(+/-) 6. Accountability			
	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	A guideline for network usage was prepared and published online: https://www.sav.sk/php/download_doc.php?doc_no=10486. A guideline for use of repository is also available online: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/institucionalny-repozitar-sav/. Repository of Slovak Academy of Sciences can be accessed online: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/institucionalny-repozitar-sav/. Update 2025: A guideline for network usage was prepared and published online: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=docs-psav. A guideline for use of repository is also available online: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/institucionalny-repozitar-sav/. Repository of Slovak Academy of Sciences can be accessed online: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/institucionalny-repozitar-sav/. The webpage is in Slovak, but individual sections have been translated—please see the "Open Science" section: https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/ethical-issues/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 13

To disseminate Open Access news and updates

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (+/-) 9. Public engagement	2019 Q3 and further	SAS Office, SAS Presidium	I-13.1 Dissemination of information about Open Access to employees via email or webpage (number of interactions); T-13 To provide researchers with better information; T-13.2 To increase share on Open Access publications

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	The SAS Central Library is organizing training for open access news and updates: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/. Update 2025: The SAS Central Library is organizing training for open access news and updates: https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/open-access/. https://uk.sav.sk/pre-vedcov/z-podujati/. List of activities here: kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 14

To prepare a concept of public engagement activities

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (+/-) 9. Public engagement	2020 Q4	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Office, SAS Institutes	I-14. An overview of activities (document) / T-14.1 To increase researcher's awareness of public engagement activities; T-14.2 To increase public engagement in research

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	The 2021 questionnaire included questions about public engagement activities. The Department of Research and Development is regularly participating on citizen engagement projects either within Slovakia (e.g. 2021-2022 project on Citizens Vision of Future of Europe) or wider European community (e.g. 2015-2018 project CIMULACT). Update 2025: The 2021 questionnaire included questions about public engagement activities. The Department of Research and Development is regularly participates on citizen engagement projects either within Slovakia (e.g. 2021-2022 project on Citizens' Vision of Future of Europe) or wider European community (e.g. 2015-2018 project CIMULACT). Only in Slovak: https://www.sav.sk/index.php?doc=services-news&source_no=20&news_no=6106/php/php/news/6106. https://www.sav.sk/index.php?doc=services-news&source_no=20&news_no=6683. Similar activities are being carried out across SAS institutes and will be showcased during the upcoming on-site visit. These include initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of public engagement and fostering public participation in research.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 15	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To engage in communication activities	(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (+/-) 9. Public engagement	2019 Q3 and further	SAS Office, SAS Presidium	I-15.1 An overview of activities (document) / T-15.1 To inform public; T-15.2 To improve the image of science and scientists in society

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	Different SAS entities engage in number of communication activities: - Science cafe in Košice (Biomedical Centre SAS) - Young Scientists Roadshow around Slovakia (Department for communication and media SAS) - Science Slam SAS in Bratislava (Young Scientists SAS) - COVID-19 press conferences (Biomedical Centre SAS) - Filming exclusive videos of COVID-19 testing samples (Biomedical Centre SAS) - SAV educates students - educational videos published on the SAS YouTube channel (Department for communication and media SAS) - SAS home-office popularization videos (Department for communication and media SAS) - Videos about SAS institutes and their research (Department for communication and media SAS) - SAVinci workshops (Department for communication and media SAS) - Science in the Theater about the COVID-19 (Department for communication and media SAS) - SpaceLab Summer School (Institute of Experimental Physics SAS) - SAS Science Podcast (Department for communication and media SAS) - Science for two minutes at Funradio (Department for communication and media SAS) - Continual dissemination of these activities on SAS website and social media channels (Facebook, Instagram) (Department for communication and media SAS). Update 2025: The website https://otvorenaakademia.sav.sk/ was launched as a platform dedicated to science outreach and public engagement. In addition to this central initiative, each institute of SAS has its own science populariser who carries out outreach activities independently or participates in initiatives coordinated by the SAS Office — specifically, the Department for Communication and Media. A list of activities is available here: kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 16

To inform about options of the commercial exploitation of research results

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (+/-) 32. Co-authorship	2020 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Presidium, Technology Transfer Office	I-16.1 Analysis on the commercial exploitation of research results (document) / T-16.1 To inform researchers; T-16.2 To increase the commercial exploitation of research results

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task is being performed by the SAS Technology Transfer Office and can be accessed online: https://ktt.sav.sk/en/for-scientists/services/. Update 2025: This task is being performed by the SAS Technology Transfer Office and can be accessed online and document was translated to English: https://ktt.sav.sk/en/for-sas-employees/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 17

To provide support for language courses for administrative and technical staff

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 10. Non discrimination (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2023 Q3	SAS Office, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-17.1 Trainings attended by administrative and technical staff of organizations (number) / T-17.1 To make organization more attractive for foreign employees; T-17.2 To reduce administrative burden for employees.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task has been postponed as there are currently no available funds for its implementation. Correction 2025: This task has been cancelled. Planned English language courses were not implemented during the evaluated period. The main reason was the low level of interest among employees, particularly elderly staff members for who do not perceive language training as direct work-related need. At the same time, the workforce is gradually being renewed, and newly recruited employees already meet the requirement of English language proficiency. For this reason, the implementation of courses is currently considered ineffective and has been postponed indefinitely.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 18	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To unify researcher evaluation practices	(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (-/+) 28. Career development (-/+) 30. Access to career advice (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2023 Q4	SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-18.1 Publication of framework document for researcher evaluation / T-18.1 To unify and formalize the employee appraisal procedures

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: To unify researcher evaluation practices across the SAS presents a challenge, as SAS consists of 45 institutes engaged in a wide range of scientific disciplines—including life sciences, physical sciences, and cultural studies. Due to this disciplinary diversity, a single, standardized evaluation framework is not feasible. Nevertheless, each SAS institute conducts employee evaluation on their institutional level and publishes transparent evaluation criteria for researchers on its official website and adheres to these guidelines in its assessment processes. Which confirms a high positive ranking in the 2025 survey. Example of similar practice from another organization: Charles University in the Czech Republic conducts a separate evaluation process for the humanities.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 19	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To unify recruitment practices - OTM-R	(-/+) 12. Recruitment (-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code) (+/-) 14. Selection (Code) (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code)	2020 Q2, 2020 Q3, 2020 Q2, 2020 Q1 and further	SAS Office, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-19.1 Templates for job postings; I-19.2 Guide for recruitment of researchers; I-19.3 Analysis of a unified approach to job posting on job portals (document); I-19.4 Number of advertised open position on EURAXESS / T-19.1 To ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers; T-19.2 To make organization more attractive for foreign employees

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	A dedicated member of the SAS Presidium is responsible for this task. We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: In March 2025, the Presidium of SAS approved a unified framework to guide recruitment and hiring practices across its public research institutions. This resulted in the adoption of a comprehensive policy document titled "Principles of Recruitment and Selection of Employees in Public Research Institutions of the Slovak Academy of Sciences" https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf. The document fully aligns with the principles of Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) and includes detailed provisions to promote gender balance in selection committees, prevent conflicts of interest, uphold confidentiality, and eliminate all forms of discrimination. Documents are published: https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/recruitment/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 20

To make recommendations about prevention of conflicts of interest in recruitment

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
(++) 4. Professional attitude			
(-/+) 12. Recruitment			
(-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code)	2020 Q1	SAS Ethics Committee, SAS Presidium	I-20.1 Published document with recommendations / T-20.1 To unify recruitment procedures; T-20.2 To increase transparency and fairness in recruitment
(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)			
(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)			
(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	A dedicated member of the SAS Presidium is responsible for this task. We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: Recommendations for the prevention of conflicts of interest in recruitment is an integral part of the document titled Principles of Recruitment and Selection of Employees in Public Research Institutions of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf. This policy outlines clear measures to ensure transparency and fairness in hiring processes, including detailed instructions on how to prevent and address conflicts of interest.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 21

To develop career development plans for each type of researcher positions

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2023 Q2	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Office, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-21.1 Published guide on career development plans / T-21.1 To provide researchers with better information early in the recruitment process

Current Status	Remarks
EXTENDED	Individual development plan for experienced researchers are already prepared. This task is also treated within a project CARLIS: https://carlis.saia.sk/. Moreover, we are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: Due to personnel changes within the HR department, the timeline for this action has been extended. The revised implementation period is set for Q3/2027.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 22	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**
To provide training on OTM-R for members of recruitment committees and team leaders/heads of departments	(-/+) 12. Recruitment (-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code) (+/-) 14. Selection (Code) (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) (++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	2023 Q2	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium	I-22.1 Implemented trainings for members of recruitment committees and team leaders/heads of departments (number); I-22.2 OTM-R Guide for members of recruitment committees and team leaders/heads of departments (document) / T-22.1 To increase awareness about OTM-R among employees; T-22.2 To align current recruitment processes with OTM-R principles

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: Following the approval of the OTM-R rules in March 2025, the HRS4R team organized one in-person and two online meetings focused on the implementation of these principles. Since then, the team has provided more than 60 individual consultations— via email, phone, or in person—and continues to offer ongoing support. To further assist Selection Committee members, the HRS4R team has developed a self-training e-learning video tool and produced printed brochures. These resources are designed to help committee members apply the OTM-R principles effectively, with particular emphasis on transparency, fairness, and inclusivity throughout the recruitment process. By its very nature, this action is implemented and further steps and the continued development of HRS4R implementation have been transferred to the new Action plan. Kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 23

To increase awareness of international qualifications	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(-/+) 12. Recruitment			
	(-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code)			
	(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)		SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium	I-23.1 Published information on international qualifications via email and webpage; T-23.1 To raise awareness of international qualifications
	(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)	2022 Q4		
	(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)			
	(++) 22. Recognition of the profession			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	This task is treated within a project CARLIS: https://carlis.saia.sk/ - establishing trainings structure for PhD students: pilot trainings will take place in October 2022. Moreover, we are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: The responsibility for the recognition of education and professional qualifications obtained abroad lies with the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic. This task is carried out through the Centre for Recognition of Diplomas (CRD), which operates the official Recognition Portal: https://uznavanie.minedu.sk/en/navigator/. The CRD serves as the national authority and is responsible not only for the recognition process but also for the validation and confirmation of Slovak education documents for use by foreign authorities. Euraxess Point SAS actively communicates updates and guidance related to this process, supporting researchers in navigating recognition procedures and accessing relevant resources.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 24

To modify postdoctoral status and recruitment procedures internally

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 10. Non discrimination			
(-/+) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)			
(++) 22. Recognition of the profession	2024 Q2	SAS Presidium	I-24.1 Internal document on postdoctoral status and recruitment procedures - posted on the web / T-24.1 To define clear rules and procedures
(-/+) 28. Career development			
(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: SAS has taken steps to strengthen its support for early-career researchers by revising internal postdoctoral policies and recruitment procedures (OTM-R policy approved in March 2025). To address the drop in net income that doctoral graduates often experience when transitioning into research roles, SAS has expanded its funding schemes for postdoctoral researchers. These include the PostdokGrant, the Štefan Schwarz Fund, Compensatory Allowance. The Competition for Young Scientists under 35 serves as a supporting scheme, aimed at fostering the professional development and research activities of early career researchers. In its formal strategic framework, Program Statement of the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences for the Period 2025–2029, the SAS Presidium formally embedded the commitment to support PhD students and young researchers. As part of this long-term vision, SAS also plans to establish a dedicated doctoral school to further enhance training, mentorship, and career development opportunities for early-stage researchers. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-scientists. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=educ-allowance. https://doktogrant.sav.sk/en. https://postdokgrant.sav.sk/en. https://schwarz.sav.sk/Shell/Home/FrontPage.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 25

To propose principles for efficient management of publicly funded infrastructure	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(++) 4. Professional attitude			
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations	2020 Q1	SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-25.1 Published document with principles of efficient infrastructure management / T-25.1 To increase efficiency of infrastructure management; T-25.2 To improve research infrastructure environment
	(+/-) 6. Accountability			
	(+/-) 23. Research environment			
	(-/+) 26. Funding and salaries			
	(+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	A new EU project support office was created in April 2022 at the Department of Research and Development which is currently working on this task. Morever, New financial coordinator will be hired in September 2022. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=activity-euprojects. Correction 2025: The document was prepared by the Technology Transfer Office of SAS. Upon completion, it was published online via official institutional channels and subsequently translated into English to ensure accessibility for the international research community. https://ktt.sav.sk/en/for-sas-employees/internal-regulations-of-sas/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 26

To support sharing of best practices between SAS Institutes

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	2019 Q4 and further	SAS Presidium, SAS Office, SAS Institutes	I-26.1 Number of team-building and networking activities / T-26.1 To create room for informal discussions and sharing of best practices
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	There are already some activities for sharing best practices, such as Facebook group "SAS Parents" for sharing factual information and contacts (e.g. regarding doctors, kindergartens, schools, etc.). This task is still ongoing. Update 2025: Several initiatives have already been launched within the SAS to promote the exchange of best practices and foster a supportive research environment. One such example is the "SAS Parents" Facebook group, which serves as a platform for sharing information and practical contacts related to family life, including recommendations for doctors, kindergartens, schools, and other essential services. This initiative remains active and continues to evolve based on community needs. Currently 40 members. https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/join-the-facebook-group-sav-parents/. Additional activities are coordinated through platforms such as "Mladí vedci SAV" (Young Scientists of SAS) - Young scientists SAS - Doctoral and postdoctoral students SAS, which facilitate peer-to-peer engagement and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, targeted events such as "Breakfast with HRS4R" and Breakfast with Euraxess provide informal discussions and sharing best practices between SAS Institutes. These activities have become standard practice at SAS. https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/hrs4r-working-breakfast-for-representatives-of-sas-institutes/. https://www.facebook.com/mladivedciSAV/?locale=sk_SK.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 27

To prepare a feasibility study on a daycare center / kindergarten

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 10. Non discrimination (++) 24. Working conditions (+/-) 27. Gender balance	2024 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium	I-27.1 Published feasibility study on a daycare center / T-27.1 To facilitate decision-making on further actions in this topic; T-27.2 To improve working conditions for employees with young children

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	A feasibility study on a daycare center / kindergarten for SAS employees on the campus in Bratislava is a part of the SAS Gender Equality Policy within Goal 1: SAS actively supports the work-life balance and is currently being prepared: https://www.sav.sk/php/download_doc.php?doc_no=10827. Update 2025: A feasibility study on a daycare centre/kindergarten for SAS employees on the campus in Bratislava is part of the SAS Gender Equality Policy. In 2023, an urban planning study was announced and it was presented in 2024. The new campus design includes a dedicated daycare centre/kindergarten as part of the planned facilities. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=services-news&source_no=20&news_no=11740. Only in Slovak: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=sk&doc=area-results.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 28

To prepare a feasibility study on barrier-free buildings

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 10. Non discrimination (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions	2024 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-28.1 Published feasibility study on barrier-free buildings / T-28.1 To facilitate decision-making on further actions in this topic; T-28.2 To improve accessibility of buildings for disabled researchers

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task will be treated within an architectural study for the new SAS campus which is currently being prepared. Update 2025: The study was conducted internally; its content has not been publicly released - kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 29	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To initiate a discussion on changes in researcher remuneration system	(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code) (++) 22. Recognition of the profession (-/+) 26. Funding and salaries (-/+) 28. Career development	2020 Q4	SAS Presidium	I-29.1 Published conclusions from the discussion (document); I-29.2 Published future scenarios (document) / T-29.1 To improve researcher remuneration system; T-29.1 To make employment in research more attractive

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	A remuneration reform was approved by the SAS Presidium and published online. There was also a change of the legal status of the academy which change to public research organization - the fact which also improved the conditions for better remuneration of researchers in SAS. Update 2025: A remuneration reform was approved by the SAS Presidium and published online. There was also a change of the legal status of the academy, which changed to a public research organization, the fact which also improved the conditions for better remuneration of researchers in SAS. SAS has issued guidelines for the remuneration of members of the Presidium members as well as for the remuneration of directors of public research institutions. These documents are of an internal character.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 30

To analyze options of the meal allowances for employees

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 24. Working conditions (-/+) 26. Funding and salaries	2019 Q4	SAS Office, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-30.1 Published analysis of options of the meal allowances for employees; I-30.2 Consultation with the SAS Institutes (number of interactions); I-30.3 Design and implementation of the best scenario (document) / T-30.1 To comply with legal obligations concerning meal allowances for employees

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	A new regulation was approved on the state level, which says that if employer does not provide meals in its facility, employees can choose between a gastro ticket and a meal allowance: https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2001-311#cast7.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 31

To analyze options of a gender balanced composition of the SAS governing and decision-making bodies	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 10. Non discrimination			
	(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems			
	(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)			
	(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)			
	(+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	2020 Q2, 2020 Q3, 2020 Q4, 2020 Q4 and further	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-31.1 Published analysis of a gender balanced composition of the SAS governing and decision-making bodies; I-31.2 Consultation with the SAS Institutes (number of interactions); I-31.3 Design and implementation of the best scenario (document); I-31.4 Indicator-based evaluation (activity) / T-31.1 To achieve a gender balanced composition of the SAS governing and decision-making bodies
	(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)			
	(++) 22. Recognition of the profession			
	(+/-) 27. Gender balance			
	(++) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies			
	(+/-) 40. Supervision			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	This task is being treated in the SAS Gender Equality Policy (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-gender) and within the H2020 project Athena (https://www.athenaequality.eu/). In 2022, there have been several trainings for research team leads and Institutes management dedicated to the implementation of a gender perspective in management: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=sk&doc=services-news&source_no=20&news_no=10333.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 32

To outline a career development plan for employees	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (-/+) 28. Career development (-/+) 30. Access to career advice (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2023 Q1, and further	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-32.1 Published career development plan for employees; I-32.2 Implementation of the career development plan for employees; I-32.3 Career development trainings (number) / T-32.1 To improve career development planning for employees; T-32.2 To unify and formalize ongoing practices in this field

Current Status	Remarks
EXTENDED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: Due to personnel changes within the HR department, the timeline for this action has been extended. The revised implementation period is set for Q3/2027.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 33

To adopt a new internal regulation, or to amend the existing decree of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences no. 55/1977 Coll.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+) 28. Career development (-/+) 30. Access to career advice (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2020 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Presidium	I-33.1 Analysis of the options of adopting a new internal regulation, or of amending the existing decree; I-33.2 Adoption of the internal regulation or amendment of the decree or other procedure / T-33.1 To formalize and harmonize relevant processes.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task needs to be treated in cooperation with the Ministry for Education and the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Parliament) which is a long-term process. The SAS Office and SAS Presidium are currently working on this task. Update 2025: The original decree regulating this matter was repealed by § 22a – "Repeal provisions related to amendments effective as of 1 January 2022" – as part of the amendment to the Act on the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The issue of scientific qualification of research staff is now governed by Part Three (§15–17) of the current SAS Act. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=docs-leg. SAS has its own dedicated committee responsible for awarding scientific qualification levels to research staff. This internal evaluation process ensures that qualifications are granted based on transparent criteria and disciplinary standards across SAS institutes. Webpage only in Slovak: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=sk&doc=docs-qualify.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 34

To outline a support mechanism for mobility and networking

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 1. Research freedom (++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) (+/-) 23. Research environment (+/-) 29. Value of mobility	2020 Q1	SAS Institutes, SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Office, SAS Presidium	I-34.1 Inclusion of the support mechanism for mobility and networking into the strategic plans of the SAS Institutes / T-34.1 To unify evaluation of researchers mobility; T-34.2 To improve networking practices; T-34.3 To share best practices

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task is treated within a project CARLIS: https://carlis.saia.sk/. Moreover, there are several mobility programs: https://oms.sav.sk/en/programmes-and-scholarships/mobility-programme/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 35

To raise awareness on the principles of social security contributions in other countries and their portability	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (+/-) 29. Value of mobility (-/+) 30. Access to career advice	2024 Q2	SAS Office, SAS Office - Department of Research and Development	I-35.1 Published information material on the principles of social security contributions in other countries and their portability - prepared in cooperation with the relevant authorities and organizations / T-35.1 To raise awareness of researchers on the principles of social security contributions in other countries and their portability; T-35.2 To improve conditions for researchers

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task is partly treated within a project CARLIS: https://carlis.saia.sk/. Moreover, we are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: SAS has been recording a growing number of international doctoral students and researchers, particularly from countries such as India, Ukraine, Iran, Pakistan and Mexico. In 2018, we registered 152 international staff members; by 2022, this number had increased to 176, and in 2025 we are seeing a further rise 435. This trend highlights the increasing importance of research internationalization within SAS. Given this development, it is only natural that SAS must actively monitor and understand legislation related to international researchers — especially in areas such as taxation, social security, and health insurance. Therefore, in recent years, we have organized several professional trainings and informational events aimed at raising awareness of the legal and administrative aspects of researcher mobility. They were carried out with the support of EURAXESS SAS, which is part of the Research and Development Department. https://euraxesspoint.sav.sk/domov-english/. Taxation brochure: https://www.euraxess.sk/slovakia/news/new-booklet-understanding-income-taxation-phd-students-researchers-and-university. For the list of activities kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 36

To adopt an internal regulation on intellectual property rights	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights	2020 Q3, 2020 Q4	Technology Transfer Office, SAS Presidium	I-36.1 Adopted internal regulation on intellectual property rights in the Slovak language / I-36.2 Adopted internal regulation on intellectual property rights in the English language

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	The internal direction was approved and published online: https://ktt.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Zasady_06_zverejnene_ENG_ed_v2.pdf. Update 2025: The internal direction was approved and published online: https://ktt.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Zasady_06_zverejnene_ENG_ed_v2.pdf. https://ktt.sav.sk/en/for-sas-employees/.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 37

To conduct trainings on the intellectual property rights	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations	2021 Q1 and further	Technology Transfer Office	I-37.1 Trainings on the intellectual property rights (number) / T-37.1 To improve awareness of the intellectual property rights
	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
	(+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task is being performed by the Technology Transfer Office of SAS. Trainings on the intellectual property rights are organized at least once a year and disseminate online: https://ktt.sav.sk/en/. Update 2025: This task is being performed by the Technology Transfer Office of SAS. Trainings on the intellectual property rights are organized at least once a year and disseminate online: https://ktt.sav.sk/en/. These training sessions have become standard practice at SAS. For the list of activities kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 38

To sign framework contracts with relevant universities on the involvement of SAS staff in the teaching process	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 22. Recognition of the profession (+/-) 33. Teaching	2020 Q2, 2020 Q3, 2020 Q4, 2020 Q4	SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-38.1 Needs analysis of the SAS Institutes (document); I-38.2 Consultation with relevant universities (number of interactions); I-38.3 Outline of framework contracts with the selected universities (document); I-38.4 Adoption of the framework contracts / T-38.1 To facilitate the involvement of SAS staff in the teaching process at universities; T-38.2 To enable better access to graduate and PhD students

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: SAS has signed framework agreements with 13 universities across Slovakia. These partnerships reflect the research focus and strategic direction of SAS, enabling staff to actively participate in the academic teaching process while strengthening collaboration between research and higher education. A detailed overview of the partner universities and corresponding agreements - kindly refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 39

To include teaching activities in the evaluation of researchers

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (-/+) 26. Funding and salaries (+/-) 33. Teaching	2022 Q4	SAS Institutes	I-39.1 Publication of the analysis of options to include teaching activities in the evaluation of researchers; I-39.2 Implementation of the proposed scenario / T-39.1 To have more complex picture of the researcher activities

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: The inclusion of teaching activities in the evaluation of researchers has been successfully implemented. Each institute of SAS has published its own "Rules for the Evaluation of Researchers" on its official website, where teaching activities are explicitly incorporated as part of the assessment criteria. According to the results of the 2025 survey, this measure received a high positive ranking, indicating that institutes are consistently applying the evaluation rules in practice. Only in Slovak: Example for Scientific section 1: https://www.astro.sk/vvi/vnutpredpAsU/Pravidla_hodnotenia_vyskumnych_pracovnikov.pdf. Example for Scientific section 2: https://bmc.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Pravidla-hodnotenia-vyskumnych-pracovnikov-BMC-SAV-v.v.i.-2022.pdf. Example for Scientific section 3: https://uvsk.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/uploaded/documents/documents/vnutorne-predpisy/Pravidla%20hodnotenia%20vyskumnych%20pracovnikov%20UVSK%20SAV.pdf.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 40	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To adopt internal regulations on processing complaints and appeals	(++) 1. Research freedom (-/+) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 24. Working conditions (-/+) 34. Complains/ appeals	2020 Q2	SAS Institutes	I-40.1 Adoption of internal regulations on processing complaints and appeals in the Slovak and English languages / T-40.1 To formalize procedures for processing complaints and appeals; T-40.2 To ensure the best possible legal protection for employees

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	This task is also performed by the SAS Ethics Committee and is ongoing. Update 2025: Procedures are formalized not only through the existence of the form (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&folder_no=562) itself, but primarily within the SAS Ethical Code, the statutes of both committees dealing with ethical issues — namely, the Ethics Committee and the Equality Committee. The Equality Committee addresses cases of unequal treatment. An ethical mediator at SAS was appointed and introduced into the life of the Academy in 2025. Ethical mediation is intended to help resolve disputes outside the Ethics Committee, particularly in cases where both parties are willing to seek reconciliation. Mediation is not suitable for all types of complaints (e.g., gender-based harassment). Confidential advisors at SAS (three in total) provide consultation procedures for reporting and addressing cases of sexual harassment. Over a four-year period, 10 cases were submitted to the Ethics Committee and 3 cases to the Equality Committee or to the confidential advisors at SAS.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 41

To outline a code of conduct for project leaders and project collaborators

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 1. Research freedom	2024 Q2	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Institutes, SAS Presidium	I-41.1 Study on possible scenarios for adopting a code of conduct for project leaders and project collaborators (document); I-41.2 Based on the study, drafting and adoption of the code of conduct, or another procedure / T-41.1 To define rights and responsibilities of the project leaders and project collaborators
(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
(++) 4. Professional attitude			
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
(+/-) 6. Accountability			
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(+/-) 10. Non discrimination			
(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems			
(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)			
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(++) 24. Working conditions			

Proposed ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+) 26. Funding and salaries			
(+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights			
(+/-) 32. Co-authorship			
(++) 36. Relation with supervisors			
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			
(+/-) 40. Supervision			

Current Status	Remarks
EXTENDED	A new EU project support office was created in April 2022 at the Department of Research and Development which is currently working on this task: https://euprojects.sav.sk/en/home/. Update 2025: The EU Project Support Office was established within the Department of Research and Development at Office SAS in 2022 and is working on this task. However, the office is understaffed (1 person), which has affected the pace of progress. Although efforts are ongoing, the task could not be completed. The action has been postponed to the next phase. The revised timeline is set for Q2/2027.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 42 To develop a mentoring scheme	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**	**Responsible Unit**	**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(-/+) 28. Career development			
	(-/+) 30. Access to career advice			
	(+/-) 32. Co-authorship		SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Institutes, SAS Presidium	I-42.1 Analysis of the options of mentoring scheme (document); I-42.2 Consultation of the proposed scenarios and identification of the best one (number of interactions); I-42.3 Implementation of the best scenario / T-42.1 To provide a professional mentoring; T-42.2 To define the position of mentor and mentored person
	(++) 36. Relation with supervisors	2024 Q2		
	(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			
	(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
	(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			
	(+/-) 40. Supervision			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	EXTENDED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: Due to personnel changes within the HR department, the timeline for this action has been extended. The revised implementation period is set for Q3/2028.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 43

To develop a management training scheme	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(-/+) 28. Career development			
	(-/+) 30. Access to career advice			
	(++) 36. Relation with supervisors	2019 Q3	SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-43.1 Publication of the management training plan and schedule (document); I-43.2 Implementation of the management trainings (number) / T-43.1 To improve managerial skills
	(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			
	(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
	(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			
	(+/-) 40. Supervision			

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	The management training scheme has been developed by the dedicated member of the SAS Presidium and the trainings are being regularly organized on topics such as: megatrends in science, science diplomacy, strategic and action planning in the implementation of research, skills and trends in research and people management, soft skills etc..

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 44

To analyze suitable educational online platforms

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2023 Q4	SAS Office - Department of Research and Development, SAS Institutes	I-44.1 Published analysis of the online learning platforms / T-44.1 To raise awareness among researchers about the online learning platforms

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	We are currently in process to employ a HR specialist who will be dedicated to HRS4R and who will also perform this task. Correction 2025: An internal analysis of educational online platforms has been completed, resulting in the identification of several tools that are beneficial for SAS. These platforms support various learning needs, including researcher development, soft skills training, and institutional onboarding. Among the recommended platforms, Seduo stands out as a valuable resource for professional development in the Slovak and Czech language environment. It is currently available to employees of the SAS Office, offering access to a wide range of courses focused on communication, management, HR, and legal literacy. For the analysis, please refer to the document entitled "Evidence for Assessors".

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 45	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To include evaluation criteria for advisors in the quality assessment of PhD study	(++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 10. Non discrimination (+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (-/+) 30. Access to career advice (+/-) 32. Co-authorship (+/-) 33. Teaching (++) 36. Relation with supervisors (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development (+/-) 40. Supervision	2023 Q4	SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	I-45.1 List of criteria for the quality assessment of PhD study - including criteria for advisors (document) / T-45.1 To define clear criteria and requirements for the PhD advisors

Proposed ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	SAS Presidium was responsible for this task. The evaluation criteria for advisors were included in the PhD Studies Quality Assurance Policy and published online: https://www.sav.sk/php/download_doc.php?doc_no=8632. During the implementation phase, SAS Research Institutes included this policy in their own internal quality assurance policies, which were approved by the SAS Council for Education and Doctoral Studies.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 46

To strengthen competencies in research ethics by organizing workshops and training sessions

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 1. Research freedom	Q4 2026	SAS Office - Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Ethics Committee	T: Enhance researchers' understanding and practice of research ethics principles across all career stages (R1–R4). I: Number of workshops and training sessions on research ethics delivered annually (photos, attendance lists, program). I2: Training materials on research ethics prepared and published on the intranet/institutional cloud (E-learning video, brochures; hyperlink). I3: Survey results showing increased awareness and understanding of research ethics principles (target ≥ 40%).
(-/+) 2. Ethical principles			
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
(++) 4. Professional attitude			
(+/-) 6. Accountability			
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(++) 24. Working conditions			
(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment			
(-/+) 28. Career development			
(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous			

Proposed ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
development			

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 47

To develop and pilot a comprehensive onboarding guide and adaptation process for other staff at Office SAS, with the aim of implementing it across participating SAS institutes following the pilot evaluation in the next phase	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			T: Design and pilot a standardized onboarding and adaptation process at the SAS Office. I: Document of the structured onboarding and adaptation process prepared, approved by the Office SAS management and published on the intranet (hyperlink). I2: Provided templates, supporting all process roles approved by the Office SAS management (Joining Checklist and Instructions, New Employee Guide, Welcome email, Employee Adaptation Plan etc.) published on the intranet (hyperlink with zip file).
	(++) 4. Professional attitude			
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
	(+/-) 6. Accountability		SAS Office - HR dpt., Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	
	(+/-) 23. Research environment	Q1 2028		
	(++) 24. Working conditions			
	(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment			
	(++) 36. Relation with supervisors			
	(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 48

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To revise the current recruitment and selection process based on inputs from participating SAS institutes, and implement the updated process in line with the OTM-R principles (OTM-R policy)	(-/+) 12. Recruitment (-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code) (+/-) 14. Selection (Code) (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) (++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code) (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions	Q3 2026	SAS Office - HR dpt, Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T1: Revised and standardised recruitment and selection process aligned with OTM-R principles. T2: Implementation of the revised process at participating institutes and the SAS Office. I1: Revised document approved by the Presidium of SAS, translated into English, and published online (hyperlink). I2: Number of training sessions held with institute coordinators (3). I3: Revised brochures and training materials for the Selection Committees (hyperlink).

Proposed ACTIONS

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 27. Gender balance			

	Current Status	Remarks		
	NEW			

Action 49

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To develop and pilot a structured offboarding process for other staff at Office SAS, with the aim of implementing it across participating SAS institutes following the pilot evaluation in the next phase	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (++) 24. Working conditions	Q1 2028	SAS Office - HR dpt., Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T: Design and pilot a standardized offboarding process at the SAS Office. I: Structured offboarding guidelines document prepared, approved by SAS Office management, and published on the intranet (hyperlink). I2: Templates and guidelines provided (Knowledge Transfer Plan, Exit Checklist, Exit Interview Guide, and Survey) approved by SAS Office management, and published on the intranet (hyperlink).

	Current Status	Remarks		
	NEW			

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 50

To implement HRS4R/HR driven initiatives to raise awareness through HRS4R and HR practices	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions	Q2 2028	SAS Office - HR dpt., Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T: To embed HRS4R values into everyday HR activities and institutional culture. I: Awareness materials prepared (1 brochure) online (hyperlink). I2: 2 newsletters, 2 website posts (hyperlink). I3: 2 workshops and webinars delivered (photos, attendance lists, print screens). I4: Survey report showing awareness level of HRS4R and HR practices (target ≥ 40%).

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 51

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To conduct analysis of existing SAS jobs / positions and assess feasibility of unified SAS Job Catalogue and Competence Framework	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 14. Selection (Code) (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code) (++) 22. Recognition of the profession (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions (++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (-/+) 26. Funding and salaries	Q1 2027	SAS Office - HR dpt., Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T: Complete analysis which includes related job descriptions and competency models as a basic pillar for multiple stages of the employee life cycle, using also the European Framework for Research Careers, which identifies both necessary and desirable competencies for each of the four broad profiles for researchers (R1 to R4). T2: To assess the possibility of harmonizing job descriptions into a unified catalogue. I1: Job analysis published online (hyperlink). I2: Report on the potential for a unified SAS Job Catalogue and Competence Framework prepared and published online (hyperlink).

Proposed ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 40. Supervision			

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 52

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
To assign Euraxess profiles of the participating institutes of SAS under the main SAS Euraxess profile to which has been granted the HR Excellence in Research Award logo	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 10. Non discrimination (-/+) 12. Recruitment (-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code) (+/-) 14. Selection (Code) (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 23. Research environment	Q2 2027	SAS Office, Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T: Achieve unification of SAS participating institutes under one official SAS Euraxess profile holding the HR Excellence in Research Award logo. I: Formal request (application) for the RTD Charter prepared and submitted (application, print screens). I2: Documented communication with the RTD Charter administrator team (print screens).

Proposed ACTIONS

	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(++) 24. Working conditions			

	Current Status	Remarks		
	NEW			

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 53

To digitalise project schemes of SAS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions (++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment	Q3 2027	SAS Office, Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T: Successfully migrate paper-based project schemes to the electronic platform Orbitus within the planned timeframe. I: 50% of project schemes successfully migrated to the Orbitus platform (print screens from the system; hyperlink). I2: User guidelines prepared and published online (hyperlink).

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 54

To share and gain best practices among HR awarded institutions across Europe	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility			
	(++) 4. Professional attitude			
	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
	(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results			T: Strengthen collaboration through regular sharing of best practices with HR Excellence in Research Awarded institutions across Europe. I: Organize or participate in networking meetings, workshops, or webinars organized with HR Awarded institutions (at least 1 annually). I2: Documented participation in European HR Excellence in Research events (LinkedIn posts, website articles, hyperlinks).
	(+/-) 23. Research environment	Q2 2028	SAS Office - HR dpt., Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	
	(++) 24. Working conditions			
	(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment			
	(-/+) 28. Career development			
	(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
	(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			

Proposed ACTIONS

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Action 55

To engage more SAS institutes in the HRS4R

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 23. Research environment (++) 24. Working conditions (++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment	Q3 2028	SAS Office - HR dpt., Dpt. R&D, SAS Presidium, SAS Institutes	T: Strengthen the involvement of additional SAS institutes in the HRS4R process. I: Number of SAS institutes (2) that have fulfilled the formal conditions for joining the HRS4R strategy and published the HR Excellence in Research logo on their institutional website (hyperlink). I2: Newly joined institutes have implemented OTM-R principles (hyperlink).

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	

Unselected principles:

The extended version of the reviewed HR Strategy for your organisation for the next 3 years, including the OTM-R policy must be published on your organisation's website.
Please provide the link to the dedicated webpage(s) on your organisation's web site, multiple links must be comma separated *:

URL *:

https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-hrs4r , https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/documents/basic-documents/ (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-hrs4r , https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/documents/basic-documents/)

If your organisation has already filled in the OTM-R checklist in the Initial Phase, please also indicate how your organisation is working towards / has developed an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above in the action plan (as emerged from the Gap Analysis), please provide a short commentary demonstrating the progress.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Initial Phase)

The current recruitment policy is governed by the applicable Slovak legislation and established procedures. The general principles of the Charter and the Code are respected, but the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment are not fully implemented. The implemented Gap Analysis pointed to major gaps between established practices and OTM-R principles. We plan to remove these gaps in the following ways:

a) To develop and to publish OTM-R principles,

b) To prepare and to make available templates for advertising individual job types in accordance with OTM-R policy,

c) To develop and to publish a manual of clear OTM-R procedures, including feedback mechanism, to ensure that each candidate is informed after the selection process,

d) To develop a training plan for OTM-R,

e) To analyze a centralized approach to job posting,

f) To advertize job postings on the EURAXESS website,

g) To advertize job postings at other portals in order to reach a broader audience,

h) To analyze options of electronic recruitment,

i) To define criteria for selection committees,

j) To develop a guide for selection committees members on OTM-R principles,

k) To formalize transparent complaints procedures.

The implementation will be ensured by the Working Group in close cooperation with the Steering Committee, individual SAS Institutes, SAS Office departments/sections as well as with the SAS Presidium. The Working Group will report quarterly to the Steering Committee on the achievements of target indicators.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Internal Review for Interim Assessment)

From the beginning, the implementation of the OTM-R principles was planned for the second half of the first four-year period of the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan. These measures have been known to be much more demanding in the current setting of SAS. There is a need for a dedicated HR specialist who would take ownership of this task and provide professional approach. Currently, we do not have such a person at SAS. As we need additional resources for employing the HR specialist, we have asked the Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Sport for funding and we are currently awaiting the decision. Provided that we receive the funding, we will employ the HR specialist who will be responsible for OTM-R.

Out of the previously listed actions, we have been able to implement the following ones:

f)   To advertise job postings on the EURAXESS website,
g)   To advertise job postings at other portals in order to reach a broader audience,
k)   To formalize transparent complaints procedures.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Internal Review for Award Renewal)

General overview of the implementation process of HR Excellence in Research in SAS:

HR Excellence in Research is managed centrally, with a coordinator at each participating institution to ensure local implementation and alignment. The overall responsibility for the implementation process lies with the Department of Research and Development, SAS Office, led by the Head of the Department Zuzana Hrabovská and Dominika Olšovská (see attachment for composition of the HRS4R Working Group (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Steering-Committee-and-Working-Group-HRS4R_ENG.pdf)). Two team members oversee the agenda, contributing part-time while managing other duties, yet their input remains pivotal to advancing project objectives.

The implementation of the OTM-R principles has been a key priority in this phase of the HR Excellence in Research process. A comprehensive policy document titled "Principles of Recruitment and Selection of Employees in Public Research Institutions of the Slovak Academy of Sciences" (file: OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-

content/uploads/OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf)) fully incorporates all OTM-R principles, including specific recommendations to ensure gender balance within selection committees, prevent conflicts of interest, keep confidentiality, and eliminate discrimination."

The policy establishes a mandatory selection process for all job vacancies within participating SAS institutes; SAS Office covering researchers and other staff positions. It also requires that research vacancies be published on the Euraxess profiles of public research institutions to ensure transparency and visibility. We identified a structural issue related to the use of the EURAXESS Europe portal. Currently, participating institutes operate under separate individual accounts, which prevents them from using the HR Award logo and from being visibly linked to SAS as a unified entity. Each institute advertises job vacancies independently, resulting in fragmented visibility and reduced transparency.

To address this discrepancy, we have included a new action in the updated Action plan: To assign Euraxess profiles of the participating institutes of SAS under the main SAS Euraxess profile to which has been granted the HR Excellence in Research Award logo. This will enable consistent branding, centralized use of the HR Award logo, and a more transparent and coherent presentation of recruitment opportunities across all participating institutes in HR strategy.

To support consistent implementation, the document includes a detailed process map of recruitment and seven standardized templates. These templates are designed for use by process owners at each step of the recruitment cycle, enabling the generation of uniform output documents and email communications. Document defines evaluation and selection principles and describe authority, responsibility and powers of the Selection Committee.

The policy has been fully implemented and now serves as a binding standard for all participating institutes and centres of SAS, as well as for the SAS Office.

The principles of OTM-R included in the document do not apply to the selection of the director a public research institution SAS, who is regulated by internal guidelines.

Pravidla_vyberoveho_konania_na_riaditela_ENG_web.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Pravidla_vyberoveho_konania_na_riaditela_ENG_web.pdf)

The development of the OTM-R policy consisted of the following steps:

1. Initial Consultations: The process began with joint meetings of the Steering Committee and HRS4R Working Group members, where the core ideas and objectives of the OTM-R policy were discussed and aligned.
2. Engagement with individual SAS Institutes: The HRS4R Working Group members met with coordinators from participating institutes and centres to review current recruitment practices and gather practical examples to inform the policy content.
3. Drafting the Policy: The first version of the policy document was drafted and internally reviewed by the HRS4R Working Group. Feedback was incorporated through collaborative discussions and revisions.

4. Expert Review and Legal Validation: A second round of revisions was conducted with the involvement of HR expert, who provided valuable feedback on the practical application of OTM-R principles. The document was then legally reviewed and finalized by Mr. Mgr. Lukáš Lapšanský, PhD., a legal expert from the Institute of State and Law SAS and author of Act No. 243/2017 (Act on Public Research Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Laws) https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2017/243/ (https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2017/243/)

5. Official Approval: On 12 March 2025, the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences officially approved the final version of the policy titled "Principles of Recruitment and Selection of Employees in Public Research Institutions of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Major Milestone in the HRS4R Strategy – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/major-milestone-in-the-hrs4r-strategy/). To ensure transparency and raise awareness, information about the approval of the OTM-R policy was published on the official website of the SAS. This public announcement aimed to reach a broad audience, including researchers, institutional stakeholders, and the public, while also marking and celebrating this important milestone in the implementation of the HRS4R strategy. https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=services-news&source_no=20&news_no=13000 (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=services-news&source_no=20&news_no=13000)

6. The document was translated into English by an official translator and published on the website. Visual materials and infographics were created with the support of an external graphic designer to enhance clarity and usability. All annexes to the document were prepared in downloadable formats to facilitate easy access and practical use by participating institutes. Researchers´ Assessment, Recruitment and Progression – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/recruitment/)

7. Introduction and Dissemination: The final policy was presented to institute coordinators during a dedicated session called Breakfast with HRS4R, providing an opportunity for discussion, clarification, and preparation for implementation. OTM-R working breakfast – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/otm-r-working-breakfast/)

The OTM-R implementation consisted of the following steps:

1. Document Preparation: Each institute downloaded the OTM-R document from the official website and completed the pre-marked sections. These sections were pre-defined by the HRS4R team to ensure a consistent structure across all documents. Institutes also added the logos of their respective public research institutions.

2. Publication of Documents: Once finalized, the completed OTM-R documents were published on the official websites of the respective institutes or centres. All participating institutes/centres have published both the HR Award logo and the OTM-R documents on their websites. Please refer to the document "Evidence for Assessors".

3. Trainings: The HRS4R team organized three professional training sessions (online and in-person) for approximately 50 supervisors and support staff responsible for administering specific recruitment steps at participating institutes and centres.

4. Process Optimization and Practical Guidance: These sessions provided practical guidance for implementing a transparent and open recruitment process in line with OTM-R principles. Feedback collected during the training contributed to the optimization of the newly designed recruitment process.

5. Sharing of Best Practices: Institutes were given access to two channels for sharing best practices related to OTM-R implementation:

- Secure repository "Oblak SAV" – a digital hub for direct exchange between institutes.
- "SurveyPlanet.com" – a tool for anonymous sharing of experiences and questions related to OTM-R implementation.

The inputs gathered through this platform were reviewed and synthesized by the HRS4R Team into a comprehensive Q&A format, which has been published on the official website: HRS4R_QA-en.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/HRS4R_QA-en.pdf).

1. HRS4R team continues to provide consultancy and practical help to all participants of the recruitment process via email, phone, or in-person meetings.
2. Training Materials for Selection Committees: E-learning materials and infographics were created to support training for Selection Committee members:

a) E-learning Video – Available in both Slovak and English on the Oblak SAV platform (an internal SAS platform). The video is intended exclusively for institutes participating in the HRS4R strategy and is not publicly accessible. All participating institutes/centres received access via a link sent to the designated coordinator's email. The link for the assessors is also referenced in the document "Evidence for Assessors".

b) Infographics – A Practical Guide and a Manual for Selection Committee Members were distributed in printed form (brochures) to all participating institutes/centres.

https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/tlac.png (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/tlac.png)

https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/image001.png (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/image001.png)

These materials are also available on the project website and on the Oblak SAV platform:

infografika_1_eng.png (2480×3508) (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/infografika_1_eng.png)

infografika2_online_eng.png (2540×14455) (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/infografika2_online_eng.png)

infografika_3_online_eng.png (2536×14113) (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/infografika_3_online_eng.png)

Each member of the Selection Committee becomes familiar with the selection process through the infographics and the e-learning video. Upon completion of the training, they sign a protocol confirming their participation (Annex No. 2 in the document "Principles of Selection and Recruitment").

Summary: As the first phase of OTM-R implementation is currently underway, consultations are ongoing regarding the implementation of the OTM-R rules adopted in March 2025. We have already received valuable feedback from institute coordinators and HR representatives concerning the need to revise the existing policy document. As a result, the revision has been added as a new action in the action plan for the next phase of the project. Furthermore, part of the revision is to establish a monitoring process and a quality control system for OTM-R implementation.

Please be aware that your OTM-R policy should be 'embedded' into the institutional HR strategy at the award renewal phase. The extended version of the reviewed HR strategy including the OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website.

4. Implementation process

General overview of the implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

Management of HR Excellence in Research is coordinated at the central level by the SAS Office, with a coordinator at each participating institution to ensure local implementation and alignment. The overall responsibility for the implementation process lies with the Department of Research and Development, SAS Office, led by the head of the department, Zuzana Hrabovska, and Dominika Olšovská (please see structure (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/struktura.png)). Two team members oversee the agenda, contributing part-time while managing other duties, yet their input remains pivotal to advancing project objectives.

To ensure coherent implementation across all SAS Institutes, procedures are being aligned and streamlined with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct through the above-mentioned actions. While the level of compliance varies across individual SAS Institutes, the implementation of the Action Plan is being tailored to reflect the specific needs, priorities, and capacities of each institution. Overall engagement remains strong, as the institute representatives involved in dialogue with the HRS4R Working Group are members of the Scientific Council, which guarantees high-level institutional responsibility, reinforces strategic ownership, and ensures long-term commitment to the implementation of the HRS4R principles.

The main challenge lies in the limited capacity of some smaller institutes—with fewer than 20 employees—which results in varying levels of implementation across the Academy. A great emphasis is placed on sharing best practices between the SAS Institutes.

The list of participating SAS Institutes and their coordinators is publicly accessible on the SAS website (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/sas-institutes/) and the Oblak SAS platform (link provided in the document titled 'Evidence for Assessors'). Official participation in the HRS4R process requires approval by the SAS Presidium. Only institutes that have completed a gap analysis and have committed to aligning with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct are eligible to participate in the SAS HRS4R implementation process and to use the "HR Excellence in Research" logo.

As of today, 33 out of 45 SAS Institutes are participating, representing a 73% engagement rate. Throughout the Interim Phase 2022–2025, three institutes joined the initiative in 2023, followed by three additional institutes in 2024 and one more in 2025.

This reflects a significant achievement and demonstrates strong commitment and interest across the SAS research community. Efforts are ongoing to encourage additional institutes to join the initiative, further enhancing collaboration, institutional alignment, and adherence to strategic objectives. It is the ambition of SAS to have two more institutes formally join the HR strategy by the end of 2028.

Organization chart of the SAS: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-org (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-org)

Steering Committee and HRS4R Working Group members: Steering-Committee-and-Working-Group-HRS4R_ENG.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Steering-Committee-and-Working-Group-HRS4R_ENG.pdf)

List of SAS Institutes participating in HR Strategy (Detailed overview provided in document „Evidence for Assessors")

SAS Institutes – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/sas-institutes/)

HRS4R team: Our team – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/contact-us/)

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist, which you will need to describe in detail:

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How have you prepared the internal review?*   ⌄

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Internal Review Preparation Process

The internal review was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of the HRS4R implementation at SAS.

1. Survey-Based Evaluation (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/questionnaire-research/)

In October 2025, the HRS4R Team, in close cooperation with HRS4R Working Group members, conducted a structured institutional survey consisting of 43 targeted questions aligned with the four pillars of the HRS4R framework. The survey received 724 responses, representing a 20% participation rate among research staff and other employees. This marks a significant increase compared to the 2018 survey, which included 19 questions and yielded 203 responses, corresponding to a 7.8% participation rate. The results of the 2025 survey were instrumental in shaping the new Action Plan for 2025–2028, providing a robust evidence base for strategic planning and policy refinement.

The notable increase in engagement is largely attributed to a shift in mindset among researchers—particularly early-career scientists—who are demonstrating a proactive interest in shaping the future of their working environment. Rather than reacting to existing structures, they are advocating for the establishment and strengthening of institutional support mechanisms in areas that remain insufficiently developed, including professional training, researcher well-being, international mobility, and career progression.

This emerging dynamic reflects a growing awareness of the critical role that a supportive and enabling research culture plays in fostering excellence. The active participation of researchers signals a collective ambition to co-create a more inclusive, responsive, and resilient research ecosystem within the SAS, aligned with European standards and values.

2. Targeted Consultations

Complementing the survey, members of the HRS4R Team conducted structured interviews with each responsible unit identified in the Action Plan. These consultations yielded valuable insights into implementation progress, operational challenges, and opportunities for enhancement. Each unit provided to the HRS4R Team with tailored documentation and analytical outputs to support their contributions to the internal review and the development of the final report. This dual methodology—combining quantitative data with qualitative stakeholder input—ensured a holistic review process, reinforcing the principles of transparency, inclusivity, and strategic coherence across the HRS4R implementation framework.

Finalization and Endorsement of the Internal Review

The preparation of the internal review was carried out in consultation with HR expert, whose insights and recommendations significantly contributed to the quality and relevance of the final document. All aspects of the review were thoroughly discussed with members of the HRS4R Working Group, who reviewed the draft, provided constructive feedback, and endorsed the report for submission to the SAS Presidium.

The document was uploaded to the European Commission's HRS4R e-tool, completing the internal review process in line with the procedural requirements of the HR Excellence in Research award.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Engagement of Research Staff and PhD Students in the HRS4R Implementation Process

Active engagement of research staff is a cornerstone of the SAS approach to implementing the HR

Strategy for Researchers. SAS recognizes that meaningful participation fosters ownership, transparency, and relevance in the development of institutional policies and practices.

1. Institutional Coordination and Dialogue

To facilitate structured dialogue and inclusive participation, HRS4R coordinators have been appointed across participating SAS institutes. These coordinators serve as key facilitators, bringing researchers together to discuss policy developments, survey design, training initiatives, and other strategic topics. Researchers are encouraged to express their views in detail, exchange perspectives with peers, and contribute to shaping the direction of institutional actions.

One notable example is the "Breakfast with HRS4R" initiative, which provides an informal setting for sharing ideas and generating inspiration for future activities. During the implementation of OTM-R principles, personnel were offered two distinct channels to provide feedback—publicly and anonymously—ensuring inclusivity and psychological safety in expressing opinions.

2. Evidence-Based Feedback through Surveys

Surveys are a vital instrument for collecting structured, anonymous feedback from researchers and staff. SAS conducted comprehensive surveys in 2018 and 2025 as part of its commitment to the HR Excellence in Research process. The survey was structured around the four pillars of the HRS4R framework:

- Ethical and Professional Aspects
- Recruitment (OTM-R)
- Working Conditions and Social Security
- Training and Career Development

The most recent survey, conducted in October 2025, will inform the development of the 2025–2028 Action Plan. SAS ensures that each survey is purpose-driven, user-friendly, and methodologically sound, providing the HRS4R Working Group with a robust evidence base for strategic decision-making. Survey results also help identify areas of excellence and opportunities for improvement.

Survey reports are publicly accessible:

- 2025 Survey Report – Dotazníkové šetrenie 2025 ENG (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Dotaznikove-setrenie-2025-ENG.pdf)
- 2018 Survey Report – Dotazníkové šetrenie 2018 ENG (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Dotaznikove-setrenie-2018-ENG.pdf)

3. Inclusion of PhD Students

Although SAS is not a degree-awarding institution, it hosts external PhD students enrolled at partner universities who conduct their research within SAS institutes. These students form a vital part of the research ecosystem and are essential to shaping the next generation of scientific talent. SAS is committed to ensuring that the voices of PhD students are heard and integrated into the HRS4R process, particularly in areas related to project schemes, supervision, and career development.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Governance Structure for HRS4R Implementation at SAS

To ensure robust oversight and strategic alignment in the implementation of the HRS4R, SAS has established a dedicated Steering Committee and Working Group. (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Steering-Committee-and-Working-Group-HRS4R_ENG.pdf)

The Steering Committee serves as the principal governance body responsible for monitoring, guiding, and validating the execution of the HRS4R Action Plan. It is chaired by the Head of the SAS Ethics Committee, together with the Vice President of SAS for Science, Research, and Innovation acting as Deputy Chair. The Committee further comprises high-level representatives of the SAS Presidium, including:

- The President of SAS (honorary member),
- The Vice President for Budget and Legislation,
- The Vice President for International Relations,
- The Vice Presidents representing three scientific sections.

In alignment with their institutional mandates, Steering Committee members actively support HRS4R implementation across SAS institutes by providing expert guidance, facilitating coordination, and promoting transparent information exchange. The Committee convenes at least once annually, with formal minutes of the meeting documenting its deliberations and decisions.

Operational Support: The HRS4R Working Group

To operationalize the HRS4R strategy, SAS has established a Working Group consisting of R1–R4 researchers, HR representatives, and the HRS4R expert team, tasked with executing the Action Plan and ensuring continuous progress.The HRS4R Working Group:

- Reviews and discusses implementation steps and milestone achievements,
- Proposes necessary revisions to the Action Plan,
- Conducts strategic consultations and prepares documentation for the SAS Presidium,
- Evaluates targeted measures and coordinates implementation activities.

In collaboration with HRS4R coordinators from individual SAS institutes, the HRS4R Working Group provides technical support, facilitates cross-institutional coordination, identifies implementation barriers, and proposes actionable solutions. It also monitors progress and ensures alignment with strategic objectives.

The HRS4R Working Group meets at least bi-monthly and is expanded semi-annually to include representatives from participating SAS entities. Meetings are convened by the Head of the Steering Committee or an authorized delegate from the HRS4R Working Group. Attendance requires a minimum of three representatives from the SAS Presidium and two personnel from the SAS Office. Outcomes of each meeting are formally recorded and communicated to the Steering Committee for review and strategic oversight. Steering-Committee-and-Working-Group-HRS4R_ENG.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/Steering-Committee-and-Working-Group-HRS4R_ENG.pdf)

Supplementary Coordination at the Operational Level

To ensure continuous progress and agile decision-making, the HRS4R Team convenes on a weekly basis. These meetings serve as a platform for reviewing implementation status, assessing milestone achievements, and discussing necessary follow-up actions. Regular engagement at this level reinforces strategic alignment, facilitates timely adjustments, and promotes a proactive approach to delivering the HRS4R Action Plan. Our team – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/contact-us/)

Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's *
research strategy, overarching HR policy   ⌄

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Strategic Integration of HR Excellence in Research within Institutional Frameworks: the newly appointed Presidium of SAS for the term 2025–2029 introduces renewed leadership and a sharpened strategic vision. A key milestone of this tenure is the formal incorporation of HR Excellence in Research into the *Programme Declaration of the Presidium* (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-psav), affirming SAS's institutional commitment to advancing the HRS4R agenda and embedding the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

At SAS, the HRS4R Working Group plays a pivotal role in guiding long-term strategic development. Comprising representatives from senior management, research institutes, and research staff, the group ensures that HR Excellence remains a visible and actionable priority across institutional planning. Its terms of reference promote inclusive participation and establish a clear strategic mandate, enabling the group to actively shape the evolution of HR policies and practices.

When overarching strategies are formulated, the HRS4R Working Group advocates for the integration of HR Excellence principles, ensuring alignment with European standards. This commitment is reflected in the SAS Strategic Plan 2025–2029, which outlines six core strategic goals:

1. Excellence in Science

- Continuous improvement of conditions for world-class research.
- Updating evaluation principles and peer-review criteria for scientific outputs.
- Establishing a dedicated SAS Project Support Department to assist applicants for ERC, MSCA, and other prestigious international programmes.

2. Human Resources and Efficient Governance System

- Creation of a dedicated body for human resources management.
- Structured professional development programmes for current and future leaders.
- Enhancement of the working environment.
- Promotion of non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and diversity in cooperation with the SAS Trade Union, through the implementation of HRS4R principles, the SAS Gender Equality Plan, and other relevant policies.

3. Support for Doctoral Students, Postdoctoral Researchers, and Early-Career Scientists

- Expansion of motivational and support instruments for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.
- Strengthening internationalisation of doctoral studies and research teams.

- Promotion of collaboration with domestic and international universities.
- Further development of the SAS Doctoral School.
- Simplification of accreditation and supervision systems within SAS.

4. Science as a Pillar of the State

- Reinforcing the role of science in national development and policymaking.

5. Independent, Safe, and Ethical Research

- Alignment of the SAS Code of Ethics with European and national standards (e.g., European Code of Research Integrity, Slovak Code of Scientific Integrity and Ethics).
- Implementation of measures for data protection, cybersecurity, infrastructure resilience, and risk management in international cooperation, with emphasis on research security within the European Research Area.

6. Raising the Profile of SAS and Enhancing Public Presentation of Science

- Systematic strengthening of the Academy's media presence through modern communication channels and public engagement strategies.

Together, these strategic actions reflect a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to embedding HR Excellence in Research across SAS's institutional structures. Through its mandate, the Steering Committee guarantees that researchers receive the support and opportunities to thrive within the Academy and to engage competitively at the European level.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Steering Committee – comprising senior leadership, including the President of the SAS – guarantees strategic oversight and full institutional support for implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan. Its formal endorsement by the SAS Presidium for the designated implementation period confirms a sustained commitment to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and to excellence in human resource management.

The HRS4R Working Group has ensured continuous oversight of the implementation process through regularly scheduled meetings, closely aligned with the proposed timeline and milestones. This structured monitoring approach has enabled the timely execution of actions, transparent reporting, and strategic coordination across all participating units.

Time Allocation and Implementation Support

To ensure effective implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan, the HRS4R Working Group coordinates a realistic and structured time commitment from all responsible units. This approach enables each unit to fulfil its designated actions within the agreed timeline while maintaining operational feasibility.

In addition to planned activities, responsible units are also granted sufficient flexibility to accommodate additional tasks that may emerge organically from previous actions or be delayed due to external factors, such as changes in government regulations or administrative procedures. This adaptive framework ensures continuity, responsiveness, and alignment with evolving institutional and policy contexts, while safeguarding the integrity of the implementation process.

How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?* ⌄

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The HRS4R Working Group provides oversight of the Action Plan through a structured monitoring process. Progress is continuously tracked via active coordination between the HRS4R Team and coordinators, with regular updates reporting the status of all new, ongoing, and completed actions.

Each action is reviewed to verify correct implementation, adherence to the proposed timeline, and the visibility of expected outcomes—such as defined targets and indicators—within the Action Plan. The HRS4R Working Group applies a combination of short-, medium-, and long-term timelines, recognizing that every action, regardless of duration, contributes meaningfully to the transformation process.

To ensure effective implementation and continuous monitoring of the HRS4R Action Plan, the HRS4R Team applies project management tools such as the Gantt Chart, which is used to track milestones, deadlines, and interdependencies between activities.In scheduled meetings, the HRS4R Team reports to both the HRS4R Working Group and the Steering Committee, presenting implementation progress and outlining activities planned for the upcoming period. Any deviations from the timeline are addressed collaboratively, with the Steering Committee providing strategic governance. Adjustments—typically minor—are made to ensure continued alignment with institutional goals and to safeguard the integrity and momentum of the HRS4R implementation.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Use of Indicators to Measure Progress and Performance

Indicators serve as a critical instrument for monitoring progress and evaluating performance within the Action Plan. The selection of indicators is strategic and deliberate. Each indicator focuses on manageable, evidence-based steps that contribute to a broader understanding of institutional transformation. Taken collectively, they offer a clear picture of how the HRS4R process is progressing and where further strategic attention is required. Well-defined indicators ensure the HRS4R Working Group remains results-driven, guides evidence-based decisions, and proactively addresses challenges while planning.

From the outset, SAS has adopted a realistic and context-sensitive approach to what can be achieved within the framework of national policy and legislative constraints. The selected indicators and targets are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound – providing a rigorous framework to monitor progress and ensure tangible results. Examples include:

- Adoption of a new institutional policy.
- Launch of innovative project schemes.
- Transition to fully digital project management platforms.

To ensure transparency and traceability, each indicator is accompanied by supporting documentation, such as links to relevant policies, training portals, or institutional resources, embedded directly within the Action Plan.

The HRS4R Working Group conducts regular reviews of all indicators, assessing their adaptability, durability, and reliability—whether they relate to policy changes, conference participation, or other strategic outputs.

By combining structure with evidence-based decision-making, the HRS4R process remains dynamic, accountable, and fully aligned with institutional and European standards of research excellence.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Preparation for On-Site Assessment

This report has been prepared based on comprehensive documentation gathered throughout the HRS4R implementation at the SAS, including key insights from the 2025 institutional survey. It provides a structured, evidence-driven overview of progress made, challenges addressed, and strategic actions undertaken to advance the HR Excellence in Research agenda.

In advance of the scheduled on-site assessment, a tailored presentation will be developed to highlight the key milestones, address outstanding issues, and reaffirm SAS's commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

To ensure inclusive and representative stakeholder engagement, targeted meetings will be organised with members of all relevant constituencies, including:

- Researchers across all career stages and profiles (R1–R4)
- Non-Slovak-speaking researchers
- Women in research
- Recognised scientific leaders
- Researchers displaced by the ongoing war
- Administrative and support personnel

This inclusive approach ensures that the review process captures the full diversity of perspectives within the SAS research community and reflects the institution's commitment to transparency, equity, and excellence in human resources for research.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

The Value of the HRS4R Community in Strengthening Implementation

A key factor in the successful implementation of the HRS4R strategy at SAS has been the support and collaboration of a strong and active HRS4R community, both within the Czech and Slovak Republics and across Europe. This network plays a vital role in sharing best practices, exchanging implementation experiences, and fostering mutual learning through regular seminars, webinars, and peer consultations.

In Slovakia, the national coordinator for HRS4R is SAIA (https://www.saia.sk/en/), which facilitates institutional cooperation and knowledge exchange. SAIA organizes an annual meeting of all Slovak institutions holding the HR Excellence in Research award—currently, nine institutions. These gatherings provide a valuable platform for dialogue, reflection, and strategic alignment among award holders.

Thanks to this vibrant European HRS4R community, HRS4R Team members have had the opportunity to engage with numerous inspiring professionals, including Barbora Wahlová and Isabelle Halleux, whose expertise and dedication have enriched our journey. Among the most impactful encounters has been with Mary Kate O'Regan from University College Cork (UCC), Ireland, whose visionary approach and leadership in HR strategy have served as a benchmark for excellence and innovation.

This collective engagement underscores the importance of transnational collaboration in advancing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and strengthening the culture of HR excellence across the European Research Area.

Overview of the Strengthening of the HRS4R Community at SAS:

April 2023: Exchange of good practice with the Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics CAS – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/exchange-of-good-practice-with-the-institute-of-animal-physiology-and-genetics-cas/)

November 2023 - Exchange of good practice between HR Award holders – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/exchange-of-good-practice-between-hr-award-holders/)

November 2024: Empowering Research Careers: HRS4R and CoARA in Focus – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/empowering-research-careers-hrs4r-and-coara-in-focus/)

October 2025: Inspirations from Ireland: HR Approaches and OTM-R Principles at University College Cork – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/inspirations-from-ireland-hr-approaches-and-otm-r-principles-at-university-college-cork/)

November 2025: HR Excellence in Research 2025 Conference in Prague – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/hr-excellence-in-research-2025-conference-in-prague/)

Addressing Recommendations from the 2020 and 2022 Consensus Reports

This section focuses on the key recommendations from the 2020 and 2022 Consensus Reports and details how SAS has addressed them within the Action Plan. Each recommendation was systematically reviewed by the HRS4R Working Group, with corresponding actions fully integrated into the implementation strategy. Progress has been closely monitored through regular meetings, updated documentation, and ongoing stakeholder consultations. Timelines and approaches have been adjusted as needed to account for institutional capacities and evolving national policy context.

The implementation of these recommendations demonstrates SAS's commitment to continuous improvement, alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, and readiness for future evaluation phases.

Initial Phase – Consensus Report Recommendations in 2020:

1. We recommend elaborating an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions and also to put into practice a quality control system for OTM-R.

Previous recommendations will provide to Slovak Academy of Sciences with many tools to attract the most suitable researchers from the national and international scientific landscape and to develop a strategy to attract underrepresented groups.

How SAS addresses this recommendation:

Detailed information about the implementation process of the OTM-R principles is provided in the section "Comments on the Implementation of the OTM-R Principles."

Since the OTM-R principles were implemented in the organization only this year, we have so far gathered individual feedback from HRS4R coordinators. Implementation of OTM-R is at an early stage, and a robust monitoring process is being established to ensure integration within the institutional quality control framework and alignment with policy requirements. This process is included in the new action plan 2026-2028 and will be implemented in the next phase of the HR strategy.

Other modifications

Information on the HRS4R strategy is made available through multiple channels to ensure transparency and accessibility across the entire organization.

On the main **SAS website**, a prominently displayed section, 'SAS Important Links,' directs users to the dedicated **HRS4R webpage**, which allows flexible updates, edits, and additions of key implementation details via the WordPress platform. This dedicated page consolidates essential information, including implementation updates, documents, and news, and serves as a central communication channel with participating SAS Institutes.

Individual SAS Institutes disseminate HRS4R information through internal websites and communication platforms, providing researchers and staff at all levels have prompt access to guidance, updates, and supporting resources.

URL: https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-hrs4r (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-hrs4r)

URL: HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/home/)

2. We cannot clearly asses the following: if the organisation has clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees and concerning the composition of selection committees.

How SAS addresses this recommendation:

On 12 March 2025, the Presidium of the (SAS) approved the "Principles of Recruitment and Selection of Employees in Public Research Institutions of the Slovak Academy of Sciences," in alignment with the OTM-R principles. The document applies to the recruitment of all researchers and other staff working in SAS Public Research Institutions and the SAS Office. The document is a key resource for recruitment guidelines, including clear rules governing the appointment and composition of selection committees.

These rules are outlined in Section 4: "Evaluation and Selection Principles" on page 9 of the document, which is published on the website:

OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf)

3. Does the organisation has an appropriate complaints mechanism in place.

How SAS addresses this recommendation:

The SAS provides an effective complaint mechanism, adapted to both recruitment stages and specific working conditions, ensuring transparency and fairness throughout the process (OTM-R Principles) page No. 11 point 20., section 4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PRINCIPLES

OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/OTS-N-Zasady-naboru-a-vyberu-zamestnancov-vo-verejnej-vyskumnej-institucii.L_Edited_EN.pdf)

Any formal complaint concerning the selection procedure will be assessed by the statutory representative of the SAS Public Research Institution (SAS P. R. I.) together with the Chair of the Selection committee, ensuring impartial and transparent handling.

To ensure impartiality, an alternative review process is applied when a member of the Selection committee also serves as the statutory representative of SAS P.R.I. Formal complaints related to the selection procedure are assessed by the Chair of the Scientific Council of SAS P.R.I., guaranteeing that the review is conducted by an authority not directly involved in the statutory role.

Complaints involving potential breaches of ethical standards are additionally referred to the Chair of the Ethics Committee of SAS P.R.I., provided that an Ethics Committee has been formally established within the institution. The Ethics Committee provides independent oversight in cases concerning ethical issues.

All complaints are managed within a clearly defined timeframe: the review process, including assessment and any resulting recommendations, must be completed within 30 calendar days from submission. This structured procedure ensures transparency, accountability, and the timely resolution of concerns arising during the selection process.

Ethical Complaints

Several participating SAS Institutes and Centres have instituted dedicated Ethical Committees to oversee and resolve cases of unethical conduct within their own organisational frameworks.

In instances where complaints cannot be adequately addressed at the local level, cases are systematically escalated to the SAS Ethical Committee. This Committee serves as the pivotal authority for maintaining research integrity and enforcing rigorous academic standards throughout the SAS network.

Allegations of unethical behaviour are managed through a robust, impartial, and confidential procedure that guarantees fairness and transparency in all outcomes. The Ethical Committee´s mandate includes addressing grave violations such as plagiarism, data falsification or fabrication, unethical authorship practices, breaches of ethical standards in research involving human of animal subjects, and other forms of serious scientific misconduct.

To promote transparency and accessibility, the SAS Ethical Committee provides a dedicated form, the **"Report of Violation of the SAS Code of Ethics,"** which is available on its website. This mechanism facilitates the submission of complaints or concerns by researchers and staff, supporting timely and responsible handling of potential ethical breaches.

SAS-Institutes_ethical-committees-1.pdf (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/SAS-Institutes_ethical-committees-1.pdf)

https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&commission_no=16 (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-commission&commission_no=16)

Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/ethical-issues/)

Non-discrimination/sexual harassment complaints

As a cornerstone of its Gender Equality Plan (GEP), SAS has implemented rigorous and transparent procedures for reporting and addressing sexual harassment and discrimination. These measures are designed to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all employees, researchers, and students.

Sexual harassment and discrimination are unequivocally prohibited and constitute severe breaches of ethical and professional standards. SAS enforces comprehensive, impartial, and confidential complaint-handling mechanisms, ensuring accountability at every stage.

When incidents cannot be resolved locally at the department or institute level, cases are escalated to the central Gender Equality and Ethics units. These bodies provide independent oversight, guaranteeing thorough review and equitable resolution.

To promote accessibility and transparency, SAS offers clear, user-friendly guidance on reporting processes, supported by dedicated forms and contact points. Employees, researchers, and students are empowered to report concerns freely and without fear of retaliation, reinforcing a culture of respect and equal opportunity throughout the organisation.

All complaints are addressed within defined timelines to ensure prompt resolution. Responsible bodies deliver recommendations and implement necessary follow-up actions. This structured framework underscores SAS´s unwavering commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct, gender equality, and non-discrimination across all organisational levels.

Procedures for reporting and resolving cases of sexual harassment at the Slovak Academy of Sciences (https://www.sav.sk/uploads/dokumentySAV/sas-gender/Reporting_procedures_for_SH_SAS.pdf):

Article in SAS Academy journal – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/article-in-sas-academy-journal/)

https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-gender (https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=sas-gender)

https://www.sav.sk/uploads/dokumentySAV/sas-gender/Reporting_procedures_for_SH_SAS.pdf (https://www.sav.sk/uploads/dokumentySAV/sas-gender/Reporting_procedures_for_SH_SAS.pdf)

Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science – HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/ethical-issues/)

Interim Phase – Consensus Report Recommendations in 2022:

1. The HRS4R information in English is not available in the visible place on the organization site web. At the address - https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&doc=activity-hrs4r - the information related to some initial HR documents is easy to be found in the Slovak language but is difficult to be found in English (we found some documents from 2018, and we mentioned them above).

Even in Slovak language, on the site are not many documents related to HR.

The documents concerning HRS4R (in English) must be published in a visible and easily accessible place on the organization's website.

It is necessary to update and upgrade the organization's website. To design and execute a high-impact HR strategy, the focus must be on actively supporting researchers' development, training, working conditions, and mobility.

Advancing the HR strategy will decisively boost international visibility – while ensuring full compliance with national legislation – and drive internal effectiveness through the establishment of a reliable complaint mechanism and the strengthening of the Ombudsman´s mandate.

Key performance indicators should be clearly defined, measurable, and directly linked to specific actions, ensuring systematic monitoring of progress and impact.

How SAS addresses this recommendation:

The organisation has significantly enhanced its website (https://hrs4r.sav.sk/en/home/), as outlined in the section "Initial Phase – Consensus Report Recommendations from 2020".