



ifo Institute – Leibniz Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich

**Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) – ifo Institute**

**Internal evaluation: Implementation of the Action Plan 2019 - 2023**

Munich, February 2021

## **Preface**

Ensuring a high degree of competency, especially on the part of the research staff, and creating an ideal framework for the achievement of scientific excellence are central elements of the personnel and quality policy of the ifo Institute, which is why it supports the “European Charter for Researchers” adopted by the European Commission in 2005 and the associated “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”.

The ifo Institute pursues the principles set out in the Charter and Code to optimize the work environment for researchers and to ensure fair recruitment processes. An internal analysis of the state of implementation of these principles and an action plan was submitted to the European Commission. As a result, the ifo Institute received the “HR Excellence in Research” Award from the EU Commission in January 2019.

After two years of implementing and continuously updating and reevaluating the action plan an internal evaluation gives an overview of the milestones that were already achieved, the processes of the implementation, and an outlook on the plan for the next years.

## **Implementation of the Action Plan**

An Euraxess working group was established to organize and monitor the implementation of the action plan. This working group is consisting of the following permanent members:

- Ms. Dittmer (Member of the Executive Board)
- Ms. Wagner (Head of Human-Resources and Law)
- Mr. Sauer (Quality Management Officer)
- Mr. Schmitt (Representative for the Researchers)

The working group meets regularly every month to monitor the progress of the various actions and to initiate the implementation of new measures. Irregularly - depending on the actions in focus - other representatives of the ifo Institutes are consulted or join the meetings of the working group. Amongst them are the following:

- Appointees for the doctoral students
- Equal Opportunities Officer
- Data Protection Officer
- Members of the Internet Team
- Other Members of Human-Resources and Law
- Other Members of the Quality Management Team
- Other Researchers

At these meetings, previously requested written or oral statements from the departments responsible for implementation are evaluated. The responsible departments include the IT team, the Internet and Intranet Team, and the new established project management team. For some actions also the ifo works council was involved.

After the implementation of the measures, individual discussions with the persons involved in the processes, as well as representatives of doctoral candidates and research staff, are used to evaluate whether the objectives set out in the Action Plan where possible indicators for the success of the actions are specified and evaluated

after the implementation. Furthermore, a continuously updated SharePoint with the information about all measures was created.

Moreover, ifo continuously seeks to identify further potential for improvement which may have arisen. For the identification of these potentials various channels are used. Internal audits by the quality management team in all ifo departments as well as external audits by TÜV Süd are used to find new potentials for improvement and to examine the effectiveness of the measures. Furthermore, ifo has a reward-based suggestion system where all employees can make improvement suggestions. As a long-term strategy systematic feedback talks with all ifo employees will be implemented. Results of these talks can also be transformed into measures for the action plan.

Also, new developments in processes or situations like the Corona crisis can lead to a necessity of new actions to guarantee an optimal research environment at ifo. After the outbreak of Covid-19, for example, ifo immediately initiated the implementation of higher hygiene standards and more flexibility regarding working hours and working from home.

The following list contains all actions from the original action plan send to the EU as well as newly added measures. It is explained in detail which article of Charter and Code they refer to, what targets should be accomplished by which actions, the responsible and involved persons/departments, and the status of the implementation.

## **1. Ethical and professional aspects**

**1.1** *Including the obligation to adhere to the rules of good scientific practice in the employment contracts of research staff and doctoral students. (Article 1)*

Target: Increasing the transparency of the rules of good scientific practice for researchers.

Responsible: HR Unit

Actions: Update for all new employment contracts regarding these rules.

Status: implementation planned for 2021.

**1.2** *Provision of all information also in English. (Article 5)*

Target: Reducing language barriers for Non-German speaking employees with regard to information on national, sectoral or institutional regulations. Indicator: translate 10-20% of all existing texts per year.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit, Internet/Intranet Team, QM Team

Actions: Information by mail in two languages, contract details in English, English information in the Intranet, company agreements translated in English, instruction in fire protection and safety. For the information that will be translated in English a priority list was created.

Status: Already implemented about 50% (that is more than the targeted 10-20% of all texts per year), targeted end date 2022.

**1.3** *Designation of an official representative for inclusion. (Article 10)*

Target: Transparency in compliance with obligations to protect and promote severely disabled employees.

Responsible: Executive Board

Actions: Since 2020 the ifo Institute has an official representative for inclusion.

Status: implemented 100%.

**1.4** *Including a reference to “non-discrimination” in job postings. (Article 10)*

Target: Further increase in transparency of the hiring process.

Responsible: HR Unit

Actions: All job postings now include the non-discrimination reference by default.

Status: implemented 100%.

**1.5** *Evaluation of the Career-Path Regulation regarding points and formulations that are not specific enough. (Article 11)*

Target: Further increase in transparency of the classification of pay scales, removal of time limits in contracts, appraisals.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit

Actions: Updating the Career-Path Regulation. The first step is a meeting with all department heads to discuss all points in the Career-Path-Regulation and talking about possible changes.

Status: Targeted implementation in 2021-2022.

**1.6** *Implementation of official feedback talks. (Article 11)*

Target: Employees receive feedback from their manager on their work performance and on the achievement of any goals set for the year in an annual structured discussion. In addition, further career development is planned, and measures are drawn up to achieve this, in particular further training measures. Managers receive feedback from employees on working conditions and processes as well as on leadership quality.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit

Actions: Feedback talk for all employees with their supervisors. Standardization of this process.

Status: Targeted implementation in 2021-2022.

**1.7** *Finding new ways to increase the number of female candidates for positions at the postdoctoral level (Article 27)*

Target: Attracting more female candidates for positions at the postdoctoral level and reaching the equal opportunity targets from the existing plans based on the cascade model.

Responsible: Executive Board, Equal opportunities officer, HR unit, Scientific Advisory Council

Actions: Implementing a long run strategy to make working at ifo more attractive for female postdocs. Discussions are being held with each research area individually regarding upcoming recruitments, initially up to the year 2025. The aim is to achieve a balanced ratio of male and female postdocs at the institute by then, and at least a proportion of 40% women in scientific management positions by then. Discussions are

being held on suitable means and reasons to support the recruitment of female scientists. Among other things, a task force will be established for this purpose, with whose support the topic will be transformed into a sustainable process.

Status: Ongoing.

### **1.8** *Revision of project processes and documentation. (Article 6)*

Target: Digitalization of processes, relief of the researchers regarding administrative and project documentation duties.

Responsible: Executive Board, QM Unit, project management team, IT, data protection officer

Actions: A project management team was implemented that helps the researchers with administrative duties, processes were already digitalized. Further digitalisations should be implemented, and the internal documentation of the processes has to be updated.

Status: implemented 60%. Targeted date for full implementation: 2021.

## **2. Recruitment process**

### **2.1** *Mention of the advantage of international experience in job advertisements and on the website (Article 6)*

Target: Further increase in transparency of the hiring process.

Responsible: HR Unit, Internet Team

Actions: All job postings now include this mention by default.

Status: implemented 100%.

## **3. Working conditions and social security**

### **3.1** *Expansion of the research data centre in regard to personnel, responsibilities, and infrastructure. (Article 23)*

Target: Enhancing the excellence of the data centre especially with regard to Big Data research. Constant increase of the yearly archived data from scientific papers at the data centre.

Responsible: Executive Board, EBDC, IT, QM Team

Actions: Currently an expert report is created on the future strategy.

Status: targeted end date of the implementation: 2023.

**3.2** *Mention Pro-active references to the copyright claims that authors of publications have. New employees will be informed of how to register with VGWort and will receive an annual e-mail reminder to declare publications with VGWort. (Article 31)*

Target: Raising the awareness of ifo employees regarding their intellectual property rights.

Responsible: HR Unit, ifo library

Actions: The ifo library sends out the information on a yearly base by mail in German and English. New employees get the information in their welcome package.

Status: implemented 100%.

**3.3** *Expansion of the Intranet. In particular, the creation of an interactive SharePoint platform for researchers. (Article 23)*

Target: Improving the exchange of knowledge between employees, thereby increasing synergy effects.

Responsible: Executive Board, Intranet Team, IT

Actions: The SharePoint platform is online. Various forums were created where researchers can interact about different topics (research topics, programming, working with kids, ...). The platform will be developed further continuously.

Status: implemented 100%.

## **4. Training of young academics and researchers**

**4.1** *Introduction of a written agreement between doctoral students and supervisors, which includes the definition of milestones, the monitoring of progress and meetings with supervisors. (Articles 36 & 40)*

Target: Establishing the procedures for the supervision of doctoral students more firmly.

Responsible: Executive Board, appointees for the doctoral students

Actions: The agreements are made via the Munich Graduate School of Economics.

Status: implemented 100%.



#### **4.2** *Closing of career development agreements with postdocs. (Article 23)*

Target: Increase of transparency.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit

Actions: The agreements are made via the University of Munich.

Status: implemented 100%.

### **5. Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles**

#### **5.1** *Development of a new HR website. (Articles 1 & 12)*

Target: Detailed and transparent information on the recruitment process, the ifo doctoral program, the development prospects (Career-Path Regulation), the equal opportunity advancement plan.

Responsible: HR Unit, Internet Team.

Actions: The new HR website is online. It includes the OTM-R strategy, links to Euraxess and the Munich Graduate School of Economics. Testimonials and tutorials were included. Furthermore, also the ifo presence on LinkedIn was expanded. The addition of even more content is still in the making.

Status: Ongoing.

#### **5.2** *Inclusion of the OTM-R procedure in the website. (Article 19)*

Target: Completely transparent internal documentation of the OTM-R procedure.

Responsible: HR Unit, Internet team

Actions: The OTM-R strategy can be found on the new HR website and in all job postings.

Status: implemented 100%.

#### **5.3** *Introduction of an e-recruitment-tool. (Article 4)*

Target: Simplification of job applications, both for the ifo Institute and the applicants.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit

Actions: The implementation of the new e-recruitment tool was finished in October 2020.

Status: implemented 100%.

**5.4** *Inclusion of already existing incentives for researchers from abroad in the texts of the job advertisements (German language courses, assistance with moving costs). (Article 12)*

Target: Increase the share of applications of qualified researchers from abroad.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit

Actions: Language courses, help with the relocation are offered with the assumption of costs.

Status: implemented 100%.

**5.5** *Comprehensive information for the applicants in the job advertisements with reference to the new HR website. (Article 12)*

Target: Improved presentation of information in the job advertisements that leads to an increased number of adequate applications.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR Unit

Actions: All job postings now include links to the detailed information on the new HR website. The overall number of applications for open positions rose in 2020. Ifo will keep monitoring if that trend is

Status: implemented 100%.

**5.6** *Updating the internal documentation of the recruitment processes. (Article 5)*

Target: Improved internal documentation.

Responsible: HR Unit, QM Team

Actions: The process was updated documented in the internal quality management manual. The OTM-R strategy was also documented.

Status: implemented 100%.

## **6. New Actions during the implementation process**

**6.1** *Career evenings for doctoral students and researchers with former doctoral students of the ifo Institute. (Article 30)*

Target: Exchange of experiences (work life outside ifo, required competences, job application processes, ...), networking possibilities for doctoral students.

Responsible: appointees for the doctoral students

Actions: The event is organised once a year with up to 4 former doctoral students. First event was in October 2019.

Status: implemented 100%.

#### **6.2** *Invitation of ifo alumni to ifo events. (Article 30)*

Target: Exchange of experiences, networking possibilities.

Responsible: Communication unit

Actions: Every ifo centre can invite alumni to the summer party. To the ifo annual meeting all alumni are invited.

Status: implemented 100%.

#### **6.3** *Creating a research fund for postdocs. (Article 26)*

Target: Better support for researchers with their research projects.

Responsible: Executive Board

Actions: Inhouse support for research projects can be granted. A detailed description of how to get these grants can be found in the intranet.

Status: implemented 100%.

#### **6.4** *Specification of fixed rules for the assumption of relocation costs. (Article 29)*

Target: Increasing the transparency of the process.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR unit

Actions: The rules were specified. A note about the assumption of relocation costs is included in all job postings.

Status: implemented 100%.

#### **6.5** *Implementation of a new data protection concept. (Article 3)*

Target: Adapting the data protection policy to new requirements and challenges. Sharpening the awareness of all employees for data protection and IT security.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR unit, IT, data protection officer

Actions: First a catalogue of necessary measures was created and, on the basis of that, a new concept was implemented. Obligatory online training course in data protection and IT security for all employees.

Status: implemented 100%.

## **7. Actions arising from the Corona crisis**

### **7.1** *Expansion of the possibilities for working from home.*

Target: More flexibility for the employees. Protection of the health of all employees during the pandemic.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR unit

Actions: Possibilities for working from home were created (e.g. hardware and expansion of remote capacities). After a few months all employees were surveyed on their experience with working from home. The results showed that employees were mostly able to cope well with the challenges and appreciated the high flexibility regarding working hours and home office. How more flexibility can be transferred to the post-pandemic phase is currently being discussed at the institute.

Status: implemented 100%.

### **7.2** *New company agreements for home office regulations and regulations of the working time.*

Target: Adapting the old agreements to the new standards with a higher flexibility for the employees.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR unit, works council.

Actions: A new agreement is created in collaboration with the ifo works council also based on the survey of all employees on their experiences with working from home. Core hours for researchers were eliminated to give them more flexibility.

Status: Final implementation in 2021.

### **7.3** *Creation of hygiene concepts at ifo during the pandemic.*

Target: Protection of the health of all employees that are not working in home office.

Responsible: Executive Board, HR unit, work safety officer.

Actions: Continuous evaluation and expansion of hygiene measures. Continuous information of all employees about all measures.

Status: implemented 100%.

## Time schedule of the implementation

The following diagram gives an overview of the current and planned status of the implementation of all actions:

	2019				2020				2021				2022				2023				Status
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>1. Ethical and professional aspects</b>																					
1.1 Rules of good scientific practice in employment contracts																					0%
1.2 Provision of all information also in English																					50%
1.3 Official representative for inclusion																					100%
1.4 Reference to "non-discrimination" in job postings																					100%
1.5 Evaluation of the Career-Path Regulation																					0%
1.6 Implementation of official feedback talks																					0%
1.7 Gender balance on postdoc level																					ongoing
1.8 Revision of project processes and documentation																					60%
<b>2. Recruitment process</b>																					
2.1 Advantage of international experience																					100%
<b>3. Working conditions and social security</b>																					
3.1 Expansion of the research data centre																					20%
3.2 VGWort																					100%
3.3 Expansion of the Intranet																					100%
<b>4. Training of young academics and researchers</b>																					
4.1 Written agreement for doctoral students																					100%
4.2 Career development agreements with postdocs																					100%
<b>5. OTMR principles</b>																					
5.1 Development of a new HR website																					90%
5.2 Inclusion of the OTM-R procedure in the website																					100%
5.3 E-recruitment tool																					100%
5.4 Incentives for researchers from abroad																					100%
5.5 Information for applicants new HR website																					100%
5.6 Internal documentation of the recruitment process																					100%
<b>6. New Actions since 2019</b>																					
6.1 Career evenings																					100%
6.2 Invitation for ifo alumni																					100%
6.3 Research fund for postdocs																					100%
6.4 Assumption of relocation costs																					100%
6.5 Data protection concept																					100%
<b>7. Actions arising from the Corona crisis</b>																					
7.1 Homeoffice expansion																					100%
7.2 Homeoffice and working time working agreements																					70%
7.3 Hygiene concepts																					100%

## **Conclusion and Outlook**

A key factor in achieving the high quality and guiding objectives of the ifo Institute is the continuous further development of the institutional framework of research. Therefore, the Charter and Code of the EU Commission helped to get an overview of the status quo at the ifo Institute and to identify potentials for improvements.

During the last two years of implementing the various measures in the action plan ifo already achieved significant progresses in various fields. At the same time new potentials are identified and the action plan is continuously updated and developed.

The Euraxess working group will continue the work of the implementation according to the process and time schedule as described before. In addition, for the preparation of the external review by the EU the Euraxess working group will once again include all stakeholders and will also receive the support of the Scientific Advisory Council.

ifo Institute, Munich, February 2021.