

EC Consensus Report - FINAL

This report was drafted by the Lead-Assessor in consensus with the members of the assessment team

Submission date: 06/10/2022

Initial Assessment - EC Consensus Report

Case number: 2020CZ548069

Name Organisation under assessment: Veterinary Research Institute

Submission date of initial GAP-Analysis, HR Strategy and Action

Plan: 06/05/2022

Eligibility assessment

Please rate the state of achievement ("yes", "no" or "partly"). If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published on the organisation's website?	Yes	
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published in English?	Yes	
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published in a visible place?	Yes	
Have the following elements of the templates for the Gap Analysis and the HR Strategy and Action Plan been completed with sufficient details and quality?		

- Gap Analysis
- HR Strategy and Action plan
 - Organisational information
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice
 - Actions
 - Implementation

Yes

The applicant has taken very seriously the recommendations from the previous assessment and responded in a detailed manner to all the proposed changes/revisions. Especially the strengths and weaknesses section is very well covered, and the action plan is linked with the gap analysis. For archives principles, it should be interesting to add the following files as addendum (download files) : https://www.vri.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Annex_2_EN_Revision_after_Assessment.pdf and https://www.vri.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/05_Action_plan_table_summary.pdf that help to understand efforts done. Same with the questionnaires and their analysis.

Quality assessment

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation.

Rate the state of achievement ("yes", "no" or "partly"). If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?	Yes	The application is quite complex in length (which results in many details, some of them unnecessary) and is supplemented through annexes (provided also on their website). There is enough information to understand the structure of the organization, as well as the relations with internal and external stakeholders.
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?	Yes	Although the action plan (28 actions) is ambitious and (reading the plan in conjunction with the Gap Analysis) it seems clear that the two documents are linked - the actions need further description of content which proves their coherence with the identified gaps.
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?	Yes	Following the application update, VRI provided information on the composition of the committee (and has considered categories R1-R4 in both working groups and the research coordination group).
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?	Yes	The applicant provided a description of how stakeholder groups are (or were) involved in the process, as well as the format in which they provided their contribution. However, it seems there are too many people involved (which could dilute responsibility) and it is a bit unclear who is actually concerned with the implementation of the action plan.
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	Yes	The applicant has provided the necessary information in order to clarify this issue. Operational staff has been appointed for each proposed action (either one or two per action).
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?	Yes	The good practice is that the applicant has divided its planned sub-actions into short-term or long-term objectives, based on the duration of their implementation. Also, the listed indicators are clearly linked to the proposed targets. However, the majority of indicators included in the Action Plan are actually milestones, deliverables or just confirmation of execution of certain tasks and therefore do not directly measure progress or performance and do not provide any possible comparison. Proper quantitative/qualitative indicators should be added, combined with corresponding targets (figures), so that measurement of progress is quantifiable and shows clearly the successful completion of proposed actions.
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?	Yes	There is an action concerned with drafting the OTM-R policy. This hasn't changed in the updated application, and it seems that the process is underway.
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?	Yes	VRI has provided a good response to the issues identified by the previous assessment. They have covered the gaps which were not sufficiently (or not at all) addressed by the action plan (i.e. from the OTM-R checklist), the objectives have been balanced into short-term and long-term etc. Measurement of progress through indicators and clear targets would improve this approach. Perhaps the actions plan is too ambitious for the first two years (number of actions, expected progression). This will be reported in the interim assessment (level of achievement, update of the AP)

General Assessment

Accepted

Pending **minor** modifications

Pending **major revisions**

Explanation

- **Accepted: This application meets the criteria and the HR award is granted.**
The assessors might have commented on your file asking for future focus on a particular aspect/criterion, so please refer to the comments given above.
- Pending **minor** modifications: This application **broadly meets the criteria**, but the assessors have some concerns/questions about specific areas/criteria. Please reflect about the feedback given above and update your file before **re-submitting within 2 months**.
- Pending **major revisions**: This application does not meet the criteria; please make the appropriate changes taking into account the comments of the assessors before **re-submitting within 12 months**.

General Recommendations

If any of the above statements have prompted a "no" in the evaluation, please provide suggestions of modifications in the form below.

If the general assessment is:

- "pending minor modifications" the recommendations are split into:
 - Immediate mandatory modifications (to be implemented in order to obtain the award, resubmission within 2 months)
 - Other modifications (to be carried out during the implementation phase).
- "pending major revisions" the recommendations are split into:
 - Mandatory modifications (in order to obtain the award, resubmission within 12 months)
 - Other modifications.

Recommendations *

The recommendations from the previous assessment have been implemented. Involvement of the researchers is much better described, as well as the composition and activities of the Steering Committee, working groups, CCG and COP. There is also clear indication of career stage and gender of the researchers involved.

As suggested in the previous assessment, the principles of the C&C have been addressed to larger extent, including gender balance, participation in decision making bodies and working conditions.

The updated documents demonstrate that the survey - as the basis for the GA - was complemented by internal discussions. And considering a relatively small size of the organizations those seem quite a powerful tool.

Although the Action Plan is well-designed, it lacks some details to further describe content which proves the coherence of actions with the identified gaps.

Indicators included in the Action Plan are actually milestones, deliverables or just confirmation of execution of certain tasks and therefore do not directly measure progress or performance and do not provide any possible comparison. Proper quantitative/qualitative indicators should be added, combined with corresponding targets (figures), so that measurement of progress is quantifiable and shows clearly the successful completion of proposed actions.

The process to establish an OTM-R policy should obviously continue and be finalized.

It should be interesting to explain in the interim self-assessment what was done during 2021 and 2022 as AP 2022-2026 is now the reference for action.

Please add important files to the it-tool for evidence purposes (survey, gantt chart, answer to assessors' review, etc.) rather than to overwrite in the boxes. The website can indeed evolve and critical information not visible (see above)

If the organisation deserves to be commented on their ambition, their actions, evidence of good practice and/or their implementation process, please provide a commentary supporting this. (max. 2000 words)

It is refreshing to see the applicant has taken very seriously the recommendations from the previous assessment. VRI responded in a detailed manner to all the proposed changes/revisions.

The experts appreciate the "Suggestions or improvement" component of the GA : it indicates the extend of discussions and reflection given in the institution to the HRS4R as well as the principles of C&C.

Thorough analysis of the weaknesses reflects a realcommitment to the implementation of the C&C. Not only formal regulations are considered but also informal practices. Suitable consideration is given to communication, awareness and inclusion. This is mirrored in the Action Plan, which includes guideliness for researchers regarding e.g. ethical issues, recruitment, good research practices, dissemination of reserach results and gender bias. Adequate trainings will probably follow. Assessors appreciated the idea of a training in conflict mediation, complaints resolution and negotiation for consensus. Systematic approach to training and development should also be acknowledged.

Also, the application is quite complex in length and is supplemented through annexes (provided also on their website). There is enough information to understand the structure of the organization, as well as the relations with internal and external stakeholders.

Overall, a very good revised application.