# Internal Review

Case number: **2021HR694051**

Name Organisation under review:   University of Zadar

Organisation's contact details: Ul. Mihovila Pavlinovića 1,23 000, Zadar

## 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 * | *432* |
| Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) * | *4 lectors* |
| Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) * | *0* |
| Of whom are women * | *253* |
| Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. * | *283* |

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|---|---|
| Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level * | *25* |
| Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level * | *73* |
| Total number of students (if relevant) * | *4709* |
| Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) * | *652* |

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| **RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)**<br>Total annual organisational budget | €<br>18.779.524,38 |
| Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research) | |
| Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding) | |
| Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research | |

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

The University of Zadar is the largest fully integrated public university in the Republic of Croatia with a total of 27 university departments, four research centers, two teaching centers, the University Library, the Student Standard Center, the Student Counseling Center, the University Laboratory, the Business Center, the University Bookstore Citadel, Agricultural Estate *Baštica*, offices and services established to perform appropriate financial, administrative and technical tasks. The elements of the organizational structure of the University of Zadar in terms of composition and functionality meet the requirements of a legally and functionally integrated higher education institution. It is based on university departments as organizational units of the University established for the purpose of conducting university and professional studies and scientific, teaching, and professional work in a particular scientific field or several scientific fields. The University of Zadar conducts various study programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels in various fields of science (humanities, social, technical, biotechnical sciences, etc.). The University of Zadar cooperates with numerous Croatian and foreign institutions and academic associations, through membership in international university associations and communities and cooperation agreements with universities. Since 2019, the University of Zadar is a full member of the EU–CONEXUS alliance, which includes La Rochelle University in France, University of Agriculture in Athens (Greece), University of Klaipeda (Lithuania), Technical University of Civil Engineering in Bucharest (Romania), Catholic University of Valencia (Spain) and the University of Zadar.

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the four thematic areas of the Charter and Code, as provided by your organization 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.

**Ethical and professional aspects:**

The Senate of the University of Zadar has adopted the Code of Ethics as one of the main university acts. At the University of Zadar, a periodic analysis of compliance with the Code of Ethics is conducted and employees are encouraged to comply with the principles through public hearings and workshops. Lectures and workshops on various topics on ethics in science and higher education are regularly organized. The University of Zadar has a permanent body called the Ethics Committee. The scope of work of this committee is concerned with the ethics of employees and students at all levels of study. Employees and students at the University of Zadar are sensitized to respect ethical rules through various workshops on the importance of knowing and applying those rules. In addition, within the syllabi prepared by the teachers/researchers, the students have a written access to individual articles of the Code of Ethics of the Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Croatia and the Code of Ethics of the University of Zadar. Ethics committees of individual constituents also issue approvals for conducting scientific research and issue instructions and clarifications regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics of the University of Zadar. The Ethics Committee will continue its work to ensure ethical and professional aspects of work at the University of Zadar.

Researchers at the University of Zadar are familiar with national legislation and institutional rules, and all employees are fully informed about the Code of Ethics and the application of ethical principles at the University of Zadar before their employment. The Code of Ethics and related documents are also available on the University's website. Issues of the Code of Ethics and the application of ethical principles are placed within the scope of work of the Ethics Committee, which, in case of violation of the above mentioned, in cooperation with the University Administration solves specific cases.

In 2013, the University of Zadar provided access to leading scientific journals and online databases and continues to raise awareness of the importance of professional ethics and the unacceptability of any form of plagiarism. To disseminate scientific and professional achievements of its employees and students, the University uses the services of the National Digital Repository (DABAR) where it gathers, permanently stores, and provides free access to scientific research, intellectual and creative production created by the institution and its staff. Final, graduate, specialist and doctoral theses of students can be stored in the repository.

Also, the purpose of the above mentioned is to encourage transparency of work and academic integrity, because it allows the repository to verify the originality of works and the level of compliance, which is further verified by the authentication system Turnitin. Considering that the Ministry of Science and Education emphasizes the need not only to publish the results of scientific research, but also to encourage the commercialization of research results that are not contrary to academic integrity, in order to improve the competitiveness of the Croatian economy and contribute to the development of Croatia as a knowledge economy, the Office of Science, Projects and Technology Transfer was established with the aim of contributing to the achievement of these goals. In addition, when applying for scientific projects, researchers sign a statement of adherence to ethical principles in research processes. Regarding the openness of publications, the University of Zadar has adopted the Declaration on the Application of Open Science Principles.

The University of Zadar adheres to the applicable regulations to protect the privacy of all its employees and users, and in particular the General Regulation on Personal Data Protection. Accordingly, the University has an employee in charge of personal data protection.

The University of Zadar strives for responsible behavior through constant cooperation with other stakeholders in the professional environment and by meeting the needs of the social and economic sector, especially in working with socially vulnerable groups, which have facilitated access and are ensured equal rights and opportunities at the University (students, employees, external stakeholders).

**Remarks (max 500 words)**

In recent years, the University of Zadar has been continuously working to improve the level of implementation of ethical and professional principles. To ensure further improvement, the University of Zadar plans to implement the activities outlined in the action plan. The Ethics Committee will continue its work to ensure ethical and professional aspects of work at the University of Zadar. In addition, continuous educational programs on ethical issues will be provided on the management, administrative and department level.

**Recruitment and selection**

Strengths and Weaknesses

The selection and employment of employees at the University of Zadar is regulated by the national legislation and institutional regulations on employment. The current employment practice is oriented towards Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R), and these OTM-R principles will be formally adopted at the University in the next three years through the creation of OTM-R policy. The new action plan envisages the adjustment of the existing Regulation related to recruitment and selection in accordance with the newly created OTM-R policy. Employment criteria are largely defined by national legislation. The criteria and standards of employment within certain professions are defined, and the rulebook prepared and adopted at the University level on the employment procedure also contributes to this. Applications are transparent and published on the University's website and other media. Applicants are informed in detail about the election procedure, and about the outcome of the election in the form of a written explanation. An advertising system has also been developed to attract quality researchers from other institutions and those returning to scientific careers, so job vacancies are also advertised on the Euraxess Jobs Portal. The selection and assessment of the ability of employees during the first employment, election to a higher title and re-election is carried out by selection panel (expert panel) composed of scientists and experts in the field in which the candidate is employed. Expert commissions consist of scientists and experts from home and foreign institutions at the level of Croatia, but also abroad (according to scientific fields and fields). However, it should be noted that experts from abroad are more the exception than the rule in such bodies. A wider range of selection procedures has also been introduced at the University, especially regarding testing and interviewing candidates for specific positions. Due to the need to improve the recruitment and selection process, the OTM-R policy is planned to be implemented in the next period. In order to more effectively implement the OTM-R policy, it is planned to conduct different workshops related to OTM-R practices and techniques. Visibility and communication will also be ensured through the official website and other media.

Since the end of 2013, a decree of the Government of the Republic of Croatia has been in force, which tied the available amount of salary complexity coefficients to the financial situation at the end of October 2013, which limited new employment. This measure makes it very difficult to implement a quality personnel development policy. The previous practice of hiring research fellows through projects approved by the Ministry of Science has been abolished, and a system for approving projects through the Croatian Science Foundation has been established. The success of project funding through the Croatian Science Foundation system has a very limited employment of new young researchers. At the same time, after the completion of the project, the possibility of their employment at the University of Zadar is also limited. Therefore, employment does not currently fully follow the real needs of the

University. Nevertheless, an advancement plan is drawn up each year to meet the required staff quality standards. Human resource management, career advancement and career development are also in line with the current University Development Strategy and action plans. To encourage scientists to apply for new scientific projects where the employment of young scientists is possible, the University continuously conducts various promotional and educational activities.

**Remarks (max 500 words)**

In recent years, the University of Zadar has been continuously working to improve the level of transparency and the implementation of ethical and professional principles in the process of hiring and selecting employees. To improve, the University of Zadar plans to implement the activities outlined in the action plan. One of the priorities is certainly creation and implementation of the OTM-R policy. Accordingly, workshops related to OTM-R practices and techniques will be provided for all employees. Visibility and communication will also be ensured through the official website and other media.

**Working conditions:**

Strengths and Weaknesses

The organizational structure of the University (integrated university) provides a high degree of flexibility and freedom to work in interdisciplinary teams, where teamwork is strongly encouraged and implemented. Scientific activity takes place in satisfactorily equipped teaching offices (on most components), with the use of university literature and available databases of relevant journals. Some departments conduct a part of their scientific research in cooperation with other scientific research institutions and economic entities, both domestic and foreign, which meets the standards of scientific research and the needs of the social and economic community. For the needs of teaching, as well as research activities and student practice activities, the University of Zadar has established and equipped the University Laboratory (oenological and pedological) and leased 16 ha of agricultural land in Baštica. In addition, the centers established within the University enable the use of sophisticated technology and instruments, allowing researchers to enhance their research and professional work. In 2022, the completion of a new student dormitory and restaurant for student nutrition is expected. Also, the plan is to complete the renovation of the building in which individual components will be moved, which will improve the working and scientific conditions for employees and students. Finally, funds were approved for the preparation of project documentation for the construction of the STEM building, which would improve the University of Zadar in its activities within these scientific fields. In addition to the provided space conditions, the University provides its employees with flexibility of working conditions through internal contracts. The work of researchers on the same horizontal can be, more or less, polymorphic and complex, but it is valued at the same level of material support, since the salaries of researchers are financed from the state budget. The polymorphism of each research site is a priori determined by the division of work into teaching, administrative and scientific part. However, administrative work often burdens the researchers, which is also a weakness of the current working conditions. Over the next period, it is planned to draft a rulebook that will regulate the material and intangible rewarding of additional engagement of researchers and their achieved results, and it is planned to put additional efforts in reducing some administrative obligations by implementing digital tools. Rulebook on rewarding additional research engagement and mechanisms for implementation will also be developed. This measure stems from the need to improve the working conditions of all employees, especially those who work harder and achieve better results. This aims to increase and maintain the overall motivation of employees and their efficiency in work. Also, establishing financial and other tools and instruments leads on encouraging the successful researchers. These activities will also be encouraged through various meetings between departments and employees by fields of science. Also, rulebook on the evaluation of institutional projects will encourage

cooperation among researchers from different components of university. Annual working meetings of the management board with the employees (researches and administrative staff) are also planned aiming to create organizational culture in a sense of participatory relationship and belonging to community. Workshops with the purpose of preserving and improving the work and general well-being of employees will also be provided, in particular for the young researchers. Further strengthening of awareness among employees on the gender balance will be provided by the gender equality plan, public lectures, research, workshops, etc.

The collective agreement at the state level regulates the rights and obligations of employees in science and education. Relevant laws and regulations at the national level define the criteria for progress to be made in each period. Achieving certain criteria enables advancement, while the University systematically plans and ensures the career development of its employees. The Rector's Award is given to staff and students each year in various fields (Lifetime Achievement Award, outstanding achievements in scientific research, outstanding achievements in teaching, successful cooperation with institutions and the economy, outstanding commitment). Some components of the University have their own practice of rewarding the best staff in the above categories. The University provides facilities, equipment, and financial support for conferences at the University and financial support in the process of publishing various publications.

International cooperation of the University of Zadar is an important aspect of the professional life of employees. Cooperation is realized within several categories, which include participation in projects, mobility of teachers and students based on mobility programs (Erasmus, Ceepus, etc.), bilateral agreements with foreign universities, individual cooperation in research, international scholarships for teachers and students, organization and participation in international conferences and other forms of cooperation. The goal of the international cooperation between the University and all its components is to improve the quality of education and research through the internationalization of its activities and programs. The advantages of international cooperation are obvious at the individual level, i.e., they contribute to connecting employees from different institutions and thus encourage synergistic scientific action, scientific complementarity, broadening horizons and introducing new practices in scientific or teaching work of everyone. Scientific and professional projects that are continuously and intensively implemented at the University contribute to the improvement of knowledge and competencies of researchers, through connecting with the economy and relevant stakeholders nationally and internationally, study trips, various educational programs, workshops, trainings, etc. Besides the above mentioned, young researchers are involved in research teams that aim to gain scientific experience. Such activities are a preliminary step forward in their own project applications to be submitted in the coming years. In addition, young researchers are involved in the teaching process. At the University level, they have an institutional mentor who monitors and evaluates their work and achievements. International cooperation has been further strengthened by the accession of the University of Zadar to the EU-CONEXUS alliance. In order to improve involvement of researchers in projects, manual for the

evaluation of project proposals and the rulebook on the selection and evaluation of scientific projects will be implemented. New calls for application of institutional projects will also be provided. It is also planned to implement the rulebook on the regulation of technology transfer aimed at further development of institutional mechanisms for commercialization of research results. These measures will also encourage the co-authorship practice in the field of social sciences and humanities.

The biggest shortcoming is the overburdening of researchers with administrative tasks, which, despite digitalization, can be complex and time-consuming. These weaknesses lead to strengthening the IT system on the management and educational level. One of the priorities it to reduce the administrative burden of researchers by introducing different online tools and databases. Online tool for collecting applications for tenders will also be created. Accordingly, data protection is also one of the needs at all level. Also, some components lack certain equipment and space needed in modern teaching methods. This part seeks to be replaced through scientific, and especially professional projects. In this regard, there exists a certain burden for researchers participating in scientific and professional projects, which is not adequately regulated at the University level. There is a certain shortcoming in terms of popularization of the work of researchers at the University of Zadar at the local and regional level. This is attributed to lack of time, low level of motivation at the component level and incoordination at the University level. In addition, there is a certain lack of awareness of some researchers about their role at the University, and in the local and regional community. The new action plan includes activities aimed at addressing these shortcomings. The visibility of public work of researchers has to be improve, therefore the new action plan includes activities aimed at addressing these shortcomings. Firstly, these actions require defining a person or an office responsible for planning and organization of different events, better visibility of university work on the website and communication to the public. University of Zadar will work on the regulation and protection of intellectual property. Primary, the completion of the rulebook on the protection and distribution of intellectual property profits is planned.

### Remarks (max 500 words)

In recent years, the University of Zadar has been continuously working to improve the level of quality of working conditions of researchers. In order to further improve working conditions, motivation and work efficiency, the University of Zadar plans to implement the activities outlined in the action plan. Priorities are focused on creating a mechanism to motivate and reward all employees, especially those who work harder and achieve better results. Involvement of all researchers in scientific and professional projects is also one of the priorities, considering the role of university in local and regional community. Accordingly, visibility in the public of university work and results should be improved. Organizational culture based on the participatory relationship and belonging to community, as well as the reducing the administrative burden of researchers are presumptions for above mentioned.

**Training and development:**

Strengths and Weaknesses:

The Office for Quality Assurance of the University of Zadar and the Office of Science, Projects and Technology Transfer regularly monitor the work of scientific staff and record scientific achievements. The Office regularly examines the need to improve general working conditions and improve knowledge, skills, and competencies (various educational programs). The University continuously provides educational programs for scientific and teaching staff in various fields (management, communication skills, conflict and time management, pedagogical skills, ICT social responsibilities, foreign languages, etc.). Also, the University financially supports attending international conferences and external educational programs and trainings where possible. One of the centers of the University is focused on lifelong education and learning of staff and students, given the educational programs it conducts. The University of Zadar encourages the education of researchers at prominent domestic and foreign institutions through mobility programs (Erasmus, Ceepus and other bilateral agreements). The University has recognized the importance of lifelong learning and stimulates the introduction of new programs that encourage continuing education of its employees. Given the importance of financial resources for the development of skills and competencies, the University internally, but also through programs and funds of the European Commission creates financial instruments for its employees. Scientific and professional projects at the University contribute to the improvement of knowledge and competencies of researchers (study trips, various educational programs, workshops, trainings, etc.). International cooperation through the EU-CONEXUS alliance has further contributed to all of the above. As a part of the *Research For Society* (RFS) project, a joint HRS4R action plan at the alliance level will be developed, which will further improve and increase training and development opportunities for researchers from all partner institutions.

The coronavirus pandemic in 2020 pointed out the importance of e-learning. The University of Zadar stimulates the education of teachers for teaching and e-learning by introducing them to new technologies that can be applied in teaching and holding individual workshops on individual information and communication systems.

The University has formally established a Career Development Center, but the counseling and career guidance of scientists and students is currently in the domain of individual offices and components (Office of Quality Assurance, Office of Science, Projects, and Technology Transfer, etc.). In the upcoming period, it is planned to transfer these functions to the Career Development Center. The aforementioned results from the need for continuous improvement of the human resource capacity and knowledge. Therefore, the priority is to strengthen the Career Development Center, which will enable the improvement of the system of professional

training of all employees, especially new and young employees through the introduction of a system of departmental mentors. The Career Development Center will also facilitate collaboration between the university and the community.

**Remarks (max 500 words)**

During the recent years, the University of Zadar has been continuously working to improve the level of quality and efficiency of educational programs and the professional development of researchers in general. To further improve, the University of Zadar plans to implement the activities outlined in the action plan. One of the priorities is to establish and to develop the Career Development Center which will build capacity and transfer knowledge to the internal and external environment of the University of Zadar.


**Have any of the priorities for the short and medium term changed?** (max 500 words)

The University of Zadar conducted the last internal audit and adopted an action plan in 2014.

Our progress in implementing the HRS4R can be tracked through documents on the University website. The action plan from 2014 is available here, and after each action there is a comment on its status. From this ambitious and comprehensive document with 117 planned actions for the period from 2010 to 2014, UNIZD has completed 83 actions out of a total of 117 planned actions, 18 actions have been extended, 11 are still in progress, and 4 have been suspended. Following the Commission's guidelines after the site visit, our new action plan for the period 2022 to 2024 has been prepared, which is less extensive, aligned with UNIZD's current and future strategy, and coordinated with the results of the surveys conducted with researchers. The new priorities are essentially aligned with the old ones, and accordingly, some old actions that were extended from the old action plan or are still ongoing are also integrated into the new action plan for the period 2022 to 2024. Our priorities have changed in part as we have adapted to the new circumstances, such as the new Law on Science and Higher Education, which fundamentally changes the procedures for recruitment and promotion of researchers and accordingly requires adaptation of higher education policies related to recruitment of experts from other countries and internalization. In addition, our priorities are set based on feedback from researchers on which aspects of their work need strengthening. Our actions are guided by four priorities: (1) increase internalization of the university and increase researchers' motivation to apply for competitive projects; (2) increase the visibility of researchers and their work in the community and establish better relations with employers/labour market/community in general; (3) reduce researchers' administrative burden through digitalization; (4) improve communication between university members and promote researchers' well-being.

**Have any of the circumstances in which your organization operates changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?**
(max 500 words)

Together with five European universities, the University of Zadar became a member of the EU-CONEXUS (European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability) alliance in 2019. EU-CONEXUS is one of 17 alliances approved for funding in the first call of European universities, launched by the EU under the Erasmus+ program. This transnational European higher education institution is aimed at researching the smart development of urban coastal areas from a global and multidisciplinary point of view. The alliance's partners are gathered around common values: sustainability, expertise, courage, and innovation. The EU-CONEXUS Association particularly values the excellence of researchers and their working conditions, so the University of Zadar's management has begun to renew the HRS4R strategy. An internal analysis was made, an action plan was adopted, and the adoption of the OTM-R policy was initiated, as well as regular monitoring of several indicators represented in the OTM-R checklist. These elements will be integrated into the new Development Strategy of the University of Zadar from 2023, which also includes the area of human resources management. Actions given in HRS4R are adjusted to the main goal of the Development Strategy related to the HR issues. It is seen how Development Strategy of the University of Zadar is focused on raising the scientific excellence and the quality of working conditions at the University of Zadar. Accordingly, improving the research infrastructure and working conditions through the construction and equipping of facilities is one of the priorities. The development of mechanisms for encouraging and rewarding employees stands out as a special goal of the Development Strategy.

**Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?** (max 500 words)

Belonging to the European University of the EU-CONEXUS alliance presents new opportunities for the students and academic staff. The goal of the EU-CONEXUS project is the strategic association of partner universities in a multi- and interdisciplinary research and teaching approach to smart and sustainable coastal resource management. In addition, the University of Zadar became a part of the EU-CONEXUS *Research For Society* project as a part of the HORIZON 2020 program. The project aims to develop a joint science and innovation program within transnational research and funding and to establish a focus on SUCS (Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability) research at European and international level. During the implementation of the project, EU-CONEXUS Research for Society will cooperate with other European universities in order to exchange experiences and knowledge and to enable a better cooperation between European universities. Moreover, a joint alliance-level HRS4R action plan will be developed. In addition to this, the Development Strategy of the University of Zadar (2017 - 2022) is in the process of implementation, which, with its action plans, supports the realization of the HRS4R strategy action plan. It is expected that all of the above will have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the implementation of the action plan that is a part of the HRS4R strategy. An important factor that can influence the implementation of the action plan is the change in the leadership of the University in 2023. However, given the strategic plans and objectives already set, no significant changes are expected that may affect the implementation of the action plan. In the same year, 2023, a new Development Strategy of the University of Zadar is planned to be adopted, which will contribute to the realization of the action plan. Actions given in HRS4R are adjusted and support the main goals of the Development Strategy with associated special goals and measures. Development Strategy of the University of Zadar is focused on raising the scientific excellence and the quality of working and studying at the University of Zadar. At the same time, University of Zadar aims at strengthening the cooperation with economy and transfer of knowledge to it, as well as the internalization in the European union space and identity. Creating smart, sustainable and socially responsible environment is one of the goals pursued by the University of Zadar. Some indicators used in the Development Strategy will also be used for monitoring activities in HRS4R.

## 2. Actions

Please consult the list of all actions you have submitted as part of your HR Strategy. Please add to the overview the current status of these actions as well as the status of the indicators. If any actions have been altered or omitted, please provide a commentary for each action. You can also select new objectives.

**Note:** Choose one or more of the principles from the GAP Analysis with their <u>implementation ratings:</u> New, In Progress, Completed, Extended

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Principles:**
() 1. Research freedom () 2. Ethical principles  () 3. Professional responsibility () 4. Professional attitude () 5. Contractual and legal obligations () 6. Accountability () 7. Good practice in research () 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results () 9. Public engagement () 10. Nondiscrimination () 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems () 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) () 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) ()            22. Recognition of the profession () 23. Research environment () 24. Working conditions () 25. Stability and permanence of employment () 26. Funding and salaries () 27. Gender balance () 28. Career development () 29. Value of mobility () 30. Access to career advice () 31. Intellectual Property Rights () 32. Co-authorship () 33. Teaching () 34. Complains/ appeals () 35. Participation in decision-making bodies () 36. Relation with supervisors () 37. Supervision and managerial duties () 38. Continuing Professional Development () 39. Access to research training and continuous development () 40. Supervision

# Action plan for the future

## New activities:

| Proposed Actions | Gap Principle(s) | Timing | Responsible Unit | Indicator(s)/Target | Current Status | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Priority: internalization/motivation for project proposal<br><br>1. Amendments to existing regulations: Manual for the evaluation of project proposals and the Rulebook on the selection and evaluation of scientific projects at UNIZD | Contractual and legal obligation; Good practice in research; Evaluation/appraisal system; Career development; Continuing professional Development; Professional responsibility | Q3 – 2022<br>Q4 – 2024 | Vice-rector for science<br><br>Office for science, projects and technology transfer | - Amendments to the existing manual and regulations adopted<br><br>- Number of successful project applications to competitive funding sources | new | The amendments will eliminate all shortcomings identified in the last call for proposals. This measure is related for youngest group of researchers (R1 and R2) to finance their first research projects in order to enhance their skills and knowledge for future more competitive projects |
| 2. Announcing a new call for applications for institutional projects | Good practice in research; Evaluation/appraisal system; Career development; Continuing professional Development; | Q4 – 2022; Q4- 2024. | Vice-rector for science<br><br>Office of Science, Projects and Technology Transfer | - Call for applications for institutional projects completed<br><br>- Number of projects funded over a two-year period | new | Announcement of a new call for applications for institutional projects that will be regulated by an improved manual and rulebook. Projects submitted for review, and the best |

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| | Professional responsibility; Research environment | | | - Number of researchers from different scientific fields included in projects<br><br>- Number of authored or co-authored scientific papers raised by the projects | | rated projects will be funded in the next two years. |
| 3. Additional promotion and motivation/ education on different professional and scientific projects | Professional attitude; Good practice in research; Research environment; Career development; Continuing Professional Development; Access to research training and continuous development | Q4-2022 – Q4-2024 | Office of Science, Projects and Technology Transfer | - Number of meetings and educational programs held<br>- Number of employees participated in the meetings and educational programs<br>- Number of successful project applications to competitive funding sources | new | Although the university continuously applies for and implements an increasing number of professional and scientific projects and continuously promotes published competitions, some researchers are not sufficiently familiar with the benefits of applying for, for example, professional projects and do not apply for them. This activity will try to motivate a larger number of researchers to decide |

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| | | | | | | independently or in collaboration to apply or collaborate on projects. |
| 4. Actions related to enhancing international collaboration through EU-Conexus Alliance | Research environment; Working conditions; Value of mobility; Co-authorship | Q3-2022 – Q4-2024 | UNIZD Management<br><br>Office of Science, Projects and Technology Transfer | - Eu-Conexus Join Researchers database of researchers established<br>- Promotion events of Joint research database inside UNIZD held<br>- Promotion events of work of Eu-Conexus Joint Research Institutes held<br>- Promotion events on joint project proposal held<br>- Promotion events on mobility options held<br>- Number of participants on promotion events<br>- Number of co-authorships projects and papers, number of study visits and | | |

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| | | | | mobilities | | |
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| (2) priority: increasing visibility and cooperation with society<br><br>5. Start running a Career Development Center which should promote cooperation between the University and the community (introducing partners from the economy sector, civil society, organizing voluntary activities of the University's employers and students etc.). | Public engagement; Dissemination, exploitation of results; | Q3 – 2023 – Q2 - 2024 | UNIZD Management<br><br>Career Development Center | – Head of Career Development Center appointed<br>– Regulations for the work of the Career Development Center adopted<br>– Career day organized by the Center for Career Development | | |
| 6. Improve the visibility of public work of researchers | Public engagement; Dissemination, exploitation of results; | Q3- 2022 – Q4 - 2024 | Constituents of the university; IT service; the person/office to be appointed as the head of these activities | - A person or an office responsible for administration and communication to the public appointed<br><br>- Manual for communicating with the public adopted<br><br>- A separate part of the website intended for advertising all public events organized by the University created | new | All components of the University organize numerous public activities that they advertise and report on separate departmental websites and social networks, which prevents good visibility and visibility to the public. To increase visibility, the goal is to create a separate part of the website at UNIZD with the purpose of combining all |

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| | | | | - Number of public events held<br><br>- Number of participants on the events | | planned/maintained activities of all components. This will increase the visibility of public action for everyone: researchers, journalists and the general public. |
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| (3) Priority: Reduce administrative burden of researchers<br><br>   7.  Completion of online tools for collecting applications for tenders | Working conditions; Contractual and legal obligations | Q3 – 2022 – Q4 - 2024 | Office and archives<br><br>Office for Human Resources, Administrative Affairs and Archives | - A tool for online application for tenders developed<br><br>-Number of tenders conducted | new | |
|    8.  Implement digital tools in order to enhance efficiency in data collection | Working conditions; research Environment; | Q2– 2024 | University administration<br><br>IT Service | - A platform for data collection developed<br><br>-Number of users<br><br>-Level of satisfaction of users | | Reduce the administrative burden of researchers by introducing online tools – for example, through the tables that would be available on the Department's website, each employee enters information about all activities performed (immediately after |

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| | | | | | | their completion), and this "database" is then used to create all reports on an annual basis, without the need for the researcher to be involved again in their formation. |
| 9. Introduce mechanisms for better redistribution of work among employees | Professional attitude; Evaluation, appraisal systems; research Environment; Founding and salaries | Q1–2024 | University administration (Rector and vice-rectors) | - A rulebook on rewarding additional research engagement and mechanisms for implementation adopted<br><br>- A system of intangible and tangible rewarding of researcher's additional engagement adopted<br><br>- Number of rewarded researchers | new | Researchers' salaries are financed from the state budget and there is no legal possibility to financially stimulate more successful and engaged researchers. Consequently, the additional engagement of highly motivated researchers (e.g., on professional projects, public events) results in work overload because they are not relieved of their other obligations or financially rewarded. In order to encourage the |

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| | | | | | | equal involvement of all researchers in additional activities (such as professional projects), it is necessary to develop intangible (and material if possible) forms of reward for such engagement. |
| (4) priority promote communication and well being<br><br>10. Encourage interdepartmental communication and cooperation in research and other activities | Working conditions; Research environment; Co-authorship; | Q3 – 2022 – – Q4-2024 | Vice-rectors Expert Councils | - Number of meetings of employees by fields of science held (e.g. each time on a given topic, exchange of research experiences, etc.)<br><br>- A system of intangible and tangible rewarding of researcher's additional engagement adopted<br><br>-Number of common scientific papers, projects and other events | | Given the organizational structure of UNIZD and the spatial dispersion of components, researchers working at the same institution have few opportunities to interact and connect. For this purpose, a meeting of employees is planned (twice a year), with the purpose of getting to know each other, exchanging experiences and achieving cooperation in |

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| | | | | achieved by interdepartmental cooperation<br><br>- Number of researchers from different scientific fields and department included in common papers, projects and other events | | research. |
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| 11. Improve the system of professional training for new employees through the introduction of a system of departmental mentors | Recruitment; Stability and performance of employment; Career development; Supervision and managerial duties | Q1–2024 – Q4–2024 | Career Development Center<br><br>Components<br><br>Quality Assurance Office<br><br>Office of Postgraduate Studies | - A rulebook of departmental mentoring adopted<br>- Number of educational programs for training mentors held<br>- Number of trained mentors<br>- Number of mentorships | new | |
| 12. Annual working meeting of the representatives of the Management Board with the employees by components | Professional attitude; Career development; Complains/ appeals; | Q4–2022 Q4–2023 | UNIZD Management<br><br>Expert | - Number of meetings<br><br>-Number of | new | To ensure direct communication between management and |

|  |  | Relation with supervisors | Q4-2024 | councils of the department | participants |  | constituents, an annual meeting of management representatives with members of expert councils of constituents will be held to discuss current challenges and future plans. |
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| 13. | Annual working meeting of the representatives of the Management Board with the employees of the administrative services | Professional attitude; Career development; Complains/ appeals; Relation with supervisors | Q3-2022 Q3-2023 Q3-2024 | UNIZD Management Administrative services | -Number of meetings<br>-Number of participants | new | In order to ensure direct communication between the administration and the administrative services, an annual meeting will be held to discuss current challenges and future plans. |
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| 14. | Workshops with the purpose of preserving and improving the work and general well-being of employees | Access to research training and continuous development; Working conditions | Q4-2022 Q4-2023 Q4-2024 | Experts employed in the Student Counseling Center and/or the Career Development Center<br><br>Quality Assurance Office | – Number of workshops related to the employees´ satisfaction with their work and well-being held<br>-Number of participants on the workshops<br>– The level of satisfaction of employees with their work and | new |  |

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**Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles**

The University of Zadar is obliged to adhere to the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) within the national legislative framework and according to the acts of the University. In this context, the University of Zadar pursues an employment policy according to these principles. However, the full meaning of the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment are relatively new for the staff and scientists of the University of Zadar. Accordingly, the OTM-R policy will be adopted at the University level, integrated into the employment regulations, communicated at all levels and available on the website. In this sequence, the necessary training of staff involved in the employment process will be carried out.

# 4. Implementation

**General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan:** (max. 1000 words)

The internal audit shows that a significant number of activities from the previous action plan were properly implemented, while a number are in the process of implementation. Due to the unplanned departure from the organization of the person in charge of the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan, the implementation was suspended. However, since the action plan had already defined the competent offices for implementation and monitoring in advance, most of the planned activities were carried out. In addition, certain offices of the University (Office for Quality Assurance, Office of Science, Projects and Technology Transfer, Career Center) were reorganized, which further complicated the implementation of some activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that despite the described difficulties, the action plan from 2014 was largely realized, and the implementation of the elements of the action plan so far has contributed to improving working conditions and excellence at the University. A Steering Committee (SC) has been established to take future steps to monitor the progress of the action plan more effectively over the next three years.

Regarding the requirements of the RFS, the current situation was analyzed according to the principles of the HRS4R strategy and new activities were proposed, aimed at reducing the gap between the existing and the desired situation. In this context, the implementation of the action plan at the University level has already started, given the fact that certain offices and components were involved in collecting the necessary data related to internal audit and monitoring indicators of action plan implementation. Accordingly, the following activities are planned in the next period with the aim of implementing the action plan, especially those elements that were not implemented in the previous period:

appointment of the Steering Committee,
· appointment of the Office for Quality Assurance and the person in charge of implementing and coordinating the human resources strategy for researchers (HRS4R) and the action plan (Ljerka Morović coordinates the implementation of the action plan between the responsible offices and the SC Management Board)
· communication of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and relevant activities of the action plan according to all levels of decision-making, offices, and components,
· conducting trainings related to the implementation of the human resources strategy for researchers (HRS4R) and the action plan,
· publishing the necessary materials on the website related to the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and the action plan,
· implementation and monitoring of activities by in-charge offices and persons (monitoring),
· periodic working meetings of the Board of Directors (twice a year),
· Periodic working meetings of representatives of the Quality Assurance Office and other offices responsible for the implementation and coordination of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and the Action Plan (twice a year),
· Periodic reporting to the Board of Directors on the implemented activities of the action plan to the Administration, i.e., the University Senate (at the end of the calendar year),
· taking the necessary corrective actions,
· consultations with other research institutions of the Republic of Croatia and partner universities of the EU-CONEXUS alliance with the aim of sharing experiences of good practice.

**How have you prepared for the internal review? ***
Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)


The appointed board of directors used several sources of data when conducting internal audits and creating a new action plan. Two workshops were conducted. The first workshop was conducted with the representatives of the offices who oversaw implementing the activities from the old action plan. Data were collected on the realization of planned activities as well as on the difficulties that accompanied their implementation. The second workshop included a focus group with representatives of all levels of researchers (R1–R4). In this way, the views, observations, and suggestions of researchers on the current situation at the University with regard to the 40 principles of Charter & Code were collected.

Furthermore, relevant quantitative data previously collected for the purpose of drafting and implementing the University of Zadar Strategy 2017–2022 were used, as well as data collected for the preparation of the document Manual for Human Resources Management Process Development at the University of Zadar. Based on the information from all four sources, the action plan from 2014 was first evaluated - for each activity the status of realization and description of measures taken is indicated, and for activities that are in progress or extended an indicator is added to evaluate the realization of that activity in of the future. Then, based on the identified gaps, a list of activities was created that will try to bridge the existing gaps in the next three years.

**How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process? ***
Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

For the needs of internal audit, a focus group was held with representatives of all levels of researchers (R1-R4). In addition, the opinions of researchers related to human resources management policies have been previously collected for the purpose of drafting the Strategy of the University of Zadar 2017-2022, and for the purpose of drafting the Manual for the development of human resources management at the University of Zadar. Information from all three sources was used in creating a new action plan aimed at bridging the identified gaps related to the working conditions of researchers. Representatives of all levels of researchers are included in the Steering Committee. The research community at the University of Zadar will be informed and acquainted with the new action plan, OTM-R policy, and all other aspects of the HRS4R process. All information and HRS4R documents will be available on the website of the University of Zadar.

**Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress? ***
Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

Competent bodies for supervising the implementation of activities are the Steering Committee (SC) and the Office for Quality Assurance, i.e., the representative of the office Ljerka Morović. The Steering Committee (SC) oversees the process and reports to the Senate on the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan. The Board of Directors consists of:

- · two Vice-Rectors (Vice-Rector for Science and Information Infrastructure, Professor Zvjezdan Penezić and Vice-Rector for Development Strategy and Publishing, Professor Josip Faričić)
- · Representatives of researchers in charge of creating a joint HRS4R action plan at the alliance level within the RFS: Assistant professor Andrea Tokić, Assistant professor Tomislav Klarin and Assistant professor Ivan Puzek
- · Representative of young researchers Paula Pedić Duić
- · Representative of the Office for Quality Assurance: Ljerka Morović is an associate member of the Steering Committee.

The Quality Assurance Office is the service that coordinates the implementation of all activities from the action plan. The Quality Assurance Office, i.e., Ljerka Morović, is the HRS4R contact person who communicates with the services in charge of the implementation of activities, coordinates their implementation and reports to the Steering Committee on progress and possible difficulties. The SC has a supervisory role - it takes corrective actions and makes possible changes to the action plan, and reports to the Senate on the success of the implementation of the action plan. Steering Committee (SC) members meet twice a year, and more often if needed.

**Is there any alignment of organizational 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)

Although this is not explicitly stated in the current development documents, the organizational policies of the University of Zadar are in line with the principles of the HRS4R strategy. After the adoption of the action plan in 2014, there was no revision of the HRS4R strategy, so its elements and principles are not integrated into the Development Strategy of the University of Zadar 2017 – 2022. action plan. HRS4R strategy will be an integral part of the new Development Strategy of the University of Zadar from 2023. Actions given in HRS4R are adjusted and support the main goals of the Development Strategy with associated special goals and measures. Some indicators used in the Development Strategy will also be used for monitoring activities in HRS4R.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

The implementation of HRS4R will be integrated into the new strategic document of the University. For each activity from the action plan, an office and/or a person responsible for its implementation has been appointed, who regularly informs the responsible person in the Quality Assurance Office. The responsible person in the Quality Assurance Office reports to the Steering Committee (SC) on the implemented activities. The entire implementation process is overseen by the SC who reports to the University Senate.

**How are you monitoring progress (timeline)? ***
Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

The SC and the Quality Assurance Office will, within their competencies, powers, and scope of work, monitor the process of implementation of the HRS4R strategy, as well as the progress of the implementation of activities from the action plan. The person in charge of HRS4R from the quality assurance office will communicate with the offices in charge of individual items from the action plan, which are obliged to report back on the progress and possible difficulties in implementation. A representative of the Office for Quality Assurance reports to the SC. As a part of the regular meetings of the SC, the implemented activities will be analyzed and possible changes to the plan by creating alternative or new activities will be discussed and approved. The SC is in charge of implementing HRS4R in future strategic documents of the University.

**How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment? ***
Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

The indicators for each measure are listed in the action plan. Once the action plan is officially approved, SC members, primarily vice-rectors, will communicate the planned actions with all offices and services in charge of their implementation. Their implementation will be checked and monitored by a representative of the Quality Assurance Office and will be regularly reported to the SC. In addition to individual indicators, the overall progress of the University will be monitored, especially in terms of processes related to the HRS4R strategy.

**How do you expect to prepare for the external review? ***
Detailed description and duly justification (max 500 words)

All the necessary documents that external evaluators will need will be prepared in advance. SC members, as well as representatives of researchers and/or administrative staff will be available for a meeting with the External experts. The University of Zadar will prepare in advance everything necessary for the meeting with external evaluators: provide a meeting space, a list of persons involved in HRS4R at UNIZD and their contact information, and if necessary, external experts will be provided with additional space for work.