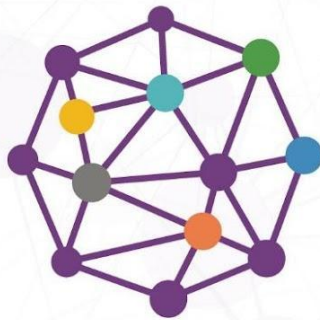




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SMART
Researchers

Deliverable 2.1

SMART Researchers Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for ESR Career Development

Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (IED)



Call: HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-02

Project number: 101216967

Project acronym: SMART Researchers

Project duration: from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2028

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Project URL: <https://smartresearchers.eu/>

Disclaimer

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101216967



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DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Project Title:	SMART Researchers: Strategic Micro-Credentialing and Skills Recognition for a Dynamic ESRs Talent Ecosystem
Acronym:	SMART Researchers
Project Number:	101216967
Document Title:	Strategic Action Plan
Deliverable:	D2.1
Work Package:	WP2- Transforming career support systems for ESRs development
Due Date:	31.8.2026.
Delivery Date:	29.04.2026
Status:	Draft ☐ / Final ☒
Type:	R-Document, report ☒ / DEC-Websites, patent filings, videos, etc. ☐ / DMP ☐ / OTHER ☐
Dissemination Level:	SEN-Sensitive ☐ / PU-Public ☒
Description of the Deliverable: (3-5 lines)	This Deliverable presents the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Framework for ESRs career development, within the SMART Researchers project. The document outlines strategies to enhance ESR career support and it aligns institutional HR practices with a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Research Careers and the European Charter for Researchers, to implement the standards for attractive research careers. Key elements include clear researcher roles and career paths, recruitment processes promoting sectoral mobility and interdisciplinary collaboration, support for intersectoral and interdisciplinary careers,

	focusing on skills for the twin transitions, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems for career progression.
Key Words:	<i>Strategic Action Plan; ESR; HR; career development; Horizon Europe; SMART Researchers.</i>

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Document history:

The Document Authors are authorized to make the following types of changes to the document without requiring that the document be re-approved:

- Editorial, formatting, and spelling
- Clarification

To request a change to this document, contact the Document Author(s) or Project Coordinator.

Changes to this document are summarized in the following table in reverse chronological order (latest version first).

Version	Date	Prepared by	Short Description/Changes
v0.1	20.02.2026.	UNSFTS	Initial draft structure created
v0.2	23.02.2026.	UNSFTS	Formatting
v0.3	21.03.2026.	Project Consortium	Review
v0.4	31.03.2026.	UNSFTS	Final version
v1.0	29.04.2026	iED	Institutional SAP completed

Table with Acronyms

Acronym	Full Form
CSC	Career Support Center
ESR	Early-Stage Researcher
EFRC	European Framework for Research Careers
ERA	European Research Area
HE	Horizon Europe
HR	Human Resources
HRS4R	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
MEPF	Monitoring, Evaluation and Policy Feedback
SO	Specific Objective
WP	Work Package
OTM-R	Open, Transparent and Merit-based recruitment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	9
1.1	PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN	9
1.2	Project Context and Strategic Alignment	10
1.3	Institutional Context	10
1.3.1	Institutional Profile	10
1.3.2	Role in the SMART Researchers Project	11
1.3.3	Alignment of the SAP with Institutional Strategy and Governance	12
1.3.4	Target Beneficiaries	14
1.3.5	Existing Structures Relevant to SAP Implementation	14
2.	METHODOLOGY, DATA AND ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS	15
2.1	Methodological Framework for SAP Development	15
2.1	HR Audit and Capacity Assessment	16
2.2	Researcher Survey Findings	22
2.3	Organizational Readiness Assessment	28
2.4	Participatory Process and Co-Design Validation	31
3.	OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES PER PILLAR	34
3.1	Strategic Pillar Architecture	34
3.2	Objectives and Measures per Pillar (SMART Framework)	35
3.2.1	Objectives and Measures	35
3.3	Phased Implementation Timeline and Resourcing	42
3.3.1	Implementation Roadmap (Strategic Level)	43
3.4	HUMAN CAPACITY AND STRUCTURAL ENABLERS	46
3.4.1	Human Resource Alignment	46
3.5	GOVERNANCE AND DECISION STRUCTURE	47
3.5.1	Governance Model	47
3.5.2	Review and Decision Cadence	48
3.5.3	Risk Escalation and Corrective Mechanism	49
4.	MONITORING, EVALUATION AND POLICY FEEDBACK	50
4.1	KPI MONITORING (Operational Level)	50

4.2 BENEFITS REALISATION TRACKING (Institutional Level)	53
4.3 POLICY FEEDBACK AND ALIGNMENT (Strategic Level)	54
5 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS	55
5.1 Reference List	55
5.2 Project Documents	55
5.3 Regulatory and Policy Frameworks Referenced	55

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: HR Audit Baseline.....	17
Table 2: Researcher survey results	23
Table 3: Organizational Readiness.....	29
Table 4: Participatory process documentation.....	33
Table 5: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 1.....	35
Table 6: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 2.....	37
Table 7: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 3.....	38
Table 8: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 4.....	39
Table 9: iED SAP Roadmap	44
Table 10: Institutional roles for SAP delivery	46
Table 11: SAP governance structure.....	47
Table 12: Review framework.....	48
Table 13: Escalation logic	49
Table 14: KPI monitoring overview	51
Table 15: Institutional Benefits Tracking.....	53
Table 16: Policy feedback mechanism	54

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Deliverable presents the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Framework for ESR career development, within the SMART Researchers project. The SAP will outline strategies to enhance ESR career support and align institutional HR practices with a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Research Careers and the European Charter for Researchers, to implement the standards for attractive research careers.

Function of this framework document

This Framework serves as a structured template guiding each partner institution in:

- Translating project objectives into institutional actions,
- Ensuring internal coordination and ownership,
- Defining measurable objectives, KPIs, and milestones,
- Monitoring risks and implementation progress,
- Securing long-term institutional integration beyond project duration.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) provides a structured, institution-wide framework for planning, implementing, monitoring, and institutionalising career development measures for Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs) over a five-year period (2026–2031).

For the purpose of this Framework, Early-Stage Researchers are defined in accordance with the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Research Careers as:

- **First Stage Researchers** – researchers undertaking research under supervision up to the point of a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience;
- **Recognised Researchers** – researchers holding a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are not yet fully independent in leading research, attracting funding, or managing research groups.

The SAP aims to strengthen institutional HR systems, enhance career pathways for ESRs, and establish sustainable, structured support mechanisms aligned with European standards for research careers.

Evidence base and development logic

The SAP is developed as an integral component of the Horizon Europe project:

SMART Researchers: Strategic Micro-Credentialing and Skills Recognition for a Dynamic ESRs Talent Ecosystem

The development of the SAP is grounded in:

- HR Audit and Capacity Assessment results,
- Researcher Survey findings,
- Participatory workshops and stakeholder consultations,
- Alignment with HRS4R principles,
- The European Framework for Research Careers,
- The European Charter for Researchers.

Together, these inputs ensure that the SAP is evidence-based, participatory, and aligned with both institutional realities and European policy frameworks.

Strategic focus areas

The SAP addresses identified HR and structural gaps and focuses on the following core strategic elements:

1. **Clear definition of researcher roles and career paths**
Establishing transparent career trajectories within and beyond academia, enabling ESRs to make informed career decisions.
2. **Recruitment reforms**
Strengthening OTM-R principles, promoting diversity, sectoral mobility, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
3. **Structured career progression frameworks**
Embedding entrepreneurship, innovation, and transversal competencies required for the green and digital transitions.
4. **Intersectoral and interdisciplinary career support**

Formalising pathways toward both academic and non-academic careers through structured institutional support mechanisms.

Governance, implementation and transparency

The SAP will be implemented by institutional leadership teams and relevant governance bodies, with continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms ensuring alignment with:

- The Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Research Careers,
- The European Charter for Researchers,
- ERA policy priorities.

Early-Stage Researchers will remain actively engaged throughout the process—from co-design to implementation—ensuring that institutional reforms reflect their real needs and experiences.

Following adoption, the SAP will be made publicly accessible to ensure transparency and contribute to broader policy learning and institutional uptake across the European Research Area (ERA).

1.2 PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Early-Stage Researchers in less research- and innovation-advanced countries in Europe often face structural challenges, including precarious employment conditions, limited mobility opportunities, insufficient career support structures, and weak recognition of transversal competencies. These systemic barriers reduce institutional competitiveness and limit Europe's capacity to fully leverage its research and innovation potential—particularly in the context of the green and digital transitions.

The SMART Researchers project responds to these challenges by:

- Establishing **Career Support Centres (CSCs)** as institutional hubs for continuous and structured career guidance;
- Developing and implementing **Strategic Action Plans** aligned with ERA principles and the European Charter for Researchers;
- Designing a **micro-credentialing and certification framework** based on the European Competence Framework for Researchers (ResearchComp);
- Strengthening institutional HR practices and talent development systems;
- Providing structured policy feedback to support EU-level harmonisation and standardisation of research career systems.

Project objectives and outcomes are fully aligned with ERA priorities through:

- Development of new instruments supporting research careers,
- Creation of sustainable institutional ecosystems for research talent,
- Implementation of European standards for researcher careers across sectors,
- Strengthening ESR competences and long-term employability.

1.3 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

1.3.1 INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Institution name: Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED)

Country: Greece



Legal status (public university, research institute, foundation, etc.): Non-Profit Organization

Number of academic/research or other staff: 20¹

Number of Early-Stage Researchers (R1 + R2): 20

Main research domains / faculties: Business innovation and entrepreneurship, digital and industrial technologies, e-health and wellbeing, green energy and sustainable development, social innovation and gender equality, culture and creativity.

Brief description (max. 200–300 words):

The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) is a Greek non-profit organisation founded in 2005, with a strong track record in innovation support, entrepreneurship promotion, and participation in EU-funded research and innovation projects. Headquartered in Greece and with an international footprint that extends to Cyprus and Estonia, iED positions itself as a reliable European project partner and ecosystem builder, working at the intersection of innovation, sustainability, digital transformation, and societal development.

Its strategic priorities focus on translating innovation into practical impact for organisations, SMEs, public bodies, and communities. iED is active across several thematic areas, including entrepreneurship, digital and industrial transformation, health and wellbeing, green transition, social innovation, and culture. Its international positioning is further strengthened through extensive participation in EU programmes and through its role as coordinator of the European Digital Innovation Hub Health Hub, which supports digital transformation in the health and pharma ecosystem in Greece.

In organisational terms, iED combines project implementation capacity with structured internal support functions, including dedicated administration, finance, marketing, and HR management. It also operates learning and capacity-building structures, such as its JOIST Academy e-learning platform, through which it develops and delivers tailored training and upskilling activities. Although iED is not a higher education institution and does not host faculties or formal doctoral schools, it contributes substantially to researcher development, skills building, and institutional capacity strengthening through European cooperation projects and innovation-oriented services.

1.3.2 ROLE IN THE SMART RESEARCHERS PROJECT

iED brings the perspective of a non-academic organisation to SMART Researchers, helping connect researcher development with entrepreneurship, employability, transversal skills, and cross-sectoral opportunities. Its role focuses on strengthening career support structures, contributing to competence development and training, supporting evaluation and policy feedback, and promoting the longer-term uptake of project results.

In **WP2 – Transforming Career Support Systems for ESRs**, iED contributes to HR audits, supports the co-development of the Strategic Action Plan, and helps strengthen Career Support Centre functions, particularly through external partnerships, cross-sectoral opportunities, and support for female leadership and inclusion.

¹ For the purposes of this SAP, the figure refers to staff involved in research, innovation, project implementation, and knowledge-production activities who fall within the project's operational interpretation of R1/R2 profiles

In **WP3 – ResearchComp-based Micro-credentialing and Certification**, iED contributes to the micro-credentialing framework through training material development, delivery of training opportunities to Early-Stage Researchers via the project support structures, and support for the institutionalisation of the certification approach.

In **WP4 – Competence Lab and Digital Resource Hub**, iED contributes to the use and deployment of the digital resource hub, supports mentoring-related activities, and co-organises researcher engagement activities in Greece.

In **WP5 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Policy Feedback**, iED contributes to competency tracking, evaluation of institutional and training-related progress, and policy feedback activities, including participation in policy co-creation processes.

In **WP6 – Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation**, iED supports knowledge-sharing, inclusion-related outreach, and actions linked to the sustainability and longer-term exploitation of project results.

Internally, implementation is coordinated through iED's project management structure, with close collaboration among the staff involved in implementation, training, evaluation, and outreach.

1.3.3 ALIGNMENT OF THE SAP WITH INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

A. Strategic alignment

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) of the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) is aligned with existing institutional policies and operational practices that support researcher development, while also contributing to the further structuring and systematisation of HR-related processes.

At the institutional level, the SAP builds upon a set of established internal policies and frameworks, including:

- the Training Plan, supporting continuous professional development and skills enhancement,
- the Gender Equality Plan (GEP), promoting inclusiveness, diversity, and equal opportunities,
- the Internal Working Regulation (IWR), defining organisational procedures and working conditions,
- the Code of Ethics (CoE), establishing principles related to integrity, ethical conduct, and responsible research practices,
- the Child Protection Policy (CPP), ensuring safeguarding standards where applicable,
- and GDPR-related policies and procedures, supporting data protection and compliance.

While a fully formalised HR strategy is not currently in place, iED has established operational HR practices, including the use of defined KPIs and activity-based planning to guide annual priorities and organisational actions. These practices provide a functional basis for performance monitoring and implementation, although they are not yet integrated into a comprehensive strategic framework.

In this context, the SAP serves as a structured, institution-wide framework that consolidates and expands existing practices into a coherent system for researcher career development. It introduces clear strategic direction, measurable objectives, and

monitoring mechanisms, contributing to the transition from operational practice to institutionalised system.

Through this alignment, the SAP:

- supports the operationalisation of existing policies through structured actions and measurable outcomes,
- strengthens institutional capacity in HR and career development systems,
- and ensures alignment with the European Charter for Researchers and the European Framework for Research Careers.

B. Adoption and approval mechanism

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) will be formally adopted at the executive management level of the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED), ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and governance structures.

Adoption Body:

The SAP will be approved by the organization's executive management, comprising the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior leadership members (CSO, COO), who are responsible for strategic decision-making and organizational oversight.

Approval procedure:

The SAP adoption process follows a structured internal review and validation approach, including:

- Preparation and drafting of the SAP by the SAP Coordinator (HR Manager), responsible for coordinating and developing the Strategic Action Plan at institutional level,
- Internal consultation through coordination mechanisms, including Coordinators meetings and engagement with relevant supervisors and operational units,
- Consolidation of validated findings and finalization of the SAP document

Expected adoption date:

Formal adoption of the SAP is expected by the **end of June 2026 (Q2 2026)**.

C. Institutional embedding mechanism

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is designed to be structurally embedded within the existing governance and operational framework of the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED), ensuring long-term sustainability and institutional ownership.

At the strategic level, overall oversight of the SAP is ensured by the executive management (CEO, CSO, COO), who act as the institutional sponsors, providing strategic direction and ensuring alignment with organizational priorities.

At the operational level, the SAP is coordinated and managed by the SAP Coordinator (HR function), who is responsible for overseeing implementation, monitoring progress, and ensuring alignment with institutional HR practices and development priorities.

Implementation responsibilities are distributed across relevant organizational units and functions, including department heads who contribute to the execution of SAP-related actions within their respective areas of responsibility.

Existing coordination mechanisms, such as Coordinators meetings, are utilized to support internal communication, alignment, and follow-up of SAP-related actions, ensuring cross-departmental engagement and consistency.

The SAP is further integrated into institutional processes through its connection with:

- annual planning and KPI-setting processes,
- HR and training-related activities,
- and internal reporting and review practices.

This embedding approach ensures that the SAP is not implemented as a standalone project deliverable, but as an integrated and evolving component of the organisation's operational and strategic framework.

D. Public accessibility and transparency

Following its formal adoption, the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) will be made publicly accessible through the official communication channels of the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED), ensuring transparency and visibility at institutional level.

The SAP will be published on the organization's official website (www.ied.eu), within the organization's career page (<https://ied.eu/career/>), allowing access to both internal and external stakeholders.

In addition, the SAP will be internally accessible through institutional systems used for policy management and employee information (e.g. HR information systems), supporting internal awareness, accessibility, and implementation.

Key updates, changes, and progress related to the SAP will be communicated internally to employees through established internal communication channels (MS Teams, team e-mails), including the organization's HR information system (Zoho People & internal HR management microsite), which serves as the central platform for policy dissemination and employee information.

Where relevant, updates and key developments related to the SAP may also be communicated externally through the organization's website and other institutional communication channels, ensuring ongoing transparency towards external stakeholders.

This approach ensures that the SAP contributes not only to internal organizational development, but also to broader knowledge sharing and alignment with European Research Area (ERA) principles.

1.3.4 TARGET BENEFICIARIES

Primary beneficiaries:

- HR professionals
- Department heads
- R1 researchers

Secondary beneficiaries:

- External stakeholders (industry, public sector)
- Research supervisors
- R2 researchers

1.3.5 EXISTING STRUCTURES RELEVANT TO SAP IMPLEMENTATION



The organisation currently supports researcher development through a set of internal structures and practices, which are further strengthened, reformed, or expanded through the implementation of the SAP.

- HR function – Strengthened
- Departmental coordination (Department Heads) – Strengthened
- Structured recruitment processes – Reformed
- Structured feedback and performance evaluation system (bi-annual 360° evaluation) – Strengthened
- Ethics and governance framework (Code of Ethics, Internal Working Regulations) – Strengthened
- Gender Equality structures (GEP) – Strengthened
- Career Support Centre (CSC) – Newly established

2. METHODOLOGY, DATA AND ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

2.1 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SAP DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is developed through an evidence-based, participatory, and governance-aligned methodological framework designed to ensure institutional ownership, policy alignment, and operational feasibility.

The methodology combines four interrelated evidence streams:

1. **HR Audit and Capacity Assessment** – institutional maturity baseline
2. **Researcher Survey** – ESR perception-based evidence
3. **Participatory consultation processes** – co-design and validation
4. **Policy alignment review** – alignment with HRS4R, the European Charter for Researchers, and the European Framework for Research Careers

These streams form a structured diagnostic-to-action pathway:

Baseline Diagnosis → Gap Identification → Priority Setting → Institutional Validation → Action Design → KPI Structuring

This approach ensures that the SAP is:

- Data-informed
- Institution-specific
- Strategically aligned with EU policy frameworks
- Co-created with internal stakeholders
- Feasible within institutional governance constraints

The development process adheres to principles of:

- Transparency
- Co-design
- Accountability
- Evidence triangulation
- Institutional embedding

2.1 HR AUDIT AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

The HR Audit conducted within the SMART Researchers framework provides a structured assessment of the institutional capacity of the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) across the four key pillars of the European Charter for Researchers. Results indicate differentiated levels of maturity across the four pillars, highlighting both areas of relative strength and critical structural gaps.

Table 1: HR Audit Baseline

Pillar	Average Score (0–4)	Interpretation (150–250 words per pillar)
Pillar 1 – Ethics, integrity, gender & open science	2.25	The score of 2.25 places this pillar within the category of moderately structured systems (2–3), indicating a developing but not yet fully institutionalised framework. The audit findings confirm that iED has established key policy frameworks, including the Code of Ethics and GDPR-related procedures, which provide a solid foundation for ethical compliance and responsible organisational practices. However, these frameworks are not yet fully operationalised through structured and consistently applied institutional mechanisms. Their implementation appears to rely primarily on general awareness and individual adherence, rather than formal processes such as systematic training, monitoring, or clearly defined internal procedures. As a result, the application of ethical principles may vary across teams and activities. Furthermore, elements related to Open Science are not yet systematically embedded in organisational practices. There is limited evidence of structured approaches to data management, transparency, or dissemination aligned with European standards. While the policy basis exists, further development is required to ensure consistent implementation,

		monitoring, and integration of ethics and integrity principles into everyday organisational processes
Pillar 2 – Assessment, recruitment & progression (OTM-R)	1.83	The score of 1.83 places this pillar within the category of developing systems (1–2), indicating limited standardisation and a need for further structural development. While recruitment and selection activities are operationally implemented, the audit findings indicate that they are not supported by consistently applied procedures or formalised frameworks. In particular, there is limited evidence of structured evaluation methods, such as competency-based assessment criteria, scoring systems, or standardised interview processes. This suggests that recruitment decisions may rely on informal or case-by-case approaches, rather than a unified institutional methodology. Additionally, the audit highlights gaps in documentation and transparency. There is no consistent use of standardised recruitment files, structured evaluation records, or formal communication mechanisms with candidates. Feedback processes and traceability of decisions appear to be underdeveloped. These limitations reduce the comparability and transparency of recruitment processes, which are key principles of the OTM-R framework. Overall,

		this pillar requires the development of structured procedures, tools, and documentation practices to ensure consistency and alignment with European recruitment standards.
Pillar 3 – Working conditions and practices	2.83	The score of 2.83 places this pillar within the category of moderately structured systems (2–3), indicating a relatively established and functional operational environment. The audit findings suggest that iED has implemented a range of practices and internal regulations that support employees in their day-to-day work. The presence of frameworks such as the Internal Working Regulation (IWR), along with policies related to working conditions and organisational support, demonstrates that key processes are in place and actively applied. These elements contribute to a stable and structured working environment, supporting the effective functioning of the organisation. However, the audit also identifies the need for further development in terms of systematic monitoring and evaluation. There is limited evidence of structured mechanisms for collecting data on employee satisfaction, well-being, or working conditions. Existing practices are not yet supported by formal feedback systems or performance indicators, limiting the

		organisation's ability to assess effectiveness and implement targeted improvements. Overall, Pillar 3 provides a strong operational foundation, which can support further institutional development through increased formalisation and monitoring.
Pillar 4 – Research careers and talent development	1.17	The score of 1.17 places this pillar within the category of emerging maturity (0–1), indicating significant structural gaps in research career development and talent management. The audit findings highlight the absence of a formalised, organisation-wide system supporting researcher career progression and development. While certain development-related activities may take place within projects or individual initiatives, these are not embedded within a coherent institutional framework. There is no clear evidence of defined career pathways, structured mentoring systems, or integrated training programmes aligned with researcher needs. Additionally, performance development processes related to research roles are not systematically implemented, and responsibilities for career support appear to be distributed in an unstructured manner across the organisation. Existing practices are largely fragmented and project-dependent, limiting their consistency and long-term impact.

		This result confirms the presence of critical structural limitations, including the absence of formalised career development systems, fragmentation of responsibilities across organisational units, and the lack of structured and institution-wide support mechanisms for researcher development.
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The HR Audit serves as the baseline benchmark for mid-term and final evaluation.

2.2 RESEARCHER SURVEY FINDINGS

(Perception-based institutional evidence)



Table 2: Researcher survey results

Pillar	Mean score (1-5)	Key strengths identified	Key gaps identified	Interpretation (100-200 words)
Pillar 1 – Ethics, integrity, gender & open science	4.20	Strong culture of academic freedom, inclusion, and ethical awareness; positive perceptions of diversity and gender equality; support for Open Science principles in practice; high levels of perceived autonomy and openness in research activities.	Limited institutionalisation of ethics-related procedures; need for more structured training and capacity building; lack of consistent internal guidance and tools for Open Science implementation; variability in application across projects.	The survey results position iED as demonstrating strong performance in Pillar 1, reflecting a well-established culture of academic freedom, inclusion, and ethical awareness. Researchers consistently report that ethical principles are respected and embedded in day-to-day practices, particularly in relation to diversity, gender equality, and openness in research activities. These findings confirm the presence of a positive organisational culture aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. At the same time, when compared with the HR Audit findings, a clear distinction emerges between culture-driven practices and formalised institutional mechanisms. While the survey reflects strong perceived performance, the audit identifies a need for greater standardisation and systematisation of ethics-related processes. This indicates a degree of overestimation of institutional maturity, where positive day-to-day

				experience may not fully reflect the level of structured implementation. Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening formal procedures, training, and internal guidance would improve consistency and alignment between perceived and actual institutional capacity.
Pillar 2 – Assessment, recruitment & progression (OTM-R)	4.04	Positive perceptions of fairness, transparency, and merit-based recruitment; clear job calls and inclusive practices; recognition of non-linear career paths; generally strong confidence in recruitment and selection processes.	Limited standardisation of assessment frameworks; insufficient recognition of diverse contributions; inconsistencies in feedback provision; need for clearer and more structured evaluation and progression criteria.	Survey findings indicate that iED is perceived as performing strongly in recruitment, selection, and progression-related practices. Respondents report high levels of confidence in the fairness and transparency of recruitment procedures, including merit-based selection, inclusive practices, and recognition of non-linear career paths. These perceptions highlight a positive experience at the level of individual interactions and operational processes. However, when compared with the HR Audit results, a divergence becomes evident. While researchers perceive recruitment and progression processes as well-functioning, the audit identifies limited standardisation, documentation, and formalisation of these practices. This suggests a misalignment between perceived and actual institutional

				maturity, indicating a degree of overestimation driven by positive day-to-day experience rather than structured systems. The findings therefore highlight the need to strengthen institutional frameworks related to evaluation, documentation, and feedback processes. Enhancing the consistency and transparency of assessment mechanisms would support alignment with OTM-R principles and ensure that strong practices are underpinned by formalised and scalable systems.
Pillar 3 – Working conditions and practices	4.10	Strong perceptions of working conditions, flexibility, and work-life balance; supportive working environment; stability and access to resources; positive day-to-day organisational support.	Limited formalisation of support structures; need for more structured mechanisms for researcher representation and decision-making; gaps in systematic training (e.g. IP, compliance); need for more consistent support for early-	The survey results indicate that iED demonstrates strong performance in working conditions and organisational practices, with respondents highlighting flexibility, supportive collaboration, and a positive day-to-day working environment as key strengths. High ratings related to work-life balance, stability, and access to resources confirm that the organisation provides a favourable operational context for research activities. When considered alongside the HR Audit findings, these results broadly

			career and fixed-term researchers.	confirm the presence of a relatively well-established operational environment. However, the comparison also reveals a distinction between strong day-to-day experience and the level of institutionalisation of support mechanisms. While researchers report positive conditions, the audit identifies the need for more structured monitoring, formal feedback systems, and consistent implementation of support processes. This suggests that perceptions are largely aligned with actual strengths, but may partially overestimate the level of systematisation. Strengthening formal mechanisms for feedback, representation, and targeted support—particularly for early-career researchers—would enhance consistency and reinforce the sustainability of existing positive practices.
Pillar 4 – Research careers and talent development	3.88	Positive perceptions of continuous learning, supervision quality, and support for innovation and skill development; acceptance of diverse	Lack of structured career development systems; limited visibility of career pathways; absence of formal mentoring	Survey findings indicate that iED is perceived as providing a generally supportive environment for research career development, particularly in terms of supervision quality, continuous learning, and support for innovation-

		career paths; supportive supervisory relationships.	mechanisms; limited access to centralised career guidance and development support.	related skills. Respondents report positive experiences in their day-to-day development, especially within project contexts and supervisory relationships. However, when compared with the HR Audit results, a significant divergence is observed. While survey responses suggest moderately positive perceptions, the audit identifies substantial structural gaps, including the absence of formalised career development systems and institution-wide support mechanisms. This indicates a clear overestimation of institutional maturity, where supportive practices experienced at project or team level are not yet embedded within a coherent organisational framework. The findings highlight the need to transition from informal and project-based support to structured, institution-wide systems. Developing clear career pathways, formal mentoring frameworks, and accessible career guidance services will be critical to improving consistency, visibility, and long-term researcher development.
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2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT

Benchmark definition

Organizational readiness is assessed across three dimensions:

1. Structural readiness (governance, policies, procedures)
2. Operational readiness (resources, staffing, tools)
3. Cultural readiness (leadership commitment, openness to reform, ESR engagement)

Table 3: Organizational Readiness

Dimension	Evidence source (Audit/Survey)	Current status (Low/Moderate/High)	Main constraints	Required institutional changes
Structural readiness	HR Audit results (low scores in Pillars 2 and 4 indicating limited formalisation and absence of structured career systems); Researcher Survey findings indicating positive perceptions but limited institutional structuring.	Moderate readiness	Limited formalisation of HR systems; absence of structured career development frameworks; fragmented implementation across organisational units.	Development of formalised HR procedures and career development systems; establishment of structured governance mechanisms to ensure consistent implementation.
Operational readiness	Existing operational practices and internal tools (Zoho People, Zoho Recruit); Researcher Survey findings indicating positive day-to-day experience.	Moderate readiness	Limited standardisation of processes; reliance on informal practices; need for improved coordination and scalability	Standardisation of processes; improved documentation and monitoring; optimisation of HR tools to support structured implementation.
Cultural readiness	Researcher Survey findings (high scores across all pillars); strong positive perceptions of working environment,	High readiness	Potential gap between positive perceptions and level of formalisation;	Alignment of strong organisational culture with formalised systems; strengthening awareness



	collaboration, and leadership support.		reliance on informal practices.	and engagement in structured HR processes.
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The organizational readiness of iED to implement the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) can be assessed as moderate, based on the combined analysis of HR Audit results and Researcher Survey findings.

From a governance perspective, the organization demonstrates sufficient structures to support SAP implementation. Executive management is actively involved in organizational planning and decision-making, while department heads contribute to the alignment and practical application of actions across different units. Although governance mechanisms are not yet fully standardized, there is clear leadership commitment to strengthening HR systems and supporting the implementation of structured processes. This ensures that SAP actions can be effectively coordinated and embedded within existing organizational practices.

In terms of operational capacity, iED benefits from established practices and the use of internal systems such as Zoho People and Zoho Recruit, complemented by an internal HR microsite that serves as a central access point for policies, procedures, and employee-related information. This integrated approach supports transparency, accessibility, and consistent internal communication. At the same time, the HR Audit highlights the need for further standardization, documentation, and scalability of processes to ensure consistency across the organization.

Culturally, the organization demonstrates high readiness, as reflected in the consistently positive perceptions reported in the researcher survey. Staff engagement, openness to change, and a collaborative working environment represent key enabling factors for SAP implementation.

The main structural barriers relate to the current level of formalization and the absence of fully integrated systems, particularly in research career development. Addressing these gaps will be essential to ensure sustainable and consistent implementation.

The overall readiness level is assessed as moderate, reflecting a strong organizational culture combined with developing institutional structures. While formalized systems are not yet fully established, iED demonstrates sufficient governance capacity, leadership commitment, and operational support to implement the SAP effectively. The active involvement of management and department heads, together with the use of internal tools and communication platforms, provides a solid implementation framework. At the same time, the need for increased formalization and systematization remains a key priority. Addressing these structural gaps will enhance consistency, scalability, and long-term impact, ensuring that the organization transitions from operational practices to a fully integrated and sustainable HR system.

2.4 PARTICIPATORY PROCESS AND CO-DESIGN VALIDATION

The development and validation of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) at iED followed a structured participatory process, ensuring alignment between institutional priorities and the needs of the research community.

The validation of the diagnostic findings was conducted through a dedicated internal meeting, during which the results of the HR Audit and the Researcher Survey were

presented and discussed. The session brought together key stakeholders, including the CEO, CSO, COO, department heads, the HR function, and researchers (ESRs), ensuring a balanced and representative perspective across organizational and decision-making levels.

During the meeting, participants reviewed the main findings and confirmed the identified strengths and gaps. Particular emphasis was placed on areas highlighted by the HR Audit, such as recruitment processes and research career development, and their alignment with the perceptions captured through the survey. This process ensured that SAP is grounded both in evidence-based analysis and in the actual experience of staff.

The prioritization of actions was carried out collaboratively, based on the relevance, urgency, and expected institutional impact of each proposed measure. Priority was given to actions addressing structural gaps, including the formalization of HR processes, the development of career support mechanisms, and the improvement of internal coordination and communication.

Co-ownership of the SAP was ensured through the active involvement of all participants in the validation and prioritization process. The inclusive nature of the discussion facilitated shared understanding and strengthened institutional commitment to implementation.

The participatory process has been formally documented, including the meeting agenda, list of participants, and supporting material, in line with the requirements.

Table 4: Participatory process documentation

Activity Type	Participants	Date	Key topics discussed	Key decisions / Priorities Confirmed
Focus group				
Workshop				
Consultation meeting	CEO, CSO, COO, HR Manager, Department Heads, Researchers (ESRs)	24/4/2026	Presentation and discussion of HR Audit and Researcher Survey findings; validation of identified strengths and gaps; alignment between institutional analysis and staff experience; identification of priority areas for SAP development	Agreement on key reform priorities, including the formalisation of HR processes, development of structured career support mechanisms, and strengthening of internal coordination and communication; validation of main findings and alignment on SAP strategic direction.

The participatory process conducted at iED played a central role in shaping the final priorities of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), ensuring alignment between institutional needs and the perspectives of key stakeholders.

The consultation meeting confirmed a clear set of reform priorities emerging from both the HR Audit and the Researcher Survey findings. The main priorities identified include the formalization and standardization of HR processes, particularly in recruitment and performance management, the development of structured career support mechanisms, and the strengthening of internal coordination and communication across organizational units. These priorities reflect the need to transition from operational practices to more formalized and scalable systems.

A high level of consensus was observed among participants regarding the overall direction of the SAP. All stakeholder groups acknowledged the strong organizational culture and positive working environment highlighted in the survey results, while also recognizing the structural gaps identified through the HR Audit. In particular, there was broad agreement on the need to strengthen institutional frameworks related to career development and to improve the consistency of HR-related processes.

At the same time, certain areas required further alignment, particularly in relation to the level of formalization needed and the prioritization of specific actions. While management and department heads emphasized feasibility and implementation capacity, researchers highlighted the importance of visibility, accessibility, and clarity of career development opportunities. These discussions contributed to a more balanced and realistic prioritization of actions.

The involvement of researchers (ESRs) in the participatory process played an important role in ensuring that the SAP reflects their needs and experiences. Their input influenced the prioritization of actions related to career development, mentoring, and access to information, reinforcing the relevance and applicability of SAP.

Overall, the process ensured that the final SAP priorities are both evidence-based and co-designed, reflecting a shared institutional commitment to implementation.

3. OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES PER PILLAR

3.1 STRATEGIC PILLAR ARCHITECTURE

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) operationalises institutional reform across four structurally defined pillars aligned with the European Framework for Research Careers and the European Charter for Researchers:

1. **Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science**
2. **Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression (OTM-R)**
3. **Working Conditions and Practices**
4. **Research Careers and Talent Development**

Each pillar translates diagnostic findings from Section 2 into measurable institutional commitments for the period 2026–2031.

3.2 OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES PER PILLAR (SMART FRAMEWORK)

3.2.1 OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

Table 5: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 1

Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives/actions
Pillar 1 – Ethics, integrity, gender & open science	Strengthen institutional implementation and accessibility of ethical, HR, and governance policy frameworks	Policy accessibility: Availability and structured accessibility of policies across the organisation	~50% of core policies centrally accessible Policies are in place but not yet fully centralised or systematically accessed	≥95% of core policies centrally accessible and regularly updated	≥75% of core policies structured and accessible through HR systems	HR Manager	Month 12	Organise policies; upload to HR microsite; ensure internal communication and accessibility

D2.1. SMART Researchers Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Framework for ESR Career Development



Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives/actions
Pillar 1 – Ethics, integrity, gender & open science	Enhance institutional awareness and consistent application of ethical and integrity principles across the organisation	Awareness and application: Number of awareness and internal communication activities related to ethics and policies	~0–1 structured awareness actions/year	≥2 awareness actions/year, reaching ≥85% of staff	≥2 awareness or communication actions implemented	HR Manager	Month 18	Introduce internal communication actions; integrate policy awareness into onboarding and meetings



Table 6: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 2

Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives
Pillar 2 – Assessment, recruitment & progression (OTM-R)	Strengthen and formalise recruitment and selection processes in line with OTM-R principles to ensure transparency, consistency, and merit-based selection	Structured recruitment : Number of recruitment processes conducted using structured templates and evaluation tools	~30% of recruitment processes using structured templates /tools	≥95% of recruitment processes using structured templates/tools	≥60% of recruitment processes implemented using structured templates and evaluation tools	HR Manager	Month 18	Develop and standardise recruitment templates; define evaluation criteria; implement structured interview and selection processes
Pillar 2 – Assessment, recruitment & progression (OTM-R)	Enhance transparency, documentation, and consistency of recruitment procedures	Recruitment transparency : Availability and consistent use of documented	~40% of recruitment processes fully documented	≥95% of recruitment processes fully documented and traceable	≥70% of relevant recruitment processes (≥3 recruitment processes) documented using	HR Manager	Month 18	Document recruitment processes; ensure alignment across departments; integrate procedures into

Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives
	across the organisation	recruitment procedures			core procedures			HR systems and tools

Table 7: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 3

Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives
Pillar 3 – Working conditions and practices	Strengthen and systematise employee feedback and monitoring mechanisms to support continuous improvement of working conditions	Feedback and monitoring: Number of structured feedback and monitoring activities conducted	2 feedback cycles/year; <30% linked to documented follow-up actions	2 feedback cycles/year; ≥95% linked to documented follow-up actions	2 feedback cycles/year; ≥60% linked to documented follow-up actions	HR Manager	Month 24	Enhance use of 360° evaluation results; introduce structured follow-up actions; strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms

Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives
Pillar 3 – Working conditions and practices	Strengthen and formalise organisational practices supporting employee well-being and work environment quality	Well-being/work environment: Number of structured well-being and work environment initiatives implemented	~0–1 structured initiatives/year	≥3 structured initiatives/year	≥2 structured well-being or work environment initiatives implemented	HR Manager	Month 24	Introduce structured well-being initiatives; organise engagement activities; support work environment improvements

Table 8: Objectives and Measures – Pillar 4

Pillar	SMART objective	KPI	Baseline (2025)	Target (2031)	Interim target (Mid-term)	Responsible owner	Due date	Key initiatives
Pillar 4 – Research careers and talent development	Establish and operationalise a Career	CSC establishment:	0 CSC services	≥3 CSC services operational	CSC function defined	HR Manager	Month 18	Define CSC structure and services;

D2.1. SMART Researchers Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Framework for ESR Career Development



	Support Centre (CSC) function as a formalised institutional mechanism for supporting researcher career development.	Existence and operationalisation of CSC function	formally defined		and at least 1 pilot service implemented			integrate CSC within HR function; communicate CSC role internally
Pillar 4 – Research careers and talent development	Develop and implement a structured training approach with defined learning outcomes aligned with ResearchComp principles.	Research Comp-aligned training: Number of training programmes aligned with defined competency areas	0 structured programmes aligned with competency areas	≥1 finalized structured programme aligned with competency areas	≥1 pilot structured training programme implemented	HR Manager	Month 24	Define learning outcomes; align training with competency areas; implement pilot structured training programmes
Pillar 4 – Research careers and talent development	Establish structured transversal	Transversal skills training:	0 structured training	≥2 structured	≥2 structured training	HR Manager	Month 24	Develop training plan; deliver training sessions;



	skills training programmes for researchers	Number of structured training programmes implemented	cycles/year	training cycles/year	cycles delivered			monitor participation and effectiveness
Pillar 4 – Research careers and talent development	Ensure formal integration of the CSC function into institutional governance and coordination mechanisms	CSC governance integration: Level of CSC integration into institutional governance processes	0 governance/coordination processes formally including CSC	CSC included in ≥95% of relevant governance/coordination processes	CSC included in ≥1 regular internal coordination process	HR Manager	Month 18	Define CSC governance role; include CSC in coordination meetings; align with management structures

3.3 PHASED IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AND RESOURCING

This section operationalises the Strategic Action Plan and demonstrates implementation realism.

Implementation is structured across four strategic phases:

1. **Initiation (Year 1)**
Governance setup, baseline consolidation, system design, internal approvals.
2. **Rollout (Years 1–3)**
Implementation of priority measures and launch of core initiatives.
3. **Consolidation (Years 3–4)**
Integration into institutional processes, KPI monitoring, adjustments.
4. **Institutionalisation (Years 4–5)**
Formal embedding into regulations, HR systems, and budgeting structures.

Phased Implementation Timeline and Resourcing:

The implementation of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) at iED is structured across four strategic phases over a five-year period, ensuring a progressive, realistic, and sustainable approach aligned with institutional capacity and priorities.

Phase 1 – Initiation (Year 1)

The initial phase focuses on governance setup, consolidation of baseline data, and system design. Key activities include the formal definition of the Career Support Centre (CSC) function, the development of structured recruitment procedures, and the organisation of HR policies and frameworks. Internal approvals and coordination mechanisms are established to support implementation.

Phase 2 – Rollout (Years 1–3)

During this phase, priority measures are progressively implemented. This includes the rollout of structured recruitment processes, the implementation of training programmes aligned with defined competency areas, and the initiation of CSC-related services. Existing practices, such as bi-annual 360° evaluations, are further strengthened and integrated into broader monitoring mechanisms.

Phase 3 – Consolidation (Years 3–4)

This phase focuses on the integration and refinement of implemented actions. HR processes are further standardised, feedback mechanisms are systematically analysed, and adjustments are made based on performance indicators. Cross-departmental consistency and coordination are strengthened.

Phase 4 – Institutionalisation (Years 4–5)

The final phase ensures the formal embedding of all systems and processes into institutional structures. The CSC function is fully integrated into governance, HR processes are embedded into organisational practices, and policies are consistently applied and maintained. The sustainability of the SAP is ensured through alignment with internal procedures and long-term organisational planning.

Resourcing



The implementation of the SAP is supported primarily through existing institutional resources. The HR Manager acts as the central coordinating role, supported by Executive Management for strategic oversight and Department Heads for operational implementation.

Existing tools, including Zoho People and the internal HR microsite, support the documentation, communication, and monitoring of HR processes. The phased implementation ensures that resource allocation remains aligned with institutional capacity, allowing gradual development, testing, and scaling of systems without requiring significant additional resources.

3.3.1 IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP (STRATEGIC LEVEL)



Table 9: iED SAP Roadmap

Phase	Timeframe	Key focus	Main measures implemented	Expected outcome
Initiation	Year 1	Governance setup and system design	Definition of CSC function; structuring of recruitment, training, and policy frameworks; consolidation of HR baseline data	Organisational foundations established and implementation readiness ensured
Rollout	Years 1–3	Implementation of core SAP measures	Deployment of structured recruitment processes; implementation of training programmes aligned with competency areas; activation of CSC support function; strengthening of feedback mechanisms	Core HR systems operational and consistently applied across key areas
Consolidation	Years 3–4	Integration and optimisation of processes	Standardisation of HR processes across departments; systematic use of feedback data; alignment of practices across organisational units	Increased consistency, efficiency, and cross-departmental alignment
Institutionalisation	Years 4–5	Embedding into institutional structures	Formal integration of CSC into governance; full alignment of HR systems with organisational procedures; continuous	Sustainable and fully institutionalised HR system supporting long-term organisational development

D2.1. SMART Researchers Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Framework for ESR Career Development



			application of policies and practices	
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3.4 HUMAN CAPACITY AND STRUCTURAL ENABLERS

3.4.1 HUMAN RESOURCE ALIGNMENT

Table 10: Institutional roles for SAP delivery

Role / Function	Core responsibility	Competency Profile	Institutional unit
SAP Coordinator	Overall coordination, monitoring, and reporting of SAP implementation; ensuring alignment with strategic priorities and organisational direction	Strategic coordination; HR management; organisational planning	HR Department
Pillar 1 Lead	Implementation of actions related to ethics, policies, and governance frameworks	Knowledge of HR policies; governance; compliance	HR Department
Pillar 2 Lead	Implementation and standardisation of recruitment and selection processes in line with OTM-R principles	Recruitment processes; evaluation methods; HR procedures	HR Department
Pillar 3 Lead	Implementation of actions related to working conditions, feedback systems, and employee engagement	Organisational development; employee engagement; feedback systems	HR Department
Pillar 4 Lead / CSC Lead	Coordination of career development actions, training programmes, and	Training design; career development; coordination skills	HR Department

	CSC-related activities		
HR Representative	Support implementation of HR-related processes at departmental level; facilitate communication and alignment across teams	Communication; coordination; operational support	Department Heads
Monitoring & data officer	Collection, monitoring, and reporting of KPIs and SAP progress; support data-driven decision-making	Data analysis; reporting; KPI monitoring	HR Department (coordination) with Department Heads (data input)

The above role distribution ensures organizational ownership through the involvement of both HR and Department Heads, while strategic alignment is maintained through the SAP coordination function.

Implementation is based on existing organizational structures and resources, ensuring feasibility without requiring additional financial commitments.

For SAP implementation, it is necessary to demonstrate:

- Organizational ownership
- Leadership accountability
- Feasibility without requiring financial commitments

3.5 GOVERNANCE AND DECISION STRUCTURE

3.5.1 GOVERNANCE MODEL

Table 11: SAP governance structure

Role	Function	Decision authority	Reporting line
Executive Management (CEO, CSO, COO)	Strategic oversight of SAP implementation	Approves SAP priorities, strategic directions, and major updates	Receives reports from SAP Coordinator

SAP Coordinator (HR Manager)	Overall coordination, monitoring, and reporting of SAP implementation	Ensures alignment with organisational strategy and oversees implementation	Reports to Executive Management
Internal Coordination Structure (Coordinators Meeting)	Operational coordination and alignment across departments	Supports implementation and validates progress at operational level	Reports to SAP Coordinator
CSC Lead (HR function)	Implementation of career development and training actions (Pillar 4)	Responsible for execution of CSC-related activities	Reports to SAP Coordinator
Researcher Input (via surveys and consultations)	Provides feedback and input to SAP implementation	Advisory (non-decision making)	Informs SAP Coordinator and Pillar Leads

3.5.2 REVIEW AND DECISION CADENCE

Table 12: Review framework

Review type	Frequency	Responsible body	Output
Operational review	Quarterly / Semi-Annual	HR Manager (SAP Coordinator) with Department Heads	Progress tracking, identification of implementation issues, adjustment actions
Strategic SAP review	Annual	Executive Management (CEO, CSO, COO)	Validation of progress, strategic alignment, approval of adjustments
Mid-term review	Year 3	HR Manager with Executive Management	Assessment of SAP implementation, KPI evaluation,

			definition of corrective actions
Final review	Year 5	Executive Management with HR Manager	Final evaluation of SAP outcomes and identification of sustainability actions

3.5.3 RISK ESCALATION AND CORRECTIVE MECHANISM

Table 13: Escalation logic

Risk Level	Trigger	Escalation path	Corrective window
Moderate	Delays in implementation of actions or partial KPI deviation	SAP Coordinator (HR Manager) reviews and coordinates corrective actions with Department Heads	Within 1–2 months
High	Significant delays or repeated KPI underperformance	Escalation to Executive Management; review and decision on corrective measures	Within 1 month
Critical	Failure to implement key actions or major deviation from SAP objectives	Immediate escalation to Executive Management; strategic intervention and redefinition of actions	Immediate action required

4. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND POLICY FEEDBACK

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is monitored through a structured three-level framework:

1. **Operational KPI Monitoring (Are we delivering what we committed?)**
2. **Benefits Realisation Tracking (Is the institution improving structurally?)**
3. **Policy Feedback and Regulatory Alignment (Is SAP influencing institutional and ERA-level frameworks?)**

Monitoring is directly linked to the SMART objectives defined under each pillar (Section 3.1) and follows the governance and review cadence defined in Section 3.5.

The system is designed to ensure clarity, feasibility, and institutional accountability without administrative overburden.

4.1 KPI MONITORING (OPERATIONAL LEVEL)

KPI monitoring tracks the implementation of objectives defined per pillar.

Table 14: KPI monitoring overview

Pillar	Objective reference	KPI	Monitoring tool / data source	Reporting Frequency	Responsible Role
Pillar 1	Policy accessibility	% of core policies centrally accessible and regularly updated	HR microsite / Zoho People / policy repository	Annual	Pillar 1 Lead
	Ethics and policy awareness	Number of structured awareness or communication actions implemented; % of staff reached	HR records / onboarding records / MS Teams or email communication logs		
Pillar 2	Structured recruitment processes	% of recruitment processes using structured templates and evaluation tools	Zoho Recruit / HR records / recruitment templates	Annual	Pillar 2 Lead
	Recruitment transparency and documentation	% of recruitment processes fully documented and traceable	Zoho Recruit / HR recruitment files / evaluation records		
Pillar 3	Feedback and monitoring	Number of feedback cycles implemented; % linked to documented follow-up actions	360° evaluation data / internal HR reports / action tracking records	Annual	Pillar 3 Lead

	Well-being and work environment	Number of structured well-being or work environment initiatives implemented	HR records / internal reports / communication logs		
Pillar 4	CSC establishment	Number of CSC services formally defined and operational	CSC documentation / HR records / internal service logs	Semi-Annual	CSC Lead
	ResearchComp-aligned training	Number of structured training programmes aligned with ResearchComp competency areas	Training records / learning materials / HR tracking tools		
	Transversal skills training	Number of structured training cycles implemented	Training records / attendance lists / feedback forms		
	CSC governance integration	Level of CSC integration into governance/coordination processes	Meeting minutes / coordination records / governance documentation		

Monitoring output:

- Annual SAP Implementation Review Report
- Mid-term review (Year 3)
- Final evaluation (Year 5)

4.2 BENEFITS REALISATION TRACKING (INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL)

While KPIs measure activity completion, benefits tracking assesses whether structural improvements are occurring.

Table 15: Institutional Benefits Tracking

Expected institutional benefit	Indicator	Measurement source	Target year
Increased transparency and consistency in recruitment processes	Recruitment procedures standardised and applied across the organisation	HR documentation / Zoho Recruit	2028
Improved employee engagement and structured feedback culture	Regular implementation of biannual feedback processes with documented follow-up actions	360° evaluation data	2028
Operationalised Career Support Centre (CSC) supporting career development	CSC structure established and core services implemented	Internal documentation	2027
Centralised and accessible HR policy framework across the organisation	HR policies available	HR microsite / Zoho People	2027

		and consistently used through a centralised system		
Structured ResearchComp-aligned training offer established		Training programme with defined learning outcomes and competency alignment implemented	Training materials / HR training records	2028

4.3 POLICY FEEDBACK AND ALIGNMENT (STRATEGIC LEVEL)

SAP is not only an internal HR instrument but also a strategic alignment mechanism with European research career frameworks.

Table 16: Policy feedback mechanism

SAP output	Institutional integration mechanism	External feedback channel	Review frequency
Updates to HR policies and internal procedures	Integration into HR framework and internal regulations through HR function	Alignment with HRS4R principles and frameworks	Annual
Progress and results of SAP implementation	Integration into internal monitoring and strategic planning processes	SMART Researchers project reporting and consortium-level reports	Annual

Career development and training framework (CSC & Research Comp alignment)	Integration into HR processes and training structures	SMART Researchers consortium exchanges and reporting activities	Annual
Organisational practices aligned with European research standards	Integration into institutional practices and internal coordination structures	Contribution to project-level discussions within the SMART Researchers framework	Annual

SAP implementation will be monitored through structured performance tracking aligned with ERA principles.

5 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

5.1 REFERENCE LIST

Not Applicable

5.2 PROJECT DOCUMENTS

The following project documents provide the operational context and complementary resources for the SAP:

- [Grant Agreement No. 101216967 – SMART Researchers](#)
- [Annex 1 – Description of the Action \(DoA\)](#)
- [Consortium Agreement \(CA\)](#)

5.3 REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS REFERENCED

The SAP is aligned with the following EU, international, and institutional frameworks:

- [Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Research Careers](#)
- [European Charter for Researchers](#)
- [ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 | European Research Area Platform](#)



- Internal Working Regulations (IWR)
- Code of Ethics
- Gender Equality Plan (GEP)