

HR STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS – HRS4R

2024 – 2029

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1. PREAMBLE

On October 11, 2024, Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava was awarded by the European Commission the distinction “HR Excellence in Research Award.”

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) of Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava (USV) is currently undergoing an update, considering the need to align with the new European guidelines in the field of research and innovation. In this context, the adoption of the Council of the European Union Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on the European framework to attract and retain research, innovation, and entrepreneurship talent (C/2023/1640) highlights the importance of concrete measures to strengthen researchers’ careers in Europe and to create a competitive and attractive academic environment.

This Recommendation emphasizes the implementation of policies that support mobility, professional development, and equity in research careers, thus facilitating the integration of researchers into international networks of excellence. USV aims to address these challenges by adapting its human resources policies, ensuring a favorable framework for researchers’ professional development and for increasing the institution’s international competitiveness.

Another fundamental aspect of updating the strategy is the transition from 40 to 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This change reflects efforts to simplify and streamline European standards applicable to research institutions, while maintaining a strong commitment to excellence, ethics, and transparency in researcher recruitment and career development.

USV has consistently demonstrated concern for implementing the best European practices in research and innovation, and updating the HRS4R strategy is an essential step in maintaining its status as a center of excellence in this field. The review process therefore aims to strengthen mechanisms for open and transparent recruitment, improve working and training conditions for researchers, as well as increase the visibility and attractiveness of USV at European and international levels.

Through this strategic update, USV reaffirms its commitment to European values in research, actively contributing to the development of a more integrated, competitive, and sustainable European Research Area.

2. INTRODUCTION

Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava (USV) is constantly committed to improving the quality of research careers and broadening career opportunities for researchers, while also contributing to the development of a more attractive and competitive European Research Area. The University recognizes the value of the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and intends to implement them in order to enhance the attractiveness of the research career and increase the quality of scientific research activities. The University's Human Resources Strategy represents a foundation for quality and continuity in research excellence, and therefore, USV aims to adapt its institutional guidelines and procedures to the principles of the European Union's policy in this field.

During the past year, Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava has committed itself to the process of implementing and certifying the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), namely:

- Approval of the Declaration of Commitment of USV to respect the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
- Approval of the initiation of the implementation process of the Charter and the Code of Conduct at the level of the University

Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava (USV) officially adhered to the principles of the Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in November 2023, through its Declaration of Commitment to these strategic documents (06.11.2023). This document was uploaded on the EURAXESS platform on January 16, 2024, and the deadline was established for the submission of the required documents by USV (Gap Analysis, OTMR & Action Plan) on the EURAXESS website (January 16, 2025).

Additionally, the local EURAXESS contact point was created at Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava, and Mrs. Otilia Cramariuc was appointed as the responsible person for the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers on the EURAXESS portal, in order to meet the requirements for obtaining the HR Excellence in Research Award.

On October 11, 2024, Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava was awarded by the European Commission the distinction "HR Excellence in Research Award."

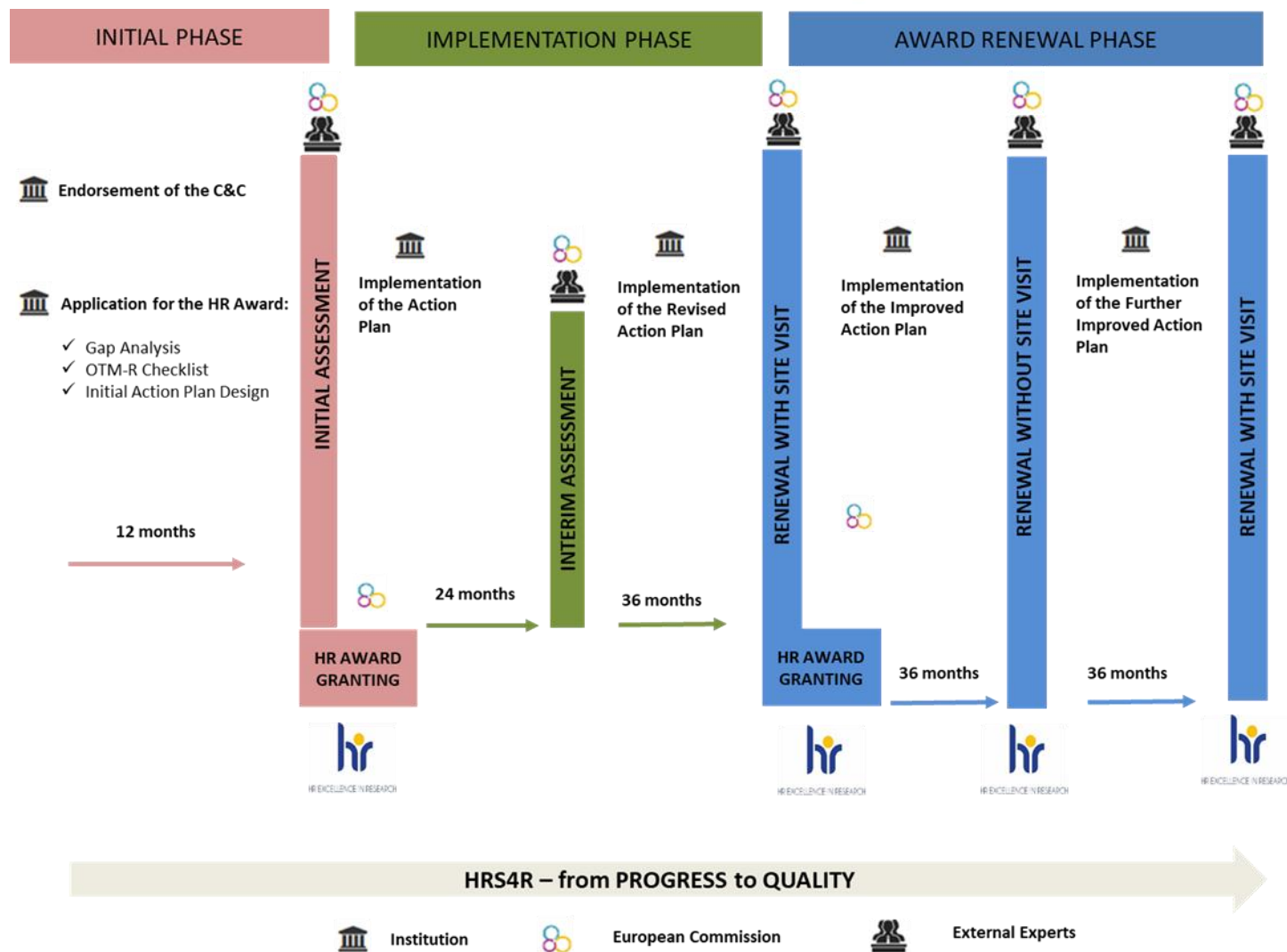
3. STAGES OF HRS4R IMPLEMENTATION AT USV

The “HR Excellence in Research Award” represents international recognition granted to research institutions that have made progress in aligning their human resources policies with the principles established in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The award acknowledges institutions whose recruitment and evaluation policies and practices are fair and transparent.

In this regard, for the successful implementation of the 20 principles mentioned above, the following three stages must be completed:

- Initial Stage: carried out at the level of the targeted institution. This consists of an internal analysis of human resources policies (GAP Analysis), a checklist concerning the process of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R), and the development of the Initial Action Plan. These documents will be submitted for evaluation by the European Commission, the body that grants the “HR Excellence in Research Award” to institutions progressing toward aligning their human resources policies with the provisions of the 20 principles of the Charter and the Code. This stage concludes with the granting of the HR Award certification.
- Implementation Stage: supervised by the European Commission. It consists of implementing the proposed Initial Action Plan, undergoing interim evaluation, revising the plan, and implementing the revised Action Plan. This phase concludes with an on-site visit and the renewal of the HR Award certification.
- Certification Renewal Stage: supervised by external experts. It includes implementing the improved action plan following the on-site visit, renewal of the certification without a site visit, implementation of the final improved Action Plan considering all feedback from the Commission, the institution’s internal conditions, and other aspects. It ends with a final on-site visit and the granting of the definitive HR Award certification.

Schematically, the phases of obtaining the HR Award certification are as follows:



4. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE AND THE HRS4R MISSION OF USV

With an academic structure comprising **11 faculties** (56 undergraduate study programs, 8 professional conversion programs, 35 master's degree programs, and doctoral studies in 13 fields), over **10,000 students**, and more than **800 employees** (teaching, auxiliary teaching, and administrative staff), USV ranked **16th in the 2023 University Metaranking**.

USV has a prestigious research activity, being a **national leader in the field of inventics**, ranking **first in Romania** in the **OSIM ranking** (both in terms of the number of patents granted and the number of patent applications filed with OSIM over the past decade).

Staff and Students	FTE (ENI)
Total researchers (staff, fellows, full-time or part-time PhD students involved in research)	821
<i>of which, foreign nationals</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>of which, with external funding (for which the university is the host organization)</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>of which, women</i>	<i>418</i>
<i>of which, R3 or R4 (Researchers with a high degree of autonomy, usually holding the status of principal investigator or professor)</i>	<i>408</i>
<i>of which, R2 (postdoctoral level)</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>of which, R1 (doctoral level)</i>	<i>380</i>
Total number of students	10315
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff)	1293

Research Funding (for the last fiscal year)	RON	EUR
Annual budget of the organization	236.981.757	47.638.354
Annual direct governmental funding of the organization (allocated for research)	22.469.980	4.516.942
Annual competitive governmental funding (allocated for research, obtained in competition with other organizations – including EU funding)	39.544.042	7.949.190
Annual funding from private, non-governmental sources (allocated for research)	1.031.831	207.420

According to its Charter, the **mission of Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava (USV)** is to:

- capitalize on human potential by developing study programs in diverse fields: natural sciences, engineering sciences, biomedical sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts, sports and physical education sciences;
- promote the values and traditions of the multicultural culture and civilization of Bukovina;
- uphold the fundamental European principles in a region where the credibility and identity of the European Union must be consolidated and expanded;
- preserve and foster cultural diversity and strengthen ties with Romanians outside the country's borders;
- contribute to regional development by reducing existing economic disparities compared with other EU Member States, providing services to the community, and internationalizing USV through genuine alignment with EU policies and mechanisms in education;
- train and further develop qualified and highly qualified human resources in regional, national, and cross-border contexts;
- foster critical thinking, personal and group initiative, and the creative potential of members of the academic community;
- promote scientific research, literary and artistic creation, and sports performance;
- affirm Romanian culture and science within the global system of values.

To achieve this mission, USV has followed its **Strategic University Plan**, implemented through annual operational plans, whose general strategic objectives are:

- continuing the policy of motivating human resources to improve the quality of education and scientific research;
- strengthening the program of investments in USV's teaching and research infrastructure;
- increasing USV's involvement in regional development;
- consolidating the honorable positions obtained by USV in national and international rankings;
- focusing institutional policies on the needs of students and the labor market;
- developing USV as a university centered on education and research.

With regard to its research activity, one of the **long-term goals of USV** is the internationalization of its research human resources and international research collaborations, through actions envisaged for the 2021–2027 horizon:

- attracting foreign teaching staff, researchers, and PhD students to engage in research activities within USV's laboratories;
- increasing the number of international research partnerships and research results obtained through international collaboration;
- developing international research projects and attracting international research funding for USV;
- increasing the number of teaching staff and doctoral students benefiting from research stays abroad;

- including specialists, researchers, and teaching staff from prestigious universities abroad in doctoral thesis defense committees.

The overarching objective is to increase the international visibility of USV's research results through:

- protecting USV's intellectual and industrial property at the international level by increasing the number of patents obtained at the European Patent Office, as well as international copyright registrations;
- analyzing the international impact in USV's research fields and promoting excellence areas internationally;
- evaluating the contribution of research activities to USV's ranking and international standings, and encouraging contributions to research indicators in international rankings;
- developing an online platform in English to showcase USV's research results and producing promotional materials in foreign languages dedicated to USV research.

The year 2024 finds USV as a prominent institution in Romania, a fact confirmed both by various international rankings and by the relatively high level of per-student funding obtained by USV as a result of its academic performance. USV is recognized as an institution of excellence in education and research, open to international experience within the global education space through the continuous improvement of the quality of its activities.

The MISSION of HRS4R at USV

The MISSION of HRS4R at USV is to improve the quality and continuity of excellent research and outstanding researchers' careers, while broadening career opportunities and contributing to the development of a more attractive and competitive European Research Area.

By adopting the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, USV acknowledges their value and commits itself to the process of HRS4R implementation and certification.

The alignment with the principles of the Charter and the Code of Conduct will have direct implications on the university's main operational directions: education, research, innovation, and technology transfer.

This multicriteria approach, interconnecting human capital development with high-quality fundamental research and the valorization of research with societal and economic impact, will contribute to strengthening USV's reputation, enhancing its performance, and increasing its influence both nationally and internationally.

5. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF USV FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF HRS4R PRINCIPLES

ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND OPEN SCIENCE

Strengths

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the university is included in the Charter of the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava (USV). The Code regulates and promotes moral values such as: academic freedom, personal autonomy, justice and fairness, merit, professionalism, honesty and intellectual integrity, transparency, respect and tolerance, responsibility, goodwill and care. Compliance with its provisions is mandatory for all persons carrying out activities within USV, regardless of their status.

USV also has its own Quality Assurance Code, which establishes the principles that guide the university in ensuring quality to achieve its declared mission, namely: the principles of excellence, accessibility, flexibility, morality, competence, continuity, the connection between theory and practice, motivation, active and conscious learning, efficiency and effectiveness, and feedback assurance.

The strategic directions of quality assurance at university level aim at: ensuring the quality of study programmes, evaluating study programmes, monitoring the performance of the teaching staff, developing relations with the international academic environment, promoting quality in research, and implementing an appropriate management system.

By University Senate Decision No. 7/23.02.2023, USV expressed its agreement to adhere to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Within USV, the body supervising the implementation of ethical principles is the University Ethics Committee, whose operation and responsibilities are regulated by the Regulation on the Functioning of the University Ethics Committee, approved by Senate Decision No. 7 of 16.01.2014.

There are also other internal bodies that oversee the university’s research activity, namely: the Research Council, the Scientific Council, the Council for Doctoral University Studies, and the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission.

USV organizes training sessions on research ethics and academic integrity for master’s students, PhD students, and early-stage researchers. USV also has its own Procedure for informing doctoral students about scientific ethics norms, prevention of academic fraud, and plagiarism.

At USV, the evaluation of teaching and research staff is carried out at department level, based on the performance criteria established nationally by the National Council for Attestation of Titles,

Diplomas and University Certificates, as well as internal criteria set at the USV or departmental level.

Regarding the dissemination of research results, an opportunity that USV can further exploit is its participation in the ANELIS PLUS project, which covers publication fees for scientific papers published in open-access journals. In addition, USV has its own policy supporting the publication of scientific papers in internationally recognized journals.

USV is constantly concerned with the intellectual and industrial protection of its research results, being a national leader in both the number of patent applications submitted to OSIM and the number of patents obtained.

In the Report on the Study of Doctoral Students' Career Orientation Needs (conducted between September and October 2023), responses from 67 USV PhD students were analyzed regarding ethics and university activity.

Among the positive aspects identified: 85% of PhD students know the ethical principles of research; over 70% feel they made the right choice by enrolling in doctoral studies, both in terms of maintaining their interest and in meeting their expectations of doctoral activity; 94% of PhD students have clarity regarding their doctoral path; a majority (82%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the academic environment and research resources available at the university, as well as with the opportunities for collaboration and publication (70%); support from doctoral supervisors is considered optimal by over 80% of respondents; access to mentoring within the university's doctoral school is highlighted by nearly 70% of respondents.

An opportunity available to USV in this context is that it is the promoter of the only Researcher Career Orientation and Counselling Centre (COACH USV) in the North-East Region, which will offer training, coaching, and mentoring courses for researchers in the region (advanced career orientation services for researchers).

Weaknesses

Although USV has developed the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Plagiarism and for Verifying Compliance with University Ethics and Deontology in the Preparation of Doctoral Theses (approved by Senate Decision No. 119/22.12.2021), this document requires updating to align with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

There is no electronic platform or institutional data repository at USV that gathers in one place the results and information from the university's research activities. Moreover, USV does not provide researchers with a backup and data storage system.

Among the less favorable aspects identified in the Report on the Study of Doctoral Students' Career Orientation Needs at USV, the following are mentioned: the main barriers perceived by PhD students in achieving their doctoral objectives include bureaucracy, limited access to European projects, and workload at their workplace. Regarding doctoral activity within research teams, the lowest score was recorded in terms of encouragement and support from fellow researchers. Over 60% of respondents believe they need training or guidance in data collection and analysis. Approximately 60% of doctoral students consider that issues such as stress and

anxiety management, time management, and achieving a work-life balance require access to training and counselling resources addressing these aspects. Only 57% have obtained the approval of the university's Research Ethics Committee for the research they conduct. 75% of respondents are not informed about the procedures for obtaining a research project, and 43% report low competence in the financial management of such projects.

RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Strengths

The filling of permanent teaching and research positions is carried out through a public competition organized by USV in accordance with national legislation and internal regulations. In establishing the methodology for filling teaching and research positions, USV applies several regulations and procedures, such as: the Regulation on Filling Vacant Teaching Positions; the Regulation on Filling Vacant or Temporarily Vacant Teaching and Research Positions for a Fixed Term, and the Operational Procedure for Organizing the Competition for Auxiliary and Non-Teaching Positions.

These documents regulate the following aspects: the announcement of vacancies, registration of candidates, establishment of the selection committee, organization of the competition, recording of results, and resolution of appeals.

For vacant positions, recruitment is carried out through transparent public mechanisms, including publication on the USV website: <https://usv.ro/resurse/angajari/>.

For auxiliary and non-teaching contractual positions, competition announcements clearly state the conditions regarding work experience, seniority in the field, as well as required studies and specializations.

USV applies a flexible approach regarding experience and age, and no restrictions are applied based on gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Anyone may apply for the advertised positions. USV maintains a balanced gender approach, including for leadership positions. Moreover, USV has its own Gender Equality Plan, through which it aims to ensure equal opportunities and treatment between women and men in employment relations at the institutional level, and to promote new perspectives and a more inclusive organizational culture.

From a gender distribution perspective, when analyzing all full-time staff employed at USV — including teaching, auxiliary, and non-teaching personnel — female employees represent 57% of the total staff.

It can also be stated, according to the same analysis, that gender distribution in USV leadership positions is balanced, with women holding 47% of leadership roles, a figure significantly higher than the national average (37%) and the European average (34%).

In terms of attracting highly specialized human resources in research activities, USV has undertaken specific initiatives and is implementing research projects aimed at bringing in such specialists — for example, under PNRR Investment I8 (AI-PHGL-COVID; CexForD).

Weaknesses

Currently, vacant positions at USV are not published on platforms that ensure international visibility (e.g., Euraxess).

Regarding the selection committees, there is no requirement for their members to have prior certified training in human resources recruitment, nor are there specific provisions concerning gender balance in the composition of these committees.

The criteria for evaluating researchers and teaching staff should be adapted, updated, and correlated with the objectives of research, development, and innovation activities, particularly regarding socio-economic impact, sustainability, exploitation, and open access to research results. In this context, the minimum mandatory standards for filling teaching and research positions need to be revised.

As for the recruitment and selection process, interview results are published on the institution's website and on the public notice board; however, there are no provisions for notifying candidates in writing about their interview results or for providing written feedback to all applicants.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

Strengths

USV aims to ensure that each category of employees benefits from appropriate conditions for professional development, so that the level of professional and material satisfaction of every member of the USV community corresponds both to personal expectations and to the university's standards and capabilities, with the goal that belonging to the academic community is an honor for each of its members.

At USV, working conditions are regulated through strategic documents, regulations, and procedures, as follows:

- USV Charter: a framework document regulating aspects related to the university community, academic autonomy and public accountability, scientific research, organization of teaching and research activities, rights and obligations of the academic community, rights and obligations of teaching and research staff, quality management, academic freedom, personal autonomy, unacceptable behaviors in teacher–student relations, collegial relations among academic staff and unacceptable behaviors, relations between academic staff and the community, and applicable sanctions.
- USV Internal Regulations: include provisions regarding employees' rights and obligations, occupational safety and health, emergency situations, rules on organizing working and rest time, compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and human dignity, labor discipline, and procedures for handling employee requests, proposals, and complaints. They also include disciplinary violations and applicable sanctions, as well as other specific legal or contractual provisions.

According to the Internal Regulations, all categories of staff employed under a labor contract at USV have the following rights: the right to remuneration for the work performed; the right to equal opportunities and treatment; the right to dignity at work; the right to safety and health at work; the right to access professional training; the right to consultation and information; the right to protection in case of dismissal; the right to collective and individual bargaining; the right to form or join a trade union; the right to participate in collective actions under the law; the right to contribute to the determination and improvement of working conditions and the work environment; and the right to request transfer to a vacant position providing more favorable working conditions after completing the probation period and having at least six months of seniority with the same employer.

According to USV's Strategic Plan 2020–2024, the indicators of the human resources motivation policy include:

- Ensuring differentiated salaries for teaching staff, with up to 40% increases in the base salary;
- Increasing hourly pay rates for hourly-paid teaching activities to exceed 100 RON per conventional hour (gross);
- Retaining, attracting, and motivating young staff (assistants, lecturers) by ensuring at least 33% of merit distinctions and 40% of the annual salary increase fund are allocated to them;
- Maintaining financial incentives for participation in scientific events, publication of scientific papers, and book publishing with prestigious publishers;
- Financially supporting all projects from own revenues and maintaining workload benefits for project directors;
- Attracting young staff with internationally recognized results, while also retaining experienced teaching staff and researchers with outstanding achievements.

USV's research activity is encouraged through access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure acquired via European projects, as well as through attracting highly qualified international researchers for the joint development of innovative research projects (PNRR Investment I8).

The university is a member of ANELIS. Its research infrastructure (existing and in acquisition) is cutting-edge, thanks to non-reimbursable funding from projects such as MANSiD, USV Digital, and BIO SAFE LAB.

USV is constantly concerned with the intellectual and industrial protection of its research results, being a national leader both in the number of patent applications submitted to OSIM and in the number of patents obtained.

There is also a strong interest in technology transfer activities, bringing university research results to the economic environment through dedicated structures such as: the Technology Transfer Centre and Spin-off Companies, and the Technology Transfer Centre in Industry 4.0 and Smart Destinations.

Another favorable aspect is represented by the numerous opportunities that USV's membership in consortia, clusters, and associations can bring in the context of sustainable relations with business, public, and NGO sectors at national and even European level (e.g. NEOLAiA European University Consortium, Suceava–Botoșani Regional Innovative Bioeconomy Cluster, EURONEST

IT&C HUB Regional Innovative Cluster, Cluj IT Association, and the East European Border Siret Science and Technology Park).

Ethical conflicts are handled by the Ethics Committee, while other types of conflicts can be resolved at the department or faculty council level, or, when appropriate, by the USV Board of Administration. Certain issues regarding employees' rights and working conditions can also be addressed by the USV trade union.

Weaknesses

Given that many teaching and research staff are involved in the implementation and management of research projects and infrastructures, their workload is very high, and the efforts they make are substantial. In addition, teaching and research staff are often overwhelmed by the large volume of bureaucratic documentation required, which calls for a reduction of administrative burden so that teaching and research activities are not affected.

At the same time, the still limited use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence applications in research activities requires a reconfiguration of specific infrastructure and active measures to increase staff familiarity with new technologies.

There is no clear regulation regarding remote working conditions for RDI (Research, Development and Innovation) activities. Moreover, USV does not yet have a policy or implementation mechanisms for intellectual property rights (IPR), which should include standard contracts between USV and employees concerning research results involving IPR, as well as employment contracts regulating activities related to IPR.

Another relevant aspect is the insufficient valorization of USV's patent portfolio and the underuse of existing opportunities for technology transfer of university research results to the economic environment.

It is necessary to develop a co-authorship procedure at USV level, specifying how to determine each partner's actual contribution to a research result and their effective contribution as co-authors of scientific papers.

Furthermore, there is a need to recalibrate the organization and functioning of several USV RDI structures: the USV Scientific Council, USV Research Centers, and the Institute for Advanced Studies.

USV is aware of the need for the academic research environment to become increasingly attractive to external and international researchers, in order to attract highly qualified human research resources and enhance the quality of research activities conducted within the institution.

RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Strengths

In 2023, USV established the only Regional Center for Research Career Orientation in the North-East Region — COACH USV. The center offers career orientation activities for researchers, including counselling, coaching, and mentoring, aimed at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and researchers from across the region. The center also carries out activities to promote research and encourage young people to pursue research careers.

USV also has its own Career Counselling and Guidance Center (CCOC), which provides support services to all university students, including PhD students (e.g. training for the development of transversal skills, psychological counselling, and career orientation).

There is a Regulation for the Organization and Conduct of Doctoral Studies in place. USV supports the career development of young researchers through participation in research competitions, professional development in their scientific field, coverage of conference participation fees, payment of publication fees for scientific papers, research mobility opportunities, and other facilities.

In recent years, USV has implemented numerous nationally and internationally funded projects dedicated to research career orientation, promotion of research, and attracting young people to research careers, as well as to the development of national and international research networks. For example, USV coordinates the project “Development through Entrepreneurial Education and Innovative Doctoral and Postdoctoral Research”, funded with 6.1 million RON of European funds for the 2019–2023 period. Through this project, 96 PhD and postdoctoral researchers follow an entrepreneurial training program that includes personalized practical experience, skills development courses, and mentoring and counselling sessions. More details: <http://decide.usv.ro/>

USV is also a partner in the project “Program for Increasing Performance and Innovation in Excellent Doctoral and Postdoctoral Research”, funded with European funds for 2022–2023 and coordinated by the “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, through which another 115 PhD and postdoctoral researchers pursue similar objectives.

USV conducts bilateral agreements with 155 institutions from 50 countries, as well as multilateral collaborations within consortia such as:

- NEOLAiA Consortium (Bielefeld University – Germany, University of Tours – France, University of Ostrava – Czech Republic, USV – Romania, Šiauliai University – Lithuania, Örebro University – Sweden, University of Salerno – Italy, and University of Jaén – Spain),
- Collegium Carpathicum Consortium (University of Warsaw – Poland, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University – Ukraine, USV – Romania, University of Prešov – Slovakia, Pázmány Péter Catholic University – Hungary, East European State University of Przemyśl – Poland, and University of Ostrava – Czech Republic).

USV is also an active member of several international university associations, including the European University Association (EUA) and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF).

Research collaborations with prestigious foreign universities take various forms: exchange of best practices in research, research internships, joint scientific events, and attracting international funding for joint research projects.

Through the ANELIS PLUS project, USV also provides its researchers access to a valuable international scientific database.

Regarding the study on the counselling needs of USV doctoral students, a majority of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied (82%) with the academic environment of the university and the research resources available to them, as well as with the opportunities for collaboration and publication (70%) necessary for doctoral work. Access to mentoring within the university's doctoral school was highlighted by nearly 70% of respondents.

Weaknesses

It is necessary to develop a policy for academic and research career development that systematically and coherently presents all existing institutional practices. Although career counselling services are offered to students and doctoral candidates, USV has not yet extended this practice to all categories of academic staff. These responsibilities are currently unevenly assumed by department directors or senior researchers.

There is a need for the systematic organization of continuous professional development activities, customized according to career level and the individual needs of academic and administrative staff.

Except for doctoral studies (where a supervisory committee exists), there are no officially designated mentors or senior researchers assigned to supervise early-stage researchers in the first two levels of their research careers.

Another factor that affects the professional development of teaching and research staff is the lack of training and limited information regarding research funding opportunities available at USV.

According to data collected from the study on the counselling needs of USV doctoral students: over 60% of respondents stated they need training or guidance in data collection and analysis; approximately 60% reported that challenges related to stress and anxiety management, time management, and work-life balance require access to training and counselling resources that address these issues; 75% of respondents have no information about how to obtain a research project, and 43% have a low level of competence in financial management of such projects.

In addition, within the NEOLAiA Alliance, an extensive study on training needs and best practices in entrepreneurship education was conducted. Out of the 786 respondents (bachelor's, master's, and PhD students) to the survey, 175 were USV students. The analysis of the responses revealed the need for entrepreneurship education courses, as well as training on risk management and ethical aspects.

In the same study, the group of researchers and entrepreneurship lecturers (424 participants, including 88 from USV) expressed that they should improve their own knowledge of entrepreneurship, as well as their teaching methods on these topics. Additionally, a significant

share of respondents indicated that knowledge of funding acquisition and strategy development should also be improved.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE GAPS IDENTIFIED AT THE USV LEVEL IN TERMS OF THE 20 PRINCIPLES OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS (C&C)

Pillar 1: Ethics, Integrity, Gender Equality and Open Science		Implementation	GAP	Initiatives to date / new proposals
1.	Ethics and research integrity	+/-		
<u>Gap analysis:</u> USV researchers comply with the ethical principles recognized in research practice, in accordance with the University Charter and the Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism and for verifying compliance with ethics and professional deontology in the preparation of doctoral theses. Their application is supervised by the University Ethics Committee. The Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism should be updated/harmonized in line with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C). There is also a need to improve communication to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the C&C principles.				
<u>Suggestions for improvement:</u> - Updating USV's Code of Ethics, as part of the USV Charter, in order to align it with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct (C&C). - Updating the Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism and for verifying compliance with university ethics and deontology in the preparation of doctoral theses, in order to update/harmonize it in line with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct (C&C). - Promoting ethical conduct and respect for the law in collaboration with the European Law Students' Association (ELSA) and the Center for Research in Applied Ethics.				
2.	Freedom of scientific research	+/-		
<u>Gap analysis:</u> Teaching and research staff have the freedom to carry out research activities, to develop and submit research projects, and to choose the calls/competitions in which they participate. However, 75% of respondents to the study on research career guidance needs (USV PhD students) do not have information on how to obtain a research project, and 43% have a low level of skills in the financial management of such a project. This is due to the fact that the management and practices specific to research activity are not brought together within a unified framework and are not widely disseminated, which would otherwise allow young researchers to be guided so that, from the very beginning of their careers, they can properly understand and approach research freedom.				
<u>Suggestions for improvement:</u>				

- Delivering courses/training on obtaining research projects (application and implementation), as well as on the financial management of these projects. - Transitioning towards open research and open access to results obtained from public funds by implementing Open Science and Open Data policies adopted at national and European level, while respecting the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”, thus taking into account intellectual property rights, the protection of personal data, and legitimate commercial interests.		
3.	Open science	+/-
USV aims to involve its researchers in all aspects of Open Science and provides support and funding in this regard. The open sharing of research results is encouraged through open-access publications, open software, and open models and algorithms. USV facilitates open access to scientific publications, research data, and other research outputs—while respecting the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”—as well as the promotion and adoption of Open Science principles and practices through: - The transition to open research and the implementation of Open Science and Open Data policies adopted at national and European level. - The use of transformative agreements concluded with prestigious partner publishers under the ANELIS PLUS project, to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted for publication in the journals of those publishers.		
4.	Gender equality	+
Good practices: - USV has its own Gender Equality Plan, through which it aims to ensure equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in employment relations within the institution and to promote new perspectives and a more inclusive organizational culture. - In terms of gender distribution, an analysis of all full-time staff employed at USV—including academic staff as well as auxiliary teaching staff and non-teaching staff—shows that female employees account for 57% of the total workforce. The same analysis also indicates that the gender distribution in USV leadership positions is balanced, with women representing 47% of leadership roles, significantly higher than the national (37%) and European (34%) levels. - USV’s Internal Regulations set out rules on compliance with the principle of non-discrimination, including with regard to gender equality. Suggestions for improvement: - Updating USV’s Internal Regulations to include provisions for interview panels/committees regarding gender balance, where the field allows.		
5.	Embracing Diversity	+/-
USV promotes an inclusive research environment by eliminating discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, disability, or social status. Gap analysis: - Non-discrimination aspects are regulated through the University Charter, the Gender Equality Plan, the Regulations for filling academic and non-academic positions, and USV’s Internal Regulations. Suggestions for improvement: - Providing support to categories of researchers who have had interruptions of at least one year (e.g., medical leave, parental leave) by relaunching their research careers and reducing their teaching load to the minimum level established in USV’s internal regulations for a period of up to two academic years, and by awarding internal research grants through a competitive call.		

Supporting activities that help integrate into the community students coming from outside Romania's borders.		
6.	The researcher	+/-
Gap analysis: - The university's research results are not yet leveraged to a satisfactory extent in terms of their technological transfer to the industrial sector. - There is low visibility for the general public regarding the university's research activity and the research results developed. Suggestions for improvement: - Developing a strategy aimed at exploiting (valorising) and disseminating the university's research results. - Developing an IT platform that enables the automated completion of reports using research outputs indexed in international databases or existing USV-level databases, as well as real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and its faculties.		
7.	Free circulation of researchers	+
Good practices: - USV promotes programs and projects to encourage and support the international mobility of researchers and academic staff. - There is a Regulation on the organization and conduct of doctoral studies. USV supports young researchers' career development through participation in research competitions, professional development in the targeted scientific field, covering conference participation fees, covering article publication fees, providing mobility opportunities, and other facilities. Suggestions for improvement: - Supporting the development of USV staff's academic and research careers, including by facilitating access to academic mobility opportunities. - Ensuring optimal conditions for student mobility by increasing the number of ERASMUS partnerships, diversifying the portfolio of programmes, and attracting funding and projects through the ERASMUS+ Programme and other relevant national and international programmes. - Strengthening doctoral schools by supporting the habilitation of USV academic staff and attracting doctoral supervisors from Romania and abroad, providing financial support for academic mobility, and disseminating research results.		
8.	Sustainability of research	+/-
Gap analysis: USV's strategic objectives regarding human resources (academic and research staff) are set out both in the University Charter and in the Strategic Plan for the 2020–2024 period. With regard to the implementation of research projects, USV has identified the need for continuous information for researchers concerning their responsibilities in implementing such projects and how to capitalise on research results for the benefit of society/the economy. According to a study on the counselling needs of USV doctoral students, over 80% of respondents consider the support received from their PhD supervisor to be optimal, and almost 70% highlight access to mentoring within the doctoral school. However, the percentages decrease when it comes to activity within the research group, especially regarding encouragement and support from fellow researchers. A few good practices, as well as aspects that can be improved at USV level, include: There is no IT platform that enables the automated completion of reports using research outputs indexed in international databases or existing USV-level databases,		

nor the real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and its faculties.

- Among doctoral students, the following needs were identified: counselling on effective personal management of the challenges involved in doctoral work; support from senior researchers; and a still limited level of knowledge regarding methods for collecting and analysing research data.
- In 2023, USV established the only Regional Centre for Guidance in the Researcher Career in the North-East Region (COACH USV). This centre will provide researcher career guidance activities such as counselling, coaching and mentoring for undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and researchers across the entire region.
- There is a need to provide researchers with training on preparing funding documentation and implementing research projects. At the same time, better transparency and information are needed regarding funding opportunities in the RDI field.
- USV supports researchers' career development both through continuously developing research infrastructure and through support for publishing articles, mobility, participation in internships, and patenting university research results.
- The transfer of university research results to industry is still limited, leading to the conclusion that researchers need to be better connected to the economic environment through active involvement in organisations such as science parks and clusters of which the university is a member.
- In 2023, USV established the only Regional Centre for Guidance in the Researcher Career in the North-East Region (COACH USV). The centre provides career guidance activities such as counselling, coaching and mentoring for undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and researchers across the entire region. It also carries out actions to promote research and attract young people to a research career.
- USV has its own Career Counselling and Guidance Centre (CCOC), which provides support services to all university students, including doctoral students (training for transversal skills development, psychological counselling, career guidance).
- The university's doctoral students declared themselves satisfied with the mentoring activity they benefited from during their doctoral studies.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Improving internal communication and information dissemination processes at doctoral school level and beyond; creating research groups that bring together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics in order to better capitalise on research results already obtained and to generate new research outputs with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character.
- Developing an IT platform that enables the automated completion of reports using research outputs indexed in international databases or existing USV-level databases, as well as real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and its faculties.
- As USV hosts the only Researcher Career Guidance and Counselling Centre in the North-East Region (COACH USV), it will focus on providing counselling to PhD students regarding the effects doctoral activity may have on personal life, as well as topics such as time management, stress resilience, and the development of motivation and perseverance. The centre will provide personalised counselling, coaching and mentoring to all categories of researchers at USV and at other universities in the region. The centre will be integrated into the European Research Area (ERA) Talent Platform network.
- Delivering training courses on research data collection and analysis within the doctoral school.
- Revitalising existing research centres within USV and developing at least five new research centres in recently established directions at USV.
- Creating an internal guide on USV's internal regulations regarding the implications/obligations of researchers with respect to results obtained under different types of funding contracts and service contracts for research and innovation activities.

- Delivering courses/training on obtaining research projects, as well as on the financial management of these projects.
- Strengthening the support offered to researchers for developing better links between academia and industry, through the contribution of the university's technology transfer centres and the collaboration network with industry via science parks, economic operators within associations, and the clusters of which the university is a member.
- Using transformative agreements concluded with prestigious partner publishers under the ANELIS PLUS project to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted for publication in the journals of those publishers.
- Developing postdoctoral programmes both by attracting projects with non-reimbursable funding and independently of such projects.
- Providing financial support for publishing scientific papers in internationally impactful journals, for mobility and research/innovation visits at prestigious institutions.
- Continuing the policy of supporting outstanding inventive activity and patenting of inventions at USV, and stimulating their technological transfer to the economic environment.
- Involving experienced researchers in the counselling and mentoring of early-career researchers – Regional Centre for Guidance in the Researcher Career in the North-East Region (COACH USV).

Pillar 2: Research Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

Implementation

GAP

Initiatives to date / new proposals

9. Researchers' Assessment

+/-

USV's evaluation process is transparent and merit-based, aligned with European standards.

GAP analysis:

- The evaluation of researchers at USV is regulated in compliance with national legislation (the Labour Code, Law 199/2023) through the following institutional documents: the USV Charter, the Internal Regulations, and the internal procedure for staff evaluation.
- There is a need to review the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions.
- There is a need to update the Regulations on the evaluation of researchers' scientific performance.
- Vacant job positions are currently published on the institution's website.
- In USV's methodology for filling vacant academic and research positions, quantitative evaluation criteria are used in accordance with national legislation, as well as qualitative criteria addressing the candidate's professional and personal qualities.
- The evaluation criteria for researchers/teaching staff should be adapted/updated and aligned with the objectives of research, development and innovation activities, in relation to socio-economic impact, sustainability, exploitation/uptake, and open access to the results. Evaluarea cercetătorilor la nivelul USV este reglementată prin respectarea legislației Naționale (Codul Muncii, Legea 199/2023) prin următoarele documente instituționale: Carta USV, Regulamentul Intern, Procedura internă de evaluare a personalului

Suggestions for improvement:

- Updating the institutional documents regarding the evaluation criteria for researchers/teaching staff, in order to align them with the principles of the Charter and the Code and with the objectives of research, development and innovation activities.
- Implementing a differentiated, performance-based remuneration system for teaching staff and researchers, based on annual evaluations, internal USV grants won through competition, outstanding achievements, and the degree of involvement in institutional development
- Attracting new teaching staff and researchers with strong research performance by revising the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions, and by awarding internal research grants through competitive calls.
- Updating the Regulations on the evaluation of researchers' scientific performance.
- Including provisions for interview panels regarding gender balance, where the field allows.
- Publishing vacant positions on the EURAXESS platform from the first year of the Action Plan, immediately after obtaining the HRS4R logo.
- Including provisions concerning candidates after the interview, such as:
- Informing all candidates in writing of the interview outcome;
- Providing appropriate written feedback to all candidates.
- Including similar provisions regarding the handling, resolution, and communication of the outcomes of appeals/complaints.

10. Recruitment

+/-

GAP analysis:

- Recruitment at USV is carried out in accordance with the applicable legislation (the Labour Code, Law 199/2023), based on specific documents: the USV Charter, the Internal Regulations, the Equal Opportunities Strategy, the Regulations on filling vacant academic positions, the Regulations on filling vacant or temporarily vacant academic and research positions for a fixed term, and the Operational Procedure for organizing recruitment competitions for auxiliary academic and non-academic staff.
- Vacant positions are currently published on the institution's website.
- There is a need to update the documents governing the recruitment of researchers and teaching staff in order to align them with the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- There is a need to review the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Developing an institutional OTM-R policy and procedure, proposed to be completed within the first two years of the Action Plan.
- Delivering specific OTM-R training courses for staff involved in the recruitment and selection process at USV.
- Including specific provisions on the OTM-R policy in the institutional quality assurance/control framework (e.g., the Quality Assurance Code).
- Updating the documents governing the recruitment of researchers and teaching staff in order to align them with the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- Publishing vacant positions on the EURAXESS platform from the first year of the Action Plan, immediately after obtaining the HRS4R logo.
- Attracting new teaching staff and researchers with strong research performance by revising the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions, and by awarding internal research grants through competitive calls.

11.	Selection	+/-
At USV, clear selection criteria are implemented for all research positions. GAP analysis: • There is a need to review the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions. • In USV's methodology for filling vacant academic and research positions, quantitative evaluation criteria are used in accordance with national legislation, as well as qualitative criteria addressing the candidate's professional and personal qualities. • The evaluation criteria for researchers/teaching staff should be adapted/updated and aligned with the objectives of research, development and innovation activities, in relation to socio-economic impact, sustainability, exploitation/uptake, and open access to the results. • Variations in candidates' professional activity are not penalized; candidates substantiate the information in their CVs with supporting documents (e.g., employment contracts, seniority certificates, current practice: decisions, etc.). Suggestions for improvement: • Attracting new teaching staff and researchers with strong research performance by revising the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions, and by awarding internal research grants through competitive calls. • Including provisions for interview panels regarding gender balance, where the field allows. • Updating the institutional documents regarding the evaluation criteria for researchers/teaching staff in order to align them with the provisions of the Charter and the Code.		
12.	Career Progression	+/-
USV supports professional development through mentoring and continuous training. GAP analysis: • Although there are procedures and initiatives related to access to mobility opportunities, they are not harmonised within a common USV-wide framework that would allow staff to access mobility opportunities electronically. • For the recruitment of fixed-term staff hired on research projects, the employer applies internal procedures specific to the type of programme/project, which introduce recruitment conditions and criteria set out in the funding guidelines for those projects/programmes. Through these temporary/project-based contracts, USV hires researchers, support staff needed for research activities, or staff for project/programme-specific management activities. • There is a need to review the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions. • There is a need to update the Regulations on the evaluation of researchers' scientific performance. • There is a need for measures to motivate researchers with outstanding performance. • USV takes a flexible approach regarding experience and age for access to a position. There is no age discrimination. Retired staff may apply for recruitment competitions under fixed-term contracts, in compliance with legal provisions. The retirement age for permanent teaching staff is 65, with the possibility of continuing activity if the person meets the criteria set for their field of competence (in accordance with CNATDCU criteria).		

- At USV, researchers are recognised as independent authors and co-authors in accordance with international practice in the field.
- There is a need to update institutional documents or to develop new instruments addressing the co-authorship procedure at USV.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Enabling electronic access to mobility opportunities.
- Updating the Regulations on the evaluation of researchers' scientific performance.
- Supporting the development of USV staff's academic and research careers through access to academic mobility opportunities.
- Ensuring optimal conditions for student mobility by increasing the number of ERASMUS partnerships.
- Attracting new teaching staff and researchers with strong research performance by revising the minimum mandatory standards required for filling academic and research positions, and by awarding internal research grants through competitive calls.
- Launching a Young Researchers' Awards Gala, highlighting and rewarding young teaching staff and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities, following a mixed evaluation carried out by academics and employers.
- Allowing high-performing teaching staff to continue teaching after reaching retirement age.
- Establishing a co-authorship procedure.
- Developing an internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the researcher's implications/obligations related to results obtained in the context of different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities.

Pillar 3: Working Conditions and Practices

Implementation

GAP

Initiatives to date / new proposals

13. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries

+/-

USV provides a supportive working environment and financial support mechanisms for researchers.

GAP analysis:

- There is a need to take measures to increase the attractiveness of USV's research environment and to motivate and recognise teaching staff and researchers.
- Student involvement across all study cycles in RDI activities is still limited.
- There is a need to expand spaces dedicated to RDI laboratories and to the activities of PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers.
- There is insufficient use of technology transfer opportunities offered through participation in structures focused on collaboration between academia and the economic sector.
- There is a need to update documents regulating working conditions at USV, such as the Internal Regulations.
- There is a need to pay attention to special situations involving an interruption of the research career of at least one year (e.g., medical leave, parental leave/childcare).
- There is a need to relieve teaching staff/researchers of certain administrative tasks.
- The use of digital technology in activities carried out at USV is still limited.

- Developing/upgrading USV's infrastructure.
- Employers and/or research funders should ensure that researchers benefit from fair and attractive funding conditions and/or salaries, with adequate and equitable social security provisions (including benefits in case of illness or for researchers who are parents, pension rights, and unemployment benefits), in line with national and sector-specific legislation, with reference to the collective labour agreement in the research sector. This principle applies to all researchers, regardless of career stage, including early-career researchers, proportionate to their legal status, performance, level of qualification and/or responsibilities.
- There is a need to implement a differentiated, performance-based remuneration system for teaching staff and researchers, based on annual evaluations, internal USV grants, degree of involvement, and outstanding achievements.
- There is a need for information and transparency regarding funding opportunities for research activities, as well as support for preparing funding documentation and implementing these projects.

Suggestions for improving:

- Initiating the Young Researchers' Awards Gala, to highlight and reward young teaching staff and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities.
- Increasing the involvement of students at all study cycles in RDI activities (research, development and innovation), including through the provision of scholarships, awards and internal grants.
- Encouraging the development and submission of RDI projects to national and international competitions, including by awarding internal research grants.
- Developing postdoctoral programmes.
- Revitalising the existing Research Centres within USV and establishing at least five new research centres in newly created directions at USV.
- Developing at least 20 new or modernised research laboratories, equipped with advanced equipment and state-of-the-art software.
- Digitising all USV processes and the management of documents and student administration by completing the implementation of the USV Digital project.
- Improving working conditions for USV staff by expanding and modernising spaces dedicated to teaching, RDI and administrative activities; equipping them with state-of-the-art equipment and software; supporting the personalisation of individual workspaces; making common areas more pleasant and welcoming; increasing workplace safety; introducing more flexible working schedules; and improving collegial relations and communication.
- Implementing a differentiated, performance-based remuneration system for teaching staff and researchers, based on annual evaluations, internal USV grants won through competitive calls, outstanding achievements, and the degree of involvement in institutional development.
- Developing an employee benefits package for USV staff by negotiating discounts/benefits with shops and service providers, including healthcare services.
- Continuously informing USV teaching staff and researchers about funding opportunities, providing support on the financial/economic aspects needed to prepare funding applications, and ensuring logistical support for the implementation of awarded projects through the Programme and Project Management Service and other involved administrative services.
- Continuing the policy of financially supporting the publication of scientific papers and internships/placements.
- Transitioning towards open research and implementing Open Science and Open Data policies adopted at national and European level.
- Using the transformative agreements concluded with reputable partner publishers under the ANELIS PLUS project to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted by journals of those publishers.
- Supporting RDI activities carried out through USV in partnership with economic operators or within new infrastructures dedicated to innovation and knowledge/technology transfer (e.g., the Siret Science and Technology Park, the Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory for the analysis of food quality and safety and

the detection of food adulteration within the Suceava–Botoșani Regional Innovative Bioeconomy Cluster); developing USV structures and training human resources dedicated to these collaborations (e.g., the Technology Transfer Centre in Industry 4.0 and Smart Destinations (authorised by MCID), the Electromagnetic Compatibility Laboratory (accredited by RENAR), the Centre for Technology Transfer and spin-off companies).

- Providing support to categories of researchers who have had interruptions of at least one year (e.g., medical leave, parental leave/childcare) by relaunching their research careers, reducing teaching loads to the minimum level set in USV's own regulations for a maximum period of two academic years, and awarding internal research grants through competitive calls.
- Relieving teaching staff/researchers of certain administrative tasks by simplifying and debureaucratising administrative procedures.

14. Stability of Employment

+

Stable employment contracts and predictability in academic careers are promoted.

Good practices:

- All researchers pursuing a career in this field are recognised by USV and are treated accordingly. They represent an essential part of USV's human resources and a key component of the institution's strategy to develop specific activities and deliver research results at a global level. This recognition should begin from the early stages of a career—postgraduate level—and should include all levels, regardless of national classification (e.g., employee, graduate, master's student, PhD candidate, postdoctoral researcher).
- USV is continuously concerned with ensuring the best conditions for its researchers, both in terms of access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure and in terms of financial support for publishing scientific papers, mobility, and research and innovation placements at prestigious institutions.
- Through the USV Charter, the Internal Regulations and employment contracts concluded at USV, the institution seeks to ensure stability and continuity of employment for all its staff. At the same time, USV consistently ensures that its employees have optimal working and research conditions, and that the employment framework is predictable and stable.
- Fixed-term employees are not treated differently from permanent employees in similar positions, and no form of abuse is tolerated.
- USV aims to improve access to training for employees on fixed-term contracts and needs to ensure that they are informed about announcements regarding the availability of permanent positions.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Initiating the Young Researchers' Awards Gala, to highlight and reward young teaching staff and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities.
- Revitalising the existing Research Centres within USV and developing at least five new research centres in newly established directions at USV.
- Using the transformative agreements concluded with reputable partner publishers under the ANELIS PLUS project to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted by journals of those publishers.
- Implementing a differentiated, performance-based remuneration system for teaching staff and researchers, based on annual evaluations, internal USV grants won through competitive calls, outstanding achievements, and the degree of involvement in institutional development.
- Creating opportunities in collaboration with universities in the international networks of which USV is a member: the NEOLAIA European University Alliance, the European University Association (EUA), and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF).
- Providing research career guidance through counselling, coaching and mentoring services for undergraduate, master's and PhD students, postdoctoral researchers

and researchers across the entire region – the COACH USV Centre.

- Ensuring transparency regarding vacancies at USV (publishing vacant positions on USV's website and on the EURAXESS platform from the first year of the Action Plan).

15. Contractual and Legal Obligations

+/-

GAP analysis:

- The rights and obligations of each member of teaching staff/researcher at USV are specified in the Individual Employment Contract, the Collective Labour Agreement, and USV's Internal Regulations. However, there is no internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the implications/obligations of the researcher/funder with respect to results obtained in the context of different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities.
- At USV, the body responsible for handling researchers' complaints/appeals is the University Ethics Committee.
- There is no Ombudsman institution at USV.
- Researchers (teaching staff) are represented in advisory and decision-making bodies, where they can defend and promote not only personal interests but also collective ones (e.g., in the University Senate and Faculty Councils). There is a Vice-Rector and Vice-Deans with research responsibilities. Department/faculty management councils and the Vice-Deans responsible for research have responsibilities in the annual individual evaluation process. Permanent academic staff elect their representatives to department and faculty councils and to the University Senate. Trade unions participate, on behalf of their members, in negotiations on salaries and on aspects related to the conditions offered by the working environment.
- USV needs to better leverage the opportunities arising from its membership in national and international networks and alliances such as the NEOLAIA European University Alliance, the European University Association (EUA), and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF).

Suggestions for improvement:

- Developing an internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the implications/obligations of researchers with respect to results obtained in the context of different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities.
- USV's strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism should be updated to align with the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- Establishing an Ombudsman institution at USV.
- Implementing pilot programmes for the internationalisation of education in line with the NEOLAIA European University Alliance agreement, and establishing a centre dedicated to the activities of this strategic alliance and to scaling good practices within other international partnerships of USV.

16. Dissemination and Exploitation of Results

+/-

USV supports researchers in exploiting their results through patents and industrial collaborations.

GAP analysis:

- There is no IT platform that would allow the automatic generation of reports containing research results indexed in international databases or in existing USV databases, as well as the real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and its faculties.
- At doctoral student level, the following issues have been identified: the need for counselling on effective personal management of the challenges associated with

doctoral work; the need for support from senior researchers; and a still limited level of knowledge regarding methods for collecting and analysing research data.

- The university's research results are still not exploited satisfactorily in terms of technology transfer to the industrial sector.
- There is low visibility for the general public regarding the university's research activity and the research results developed.
- Collaboration with prestigious publishers under the ANELIS PLUS project remains limited, as does access to publishers and journals with international impact.
- The university's involvement in the academic associations and networks of which it is a member is still limited.
- There is a need to capitalise on USV's patent portfolio and institutional reputation, given its national leading position in terms of the number of patent applications and patents registered with OSIM during 2012–2022.
- There is a need to improve the technology transfer activity carried out at university level through the university technology transfer centres.
- There is a need to include provisions in institutional documents regulating issues related to intellectual property rights.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Developing an IT platform that enables the automatic completion of reports using research results indexed in international databases or existing USV databases, as well as the real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and its faculties.
- Creating research groups that bring together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics, in order to better exploit research results already obtained and to generate new research outputs with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character.
- USV hosts the only Research Career Guidance and Counselling Centre in the North-East Region, COACH USV, and will therefore provide counselling to PhD candidates regarding the effects that doctoral activity may have on personal life, as well as issues such as time management, stress resilience, motivation and perseverance. The Centre will provide personalised counselling, coaching and mentoring to all categories of USV researchers and to researchers from other universities in the region. The Centre will be integrated into the European European Research Area (ERA) Talent Platform.
- Delivering training courses within the doctoral school on the collection and analysis of research data
- Revitalising the existing Research Centres within USV and developing at least five new research centres in newly established directions at USV.
- Developing a strategy aimed at the exploitation and dissemination of university research results.
- Using transformative agreements concluded with reputable partner publishers under the ANELIS PLUS project to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted by journals of those publishers.
- Intensifying USV's activity within international academic associations and networks and joining new associations/networks relevant to the university's activity; supporting teaching staff and researchers in obtaining membership and taking on leadership roles in national and international professional associations.
- Continuing policies that support outstanding invention and patenting activity at USV and stimulating the technology transfer of these inventions to the regional, national and international economic environment, by attracting/training specialists in innovation management, technology transfer, technology brokerage, intellectual and industrial property law, promoting USV's technology and service offer, and organising dedicated events with national and international economic partners.
- Strengthening the support offered to researchers to develop better relations between academia and industry through the contribution of the university's technology transfer centres and its industry collaboration network (e.g., through science parks, economic operators within associations and clusters of which the university is a member).
- Including provisions in institutional documents regulating aspects related to intellectual property rights.

Pillar 4: Research Careers and Talent Development

Implementation

GAP

Initiatives to date / new proposals

17. Valuing Diverse Research Careers

+/-

USV provides continuing training programmes and opportunities for professional development.

GAP analysis:

- The strategic objectives regarding USV's human resources (academic and research staff) are defined both in the University Charter and in the Strategic Plan for the period 2020–2024. With regard to the implementation of research projects, a need has been identified at USV for the continuous information and training of researchers regarding their responsibilities in implementing such projects and the ways in which research results can be valorised for the benefit of society and the economy. According to a study on the counselling needs of USV doctoral students, over 80% of respondents consider the support provided by the doctoral supervisor to be optimal, while almost 70% highlight access to mentoring within the doctoral school. However, the percentages decrease when referring to collaboration within the research team, particularly in terms of encouragement and support from fellow researchers.
- There is currently no integrated digital platform that would allow the automatic generation of reports including research results indexed in international databases or in institutional databases available at USV, nor a system that would enable the real-time promotion of research and innovation results on the websites of the university and its faculties.
- At the level of doctoral students, several needs have been identified, including:
 - the need for counselling related to effectively managing the challenges associated with doctoral research activities;
 - the need for increased support from senior researchers;
 - a relatively limited level of knowledge regarding research data collection and analysis methods.
- USV promotes programmes and projects aimed at encouraging and supporting international mobility of researchers and academic staff.
- There is a Regulation on the organisation and conduct of doctoral studies at USV. The university supports the career development of young researchers through participation in research competitions, professional development in their scientific field, payment of conference participation fees, support for article publication fees, mobility grants and other facilities.
- USV shows a constant concern for the development of the teaching competences of academic staff. Through the Department for Teacher Training, the university provides the initial and mandatory pedagogical training required for academic staff at the early stages of their careers.
- There is a need to develop a comprehensive policy for academic and research career development, which would systematically present all institutional practices in this area, as well as an internal guide on the institutional regulations concerning researchers' responsibilities regarding results obtained within different types of research funding contracts and research and innovation service agreements.
- There is also a need to organise systematic continuing training activities, tailored to the career stage and individual needs of academic and administrative staff.
- Academic staff and researchers are currently facing a significant administrative workload, which may affect the quality of their academic and research activities.
- The use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence applications in research and innovation activities at the university remains relatively limited, indicating the need for further development in this area.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Improving internal communication processes and information dissemination at the level of the doctoral school and beyond; establishing research groups that bring together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics in order to better valorise existing research results and generate new research outcomes with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character.
- Creating an IT platform that would allow the automatic generation of reports including research results indexed in international databases or in institutional databases available at USV, as well as the real-time promotion of research, development and innovation (RDI) results on the websites of the university and its faculties.
- Establishing research groups that bring together researchers interested in similar or complementary research themes in order to maximise the valorisation of existing research results and to create new research outcomes with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character.
- USV hosts the only Research Career Guidance and Counselling Centre in the North-East Region, the COACH USV Centre. In this context, the centre will provide counselling to doctoral students regarding the effects that doctoral activities may have on personal life, as well as aspects such as time management, stress resilience, and the development of motivation and perseverance. The centre will offer personalised counselling, coaching and mentoring to all categories of researchers at USV as well as researchers from other universities in the region. The centre will be integrated into the European Research Area (ERA) Talent Platform.
- Organising training courses on research data collection and analysis within the doctoral school.
- Revitalising the existing research centres at USV and developing at least five new research centres in recently established research directions at the university.
- Supporting the development of academic and research careers of USV staff, including by facilitating access to academic mobility opportunities.
- Ensuring optimal conditions for student mobility, by increasing the number of ERASMUS partnerships, diversifying programme offerings and attracting funding and projects from the ERASMUS+ Programme and other national and international programmes.
- Strengthening doctoral schools by supporting the habilitation of USV academic staff and attracting doctoral supervisors from Romania and abroad, as well as providing financial support for academic mobility and dissemination of research results.
- Developing a policy for academic and research career development, which will systematically present all institutional practices in this area, as well as an internal guide regarding the institutional regulations concerning researchers' responsibilities related to results obtained under different types of research funding contracts and research and innovation service agreements.
- Improving career support services for researchers at USV and implementing continuing professional development programmes through the Regional Research Career Guidance Centre for the North-East Region (COACH USV).
- Reducing the administrative workload of academic staff involved in research, development and innovation activities by relieving them of certain administrative tasks.
- Digitalising all institutional processes and document management at USV, including academic administration and study management, through the completion of the USV Digital project

18. Career Development and Advice	+/-
GAP analysis: • In 2023, USV established the only Regional Research Career Guidance Centre in the North-East Region, the COACH USV Centre. The centre provides research career guidance activities such as counselling, coaching and mentoring for undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, as well as for postdoctoral researchers and researchers across the entire region. • A need has been identified to provide training for researchers on the preparation of funding applications and the implementation of research projects. At the same time, greater transparency and improved dissemination of information regarding funding opportunities in research, development and innovation (RDI) are necessary. • USV supports researchers in career development both through its continuously developing research infrastructure and through institutional support for activities such as publishing scientific articles, participating in mobility programmes and internships, and patenting research results generated within the university. • The technology transfer of university research results to industry remains relatively limited, which highlights the need for stronger engagement of researchers with the economic environment, including through active involvement in science parks and clusters in which the university participates. Suggestions for improvement: • Developing an internal guide on the institutional regulations regarding researchers' responsibilities and obligations related to results obtained under different types of research funding contracts and research and innovation service agreements. • Organising courses and training sessions on obtaining research projects as well as on the financial management of research projects. • Strengthening the support provided to researchers in developing stronger links between academia and industry through the contribution of the university's technology transfer centres and the collaboration network with industry through science parks, economic partners and clusters in which the university is involved. • Using transformative agreements concluded with major academic publishers within the ANELIS PLUS project in order to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted for publication in journals belonging to those publishers. • Developing postdoctoral programmes, both through attracting externally funded projects and through institutional initiatives independent of such projects. • Revitalising the existing research centres at USV and developing at least five new research centres in recently established research directions at the university. • Providing financial support for the publication of scientific papers in internationally recognised journals, as well as for mobility programmes and research and innovation internships at prestigious institutions. • Continuing the institutional policy of supporting outstanding inventive activity and patenting at USV, while stimulating the technology transfer of these inventions to the economic sector. • Providing research career guidance opportunities through counselling, coaching and mentoring services offered to undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and researchers across the entire region through the COACH USV Centre.	

19.	Continuous Professional Development	+/-
GAP analysis: • The need to develop a policy for academic and research career development, which would systematically and coherently present all institutional practices in this area, as well as an internal guide regarding the institutional regulations concerning researchers' responsibilities and obligations related to results obtained under different types of research funding contracts and research and innovation service agreements. • The need to systematically organise continuing training activities, tailored to the career stage and individual needs of academic and administrative staff. • The need to capitalise on the potential offered by the fact that USV hosts the only Research Career Guidance Centre in the North-East Region of Romania (COACH USV). • The relatively low level of research project development, in relation to both the number of researchers and the potential offered by the university's research infrastructure. • The need for an incentive system aimed at motivating researchers and students to continue their research activities. • The identification of specific training needs among the university's doctoral students, as well as among researchers and professors involved in entrepreneurship education. • The need to develop programmes aimed at strengthening competences related to scientific creativity, inventiveness and intellectual property protection. • The need for unrestricted online access to scientific resources, such as journals, international publications and research databases. • The need for financial support for the publication of scientific papers and for research internships. Suggestions for improvement: • Developing a policy for academic and research career development, which will systematically and coherently present all institutional practices in this area, as well as an internal guide regarding the institutional regulations concerning researchers' responsibilities and obligations related to results obtained under different types of research funding contracts and research and innovation service agreements. • Improving research career support services for USV researchers and implementing continuing professional development programmes through the Regional Research Career Guidance Centre for the North-East Region (COACH USV). • Encouraging the development of competitive research, development and innovation (RDI) projects. • Motivating students to pursue academic studies through a substantial scholarship programme, financial support and facilities offered to students, while monitoring the impact of these measures on improving academic performance. • Developing postdoctoral programmes, both through attracting externally funded projects and through independent initiatives, in order to ensure continuity and predictability in the research careers of high-performing doctoral graduates from USV and other institutions. • Increasing the involvement of students from all study cycles in RDI activities, including through the allocation of ECTS credits, scholarships and awards, the mandatory inclusion of students in internal grant project teams, and their participation in the implementation of research projects. • Revitalising the existing research centres within USV and developing at least five new research centres in newly established research directions at the university. • Developing the Research Career Guidance, Association and Counselling Centre for the North-East Development Region of Romania (COACH USV) and integrating it into the European Research Area (ERA) Talent Platform.		

- Using transformative agreements concluded with prestigious academic publishers within the ANELIS PLUS project in order to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted in journals belonging to those publishers.
- Continuing the institutional policy of financially supporting the publication of scientific papers in journals with international impact and of books published by prestigious international publishers.
- Supporting research and innovation internships at prestigious institutions in Romania and abroad, as well as in companies with strong RDI activity, through the attraction of projects, institutional revenues or direct funding provided by the private sector.
- Organising training courses on obtaining research projects and on the financial management of research projects.
- Organising courses and training programmes aimed at improving entrepreneurial skills.

20. Supervision and Mentoring

+/-

Best practices:

- Each doctoral student benefits from supervision and guidance provided by the doctoral supervisor and the supervisory committee.
- In 2023, USV established the only Regional Research Career Guidance Centre in the North-East Region (COACH USV). The centre provides research career guidance activities such as counselling, coaching and mentoring for undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, as well as for postdoctoral researchers and researchers across the entire region. At the same time, the centre carries out activities aimed at promoting research and encouraging young people to pursue research careers.
- Access to mentoring within doctoral schools was appreciated by over 70% of respondents in the opinion survey conducted among doctoral students.
- There is a need to develop a policy for academic and research career development, which would systematically and coherently present all institutional practices in this area.
- With the exception of doctoral studies (where a supervisory committee exists), for researchers at the first two career stages there are no formally designated senior researchers responsible for supervision. Experienced or senior researchers should pay particular attention to their multifaceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisers, leaders, project coordinators, managers or scientific communicators. They should fulfil these responsibilities according to the highest professional standards. In their role as supervisors or mentors, senior researchers should develop constructive and positive relationships with early-career researchers in order to ensure effective knowledge transfer and to support the successful development of their careers.
- There is a need to provide career counselling services to all categories of researchers, covering topics such as preparing funding applications, financial management of research projects and other relevant aspects.
- There is also a need to provide career counselling services to all categories of academic staff and researchers.
- There is a need to designate senior researchers to carry out supervision activities for early-career researchers.

Suggestions for improvement:

Continuation of good practices through:

- Strengthening doctoral schools by supporting the habilitation of USV academic staff and attracting doctoral supervisors from Romania and abroad, accrediting at least two new doctoral fields, expanding, harmonising and diversifying advanced academic training programmes, involving academic staff from foreign universities in supervisory and thesis defence committees, and encouraging joint doctoral supervision (cotutelle).
- Developing the USV Institute for Advanced Studies as a catalyst forum for interdisciplinary and international cooperation in research, development and innovation (RDI) within the university.
- Establishing research groups that bring together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics in order to better valorise existing research results and to

generate new research outcomes with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character.

- Developing a policy for academic and research career development that systematically and coherently presents all institutional practices in this area.
- Involving experienced researchers in counselling and mentoring early-career researchers through the Regional Research Career Guidance Centre for the North-East Region (COACH USV).
- Providing career counselling services for all categories of researchers, addressing topics such as preparing funding proposals, financial management of research projects and other aspects related to research careers.
- Improving career support services for researchers at USV and implementing continuing professional development programmes through the Regional Research Career Guidance Centre for the North-East Region (COACH USV).
- Developing the USV Institute for Advanced Studies as a catalyst forum for interdisciplinary and international cooperation in RDI activities within the university.
- Engaging experienced researchers in mentoring and advising early-career researchers through the COACH USV Regional Research Career Guidance Centre.
- Providing career counselling services for researchers on topics such as preparing funding applications, financial management of research projects and other aspects related to research career development.

7. THE HRS4R IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

General overview of the implementation

The process of aligning USV with the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers began with consultation of the university's academic community. To this end, an analysis of the university's research environment was carried out on three levels, namely:

- An analysis of the gaps/issues faced by the university's researchers and teaching staff from the perspective of the 20 principles of the C&C (based on face-to-face meetings with them, taking into account the participation of researchers and teaching staff from all 11 faculties of USV);
- An analysis of the gaps/issues faced by the PhD students of the university's two doctoral schools (based on the interpretation of the online questionnaire administered to doctoral students and the preparation of a report on the study of the career guidance needs of USV doctoral students as researchers, attached);
- An analysis of the institutional documents in terms of how they do or do not address the negative aspects identified, as well as how they align with the 20 principles of the C&C.

In this regard, the Action Plan for obtaining the HRS4R accreditation was drawn up, which includes a series of actions grouped into the four categories covered by the C&C, namely:

- Ethical and professional aspects
- Recruitment and selection
- Working conditions and social security
- Training and development

Thus, actions have been proposed that refer to three essential aspects, namely:

- Updating USV's institutional documents in order to align them with the C&C principles and to address the issues identified as problematic by the consulted categories
- Creating new specific institutional tools (guides, regulations, procedures, platforms, services) that will complement the framework for alignment with the C&C principles and provide clarity, transparency and support to the academic environment
- Initiating or continuing actions/good practices that will strengthen the career prospects of USV researchers in the context of USV's European openness

Once the actions corresponding to USV's Action Plan had been identified, services/committees within USV that have the prerogatives to carry out the planned actions were assigned, and an indicative timeframe was set for their implementation.

The implementation of the initial Action Plan will be carried out over a period of 24 months from the receipt of the HRS4R certification, following the completion of the initial phase of

the entire HRS4R process. In the first 12 months, the institutional documents requiring revision, identified as output indicators in the Action Plan, will be updated, and the development of new institutional instruments, likewise identified as indicators, will be initiated. During the last 12 months, the measures proposed in the new and updated institutional documents will begin to be implemented, feedback will be sought from the categories initially consulted, and improvements will be made where necessary. At the same time, the actions and good practices included in the Action Plan will be initiated/continued, and suggestions for their improvement will also be collected from the target groups.

Throughout the implementation of the Action Plan, periodic reports will be produced to highlight progress made in achieving the corresponding indicators, any delays, corrective actions, and other relevant aspects. Two years after the launch of the Action Plan, an internal review of the HRS4R Strategy will be carried out. Thus, based on the level of achievement of the indicators of the initial Action Plan and the corrective actions identified as necessary, the initial Action Plan will be revised in order to align it with the issues raised. The revised Action Plan will be discussed and endorsed by the Implementation Committee and will be submitted to USV's decision-making bodies for final approval.

The entire process of implementing the Action Plan will be carried out with the support of the HRS4R Implementation Committee, under the supervision of the Rector of USV.

How will the implementation committee or coordination group be periodically monitored with regard to the progress achieved?

The HRS4R Implementation Committee will periodically review the reports on the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan, which include the performance indicators, any delays, potential non-compliant aspects, and proposed corrective actions. These progress reports will be submitted by the Committee to the USV Senate for the approval of the proposed corrective actions, with a view to the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

The entire process of implementing the Action Plan will be carried out with the support of the HRS4R Implementation Committee, under the supervision of the Rector of USV.

How do you intend to involve the research community, the main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

The Implementation Committee and each Working Group will also include relevant representatives of the stakeholders (the leadership, decision-making bodies, researchers and administrative staff of USV). The Committee will oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process of the Action Plan.

Each Working Group is responsible for implementing each action at all stages defined in the Action Plan. In turn, the Working Group will be responsible for monitoring the implementation, tracking the progress made and reporting it to the Coordination Committee.

The academic/research community of USV will be involved in the implementation process of the Action Plan in the following ways:

- Representatives of the academic/research community of USV are part of the Implementation Committee and the Working Groups, thus providing an effective means of disseminating aspects related to the Action Plan, as well as of offering constructive feedback on the implementation process and possible improvements.
- The research community will have a major influence on the implementation process through the existing bodies (such as the USV Senate), in accordance with national legislation and the USV Statute.
- The implementation process will also include evaluation activities in the form of periodic surveys among the research community, on the basis of which reports will be drawn up to highlight progress in achieving the corresponding indicators, any delays, corrective actions and other aspects.

How do you proceed in aligning organizational policies with HRS4R?

The actions proposed and the indicators assumed in USV's HRS4R Action Plan will constitute the main starting point for updating and/or creating new institutional documents targeting the university's research human resources, and will also be included in the Rector of USV's Management Plan, with direct implications for the main operational directions specific to a university: education, research, innovation and technology transfer. This multicriteria approach, which intelligently interconnects human capital development with high-quality fundamental research and with the valorisation of research with societal and economic impact, will contribute to strengthening the reputation, increasing the performance and enhancing the national and international influence of our university.

How do you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?

The gap analysis and the Action Plan were approved by the USV Senate. Consequently, the proposed Action Plan is endorsed by the institution at the highest representative level for its implementation.

The Implementation Committee and the Working Groups will include relevant members/representatives of the university, faculties and services, as entities mandated to implement the actions.

The implementation process of the Action Plan will involve the periodic consultation of the relevant stakeholders (USV Senate, researchers, trade unions, etc.).

Members of the expert group from the research community, who initially supported the development of the gap analysis, will be invited to contribute to the periodic review of the Action Plan. On the basis of the periodic reports on the implementation of the Action Plan, potential delays in achieving the indicators will be identified and corrective actions will be proposed, the implementation of which will be monitored by the HRS4R Implementation Committee.

How will you monitor progress?

For the monitoring and implementation of the actions in the Action Plan, it is necessary to undertake the following measures:

- Identifying the entities to which the achievement indicators of the Action Plan are assigned. Even if several entities (services/committees) within USV contribute to achieving these indicators, each indicator nevertheless falls under the responsibility of one such entity.
- Opinion surveys within the Working Groups for the preparation of periodic reports on the actions already carried out, contributing to the periodic review of the Action Plan.
- Quarterly meetings of the HRS4R Implementation Committee in order to monitor the degree of achievement of the indicators, any inconsistencies, potential delays, and to establish corrective/remedial actions for the problems identified.
- Periodic briefing of USV's leadership structures.

Through these actions to monitor progress in the implementation of the Action Plan, any inconsistencies/problems that may arise can be identified in due time, effective corrective actions can be determined so that the risks associated with monitoring are minimized and the indicators of the Action Plan can be achieved under optimal conditions.

How will you measure progress (the indicators) for the next evaluation?

Each main action in the Action Plan corresponds to a set of indicators established individually for all planned secondary actions. These sets of indicators will be subject to periodic evaluation by the Implementation Committee. The quarterly meetings of the members of this committee will make it possible to assess the level of achievement of the indicators. Depending on the situation identified for each of these indicators (fulfilled, partially fulfilled, fulfilled with comments/recommendations, fully fulfilled), the best decisions will be taken to remedy the issues encountered.

8. ENTITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE HRS4R AT USV

For the implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code for Researchers at the level of USV, it was necessary to create a coordination structure that possesses the required expertise and is vested with authority regarding the implementation of the changes associated with this endeavour (updating institutional documents, creating new tools, specific actions, good practices).

At the same time, the entire process of analysing potential gaps at USV level in relation to the principles of the Charter and Code was carried out with the support of Working Groups, which will also be involved in the process of implementing the changes related to HRS4R.

HRS4R IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

How the HRS4R Implementation Committee was appointed

The Committee was established taking into account all the structures in the USV organisational chart that are connected to the university's research activity, namely:

- The scientific research activity is coordinated by the Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity
- Human resources-related aspects at USV fall under the responsibility of the Human Resources Service
- Financial resources-related aspects at USV fall under the responsibility of the Financial-Accounting Service
- Quality assurance-related aspects fall under the responsibility of the Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance
- Aspects related to the activity of USV doctoral students fall under the responsibility of the Council for Doctoral University Studies
- Legal aspects fall under the responsibility of the USV Legal Service
- Aspects related to the transfer of university research results to the industrial environment fall under the responsibility of the USV Centre for Technology Transfer and Spin-off Companies
- Aspects related to access to national and European funding lines fall under the responsibility of the Programme and Project Management Service

The Committee will be under the direct supervision of the Rector of USV and will ensure the implementation of the necessary steps for aligning USV with the principles of the Charter and Code, namely:

- Updating the institutional documents that regulate the issues identified in the GAP analysis in relation to the 20 principles of the Charter and Code
- Creating new tools (guides, procedures, regulations) to regulate the issues identified in the GAP analysis and which are not currently covered by the existing procedures and regulations of USV
- Creating new mechanisms for remedying the issues identified in the GAP analysis (developing an IT platform that allows the automatic generation of reports with research results indexed in international databases or in the databases existing at USV)

level; enabling electronic access to mobility opportunities; creating an electronic platform at USV level or a data repository that centrally stores the results and information related to the university's research activity)

- Implementing the Action Plan at USV level and monitoring alignment with the 20 principles with a view to improving the quality of researchers' careers and expanding career opportunities for the university's researchers and beyond

The composition of the HRS4R Implementation Committee at USV level is as follows:

Name	Position	Department
Aurelian Rotaru	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity	Prorectorate
Cristina Elena Turcu	President of the Scientific Council	University Scientific Council
Laura Bouriaud	Coordinator	Council for Doctoral Studies
Geanina Măciucă	Head of Department	Financial-Accounting Department
Anișoara Moldovicean	Head of Department	Human Resources Department
Corneliu Octavian Turcu	Head of Department	Programs and Projects Management Department
Costel Mironeasa	Coordinator	Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee
Paul Pașcu	Coordinator	Technology Transfer Center and Spin-off Companies
Iolanda Rusu	Legal Advisor	Legal Department
Otilia Cramariuc	Referent	Technology Transfer Center and Spin-off Companies

WORKING GROUPS

How the Working Group responsible for implementing HRS4R was appointed

The Working Group responsible for implementing HRS4R is made up of representatives of the USV administrative consultative committee, teaching staff, researchers (R1–R4), and doctoral candidates.

The teaching staff and researchers come from all 11 faculties of USV. In establishing the working groups, the following aspects were taken into account:

- Involvement of representatives of the decision-making structures within USV in order to ensure the legitimacy of updating institutional documents for aligning the university's internal regulations with the principles of the Charter and Code
- Non-discriminatory involvement of representatives from all 11 faculties, in compliance with the principle of gender equality
- Knowledge of the university's institutional documents related to research activity

- Involvement of researchers (academic staff) from all stages of their career (R1–R4)
- Availability of the members of the working groups to inform themselves about how the HRS4R principles have been implemented in similar institutions in the country and abroad, as well as their willingness to learn from good practices and apply them at USV
- Knowledge of national legislation and institutional regulations in the field of research and education, with an emphasis on human resources

Working Groups	Consultations format	Results
Working group composed of representatives of the Administrative Consultative Committee	Face-to-face meeting	The Administrative Consultative Committee is represented by the Administrative Departments of USV that are directly or indirectly involved in matters concerning human resources at USV (the Human Resources Service, the Financial-Accounting Service, the Legal Service). Each of the appointed members of these services was assigned responsibilities for carrying out an analysis of the initial state of implementation of the C&C principles and compliance with the OTM-R policy, within their area of competence. This group carried out an analysis of the 20 principles and of the OTM-R policy in order to assess the current level of their fulfilment at USV. On the basis of this analysis, the main areas for improvement required for their fulfilment were identified, and a first document containing these aspects was drafted. Thus, the main institutional documents that will need to be amended in order to align with the 20 principles of the Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers and with OTM-R were identified, namely: • USV Charter • USV Internal Regulations • Regulation on Filling Vacant or Temporarily Vacant Teaching and Research Positions • Regulation on Filling Vacant Teaching Positions • Regulation on the Organisation and Conduct of Doctoral Study Programmes • Regulation on the Organisation and Functioning of the Counselling and Career Guidance Centre • Quality Assurance Code • Strategy for Preventing and Combating Plagiarism and for Verifying Compliance with Academic Ethics and Deontology in the Preparation of Doctoral Theses at USV (including the creation of the Ombudsman institution at USV level) • Other documents

Working Group of Academic and Research Staff	Face-to-face interviews	The group of academic and research staff, made up of 11 scientific experts appointed from each faculty, was trained regarding the HRS4R procedure (its stages and the documents to be prepared). The main mission of this group was to obtain feedback from the scientific community to which they belong (the faculty they represent). In this respect, the following aspects requiring improvement were identified: • The implications and obligations of the researcher regarding the research results obtained in the context of different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities are not sufficiently known • Need for information and transparency regarding funding opportunities for research activities, as well as the need for support in preparing funding applications and implementing these projects • Need for training on how to obtain research projects and how to implement them • Need for support in the technology transfer of research results obtained at university level to industry • Low visibility among the general public regarding the university's research activity and the research results developed • Still limited collaboration with prestigious publishers within the ANELIS PLUS project, as well as limited access to publishers and journals with international impact • Still low level of the university's involvement in the academic associations and networks of which it is a member • Need to update the documents concerning the recruitment of researchers and teaching staff in order to align them with the provisions of the Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers • Need to revise the minimum mandatory standards required for filling teaching and research positions • Vacant positions are currently published on the institution's website • The evaluation criteria for researchers/teaching staff should be adapted/updated and correlated with the objectives of research, development and innovation activities regarding socio-economic impact, sustainability, exploitation and open access to their results • Need for measures to motivate researchers with outstanding performance • Need to pay attention to special situations involving an interruption of at least one year in the research career (e.g. medical leave, childcare) • Need to capitalise on USV's patent portfolio and institutional reputation stemming from its position as national leader in terms of the number of patent applications and patents registered with OSIM in the period 2012–2022 • Need to update institutional documents or create new tools concerning the co-authorship procedure at USV level • Teaching staff and researchers are overloaded with administrative activities, which may affect the quality of their work • Need to develop a policy for academic and research career development, which systematically and coherently presents all existing institutional practices, and an internal guide on the internal regulations relating to the implications/obligations of the researcher regarding the results obtained in the context of different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities • With the exception of doctoral studies (where a supervision committee exists), for researchers at the first two career stages no persons (senior researchers) are officially appointed to carry out supervision activities. Experienced/senior researchers should pay particular attention to their multifaceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisers, leaders, project coordinators, managers or scientific communicators • Need to systematically organise continuing training activities tailored to the career level and individual needs of academic and administrative staff
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Working Group of USV Doctoral Students	Online questionnaire	This analysis is part of a broader study addressed to doctoral students in the North-East Region of Romania and aims to investigate their guidance and counselling needs for a research career. The results of the study will be taken into account in the training and counselling of doctoral students within the Centre for Guidance, Networking and Counselling for a Research Career in the North-East Region of Romania, developed at “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava. The study is carried out through the project <i>Creation and development of the Centre for Guidance, Networking and Counselling for a Research Career for the North-East Development Region of Romania within “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava – COACH USV</i>, funded under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan PNRR-III-C9-2022-I10. The interpretation of the results of the questionnaire applied in 2023 to the 67 doctoral students of USV reflects the following situation: General opinions of doctoral students regarding the challenges of activities within the doctoral school: • Over 70% feel they made the right choice by enrolling in a PhD, both in terms of maintaining their interest and in seeing their own expectations reflected in the doctoral activity they carry out. Nevertheless, for 25% the pressure they experience during the doctoral research period is such that it affects their relationships with those close to them. • 22% state that they have considered giving up their doctoral studies, for reasons related to personal constraints (lack of time and financial resources, burnout), contextual aspects (the difficulty of publishing papers in impact factor journals), or interpersonal problems (poor communication). • A positive aspect is that among the career objectives expressed by the respondents there are also goals related to sustainable development and addressing community issues: contributing to technological development and innovation, further deepening, development and improvement, continuous research, and changing the school’s image in the community. No less important, however, are the barriers that doctoral students feel in achieving these objectives, which take the form of financial, time and age constraints, bureaucracy, limited access to European projects, and workload at their place of employment. Perspective on the conditions for carrying out activities within the doctoral school: • A positive aspect is that 94% of the university’s doctoral students have clarity regarding the doctoral path they have embarked on, a fact also confirmed by the high percentages (over 70%) of those who know well or very well both the data collection and data analysis methods in their chosen doctoral field. • A majority state that they are satisfied or very satisfied (82%) with the academic environment of our university and with the research resources they have access to, as well as with the opportunities created for collaboration and publication that are necessary for doctoral work (70%). • Support from the doctoral supervisor appears to be considered optimal by over 80% of our institution’s doctoral students who responded to the questionnaire, both in terms of the encouragement and attention they receive, the appreciation for their doctoral work, and the efficient communication regarding the mitigation of any aspects that might affect the proper conduct of their doctoral activity. This percentage decreases when it comes to the relationship with the research group/doctoral cohort to which the respondents belong, in the sense that only about half feel that their expertise is valued/appreciated within the group, with the lowest percentage recorded in relation to encouragement and support from fellow researchers. • Access to mentoring within our university’s doctoral school is noted by almost 70% of respondents.
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		Training and professional development: • Over 60% of respondents believe they need training/counselling in data collection and data analysis. • Approximately 60% of the doctoral students who answered the questionnaire consider that the problems they face in terms of stress and anxiety management, as well as achieving a work–life balance, would require access to training and counselling resources addressing these aspects. • 67% of doctoral students believe that issues related to time management should be addressed in counselling sessions during their doctoral studies. • 60% state that they are interested in counselling, considering themselves to be lacking in terms of developing their own motivation and perseverance in the context of their doctoral activity. Research management and professional conduct, knowledge of project writing, financial management, research ethics: • One of the important aspects to highlight in the context of the university's goal of aligning with the provisions of the Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers is the fact that 85% of the doctoral students who responded to the questionnaire are familiar with the ethical principles of research. However, only 57% have obtained the approval of the university's research ethics committee for the research they are conducting. • 75% of respondents have no information about how to obtain a research project, and 43% have a low level of competence regarding the financial management of such a project • 76% consider that they have a medium to high level of competence in writing a research project for a project competition The results of the analysis carried out for the group of doctoral students in our institution indicated the following areas of intervention in order to increase convergence with the principles of the Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers, namely: • Improving internal communication processes and information dissemination within the doctoral school and beyond • Delivering training courses on research data collection and analysis within the doctoral school • Delivering courses/trainings on obtaining research projects (application and implementation of such projects), as well as on the financial management of these projects • Providing counselling to doctoral students regarding the effects that doctoral activity may have on their personal lives, as well as on aspects such as time management, resilience to stress, and the development of motivation and perseverance • Creating research groups that bring together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics in order to better capitalise on existing research results and to generate new research outcomes with a strongly innovative and multidisciplinary character • Creating institutional mechanisms and strategies to encourage effective training activities and to support the development of research careers • Strengthening the support offered to researchers for developing better relations between academia and industry
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9. ACTION PLAN

Planned Action	Principles	Deadline	Responsibles	Indicators
ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND OPEN SCIENCE				
Strengthening institutional commitment to the ethical principles of the research profession	1, 6, 15, 8, 16, 17, 9	S2, 2028	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Human Resources Department Legal Department	✓ Updated USV Charter ✓ Updated Strategy for Preventing and Combating Plagiarism and for Verifying Compliance with University Ethics and Deontology in the Preparation of Doctoral Theses ✓ Updated Regulation on the Evaluation of the Scientific Performance of Researchers ✓ Establishment of the Ombudsman Institution at USV ✓ An internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the implications/obligations of researchers concerning results obtained under different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities, developed ✓ An IT platform enabling the automatic generation of reports with research results indexed in international databases or existing USV databases, as well as the real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and faculties ✓ A strategy developed to focus on the valorisation and dissemination of university research results ✓ Institutional documents regarding the criteria for evaluating researchers/academic staff updated to align with the principles of the revised Charter and Code (e.g., Regulation on the Evaluation of Academic Staff Performance)
Increasing researcher support for research activity	2, 6, 17, 8, 16, 5, 9	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Council for Doctoral Studies Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee	✓ Needs assessment reports and types of support required ✓ Updated Regulation on the Evaluation of Researchers' Scientific Performance ✓ Courses/trainings in various fields (project writing and implementation, data collection and analysis within the doctoral school) ✓ Implementation of an Open Science, Open Data policy

			Legal Department Financial-Accounting Department Programs and Projects Management Department	✓ <i>Attraction and co-financing of projects for online access to high-impact international journal collections, international scientific databases, and research performance analysis tools through the ANELIS PLUS Association</i> ✓ <i>Revitalisation of existing Research Centres at USV and development of at least 5 new research centres in recently established directions at USV</i> ✓ <i>Intensification of USV's activities within international academic associations and networks, and accession to new associations/networks relevant to the university's activity, in order to facilitate the technological transfer of research results to industry</i> ✓ <i>Creation of research groups bringing together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics, in order to maximise the value of research results already obtained, and to generate new research outputs with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character</i> ✓ <i>Implementation of a differentiated remuneration system for teaching staff and researchers based on performance, according to annual evaluations, USV internal grants won through competition, exceptional achievements, and their degree of involvement in institutional development</i> ✓ <i>Revitalisation of research careers and reduction of teaching load to the minimum established by USV's internal regulations for a period of at least 2 academic years, along with the granting, through internal research grants competitions, of funding for categories of researchers who have had interruptions of at least 1 year (e.g., medical leave, childcare leave)</i> ✓ <i>Provision of counselling, coaching, and mentoring services for bachelor's, master's, and doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and researchers from the entire region – COACH USV Centre</i> ✓ <i>Promotion of ethical behaviour and respect for the law in collaboration with the European Law Student Association (ELSA) and the Research Centre for Applied Ethics</i>
RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION				
Strengthening institutional commitment to the principles of Open,	10, 9, 11,	S2, 2028	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council	✓ <i>USV's OTM-R policy and procedure developed</i> ✓ <i>Delivery of specific training courses on OTM-R for those involved in the training and selection process at USV</i>

Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment			Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Human Resources Department Legal Department	✓ <i>Inclusion of special provisions on the OTM-R policy within the institutional quality control standards (e.g., Quality Assurance Code)</i> ✓ <i>Publication of job vacancies on the EURAXESS platform starting from the first year of the Action Plan, immediately after obtaining the HRS4R logo</i> ✓ <i>Documents regarding the recruitment of researchers and academic staff updated:</i> • <i>Regulation on filling vacant or temporarily vacant teaching and research positions</i> • <i>Regulation on filling vacant teaching positions</i> • <i>Other documents containing regulations in the field of researcher and teaching staff recruitment</i>
Attracting new teachers and researchers with high research performance	9, 10, 11, 12	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Human Resources Department Legal Department Programs and Projects Management Department	✓ <i>Minimum required and mandatory standards for filling teaching and research positions revised</i> ✓ <i>Updated Regulation on the Evaluation of Researchers' Scientific Performance</i> ✓ <i>Launch of the Young Researchers Gala, highlighting and awarding young faculty members and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities, based on a mixed evaluation carried out by professors and employers</i> ✓ <i>Development of postdoctoral programs both through attracting non-reimbursable funded projects and independently of them, in order to ensure predictability for the continuation of research activities by high-performing doctoral graduates from USV and other institutions</i> ✓ <i>Possibility of electronic access to mobility opportunities</i>
WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES				
Increased support for researchers and academics in terms of working conditions and social security	13, 14, 4, 8, 7, 17, 12	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Human Resources Department Technology Transfer Center and Spin-off Companies Legal Department	✓ <i>Update of USV's Internal Regulations, including provisions on remote working conditions and intellectual property rights</i> ✓ <i>Updated Regulation on the Evaluation of Researchers' Scientific Performance</i> ✓ <i>An internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the implications/obligations of researchers with respect to results obtained under different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities</i> ✓ <i>A Strategic Plan for the development of teaching and research careers developed</i>

			Financial-Accounting Department Programs and Projects Management Department	✓ <i>Relieving teaching staff/researchers of certain administrative tasks through simplification and reduction of bureaucracy</i> ✓ <i>Digitalisation of all USV processes and management of documents and student records through the completion of the USV Digital project</i> ✓ <i>Revitalisation of existing Research Centres within USV and development of at least 5 new research centres in recently established directions at USV</i> ✓ <i>Development of at least 20 new or modernised research laboratories, equipped with advanced equipment and state-of-the-art software</i> ✓ <i>Continuation of the policy of financial support for the publication of scientific papers and for internships</i> ✓ <i>Provision of counselling, coaching, and mentoring services for bachelor's, master's and doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and researchers across the entire region – COACH USV Centre</i> ✓ <i>Use of transformative agreements concluded with prestigious partner publishers within the ANELIS PLUS project to cover open-access publication fees for scientific papers accepted by those publishers' journals</i> ✓ <i>Revitalisation of research careers and reduction of teaching load to the minimum provided in USV's internal regulations for a period of at least 2 academic years, along with the granting, through internal research grant competitions, of funding for researchers who have had interruptions of at least 1 year (e.g., medical leave, childcare leave)</i>
Improving recognition and motivation at work and in research	13, 14	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Human Resources Department Financial-Accounting Department Legal Department Programs and Projects Management Department	✓ <i>Launch of the Young Researchers Gala, highlighting and awarding young faculty members and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities, based on a mixed evaluation carried out by professors and employers</i> ✓ <i>Encouraging the preparation and submission of RDI projects in national and international competitions, including through the awarding of internal research grants</i> ✓ <i>Implementation of a differentiated remuneration system for teaching staff and researchers based on performance, annual evaluations, USV internal grants won through competition, exceptional achievements, and their degree of involvement in institutional development</i> ✓ <i>Development of an employee benefits package for USV staff through negotiating facilities with shops and service providers, including healthcare services</i>

				✓ <i>Increasing the involvement of students from all study cycles in research, development, and innovation activities, including through scholarships, awards, and internal grants</i>
Creating all premises for the respect of intellectual property and the development of technology transfer activities at the USV level	13, 18, 12, 16, 15	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Technology Transfer Center and Spin-off Companies Legal Department	✓ <i>Updated USV Charter</i> ✓ <i>Updated Regulation on the Evaluation of Researchers' Scientific Performance</i> ✓ <i>A co-authorship procedure established at USV</i> ✓ <i>Updated USV Strategy for Preventing and Combating Plagiarism and establishment of the Ombudsman institution at USV</i> ✓ <i>Support for patenting inventions from USV</i> ✓ <i>Support for knowledge and technology transfer, such as the Siret Science and Technology Park, the Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory for Food Quality, Safety, and Fraud Detection within the Suceava-Botoșani Regional Innovative Bioeconomy Cluster; development of USV structures and training of human resources dedicated to these collaborations, such as the Technology Transfer Centre in Industry 4.0 and Smart Destinations (authorized by MCID), the Electromagnetic Compatibility Laboratory (accredited by RENAR), and the Technology Transfer Centre and Spin-off</i>
Internationalization of USV's research activities	14, 13, 7, 18, 15	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Council for Doctoral Studies Financial-Accounting Department Legal Department	✓ <i>Collaboration activities with universities from international networks in which USV is a member: NEOLAiA European University Alliance, European University Association (EUA), Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)</i> ✓ <i>Creation of a centre dedicated to the NEOLAiA strategic alliance and to extending best practices within USV's other international partnerships</i> ✓ <i>Implementation of Open Science and Open Data policies adopted at national and European level</i> ✓ <i>Financial support for the publication of scientific papers in high-impact international journals, for mobilities, and for research and innovation internships at prestigious institutions</i> ✓ <i>Ensuring optimal conditions for student mobilities by increasing the number of ERASMUS partnerships, diversifying the programme offer, and attracting funding and projects under the ERASMUS+ Programme, as well as other relevant national and international programmes</i>

RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Creating all premises for the optimal development of the teaching career of USV researchers	20, 19	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Council for Doctoral Studies Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee Legal Department Technology Transfer Center and Spin-off Companies Programs and Projects Management Department	✓ <i>A Strategic Plan for the development of teaching and research careers elaborated</i> ✓ <i>Courses/trainings on improving entrepreneurial skills</i> ✓ <i>Strengthening doctoral schools by supporting the habilitation of USV academic staff and attracting PhD supervisors from Romania and abroad</i> ✓ <i>Accreditation of at least 2 new doctoral fields</i> ✓ <i>Development of the USV Institute for Advanced Studies as a catalyst forum for interdisciplinary and international cooperation in RDI</i> ✓ <i>Improvement of career support services for USV researchers through the only research career guidance centre in the North-East Region (COACH USV)</i> ✓ <i>Courses/trainings in various fields (project writing and implementation, data collection and research analysis within the doctoral school)</i> ✓ <i>Revitalisation of existing Research Centres within USV and development of at least 5 new research centres in recently established fields at USV</i>
Financial support for researchers in professional development issues	19	S1, 2029	Vice-Rector for Scientific Activity University Scientific Council Human Resources Department Council for Doctoral Studies Financial-Accounting Department	✓ <i>A financial support policy for the publication of scientific papers implemented</i> ✓ <i>Research and innovation internships for researchers funded from USV resources</i> ✓ <i>Courses/trainings on improving entrepreneurial skills</i>

Detailed overview of the Action Plan:

	ACTION	INDICATORS
ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND OPEN SCIENCE		
1.	Strengthening institutional commitment to the ethical principles of the research profession	
1.1	<i>Revision of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, included in the USV Charter</i>	<i>Revised USV Charter</i>
1.2	<i>Revision of the Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism and ensuring compliance with university ethics and deontology in doctoral theses, to align with the principles of the Charter and the Code of Conduct for Researchers</i>	• Updated Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism and for verifying compliance with university ethics and deontology in the preparation of doctoral theses • Establishment of the Ombudsman institution at USV
1.3	<i>Development of an internal guide on researchers' obligations related to results obtained under various research and innovation funding and service contracts</i>	<i>An internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the implications/obligations of researchers concerning the results obtained under different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities, developed</i>
1.4	<i>Development of an IT platform or institutional repository at USV to bring together research results and related information</i>	<i>An IT platform that allows the automatic generation of reports with research results indexed in international databases or in databases existing at USV, as well as the real-time promotion of RDI results on the websites of the university and its faculties</i>
1.5	<i>Development of a strategy aimed at the valorisation and dissemination of university research results</i>	<i>A strategy for the valorisation and dissemination of university research results developed</i>
1.6	<i>Revision of institutional documents on the evaluation criteria for researchers and academic staff to ensure alignment with the principles of the Charter and Code, and with the objectives of RDI activities</i>	<i>Institutional documents regarding the evaluation criteria for researchers/academic staff, updated to align with the principles of the Charter and the Code (e.g., Regulation on the evaluation of teaching staff performance)</i>

2. Increasing researcher support for research activity		
2.1	<i>Assessment of the type of support and provision of courses/trainings in the areas requiring support (personalised counselling, coaching, mentoring)</i>	• <i>Evaluation reports on the needs and type of support</i> • <i>Courses/trainings in various fields (project writing and implementation, data collection and research analysis within the doctoral school)</i>
2.2	<i>Transition towards open research and open access to publicly funded results, by implementing Open Science and Open Data policies at national and European level, while observing the principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'</i>	<i>Open Science, Open Data policy implemented</i>
2.3	<i>Use of transformative agreements concluded with prestigious partner publishers within the ANELIS PLUS project for covering open-access publication fees of scientific papers accepted in the journals of these publishers</i>	<i>Securing and co-financing projects ensuring online access to high-impact journal collections, international scientific databases, and research performance analysis tools via the ANELIS PLUS Association</i>
2.4	<i>Implementation of best practices in research activities</i>	• <i>Revitalisation of the existing Research Centres within USV and development of at least 5 new research centres in recently established fields at USV</i> • <i>Intensification of USV's activity within international academic associations and networks, and accession to new associations/networks relevant to the university's activity, in order to facilitate the technological transfer of research results to industry</i> • <i>Creation of research groups bringing together researchers interested in similar or complementary topics, with the aim of maximising the value of existing research results and generating new research outputs with a strong innovative and multidisciplinary character</i> • <i>Implementation of a differentiated remuneration system for academic and research staff based on performance, according to annual evaluations, USV internal grants won through competition, outstanding achievements, and their degree of involvement in institutional development</i> • <i>Relaunch of research careers and reduction of the teaching workload to the minimum norm established in USV's internal regulations for a period of at least 2 academic years, along with the</i>

		awarding, through competitive internal research grants, of support for researchers who have had interruptions of at least 1 year (e.g., medical leave, childcare) • Provision of counselling, coaching and mentoring services for Bachelor's, Master's and PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, and researchers across the region – through the COACH USV Centre • Promotion of ethical behaviour and respect for the law in collaboration with the European Law Student Association (ELSA) and the Centre for Research in Applied Ethics
RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION		
3.	Strengthening institutional commitment to the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment	
3.1	Development of USV's own OTM-R policy and procedure	• USV's OTM-R policy and procedure developed • Delivery of specific training courses on OTM-R for those involved in the training and selection process at USV • Inclusion in institutional quality control standards (e.g., Quality Assurance Code) of specific provisions regarding the OTM-R policy • Publication of job vacancies on the EURAXESS platform starting from the first year of the Action Plan, immediately after obtaining the HRS4R logo
3.2	Revision of documents concerning the recruitment of researchers and teaching staff to ensure alignment with the principles of the Charter and the Code of Conduct for Researchers	Updated documents concerning the recruitment of researchers and academic staff: • Regulation on the evaluation of researchers' scientific performance • Regulation on the filling of vacant or temporarily vacant teaching and research positions • Regulation on the filling of vacant teaching positions • Other documents containing provisions on the recruitment of researchers and teaching staff
4	Attracting new teachers and researchers with high research performance	
4.1	Revision of the minimum mandatory standards for filling teaching and research positions	The minimum mandatory standards for filling teaching and research positions revised
4.2	Highlighting and attracting high-performing researchers	• Launch of the Young Researchers' Gala, highlighting and awarding young academics and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities, based on a mixed evaluation carried out by professors and employers • Development of post-doctoral programmes both by attracting non-reimbursable funded projects and independently of them, in order to ensure predictability for continuing the research activity of high-performing PhD graduates from USV and other institutions

		• Possibility to access mobility opportunities through an electronic system
WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES		
5	Increased support for researchers and academics in terms of working conditions and social security	
5.1	Development of tools to align with the working conditions and social security provisions of the Charter and the Code	• Updating the USV Internal Regulations, including provisions on remote working conditions and intellectual property rights • An internal guide on institutional regulations regarding the implications/obligations of researchers concerning the results obtained under different types of funding and service contracts for research and innovation activities • A Strategic Plan for the development of teaching and research careers elaborated
5.2	Actions to support USV's research activity	• Reduction of administrative workload for teaching and research staff through simplification and administrative debureaucratisation • Digitalisation of all USV processes and document/school management by finalising the implementation of the USV Digital project • Revitalisation of the existing Research Centres within USV and development of at least 5 new research centres in recently established fields at USV • Development of at least 20 new or modernised research laboratories, equipped with advanced equipment and state-of-the-art software • Continuation of the financial support policy for the publication of scientific papers and research internships • Provision of counselling, coaching, and mentoring services for Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, and researchers across the entire region – through the COACH USV Centre • Use of transformative agreements signed with prestigious partner publishers within the ANELIS PLUS project for covering open-access publication fees of scientific works accepted in the journals of these publishers • Relaunch of research careers and reduction of the teaching workload to the minimum level established in USV's internal regulations for a period of at least 2 academic years, along with the awarding, through competitive internal research grants, of support for researchers who have had interruptions of at least 1 year (e.g., medical leave, childcare leave)

6	Improving recognition and motivation at work and in research	
6.1	<i>Acknowledgement of high-performing researchers</i>	<i>Launch of the Young Researchers' Gala, where young academics and researchers with outstanding performance in RDI activities will be highlighted and awarded, based on a mixed evaluation carried out by professors and employers</i>
6.2	<i>Motivation for developing and submitting RDI projects</i>	<i>Encouraging the development and submission of RDI projects in national and international competitions, including through the awarding of internal research grants</i>
6.3	<i>Implementation of other measures to motivate researchers and academic staff</i>	• <i>Implementation of a differentiated remuneration system for academic and research staff based on performance, taking into account annual evaluations, USV internal grants won through competition, exceptional achievements, and their degree of involvement in institutional development</i> • <i>Development of a benefits package for USV employees by negotiating facilities with shops and service providers, including healthcare services</i> • <i>Increasing student involvement in RDI activities across all study cycles (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD), including through scholarships, awards, and internal research grants</i>
7	Creating all premises for the respect of intellectual property and the development of technology transfer activities at the USV level	
7.1	<i>Updating the provisions of the USV Charter and other relevant documents regarding intellectual property rights</i>	• <i>Updated USV Charter</i> • <i>A co-authorship procedure established at USV</i> • <i>Updated USV Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism and establishment of the Ombudsman institution at USV</i>
7.2	<i>Continuation of policies supporting patenting activities and the transfer of knowledge and technologies</i>	• <i>Support for patenting inventions developed at USV</i> • <i>Support for knowledge and technology transfer, such as the Siret Science and Technology Park, the Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory for quality analysis, food safety, and detection of food fraud within the Suceava-Botoșani Regional Innovative Bioeconomy Cluster; development of USV structures and training of human resources dedicated to these collaborations, such as the Technology Transfer Centre in Industry 4.0 and Smart Destinations (authorised by MCID), the Electromagnetic Compatibility Laboratory (accredited by RENAR), and the Technology Transfer Centre and spin-off companies</i>
8	Internationalization of USV research activities	

8.1	<i>Creating opportunities in collaboration with universities from international networks</i>	• <i>Collaboration activities with universities from the international networks of which USV is a member: the NEOLAiA European University Alliance, the European University Association (EUA), the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)</i> • <i>Creation of a centre dedicated to the NEOLAiA strategic alliance and to extending best practice examples within USV's other international partnerships</i>
8.2	<i>Transition towards open research</i>	<i>Implementation of Open Science and Open Data policies adopted at national and European level</i>
8.3	<i>Financial support for USV's internationalisation activities</i>	• <i>Financial support for the publication of scientific papers in high-impact international journals, as well as for research and innovation mobilities and internships at prestigious institutions.</i> • <i>Ensuring optimal conditions for student mobilities by increasing the number of ERASMUS partnerships, diversifying the range of programmes, and attracting funding and projects under the ERASMUS+ Programme, as well as other relevant national and international programmes</i>
RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT		
9	Creating all premises for the optimal development of the teaching career of USV researchers	
9.1	<i>Development of a Strategic Plan for academic and research career advancement</i>	<i>A Strategic Plan for the advancement of teaching and research careers developed</i>
9.2	<i>Capitalising on training and development opportunities offered by USV's dedicated structures</i>	• <i>Strengthening doctoral schools by supporting the habilitation of USV academic staff and attracting PhD supervisors from Romania and abroad.</i> • <i>Accreditation of at least two new doctoral fields.</i> • <i>Development of the USV Institute for Advanced Studies as a catalytic forum for interdisciplinary and international cooperation in the field of RDI.</i> • <i>Improvement of career support services for USV researchers through the only research career guidance centre in the North-East Region (COACH USV).</i> • <i>Courses/trainings in various fields (project writing and implementation, data collection and analysis within the doctoral school).</i> • <i>Courses/trainings aimed at improving entrepreneurial skills.</i> • <i>Revitalisation of existing USV Research Centres and development of at least five new research centres in recently established directions at USV.</i>
10	Financial support for researchers in professional development issues	

10.1	<i>Maintaining the financial support policy for publishing scientific papers in high-impact international journals and books at renowned international publishing houses</i>	<i>A financial support policy for the publication of scientific papers implemented</i>
10.2	<i>Support for research and innovation internships at prestigious institutions in Romania and abroad, as well as at companies with intensive RDI activities</i>	<i>Research and innovation internships for researchers supported by USV resources</i>

ANNEXES

1.	Decision No. 7 of the Senate of 'Ștefan cel Mare' University of Suceava, dated 23 February 2023, on the adoption of the principles of the Charter and the Code of Conduct for Researchers
2.	The report on the study of USV doctoral students' needs for research career guidance
3.	Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) Checklist
4.	Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (C/2023/1640)