

## TEMPLATE 3: INTERNAL REVIEW

Name Organisation under review: **University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna**

Organisation's contact details: Dr. Andrea Handsteiner, Head of Personnel Development Department, andrea.handsteiner@boku.ac.at

Web-link to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan: <https://boku.ac.at/personalentwicklung/themen/human-resources-strategy-for-researchers>

Web-link to organisational recruitment policy (OTM-R principles):<sup>45</sup> [https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR\\_Logo/OTM-R\\_Guidelines\\_BOKU.pdf](https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR_Logo/OTM-R_Guidelines_BOKU.pdf)

**SUBMISSION DATE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:** 21.09.2020

### 1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

*Key figures 31.12.2019 (Intellectual Capital Report 2019, financial statement 2019)*

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<b>FTE</b>
<i>Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research</i>	1.139
<i>Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)</i>	306,4
<i>Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)</i>	575,2
<i>Of whom are women</i>	445,8
<i>Of whom are stage R3 or R4<sup>1</sup> = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.</i>	212,9

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research\\_policies/Towards\\_a\\_European\\_Framework\\_for\\_Research\\_Careers\\_final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf)

<i>Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level</i>	477,3
<i>Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level</i>	327,4
<i>Total number of students (if relevant)</i>	11.008
<i>Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)</i>	1.743,3
<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)</b>	<b>€ (million Euros)</b>
<i>Total annual organisational budget</i>	187,7
<i>Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure, ...)</i>	134
<i>Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)</i>	39,3
<i>Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research</i>	12,3
<b>ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)</b>	
<p>The University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) was founded in 1872 as university for agriculture and forestry. Today BOKU is a modern university specializing in life sciences with three major campuses in and around Vienna.</p> <p>As “University of Life”, BOKU has important social and political responsibilities: from agricultural issues to biotechnological research - possibilities for sustainable use and thus the long-term protection of natural resources is investigated and conveyed. This allows BOKU to provide answers which are of socio-political relevance and of direct relevance to us all.</p>	

## 2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE (NARRATIVE)

BOKU's performance within the different dimensions 'Ethical and professional aspects', 'Recruitment and selection', 'Working conditions' and 'Training and development' was extensively discussed and reported during the gap analysis in the initial phase. The gathered information was updated according to recent development during every interim and internal assessment. With the following brief description of each of the four dimensions we provide insight to status quo and current activities. A detailed list of relevant legislation, existing institutional rules and practices is provided in the document 'Gap Analysis' (last update 2020, available in German language).

## Ethical and professional aspects

BOKU is a member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity and set up its own ombudsman responsible for good scientific practice long time ago. Comprehensive guidelines for compliance were introduced in 2014. In addition, an ethics committee was established and the BOKU Ethics Charter was published in 2015. It addresses ethical issues related to study and teaching, research and recommendations for interaction among staff. To further enhance ethic principles an ethics committee for research projects was constituted in 2019 and included in the university's statutes.

Accountability for scientific projects is given strong central support. Accounting is transparent to researchers and scientific projects are regularly audited. Support for researchers for the financial planning of upcoming projects was further expanded within the framework of quarterly reviews. Data about scientific projects and publications must be entered into the BOKU research database FIS. The reprogramming of the research information system with increased usability is an important issue at the moment as it is one of the most important bases for the generation of key figures of the university. Unfortunately, the reprogramming is delayed, because new requirements for the database were submitted subsequently.

Evaluation and appraisal systems are in place. The requirements for habilitation, the fulfilment of qualification targets within career positions and the evaluation of organisational units and academic staff have been developed in several working groups and precisely defined in internal guidelines and processes. The task is to keep running the operational implementation and keeping the guidelines up to date. From 2006-2014 all departments were evaluated according to an internal guideline, in January 2020 the second evaluation of 5 departments was started and is currently being implemented.

BOKU regularly takes part in various initiatives which intend to make research available to the public, such as a former lecture series in community colleges ("University goes Public"), open evenings ("Lange Nacht der Forschung") and the Vienna "Girl's day" event. There is a strong appearance of BOKU scientists in public media consistent to current issues. Over the past years, BOKU has massively expanded its activities in the field of Citizen Science, a small organisational unit was established and BOKU is involved in the coordination of the Citizen Science Network Austria.

Apart from this in the dimension 'ethical and professional aspects' an amazing amount has happened since 2017:

The guidelines for the seizure and exploitation of service inventions have been revised and improved human resources for the dissemination and exploitation of results have been created. Thus, the spin off consulting and start-up coaching could be expanded and a new business incubator at the Muthgasse location is under construction. Still there is a need for action in the area of Open Data (suitable databases are currently being examined) and in the revision of the IP strategy in the direction of an innovation strategy.

Important activities were executed by the university library: besides the implementation of the new library system ALMA in 2018, an online open access repository was set up. The negotiations of transformative agreements with publishers are ongoing. For better support an Open-Access-Publication-Fund was established and guidelines for its use were drawn up. Furthermore, the University archive integrated all decentralized scientific collections. A new directory is available now and a directive for scientific collections was published in 2019.

Large investments were made and are in prospect in direction of the principle 'good practice in research': Within the earlier created unit for Employee

Protection and Health in 2018 an internal position as fire safety administrator was filled for better supervision of the task that was previously performed externally. This was followed by an adjusted fire protection regulation. Aligned safety instructions for the numerous laboratories at BOKU were planned, but as the laboratories are very differently oriented this is not an easy exercise. The next big step will be the implementation of ISO 45 001 health and safety management system at the entire university.

There have been structural legal improvements: the subject area of research contract review was newly assigned to the legal department, which takes care of all legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality. All the measures accompanying the basic data protection regulation 2018 have been diligently taken. Guidelines for information security were drawn up in 2019 and security awareness training has also been available since 2020.

However, in the area of IT security and performance, more significant innovations are necessary and planned: the BOKUnet 2020+ project aims to increase the availability of the backbone of the IT network even further (it will be converted from the current star structure to a path-redundant ring structure). This will increase performance and expand the backup data center. The aim is to keep the remaining sites running even if one main site fails. In this context, it is important to mention that BOKU submitted several activities for the digitisation of essential processes during a digitisation call. The implementation will be determined by the result of the funding volume.

An extremely important structural improvement in the area of accountability has been initiated since 2017: the establishment of a Project Accounting Service Point (SPA). The service unit is entrusted with the management of all tasks that arise in the course of the proper quality assured accounting of EU research projects with regard to external and internal accounting. It ensures BOKU-wide quality assurance of all EU research project accounts as well as support for all EU audits (first and second level control). This is done on the basis of a defined service level. A comparable service point for other e.g. national research projects is currently not available in terms of resources.

SPA has introduced the following measures: project accounting guidelines and checklist; Business Record System for storing, processing and keeping documents that are incurred in the course of project settlement or are required for eligible settlement (BokuBizzRec is available since 2019 to the internal project management as well as to the external auditing office in case of an audit); ArgeData, which is a recognized electronic and audit-proof recording system required for project time recording in an audit process and serves to ensure the sustainable accounting success for projects. Apart from this SPA trains colleagues on project accounting within the framework of BOKU Training Passport.

For the principle of professional attitude, the new version of the "Guideline for the planning and submission of research projects according to §§26 and 27 UG" (2018) must be mentioned above all, as well as the introduction of a certificate for third-party funding management, with which project managers can demonstrate their relevant know-how for project applications.

Recruitment and selection

There are elaborate and most useful procedures for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers in place at BOKU. An overview is presented in the OTM-R Checklist BOKU ([https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR\\_Logo/BOKU\\_otm-r-checklist.pdf](https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR_Logo/BOKU_otm-r-checklist.pdf)). For the most part procedures for recruitment are regulated by law, most notably by the University Act. For example, each position must be officially advertised for at least three weeks before it can be filled and the internal equality body must check all job advertisements for gender issues.

In connection with BOKU's quality audit in 2014 recruitment and appointment procedures were evaluated. Strengths, weaknesses and further development potential was listed in BOKU's quality documentation, authorized by BOKU's quality board. The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria therefore certified BOKU's quality management system without any conditions to be fulfilled. In the following we describe some of the strengths and minor weaknesses of recruitment and selection at BOKU.

Austrian Universities must advertise research job vacancies (for scientific and research staff) internationally, at least EU-wide. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research actively promotes the EURAXESS Job portal in order to raise awareness for the European job database. BOKU announces standardized every open scientific position on the EURAXESS Job portal. An internal form for this purpose was already created in 2016, departments offering research positions need to fill in the job description in English, additional to each job announcement in German language.

For the purpose of further professionalization and for internal purpose BOKU has drawn up a set of guidelines providing supportive and important instructions for anyone involved in the recruitment process. The document distinguishes between the various phases from vacancy to interview and written statement for selection. It is accessible in the internal area of the homepage after login. A significant internal role in the whole recruitment procedure takes the Equal Opportunities Working Group: it has a right to join every interview, to see through each job offer before announcement and needs to comment on every written statement of selection of a candidate in order to avoid any discrimination during selection process.

The appointment of senior positions for leading researchers like University Professors and Associate Professors are subject to their own detailed guidelines as here are: regulations for appointment procedures and procedural guidelines and standards for qualification agreements. Both documents get translated and will be available in English soon. The comprehensive regulations for the appointment of professors are based on the University Act and the University Statutes. To enhance transparency, the standardized procedures are mapped on respective flow charts. One of the recently completed actions for improvement was the standardization of instructions for reviewers and appointment committee members.

Additionally, in 2019 the procedural guidelines and standards for qualification agreements (regarding Assistant and Associate Professors) were revised and raised to an internationally comparable level for tenure track positions. A qualification advisory board deals with every single selection of a candidate for a career position and the criteria for selecting researchers focus on both, the candidates' past performance and their future potential. A qualification agreement accompanies the individual career path and mobility experience is an indispensable part of it. Also, in 2019 BOKU published its OTM-R guidelines as a supplement to the mentioned documents and general information for candidates.

Already since 2016 BOKU's scientific career model is available in English. To enhance international and inter-sectoral comparability single career positions were categorized within the European Framework for Research Careers

([https://era.gv.at/object/document/1509/attach/Towards\\_a\\_European\\_Framework\\_for\\_Research\\_Careers\\_final.pdf](https://era.gv.at/object/document/1509/attach/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf)). Every single job announcement now includes the respective category from first stage, recognized, established to leading scientist.

With some restrictions the recruitment process could be improved by digitizing the selection process to a certain extent. But apart from the fact that there is currently no scope for this, because there are much more urgent areas for digitization in personnel administration, the improvements would be particularly helpful for internal reasons but not have a strong impact for applicants.

#### Working conditions

A major legal framework for working conditions at BOKU is the collective agreement for university employees, implemented in 2009. It sets out regulations to employment relationship, working hours and especially contains a salary scheme which is applicable to scientific and non-scientific staff, also for temporary assignments within third party funded scientific projects. Salaries therefore are highly transparent and fair. BOKU is obliged to produce an annual report on male and female pay scales (gender pay gap). In addition, the Equal Opportunities Working Group and the Coordination Center for Equal Opportunities, Advancement of Women and Gender Studies produces an annual report on gender equality. The Equal Opportunities Working Group and the Arbitration Board monitor non-discrimination in work and study life.

The possibilities to promote career development also strongly refer to collective agreement and the herein described scientific positions. Additional guidelines for qualification procedure and qualification targets (career positions) were worked out in working groups and formalized in different internal agreements. One was implemented in 2010, revised in 2019, and refers to the positions Assistant and Associate Professors. Another one was signed in 2016 and allows newly created positions as Research Assistant and Research Associate Professor. This second career model has emerged in addition to the career positions according to the collective agreement, but for various reasons it has not become widely accepted.

Further activities for the promotion of career development can be listed: The introduction of different doctoral schools guarantees the support and extensive financing of doctoral education. A BOKU advisory board for the promotion of young scientists was founded in 2019. Its task is the awarding of research grants. The unit for research support provides advice for the application for grants and scholarships. For first stage and recognised researchers, BOKU has launched the career support programme 'shape your career', which is in a pilot phase in 2020. Orientation seminars, individual and peer coaching will help young researchers to plan their own career. After evaluation of the individual formats, suitable offers shall continue to be available, if the funding can be provided.

To name but a few more significant working conditions, the following activities should be mentioned briefly: BOKU set up an occupational pension fund in 2010, which allows a contribution in addition to the state pension scheme. Every employee who works for the university for at least two years is a beneficiary. BOKU places particular importance on internationality and mobility. Researcher are supported by numerous activities of the unit for International Relations. In spring 2017, internal agreements for sabbaticals and educational leaves were signed, they regulate the eligibility requirements and the process. Work-life

balance is a big issue anyways: there are plenty of part-time or tele-work agreements for employees with family responsibilities. Flexible working times are common for the majority of the staff. BOKU emphasizes activities for staff health care, in 2016 BOKU therefore was even awarded with a price from Public Servant Insurance Corporation (BVA).

Providing options for childcare is an essential foundation of reconciling work/study and family. At BOKU following services are offered on a regular basis and under parent-administered organization: kindergarten, 3-week-long day care for pupils in July and childcare at special events. One of the recent action points refers to an urgently needed new building for the university kindergarten, including outdoor playgrounds and a modern kitchen. With some delay due to legal complications the kindergarten was finally opened in January 2018. It hosts 55 children from 1-6 years, employs certified and assistant supervisors for each of the 2 family groups and for the nursery as well as a cook, who daily prepares fresh organic food for the children. The association of daycare facilities BOKU (Verein Boku Kindergarten) is certified daycare facility according to the Vienna daycare law (Wiener Kindergartengesetz, WKGG).

One of the future tasks includes the compatibility of work/study and care of relatives. At the moment BOKU offers network meetings for nursing relatives "More than I can do" (in cooperation with the TU Vienna). Further needs should be identified and addressed professionally, perhaps by setting up a contact point for the support of caregiving relatives. In 2019, preparations were made to integrate the care issue (UniCare) more comprehensively within diversity strategy and equality plan. There shall be a regular professional exchange with the UniKid - UniCare Austria network including participation in specialist lectures.

Major investments were also made in the research environment: Within the framework of the BOKU Core Facility Strategy, the acquisition of joint research infrastructures within and between departments is increasingly being implemented. On 1.1.2020, Core Facilities were now also established as a separate unit dealing with the further expansion of the joint use of special research infrastructure at every BOKU site. In compliance with competition and state aid regulations, this should also be accessible to spin-offs and start-ups of BOKU.

#### Training and development

There are various regulations to support researchers in their different career steps, for example PhD students are given the opportunity to discuss their dissertation projects with a team of supervisors. Standards for the supervision of doctoral students are increasingly regarded as important. End of 2016 BOKU established a Doctoral Centre, which is responsible for the implementation of structured Doctoral Programs, allowing for a modern, state-of-the art doctoral education.

Regarding supervision and managerial duties BOKU runs different programs to support senior researchers in performing their management tasks to the highest professional standards: different leadership trainings, a particular leadership course for professors (including reflection on the scientific leadership portfolio), a research project management course and needs-oriented individual coaching for scientists with organizational management tasks. Emphasis was put on the implementation and continuous professionalization of appraisal interviews through repeated evaluation of the perception of the interviews and regular training offers. An internal agreement with the works council for the execution of appraisal interviews was introduced in 2012 and revised in 2016.

Taking a leadership role is often a sensitive issue for scientists. Everyday life in research and teaching leaves little room for professionalisation in the

management sector. This makes it all the more important that the university does not regard management training of its scientists as a sprint, but rather as a marathon: It is important to bring the topic up again and again and to provide helpful tools for support. BOKU implemented leadership principles to provide a common ground for professional leadership in 2017. The principles describe values and standards for managing staff should be considered binding at all levels of leadership. They underscore BOKU's mission for sustainability and also signal the appreciation for staff management at the University. In 2019 and 2020 different departments had workshops to reflect on the implementation of the leadership principles in their own environment. It is desirable that others follow as resistance to leadership issues is not likely to be overcome soon and there is still work to be done ahead.

BOKU has a real strength in the area of training and continuous development. In 2015 BOKU implemented a training passport accessible for all employees. It aims at better orientation during onboarding and continuous professional development throughout a research career. The training programme offered every academic semester comprises various courses and workshops to improve key competencies in research work and teaching. There are about 150 courses on transferable skills a year. A third of these are held by internal trainers who pass on their knowledge and thus contribute significantly to internal knowledge management. The BOKU Training Passport has contributed significantly to a strong increase in training activities: Course attendance has almost doubled since 2015.

This can only be achieved by permanent professional handling of the successfully introduced personnel development instrument. The software application specially programmed for the training passport was already twice revised, in 2017 and 2019, to make it more user-friendly. Additionally, each individual training session is routinely evaluated, thus ensuring that the entire programme continuously improves. The range of training courses offered is based on internal needs: As a university with strong third-party funding, there is a focus on the management of research projects. In 2018, thus a certificate was introduced to prove internal knowledge for the submission and management of third-party funded research projects at BOKU through the completion of various training courses. It is most desirable that all established researchers can demonstrate necessary qualifications.

With the covid-19 crisis, there was a rapid switch to online training. For the future, it will be necessary to work out to what extent online and classroom training can be used in the best possible way.

---

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?

In the initial phase in 2011 the main focus was to address young scientists and their career development. Meanwhile there is a broader focus and more principles have come to the fore, particularly 'good practice in research' and 'dissemination and exploitation of results'.



Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?

No

Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

No

### 3. ACTIONS

	Principle	Action	Realization until	Responsible unit	Indicators / Targets	Current Status	Report / Activities
1	Career Development	Career path positions for young scientists	Continuous	Rectorate	Annual number of career positions	in progress	new guidelines for career positions (2019); regular personnel planning meetings with all organizational units; advertisement and appointment of career positions; conclusion of qualification agreements; ongoing monitoring by the Qualification Advisory Board  numbers 2017 / 18 / 19 (each 31.12.): 13 / 11/ 13 Assistant Professors 40 / 47 / 46 Associate Professors
2	Recruitment and Selection	Development of more transparent information for applicants	2019	Rectorate	General OTM-R Policy available	in progress	General BOKU OTM-R Policy and revised procedural guidelines and standards for qualification agreements (career positions) were published in 2019; the translation of the documents related to research career positions into English is in progress
3	Continuing Professional Development	Continuing training program	Continuous	Unit for HR Development	Annual number of events and participants	in progress	Total number of course attendances within BOKU Training Passport for the years: 2017 / 18 / 19: 1.415 / 1.917 / 2.021

4	Working conditions	Provide new premises and possibilities for kindergarten	WS 19/20	Rectorate	Opening and put into operation of new building	completed	put into operation of new building 1/2018; numbers summer term 2020: 55 children from 1-6 years in 3 groups; 3 certified and 3 assistant supervisors and 1 cook employed on a regular basis
5	Working conditions	Implement UniCare	SS 2022	Rectorate	Creation of a contact point for the support of caregiving relatives; cooperation with the inter-university network UniKid- UniCare Austria; needs assessment and conception of needs-based counselling services	new	Activities carried out will be listed in the next interim report
6	Evaluation / appraisal systems	Evaluation of Professors according to internal guidelines	Continuous	Unit for Quality Mgmt.	Annual number of conducted evaluations	in progress	The questionnaire for the personal evaluation as well as the guidelines for the teaching portfolio were revised and a flow chart of the evaluation procedure presented on the homepage;  Number of evaluations of professorships according §98, §99(3) University Act and A2 Collective Agreement: year 2017 / 18 / 19: 8 / 14 / 16 evaluations
7	Evaluation / appraisal systems	Evaluation of Departments according to internal guidelines	WS 21/22	Unit for Quality Mgmt.	Implementation of the evaluation of five departments belonging to the Vienna Institute for Biotechnology	new	Activities carried out will be listed in the next interim report
8	Good practice in research	Measures to create a common structure in the field of work safety	Continuous	Unit for Employee Protection & Health	aligned safety instructions, adjusted fire protection regulation, regular meetings of decentralized representatives	in progress	A general safety instruction is part of the BOKU training passport for all staff members; the fire protection regulation has been adjusted;  In the years 2017 to 2019 different training courses in the field of work safety were held within BOKU Training Passport: 6 courses (94 participants) for Labelling of hazardous working materials, safety instruction and fire prevention; 8 courses (128 participants) for First aid  Decentralized representatives for work safety meet once in a quarter; additionally, BOKU organized in 2019 a conference for the Forum Safe Universities Austria

9	Good practice in research	Implementation of ISO 45 001 health and safety management system	SS 2023	Unit for Employee Protection & Health	Certification of a pilot department in 2020; Implementation at the entire university; Start of overall certification in 2021	new	Activities carried out will be listed in the next interim report
	Public Engagement	Promotion of Citizen Science in Austria	SS 2023	Rectorate	Definition and establishment of long-term oriented university internal and cross-institutional work priorities; Evaluation and quality assurance in Citizen Science; Presentation of an interinstitutional Citizen Science-concept including action plan	new	Activities carried out will be listed in the next interim report
11	Dissemination, exploitation of results	Update and realization IP and exploitation strategy	Continuous	Innovation and Technology Transfer	Annual number of claims	in progress	Guidelines for the seizure and exploitation of service inventions published 2017; Claims of "Service inventions" for the years 2017/18/19: 16/25/19; 4 internal trainings to 'Inventing - Patenting - Founding: Exploitation of scientific results & innovations' carried out since 2017 with a total of 50 participants
12	Dissemination, exploitation of results	Promote open access publications at BOKU and extension teaching library	2019	Library	Online open access repository available; linked to research information system; Budget dedicated to open access publications; Number of instructions and trainings	completed	Online Open Access Repository implemented; Open-Access-Publication-Fund implemented as well as a guideline for use; Negotiations of transformative agreements with publishers ongoing; User instructions and trainings since 2018; All services and information presented transparently on the homepage
13	Dissemination, exploitation of results	University archive: decentralized scientific collections	2020	Library	Availability of new directory; guidelines for archiving and collecting	completed	Archiving policy published 2017; directive for the scientific collections published 2019
14	Dissemination, exploitation of results	New union library system, increased and simplified research possibilities	2020	Library	Implementation and migration; number of user trainings	completed	Implementation of the new library system ALMA in 2018; Migration of data; New user trainings implemented
15	Dissemination, exploitation of results	FIS 3+ (reprogramming research information system)	WS 21/22	Unit for Research Support	new features (exporting of data such as for CV); data collection, tooltips and help texts in English; new web appearance and increased usability	in progress	Requirements were greatly expanded during the project (partly due to legal requirements), start FIS 3+ planned for 2021; Completed: researchers profil (CV); profile of institute; integration of open access (journals indexed in DOAJ); FIS adjusted to sales tax and EU state aid law; Interface to Arge Data Plus (recording of project hours);
16	Dissemination, exploitation of results	FIS support for international research staff	WS 22/23	Unit for Research Support	optimized support and teaching in English: face-to-face, online training and personal coaching;	new	

The extended version of the reviewed HR Strategy for your organisation for the next 3 years, including the OTM-R policy must be published on your organisation's website.

Please provide the link to the dedicated webpage(s) on your organisation's web site \*: <https://boku.ac.at/personalentwicklung/themen/hr-excellence-in-research>

If your organisation has already filled in the OTM-R checklist in the Initial Phase, please also indicate how your organisation is working towards / has developed an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above in the action plan (as emerged from the Gap Analysis), please provide a short commentary demonstrating the progress of the implementation versus the initial phase.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles

Already before the work towards a Human Resources Strategy for Researchers there were elaborate and most useful procedures for open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers in place, because for the most part procedures for recruitment are strictly regulated by law, most notably by the University Act. For example, each position must be officially advertised for at least three weeks before it can be filled and job vacancies for research staff anyhow must be advertised internationally. Also, the internal equality body must check all job advertisements and every single recruitment selection in terms of gender equality.

Additionally, in connection with BOKU's quality audit in 2014 recruitment and appointment procedures were evaluated. Strengths, weaknesses and further development potential was listed in BOKU's quality documentation, authorized by BOKU's quality board. The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria certified BOKU's quality management system without any conditions for meeting the requirements of the audit standards.

Therefore, in terms of HR Logo issues not so many activities were needed. What seemed necessary was to provide more transparent information on the recruitment procedures for international candidates. Thus, it was useful to develop and publish an OTM-R policy and to translate relevant documents for research career positions into English. Also, the use of the EURAXESS Job portal moved more into focus. As BOKU now announces every open research position on the EURAXESS Job portal, an internal form for this purpose was created. And to enhance international and inter-sectoral comparability the job announcements include information about the respective category within the European Framework of Research Careers from first stage, recognized, established to leading scientist (R1 – R4).

In case your organisation has entered the HRS4R process prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015), please fill out the OTM-R checklist<sup>45</sup>.

Ideally, the extended version of the reviewed OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website. Please provide the web link to the OTM-R dedicated webpage(s) if it is different than the one where the reviewed HR Strategy is located.

[https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR\\_Logo/OTM-R\\_Guidelines\\_BOKU.pdf](https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR_Logo/OTM-R_Guidelines_BOKU.pdf)

[https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR\\_Logo/BOKU\\_otm-r-checklist.pdf](https://boku.ac.at/fileadmin/data/H05000/H17900/HR_Logo/BOKU_otm-r-checklist.pdf)

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION (MAX. 1 PAGE)**

General overview of the implementation process: (max. 1000 words).

BOKU signed the declaration of endorsement of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers already in 2006. Since 2011, BOKU has enforced its efforts to elaborate its Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. By means of a continuous improvement process, further implementation of the Charter & Code is facilitated. After a comprehensive internal gap analysis, BOKU started with its first Action Plan in 2012 (Acknowledgement by the European Commission).

Beginning in March 2011, all key persons and experts responsible for significant parts of the four dimensions of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers at BOKU (more than 20 people) were asked in semi-structured individual interviews about the current situation. Department heads, process owners, speakers of committee and key researchers shared their internal knowledge regarding the 40 charter principles. The answers - divided into applicable legislation, internal regulations and processes, individual and general descriptions of the situation - were summarized in a structured report using the template for the internal gap analysis.

The positive finding of this internal analysis was that BOKU is already using numerous tools in all areas to comply with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. However, also potential improvements and needs for development could be identified. On behalf of the corresponding Vice Rector for Human Resources Management and Organizational Development, the key issues and action areas for the upcoming period were identified. In view of the resource implications and the timescale, the next relevant steps for BOKU have been set out. The first action plan in 2012 focused strongly on supporting young scientists (First Stage and Recognized Researchers regarding European Framework for Research Careers).

The proposed measures were reviewed in in-depth telephone interviews with representatives of the target group. Single measures and events were evaluated after completion to aggregate feedback. In 2014 BOKU successfully conducted its first self-assessment. An informal working group was established to monitor

the progress in single dimensions and for the interim assessment there was positive feedback from European Commission.

In 2016 BOKU set up a HRS4R steering committee to allow the further implementation and the embedding of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers in BOKU's Planning- and Management Process. Members of the first steering committee were the Vice Rector for Research and International Research Collaboration, the Vice Rector for Teaching and International Affairs as well as the units for Quality Management, Strategic Projects and Human Resources Development.

From the very beginning the steering committee had the purpose to particularly support and promote HRS4R activities. It oversaw the gap analysis, set the strategy and decided on the new action plan. Compared to the first action plan, the second one was able to expand its range. By establishing a steering group including Vice Rectorate for Research, the research side could be better involved and new targets in the field of research communication and transfer, explicitly on open access, dissemination and exploitation of results, could be tackled. BOKU successfully passed the award renewal in 2017.

Due to a new rectorate the steering committee had to be reconstituted in 2018. Still, Vice Rector for Research and Innovation, Vice Rector for Organization and Process Management and the units for Quality Management, Strategic Projects and Human Resources Development are members. The steering committee meets once a year to monitor progress of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers.

BOKU's HRS4R activities are communicated regularly by means of internal communication channels: presentation in meetings with department heads and research representatives, news stories on BOKU homepage, notes in the online research newsletter and print-article in the BOKU magazine.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below:

- How have you prepared the internal review?

For the current report in the award renewal phase the extended gap analysis has been updated, important interim progress has been recorded and new needs have been added.

- How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

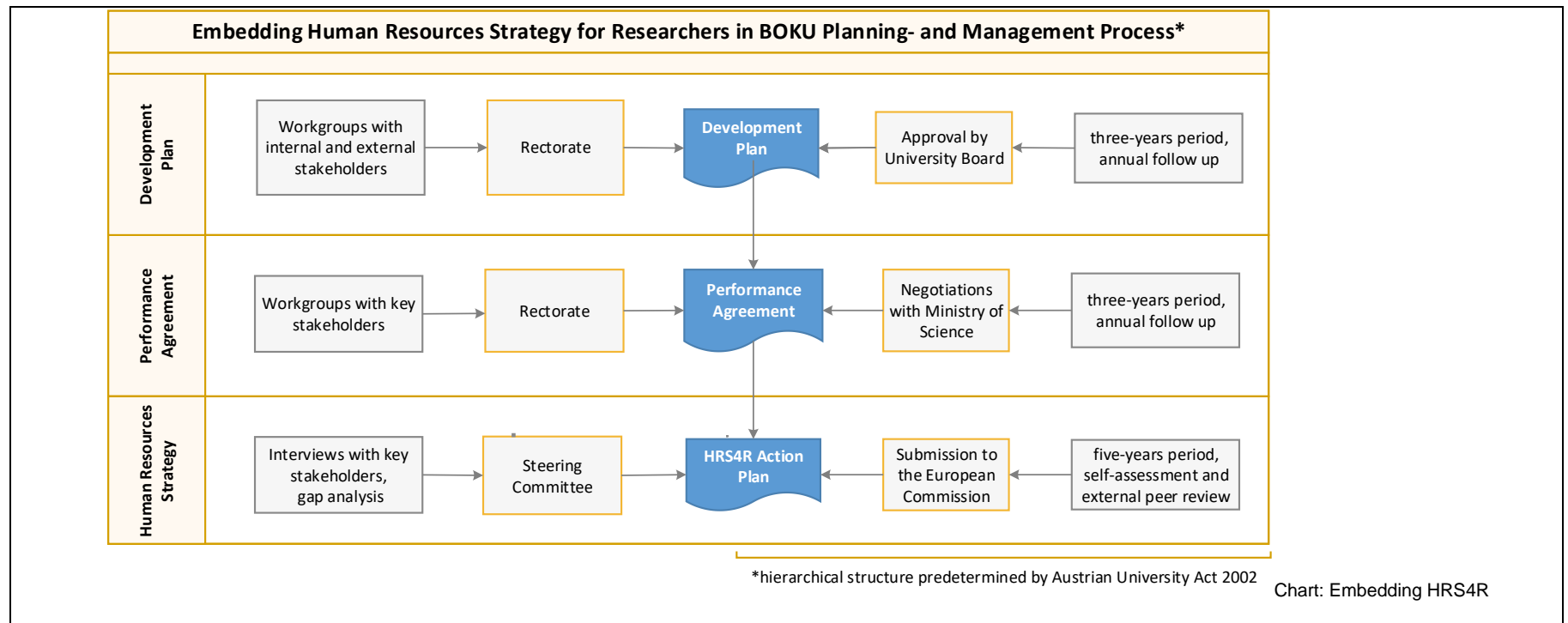
In the beginning through focus interviews, later mainly through the multiplier effect, via research spokespersons of the scientific departments, directly and very substantial via the Vice Rectorate for Research and the Unit for Research Service

- Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?

There is a steering committee consisting of Vice Rector for Research and Innovation, Vice Rector for Organization and Process Management and the units for Quality Management, Strategic Projects and Human Resources Development regularly overseeing progress.

- Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy?

The continuation of the activities related to the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers is considered as a major strategic decision and is mentioned in the Development Plan and the Performance Agreement of the University. The chart below shows the embedding of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers within BOKU's strategic Planning- and Management Processes.



- How is your organisation ensuring that the proposed actions are also being implemented?

The fact that the responsible vice rectorates are part of the steering group ensures implementation. The available resources and feasibility have been clarified before an action is included in the Action Plan, so there should normally be no major obstacles.

- How are you monitoring progress?

Regular consultation with responsible persons once a year, any necessary deviations are documented.



- How do you expect to prepare for the external review?

Evidence of the implementation of measures should be listed beforehand so that they can then be quickly grasped.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process: (max. 1000 words):

There are no additional resources in financial or personnel terms for the work on the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, which means that paths must be taken within the existing framework in each case.

Nevertheless, with its efforts to obtain the HR Excellence in Research logo, BOKU is kind of a 'pioneer' for other institutions and was frequently invited and active as ambassador, particularly as external board member (during the HRS4R-introduction at the University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten), as author (HR Excellence in Research – a European Certification. In: 'Personal in Hochschule und Wissenschaft entwickeln', 1/2020) and as (keynote) speaker at national and international events such as

- Czech universities autumn conference 2018 about university projects funded from EU funds
- MSCA 2018 - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Annual Conference
- Euraxess Austria: Exchange of experience 2019 on Career Development
- 45th AUCEN Meeting 2019 at the University of Innsbruck

Already in 2015 BOKU was invited to visit Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald in Germany and to contribute to the final phase of preparing their strategy with expertise in implementing the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. In June 2018 representatives from Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic, visited for knowledge sharing before their submission.

*Please note that the revised HR strategy and Action Plan must also be published upon completion of the internal assessment.*