

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY OF INCDFT-IFT IAȘI

- 2026 -

With a tradition spanning more than seven decades of activity and notable achievements in scientific research, the National Institute of Research and Development for Technical Physics – IFT Iași (INCDFT-IFT Iași), although a medium-sized institute (70–75 employees), is a center of excellence that contributes both to the development of national/regional research and to international research. Achieving and consolidating this status of excellence has been made possible through sustained efforts aimed at ensuring the international recognition of its scientific activity.

The institute's openness to the international scientific community, also incorporated into its institutional development strategy, encompasses collaboration at various levels with research institutions, universities, and companies worldwide. INCDFT-IFT Iași puts this commitment into practice through joint research projects (bilateral, European, and international), specialized consultancy, the exploitation and dissemination of research results, the joint organization of international scientific events, as well as through the recruitment of highly qualified specialists and the placement of the institute's research staff in prestigious laboratories in Europe, the United States, and Japan for advanced training and specialization.

In accordance with its statutory mandate, the National Institute of Research and Development for Technical Physics – IFT Iași (INCDFT-IFT Iași) conducts research, development, and innovation activities in the fields of materials with novel structures and physical properties; devices, instruments, and equipment based on such materials; new methods for material production and advanced material characterization techniques; non-destructive testing and evaluation; electrical and magnetic separation methods; and specialized materials and devices with applications in engineering, medicine, and biotechnology. Applications resulting from this research are developed in partnership with research institutes and universities, within national research programmes and other international programmes, as well as in collaboration with industrial partners.

The scientific research activities carried out at INCDFT-IFT Iași are complemented by professional development and educational activities, including: (a) doctoral supervision, with researchers from the institute acting as PhD supervisors affiliated with various doctoral organizing and supervising institutions (IOSUDs); (b) demonstration and practical activities for students from relevant academic programmes, including master's and doctoral students; and (c) the training of young specialists in the use of the institute's advanced research equipment.

The Human Resources Strategy of INCDFT-IFT Iași is structured around the four pillars of the European Charter for Researchers, for which general objectives and specific actions have been established:

1. Ethics, Integrity, Gender, and Open Science
2. Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment, and Career Advancement
3. Working Conditions and Practices
4. Research Careers and Talent Development

The document is based on the Strategic Plan for Institutional Development of INCDFT-IFT Iași (2025–2029).

Strategic Vision of INCDFT-IFT Iași

INCDFT-IFT Iași aspires to establish itself as a nationally and internationally recognized research hub, making significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge in fields of strategic relevance to society. This vision is supported by the effective and sustainable development of the institute's resources, with a particular focus on its human capital, and by fostering a strong culture of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, innovation, and collaboration.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Strengthen an institutional culture based on ethics, research integrity, equal opportunities, and open access to knowledge.

Objective 2: Strengthen the implementation of a merit-based, transparent, and inclusive system for managing researchers' careers, in accordance with the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R).

Objective 3: Develop a safe, modern, and motivating institutional environment that supports researchers' performance and promotes a healthy work–life balance.

Objective 4: Establish an integrated framework for training, mentoring, and mobility to support the sustainable development of research careers, from research assistants to senior researchers, while supporting researchers in achieving outstanding scientific performance, engaging in innovative projects, and actively participating in national and international consortia.

Objective 1: Strengthening the institutional culture based one, integrity, equal opportunities, and Open Access to knowledge

Through its fundamental institutional documents, INCDFT-IFT Iași expresses a clear commitment to professional ethics, research integrity, gender equality, and the promotion of Open Science.

Its commitment to ethical conduct in research relies on the promotion of fundamental values, including fairness, excellence, integrity, well-being, professionalism, respect, flexibility, diversity, transparency, collaboration, consultation, inclusion, sustainable development and the green transition, accountability, and institutional transparency across all research activities. In particular, the institute explicitly assumes public accountability and the implementation of ethical policies through the following principles:

- compliance with applicable legislation, internal regulations, and national and European policies governing scientific research;
- implementation of applicable regulations concerning quality assurance and assessment in scientific research;

- compliance with the principles of equity and research ethics set out in the *Code of Ethics and Conduct for Scientific Research*, together with the active promotion of research integrity;
- ensuring transparency in all institutional decisions and activities, in accordance with applicable legislation.

Through its institutional ethics and mediation bodies, namely the *Ethics Committee* and the *Committee for Receiving and Resolving Cases of Gender-Based Harassment and Workplace Moral Harassment*, INCDFT-IFT Iași addresses disciplinary misconduct, complaints, and conflict mediation in accordance with established procedures.

With regard to gender equality and diversity, INCDFT-IFT Iași implements specific measures established through its *Internal Regulations* and its *Gender Equality Strategy and Plan*. The *Human Resources Strategy* provides for policies promoting non-discrimination and equal opportunities, balanced participation in decision-making, and equitable access to resources, positions, and research opportunities.

The promotion of Open Science represents a commitment of INCDFT-IFT Iași and forms part of its institutional mission to transfer knowledge to society through innovation, education, and open research. The principles of transparency, collaboration, accountability, and free access to research results are regarded as essential institutional values.

Furthermore, the *Strategic Plan for Institutional Development* establishes a framework for international cooperation and encourages partnerships with economic operators and public institutions for the implementation of applied research programmes, including through contracts that require the dissemination of research results.

Actions

1.1. Conduct annual training sessions on research ethics.
1.2. Strengthen the role of the Ethics Committee and related structures by continuously updating procedures for the prevention, reporting, and resolution of conflicts.
1.3. Monitor annually compliance with the principles of gender equality and diversity in decision-making processes and research activities.
1.4. Promote open-access publication through institutional policies.

Objective 2: Strengthen the implementation of a merit-based, transparent, and inclusive system for managing researchers' careers, in accordance with OTM-R principles

INCDFT-IFT Iași has established its policies for researchers' career development around the principles of merit, transparency, competence, and equal opportunity. These principles are set out in the *Strategic Plan for Institutional Development - Human Resources Strategy chapter*, in *Order No. 4688 of 18 August 2026 of the Minister of Education and Research, approving the minimum*

and mandatory criteria and standards for awarding the status of Principal Researcher (R4) – Scientific Researcher Grade I and Established Researcher (R3) – Scientific Researcher Grade II, pursuant to *Law No. 183/2024 on the status of research, development, and innovation personne*l, as well as in the institute's internal *Regulations on Recruitment and Promotion*.

These regulatory frameworks provide INCDFT-IFT Iași with the basis for organizing competitive recruitment and promotion procedures and for establishing internal rules for the selection and assessment of research staff, in accordance with applicable national legislation.

The recruitment of research staff is conducted in accordance with the principles of **Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R)**, ensuring a fair, competitive, and inclusive selection process. Recruitment and career advancement are based on clearly defined performance standards, while research activity is assessed against objective criteria through regular evaluations, with due consideration given to the value and impact of individual contributions to the institute and the wider research community.

Selection criteria and the composition of evaluation and recruitment committees are established through internal methodologies approved by the Scientific Council. These procedures take into account the principles of ethical conduct, appropriate representation of relevant areas of expertise, impartiality, and gender balance.

Career progression is based on demonstrated professional and scientific performance and on the substantive contributions of researchers within their respective fields. Assessment procedures follow established standards, criteria, and methodologies for evaluating the quality, relevance, and impact of research outputs and professional conduct, in full compliance with applicable legislation and internal regulations.

INCDFT-IFT Iași is committed to continuously improving its recruitment and promotion procedures in line with OTM-R principles. In this context, the institute recognizes the value of diverse professional experiences and career paths, including experience gained in industry, scientific entrepreneurship, technology transfer, knowledge exchange, or public policy, as relevant components in assessing professional merit and career potential.

This approach is consistent with the principles of the **European Charter for Researchers**, which promotes a comprehensive assessment of researchers that takes into account not only scientific publications and research outputs, but also multidisciplinary experience, knowledge dissemination, societal engagement, and contributions to intersectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Actions

2.1. The OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) policy will be translated in English and posted on the institute web page, in accordance with European standards.

2.2. Professionalize the selection and evaluation committees through training on equity, diversity, and recognition of diverse career paths.
2.3. Introduce flexible evaluation criteria to recognize interdisciplinary activity, intersectoral collaboration, and the societal impact of research.
2.4. Formally recognize experience from non-academic environments (industry, entrepreneurship, public policy) in the career assessment process.

Objective 3: Develop a safe, modern, and motivating institutional environment that supports researchers' performance and work–life balance

INCDFT-IFT Iași is committed to ensuring a coherent, modern, inclusive, and equitable institutional framework for researchers' working conditions. This commitment is reflected in a comprehensive set of clearly defined principles and provisions established through the institute's strategic documents and internal regulatory framework.

Access to infrastructure, laboratories, and digital facilities is guaranteed through the *Strategic Institutional Development Plan* and the *Internal Regulations*, which stipulate that the institute will continue to develop advanced research infrastructure and to invest in modern scientific equipment and digital facilities to support internationally competitive research. In the short and medium term, emphasis is placed on digital transformation, with measures to expand online access to bibliographic resources, databases, and analytical tools. According to the HRS4R Gap Analysis, research infrastructure is considered one of the strengths of INCDFT-IFT Iași.

With regard to work–life balance, the institute is committed to developing and implementing measures that support the well-being of its staff. These measures include the digitalization of administrative processes to reduce bureaucratic workloads and, where the nature of the work allows, the provision of flexible working arrangements and working hours.

Safety, health, and social security at INCDFT-IFT Iași are ensured in accordance with applicable national legislation by providing appropriate working conditions and the necessary occupational health and safety measures for all staff, within the limits of the legal framework and available resources. The *Strategic Institutional Development Plan* supports the development of research careers through structural measures concerning the recruitment, evaluation, and promotion of scientific staff, in accordance with their professional status and level of experience. In addition, the *Gap Analysis* conducted as part of the *HR Excellence in Research* process confirms the consistency of these institutional approaches and the application of *OTM-R principles* at all levels of the research career.

Actions
3.1. Continuously modernize the research infrastructure through systematic maintenance programmes and the periodic upgrading and replacement of research equipment.
3.2. Enhance digital access to scientific and administrative resources by digitalizing institutional support services.

3.3. Promote flexible working arrangements, including adaptable working hours where appropriate, while reducing administrative and bureaucratic burdens through digitalization.
3.4. Ensure fair, equitable, and transparent contractual conditions for all categories of research staff.

Objective 4: Create an integrated framework for training, mentoring, and mobility to support sustainable research careers and support researchers in achieving outstanding scientific performance, engaging in innovative projects, and actively participating in national and international consortia

To support career guidance, the *Strategic Institutional Development Plan* establishes objectives and activities dedicated to integrating recent graduates into research and innovation fields. There is a need to continuously develop an institutional culture of mentoring and support early-career researchers, in accordance with the principles of the *European Charter for Researchers*.

INCDFT-IFT Iași actively promotes lifelong learning, continuing professional development, and the internal and international mobility of researchers. The *Strategic Institutional Development Plan* encourages participation in professional development courses, postdoctoral fellowships, and international training placements in order to strengthen skills and facilitate integration into the European Research Area.

Support for scientific excellence and innovation is regulated through the Strategic Institutional Development Plan, which provides for institutional measures such as financial support for participation in prestigious conferences and encouragement of involvement in highly innovative research projects. Ensuring coherence and alignment across these initiatives is essential. In this context, the European Charter for Researchers emphasizes the importance of assessing scientific performance not only in terms of research outputs, but also with regard to impact, innovation, and the effective transfer and valorization of knowledge and technology.

Integration into research networks, consortia, and thematic centers is supported by the *Strategic Institutional Development Plan*, which promotes the establishment of or participation in interdisciplinary collaborative structures, both nationally and at European level. INCDFT-IFT Iași actively encourages researchers to participate in scientific networks, research consortia, thematic centers, and similar structures as part of the institutional strategy for increasing research capacity and international visibility.

Actions
4.1. Support researchers' participation in international placements, continuing professional development courses, and professional retraining programs.
4.2. Provide financial and administrative support for participation in conferences, scientific networks, and international projects.
4.3. Grant awards for scientific performance and innovation among young researchers.

4.4. Encourage the establishment of and participation in national and European consortia.

In July 2024, the European Commission awarded INCDFT-IFT Iași the **Human Resources Excellence in Research (HRS4R) Award** (https://www.phys-iasi.ro/en/hrs4r), recognizing the institute's commitment to implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. The documentation for the initial implementation phase was prepared in 2023 and submitted to the European Commission in May 2024. The HRS4R Award is granted to research organizations that demonstrate their commitment to implementing the principles and standards set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the related Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Accordingly, INCDFT IFT-Iași aims to ensure a robust, coherent, and transparent institutional framework for implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, integrated into its long-term institutional development policy, while improving accessibility and communication to support research collaboration.