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The External Evaluation Report of a Doctoral Study Domain

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I. Introduction¹

In this chapter, the following shall be summarized:

- the context in which this external evaluation report was drafted (**the type of evaluation, the period of the evaluation visit, the composition of the Experts Committee** etc.);

The external evaluation took place in the months of October and November of 2021. Due to the pandemic, all meetings took place online, and no visit on-site was possible. The vast majority of documents was received prior to the meetings described below. On request, other documents were added to complement the information received.

The Geography Evaluation Panel was composed of three people: the coordinator, Prof.univ.dr. Adrian Grozavu, from "A.I. Cuza" University of Iași, myself, Prof. João Sarmento, from the University of Minho, Portugal, as international expert, and PhD student Sorin Furdu, from the University of Oradea.

- details about the doctoral school(s) of which the doctoral domain under review is part (number of doctoral advisors, number of students, institutional context, short history etc.);
- details about the doctoral study domain under review (number of students, institutional context, short history etc.).

The Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, located in Bucharest, has a doctoral school, in the field of Geography, with a history that dates back more than 50 years, that is, to the year of 1968. The Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy awards PhDs in Geography in four main areas: geomorphology, hydrology, climatology and environmental geography.

¹ Each time when applicable the information shall be presented gender-wise.



The principal objectives of the doctoral schools is to train highly qualified specialists for research in the university, pre-university education system and in the administrative and managerial fields.

The Institute of Geography has twenty-seven researchers, twenty-five of which hold a PhD. They take part in examinations and guidance commissions. The Institute of Geography is also responsible for the Centre for the study of natural hazards, located in Pătârlagele, Buzău county.

Presently, the doctoral school has five academic staff. Two have tenure over research positions at the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, and three are associated researchers with pensioner status. Of these, only two supervise PhD students at the moment.

Between 2016 and 2020, seven doctoral theses were defended, four in 2017, one in 2018 and two in 2019 (annex 4.12). On 28th October an eight thesis was defended, although it falls outside the evaluation period. At present there are six PhD students.

The doctoral school has offered various courses, among them: Ethics and Academic Integrity; Global Environmental Changes, Natural and Technological Hazards, Geographic Information Systems, Climate Risks, Relief Mapping and Geomorphological Processes. Between 2016 and 2020 the first four were on offer (annex 4.6).

II. Methods used

This chapter will contain the methods and tools used in the external evaluation process, before and during the evaluation visit, including at least:

Unfortunately, and due to the pandemic situation, it was not possible to visit the buildings included in the institution's property, and therefore no assessment could be made on classrooms, laboratories; libraries; research centers; etc. All meetings were online. Simultaneous translation from Romanian into English was provided.

Administrative support was always available, and continuous contact was kept with Prof. Irina Cozmîncă. Several exchanges of information and also zoom meetings took place with the panel coordinator, Prof. Adrian Grozavu, which were key to this report.

On Tuesday, 26.10.2021, between 13:00 and 13:45, via zoom, we met with the contact person for the doctoral study domain under review - Prof. Monica Dumitresco - and the team who drafted the internal evaluation report. Various issues were discussed and clarified, and some additional documents were asked. These documents were sent by email on the 4th November. A second batch of documents was sent by email on the 10th November.

On Tuesday, 26.10.2021, between 14:00 and 14:45, via zoom, we met with the academic staff corresponding to the doctoral study domain, i.e. Petre Gastescu, Dan Balteanu. Additional discussions were conducted and various issues clarified.

- Meeting/discussions with doctoral students in the doctoral study domain under review;



On Wednesday, 27.10.2021 between 13:00 and 13:45, via zoom, we met with three PhD students: Cristina Elena Mihalache; Alexandra Vrincenu and Claudiu Angearu. The meeting was mostly conducted in English.

- Meeting/discussions with the Directors/ persons in charge of the research centres/laboratories within the doctoral study domain

On Wednesday, 27.10.2021 between 14:00 and 14:45, via zoom, we met with Mihaela Sima, Biana Mitrica and Monica Dumitrescu.

- Meeting/Discussions with the graduates of the doctoral study domain under review;

On Thursday, 28.10.2021, between 17:00 and 17:45, via zoom, we met with four graduates from the doctoral school: Daniel Simulesco, Elena Tuchi, Mihai Hustiu and Laura Lupu. The meeting was conducted in Romanian and translation was available.

- Meeting/Discussions with employers of the graduates in the doctoral study domain under review;

On Thursday, 28.10.2021, between 18:00 and 18:45, via zoom, we met with four employers of Doctoral graduates: Sandu Boengiu, from the University of Craiova; Elena Mateescu, from the national Institute of Meteorology, Dan Tanislav, from the University of Valahia in Targoviste, and Viorel Chendes, from the Hidrology Organisation.

- Meeting/Discussions with the school officials of the Doctoral School(s) in which the doctoral study domain under review is operating;

- Meeting/Discussions with the doctoral advisors in the doctoral study domain under review;

- Meeting/discussions with the representatives of the various structures of the IOSUD/Doctoral School(s) in which the doctoral study domain under review is operating:

- The Council of the Doctoral School, the University Senate, the Board of Directors, the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commission, the Quality Assurance Department, the Ethics Commission (including with the student representatives of these structures);
- the Career Counselling and Guidance Center;
- student organizations;
- secretariats;
- various departments/administrative offices (Social/Student residences-Cafeterias etc.);
- Application of questionnaires to doctoral students or academic staff in the doctoral study domain under review.

On Friday, 22.10.2021, between 16:00 and 17:45, via zoom, there was a general meeting of panel members, to discuss the main methodological aspects related to the evaluation of doctoral studies.

On Monday, 25.10.2021, between 17:00 and 17:45, via zoom, there was a general meeting of panel members, to discuss *the preparation and harmonization of evaluation steps of the doctoral study domains and IOSUD.*



On Monday, 25.10.2021, between 18:00 and 18:45, via zoom, there was a meeting *with representatives of the Academy and of the Council for Academic Doctoral Studies (CSUD)*.

On Tuesday, 2.11.2021, between 18:00 and 18:45, via zoom, there was a meeting *with the members of the Ethics Commission*.

On Wednesday, 3.11.2021, between 9:00 and 9:45, via zoom, there was a meeting dealing with technical issues which I could not attend because of time zone differences and technical issues.

On Friday, 5.11.2021, between 16:00 and 18:00, via zoom, there was a meeting continuing to deal with technical issues.

Other meetings took place to organise various issues.

III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

**general description of domain analysis.*

Criterion A.1. The administrative, managerial institutional structures and the financial resources

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard A.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies (IOSUD) has implemented the effective functioning mechanisms provided for in the specific legislation on the organization of doctoral studies.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator A.1.1.1. *The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the Doctoral School of the respective university doctoral study domain:*

(a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;

These regulations are present and detailed in a 41-pages 2013 document, which clarifies various aspects of SCOSAAR. The document is available in Romanian only. The website http://www.geoinst.ro/phd_studies_GM.html provides public information of these regulations. According to the English transcript of the 26 October meeting, some of the provisions in the SCOSAAR Regulation do not apply, and there is a need to update the Regulations.

(b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct;

No information was found related to election processes, both for the director of the council of doctoral school as well as for the students' representative. English transcripts of the 26th October meeting were provided at a later stage, and it was possible to read that while there are some students on the Scientific



Council of SCOSAAR, this number is less than 25%, as legislations demand. Furthermore, there is no election methodology.

c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);

A 20-pages document explaining the methodologies *for organizing and conducting doctoral studies* was provided. The document is available in Romanian only.

d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;

A 3-pages document intitled “mecanisme de recunoaștere a calității de conducător de doctorat și de echivalare a doctoratului obținut în alte state și de recunoaștere a studiilor universitare” was provided, which explains these mechanisms. The document is available in Romanian only.

e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings;

According to the English transcript of the 26 October meeting there is no Council of the Doctoral School, and all admission issues, validation of doctoral supervisors in Academy are approved by the Academy’s Chair Bureau and the by the Academy’s Chair. Students’ requests for doctoral stage extension or presenting the thesis and the Curricula are approved by the Department Director and then by the Institute Director. The Bureau acts as a kind of council.

f) the contract for doctoral studies;

These regulations are present and detailed in a 41-pages 2013 document, which clarifies various aspects of SCOSAAR. The document is available in Romanian only.

g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.

These regulations are present and detailed in a 41-pages 2013 document, which clarifies various aspects of SCOSAAR. The document is available in Romanian only.

Recommendations:

Internal regulations of the Doctoral School need to be updated. A council needs to be established with clear election procedures. Election processes must be introduced and clarified and student representation must comply with legislation.

The indicator is fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.2. *The doctoral school’ Regulation includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards binding on the aspects specified in Article 17, paragraph (5) of the Government Decision No. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of Doctoral Studies with subsequent amendments and additions.*

While the document in appreciation is written in Romanian, I believe these issues are covered in the document intitled “Regulamentul de organizare a studiilor universitare de doctorat în cadrul Școlii de Studii Avansate a Academiei Române”

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled.



Standard A.1.2. The IOSUD has the logistical resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies' mission.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator A.1.2.1. *The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.*

In an English Transcript of the 26th October meeting, it is said that “students’ records exist at every institute, but not at SCOSAAR level. We are in process of implement one.” According to the self-assessment report, the Institute of Geography manages the physical files of doctoral students. Thus, there is no digital IT system but a physical format. While the student numbers are small, a digitalisation of the files would be beneficial. Additional information provided on the 10th November indicates that there are physical and electronic files for each doctoral student, and the general record is made in Excel. A customized computer program for IOSUD- School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy (SCOSAAR) is being purchased.

Recommendations:

The digitalisation of physical files and use of digital platform should be in place.

The indicator is fulfilled

Performance Indicator A.1.2.2. *The existence and use of an appropriate software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.*

According to the self-assessment report, it is possible, upon request, to use specific software to verify degree of research similarity. At the time of writing this report, the indicated website to conduct theses searches was not working: <https://www.sistemantiplagiat.ro/web/main/printReport.html>. Additional information provided includes a 2020 contract between the Academia and a company, to provide this service (Annex C1). It also includes a 1651 pages (!) report of the application of this software to one particular PhD thesis (Annex C2), showing similitude contents.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled.

Standard A.1.3. The IOSUD makes sure that financial resources are used optimally, and the revenues obtained from doctoral studies are supplemented through additional funding besides governmental funding.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator A.1.3.1. *Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development grant under implementation at the time of submission of the internal evaluation file, per doctoral study domain under evaluation, or existence of at least 2 research or institutional development / human resources grant for the doctoral study domain, obtained by doctoral thesis advisors operating in*



the evaluated domain within the past 5 years. The grants address relevant themes for the respective domain and, as a rule, are engaging doctoral students.

The self assessment report indicates that two PhD students are beneficiaries of a UEFISCDI research grant called The Holistics of the Impact of Renewable Energy Sources on the Environment and Climate (HORESEC). Additional information sent on the 10th November indicates that there four Research Projects won by PhD supervisors, and three others at the Institute level.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.2. *The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of the evaluation, who for at least six months receive additional funding sources besides government funding, through scholarships awarded by individual persons or by legal entities, or who are financially supported through research or institutional / human resources development grants is not less than 20%.*

The self assessment report states that 30% of PhD students are involved in UEFISCDI grants or research projects. From the three PhD students who participated in the meeting described above, two mentioned having a scholarship, and the third having access to funds that allowed to support some fieldwork. Naturally it is difficult to assess if these funds are enough to conduct independent research without the need to have a part-time job. It is critical that the best students are able to find financial support to conduct their research activities without having to spend time performing jobs non research related. Some of these issues are above the responsibilities of the Institute and lay at National Government and Ministry levels.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.3.² *At least 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.).*

The self assessment report states that 2 out of 10 students were funded: one during 9 months, the other during 24 months.

Recommendations:

It was decided at a meeting that this indicator is not applicable.

The indicator is fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled.

Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard A.2.1. *The IOSUD has a modern research infrastructure to support the conduct of doctoral studies' specific activities.*

² The indicators marked with an asterisk (*) hold a special status, referring exclusively to the evaluation of doctoral studies domains, as per Article 12 from the annex No.1 of the Order of the minister of education No. 3651/12.04.2021 approving the Methodology for evaluating university doctoral studies and the system of criteria, standards and performance indicators used in the evaluation. In case they are not met, the Agency extends a period of maximum 3 years to IOSUD to correct the respective deficiencies.



**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator A.2.1.1. *The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school enable the research activities in the evaluated domain to be carried out, in line with the assumed mission and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.). The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly.*

According to the self-assessment report several equipment has been acquired in the past five years. While annex 4.3 is not exhaustive, it lists some equipment, especially computers and software.

It is important to stress that an significant part of the doctoral students' activity is carried out in the field, and that the Institute also manages a field station.

Also important to mention that in the meeting with directors, an explanation was given, as to the sharing of equipment's within the Romanian Institute, that allows collaboration with other research centres within the Academia (composed of 67 institutes) and other stakeholders. This may compensation any lack of equipment in a particular given research.

Additional information sent on the 10th November includes helpful photographs of facilities and equipment.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard A.3.1. At the level of each domain there are sufficient qualified staff to ensure the conduct of doctoral study program.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator A.3.1.1. *Minimum three doctoral thesis advisors within that doctoral domain, and at least 50% of them (but no less than three) meet the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) in force at the time when the evaluation is carried out, which standards are required and mandatory for obtaining the enabling certification.*

According to the self-assessment report, only two doctoral thesis advisors, that is 40% of the total or 2 in 5, meet the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU). Importantly, additional information sent on the 10th November, which was already transmitted during the evaluation, two requests were submitted to SCOSAAR for the habilitation process by CSI Dr. Mihaela Sima and CS II Dr. Bianca Mitrică (Annex C3).

Recommendations:

Two more people with habilitation to supervise are needed urgently.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.



Performance Indicator *A.3.1.2. *At least 50% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.*

According to the self-assessment report, only 40% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD in the evaluation period, that is, 2 out of 5. The issue here is that three of these five supervisors are pensioners and associate researchers without an employment contract, as can be seen in annex 4.5. These three professors have not taken any new PhD students in the past years, which reduces significantly the prospect of growth in the doctoral school. As mentioned in the previous point, additional information sent on the 10th November indicates that to SCOSAAR for the habilitation process by CSI Dr. Mihaela Sima and CS II Dr. Bianca Mitrică (Annex C3).

Recommendations:

Urgency is required in the process of habilitation, in order to obtain 2 further PhD supervisors.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.3. *The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.*

The four courses indicated are taught by two teaching staff, who are professors and doctoral thesis advisors with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.4. *The percentage of doctoral thesis advisors who concomitantly coordinate more than 8 doctoral students, but no more than 12, who are themselves studying in doctoral programs³ does not exceed 20%.*

Recommendations:

According to the self-assessment report this criterion is met. Doctoral supervisors did not supervise more than eight PhD students at any one time, for the period under analysis. This is clear from annex 4.7.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard A.3.2. *The Doctoral advisors within the domain are carrying out a scientific activity visible at international level.*

**general description of the standard analysis.*

³ 3 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 159, paragraph (3), respectively 4 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 174, paragraph (3) of the Law of national education No.1/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions, with additional extension periods approved as per Article 39, paragraph (3) of the Code of doctoral studies approved by the GD No. 681/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions.



Performance Indicator A.3.2.1. *At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in the evaluated domain have at least 5 Web of Science- or ERIH-indexed publications in magazines of impact, or other achievements of relevant significance for that domain, including international-level contributions that indicate progress in scientific research - development - innovation for the evaluated domain. The aforementioned doctoral thesis advisors enjoy international awareness within the past five years, consisting of: membership on scientific boards of international publications and conferences; membership on boards of international professional associations; guests in conferences or expert groups working abroad, or membership on doctoral defense commissions at universities abroad or co-leading with universities abroad. For Arts and Sports and Physical Education Sciences, doctoral thesis advisors shall prove their international visibility within the past five years by their membership on the boards of professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or international competitions.*

According to the information available - self assessment report plus CVs - only two of the PhD supervisors currently working at the Institute of Geography meet the minimum standards of the National Council for the Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU), for the field of Geography, that is 40%, below the requested 50%. They have also an excellent track record in what international publications concerns, as can be seen in annex 4.8. Understandably, the three other PhD supervisors, due to the age (85, 87 and 90), have developed most of their career under different academic criteria and context. Nevertheless, their scientific outputs, knowledge and current participation in prestigious institutions, in journals' editorial committees, as indicated in annex 4.8, cannot be overlooked at any rate. It is therefore a very particular context that dictates this result of 40% and this should not be detrimental to this evaluation. That is the reason why it is indicated partially fulfilled.

Recommendations:

Urgency is required in the process of habilitation, in order to obtain 2 further PhD supervisors.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.2.2. *At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in a specific doctoral study domain continue to be active in their scientific field, and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation, which are required and mandatory for acquiring their enabling certificate, based on their scientific results within the past five years.*

All five PhD doctoral thesis advisors acquired at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation in the last five years, as can be see in annex 4.9.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

**general description of domain analysis.*



Criterion B.1. The number, quality and diversity of candidates enrolled for the admission contest

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard B.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies has the capacity to attract candidates from outside the higher education institution or a number of candidates exceeding the number of seats available.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator *B.1.1.1. *The ratio between the number of graduates of masters' programs of other higher education institutions, national or foreign, who have enrolled for the doctoral admission contest within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget, put out through contest within the doctoral domain is at least 0.2 or the ratio between the number of candidates within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget put out through contest within the doctoral studies domain is at least 1,2.*

Recommendations:

It was decided at a meeting that this indicator is not applicable.

The indicator is fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled.

Standard B.1.2 Candidates admitted to doctoral studies demonstrate academic, research and professional performance.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator *B.1.2.1. *Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.*

According to the self-assessment report, the selection of candidates involves several items and it is made according to the principles provided by SCOSAAR, which were already mentioned.

These items include:

- 1. the average grade obtained by candidates in their BA and MA degrees;*
- 2. the research experience*
- 3. the motivation to engage in doctoral studies.*
- 4.*

Admission also implies three different types of assessment, which are made on a specific colloquium, namely:

- 1. Oral assessment consisting of the presentation of the doctoral research project.*
- 2. Interview (an oral exam based on the bibliography related to the proposed topic, to which the examination of Geographical knowledge is added for candidates with a BA in a field other than Geography).*
- 3. Oral assessment of a foreign language.*

The examination of candidates, is performed by a commission created for this purpose.



It is important to refer that the methodology for admission, the proposed topics and the related specific bibliography is available both on the notice board of the Institute of Geography and on the website (www.geoinst.ro), approximately two months prior to the date of the doctoral admissions colloquium.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.1.2.2. *The expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission⁴ does not exceed 30%.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the self-assessment report, the overall ratio is 42%, as presented in annex 4.7, that is, above the threshold of 30%. Yet is the period of evaluation (2015/2016 to 2019/2020), the number of drop outs is zero.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard B.2.1. *The training program based on advanced university studies is appropriate to improve doctoral students' research skills and to strengthen ethical behavior in science.*

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator B.2.1.1. *The training program based on advanced academic studies includes at least 3 disciplines relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students; at least one of these disciplines is intended to study in-depth the research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.*

- *description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

- *analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself*

According to the self-assessment report, in the first year, during the first and second semesters, doctoral students go through a period of advanced training within the doctoral school. In the past five years the doctoral school has been running seven courses, namely

1. Ethics and Academic Integrity;
2. Global Environmental Changes,
3. Natural and Technological Hazards,
4. Geographic Information Systems,
5. Climate Risks
6. Relief Mapping
7. Geomorphological Processes.

⁴ 3 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 159, paragraph (3), respectively 4 years for the doctoral university studies with the duration stipulated at Article 174, paragraph (3) of the Law of national education No. 1/2011 with subsequent amendments and additions.

At the moment, four courses are on offer. The syllabus for the first four courses (the third one is entitled slightly different: Natural Hazards in the Anthropocene) was provided. There are at least 3 courses relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students.

Unfortunately the model used for the syllabus does not include the program and the bibliography which has to be consulted by students, and only the learning outcomes and the specific skills that should be acquired. It is nevertheless possible to say, with a certain degree of certitude, that at least one of these courses - Geographical Information Systems - includes in-depth research methodologies, or at least spatial data processing.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.2. *At least one discipline is dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property in scientific research or there are well-defined topics on these subjects within a discipline taught in the doctoral program.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

There is one course dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property, entitled Ethics and Academic Integrity. It is stated that "The Institute of Geography has organized examinations focused on "learning outcomes", but this formulation is vague.

From the syllabus of the course it is possible to view the learning outcomes and specific skills acquired (described below), but no program or bibliography is available.

1. Knowledge and acquisition of general ethical principles.
2. Ability to use responsibly the principles of ethics and academic integrity in subsequent professional activities.
3. Knowledge of the major implications of ethics in scientific research by deepening the criteria on copyright, plagiarism, conflict of interest, etc.
4. Ability to independently use the principles of ethics and academic integrity in new contexts.
5. The knowledge and skills acquired in this discipline will be the basis of future scientific and didactic research activities.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.3. *The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses „the learning outcomes”, specifying the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities⁵.*

⁵ Or by what the graduate should know, understand and to be able to do, according to the provisions of the Methodology of 17 March 2017 regarding inscription and registration of higher education qualifications in the National Register of



- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The self assessment report states that "The Institute of Geography has organized examinations focused on "learning outcomes", It is indeed possible to read the specific Learning outcomes and specific skills that should be acquired for each of the four courses syllabus provided.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.4. All along the duration of the doctoral training, doctoral students in the domain receive counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions, which is reflected in written guidance and feedback or regular meeting.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The self assessment report lists, in annex 4.10, the names of the counsellors of the steering committee. There are a number of 8 counsellors for 7 PhD students. It is not clear how often these committees meet. From the meetings with PhD students and also with graduates, as described above, it became clear that supervision was always available and students and graduate felt satisfied with the feedback and support from the Institute. Even those who studied part-time and were not present much throughout the year, referred that whenever they needed staff was supportive and never felt sidelined.

The self assessment report states that an annual workshop dedicated to young researchers takes place each December.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.5. For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance must not exceed 3:1.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the self-assessment report, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance is 4:2, which is below 3 to 1.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.



Criterion B.3. The results of doctoral studies and procedures for their evaluation.

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard B.3.1. Doctoral students capitalize on the research through presentations at scientific conferences, scientific publications, technological transfer, patents, products and service orders.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator B.3.1.1. *For the evaluated domain, the evaluation commission will be provided with at least one paper or some other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a doctor's title within the past 5 years. From this list, the members of the evaluation commission shall randomly select 5 such papers / relevant contributions per doctoral study domain for review. At least 3 selected papers must contain significant original contributions in the respective domain.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the self-assessment report, at least one article or other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a PhD in the past five years, was published. During the same period, six doctoral students have obtained their doctorate degree. They have all published at least one relevant article. An exhaustive list of published articles was provided. Additional information provided on the 10th November includes a 226-pages compilation of full papers, many in international journals, where significant original contributions are made (Annex C6). Furthermore, additional information provided on the 10th November indicates the figure of 7 doctoral students as having obtained the title of doctor, and include a 370-page compilation of papers. This information indicates the number of 33 articles, 3 of which indexed in ISI, and 23 BDI (Annex C7).

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *B.3.1.2. *The ratio between the number of presentations of doctoral students who completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years), including posters, exhibitions made at prestigious international events (organized in the country or abroad) and the number of doctoral students who have completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years) is at least 1.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the self-assessment report, the six graduates from the past five years presented a total of 55 scientific papers at national and international events (annex 4.12 even refers 57). Thus, the ratio between the number of presentations of doctoral students is 55:9, that is, 9 papers per graduate.



Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard B.3.2. The Doctoral School engages a significant number of external scientific specialists in the commissions for public defense of doctoral theses in the analyzed domain.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.1. The number of doctoral theses allocated to one specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD should not exceed two (2) in a year for the theses coordinated by the same doctoral thesis advisor.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the self-assessment report, no more than two theses were assigned to any one PhD committee member in the same year. The self-assessment report provides a list of the institutional origin of the PhD committee members: University of Bucharest (3), the Academy of Economic Studies (1), the University of Craiova (1), the National Meteorological Administration (1), the Oltenia Regional Meteorological Centre (1), the Ecological University (1), the Institute of Balneology, Physiotherapy and Medical Recovery (1), "Spiru Haret" University (1), the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Bucharest (1). Annex 4.13 list the details of these supervisions.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.2. The ratio between the doctoral theses allocated to one scientific specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized, and the number of doctoral theses presented in the same doctoral study domain in the doctoral school should not exceed 0.3, considering the past five years. Only those doctoral study domains in which minimum ten doctoral theses have been presented within the past five years should be analyzed.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The ratio does not exceed 0.3. But since the number of defended PhDs was 7, it is below the minimum of 10, and therefore should not be analysed.

Recommendations:

It was decided at a meeting that this indicator is not applicable.

The indicator is fulfilled/partially fulfilled/not fulfilled.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

**general description of domain analysis.*



Criterion C.1. Existence and periodic implementation of the internal quality assurance system

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard C.1.1. There are an institutional framework and procedures in place and relevant internal quality assurance policies, applied for monitoring the internal quality assurance.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator C.1.1.1. *The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the IOSUD, the following assessed criteria being mandatory:*

(a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors;

(b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity;

(c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized;

(d) the scientific activity of doctoral students;

(e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students;

(f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

The Institute of Geography has provided various documents which address the concerns of this indicator, namely, "Methodology for organizing and defending the doctoral thesis"; "Methodology regarding the situations of extension or cessation of the PhD Student quality", "Methodology regarding the granting and revocation of the quality of doctoral supervisor within SCOSAAR", "Mechanisms for recognizing the quality of doctoral supervisor", "Methodology for evaluating the doctoral supervisors" and "Methodology regarding co-supervised doctorates".

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *C.1.1.2. *Mechanisms are implemented during the stage of the doctoral study program to enable feedback from doctoral students allowing to identify their needs, as well as their overall level of satisfaction with the doctoral study program in order to ensure continuous improvement of the academic and administrative processes. Following the analysis of the results, there is evidence that an action plan was drafted and implemented.*

Additional information provided on the 10th November indicates that at the SCOSAAR level, a questionnaire will be applied to doctoral students, to assess the quality of doctoral studies (Annex C8).



As it has not been applied yet, no results are available. Interviewed PhD students and graduates felt they had always support from the institute and from the supervisors and other staff.

Recommendations:

Apply the questionnaire to PhD students, interpret the results. Discuss them and to make improvements accordingly.

The indicator is partially fulfilled.

Criterion C.2. Transparency of information and accessibility of learning resources

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard C.2.1. Information of interest to doctoral students, future candidates and public interest information is available for electronic format consultation.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator C.2.1.1. *The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as:*

- (a) the Doctoral School regulation;*
- (b) the admission regulation;*
- (c) the doctoral studies contract;*
- (d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis;*
- (e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;*
- (f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data;*
- (g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor);*
- (h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis;*
- (i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

In the website http://www.geoinst.ro/about_us.html it is possible to find the information as listed above.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard C.2.2. The IOSUD/The Doctoral School provides doctoral students with access to the resources needed for conducting doctoral studies.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

Performance Indicator C.2.2.1. *All doctoral students have free access to one platform providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis.*



- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

There is a limited number of IP addresses that allow free access to databases. It seems the number is sufficient for the needs. No indication of remote access was obtained. Additional information provided on the 10th November indicates that PhD students have the opportunity to access several databases and to online scientific documentation resources (Annex C9).

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.2. *Each doctoral student shall have access, upon request, to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the self-assessment report, it possible, upon request, to use specific software to verify degree of research similarity. At the time of writing this report, the indicated website to conduct these searches was not working: <https://www.sistemantiplagiat.ro/web/main/printReport.html>

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.3. *All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School, according to internal order procedures.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

According to the self-assessment report, the Institute of Geography has an important documentation centre in the domain of Geography. It has a significant and unique library, which includes the collections of the former Romanian Society of Geography, which was established in 1875, and the collections of various academics who donated their libraries. Significantly, it maintains numerous publications exchanges with many national and international institutions. The Institute of Geography has also a significant Archive, which contains field-survey manuscript reports, among other documents, and importantly, over 8,000 various-scale cartographic materials edited over the last two centuries, and more than 58,000 aerial survey photographs.

Furthermore, the Institute of Geography is responsible for the *Pătărlagele Geographical Research Station, established in 1969, and located in the Subcarpathians of Buzău*. This Station was raised to the status of *Natural Hazard Research Centre* in 2008. the Centre hosts the *International Summer School*



on natural hazards and sustainable development problem since 2001 and various other scientific events.

The Institute of Geography has also various equipment, such as computers, scanners, printers, xerox devices, a total station, Lidar, DGPS, among others. Annex 4.3 is not exhaustive, but lists some equipment, especially computers and software purchased in the past years.

The Institute of Geography has a 50-seat conference room, equipped with a computer and a projection screen.

Doctoral students have the right to use equipment, the reading room, the library and the other means provided by IOSUD / IGAR for professional training. All SCOSAAR doctoral students have access to the Library of the Romanian Academy, the holder of unique collections of books, periodicals and maps.

In the meetings with students and graduates, a general satisfaction with scientific research laboratories or other facilities was shown.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization

**general description of the criterion analysis.*

Standard C.3.1. There is a strategy in place and it is applied to enhance the internationalization of doctoral studies.

**general description of the standard analysis.*

A 3-pages document intitled "METODOLOGIE privind mobilitatea academică a studenților-doctoranzi" was provided, and details aspects of the internationalisation of doctoral students. The document is available in Romanian only. In the case of Geography, no information was found related to the specific existent international agreements (ERASMUS or others). Additional information provided on the 10th November lists the existing interacademic exchange agreements (Annex C10).

Performance Indicator *C.3.1.1. *IOSUD, for every evaluated domain, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study, aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution's documents and the evaluation visit itself



In the period 2010 to 2019, 21 mobilities were made by 7 students. In the last five years, only five mobilities were identified. They were all short mobilities (3-5 days), mostly to participate in conferences. No longer stays were identified, despite one of the PhD students interviewed being in a 3 months international mobility in Prague, at the time.

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.2. *In the evaluated doctoral study domain, support is granted, including financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.*

- description of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself

- analysis of the facts, the findings from the assessed institution’s documents and the evaluation visit itself

The self-assessment report does not provide information on support granted to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage. It does provide information on the invitation of leading experts to deliver courses or lectures for PhD students. Between 2016 and 2020 there were various seminars given to the doctoral school by international experts. To be more specific, 18 in 4 years, that is, a little over 4 each year (Annex 4.16).

Recommendations:

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.3. *The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).*

No information was found regarding this indicator.

Recommendations:

It is important that PhD students have the opportunity to internationalise their research, contacting international researcher at home or being able to spend time periods abroad.

The indicator is not fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

Additional information provided on the 10th November includes a complete SWOT analysis.

<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doctoral School is based on the Institute of Geography, which has a long history and tradition, and is one of the main institutions of fundamental and applied geographical research 	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need to establish more international mobility partnerships to provide more opportunities to PhD students for long-term stays;
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<p>in the country;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of numerous research projects; - Students and Graduates are satisfied with their studies; - Staff is motivated and has an excellent scientific track-record; - The existence of well equipped laboratories, including a field station; - Good relations between the various Institutes which allows for scientific cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulty in creating a sense of doctoral community with strong relations between students and staff, due to low number of PhD students; - Small number of PhD supervisors, which prevents the enlargement the topics under study, especially in the field of Human Geography.
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employers are very satisfied with the PhD graduates they employ; - Labour market needs PhD graduates; - Submission of applications for the habilitation procedure by 2 researchers from the Institute and their affiliation to SCOSAAR in the near future. 	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GIS and associated technology need continuous funding, so that laboratories do not become outdated; - Inadequate public investment in higher education delays the contracting of PhD supervisors; - Unattractive doctoral scholarships.

V. Overview of judgments awarded and of the recommendations

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
1.	PI	<p>A.1.1.1. The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the Doctoral School of the respective university doctoral study domain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School; b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct; c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies); d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad; e) functional management structures (Council 	Partially fulfilled	<p>Internal regulations of the Doctoral School need to be updated. A council needs to be established with clear election procedures. Election processes must be introduced and clarified and student representation must comply with legislation.</p>

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings; f) the contract for doctoral studies; g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.		
2.	PI	A.1.1.2. The doctoral school' Regulation includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards binding on the aspects specified in Article 17, paragraph (5) of the Government Decision No. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of Doctoral Studies with subsequent amendments and additions.	Fulfilled	None
3.	PI	A.1.2.1. The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.	Fulfilled	Digitalisation of physical files and use of a digital platform should be implemented.
4.	PI	A.1.2.2. The existence and use of an appropriate software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.	Fulfilled	None
5.	IP	A.1.3.1. Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development grant under implementation at the time of submission of the internal evaluation file, per doctoral study domain under evaluation, or existence of at least 2 research or institutional development / human resources grant for the doctoral study domain, obtained by doctoral thesis advisors operating in the evaluated domain within the past 5 years. The grants address relevant themes for the respective domain and, as a rule, are engaging doctoral students.	Fulfilled	None
6.	PI *	A.1.3.2. The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of the evaluation, who for at least six months receive additional funding sources besides government funding, through scholarships awarded by individual persons or by legal entities, or who are financially supported through research or institutional / human resources development grants is not less than 20%.	Fulfilled	None

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
7.	PI *	A.1.3.3. At least 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.).	Not Applicable.	
8.	CPI	A.2.1.1. The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school enable the research activities in the evaluated domain to be carried out, in line with the assumed mission and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.). The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly	Fulfilled	A more exhaustive list should be provided, including laboratory materials both in the Institute and in the Field Station. Provision of this information to the public through a specific platform should be observed.
9.	CPI	A.3.1.1. Minimum three doctoral thesis advisors within that doctoral domain, and at least 50% of them (but no less than three) meet the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) in force at the time when the evaluation is carried out, which standards are required and mandatory for obtaining the enabling certification.	Partially fulfilled	There are only two doctoral thesis advisors, that is 40% of the total or 2 in 5, meet the minimum standards. More people with habilitation to supervise are needed, either some may take habilitation or new hiring. A process of habilitation is in course to obtain 2 further PhD supervisors. Urgency is required in this process.
10.	PI *	A.3.1.2. At least 50% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.	Partially fulfilled	Only 40% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD in the evaluation period, that is, 2 out of 5 have full-employment contract. Three are pensioners and associate researchers without an employment contract, and have not taken any new PhD students in the past years, which reduces significantly the prospect of growth in the doctoral school. A renovation in the group is needed. A process of habilitation is in course to

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
				obtain 2 further PhD supervisors. Urgency is required in this process.
11.	PI	<p>A.3.1.3. The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.</p>	Fulfilled.	More people with habilitation to supervise are needed, and more courses should be offered and not only taught by two people only.
12.	PI *	<p>A.3.1.4. The percentage of doctoral thesis advisors who concomitantly coordinate more than 8 doctoral students, but no more than 12, who are themselves studying in doctoral programs does not exceed 20%.</p>	Fulfilled.	None
13.	CPI	<p>A.3.2.1. At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in the evaluated domain have at least 5 Web of Science- or ERIH-indexed publications in magazines of impact, or other achievements of relevant significance for that domain, including international-level contributions that indicate progress in scientific research - development - innovation for the evaluated domain. The aforementioned doctoral thesis advisors enjoy international awareness within the past five years, consisting of: membership on scientific boards of international publications and conferences; membership on boards of international professional associations; guests in conferences or expert groups working abroad, or membership on doctoral defense commissions at universities abroad or co-leading with universities abroad. For Arts and Sports and Physical Education Sciences, doctoral thesis advisors shall prove their international visibility within the past five years by their membership on the boards of professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or</p>	Partially fulfilled	2 out of 5, that is, 40%. A process of habilitation is in course to obtain 2 further PhD supervisors. Urgency is required in this process.

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		international competitions.		
14.	PI *	A.3.2.2. At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in a specific doctoral study domain continue to be active in their scientific field, and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation, which are required and mandatory for acquiring their enabling certificate, based on their scientific results within the past five years	Fulfilled.	None
15.	PI *	B.1.1.1. The ratio between the number of graduates of masters' programs of other higher education institutions, national or foreign, who have enrolled for the doctoral admission contest within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget, put out through contest within the doctoral domain is at least 0.2 or the ratio between the number of candidates within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget put out through contest within the doctoral studies domain is at least 1,2.	Not Applicable.	
16.	PI *	B.1.2.1. Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.	Fulfilled.	None
17.	PI	B.1.2.2. The expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission does not exceed 30%.	Fulfilled	None
18.	PI	B.2.1.1. The training program based on advanced academic studies includes at least 3 disciplines relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students; at least one of these disciplines is intended to study in-depth the research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.	Fulfilled.	Include in the courses' syllabus the program and the bibliography.

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
19.	PI	B.2.1.2. At least one discipline is dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property in scientific research or there are well-defined topics on these subjects within a discipline taught in the doctoral program.	Fulfilled.	None
20.	PI	B.2.1.3. The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses „the learning outcomes”, specifying the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities.	Fulfilled.	More details should be provided
21.	PI	B.2.1.4. All along the duration of the doctoral training, doctoral students in the domain receive counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions, which is reflected in written guidance and feedback or regular meeting.	Fulfilled.	It would be useful for the doctoral school that committees meet regularly and assess research progress. It is not clear and often these committees meet.
22.	CPI	B.2.1.5. For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance must not exceed 3:1.	Fulfilled.	None
23.	CPI	B.3.1.1. For the evaluated domain, the evaluation commission will be provided with at least one paper or some other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a doctor's title within the past 5 years. From this list, the members of the evaluation commission shall randomly select 5 such papers / relevant contributions per doctoral study domain for review. At least 3 selected papers must contain significant original contributions in the respective domain	Fulfilled.	None
24.	PI *	B.3.1.2. The ratio between the number of presentations of doctoral students who completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years), including posters, exhibitions made at prestigious international events (organized in the country or abroad) and the number of doctoral students who have completed their doctoral	Fulfilled.	None

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years) is at least 1.		
25.	PI *	B.3.2.1. The number of doctoral theses allocated to one specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD should not exceed two (2) in a year for the theses coordinated by the same doctoral thesis advisor.	Fulfilled.	None
26.	PI *	B.3.2.2. The ratio between the doctoral theses allocated to one scientific specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized, and the number of doctoral theses presented in the same doctoral study domain in the doctoral school should not exceed 0.3, considering the past five years. Only those doctoral study domains in which minimum ten doctoral theses have been presented within the past five years should be analyzed.	Not Applicable.	The ratio does not exceed 0.3, as the number of defended PhDs was 7, thus, below the minimum of 10.
27.	PI	C.1.1.1. The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the IOSUD, the following assessed criteria being mandatory: a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors; b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity; c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized; d) the scientific activity of doctoral students; e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students; f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.	Fulfilled.	None
28.	PI *	C.1.1.2. Mechanisms are implemented during the stage of the doctoral study program to enable feedback from doctoral students allowing to identify their needs, as well as their overall level of satisfaction with the doctoral	Partially Fulfilled.	Apply the questionnaire to PhD students, interpret the results. Discuss them and to make improvements accordingly.

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
		study program in order to ensure continuous improvement of the academic and administrative processes. Following the analysis of the results, there is evidence that an action plan was drafted and implemented.		
29.	CPI	<p>C.2.1.1. The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Doctoral School regulation; b) the admission regulation; c) the doctoral studies contract; d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis; e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies; f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data; g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor); h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis; i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation. 	Fulfilled.	None
30.	PI	C.2.2.1. All doctoral students have free access to one platform providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis.	Fulfilled	None
31.	PI	C.2.2.2. Each doctoral student shall have access, upon request, to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.	Fulfilled.	None
32.	PI	C.2.2.3. All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School, according to internal order procedures.	Fulfilled	None

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment	Recommendations
33.	PI *	C.3.1.1. IOSUD, for every evaluated domain, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study, aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.	Fulfilled	Longer international mobility periods should be encouraged. Available public information should be displayed regarding existing international mobility contracts (ERASMUS or others) and possibility of exchanges. In the Institute of Geography website there is a list of six “Inter-Academic Exchanges” with specific themes, but no more information.
34.	PI	C.3.1.2. In the evaluated doctoral study domain, support is granted, including financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.	Fulfilled	None
35.	PI	C.3.1.3. The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).	Not fulfilled	It is important that PhD students have the opportunity to internationalise their research, contacting international researchers at home or being able to spend time periods abroad.

The recommendations contained in the report shall be resumed in the indicators’ analysis. Other general recommendations may be made that do not fit within a particular indicator.

VERY IMPORTANT!!! – *Each identified weakness must be correlated with at least one recommendation to improve the situation!*

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

Several important issues raised during the evaluation are resumed and some general conclusions are drawn on the quality of the education provided within the doctoral study domain under review; the Experts’ Panel also presents general assessments about the institution. Other general recommendation may also be presented, which cannot be related to a specific indicator and have not been presented at point V.



A decision is proposed, together with the reasons for granting it (if the Experts' Panel members do not reach a consensus, each of them can propose and argue his/her own decision).

- The Romanian Academy, and its Institute of Geography is very reputable institution, and offers high standards of education and research;
- Internal regulations of the Doctoral School need to be updated. A council needs to be established with clear election procedures;
- The digitalisation of physical files and the use of digital platforms to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background needs to be implemented in *the School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy* (SCOSAAR);
- The courses syllabus need to be more detailed, providing the program and the bibliography, which needs to be updated and have a national/international mix;
- The Doctoral School needs to grow as it has few students and only two certified supervisors. More people with habilitation to supervise are needed, either some may take habilitation or new hiring. A process of habilitation is in course to obtain 2 further PhD supervisors. Urgency is required in this process;
- It is important that PhD students have the opportunity to internationalise their research, contacting international researcher at home or being able to spend long time periods abroad.

VII. Annexes

The following types of documents shall be attached:

- *The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit – MANDATORY.*
- *The survey questionnaire applied to doctoral students or academic staff in the doctoral study domain under review, the results - optional (e.g., in graphic form) and their interpretation - if applicable.*
- *Scanned documents – any document requested from the IOSUD during the evaluation visit and received, which is not found in the internal evaluation file received before the visit and referred to in the report.*
- *Pictures – if relevant issues are raised regarding the condition of the student residences, cafeterias, premises for teaching and learning activities, library etc.*
- *Screenshots/Print screens of the Doctoral School/IOSUD website proving specific claims in the report, accompanied by the date when they were accessed and saved.*
- *Any other documents relevant to the evaluation process referred to in the report.*