

WORK PROGRAM FOR THE CANDIDACY FOR DIRECTOR

Andrej Marušič Institute
University of Primorska (UP IAM)

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In the concluding term, UP IAM placed significant emphasis on the following:

- **Successful Financial Management**

Throughout the concluding term, UP IAM consistently ended its years with a significant surplus of revenues over expenses. These funds will be allocated toward advancing research activities at UP IAM, purchasing new research equipment, enhancing research capacities, as well as strengthening the human resources within research groups.

- **Successful Application and Implementation of Projects**

In collaboration with the future InnoRenew CoE department, we are currently implementing:

- § 6 research programs (including one newly obtained in 2025)

- § 23 ARIS research projects

- § 6 additional national projects

- § 21 international projects

- § Education and mentorship of 8 young researchers; in 2025, two more will begin their training

- § Numerous adapted ARIS projects – over the last 10 years, together with UP Famnit, we have secured 16 such projects on the basis of a B evaluation in ERC grant applications

- **Successful Collaboration with UP Famnit**

The collaboration is based on a Memorandum of Understanding outlining areas of mutual interest between UP Famnit and UP IAM across several levels:

- § A successful model of shared administrative offices operates across various domains, resulting in both financial savings and increased operational efficiency.

- § Both institutions share a commitment to expanding research and teaching capacities. A recent example is the acquisition of the Galeb building (first and second floors).

- § Joint efforts have been made in the accreditation of new study programs at UP Famnit.

- § Over the past eight years, researchers from both institutions have received a total of eight Zois Awards and recognitions. Each year, the institutions are honored with the Prometheus Award for excellence in science communication, along with various awards and recognitions from the University of Primorska.

- **Successful Integration of the InnoRenew CoE Institute into UP IAM**

The InnoRenew CoE research institute was established in 2017 under the Teaming project Renewable materials and healthy environments research and innovation centre of excellence, which concluded successfully in 2023. The University of Primorska served as the projects lead partner, with its core activities centered at UP IAM. In 2024, the mentoring institution WKI withdrew from co-ownership of the InnoRenew CoE institute. Based upon the initiative of the University of Primorska and the expressed interest of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of

Slovenia, the representatives of the remaining co-founders agreed to support the integration of the InnoRenew CoE Institute into the University of Primorska, specifically as a department within UP IAM. Through this integration, UP IAM will contribute to the University's first ERC project, its first EIC Pathfinder project, two MSCA projects, and several additional Horizon Europe projects.

In addition to ensuring continuity in the abovementioned areas, the key priorities in the upcoming term will be:

✦ **Development of Departments and Centres at UP IAM**

§ As of August 2025, the InnoRenew CoE institute is expected to become a formal department within UP IAM. This integration will initiate a period of consolidation and the creation of new synergies between departments, previously unattainable at this scale. The merger will also enable the newly formed **InnoRenew CoE** department to participate in a broader range of funding calls that were previously inaccessible.

This development is anticipated to foster stronger collaboration with other departments, particularly the **Department of Technology** and part of the **Department for Health Studies**, thereby strengthening research groups through joint applications for national and international projects. Moreover, the diverse research activities within the InnoRenew CoE department will enhance collaboration with other University of Primorska members by providing expanded opportunities for student research and practical training across various study programs in our laboratories.

§ The **Department of Mathematics** is currently the department with the highest number of research projects and scientific publications at UP IAM. We are committed to maintaining this level of productivity and the number of project applications moving forward. The Department of Mathematics collaborates closely with the **Department of Information Sciences and Technologies** through numerous interdisciplinary initiatives. The latter has recently made significant progress, substantially increasing the number of scientific publications, and expanding its scope of activities. We remain fully committed to supporting this continued growth.

§ The **Slovene Centre for Suicide Research** has achieved a significant breakthrough in recent years, increasing the number of publications and acquired projects, thereby greatly enhancing its visibility and impact. We will support the continued promotion of the centre both nationally and internationally.

§ This year marks the 10th anniversary of the **Centre for Application Design and Development**. We will continue to support its ongoing efforts to develop in-house IT solutions for the University of Primorska.

✦ **Research at UP IAM**

The continuous improvement of research conditions – both in terms of capacity and research equipment – will enable employees to achieve numerous high-quality scientific publications, secure new research projects, and actively participate in prominent international scientific conferences. Special emphasis will be placed on supporting all researchers in the application and implementation of both national and international projects. Although UP IAM will acquire its first ERC project through the integration of InnoRenew CoE, a key strategic objective, particularly in cooperation with UP Famnit, remains the acquisition of additional ERC projects at the University of Primorska.

✦ **Research Infrastructure**

§ In 2025, the University of Primorska – with financial contributions from UP IAM and UP Famnit – acquired co-ownership of the X-ray Narrow-Angle Scattering Beamline at the Elettra

Synchrotron in Trieste. The beamline is scheduled to be constructed by 2027 and will enable groundbreaking research for our colleagues.

§ Through the integration of the InnoRenew CoE department, UP IAM will acquire research infrastructure and equipment valued at nearly 23 million euros. In the context of interdisciplinary collaboration across departments all infrastructure and equipment will be made available to all our colleagues.

§ UP IAM will allocate a substantial part of its revenue surpluses from previous years toward the modernization and acquisition of new research infrastructure and equipment.

✂ **Administrative Offices at UP IAM**

We will continue to follow the model of joint administrative offices shared between UP IAM and UP Famnit, which we are continuously improving by merging previously separate units. With the integration of InnoRenew CoE into UP IAM, certain offices will be reinforced with additional personnel, creating opportunities to reassess and optimize the organizational structure. In line with the University of Primorska's strategy, we will encourage administrative staff to participate in mobility programs and to improve their skills through lifelong learning initiatives.

✂ **Collaboration with the Industry**

We will encourage stronger collaboration with the industry by exploring models that further motivate employee engagement, such as participation in various fairs, professional events, facilitating visits to and from UP IAM's industry partners in Slovenia and abroad. An additional motivating factor will be the opportunity for staff to benefit from the allocation of surplus funds generated through such projects. By promoting interdepartmental cooperation and leveraging the newly acquired infrastructure, we believe that market-generated revenue will increase significantly in the coming years.

✂ **Other**

§ We will continue to actively participate in organizing prominent international conferences and summer schools.

§ We remain committed to fostering career development opportunities for early-career researchers.

§ Following the recent acquisition of ownership of the entire Galeb building, partial renovations are planned in the near future. These improvements will ensure more comfortable and functional working conditions for all users.

§ Starting in 2026, all researchers employed at the University of Primorska for at least 50% will be eligible to access so-called IRD funds. The goal of this initiative is to support researchers who currently lack project-based funding, helping them strengthen their potential for securing such resources (e.g., by attending conferences, participating in research visits, etc.).

§ Researchers who meet the eligibility criteria will have the opportunity to apply for the sabbatical year. This will facilitate extended research visits at prestigious international institutions, fostering new knowledge, and the development of valuable research collaboration for UP.

§ In addition to the integration of a new research group in 2025, UP IAM will continue to monitor interest in forming new (initially internal) research groups and support their development.

Koper, 10. 7. 2025

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