



**Programme
Johanes Amos Comenius**

EXCELLENT RESEARCH

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In Prague on:	14/07/2022
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INTRODUCTION

Czech Republic - The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as the Managing Authority of the Programme Johannes Amos Comenius announces the call for grant applications of individual projects from the Programme Johannes Amos Comenius.

1. ANNOTATION OF THE CALL

The call is aimed at supporting the increase of the number of excellent R&D results in the Czech Republic, the development and support of excellent research teams with cutting-edge equipment in all aspects. The call focuses on supporting the development of international cooperation of Czech research organizations with top teams from around the world. The call aims to develop the competitiveness of specific teams, entire research organizations and, consequently, the whole Czech research and development. The call will be aimed at supporting projects that are focused on areas defined as priorities in the National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation of the Czech Republic for 2021-2027 (hereinafter referred to as „National RIS3 Strategy“) with a preference for interdisciplinary projects.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF THE CALL

Policy objective	1
Priority	1 - Research and Development
Specific objective	1.1 Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and deploying advanced technologies
Call number	02_22_008
Call type	Round call
Type of operations/projects supported	Individual project
Evaluation model	Single round

3. SCHEDULE

Date of publication of the call notice on the website	01/07/2022
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Date of announcement of the call, i.e. date of accessibility of the grant application in IS KP21+	14/07/2022
Date of opening the submission of grant applications	14/07/2022
Final deadline for submitting the grant applications	16/01/2023, 14:00:00
Minimum/Maximum duration of the project to be planned by the applicant	Minimum duration: 36 months Maximum duration: 72 months
Final date for completion of the physical implementation of the project	30/06/2028
Time eligibility of the expenditures	Expenditures are eligible from the date of announcement of the call.

4. SUBSTANTIVE FOCUS

The call focuses on supporting research preferably of an interdisciplinary nature with a high potential to produce top and future-applicable research results, research based on an excellent research team and a development of international cooperation among research organizations. The implementation of the activities supported by the call will contribute to the increase of the international involvement of the Czech research organizations, intensification of the production of excellent (and potentially applicable) research results and to the development of the competitiveness of the Czech Republic.

The support will be directed on oriented/applicable research projects that have the potential to produce applicable R&D results in a long- term horizon. Projects of an interdisciplinary nature will be given an advantage in the evaluation process.

4.1. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Details on the activities listed below are given in Chapter 5.7 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries - Specific Part.

COMPULSORY ACTIVITIES:

Activity 1. Project management

Activity 2. Implementation of top-level research projects that achieve international excellence through quality and originality

Activity 3. Capacity development of research teams

Activity 4. Development of internationalisation

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Activity 5. Modernization and upgrade of infrastructure, purchase of infrastructure necessary for the implementation of research intents

Activity 6. Mobilities of the expert team

4.2. EXCLUDED ACTIVITIES

- New constructions, real estate purchases;
- activities associated with construction activities that would not preserve the external floor plans, horizontal and vertical dimensions of the existing building;
- activities related to the refinement and marketing of the product, outsourcing of the supported project activities (the implementation of the entire supported activity cannot be outsourced to another entity), carrying out contract research or providing research services by the beneficiary or partner within the project activities.

4.3. TARGET GROUP

- Research organizations staff;
- students of doctoral study programmes at higher educational institutions (hereinafter as “HEIs”).

4.4. INDICATORS

An overview of relevant indicators, including their definition and reporting method, is given in the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries - Specific Part, Chapter 7.8.

4.5. SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the project is set at 5 years; further information and conditions are given in Chapter 7.10 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries - Specific Part.

5. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND CONDITIONS OF PARTNERSHIP

5.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

An eligible applicant must belong to one of the following categories and at the same time meet all the conditions set out in Chapter 5.3 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries - Specific Part:

Entities meeting the definition of a research and knowledge dissemination organization according to the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01):

- state organizational units and contributory organizations of the state organizational units;
- public research institutions;
- public HEIs;
- private entities carrying out publicly beneficial activities (e.g. public benefit corporation – Czech „o.p.s.“, institute, association, foundation);
- other entities - legal entities (e.g. limited liability company – Czech „s.r.o.“, joint stock company - Czech „a.s.“).

LIMITATIONS OF THE CALL:

The number of grant applications submitted by one applicant (understood as a single ID number of the organization – Czech „IČO“) to the call is limited according to the amount of the entitlement to institutional support for the development of research organizations according to the evaluation of their results (hereinafter as „ISD-RO“) for the year 2021¹, as follows:

Group	ISD-RO for 2021	Maximum number of grant applications per applicant (ID number)
1	CZK 2,000,000,000 (inclusive) and more	4
2	CZK 500,000,000 CZK (inclusive) – 1,999,999,999	3
3	CZK 200,000,000 CZK (inclusive) – 499,999,999	2
4	CZK 45,000,000 CZK (inclusive) – 199,999,999	1
5	CZK less than 45,000,000	0

The maximum number of submitted grant applications shall be increased by one application beyond the above shown scheme in case of university-type HEIs with the amount of support for the development of RO higher than CZK 500 mil.

The date and time of submission of the grant application in IS KP21+² decide. Grant applications submitted by one applicant (one ID number) beyond the given limit will be excluded from the evaluation process and the provider of support will terminate the evaluation procedure.

¹ See the document Limitation of the number of applications for the Excellent Research Call, available in Czech language at www.opjak.cz

² For example, in Group 3, each third and subsequent grant application will be excluded from the evaluation process whereas the order of the date and time of submission of the application in IS KP21+ decide.

5.2. PARTNERSHIPS

Applicants/beneficiaries may implement the project independently or in cooperation with a partner(s).

An eligible partner must belong to one of the following categories and at the same time meet all the conditions set out in Chapter 5.3 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries - Specific Part. The rules and conditions of the partnership are set out in Chapter 5.4 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part.

Eligible partners:

Entities meeting the definition of a research and knowledge dissemination organization according to the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01):

- state organizational units and contributory organizations of the state organizational units;
- public research institutions;
- public HEIs;
- private entities carrying out publicly beneficial activities;
- other entities - legal entities (e.g. limited liability company – Czech „s.r.o.“, joint stock company - Czech „a.s.“).

6. TERRITORIAL FOCUS - ELIGIBLE PLACE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The conditions are set out in Chapter 5.5 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries - Specific Part.

The eligible place of implementation is the territory of the Czech Republic, Activity 6 can be implemented outside the territory of the Czech Republic, both within the EU and outside the EU territory.

7. FORM OF SUPPORT

Allocation of the call	CZK 8,000,000,000
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<p>Structure in terms of funding sources</p>	<p>The ratio of the sources of project financing is based on the Co-financing Rules for the programming period 2021-2027³ and the pro rata ratio specified in chapter 7.3 of the call.</p> <p>The ratio of project funding sources for the beneficiary, which is a state organizational unit or a contributory organization of a state organizational unit: EU: 69.70%, state budget: 30.30%, own share 0,00 %.</p> <p>The ratio of project funding sources for all other beneficiaries: EU 69.70%, state budget 25.30%, own share 5.00%.</p> <p>The indicative distribution of the call allocation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU share: CZK 5,576,000,000, - SR share: CZK 2,028,000,000. -own share: 396 000 000 CZK.
<p>Minimum amount of total eligible project expenditure</p>	<p>CZK 50,000,000</p>
<p>Maximum amount of total eligible project expenditure</p>	<p>CZK 500,000,000</p>
<p>Fund</p>	<p>European Regional Development Fund</p>
<p>Method of financing</p>	<p>Ex-post / ex-ante financing</p>
<p>Amount of the 1st advance payment</p>	<p>For ex-ante funded projects: the amount of the 1st advance payment shall be determined on a project-by-project basis, based on the amounts of planned billing for the first two reporting periods indicated in the financial plan. However, the amount of the 1st advance payment may amount to a maximum of 30 % of the total eligible project expenditure.</p>

³ Co-financing rules for the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Border and Visa Policy for the programming period 2021-2027.

<p>Budget limits</p>	<p>Budget Chapter Direct Expenditure – Investment Expenditure - This budget chapter is limited by a maximum of 50% of the total eligible project expenditure;</p> <p>Budget Chapter Buildings and Constructions - this budget chapter is limited by a maximum of 20% of the total eligible project expenditure;</p> <p>Budget chapter Purchase of services - this budget chapter is limited by a maximum of 49% of the total eligible project expenditure;</p> <p>Eligible expenditure for the activity „Mobility of the Expert Team“ must not exceed 15% of the total eligible project expenditure.</p>
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7.1. SUBSTANTIVE ELIGIBILITY

The support cannot be granted if the project has been physically completed or fully implemented before the applicant submits the grant application, regardless of whether the applicant has made all related payments or not.

The substantive eligibility of expenditure is determined by the definition of eligible activities and objectives of the call, for more details see chapter 4.1 of the call and chapter 5.7 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part. The eligibility conditions for expenditure are further regulated in chapter 8 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part.

7.2. METHOD OF REPORTING TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

The total eligible expenditure will be reported partly in a full extent and partly under the simplified reporting system, i.e. using lump sums, unit costs and flat rate. Further information is provided in Chapters 5.9.1, 8.1 and 8.2 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part.

7.3. AID INTENSITY AND CO-FINANCING CONDITIONS

Co-financing is required between 0% and 5% according to the conditions set out in Chapter 5.10.5 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part.

The pro rata ratio (the ratio of distribution of funds between the categories of P JAC regions) is 40%

for less developed regions, 39% for transition regions and for 21% more developed region.

7.4. STATE AID CONDITIONS

The provided funds do not constitute state aid as referred in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The support will be granted for the implementation of non-economic activities as defined in paragraph 19 of the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01); any economic use must be only ancillary in accordance with paragraph 20 of the Framework.

For more information on the conditions of state aid, see Chapter 7.6 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part.

8. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GRANT APPLICATION

The grant application⁴ is submitted through the IS KP21+ at <https://iskp21.mssf.cz>. The grant application must be submitted in the Czech language, the English version of the application, including selected parts of the application will be documented in the form of an annex, see the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – Specific Part, Chapter 5.2.

The grant application must be provided with electronic signature of the applicant's governing body or by a person authorised to sign under a power of attorney.

An overview of the annexes to the grant application is given in the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – Specific Part, Chapter 13, annex 7. The current versions of the templates of the annexes to the grant application are always available in IS KP21+, selected annexes can be downloaded on the programme website in the section of the announced call (<https://opjak.cz>). The Managing Authority is entitled to update the templates of the annexes to the grant application during the time the call is open; an update of the templates of the annexes to the grant application is not an amendment to the call.

8.1. CONSULTATION ON THE PREPARATION OF THE GRANT APPLICATION

Before submitting a grant application, applicants may consult the questions about the call with representatives of the Managing Authority.

- The Managing Authority will only provide email consultations via the following email: spickovyvzkum@msmt.cz.

⁴ A grant application means an application for providing a financial support due to Section 14(3) based on a call pursuant to Section 14j of Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budget Rules and on Amendments to Certain Related Acts (Budget Rules), as amended, except for eligible applicants –state organizational units.

- **Email enquiries** will be dealt with on an ongoing basis, usually within 5 working days from receiving the email.
- **In-person/online consultations will only** take place on a date and time arranged in advance at the above email address. Specific questions concerning the subject-matters of the call (i.e. definition of eligible activities, setting of indicators, etc.) will be an exclusive subject of the in-person consultations.
- A check on the correctness of completion of the grant application is not the subject of the consultation.
- The assessment of the substantive content of the project in terms of its quality and the effectiveness, economy and efficiency of the planned expenditure is an exclusive subject of the substantive evaluation process and will not be handled by the Managing Authority during the consultations.
- Questions must be sent no later than 5 working days before the consultation to the e-mail address **spickovyvyzkum@msmt.cz**.
- If the applicant fails to deliver the list of questions within the required deadline, it's upon the Managing Authority to determine whether the consultation will take place or not. Depending on the nature/focus of the applicant's questions, the Managing Authority will decide whether an in-person consultation is necessary.
- **The dates of the seminars for applicants** will be published on the programme website <https://opjak.cz/seminare/>.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CALL

The call and the related documentation may be amended, especially in cases forced by amendments in the legislation or the methodological environment.

Amendments to the call will be published on the P JAC website in the section of the announced call. Applicants who already have started to fill in a grant application in IS KP21+ will also be informed about the publication of the amendment to the call for proposals via an internal dispatch.

The rules for amending the call are set out in Chapter 5.1 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General Part.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

10.1. JUSTIFICATION FOR TARGETING THE CALL

- Persistent low openness and low internationalisation of the Czech research system, lower level of involvement in international cooperation, which results in inbreeding and lower performance of

the whole system. In the Czech Republic, in order to improve the quality of research, it is necessary to strengthen the approachability of the research environment by linking it to the international research community through promoting international cooperation in research and development and encouraging two-way international mobility.

- Despite significant development in the past period and improvements in both productivity and quality of research, the domestic research system remains relatively closed to international collaboration.
- Research teams from the Czech Republic are still insufficiently involved in international research programmes.
- Low number (in international comparison) of top-level workplaces and teams carrying out excellent research and development with the potential for applying the results in innovative products and services with high added value.
- The quotation accuracy in publications developed by Czech research organizations, and thus their quality, is below the world average in most areas.
- The infrastructure for research and development does not fully meet the current needs. The Czech Republic's ambition to become one of the countries with the highest scientific research performance in Europe can only be achieved if the infrastructure for excellent research and research applicable in practice is up to the demanding requirements for the up-to-date technology.

Links to sources of information:

- National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization of the Czech Republic 2021-2027. Prague: Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2021⁵ ;
- Analysis of the state of research, development and innovation in the Czech Republic and their comparison with foreign countries in 2020⁶ ;
- National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic 2021+⁷ ;
- Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019-2030. Prague: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic - Council for Research, Development and Innovation, 2019⁸.

10.2. RELATION TO STRATEGIES

The call follows the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic 2021+⁹ and the National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation of the Czech Republic 2021 - 2027¹⁰ (National RIS3 Strategy): Strategic Objective B – Improving the quality of public research and Strategic Objective C - Increasing the availability of skilled people for research, development and innovation.

⁵ <https://www.mpo.cz/cz/podnikani/ris3-strategie/>

⁶ <https://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=967605>

⁷ <https://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=913172>

⁸ <https://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=866015>

⁹ <https://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=913172>

¹⁰ <https://www.mpo.cz/assets/cz/podnikani/ris3-strategie/dokumenty/2022/1/RIS3-Strategie- A RIS3-Strategie .pdf>

Consistency of the call with the National RIS3 Strategy:

The call contributes to the specific objective B.1 - Improving the quality and societal relevance of public research and specific objective C.3 - Increasing the potential and motivation of researchers in research organizations.

Project compliance with the National RIS3 Strategy:

All applications supported by this call are following Specific Objective B.1 and Specific Objective C.3 of the National RIS3 Strategy in a ratio of 70:30.

Each grant application must comply with at least one domain of research and innovation specialisation defined in Annex 1 (version 3) of the National RIS3 Strategy, which is Annex 4 of the call. Specifically: the grant application must be focused on research/development in at least one of the Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) and Emerging Technologies and/or research/development/innovation in at least one of the Strategic R&D&I Topics in the Application Sectors and/or research/development/innovation in at least one of the Social Sciences and Humanities Topics defined for the domain of specialisation and/or research/development/innovation in the RIS3 missions.

Grant applications that do not demonstrate compliance with at least one of the RIS3 National Strategy's research and innovation specialisation domains or RIS3 missions will not be supported. In addition, if compliance with only one R&D&I/KETs/Social Sciences and Humanities strategic topic/mission objective is demonstrated and at the same time the project contributes only minimally to this topic/objective, the application will not be supported.

10.3. INFORMATION ON FOLLOW-UP/ADDITIONAL CALLS

It is not relevant for this call.

11. ANNEXES TO THE CALL

- Annex 1 Evaluation criteria
- Annex 2 Results of the survey of Information system on average earnings (in Czech "ISPV") for wages and salaries
- Annex 3 Summary of correction coefficient values
- Annex 4 Cards of thematic areas

12. OTHER DOCUMENTS TO THE CALL

Applicants and beneficiaries are bound by the additional conditions set out in the following documentation:

- Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General Part are published at the following link:
<https://opjak.cz/dokumenty/>

- Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – Specific Part are published at the following link:
<https://opjak.cz/vyzvy/>

A model legal act on the grant award/transfer is published on the call website here:
<https://opjak.cz/dokumenty/>

13. OTHER PROVISIONS

During the evaluation process of a grant application, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports applies the procedures according to the Section §14k(1), (3) and (4) and §14p of the Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budget Rules and on Amendments to Certain Related Acts (Budget Rules), as amended. Detailed information is provided in the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – General and Specific Part:

- the procedures for elimination of defects in the grant application are set out in Chapter 5.14;
- the procedures for submitting other documents necessary for the issuance of a legal act on grant award/transfer are set out in Chapter 6.4;
- the procedures for modifying the grant application, i.e. the possibility of formulating objections and recommendations, are set out in chapters 5.14 and 6.3;
 - the project evaluation and selection process are described in Chapter 5.14 of the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries – Specific Part;
 - procedures for using the projects on waiting list are given in Chapter 2 and 5.14.

The support is provided in the form of a grant or in the form of funds included in the state budget for state organizational units. The final amount of support is determined by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Support. The Managing Authority reserves the right to suspend the call.

In case of termination of the grant applicant before the date of the legal act on the grant award, the provider shall conduct the procedure for the grant award with a legal successor in accordance with Section 14l of Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgetary Rules and on Amendments to Certain Related Acts (Budgetary Rules), as amended, if the legal successor meets the conditions for an eligible applicant set out in this call for proposals. In all other cases, the provider shall terminate the procedure.

The amount of the charges for the breach of budgetary discipline for non-compliance with the set conditions will be specified in the legal act on the grant award/transfer.