



Technology Agency
of the Czech Republic

Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and its programmes

ESTABLISHMENT AND LAUNCH OF TA CR ACTIVITIES

The establishment of the Technology Agency CR (hereinafter referred to as TA CR) was one of the important steps for implementing the reforms of the system of research, development and innovation in the Czech Republic approved by the Government. The main objectives were to simplify and streamline the system of targeted support of applied research and experimental development in the Czech Republic, to ensure sufficient competition in the selection of supported research and development projects and to reduce the administrative burden on the support providers as well as the beneficiaries. The creation of TA CR was legally secured by an amendment to Act No. 130/2002 Coll. which was approved by Act No. 110/2009 Coll. of the 27th of March 2009 with effect from the 1st of July 2009.

The activity of TA CR was initiated by the Government appointing the Presidency of TA CR on the 12th of October 2009. Immediately after the Office of the TACR was established, whose main role is to provide an administrative and organizational agenda associated with the fulfilment of tasks set by law.

Other bodies of TA CR are a twelve-member Research Council, which is the conceptual body of TA CR, and the control board, a ten-member group of experts appointed in March 2011.

BASIC ROLE OF TA CR

In accordance with the terms of Act No. 130/2002 Coll. the main role of TA CR is to prepare and implement programmes of applied research, experimental development and innovation and thereby contribute to increasing competitiveness and economic growth in the Czech Republic. Other important tasks of TA CR according to the Act include promoting cooperation between research organizations and the private sector. The means to fulfil these tasks is in particular the effective use of public funds to support research, development and innovation.



TA CR PROGRAMMES

Programme for the support of applied research and experimental development ALFA



The first programme prepared by TA CR in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of the Environment is the Programme to support applied research and experimental development ALFA.

The programme places emphasis on strengthening public-private partnerships in research, development and innovation and research, development and innovation projects requiring rigorous co-financing from private sources.

Thematically, the programme supports projects of applied research and experimental development in the areas of advanced technologies, the environment, energy and transport. These areas are reflected in the structure of the programme which is divided into three sub-programmes:

Sub-programmes and their specific objectives

PP1: Advanced technologies, materials and systems

- Reduce material and energy demands whilst increasing the utility properties of products through the use of advanced technologies;
- Improve the utility properties of materials;
- Increase safety, speed, capacity and quality of systems for the transmission of information.

PP2: Energy resources and environmental creation and protection

- Reduce anthropogenic impacts on the environment;
- Reduce and prevent the negative effects of natural disasters;
- Increase the reliability and security of supply from renewable sources;
- Improve the efficiency of the energy use of fuels;
- Streamline and increase the capacity of the transmission of energy.

PP3: Sustainable development of transport

- Reduce the negative impacts of transport and infrastructure projects on the environment;
- Increase the safety of vehicles and reducing accidents;
- Increase the safety and lifespan of infrastructure;
- Increase the flow of traffic using transport telematics.

Characteristics of the programme

Duration	2011 to 2016
Tenders announced in years	2010, 2011 and 2012
Total expected budget	11,6 billion CZK
of which from the state budget	7,5 billion CZK (65 %)
Length of projects	2 to 6 years
Recipients of support	enterprises, research organizations

Focus of the programme

The programme is focussed on supporting projects of applied research and experimental development, the results of which have high potential for application in new products, production processes and services.

Aims of the programme

- The main aim of the programme is to significantly increase the quantity and quality of new knowledge in applied research and experimental development in the areas of advanced technologies, materials and systems, energy resources, protection and creation of the environment, and sustainable development of transport, which will be applicable in the form of innovation;
- The programme also aims to highlight the need for interdisciplinary of topics and a comprehensive approach to performing the projects;
- The programme seeks to increase the intensity and effectiveness of cooperation in research and development between different subjects, and especially between enterprises and research organizations.

Types of results

- patents;
- pilot operation, proven technology;
- results with legal protection - utility models, industrial designs;

- technically realized results - prototypes, functional samples;
- certified methodologies and procedures, and maps with expert content;
- software.

Evaluation process of project proposals

The Office of the TA CR ensures a minimum of two peer reviews and one reporter's evaluation. The council of the relevant sub-programme consisting of project reporters evaluates the projects according to the rules and criteria of TA CR. This evaluation is submitted by the Office of the TA CR is submitted to the Programme Council. The Programme Council objectively and dispassionately assesses the project proposals and draws up a ranking of projects with regard to the opinions of the Sub-programme Council (SPC). This ranking is then submitted to the Presidency of the TA CR, which sets a definitive ranking of the projects.

The first tender in the research, development and innovation programme ALFA was announced on the 24th of March 2010. Of the 657 project proposals received for the individual sub-programmes a total of 256 projects were selected for support. The second round of tenders was announced in July 2011. A total of 832 project proposals were received and 273 projects were selected for support. Third tender was announced in June 2012. A total of 995 project proposals were received and 165 projects were selected for support.



Programme of public procurement in research, experimental development and innovation for the needs of public administration bodies BETA



The BETA programme is aimed at promoting research, development and innovation for the needs of the government, especially administrative offices that are not providers of support for research, development and innovation. The objectives of the programme are to enhance current practices, methodologies, regulatory mechanisms, supervision activities, and to improve services, information and control products and processes that will lead to greater innovation, efficiency and effective allocation of public funds. The programme is announced for the period 2012-2016 with the allocated amount of 640 million CZK.

The first round of tenders in the BETA programme was launched by the TA CR on the 10th of February 2011. By the 22nd of May 2012 there were a total of 33 tenders announced and in 10 cases the contracting authority (TA CR) decided to choose the best offer.

Characteristics of the programme

Duration	2012 to 2016
Identification of research needs	yearly until 2015 inclusive
Total expected budget	640 mil. CZK
of which from the state budget	640 mil. CZK (100 %)
Length of projects	1 to 3 years
Recipients of support	enterprises, research organizations
Max. level of support /project	100 % of total eligible costs

Focus of the programme

- The programme is aimed at promoting research, development and innovation for the needs of the following governmental bodies:
 - Czech Mining Authority;
 - Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre;

- Ministry of Transport;
 - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs;
 - Ministry for Regional Development;
 - Ministry of Interior;
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
 - Ministry of the Environment;
 - The State Office for Nuclear Safety.
- The programme is implemented through individual tenders in research and development based on the requirements of the relevant governmental bodies.

Aims of the programme

- The programme aims to enhance current practices, methodologies, regulatory mechanisms, supervisory activities, as well as to gain new knowledge, skills, services, information and control products and procedures intended for use by the state administration and will lead to greater innovation and also to an increase in the efficiency of these activities.
- Specific objectives are broken down according to the research needs of the relevant governmental bodies. The research needs are met through specific projects implemented by individual public contracts in research and development.

Types of results

- results reflected in legislation and standards;
- results reflected in directives and regulations of a non-legislative nature which are binding within the competence of the relevant provider;
- results reflected in the approved strategic and conceptual documents of state or public administration bodies;
- results with legal protection - utility models, industrial designs;
- technically realized results - prototypes, functional samples;
- certified methodologies, specialized maps with expert content;
- software;
- patents;
- research papers;
- pilot operations, proven technologies.

Evaluation process of project proposals

Evaluation of the BETA programme takes place in two stages. Firstly, each of the related governmental bodies sends a draft of their research needs. These are then evaluated primarily from the point of view of fulfilment of the conditions of the programme and the necessity to solve the given issue.

TA CR announces a call for tenders pursuant to the Act on Public Procurement for the research needs that the Programme Council has recommended and the Presidency of the TA CR has approved. TA CR cooperates on the preparation of tender specifications for selected research needs with the relevant governmental bodies. The tender selection procedure from the time of the notice to the announcement of results of the tender is governed by the Act on Public Procurement. The submitted tenders are first evaluated from the point of view of eligibility and then based on their economic benefits. One contractor is selected whose bid best meets the prescribed criteria and requirements.



Programme to promote applied social science research and experimental development OMEGA



The main aim of the OMEGA programme, which is intended for a six-year period from 2012 to 2017, is to strengthen research activities in the field of applied social sciences. The allocated amount for the entire duration of the programme should reach 386.4 million CZK. Support will be provided for small-scale projects with a duration not exceeding two years whose results will help to streamline the conceptual, methodological and decision-making activities in the socio-economic sectors of society. The first tender was announced on the 20th of July 2011. Forty-eight of the total 123 project proposals received were selected for support. The second tenders of this programme will be announced in 2013.

Characteristics of the programme

Duration	2012 to 2017
Tenders announced in years	2011, 2013 and 2015
Total expected budget	386.4 mil. CZK
of which from the state budget	309 mil. CZK (80 %)
Length of projects	1 to 2 years
Recipients of support	enterprises (only legal entities), research organizations
Max. level of support /project	80 % of the total eligible costs

Aims of the programme

The main aims of the programme are to strengthen research activities in the field of applied social sciences and the application of the results of these activities to enhance the competitiveness of the Czech Republic, to increase the overall quality of life of its inhabitants and to balance the socio-economic development of society.

- The specific objectives of the programme are
 - To improve the efficiency of public policies;
 - To implement and promote the public interests of the Czech Republic;
 - To increase the competitiveness of the Czech Republic in a globalized environment;
 - To develop regions in the context of the European integration process;
 - To forecast the economic development of the Czech Republic;
 - Social development, optimization of social stratification processes in society;
 - Development of the knowledge and innovation of society.

Characteristic features

- the interdisciplinary nature of research and development;
- emphasis on the acquisition of new knowledge and applicability of results in practice;
- outputs that streamline conceptual, methodological and decision-making activities in socio-economic areas.

Types of results

- certified methodologies and practices, including specialized maps with expert content;
- software;
- results reflected in legislation and standards;
- results reflected in directives and regulations of a non-legislative nature which are binding within the competence of the relevant governmental body;
- research papers.

Evaluation process of project proposals

The Office of the TA CR ensures a minimum of two peer review reports and one reporter's opinion. The Expert Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisting of project reporters evaluates the projects according to the rules and criteria of TA CR. This evaluation is submitted by the Office of the TA CR to the Programme Council. The Programme Council objectively and dispassionately assesses the project proposals and draws up a ranking of projects with regard to the opinions of the Sub-programme Council. This ranking is then submitted to the Presidency of the TA CR, which sets a definitive ranking of the projects.

Programme for the support of development of long-term collaboration between the public and private sectors on research, development and innovation Competence Centres



The largest of the new programmes of TA CR is the Competency Centre programme which will support projects with a length of up to eight years. This programme was prepared based on the results of analyses focused on the current experience of the Czech Republic with programs of a similar nature, as well as similar international programmes. The programme will support the establishment and operation of centres of research, development and innovation in advanced fields. The resulting centres will create conditions for the development of long-term cooperation in research, development and innovation between the public and private sectors. Therefore, only consortia consisting of research organizations and enterprises, which will be required to co-finance projects from private sources, will be eligible to participate in the programme. The duration of the programme is from 2012 to 2019 with the publication dates of three-stage public tenders being 2011 (29th of June), 2013 and 2015. Overall, 6 billion CZK will be distributed in the framework of the programme. The first tender was announced on the 29th of June 2011. Of the total amount of 128 project proposals received 22 projects were selected for support. The second tender of this programme will be announced in 2013.

Characteristics of the programme

Duration	2012 to 2019
Tenders announced in years	2011, 2013 and 2015
Total expected budget	8.595 billion CZK
of which from the state budget	6.016 billion CZK (70 %)
Length of projects	4 to 8 years
Recipients of support	enterprises, research organizations
Max. level of support /project	70 % of the total eligible costs
Expected number of supported centres	35

Focus of the programme

- The programme is focussed on supporting the establishment and activities of centres for research, development and innovation in advanced fields with strong application potential and the prospect of providing a significant contribution to the increased competitiveness of the Czech Republic;
- The resulting centres will create conditions for the development of long-term cooperation in research, development and innovation between the public and private sectors;
- The focus and research aims of the centres are set by the partners of the centres in a strategic research agenda, which is a key link between the partners and the main prerequisite for the formation and activity of the centres.

Aims of the programme

- The main aim of the programme is to increase the competitiveness of the Czech Republic in advanced fields with a strong potential for application in innovation;
- The programme hopes to encourage businesses and research organizations to develop strategic partnerships, strengthen interdisciplinary research, development and innovation and increase the horizontal mobility of researchers, particularly new researchers.

Types of results

- patents;
- pilot operations, proven technologies;
- results with legal protection - utility models, industrial designs;
- technically realized results - prototypes, functional samples;
- certified methodologies and procedures, and maps with expert content;
- software.

Evaluation process of project proposals

Evaluation of the Competence Centres Programme takes place in two stages. In the first stage the proposals are evaluated by two Czech and two foreign evaluators who prepare a peer review for each proposal. Then, reporters (Members of the Programme Council) prepare a summary of the peer review as part of a summary evaluation report, on which all four of the opponents of the given project proposal provide their observations. The Programme Council then discusses the summary evaluation report together

with the observations of the opponents and based on this they prepare a final evaluation report. The Programme Council also proposes a ranking for the project proposals which is submitted together with the evaluation to the Presidency of the TA CR which approves the project proposals advancing to the second stage of the tender.

In the second stage of the evaluation the project proposals are evaluated by three Czech opponents and a reporter (Member of the Expert Evaluation Committee). Subsequently, the project proposals are assessed based on the rules and criteria of TA CR by an expert evaluation committee which submits its evaluation and ranking of project proposals to the Programme Council. The Programme Council then discussed the ranking of project proposals and forwards the results of its evaluation to the Presidency of the TA CR, which decides whether to provide support from the Competence Centre Programme or not.



ACTIVITIES OF THE TA CR

TA CR cooperation in the national system of research, development and innovation

TA CR works closely with the central government in the framework of the system of research, development and innovation on the preparation of support programmes that implement the approved departmental concepts in research and development. In 2009 and 2010, TA CR collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Environment and other ministries that are no longer providers of research and development. The competence centres programme was prepared with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and further steps are being discussed leading to cooperation with other agencies of a similar type. Cooperation in obtaining opponents for TA CR programmes and the analysis of the findings resulting from the implementation of OP RDI has also been arranged.

The possibility of cooperation in the preparation of complementary programs has also been discussed with other partners including the business development agency Czech Invest and the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. The TA CR now resides with the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic at the same address since both agencies moved there February 2011.



Cooperation with similar foreign agencies and other international activities

During 2010 a number of steps were taken to ensure the entry of TA CR into the prestigious European Network of Innovation Agencies (TAFTIE) and in December of the same year the Czech Republic was adopted as a permanent member of this network.

Cooperation with the Korean Institute for Advancement of Technology (KIAT) is also under preparation.

In addition, TA CR is preparing a programme promoting cooperation in research and development through joint projects of the technology and innovation agencies (DELTA), which aims to increase the quantity and quality of the results of applied research and development that will be successfully applied in practice and to strengthen the competitiveness of the Czech Republic through the promotion of bilateral or multilateral cooperation of top Czech and foreign participants. The programme will focus on promoting cooperation in research and development through joint projects of enterprises and research organizations supported by the TA CR and major foreign technology and innovation agencies and other similar agencies from countries outside the EU, the EFTA States and Switzerland (hereinafter referred to as Partner Agencies), which will have entered into contracts or supplements to contracts for cooperation with the TA CR at the time of tender publication enabling this cooperation to be realized.

Completion of the preparation of this programme requires cooperation agreements to be entered into with at least three agencies with a similar focus.

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