



# Call documentation

**6<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals**

**Programme SIGMA**

**Sub-Objective 1: Support for the Commercialisation of  
R&D&I+**

Funding Programme for Applied Research and Innovation

Ref. No.: TACR/9-1/2024



# Focus and Conditions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals Under the SIGMA Programme

## Sub-Objective 1: Activities of so-called pre-application research Support for the Commercialisation of R&D&I+

### What is the focus of the call for proposals?

The call for proposals is aimed at supporting projects with the ambition of participating in the EIC Accelerator.

The call for proposals is focused on supporting the verification of outputs / results of applied research in terms of their practical application and on the preparation of their subsequent commercial exploitation or use for the needs of society.

The call for proposals is focused on supporting the commercialisation of breakthrough innovative solutions (products, services, etc.) and supporting the growth and development of small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups based in the Czech Republic.

The call for proposals **is not focused on a particular sector or field.**

The objective of each project proposal is to draw up a **feasibility study in English** in order to verify the technological and economic viability of a disruptive innovation.

The product or service should have an exploitation potential not only in the Czech environment, but should be also competitive on the international market. The uniqueness, impact and implementation of the product or service will be evaluated.

The applicant is expected to have a level of technology readiness at least at the level of laboratory verification when submitting the project proposal.

After completion of the project, the product or service should be ready for practical use or market entry and should be ready for faster expansion to other markets (EU, global).

Funded projects in this call for proposals will be provided with support services - coaching

### Who can apply for funding?

**The main applicant** must be a **small** or **medium-sized enterprise** that carries out the project **independently** (without other participants).

## Important dates

**Call is open for submissions:** from 18. 1. 2024 until 6. 3. 2024

**Announcement of results:** 30. 6. 2024

**Start of project implementation:** at the earliest May and at the latest July

**Project duration<sup>1</sup>:** 6 months

**Deadline for completion of the project:** February 2025

## Maximum amount and rate of funding

**Maximum amount of funding per project:** 730 000 CZK

**Maximum rate of funding per project:** 70 %

## What documents are provided by the applicant? (TA CR will not ask for them)

### 1. Through the data box:

- Confirmation of submission of an electronic project proposal to ISTA.

### 2. Through the project proposal in ISTA:

- **Project proposal in English** (max. 10 pages of A4, the recommended minimum font size allowed is 10 points);
- **Video as a presentation of the project proposal in English (max. 3 minutes long).**
- The ownership structure for each applicant in Chapter 2 APPLICANTS / Ownership Structure.
- **In the event of the participation of another participant from abroad:**
  - Information on the beneficial owner of the foreign applicant.

### 3. Other ways:

- Applicants to whom the Act imposes this obligation must be registered in the register of beneficial owners.

**In the event that you do not submit the above-mentioned documents and information, TA CR will not accept the project proposal for the call for proposals.** You cannot provide additional documents and information based on a request pursuant to Article 21(9) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development, as this is an obligation established pursuant to Article 17(3) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development.

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<sup>1</sup> During the project implementation, it is possible to request an extension of the project solution by a further two months based on the project change procedure (pursuant to SME-07 Project Change Procedure).

## What documents are provided by the applicant? (TA CR will ask for them)

### 1. Through the data box:

- Sworn statement of the applicant.

### 2. Other ways:

- Applicants must publish their financial statements in the public register in the event that the Act imposes this obligation on them. TA CR shall check the publication of financial statements for the years 2020, 2021, and 2022. In the event that the applicant has not published the required financial statements at the time of submitting the project proposal, they may be documented through the annexes of the project proposal in ISTA:
  - for the years 2020, 2021, and 2022 including confirmation of sending to the registry court;
  - for the year 2023, including confirmation of sending to the registry court, if it has not yet been published and if this financial statement is available for the purpose of assessing whether the applicant is not an undertaking in difficulty;
  - consolidated financial statements for an economically related group (ESSO in Czech, ERG in English) for the years 2020, 2021, and 2022, if the applicant is part of it, for the purpose of assessing whether it is not an undertaking in difficulty.

In the event that you do not provide the above-mentioned documents and information, TA CR will invite you to provide them pursuant to Article 21(9) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development.

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Questions about the call for proposals may be submitted via the [Helpdesk](#). You can contact our regional staff at the [contact points](#) for personal or telephone consultations.

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# Introductory Information

For this call, the call documentation is published in Czech and English. **In case of divergence between the language versions, the Czech version shall prevail.**

Before submitting a project proposal, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (hereinafter TA CR) recommends that applicants become familiar with the following important references and terms that are directly related to the call:

- [General Terms and Conditions of TA CR](#) (version 7), which lay down all the rights and obligations of beneficiaries, including the definition of important terms. Furthermore, individual cost categories are described in more detail here;
- [Frascati Manual](#), which describes the specifics of research and development projects, defines important terms, and should also serve as a guide for classifying research activities into the right categories (industrial research and experimental development); and
- Information system of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (hereinafter „[ISTA](#)“), which is used to submit project proposals.



The „§“ icon in front of the text serves as a hyperlink to the legal framework (Chapter 8). Clicking on this icon will take you to the relevant part of the legal framework.

# 1 Applicants in the Call for Proposals

## The main applicant:

- must be the **small or medium - sized enterprise** that has its registered office, establishment, or branch in the Czech Republic;
- must implement the project **independently** (without other participants);
- may submit a **maximum one project proposal**. In case of submission of a higher number of project proposals than one, it decides about the order of the time of submission in the information system ISTA. Project proposals submitted in excess of the permitted number of projects will not be accepted to the call, even if the first project proposal submitted for the call is not accepted for the call for non-compliance with formal requirements or proof of eligibility.

Start-ups, research organisations or other legal forms can also apply as a **small or medium-sized enterprise**, as long as they meet the conditions of size.

## 2 Dates and Deadlines

Dates and deadlines related to **the submission of project proposals and to the proof of the applicant's eligibility**

<b>Call opening time</b> (from this time onwards, project proposals may be filled in and submitted in ISTA)	18. 1. 2024 at 9:00
<b>Call closing time</b> (deadline for the submission of project proposals through ISTA)	6. 3. 2024 at 16:29:59
<b>Deadline for sending a confirmation of submission of an electronic project proposal</b> from the data box of the main applicant to the TA CR data box	6. 3. 2024 at 23:59:59
<b>Deadline for the receipt of proof of eligibility documents</b> (except for documents that constitute a part of the project proposal) in the TA CR data box	

TA CR shall **publish the results of the call at the latest on 30. 6. 2024** on the website [www.tacr.cz](http://www.tacr.cz). Subsequently, TA CR shall send the **decision on the result of the call** to the main applicant through their data box.

Dates and deadlines related to the **project implementation**

<b>Start of the project</b>	May 2024 – July 2024
<b>Project duration<sup>2</sup></b>	6 months
<b>Deadline for completion of the project</b>	February 2025

<sup>2</sup> During the project implementation, it is possible to request an extension of the project solution by a further two months based on the project change procedure (pursuant to SME-07 Project Change Procedure).



# 3 Project Proposal

**The project proposal** is an application for funding, which applicants submit through ISTA. Applicants must include in the project proposal all the information that is necessary for its evaluation (directly in the fields provided in ISTA or in the annexes to the project proposal). If TA CR decides to support the project proposal and a project contract<sup>3</sup> is signed, then the project proposal becomes a **project**.

The project proposal shall be submitted **in English**. All information provided in the project proposal must correspond to the facts as of the date of the proposal submission.

## 3.1 Focus of the Call for Proposals

The call is focused on supporting the commercialization of breakthrough innovative solutions (products, technologies, services, etc.) that will contribute to the expansion, growth and development of enterprises. The call is not focused on a particular sector or field.

The objective of each project is to prepare a **feasibility study (in English)** to verify the technological and economic feasibility of a breakthrough innovation. The objective of the project is not to develop technical and scientific knowledge, but to verify and confirm the hypothesis in terms of potential consumer interest in the innovation and the readiness of the product, technology or service for commercial exploitation. Increased emphasis is placed on the groundbreaking nature of the solution and the experience or skills of key people in the project team.

The product, technology or service should have commercial potential not only in the Czech environment, but it is expected to have a potential to expand and compete also on the international markets.

At the time of submitting the project proposal, the product, technology, or service should:

- be ready for practical use and before entering the market;
- have a clearly specified target group, final customer or marketing channel;
- be at least at the level of laboratory verification.

At the end of the project, the technology must be at the level of demonstration in the relevant environment.

TA CR offers **international expert coaching** to the beneficiaries of funding, in which case it collaborates with representatives of the Enterprise Europe Network, with whom (based on the consent of the beneficiary) the project proposal may be shared for the purpose of selecting a coach.

Beneficiaries will be offered the possibility of a special screening of their successful projects for suitability for participation in the EIC Accelerator under Horizon Europe through the so-called

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<sup>3</sup> Where the call documentation refers to a **project contract**, this also includes a **decision on the provision of funding**, which the TA CR issues only if the applicant is an organisational unit of the state, or an organisational unit of a Ministry engaged in research and development.

plug-in mechanism, which allows skipping the Short Stage Proposal stage. This screening will be conducted based on the assessment of projects by experts focused on business and innovation with knowledge of the EIC Accelerator tool. The experts will either recommend or not recommend the project for the 2nd round (so-called Full Stage Proposal) of the EIC Accelerator. The projects that will be recommended will be able to apply for funding in the EIC Accelerator by submitting an application until the second round of the upcoming EIC Accelerator deadlines, but no later than 12 months after the beneficiary is reported to the plug-in mechanism.

#### **Gender in the Content of Research and Innovation:**

Applicants will state in the project proposal how the feasibility study will address the impact of the product, technology, service (etc.) on different population groups with regard to their gender and other relevant characteristics (opportunities for and barriers to use, benefits, etc.). For more information, please refer to the [Gender Dimension in Research Content guideline](#).

## 3.2 Application of Outputs and Results

Applicants must attach a **Project Proposal** (Annex 1 of the call documentation) to the project proposal and insert a **functional link to a video to introduce the uniqueness of the project proposal**. Both the annex and the video must be in English. TA CR will not accept a project proposal for a call for proposals without the mandatory annex and a functional link to the video. The required mandatory annex and video cannot be additionally provided based on a request pursuant to Article 21(9) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development.

#### **Annex 1 - Project Proposal**

This is the **substantive part of the project proposal**, which the main applicant will attach to the project proposal in **pdf format**. This attachment must be completed in **English**. The **structure**, including the numbering and naming of the chapters, **must be followed** in the annex, according to the example document of Annex 1 of the call documentation. The scope of the final document is set to a **maximum of ten pages of A4 format** (including the introductory page) and the recommended font size is at least 10. If the project proposal exceeds the maximum length of 10 pages and is in a language other than English, the project proposal will not be accepted for the call for proposals.

In ISTA, this annex can be downloaded in an editable format. Insert the project proposal in chapter 3. PROJECT PRESENTATION / Definition of the project or 8. PROJECT ANNEXES.

#### **Video introducing the unique project proposal**

Each project proposal must include a link to the **maximum length of 3 minutes (in English)** in the required Full HD resolution (1920 × 1080 px, 30-60 fps) that you place on YouTube or other suitable platform (without a password or having to request access permission). If the video exceeds the maximum length of three minutes and is in a language other than English, the project proposal will not be accepted for the call for proposals. There is no minimum video length.

Please describe in the video:

- What is your product or service and in what respect it is **unique**. (not what the business does in general).
- What is your **motivation** (what you want to achieve).
- What is the **target group** and how the product or service has the potential to appeal to it. (why the target group should seek out the product or service).
- Who are you and how many people are in your **project team** (uniqueness of know-how in the project team).
- How do you plan to **bring the product to the market**.

The content of the **video** must be in accordance with Annex 1 of the call documentation (**Project Proposal**).

Insert the link to the video in ISTA into tab 3. PROJECT PRESENTATION into box Project video presentation.

### 3.3 Differentiation from Similar Projects



The Technology Agency of the Czech Republic only supports project proposals, whose contents or part(s) thereof have not been or are not currently being addressed in another of their own projects<sup>4</sup>. Dual funding is not permitted.

Applicants (particularly in cases where key persons in the project team are the same and the project proposals have a similar focus) are required to state their own:

- **completed projects**, if the planned outputs/results of the project proposal are connected to them, and to describe this connection;
- **related ongoing projects** and describe the differences between these projects with the project proposal submitted to this call for proposals;
- **project proposals submitted both to this and another call for proposals**, where simultaneous funding would not result in dual funding. In which case, it is necessary to describe the differences between these projects;
- **project proposals submitted both to this and another call for proposals**, where simultaneous funding **would** result in dual funding. In which case, it is necessary to state that only one project contract will be concluded and that this commitment must be respected.

In case of non-compliance with the conditions described above, the project proposal **will not be funded** due to non-compliance with the conditions of the tender documentation.

If there are no such projects to which the obligation of delimitation applies, then please **explicitly state this fact**.

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<sup>4</sup> **Own projects** are any projects of any provider of state aid, in which an entity with the same ID number participates, regardless of whether it is the main applicant or other participant.

A description of the current state of knowledge in the given research area, a description of the novelty of the developed solution in the sense of gaining new knowledge, and a list of projects with which the project proposal may be duplicated and the limitations to these possible duplications should be given in Annex 1 - Project Proposal.

In order to verify the completeness of the list of related projects and demonstrate the novelty of the proposed solution, TA CR recommends using the [STARFOS](#) tool for searching for funded, or the Research, Experimental Development and Innovation Information System ([R&D IS](#)).

### 3.4 Thematic Classification of Project Proposals

Inclusion of the project proposal in the correct category of the given classification is used for statistical and analytical purposes and for the evaluation of the expenditure of public funds in the field of research, development, and innovation. Classification is a mandatory step in the proposal submission process and evaluation of project proposals. The correct classification of the project proposal also has an impact on the correctness of the evaluation process and evaluation of project proposal. The objectives and fields that may be selected for the classification (defined based on the focus of the programme) are listed in the references provided below or in the help system of ISTA.

#### **Objectives of the National Priorities of Oriented Research, Experimental Development and Innovation (RDI priorities)**

Applicants must select one main and between zero and two secondary objectives from the National Priorities of Oriented Research, Experimental Development and Innovation (RDI priorities) - an overview of the objectives is given in ISTA.

In this call for proposals, applicants cannot choose the main objective from Area 6 Safe Society. The applicant can choose a secondary objective or objectives from all areas of the RDI Priorities.

#### **Fields of CRP, FORD and TA CR**

Applicants must select one main, one secondary, and one other secondary field in the project proposal according to the Central Register of Projects (**CRP**), Fields of Research and Development (**FORD**) and according to the code list of **TA CR**. The selected fields of CRP, FORD and TA CR should be aligned with each other.

#### **National RIS3 strategy**

The project proposal must be in accordance with the National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation of the Czech Republic 2021–2027 (**National RIS3 Strategy**) at the following levels:

- Domain of research and innovation specialisation (**domain of specialisation**).

Each project proposal **must** be aligned with only **one domain of specialisation**.

A description of the National RIS3 strategy is given in [Annex 1 Cards of thematic areas](#).

All the above-mentioned details shall be completed in ISTA in Chapter 3. PROJECT INTRODUCTION / Definition of the project.

### 3.5 Outputs and Results

In this call for proposals, TA CR can only fund project proposals where the **output/result is expected to be applied in practice**.

In each project proposal, **one main output/result of type O – other result** must be selected in the form of a **feasibility study**. This output/result must be in English.

The main output/result is generated into binding parameters and is part of the Project Contract. According to the General Terms and Conditions, all the main outputs/results must be achieved by the end of the project implementation.

## 4 Financial Rules

<b>Expected amount allocated to the call for proposals*</b>	10 million CZK
<b>Maximum amount of funding per project</b>	730 000 CZK
<b>Maximum funding rate per project</b>	70 %

\*The estimated budget allocation for this call for proposals may change depending on the possibilities of the state budget.

Beneficiaries shall cover the mandatory co-funding at a minimum rate of 30 % from other sources.

There is no legal entitlement to the funding.

### 4.1 Funding Rate



Considering that the only output/result of the project proposal is the feasibility study, all project proposals must have an IR/ED ratio of 100/0.

<b>Types of applicant</b>	<b>Industrial research (IR)</b>
	<b>Maximum funding rate</b>
<b>Small enterprise</b>	70 %
<b>Medium-sized enterprise</b>	60 %

The maximum funding rate per project is identical to the maximum funding rate according to the type of applicant.

All project proposals must be stated as 100% industrial research in this call for proposals. Industrial research has the same rate of funding as feasibility study. But due to technical reasons it is not possible to introduce the category of activity "feasibility study" in ISTA.

### 4.2 Eligible Cost Categories



All cost categories are listed and detailed in Article 18 of the [General Terms and Conditions](#).

In this call, eligible cost categories include:

- **personnel costs;**
- **costs of subcontracting;**

- **other direct costs;**
- **indirect costs** – may be reported using the following method:
  - **„flat rate” of up to 25 %** of the sum of the personnel costs and other direct costs actually reported by the applicant in the given year.

Project implementation costs are eligible from the start date of the project implementation. In the event that the project implementation will start in accordance with the project proposal before the announcement of the results of the call for proposals, but no earlier than 1 May 2024, and the project proposal will be funded, the costs of the project implementation will be eligible.

# 5 Proof of Eligibility and Project Proposal Submission

## 5.1 Proof of Eligibility and Other Requirements Stipulated by TA CR

**§** The main applicant shall prove **its ability** to implement the project independently in the following way:

### The Sworn Statement of the Applicant:

- must be sent by each applicant from its data box (each applicant for itself) to the TA CR data box (data box ID: afth9xp) on the prescribed form „[Sworn Statement of the Applicant](#)”;
- does not need to be physically signed (the signature is replaced by it being sent from the appropriate data box);
- in the details of the message, state the „6th of the Call for Proposals SIGMA, Sub-Objective 1: Support for the Commercialisation of R&D&I+ – Proof of Eligibility”.

### Financial statements:

- Applicants must comply with the obligation established by the Accounting Act to **publish financial statements for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022**, from which TA CR will check whether the applicant is not an undertaking in difficulty or the correct applicant type.

In the event that the applicant does not have the required financial statements for the above-mentioned years, as the entity was not established at that time, it shall document its fulfilment of the obligation with the financial statements that it is obliged to publish from the date of establishment.

In the event that applicant has submitted its financial statements to the registry court, and they have not yet been published before the submission of the project proposal, the applicant shall attach the financial statements as an annex to the project proposal, including a confirmation of submission to the relevant registry court.

In the event that the relevant income tax administrator (e.g., tax office) has submitted the financial statements to the registry court on behalf of the applicant, and they have not yet been published before the submission of the project proposal, the applicant shall attach the financial statements as an annex to the project proposal, including a confirmation of submission to the income tax administrator.



### Undertaking in difficulty:

- Funding will not be provided to an applicant **who meets the definition of an undertaking in difficulty**. The Office for the Protection of Competition (ÚOHS) has defined individual criteria according to Article 2(18) of the Regulation, which are available [here](#).
- The evaluation of undertakings in difficulty applies in particular to limited liability companies, joint stock companies, cooperatives, European companies, European cooperative companies, public companies, limited partnerships, and others.
- The evaluation of undertakings in difficulty is performed according to the assessment criteria both for individual entities and at the level of the entire group of interconnected entities between which control relationships exist. For this reason, for subjects that belong to a group of companies, the criteria of an undertaking in difficulty must be monitored not only at the level of an individual subject, but also at the level of the entire group. Therefore, data for parent, subsidiary, and sister companies, including foreign entities, are included in the assessment.
- TA CR shall check this condition during a formal inspection. If the applicant is identified as an undertaking in difficulty, the TA CR will not accept the project proposal with the given applicant for public competition.

In the event that ISTA identifies the applicant as an undertaking in difficulty, but there is an objective and publicly demonstrable explanation why you are not actually an undertaking in difficulty (e.g., a company being divided), then state the relevant arguments in the ISTA comment in Chapter 2. APPLICANTS / Financial Indicators below the table. You can also attach the financial statements for the year 2023 together with the confirmation of delivery to the registry court.

Also, **if you are part of a group of companies that function as an economic unit**, and within the assessment of the whole group you are not an undertaking in difficulty, please **state this fact in a comment. Provide consolidated financial statements for the entire group** as annexes to the project proposal.

### Records of beneficial owners:

- Applicants that legally fall under this obligation must **be registered in the register of beneficial owners**. If the applicant is not registered in the register of beneficial owners by the end of the period for the submission of proposals, i.e., by 6. 3. 2024, **then TA CR will not accept the project proposal for the call for proposals**.

In the event that the applicant's organisation is not in this register, it shall submit a proposal for entry of data into the register of beneficial owners to the relevant registry court or a request for registration with a notary (including a certificate of registration). Please note that the applicant must be registered in the register of beneficial owners by the end of the

period for the submission of proposals. More information may be found [here](#).

#### **Requirements for which compliance is documented through ISTA:**

- **Professional qualifications to implement the project** – to be filled in for key persons in the project team in the „Professional CV” section. Each main applicant must have at least one person in the role of a researcher in the project proposal and each potential other partner must have at least one person in the role of other researcher.
- **Authorisations to perform the activities planned in the project proposal** – a copy is submitted with the project proposal (e.g., authorisation to perform biological testing, authorisation to perform research on human embryonic stem cells);
- **Ownership structure of each applicant** – each applicant must indicate all ultimate owners - natural persons with a share of at least 10% (if it follows from the legal form of an applicant that it does not have an ownership structure, this obligation shall not apply to it).

## 5.2 Project Proposal Submission

A project proposal must be submitted to the call in **an electronic form through ISTA**. No other form of project proposal submission shall be permitted.

After submitting the project proposal through ISTA, the owner<sup>5</sup> of the project proposal shall generate a document entitled **„Confirmation of Submission of an Electronic Project Proposal in ISTA”**. This document contains clear identifiers, which must be identical to the electronically submitted project proposal.

#### **Confirmation of submission of an electronic project proposal in ISTA:**

- must be sent from the data box of the main applicant to the TA CR data box (data box ID: afth9xp);
- in the details of the message, state the „6th of the Call for Proposals SIGMA, Sub-Objective 1: Support for the Commercialisation of R&D&I+ – Confirmation of Submission”.

The **project proposal may be withdrawn** (e.g., in the case of a need to modify or supplement an already submitted project proposal) by the owner of the project proposal in ISTA. After submitting the project proposal, the owner of the project proposal will see the „Withdraw the Project Proposal” button in the PROJECT DRAFT SUMMARY tab. This step cancels the submission of the project proposal. For proper submission, it is necessary to send the project proposal again in ISTA, then generate a confirmation of the submission of the project proposal and send it to the TA CR data box.

**Once the call for proposals is closed, it will no longer be possible to modify the proposal.**

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<sup>5</sup> **Owner** is a role in ISTA. It is the person who initiated the project proposal and is the only one with the right to submit the project proposal to a call in ISTA and to subsequently generate the „Confirmation of submission of an electronic project proposal in ISTA”. The owner of the project proposal may assign and modify authorisations to revise the project proposal to all persons.

## 5.3 Notification of Changes After the Submission of Project Proposals

As applicants, you are obliged to inform TA CR in writing about any and all **changes** that may take place **in the period from the submission of the project proposal until the possible conclusion of the project contract** and which concern your legal status or the details required to demonstrate eligibility (e.g., change in size, registered office, statutory representative, merger, or division of the enterprise), or which may affect the decision making of TA CR.

You must do so within **seven calendar days** of becoming aware of such a change. If you do not do so within the set deadline, the project proposal will be excluded from the call.

# 6 Evaluation

The evaluation will take place between 7. 3. 2024 and 30. 6. 2024. Immediately after the closing of the call for proposals, a formal check will begin to verify the basic requirements. Afterwards, TA CR will publish on its website the project proposals that will be further evaluated and those that will not be admitted to the call.

Details concerning individual evaluation steps, a list of the evaluation criteria together with the aspects that will be evaluated under individual criteria are provided in the following Annex to the Call Documentation: [Annex No. 2 - Evaluation Process](#).

## 6.1 Evaluation Process



Each project proposal admitted to the call, i.e., that successfully passed the formal check, will be gradually evaluated by:

- experts;
- the rapporteur;
- expert advisory body.

The TA CR Board will subsequently issue a final decision on the support or non-support of project proposals.

## 6.2 Binary Criteria

If a binary criterion is not met, the project proposal cannot be recommended for funding regardless of the number of points it receives in the evaluation.

List of binary criteria
Compliance with the programme and the sub-objective 1.

## 6.3 Scored Criteria

If 0 points are awarded for a scored criterion, then the project proposal will not be recommended for funding.

Scored criterion	Point scale
1. Excellence	0; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 points
2. Impact	0; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 points
3. Implementation	0; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 points

## 6.4 Independence of the Evaluation Process

Independence and equal treatment are the basic principles applied by TA CR in the evaluation process. Therefore, none of the applicants or their authorised persons may contact the persons evaluating the project proposals with the intention of influencing them. Complaints concerning suspicions of corrupt practices or other unfair activities may be using the form available [here](#). Further information may be found on the [TA CR website](#).

# 7 Signature of the Project Contract and Project Implementation

A **project contract** will be concluded with the main applicants of successful project proposals. The project proposal may be changed before signing the project contract only if it is a change of an administrative nature or a change not caused by the applicant, which is worthy of special consideration (in more detail [Stanovisko ke změnám před uzavřením smlouvy o poskytnutí podpory](#)).

A project contract will not be concluded with the main applicant if the main applicant include:

- an enterprise in which the beneficial owner is be a public official pursuant to Article 2(1)(c) of Act 159/2006 Coll., on Conflicts of Interest, or
- or a public official or a person controlled by him or her owning a share representing at least 25% of the shareholder's participation will be among the main applicant (Article 4(c) of Act 159/2006 Coll., on Conflicts of Interest), or
- the beneficial owner of the applicant will be listed among the persons on whom a sanction is imposed pursuant to Act 69/2006 Coll., on the Implementation of International Sanctions.



Before signing the project contract, you shall be obliged to document all the facts set out in the decision on the result of the call for proposals. In this decision, TA CR will state everything it requires of the applicants and within what timeframe.

After concluding the project contract, the main applicant shall become the main beneficiary.

**The project contract** is generated in ISTA by **the owner** of the project proposal. The **project contract** can be generated before the documents specified in the decision on the result of the call are provided.

## 7.1 Provision of Funding

TA CR will provide the **funding** as a **lump sum** to the account of the main beneficiary in the amount specified in the binding parameters of the project solution. TA CR shall pay the funding within 60 calendar days from the day the Project Contract becomes effective.

## 7.2 Implementation

When planning **the start of project implementation**, applicants do not have to take into account when the project contract will be signed. The project implementation may start before the signing of **the project contract**, but not before the date chosen by the applicants for the start of the project implementation.

In accordance with the above, approved costs incurred before signature of the project contract will be eligible, provided the agreement is subsequently signed.

Various project implementation processes will take place in English. TA CR will inform the beneficiary before the start of the project implementation of the processes that are involved.

During the project implementation, TA CR shall check the progress of the implementation in several ways.

In the event that you request an extension of the project implementation period, based on change management (according to SME-07 Project Change Management), and the **project implementation extends into 2025**, you will be obliged to submit an **interim project report for the year 2024**.

At the end of the project implementation, you will submit a **final report** and then the **final project evaluation** will take place. The following may also be performed on the project:

- public administration control,
- monitoring visit, or
- continuous project evaluation.

If the original project proposal changes during the project implementation, you must always inform us about such a change. The types of changes requiring supporting documents and the method of their notification may be found in guideline SME-07 Procedures for Changes in Projects. Furthermore, throughout the project implementation, all beneficiaries must comply with the obligation to publish their annual financial statements throughout the entire project implementation period.

The type of organisation is assessed only on the day of the provision of funding, i.e., on the date of the decision on the results of the call for proposals. Changes made after this date will no longer be reflected in the project and the applicant shall not provide notice of them (i.e., you do not proceed according to SME-07 Project Change Management). It is therefore sufficient to meet the conditions for the given type of organisation on the date of the provision of funding. If the applicant selects the wrong type of organisation in the project proposal, it shall be obliged to notify the provider of this fact even after the date of the decision on the provision of funding (according to the procedure in SME-07 Project Change Management).

The main beneficiary will submit the **„Data Management Plan“** to TA CR together with the first interim report, regularly update it and submit the updated version of the „Data Management Plan“ to TA CR as part of the interim and final report, including information on the availability and method of dissemination of the results of the research and the research data.

The Data Management Plan must include the following information:

- What research data will the beneficiaries create, process, or collect during the project;
- What methods and principles of their management will be used with regard to the FAIR principles (findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability);
- Whether and how the data will be shared and published; and
- How the data will be stored during the project solution and kept after the end of the project.

More information can be found in the document [Research Data and Open Access to Outputs/Results](#) and in the specific conditions of the Project Contract.

Each beneficiary and other participant participating in the implementation of a project funded by TA CR are obliged, in accordance with the General Terms and Conditions, to disclose that the project was implemented with the financial participation of TA CR, i.e., in all promotional materials and in all types of media that relate to the project or its results and outputs. The rules for mandatory publicity can be found on the [TA CR website](#).



# 8 Legal Framework of the Call for Proposals

The programme SIGMA was approved by Government Resolution No. 414 of 18th May 2022. TA CR is the programme provider. The programme text, call documentation, and other documents related to the call for proposals are published on the website [www.tacr.cz](http://www.tacr.cz). It is a one-stage call for proposals announced pursuant to the [Act on the Support of Research and Development](#) and in accordance with the [Framework](#), [Regulation](#), and [Budgetary rules](#).

The call for proposals is implemented in accordance with the updated National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic for 2021+ as approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic of 20 July 2020 No. 759, i.e., the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic 2021+, [National Priorities of Oriented Research, Experimental Development and Innovation](#) as adopted by Government Resolution No. 552 of 19 July 2012, and national and ministerial strategies.

Relevant provisions in the following internal regulations valid and effective on the day of announcement of the call for proposals and published on the website [www.tacr.cz](http://www.tacr.cz) are binding for TA CR and the applicants.

Guidelines and statutes provide the binding procedures of TA CR resulting from legislation and other regulations. The versions applicable to this call for proposals are given in the third column of the table below.

Code	Name of the directives or statutes	Version
<a href="#">SME - 06</a>	Admission of project proposals to a call for proposals	v9
<a href="#">SME - 08</a>	Complaints within calls for proposals	v5
<a href="#">SME - 10</a>	Cancellation of a call for proposals	v4
<a href="#">SME - 11</a>	Call preparation and announcement	v10
<a href="#">SME - 13</a>	Conclusion of a Project Contract/issuance of a decision on the provision of funding	v4
<a href="#">SME - 17</a>	Helpdesk for applicants and beneficiaries	v4
<a href="#">SME - 23</a>	Preparation of evaluation reports, opinions and expert assessments	v8
<a href="#">SME - 34</a>	Evaluation of project proposals submitted to a call for proposals	v6

<a href="#">RAD - 01</a>	Statutes and rules of procedure of the Committee for the admission of project proposals	v3
<a href="#">RAD - 02</a>	Statutes and rules of procedure of an expert advisory body	v9

## 8.1 Legal Definition of Applicants

**Enterprises<sup>6</sup>** – legal persons or natural persons engaged in business activities pursuant to Act 455/1991 Coll., on Small Business Activities or performing economic activities within the meaning of Article 1 of Annex I to the Regulation.

## 8.2 Insufficient Differentiation and Duplication

If TA CR finds that a project proposal or part(s) thereof duplicates another project proposal and the applicants have not explained how their project proposal differs from that other project proposal, then the project proposal will not be funded on the grounds of a failure to meet the conditions of the call documentation, or the project contract will not be concluded with the applicants. This shall also apply to similar project proposals submitted to this or another ongoing call for proposals, which have not been disclosed in the relevant part of the ISTA system.

An applicant must immediately withdraw from the call for proposals if it concludes a project contract for identical project (in terms of the whole content or part(s) thereof) under another call for proposals/public tender in the Czech Republic or abroad.

## 8.3 Funding

The highest funding rate provided to an enterprise-type applicant may not exceed the highest funding rate permitted for individual types of enterprises as laid down in the Regulation.

The conditions for effective cooperation are determined by Article 2(90) and Article 25(6), while the types of enterprises are defined in Article 3 of Annex 1 of the Regulation.

The applicant must ensure that:

- unauthorised indirect state aid is avoided (in accordance with provisions 2.1 and 2.2 of the Framework);
- the distribution of rights and access to outputs/results in the project proposal are in accordance with point 29 under provision 2.2.2. of the Framework;
- overlap with other state aid for the same eligible expenditure (double funding) is avoided.

Applicants are not entitled to reimbursement of the costs associated with their participation in the call for proposals.

Eligible costs are listed and broken down into individual categories in Article 18 of the General Terms and Conditions. The project contract stipulates the method in which the TA CR funding

<sup>6</sup> The [User Guide](#) to the SME definition from the European Commission can serve as a **guide for determining the size of the enterprise**. In light of the current jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union, we point out that the recommendations given in this manual are not legally binding, and the provisions of the Regulation, which are legally binding, must always be followed as a priority.

is provided. The specific terms of the project contract (Article 4) stipulate the particulars set out in the General Terms and Conditions.

## 8.4 Proof of the Applicant's Eligibility

Only applicants meeting the eligibility conditions laid down in Article 18 (2) (b) to (i) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development and given by the Regulation may receive funding. Each applicant shall demonstrate its eligibility separately pursuant to Article 18 of the Act on the Support of Research and Development.

Failure to meet the eligibility requirements or the obligation to demonstrate eligibility shall be grounds for not admitting a project proposal to the call for proposals.

Furthermore, applicants must fulfil the obligations set forth in Article 21a et seq. of Act 563/1991 Coll., on Accounting, i.e., in particular, to publish financial statements, if required by law. In the event of non-compliance, the applicant for support will not be admitted to the call for proposals, as the legal obligation of the applicant would not be fulfilled.

The applicant must not be an undertaking in difficulty as defined in Article 2(18) of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

The definition and calculation established for the identification of an undertaking in difficulty is not based on a subjective evaluation of the management of the undertaking. In the currently effective regulations, the European Commission has defined an undertaking in difficulty in the interest of greater objectivity using so-called „hard” criteria, which should not allow subjective assessment), but are based on Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014, known as the General Block Exception Regulation (GBER).

Moreover, applicants must comply with the condition set out in Article 8 of Act 37/2021 Coll., on the Registration of Beneficial Owners, i.e., be registered in the register of beneficial owners. In the event of non-compliance, the applicant for support will not be admitted to the call for proposals, as the legal obligation of the applicant would not be fulfilled. The entities listed in Article 7 of Act 37/2021 Coll., on the Registration of Beneficial Owners, do not have a beneficial owner, so this obligation does not apply to the listed types of entities.

In the event that the Confirmation of Submission of the Electronic Project Proposal is not sent properly and on time, then the project proposal will not be considered as being submitted properly and on time and will not be checked as part of the formal control for other requirements (e.g., proof of the eligibility of applicants).

A project proposal may not contain classified information pursuant to Act 412/2005 Coll., on the Protection of Classified Information and on Security Clearance, as amended.

## 8.5 Evaluation and Submission of Documents

The evaluation of project proposals is governed by SME-34 Guidelines for the evaluation of project proposals submitted to a call for proposals. Activities of the Expert Advisory Body are governed by RAD-02 Statutes and Rules of Procedure of an Expert Advisory Body. No information

related to a particular project proposal or to interim evaluation results shall be provided during the course of the evaluations.

Before signing the project contract, applicants are obliged to demonstrate their continuing eligibility in a manner laid down in Article 18(5) to (7) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development, or other facts laid down in the decision on the result of the call for proposals. In their decision, TA CR will state everything that needs to be documented by the applicants.

## 8.6 Reserved Rights of TA CR

In accordance with Article 24 of the Act on the Support of Research and Development, the provider reserves the right to:

- cancel an announced call for proposals and not support the project proposals submitted under that call for proposals, in accordance with SME-10 Guidelines for the Cancellation of a Call for Proposals; and/or
- restrict the number of project proposals to be funded.

The decision to cancel a call for proposals or to restrict the number of project proposals to be funded will be made based in particular on the total amount of funding allocated to TA CR for the support of applied research, experimental development and innovations from the state budget of the Czech Republic.

In justified cases, the provider reserves the right to include in the decision on the result of the call for proposals additional conditions established on the basis of facts determined during the evaluation of the project proposal, with the provision that a project contract will be signed with the main beneficiary, or a decision on the provision of funding for the implementation of this project will be issued in its favour only after these conditions have been met. In case of doubt, TA CR may also request relevant documents to be submitted (for example, documents proving that the funding granted by the decision of a R&D provider was not used due to its withdrawal from the agreement).

In cases where among the applicants for the project proposal there will be an enterprise in which a public official pursuant to Article 2(1)(c) or a person controlled by it owns a share representing at least 25% of the partner's participation in the enterprise (Article 4c of Act 159/2006 Coll., on Conflicts of Interest), the provider reserves the right to not conclude a project contract with the main applicant.

Pursuant to Article 17(3) of the Act on the Support of Research and Development, the provider stipulates the condition that no beneficial owner of the applicant within the meaning of Act 37/2021 Coll., on the Registration of Beneficial Owners, shall be a public official pursuant to Article 2(1)(c) of Act 159/2006 Coll., on Conflicts of Interest, or that no such beneficial owner shall be listed among the persons on whom a sanction applicable under Act 69/2006 Coll., on the Implementation of International Sanctions has been imposed.

If the applicant does not have a beneficial owner, then the related parts shall not be relevant for the applicant.

In accordance with Article 32 of the Act on the Support of Research and Development, TA CR will publish project details through the Information System of Research, Development and Innovation

(RDI IS). After signing the project contract, the provider reserves the right to publish the information published through the RDI IS, and to keep it and provide access to it in the DAFOS system, in particular in its public component, the TA CR STARFOS search engine available at [www.starfos.tacr.cz](http://www.starfos.tacr.cz).

When announcing the results of compliance with the conditions of the call for proposals and the results of proposal evaluations, TA CR will publish the following information from the project proposals: code of the project proposal, name of the project proposal, the main applicant, and other partners. TA CR will not publish confidential information.

Information on project proposals that TA CR decides will not be funded is not published, except for the information published when announcing the results concerning compliance with conditions of the call for proposals and the results of proposal evaluations.

## 8.7 Appeal

The main applicant may file an appeal against the TA CR procedure to check compliance with conditions of the call for proposals or the procedure to evaluate and select project proposals in the call for proposals. It may do so in accordance with the guideline SME-08 Guidelines for Complaints within Calls for Proposals.