

# TA CR Research Board and its vision

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## Statute of the Research Board of the TA CR

The Research Board (RB) is the conceptual body of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR). It has twelve members, appointed and dismissed from among experts by the Czech Government on a proposal by the Research, Development, and Innovation Council (RDIC). The term of office of the RB members is four years. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the RB are appointed from among the RB members and dismissed by the Czech Government on a proposal by the RDIC. The RB is composed of experts from academia, ministries and the application sphere so that it is able to perceive and discuss the comments and needs of these main players in the field of applied research. Its activities are in line with the mission of the TA CR, which is to ensure an effective and transparent system of support in the field of research, development and innovation, based on the cooperation between the research and application spheres in order to increase the competitiveness of the Czech Republic. The main vision is to ensure the best possible conditions for cooperation between the research and application spheres.

## In particular, the RB:

- + Submits to the TA CR Board proposals for new programmes prepared by the TA CR and their objectives
- + Comments on calls for proposals (for example, on the respective tender dossiers) in an effort to reduce the bureaucratic burden and enable flexible and effective cooperation between partners
- + Proposes to the TA CR Board the establishment and focus of special committees and their members
- + Comments on programme proposals prepared by the TA CR, or on programme proposal prepared by other administrative authorities, the implementation of which is ensured by the TA CR
- + Evaluates the interim and final results of the programmes implemented by the TA CR
- + Evaluates the expert level of the TA CR and suggests any necessary measures in this area to the TA CR Board

Within the competencies mentioned above, the RB will, through its actions, help to fulfil the goals of the government's strategic programmes and increase the competitiveness of the Czech Republic.

## It will do so namely by:

- + Monitoring modern global trends, thereby helping the TA CR to continuously maintain the appropriate balance of support for current (traditional) and newly emerging fields, important for the Czech economy and its innovation potential.
- + Promoting support, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, in introducing innovations and changes related to modern trends.
- + Supporting the transfer of knowledge of technology between academia and the application sphere and supporting the creation and development of programmes for spin-off companies.
- + Transferring the experience of the beneficiaries to other bodies of the TA CR in the interest of improving processes and reducing bureaucratic burden.
- + Supporting the emerging young generation.
- + Supporting flexible and fast solutions to emerging challenges.
- + Providing effective cooperation with other ministries, especially the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of the Environment, but also the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence in implementing the government's strategic materials and the ministries' research priorities.
- + Supporting the involvement of Czech entities in international projects in the form of partnerships in Horizon Europe, bilateral cooperation (DELTA 2, KAPPA programmes) and other synergistic activities.
- + Supporting the improvement of competencies and knowledge of the TA CR employees (education, involvement in international projects, participation in international events, etc.).

Scientific knowledge is increasingly influencing economic and social change in the world. The Czech Republic has a high-quality scientific background in research organizations and is engaged in the development of modern fields. At the same time, the transfer of scientific knowledge to industry and other areas. The Research Board plays a fundamental role assisting in the transfer, especially through conceptual activities that enable the TA CR to better define the priorities of the support provided. Given that the RB relies on a broad base of research organizations and associations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of Industry and Transport and others, it is able to assist the TA CR in determining priorities not only in terms of trends but also in acute issues, which currently include, in particular, climate change, social impacts of changes in the current world or the new COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Concrete output :**

**The RB has introduced expert lectures from various fields, given by leading experts, thus enriching the knowledge within the TA CR in the field of modern trends. In line with this concept, it also promotes and participates in the preparation of the SIGMA framework programme, which can facilitate greater flexibility and further reduction in administrative burden.**

One of the ways to accelerate the application of scientific knowledge in practice (technology transfer processes) is the establishment of spin-off companies, which are created by separation from academia. The Czech Republic lags far behind in this respect, and timely financial support to help such new companies bridge the “valley of death” is virtually non-existent. The RB will therefore initiate support in this area. At the same time, cooperation with other entities in the field of technology transfer (e.g. Transfera) will help in defining the needs of academia in the proof of principle and other areas.

#### **Concrete output :**

**The RB members have participated in the creation of a document dealing with the creation of spin-off companies. This document was approved by the Czech government at the end of 2019.**

**The RB members have been informed of the initiation of the Horizon 2020 call for the transfer of the Phase 1 SME Instrument to the national level. This instrument was perceived very positively not only by SMEs, but also by start-ups or spin-offs, which needed funds for a feasibility study. TA CR actively promoted the call and became the coordinator of the consortium of providers that will be submitting the project.**

Small and medium-sized enterprises are an important element of economic development. The RB continuously gives TA CR recommendations as to how new calls can help small and medium-sized enterprises in introducing new technologies such as robotics, automation and the like.

#### **Concrete output :**

##### **Strategic support of activities related to Industry 4.0 in the TA CR programmes.**

As mentioned above, the RB members are in close contact with the scientific and business spheres and with the ministries whose programmes are being implemented by the TA CR. This allows the RB to obtain information “from below”, i.e. from potential or existing beneficiaries. The RB then passes this information on to the management of the TA CR and promotes the elimination of bottlenecks in the functioning of the TA CR or in the system of applications for support.

#### **Concrete output :**

**RB members have played an important role in changing the information system, called ISTA, which led to its improvement and the creation of better environment for users.**

**RB members have participated in the reintroduction of scholarships into the TA CR programmes as an important form of support for beginning researchers from the ranks of doctoral students.**

**RB members continuously provide feedback from beneficiaries, ministries and relevant associations, which leads to the elimination of partial complications in the system of applications for support, project solutions and the functioning of the TA CR on a general level.**

An important aspect in supporting applied research is the role played by the young generation. The Research Board will continue to support programmes that specifically benefit students’ applied research and their intensive interaction with the business community.

#### **Concrete output :**

**In the past, the RB designed and provided conceptual assistance with the creation of the Zéta programme, the last call for proposals of which was in 2019.**

**The RB will support the emphasis on the young generation in other upcoming TA CR programmes, for example by means of a cross-sectional parameter applied across the Agency’s support instruments.**



Bureaucracy in the Czech Republic is one of the obstacles to the development of applied research. The Research Board will continue to promote the maximum reduction of bureaucratic burden for beneficiaries, within the existing legal framework. However, the RB will also be actively involved in improving this framework.

**Concrete output:**

**RB's participation in amendments to Act No. 130 on support for research, development and innovation.**

The other main providers/administrators of support for applied research within their respective areas of competence are the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Transport. The RB will continue to be in close contact with the representatives of these ministries and will support the coordination of the different calls within the programmes.

**Concrete output:**

**Participation of the RB members in implementing the programmes of these ministries which are administered by the TA CR, as well as the provision of feedback on the ongoing implementation of these programmes.**

As in other areas, in the field of applied research, too, international cooperation is becoming increasingly important. The TA CR is very active cooperating with other European and other countries, and the RB effectively supports these activities and will continue to do so.

**Concrete output:**

**Support for updating priorities and implementation of the TA CR programmes focused on international cooperation (Delta 2, KAPPA, Cofund schemes/partnerships).**

As the EC is planning to allocate up to one half of the budget of Pillar II of the EU Horizon Europe programme to missions and partnerships, the RB will continue to support the maximum possible participation of the TA CR in partnerships to replace the existing ERA NET Cofunds in which TA CR has already been actively involved.

At the same time, the RB supports synergetic effects with Horizon 2020, resp. Horizon Europe, e.g. in the form of financing projects with the so-called Seal of Excellence.

The RB is convinced that for a high-quality preparation of programmes and their administration, it is necessary to constantly improve the competencies and knowledge of the TA CR employees, not only through education, but also through participation in international projects, international networks (TAFTIE) and international events.

The RB will actively support the improvement of competencies and knowledge of the TA CR employees. If calls are identified at the international level for providers, the TA CR will inform about their availability and provide support for participation.

These competencies also relate to trends in the support of R&D at the international level, knowledge of societal challenges, as well as horizontal topics, which are emphasized at the international level. Education and exchange of experience may subsequently be used as inspiration for the TA CR programmes.

