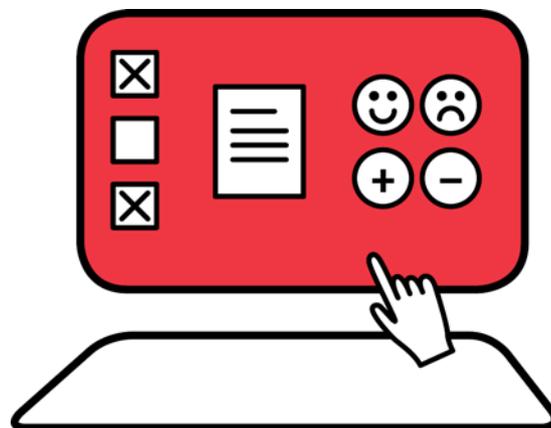


**Evaluation of Project Proposals
for the First Public Tender
of the National Centres of Competence 1
Programme
2018**



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INTRODUCTION

Dear opponents,

you are reading a document which will help you with evaluating the project proposals submitted under the 1st Public Tender of the National Centres of Competence 1 Programme. In particular, it contains information related to the evaluation of the project proposals itself. If you need to examine documentation for the National Centres of Competence 1 Programme (programme wording, tender dossier) or general information (about the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (hereinafter TA CR), effective legislation, terminology used) please go to the TA CR website (see the links in the manual) or directly visit the ISTA information system. We hope this manual will be beneficial when evaluating project proposals seeking support under the National Centres of Competence 1 Programme. Should you find anything unclear, do not hesitate to contact us.

Project Evaluation Department
TA CR

WHAT NOVELTIES DOES THE NCC1 PROGRAMME BRING AND WHAT TO FOCUS ON?

Project Participants – the main beneficiaries of the aid shall be research organisations exclusively; enterprises (legal and natural entities; SE/ME/LE) may only be other project participants; however, these must also plan non-zero costs. The main applicant must be a research organisation. The consortium must consist of at least 4 applicants, at least two of which must be SE and/or ME.

Funding model – inspired esp. by the funding scheme of the German Fraunhofer Institutes; long-term public funding for strategic research is bound to the Centre's ability to raise funds from commercial sources. The maximum amount of aid amounts to 80% for each year as well as in total for the entire implementation period. The project implementation must draw at least 20% of funds from non-public sources. Additionally, in the project proposal, the applicants shall undertake to achieve revenue in the minimum amount of 19% of the subsidy amount in the form of commercialisation activities in the field of R&D. If eligible costs occur to the beneficiary in 2018 (if the implementation commences already in 2018 but no earlier than as of 1 June 2018), the beneficiary shall include such costs in the 2019 statement of aid.

Project Implementation Period – the project implementation shall commence no earlier than on 1 June 2018 and no later than 1 February 2019; the deadline for project completion is on 31 December 2020. In 2020, the implemented projects will be evaluated and, if evaluated positively, the implementation period for such project may be extended until 2022. In such case, the aid for these projects for 2021–2022 may be increased by the maximum of half of the original aid amount granted.

Sub-Projects – these are not part of the project proposal, but the project shall be implemented through such sub-projects (at least one sub-project must be approved by the Centre Council prior to the signing of the Agreement on the Provision of Support). The sub-project will help to achieve specific project results.

Mandatory Annexes – the 1st Public Tender established three mandatory annexes. It is the Agreement on the Establishment of the National Centre of Competence that shall be concluded between the individual members of the NCC Centre (the main applicant and other participants). Second mandatory annex is the document establishing the NCC Centre Council, including the activities and function of the Council (this may be an agreement, rules of procedure or another legally binding document). The third mandatory annex to the project proposal shall be the minutes of the meeting or a similar document from the Centre Council meeting confirming the discussion of the submitted project proposal to the First Public Tender of the National Centres of Competence 1 (NCC1) Programme and its approval by the Centre Council. The recommended (not mandatory!) annexes are,

for example, a market research demonstrating the acquaintance with the future clients' needs or other relevant documents which may show the potential for the application of the expected outcomes.

Project Proposals in English language – for the purposes of the evaluation by the foreign opponents, the project proposals shall be submitted only in English language (except for the details for the Central Project Register (CEP)). However, the domestic opponents shall draft their Opponent's Report in Czech.

Consensus Meeting – a novelty in the TA CR evaluation process. Separate consensus meetings for each individual evaluated project proposal seeking aid under the First Public Tender of the National Centres of Competence 1 (NCC1) Programme shall be held prior to the NCC1 Programme Council meeting. These meetings shall be always attended by the domestic opponents of given project proposal, its reporter and other designated members of the Programme Council. The purpose of the consensus meeting is to consolidate the evaluation of the opponents and the reporter. If the participants of the concensus meeting should decide the total score awarded by the opponents does not correspond with the quality of the project proposal, they shall have the right to propose to the Programme Council an adjustment of the scores within the maximum range of $\pm 20\%$ of the points received by the project as the total amount of points from the opponents. The consensus meeting outcome is the protocol which form the basis for the Programme Council meeting.

TERMINOLOGY IN NCC1 PROGRAMME

- **Centre / NCC Centre** = NCC Project + other public support + commercialisation activities.
- **NCC Project** – a part of the NCC Centre funded by the TA CR NCC1 Programme (including co-funding).
- **NCC Branch** – a financially independent accounting entity which forms a certain part of the involved applicant implementing the NCC Project.
- **Sub-Project** – specific activities with specific outcomes (sub-projects are funded by the NCC Programme).
- **Centre Council** – the NCC Centre management, determining the conceptual and strategic course of the Centre, overseeing the fulfilment of the strategic research agenda, making crucial decisions.
 - **Comprising of e.g.:** representatives of NCC Centre participants, of research and application sphere, of public administration or of foreign facilities.

NCC1 PROGRAMME

What is the programme about?

The NCC1 Programme is aimed at supporting long-term cooperation between the research and the application spheres and at strengthening the institutional basis of applied research.

The programme is expected to synergize the existing centres, such as the Centres of Competence (TA CR), Centres of Excellence (GA CR), RDI Centres and other already built infrastructures and transform them into the so-called NCC Centres. Each applicant's NCC Centre will be a group of facility teams. The branches will jointly contribute to the implementation of the research activities to meet the objectives of the NCC Centre and will be subordinate to the NCC Centre joint management. The branches participate in the NCC Centre via their staff team, infrastructure, existing know-how, own resources, as well as ongoing and future projects. Each branch must be a financially independent unit with separate accounting within the institution. These branches should work intensively with the application sector and should generate knowledge with a high potential for direct application in practice; they should also acquire a significant portion of their income from contractual research as well as from other resources.

What are the programme objectives?

The objective of the Programme is to increase the efficiency and quality of the outcomes of applied research and technology transfer in key areas with growth prospects, increase undertaking competitiveness, and strengthen the excellence and application relevance of research organisations.

The tool for achieving this objective is to build a sufficiently stable and long-term base of applied research (in the form of National Centres of Competence) through the concentration of research capacities and setting their strong focus on the application of their research outcomes in practice. In order to ensure the long-term stability of the system, centres aided under the National Centres of Competence 1 Programme, which will be evaluated as successful on the basis of the established criteria, can be subsequently aided under the follow-up National Centres of Competence 2 Programme.

Achievement of the programme objective should also be ensured by fulfilment the sub-objectives of the programme:

- links between existing research centres;
- focus on promising sectors of Czech economy according to the RIS3 strategy;
- achieving interdisciplinarity and support for long-term cooperation;
- promoting innovation by technology transfer, emphasis on the practical applicability of results;
- increasing the number of innovation leaders.

National Centres of Competence 1 in a Nutshell

Parameter	NCC
Maximum support intensity	80%
Project implementation period	until 12/2020 max. with possible a extension until 2022
Allocation of financial support per project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CZK 66–330 mil. by 2020 • CZK 100–500 mil. for the entire implementation period until 2022
Indirect cost reporting method:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full cost, flat rate 20% • flat rate of up to 30% for HR Award
Beneficiaries of aid	ROs only
Applicants	ROs, enterprises

What is the topic focus of the 1st public tender?

1st Public Tender Themes
Biomedicine
Biotechnology and Professional Chemistry
Global Change Impacts on Czech Republic and Environmental Industry
Transport and Smart City
Aviation and Space Technology
Modern Energy
Optics and Optoelectronics
Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology
Robotics, Informatics, and Cybernetics for Society 4.0
Social Impacts of Technological Changes
Mechanical Engineering for 21st Century

Each project must concern itself with at least 1 and a maximum of 11 themes.

What are the expected outcomes of the programme?

Expected Outcomes	Results of Programme
P – patent	
G – technically realised results – prototype, functional sample	
Z – pilot plant, proven technology	
R – software	
F – industrial and utility model	
H – results reflected in legislation and standards and outcomes reflected in non-legislative directives and regulations binding within the competence of the respective provider	
N – certified methodologies, procedures and specialised maps with professional content	
O – other outcomes	

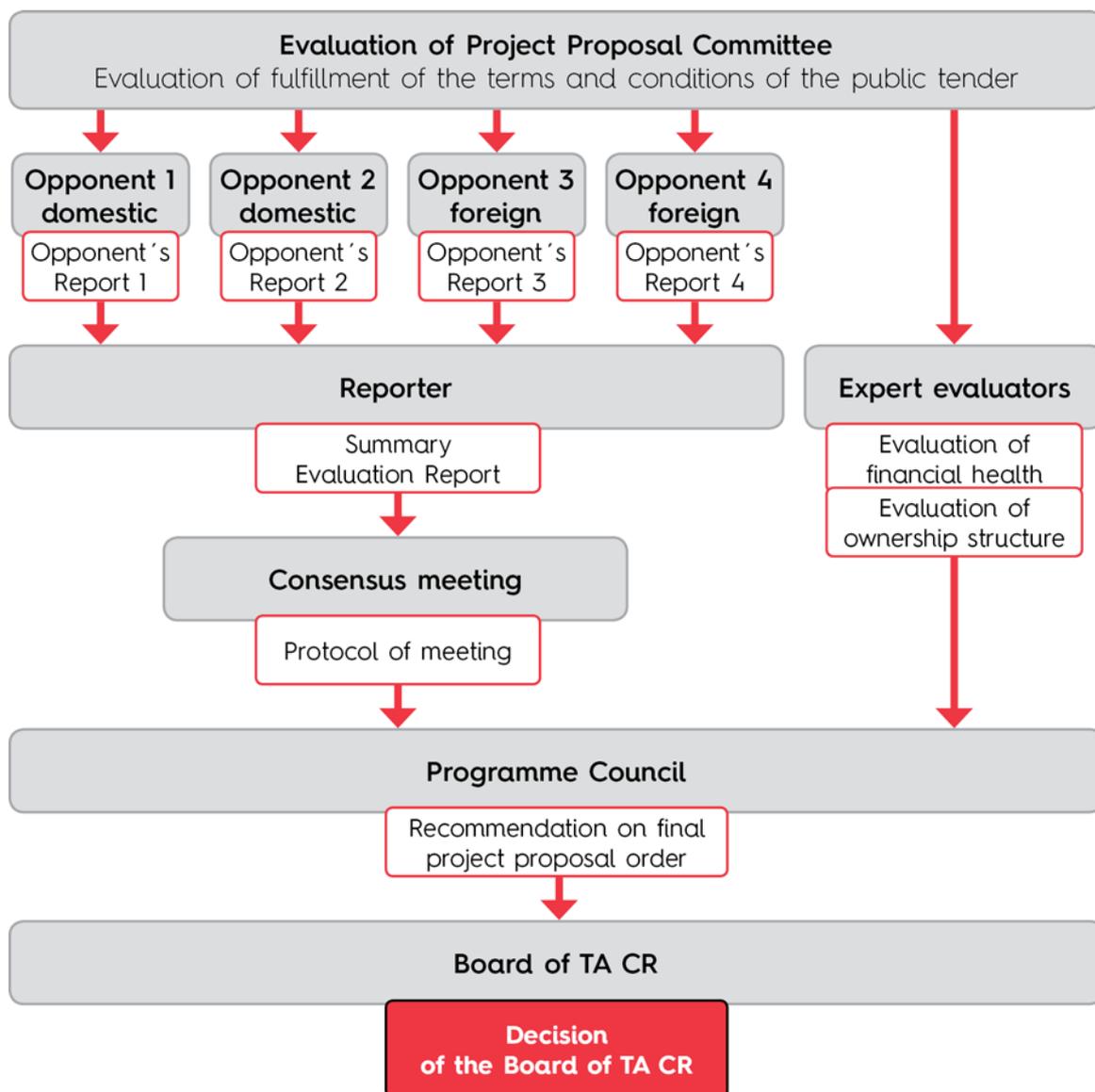
For a detailed overview of the NCC1 Programme outcomes see the Definition of Result Types Supported by NCC1 Programme. Comprehensive information on the aforementioned results is also given in [Annex 4](#) of the document “Methodology for evaluating research organisations and programmes under targeted support for research, development, and innovation”. The translated part of this annex on the results supported by NCC1 is [here](#).

Upon achieving the outcomes, each outcome supported by the Programme shall be assigned to specific objectives of the selected sub-fields of the National Priorities of Oriented Research, i.e. upon submission of the sub-project, the proposed outcomes of the sub-project must already be in accordance with the selected sub-fields and objectives.

TA CR EVALUATION PROCESS

For programmes implemented by the TA CR, the evaluation process for projects submitted to the announced public tender is governed by SME-34 Evaluation of Project Proposals Submitted to Public Tender (v1) and specified in the tender dossier. The entire evaluation process is divided into several successive steps listed below. The process is based on Act No. 130/2002 Coll.; however, it may differ from one programme to another, e.g. in the number of drafted reports in the public tender or the powers of individual bodies.

How are the NCC1 Programme projects evaluated?



1. The project proposals delivered in accordance with the announced conditions of accepting the project proposals are first assessed by the **Project Proposal Committee** which decides whether they comply with the conditions of accepting the project proposals in the public tender in applied research and experimental development.
2. The project proposals accepted to the public tender are then evaluated by the **opponents**. Each project proposal is evaluated by **two domestic and two foreign opponents** which have not been involved in the project implementation, meet the impartiality requirement and are not employees of the same organisation. The opponents evaluate the point-score criteria (the factual part of the project proposal) and the binary criteria. The opponent's report also includes a final evaluation of the project proposal with its final position on whether to recommend the project for the aid.
3. Along with the opponents, each project proposal is assigned a **reporter** (a member of the Programme Council). For each project proposal, the reporter drafts a summary assessment report summing up the opponents' reports, pointing out the discrepancies in their evaluation, and containing the reporter's own insights into the project proposal.
4. The applicants which are business entities are assessed based on their financial health and ownership structure. These aspects are assessed by the **expert evaluators** whose report is then the basis for the Programme Council meetings.
5. The Programme Council meetings are preceded by separate **consensus meetings** for each individual assessed project proposal. These meetings shall be always attended by the domestic opponents of given project proposal, its reporter and other designated members of the Programme Council. The purpose of the consensus meeting is to consolidate the evaluation of the opponents and the reporter. If the participants of the consensus meeting should decide the total score awarded by the opponents does not correspond with the quality of the project proposal, they shall have the right to propose to the Programme Council an adjustment of the scores within the maximum range of $\pm 20\%$ of the points received by the project as the total amount of points from the opponents. The consensus meeting outcome is the protocol which forms the basis for the Programme Council meeting.
6. The project proposals will be then assessed by the **Programme Council** (its activities are governed by RAD-02 Statute and Rules of Procedure of Expert Council Body (v 5) available on the www.tacr.cz website) which will base its evaluation on the evaluations by the opponents, reporter and expert evaluators as well as on the recommendations resulted from the consensus meetings. For the project proposals in question, the Programme Council bases its decision on the total of points given by the opponents. If the Programme Council wishes to adjust the score of the project proposal, it may do so within the maximum range of $\pm 20\%$ of the points received by the project as the total amount of points from the opponents. If the Programme Council proposes a different form of point scores than recommended by the consensus meeting, it is required to thoroughly explain it in the minutes of the meeting.
7. The final stage is the evaluation by the **Board of TA CR** which may adjust the evaluation score of the project proposal, reduce the total costs proposed, and adjust the Programme Council recommendations. It makes the final decision on whether or not to grant the aid.

OPPONENTS

How are the opponents assigned?

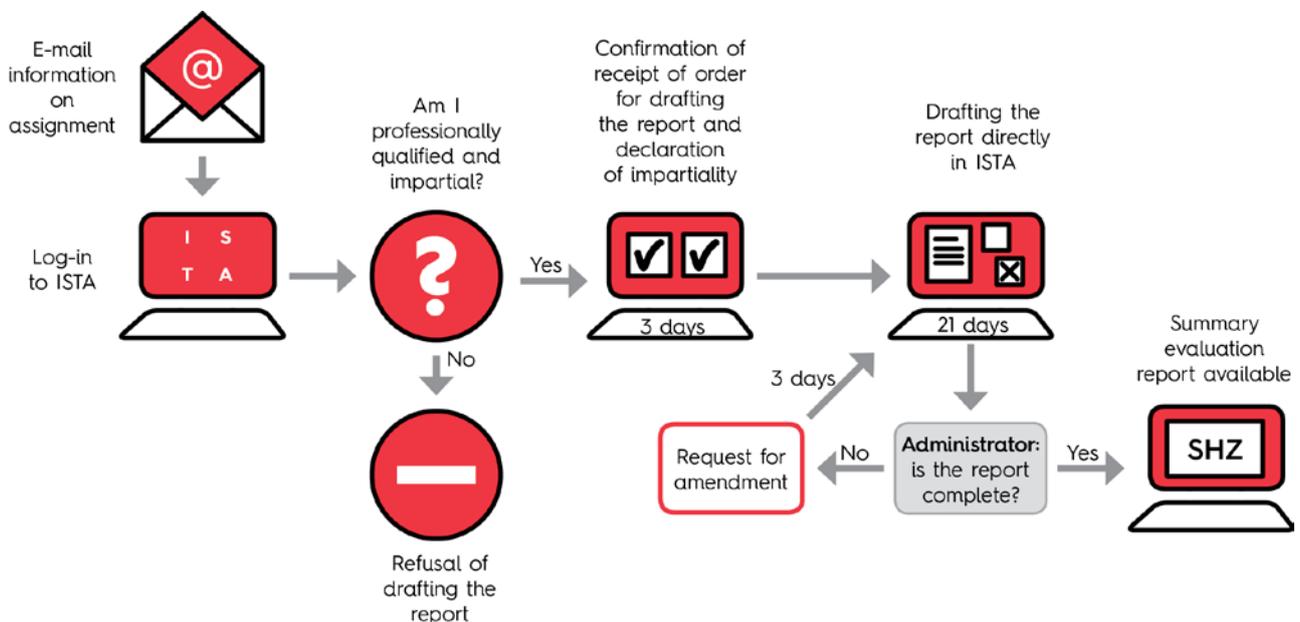
The Office of TA CR assigns two domestic and two foreign opponents to each project proposal via the ISTA information system (hereinafter ISTA) based on the established criteria (esp. impartiality and conformity with the field categories CEP and FORD selected by the opponents).

If you are the selected opponents (about which you will be informed via e-mail), you are obligated to confirm acceptance of the project proposal and your willingness to draft the report to the Office of TA CR **within three business days**.

Please note that the project proposals under the First Public Tender of the NCC1 shall be submitted in English language. Therefore, it is necessary to have a knowledge of this language at a professional level for the evaluation.

The number of project proposals to be evaluated by you as the opponent in the given public tender is limited in order to avoid excessive workload and preserve the quality of drafting the reports for the public tender. You may access the project proposals assigned to you via ISTA.

What is the procedure for drafting the opponent's report?



1. You will be automatically informed of the project proposal assignment by a short e-mail message.
2. Log in the ISTA information system and you will find the assigned project proposals under your Tasks.
3. According to the project proposal annotation, you may then decide whether you are professionally qualified to evaluate the project proposal. If you do not consider yourself an expert in given field or if you are partial to the project proposal or any of the applicants, decline drafting the report in the system and state the appropriate reason. With this step, the evaluation process shall be discontinued.
4. If you meet the impartiality requirement to the project proposal or to the applicants and you are simultaneously professionally qualified to evaluate the project proposal, confirm the assignment in the system by checking that you agree with the contents of the declaration of impartiality entitled "Confirmation of Accepting Order for Drafting Report in Public Tender and Opponent's Declaration of Impartiality". This confirmation must be performed **within three business days**. Otherwise, it shall be deemed as an expression of disinterest to evaluate the project and the TA CR shall approach the opponent who was selected next in line.
5. You have **21 calendar days** to draft your report from the date of the receipt of the order for drafting the report. Please note the administrator may shorten the deadline in exceptional cases (e.g. if the evaluation is assigned shortly before the relevant consensus meeting). **Thank you in advance for your understanding if the deadline had to be shortened in your case.**
6. You shall draft the report directly in ISTA.
7. After the report is drafted, it needs to be submitted electronically. In the report form for the public tender, you must complete the fields for all criteria (point-score and binary, i.e. eliminative). Unless all fields are completed, the report cannot be completed and submitted in ISTA.
8. You shall draft the report within the set deadline and sufficient quality for further evaluation of the project proposal. The administrator of the evaluators is entitled to return the incomplete reports based on a formal inspection or request from the reporter back to the opponent for completion. The opponents are obliged to finalise and resubmit the report in ISTA within three calendar days.
9. Upon announcing the results of the public tender, you may access a summary evaluation report in ISTA, in which the reporter (Programme Council member), among other things, comments on your arguments and evaluates your performance with grades. Two grades are allocated – one for the coherence of the report (if the evaluation score corresponds with verbal commentary) and one for professionalism (whether it is clear the opponent understand the issues in question); the grades range from 1 to 4 with 1 being the best. Such information may provide you with a feedback and reflection for your next evaluation (what to focus on, what to look at differently etc.). Otherwise, you may contact us in case you disagree with the evaluation of your report.

What is the procedure for a consensus meeting?

1. The consensus meeting is held at the TA CR headquarters with the participation of domestic opponents of the project proposal in question, the reporter, and other Programme Council members.
2. Prior to the meeting, you will be able to access other opponents' evaluation to prepare arguments for the consensus meeting based on contradictions you have found.
3. The purpose of the consensus meeting is to consolidate the evaluation of all opponents and the reporter. Therefore, the protocol of the meeting will particularly outline the conclusions of discussions on specific contradictions in such evaluations. The protocols will also contain recommendations on whether to support the project proposal or not.
4. If the participants to the consensus meeting decide to adjust the total number of the points granted to the project proposal based on their discussion of the individual contradictions as well as overall overview of the project proposal, they may propose an adjustment of the scores within the maximum range of $\pm 20\%$ of the points received by the project as the total amount of points from the opponents.

What are the reasons for exclusion from evaluation and for sanctions?

You must decline the drafting of the report if:

- a) the topic addressed in the project proposal does not correspond to your professional competence,
- b) you are partial to the project proposal or to the main applicant or other participants of the project proposal (esp. if you are in an employment relationship with the main applicant or another participant of the project proposal; please note that as a university employee, you are partial to all projects in which the university is involved, regardless of which faculty is actually involved in the given project). **If you report your employer and other entities, to which you feel in any way impartial or in a conflict of interest, correctly in ISTA, the project proposals involving such entities shall not be assigned to you for evaluation.**
- c) you are linked with the main applicant or another participant in any other close relationship which might make you impartial (e.g. you or your company submit or are already implementing another project together with the main applicant or another participant of the project proposal in question).

Impartiality also exists when...

Opponents are also considered impartial if they are in a secondary employment or other employment relationship with the main applicant or another participant (regardless of its scope). *For further details on impartiality and specific cases which TA CR considers as impartiality see the Documents folder in ISTA.*

The opponents evaluating the project proposal cannot be a NCC1 Programme Council member.

If you draft the report and during the project proposal evaluation you are found to meet any of the conditions excluding you from the evaluation or you are found partial to the project proposal, the TA CR evaluation bodies shall not take this report under consideration and the TA CR shall ensure a draft of a new report.

If conditions are violated, it may happen that...

The opponent bears full responsibility for violating the aforementioned conditions, even in case of a damage caused to TA CR or a third party due to the violation of confidentiality and personal data protection provisions and due to misuse of such personal data or violation of other obligations stipulates in the agreement concluded with the TA CR.

If you fail to draft the report within the stipulated deadline or you submit the report in quality insufficient for further evaluation of the project or you make a fundamental mistake in your evaluation, you may be excluded from the opponent's database. Similarly, those opponents who drafted the report on a project proposal to which they were partial and did not report such matter shall be excluded as well.

In failing to follow the stipulated deadline for drafting the report, you may be subject to sanctions. The contractual penalty for the delay in drafting the report is CZK 50 per each commenced day of delay. Simultaneously, you may be required to compensate in full for damages incurred due to the delay in fulfilling your contractual obligations.

In the event of a gross breach of your agreement on your part, the TA CR is entitled to withdraw from the agreement. Such gross breach of the agreement is considered to be e.g. delay in drafting the report which is longer than two business days.

PROJECT PROPOSAL EVALUATION

What are the basic principles for project proposal evaluation?

- First, you should examine the project proposal as a whole in order to get a comprehensive idea of the project proposal, especially the parts that may not meet the specific criterion and may be key for the overall project proposal evaluation.
- When evaluating the project proposal, follow this Manual for Opponents, the SME-23 Directive for Ensuring the Drafting of Reports, Positions and Expert Evaluations (v4), the wording of the NCC1 Programme and the tender dossier of the First Public Tender. All materials are available on the TA CR website www.tacr.cz. When creating your project proposal evaluation, also follow the publicly available databases ([information system for research, experimental development and innovation](#), [patent databases](#) etc.), trustworthy online sources and your own experience and knowledge. Besides your professional experience and knowledge and the aforementioned documents, you may also utilise the knowledge gained from examining other professional materials and documentation.
- The TA CR Programmes arise from the Community Framework (Framework for State aid for Research, Development and Innovation – 2014/C 198/01) from Commission Regulation (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 on the Functioning of the European Union) and from Act No. 130/2002 Coll. (Act on the Support of Research and Development from Public Funds and on the amendment to some related acts – Act on the Support of Research and Development); therefore, you should be familiar with these guidelines.
- When evaluating the project proposals, you should use the **Frascati Manual** – the documents published by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) which may assist in the evaluation of the research and experimental development activities.
- The output of the expert evaluation of the project proposal will be the electronically completed “Evaluation Form for Public Tender” stored in the electronic application for project proposal evaluation. **The project proposal evaluation takes place only electronically.** The form sets out the structure and contents of the required report for public tender.
- When concluding the evaluation, state your final position on the project proposal, if you recommend the project for the aid and for your reports provide appropriate reasoning. In particular, mention the reasons which led you to such a decision, even if they are already listed with one of the criteria.
- Please also state the pros and cons of the project proposal in question, even if they are already listed with one of the criteria.
- Upon creating the evaluation, be aware that the TA CR will provide your report (without stating your name) to the applicant.

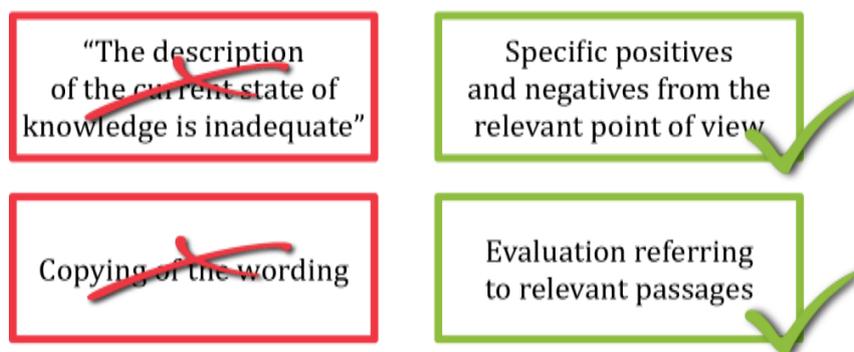
What are the general guidelines for evaluation?

Point score must be always accompanied by a comment and reasoning for each criterion.

The factual argumentation of opponents in each criteria is very important for the evaluation in further stages of the evaluation but also after the public tender is completed (the opponent's reports are disclosed to the applicants and especially those who were not granted the support may feel injured if the points of their project proposal were reduced without the report stating clearly why it was done so). Unfortunately, it may happen that some of the opponent's evaluation lack such argumentation. The opponents may lengthily comment on the justification of the criterion evaluation, but after closer examination, one realises their commentary cites whole passages or sentences from the project proposal and the text is entirely unsubstantial in terms of the opponent argumentation.

Such report is equally useless to one in which the opponent replaces its own arguments with the one-sentence descriptions of given state (e.g. "The description of the current state of knowledge is inadequate"). As implied above, the author of such an report is not very helpful to other participants in the evaluation process nor does it benefit the author's reputation. The opponents with lower grades for their evaluation may be approached less in the future public tenders and in case of repeated mistakes, the cooperation with TA CR is terminated completely.

The opponent's comments on individual criteria (or sub-criteria) do not have to be extensive; however, they should answer the question of why the opponent assigned the given number of points to the criterion in question. If a full score is assigned, the commentary should include the positives of the project from the relevant point of view. If the number of points gets lower, the commentary should include the specific negatives so the list of deficiencies corresponds to the points taken.



How to do it?

In your comments, use your own arguments referring only to the relevant parts of the project (do not copy entire sections) and clearly state specific pros and cons of the project in terms of the given criterion and assign points based on their ratio.

The point score of the project proposal shall correspond to the verbal commentary (i.e. if you give a negative evaluation, it must also reflect in the score).

The opponent should avoid situations where it introduces a number of reservations to the project but then assigns full or only slightly reduced number of points. The same applies for situations where the opponent does not include any deficiencies in its commentary but then lowers the number of assigned points (on the other hand, full or high number of points assigned shall be justified by stating pros of the project proposal within the given criterion). The opponent should not be afraid to assign zero points if it is the opponent's report that the project proposal does not meet the criterion.

More reservations without points reduced or ~~hardly any~~ reservations and number of points reduced

Point score corresponding to verbal commentary

How to do it?

Carefully compare the number of points assigned and the degree of criticism of relevant comments (the opponent should be able to answer the question of how much does the project proposal deviate from the ideal state and reduce the number of points accordingly; similarly, the opponent should set a threshold for meeting a criterion which allows for successful project implementation and should the opponent feel the threshold is exceeded, it assigns zero points).

On average, a high-quality project proposal is usually rated at around 100 points.

If you assign more than 115 points to any project proposal, you are required to justify such a high number of points (the project proposal must be exceptionally good in order to earn such high score). On the other hand, if you assign less than 70 points, you are required to explicitly explain why you find the project so inadequate.

If you find the project proposal quality insufficient, you should not recommend it for receiving support.

If you gain knowledge of facts not directly required by the prescribed structure of the report but relevant to the project proposal and they may influence the decision on whether the project proposal receives support or not, you should include them in the report.

When evaluating, pay attention to the language and textual form and proofread individual comments before the submission. Typos and grammatical errors may reduce the credibility of the report as well as its author in the reader’s eyes. It is a shame especially in cases where the content and expertise of such report is on a very high level. Mistakes in the report may unnecessarily reduce your credibility.

How should/not a proper justification of answers in the project proposal evaluation look like?

Sub-criterion: Describing the strategy for the commercialisation of know-how gained in the NCC Centre and experience of participants with R&D outcome commercialisation.

The applicants have a clear strategy how to commercialise ~~the project outcomes~~ and their experience suggests this strategy will be fulfilled.

The applicants build on their previous cooperation where they successfully commercialised the outcomes of a jointly implemented R&D project. Company XY, a member of the consortium, is a major producer of plastic parts for the automotive industry. Therefore, it can be reasonably expected that XY will successfully ensure the application of the planned outcomes of the Centre. It is also positive that the Centre does not rely solely on the application of the outputs by the consortium members but the submitted commercialisation strategy includes other economic entities outside of the automotive industry, while some have already expressed preliminary interest in these outputs or they previously applied such outputs (e.g. companies ZZ, UU, or XX).

How to evaluate point-score criteria?

- In your verbal commentary, thoroughly justify your point score assigned to each sub-criterion – be brief and concise.
- The NCC1 Programme established scoring in the form of point scale while the sub-criteria are divided into four categories according to their importance. For each sub-criterion, there is a choice of four point evaluations. In ascending order, they mean:

Not fulfilled	0	0	0	0
Fulfilled with serious reservations	1	3	5	6
Fulfilled with minor reservations	3	7	10	14
Fulfilled without reservations	5	10	15	20

- If you evaluate one of the project proposal’s sub-criteria below with 0 points, you will no longer be able to recommend the project proposal for support. You will also not be able to recommend the project proposal for support if you assign all sub-criteria less than 60 points in total.

Point-Score Criteria

1 Quality of NCC Project Management Model

1.1

Method of Organising NCC Centre's Activities and Management.

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The applicant described the Centre's management method in a clear and detailed manner. The Centre Council structure is in accordance with the recommendations listed in the Programme and the tender dossier for the 1st Public Tender and its structure and set-up are presumed to efficiently fulfil the rights and obligations set by the Programme. The relationship between the Centre Council and individual participants are clearly described and determined so the Council can fulfil its mission according to the Programme's instructions in favour of the Centre as a whole. The main participant has previous experience with managing R&D projects. The main participant is able to manage the implementation progress and adherence to work schedule. The method of the Centre's management, the level of communication with other participants, the definition and system of responsibilities for solving project implementation tasks and organising cooperation during implementation are described in detail. The Centre's manager has the necessary experience and expertise to efficiently manage and supervise the activities within the main participant's competence.

Help with Evaluation: *The method of the Centre's management should correspond to its size, specifications of given field and the expected development of the Centre. Under the Programme terms, the Centre Council should consist of representatives of the public administration and research and application spheres. Part of the Council members should represent foreign facilities (the representation should correspond to the planned foreign overlap of the Centre's activities). The Centre Council power against the Centre and its participants should be clearly defined and described in order for the Council to efficiently fulfil its part prescribed in the Programme's wording (while the binary criterion 2 evaluates the mere existence of relevant documents, apply qualitative evaluation, i.e. to what extent is the system meaningful, efficient and its application beneficial in achieving the objectives of the Centre and the project). The Centre's manager should have experience in managing large R&D projects.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Centre Management Method, Mandatory Annexes – Agreement on the Establishment of the National Centre of Competence and documents related to the establishment and status of the Centre Council, Research Team – Conducting management activities of the NCC Centre (Manager).

1.2 Quality and Extent/Level of Cooperation among NCC Centre's Participants and with Other (External) Partners.

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The Centre's participants build on already existing cooperation, or the establishment of relations with new entities is done meaningfully, in order to effectively involve all of the Centre's participants in the cooperation and to direct the cooperation to achieve the project's objectives. The involvement of the Centre's external partners and the cooperation procedure with them is clearly described and such cooperation is justifiable in terms of achieving the project's objectives.

***Help with Evaluation:** The applicant should describe the types of future cooperation, especially within the NCC Consortium but also with external entities. Negative evaluation should be given to projects in which the participants will work "side by side", i.e. no cooperation between individual teams will occur during the implementation of individual activities and sub-projects.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Centre Management Method, NCC Project Activities – Branches of Involved Participants, Mandatory Annex – Agreement on the Establishment of the National Centre of Competence.

1.3 Describing Strategy for Commercialisation of Know-How Gained in NCC Centre and Experience of Participants with R&D Outcome Commercialisation.

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The project proposal applicants described the commercialisation strategy of the know-how gained in the Centre clearly and meaningfully. The applicants used specific examples to document previous experience with commercialisation and the market(s) intended for the project results. The described strategy and documented experience indicate prerequisites for fulfilling the project's objectives, especially in connection with the Centre's ability to secure a substantial part of the revenues from non-public sources.

***Help with Evaluation:** The experience with commercialisation and technology transfer needs to be evaluated in the context of all enterprises and institutions involved. Unsatisfactory evaluation should be received by those projects in which none of the important consortium participants involved has any experience with commercialisation of applied research (the criterion cannot be met based on experience of a participant whose involvement and position in the Centre is merely marginal and its crucial benefit in applying the project's outcome cannot be assumed). The existence of a functional commercialisation system within the applicant's organisational structure is deemed positive. If a market placement is described, there should be specific and grounded strategies stated, e.g. cheaper production, better product quality, connections to key distributors etc.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: Commercialisation Method and Management, NCC Project Activities.

1.4 Sufficient Credibility of Risk Analysis Contained in Project and Consideration of Risks of NCC Project

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The project proposal applicants described in detail the critical assumptions of fulfilling the objectives, sufficiently identified possible risks (including e.g. rejection of the innovative implementation by the target group), considered the possibility of their occurrence, suggested methods to address them, estimated their severity and described preventive measures to be taken to eliminate or reduce the risk (prevention plan).

Help with Evaluation: A complex overview of the risks of the project indicate the project is well thought-through and planned by the applicant. The method of solution and their prevention should also be included. The project proposal applicant completed a table of identified risks in which the following risks are already pre-filled: Personnel (important employee turnover), organisational (managing the researchers and other participants), financial (loss of solvency of other participants), loss of ability to apply the outcome, change in project (based on the research during the implementation). The applicant may add any additional risks at its own discretion. The applicant will accompany each risk with the probability of its occurrence on a scale of Very High = 5 (more than 70%), High = 4 (36–69%), Medium = 3 (21–35%), Low = 2 (11–20%), Very Low = 1 (less than 10%) as well as identifying the appropriate impact: Very High = 16, High = 8, Bigger = 4, Small = 2, Very Small = 1. The risk level is then automatically calculated as the product of the two previous values and it is a benchmark. The higher the benchmark, the greater attention should be paid to analysing these risks, their prevention and crisis scenarios.

Relevant parts of the project proposal: Analysis of Risks to Achieving the Project Objectives.

2 Quality of Research and Implementation Team/Consortium (the existing quality, results and experience of the participants/implementation team including international experience and cooperation with regard to the NCC Centre's focus)

2.1 Quality of Research Team.

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The main researcher has sufficient practical experience in R&D as well as in managing a research team for R&D implementation to such an extent that there is no doubt of its ability to lead its team to fulfil the R&D objectives set by the project. The research team has the required expertise to meet set objectives. The researchers' professional competence has been proven. The researchers have experience with R&D project implementation. The research team is balanced in terms of its expertise and experience. The experience obtained by the team members correspond with their position in the team.

Help with Evaluation: *In the case of applied research or experimental development projects, the implementation should be performed by relevant experts who can contribute to the successful implementation of the relevant outcome of the research project. These experts can be experienced academics, persons with field experience as well as an emerging research generation without any greater professional experience. The size of the research team should be reasonable. The expertise or competence of the aforementioned team members should be necessary and justifiable for the relevant project. The main researcher should have a proven professional history in the R&D field and experience and erudition in the area of the project's main focus, at the same time the researcher should be a competent manager who can efficiently supervise the research team.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: Research Team – Sponsors of Research Themes and any other key person, Research Team – Conducting Research Activities of NCC Centre (main researcher).

2.2 Quality of Institutions.

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The Centre's participants (i.e. their relevant facilities involved with the Centre) have sufficient prerequisites for implementing the Centre's activities, fulfilling its objectives and achieving the expected outcomes and their commercialisation. That is, they have adequate experience in R&D implementation, or in applying its outcomes into practice, they also have sufficient facilities and technical equipment at their disposal to fulfil the activities planned for the project. The project appropriately involves entities from research and application sphere in such a way that their cooperation leads to achieving the planned outcomes and their subsequent commercialisation (or application, in general). The NCC Centre has an innovative leader/innovative leaders with an international status related to the Centre's focus.

Help with Evaluation: *Focus on experience and facilities of individual institutions, especially with regard to the Centre's dispositions – know-how, infrastructure, own resources, experience with R&D project implementation and outcome commercialisation (including its success) or the extent of current activities relevant to the Centre's activities (project financed from other sources, outcomes etc.). The quality of the institution should be evaluated in relation to the definition of participant's facility. The evaluation should not positively reflect the experience/outcomes gained outside of the given NCC Centre's facility (e.g. outcomes from other parts of the faculty if the facility in question is only its selected part, such as a department). On the other hand, the fact that the NCC Centre contains an innovation leader with an important international status should be positively evaluated.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Branch, Applicant's Previous Experience.

3 NCC Centre's Research Focus

3.1 Relevance, Topicality, Necessity, Potential, Applicability (in relation to the NCC Centre's focus, the selected theme(s) and planned outcomes).

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The applicants proved that the objective and focus of the Centre is up-to-date and needed in the future. The research theme(s) are selected appropriately with respect to such objective and focus. Also, there is sufficient potential and interest in the application of the outcome in practice (on market).

Help with Evaluation: *Negative evaluation should be given to projects of Centres focused on marginal topics and needs, with low potential for market application, or focused on short-term problems or topics which no future potential. For the purpose of the 1st Public Tender, the research themes, from which the project must meet at least one and the fulfilment of which should ensure the required topicality and necessity of the implementation, are the following: 1. Biomedicine, 2. Biotechnology and Professional Chemistry, 3. Global Change Impacts on the Czech Republic and Environmental Industry, 4. Transport and Smart City, 5. Aviation and Space Technology, 6. Modern Energy, 7. Optics and Optoelectronics, 8. Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology, 9. Robotics, Informatics and Cybernetics for Society 4.0, 10. Social Impacts of Technological Changes, 11. Mechanical Engineering for 21st Century.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Centre Annotation, NCC Main Research Theme, NCC Centre objective and focus and fulfilment of the programme objective, NCC Project Activities.

3.2 The Commercial Potential of Selected NCC Centre's Focus and Proposed Method of Cooperation with the Application Sphere and its Long-Term Vision and Knowledge of Third Party (future clients, partners) and Target Group Needs.

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The applicants proved their knowledge of the market targeted for planned project implementation and such foundation indicates the potential for application of the expected outcomes. The market for subsequent production is sufficient and the applicant described how should the subsequent production gain its place on the market (e.g. cheaper production, better product, link to the key distributors, etc.). The applicants described how the enterprises involved in the project should be practically participating in the application of the outcomes and the sphere of application (i.e. the enterprises outside the consortium and other public administration organisation subjects) in general. The researchers have an overview of the potential target user group and method of outcome application, or they have a good knowledge of the relevant market and demand.

Help with Evaluation: *The most suitable method of demonstrating the knowledge of the market is to provide market research; however, the interest in applying the outcomes may also be supported by other relevant annexes. The more objective and binding information is presented, the better. The presentation of current or potential competition for subsequent production should be deemed positively, not negatively. The more specific and trustworthy the target market inner-workings are described, the clearer is the applicant's notion of the acquisition of part of the market. On the other hand, general wording supported by no objective data cannot be considered as a valid market mapping. Ideally, the commercial potential of the Centre's outcomes should be presented in an international context. The market, or the proposed outcomes, may not always be of a commercial nature (e.g. with public sector application). In any case, the applicant must demonstrate its knowledge of the environment for which the project outputs are targeted (possibly including knowledge of target groups etc.) and prove their competitiveness, i.e. method of ensuring the application of the outcomes.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: Cooperation Management, NCC Branch – Application of Results, Expected Outcomes, Expected Income, Commercialisation Method and Management.

3.3 Usefulness of the project and its contribution to meeting the objectives of the Programme and relevant national strategies

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The applicants have demonstrated that the project fulfils the main objective of the Programme which is to increase the efficiency and quality of the outcomes of applied research and technology transfer in key areas with growth prospects, increase undertaking competitiveness, and strengthen the excellence and application relevance of research organisations. As well as individual sub-objectives of the Programme: (i) linking the *existing* research centres, (ii) focusing on the prospective sectors of the Czech economy according to the National RIS3 Strategy, (iii) securing interdisciplinarity and supporting long-term cooperation, (iv) promoting innovation through technology transfer, emphasising the applicability of results in practice, and (v) increasing the number of innovation leaders.

Help with Evaluation: *The project proposal's conformity with the focus and objectives of the NCC Programme is the essence of the binary criterion 5. If you think the project does not conform to the Programme, you should assign 0 points to the project and then evaluate the binary criterion as unfulfilled and finally not recommend the project for support. If conformity exists, evaluate this sub-criterion in terms to what extent and how efficiently and meaningfully the project fulfils all aspects of main objectives and sub-objectives of the*

Programme. The project should fulfil at least one of the sub-objectives; however, the more sub-objectives the complex implementation covers, the better. In this case, the evaluation follows “the more, the better” principle (which should be reflected in the score evaluation). The applicants could also demonstrate with which other strategic documents their project complies. Evaluate the extent to which the project fulfils these strategies and if such strategies are relevant in terms of meeting the NCC Programme objectives. If the effect is positive, compliance with other strategic documents is also grounds for higher point score (in practice, however, it should be considered positive if you are hesitating between assigning two-point values, the compliance with secondary strategic documents should not completely compensate for the lack of compliance with main objectives or sub-objectives of the NCC Programme).

Relevant parts of the project: NCC Centre Annotation, NCC Main Research Theme, NCC Centre objective and Focus and Fulfillment of the Programme Objective, Fulfillment of the sub-objectives of the Programme.

4 Budget

4.1 Involvement of Resources from Enterprises – Consortium Members

Evaluate to what extent the following applies: The applicants’ estimation of resources from involved enterprises which contribute to the project implementation is credible in relation to its size and history. The project budget, including these resources and required aid, is balanced, so all the planned activities leading to achieving the project objectives may be efficiently implemented.

Help with Evaluation: *Evaluate the credibility of the estimated volume of resources from enterprises in relation to:*

- enterprises involved (their size, volume of existing R&D activities etc.) and*
- the degree of their involvement in the project.*

At the same time, it should apply that the bigger degree of involvement of resources from enterprises (or the lower amount of aid is required) in relation to the required subsidy in total, the better. The minimum degree of the enterprises’ participation is 20% and compliance with this minimum is monitored by the information system and is inspected as a part of the formal inspection. If your professional report indicates that compliance with the minimum participation is unrealistic, you should evaluate this criterion as unfulfilled.

Relevant parts of the project proposal: Financial Plan, NCC Centre Management Method, NCC Project Activities, NCC Branch.

4.2 Volume of NCC Centre's Commercial Revenues

Evaluate to what extent the following applies:

The applicants' estimation of revenues from the Centre's commercialisation activities is at least 19% of the required aid, it is credible and conforms to the Centre's focus, existing commercialisation experience of its participants and situation on the markets for which the project outcomes are targeted.

Help with Evaluation: Evaluate the credibility of the estimated volume of the Centre's commercial revenue in relation to:

- Centre's focus,
- market potential,
- Centre's structure,
- experience of the Centre's participants and
- existing results of outcome commercialisation/technology transfer etc.

The project commercial revenues should amount to at least 19% of the total required aid. At the same time, it should apply that the bigger the amount of the Centre's commercial revenues (in proportion to the total requires subsidy), the better.

Relevant parts of the project proposal: Financial Plan, NCC Centre Management Method, NCC Project Activities, NCC Branch.

How to evaluate binary criteria?

For each of the three binary criteria, please specify:

- YES, the project meets the binary criterion
- NO, the project does not meet the binary criterion

If you think the project proposal does not meet a certain binary criterion, state so in the report and duly justify it. Therefore, the project proposal may no longer be recommended for support under NCC1 Programme. You will, however, still need to complete the entire report for the public tender (**for example, it is not acceptable to comment on all criteria that you do not recommend the project for support based on it not meeting the binary criterion!**). If the project proposal meets the binary criterion, it is not necessary to justify your position.

How to evaluate binary criteria?	Project meets the binary criterion	→ YES
	Project does not meet the binary criterion	→ NO + reason

Binary Criteria

0.1 Activities implemented within the projects are considered activities of applied research and/or experimental development.

Evaluate whether the submitted project proposal's nature meets the definition of applied research or experimental development.

Help with Evaluation: *The NCC1 Programme does not support projects the subject of which is basic research. If you think some of the parts of the project proposal are more of a basic than applied research, state so and define the proportion of such activities to the whole project (in terms of time or finances).*

You must decide between applied research (AR) or experimental development (ED) based on the fulfilment of five criteria; the activity must be novel, creative, uncertain, systematic and reproducible – according to the Frascati Manual. Here you will also find instructive examples of identifying AR and ED in different fields of R&D.

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Centre Annotation, NCC Centre Objective and Focus, NCC Project Activities.

0.2 The NCC Centre's management fulfils all requirements of the Programme and the tender dossier.

Evaluate whether the Centre Council has been established and whether its responsibilities and powers are set out clearly in the relevant documents in accordance with the Programme's terms.

Help with Evaluation:

According to the Programme, the Centre Council powers include:

- determining the conceptual and strategic direction of the Centre,*
- essential decisions on the Centre's operation,*
- supervision over fulfilling the Centre's objectives and its research focus and*
- overseeing cooperation with the application sphere.*

According to the Programme, the Centre Council must approve/negotiate in particular:

- the project proposal for NCC1 Programme,*
- the proposals of sub-projects,*
- requests for project changes regarding the outcomes, objectives, professional program and other binding contractual parameters,*
- interim and final reports and financial statements,*
- handing over the outcomes and implementation plans,*
- the complementary project proposals (H2020, national sources, private sources) implemented*

*in the Centre and
– utilising the fund from non-public sources of the Centre.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Centre Management Method, Mandatory Annexes – Agreement on Establishment of the Centre and other documents related to the establishment and status of the Centre Council.

0.3 The NCC Centre complies with the focus and objectives of the National Centres of Competence 1 Programme and at least one of the research themes for the First Public Tender.

Evaluate if the submitted project proposal's nature meets the objectives of the NCC1 Programme and its focus conforms with at least one of the research themes set out for the 1st Public Tender.

Help with Evaluation: *The project meets the objectives and focus of the Programme if it contributes to the increase in efficiency and quality of the outcomes of applied research and technology transfer in key areas with growth prospects as well as the increase in undertaking competitiveness and strengthening the excellence and application relevance of research organisations. The compliance with the set-out research theme shall be met if the project focuses on one of the following areas: 1. Biomedicine, 2. Biotechnology and Professional Chemistry, 3. Global Change Impacts on the Czech Republic and Environmental Industry, 4. Transport and Smart City, 5. Aviation and Space Technology, 6. Modern Energy, 7. Optics and Optoelectronics, 8. Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology, 9. Robotics, Informatics and Cybernetics for Society 4.0, 10. Social Impacts of Technological Changes, 11. Mechanical Engineering for 21st Century.*

Relevant parts of the project proposal: NCC Centre Annotation, NCC Main Research Theme, NCC Centre objective and Focus and Fulfillment of the Programme Objective, Fulfillment of the sub-objective of the Programme.

Final Evaluation

Conclude your report for the public tender by summarising the positive and negative aspects of the evaluated project proposal.

How should/should not the final position of the opponent look like?

The overall quality of the project proposal is high and I recommend it for support.

The project applicants build on a successful cooperation established by implementing a joint project supported under the Centre of Competence, while the consortium has been appropriately supplemented with other major players in the set field (whether ROs or the application enterprises). Thanks to the involvement of these new entities, there is an even greater emphasis on interdisciplinarity and higher applicability of the planned outcomes of the Centre. The relations between the Centre's participants are contractually binding and clearly set forth the rights and obligations of each of them. At the same time, the Centre Council structure and its powers build a prerequisite for meaningful Centre management and its direction towards the planned objectives. I see a small deficiency in the composition of the research team which consists of renowned researchers; however, the representation of the middle and young generation of research is low. If the Centre is supposed to become a long-term base for applied research, it shall also ensure the continuity of R&D experience transfer within the research team. However, despite this reservation, I am convinced that the evaluated project meets the NCC1 Programme conditions and its implementation will greatly contribute to fulfilling the Programmes objectives. For that reason, I recommend the project for support.



Pay special attention to the selection of a field in which you state your final position on the project support. So the YES/NO value corresponds to your positions and arguments stated in your verbal evaluation. If any error occurs, please contact the Office of TA CR so the appropriate correction can be made and incorrectly entered value is not reflected in the next stages of the evaluation process.

CONCLUSION

If you have not found answers to your questions in this Manual, do not hesitate to contact the administrator of the evaluators (evaluators@tacrcz) or the [HelpDesk](#).

Thank you for your participation in the evaluation process of the National Centres of Competence 1 Programme and for your contribution to its improvement by selecting the best projects for support which meet the Programme's objectives.

We look forward to our future cooperation.

Project Evaluation Department
TA CR