GAČR

CZECH SCIENCE FOUNDATION

GUIDEBOOK FOR PANEL MEMBERS 2025

Contents

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DEAR EVALUATORS,

The goal of the evaluation process of the Czech Science Foundation (GACR) is to identify and recommend for funding the best basic research projects.

The evaluation is carried out in 38 expert panels grouped into five areas, or discipline committees. The panels and committees are composed exclusively of experts in the relevant scientific topics. We believe that the best research is only recognised by the scientists themselves, so the evaluation is in your hands.

GACR applies the principles which took inspiration from the European Research Council (ERC) in the evaluation of projects. Their credibility is underlined by the fact that they have been adopted by other major European agencies funding basic research. As a result, most international projects are evaluated by only one of the agencies involved, whether it is GACR or another agency, and the others trust the evaluation.

However, the evaluation of project proposals is intended to have more impact than simply recommending the best ones for funding. Every Applicant, whether their project receives funding or not, deserves feedback - where their research is good and where there may be potential for improvement. It is this feedback, as well as reflecting on one's own research when writing projects, that is key to improving Czech science.

The assignment for you, the panel members, is not only to evaluate the project proposals, but also to monitor the progress of the funded projects and evaluate them after their completion. You can then also nominate the best ones for the President's Award.

The handbook you are reading is designed to help you navigate the evaluation process and your tasks. I hope it succeeds.

With kind regards

prof. MUDr. Mgr. **Milan Jirsa**, CSc.
President, Czech Science Foundation

The Czech Science Foundation (GACR) is the only institution in the Czech Republic that provides targeted aid exclusively for basic research projects.

GACR's OBJECTIVES

Fund basic research science projects

Create **suitable and attractive conditions for scientists**

Increase the efficiency of basic research

Support and further expand **international scientific collaboration**

GACR IN NUMBERS

€ 192 million GACR budget

1993 first calls announced

9 types of grant schemes

5,000+ peer-reviewed articles per year as a result of GACR funding

200+ institutions involved

20,000+ projects funded

Role of Panel Members

Panel Members are selected by a committee consisting of a member of the Presidium, the GACR Scientific Board, and a representative of the governmental Research, Development and Innovation Council (R&D&I Council). There are over 400 members of 38 dedicated panels at GACR. What is their role?

The Role of a Panel Member

Evaluate projects impartially

Discuss proposals at **meetings** and recommend them (or otherwise) for funding

Provide feedback to the Applicants by writing high-quality expert reviews

Recommend foreign experts for Phase 2 of the evaluation of project proposals

Monitor project progress by evaluating interim and final reports

Recommend projects for the Award of the President of the GACR

TIMELINE OF PANEL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

mid-April to mid-May writing-up reviews for project proposals assigned to you

late May / early June panel meetings

second half of September examining external reviews and proposing grades

October panel meetings

mid-January to mid-February evaluating Interim Reports and panel meetings

mid-February to March evaluating Final Reports and panel meetings

Code of Ethics

The panel member, as an evaluator, should perform his/her work with the highest degree of courtesy, understanding, and to the best of his/her knowledge and conscience. The basic principles are set out in the Evaluator's Code of Ethics.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The evaluator is required to refrain from any action which would or could lead to a conflict between the public interest and his/her private interest. This includes any advantage to the evaluator, his/her family and relatives, as well as individuals or entities with whom he/she has ever had or still has business, political and/or other relations.

- **The evaluator must not be employed at the same institution** (faculty/college/school or department) as the Applicant or Co-Applicant(s).
- **The evaluator must not be a relative or a person close to the Applicant or Co-Applicant(s).**
- **The panel member must not have a close working relationship with the Applicant or Co-Applicant,** nor have have a working history with the Applicant or Co-Applicant in the last 5 years.
- If these or other reasons exist making the evaluator feel biased and therefore conflicted, the evaluator must not evaluate the project and must immediately declare the conflict of interest in the GRIS application and notify the chair or vice-chair of the panel, and the head of the relevant department.
- Not only do conflicted persons not evaluate the relevant project proposal, but also that proposal **is not accessible to them in the grant assessment and handling system GRIS.** When the project with conflict is discussed at the committee meeting, they have to leave the room.
- A panel member **must not disclose their GRIS login details** to any third party.

Details on: gacr.cz/code-of-ethics-for-reviewers

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION?

1. Evaluations are for the benefit of panel colleagues to become familiar with the project.
2. The evaluation provides basis for a discussion on the quality of the project in comparison to other projects.
3. Evaluation provides feedback to the Applicants.
4. Evaluations are required by Act 130/2002 on R&D Funding.

It is essential that the reviews contain complete and unbiased information.

Questions to focus on:

How scientifically sound is the contents of the project proposal (originality, quality and professional standard of the grant project proposal)?

What is its potential contribution to the discipline?

How big a step forward will it be for world science if the project is a success?

How likely is the Applicant to achieve the proposed objectives?

Is it reasonable to assume that the project will be completed?

What is the balance between, the scientific quality of the project, and its expected costs?

INDIVIDUAL GRADING SCALE

The quality of the project proposal/ Applicant/Co-Applicant(s)/their publication level/institutional resources are considered to be:

A1 - outstanding
A2 - excellent
B - very good
C1 - average
C2 - poor

PANEL GRADING SCALE

A – top quality project proposal, recommended to proceed to Phase 2

B – a quality project proposal, recommended to proceed to Phase 2

C – the project proposal **is not recommended** to proceed to Phase 2

Cn – poor quality project

EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THE PROJECT

1. Aims of the Project Proposal

In terms of the contribution to the expertise of the panel to which the project has been submitted, the following is assessed:

- Definition of clear and specific aims, and how demanding, relevant, and feasible they are
- Proportionality of the scope of the problem to be examined relative to the funding and time required

Poor quality project example:

- Does not define what is called a “knowledge gap” or defines it insufficiently, where this knowledge gap should be filled by the Project outputs, i.e. the Project is not based on an original idea (the Applicant is either not familiar enough with the state of knowledge in the respective field, or only deliberately replicates research conducted already)
- Does not formulate a hypothesis clearly, nor the method of its verification
- Proposes methodology which is inappropriate for the verification of the hypothesis formulated; d) proposes outputs or aims which cannot be achieved by the proposed research, or the collection and processing of the anticipated data

2. Project Approach and Methodology

The following elements are evaluated:

- Contribution to the relevant scientific field (in the case of an inappropriately chosen panel, the project's rating may be reduced if there is another panel where the relevant field is explicitly mentioned)
- The pathway to the achievement of the aims and results as set out by the Applicant (i.e. the concept, preparation and appropriateness of the proposed methodology, including the project timeline)
- Adequacy of resources (particularly in terms of the amount of time and the contribution of the individual team members in the expected outputs), qualifications represented in the team, and the definition of the roles of its members

Poor quality project example:

- It is unclear how the objectives (if formulated) will be achieved, what methods will be applied and how the research team will proceed
- It is unclear how each member of the project team will contribute to the achievement of the project objectives and outputs (publications)
- The composition (size) of the research team is clearly over-dimensioned, and the project shows the signs of hidden institutional funding

3. Project Outputs

It is the quality, not the quantity, of the expected results that is assessed, in the context of the expectation of excellence in the relevant field.

Poor quality project example:

- The quality of the expected outputs of the project is low
- The quality of the expected outputs is not sufficiently specified
- The expected publication activity is clearly not consistent with the previous publication activity of the proposer and the members of the project team (obvious discrepancy between promises and possibilities)
- The proposed outputs do not fall within the outcomes defined by the current Results Assessment Methodology

4. International Cooperation

The following elements are evaluated (only if relevant for the project):

- The expected involvement of institutions from other countries in the project, use of each other's equipment and resources of the cooperating institutions, and the use of complementary approaches and methodologies
- For PIF OUTGOING projects, the quality and readiness of the institution hosting the 730-day fellowship in the other country

5. The Progress and Results of Previous Projects

The evaluation takes into account any breaches of the rules for the management of targeted aid (grant funds), compliance with all of the obligations, and the evaluation of completed or currently ongoing grant projects.

6. Intradisciplinary Projects

Special attention should be paid to interdisciplinary projects, the contents of which correspond to the panel's scope only partially. In such situations, it is not desirable for a project to be disqualified from funding if it is otherwise a project of acceptable quality.

THE APPLICANT

When assessing the Applicant, the following should be taken into account:

- The contribution of the Applicant to the present knowledge in the field as well as beyond
- The quality of scientific publications and the Applicant's contribution to their development
- Other activities, such as educational and training activities, lectures by invitation, prestigious awards, major projects, memberships in peer-review systems, etc.

When assessing the Applicant's ability to successfully carry out the proposed project and achieve the intended results, **the length of the Applicant's scientific career, including any career breaks, must be taken into account.**

PROJECT COSTS

It is necessary to assess whether the proposed costs are in line with the tender document, whether the costs are necessary for the project, and whether they are reasonable.

1. Are the proposed costs and the workloads reasonable

to the project proposal and the expected results?

The following items cannot be requested under direct costs:

- Profit, value added tax (for payers of this tax), interest on debts, losses and damages, financial leases and rental costs with a subsequent purchase option
- Costs of securing the rights to the results of projects, costs of marketing, sales and distribution of products
- Other costs not directly related to the subject matter of the grant project
- Costs related to the subject matter of the project where the cost exceeds the fair and usual price at the time and place of the project
- Entertainment expenses and gifts
- Costs of renting premises, equipment, etc., with the exception of the rental of packaging, highly specialised laboratories and premises for short-term events with a scientific output
- Costs of furniture and other unrelated furnishings for the premises
- Costs of telecommunications services, the costs of the acquisition, repair and maintenance of communication equipment and technology (telephones, dictaphone recorders, digital readers, etc.)
- Costs of periodicals, textbooks and study texts
- Costs associated with participation in conferences and workshops except for an active presentation of the results of the project
- Costs for improving the qualifications of the individuals involved in the project (purchase of textbooks, training, courses, etc.)
- Costs for the acquisition, rental and operation of digital information databases
- Costs of repairs or maintenance of premises, construction costs, renovation of buildings or facilities
- Consulting fees, whether those of Czech or international consultants

In the case of Standard and International Projects (Bilateral and Lead Agency), funds may also be requested for the acquisition cost or depreciation of newly acquired tangible fixed assets (i.e. assets whose useful life exceeds 1 year and the purchase price exceeds CZK 80,000). These costs cannot, however, be requested as being hidden under other items.

No investment costs are allowed for POSTDOC INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP projects. Any intangible assets can be acquired for all projects under the "materials costs" items and are included under other services.

2. Are the individual items of the proposed costs

well explained and justified?

3. Is the project proposal compliant with the requirements of the tender document

in terms of the extent and the definition of eligible costs?

4. Duplicit financing

When assessing duplicit financing, you should pay particular attention to the other projects carried out by the Applicant, and take the following into account:

- At the panel meeting, you may request the necessary information about the Applicant's and Co-Applicant(s)' ongoing and proposed GACR-financed projects
- The Applicants often indicate in their project proposals workloads that may exceed 1.00 in total across all GACR grants. However, in the event that all such grants are awarded, the Applicants intend to adjust their workloads in order to comply with the relevant rule(s), and it is therefore advisable not to check the data in Part E strictly "arithmetically", but to pursue the main objective of avoiding duplication in project funding
- The evaluation should also reflect the results of and approaches to previous grant projects carried out by the organization and co-organization, the Applicant and Co-Applicant(s), for both GACR-funded projects and those financed by other providers

WRITING THE EVALUATION REPORT

By law, each Applicant has access to the evaluations of his/her projects and the evaluation reports, and the following is, therefore, required:

- A high level of expertise in the reviews
- Feedback to the Applicant as to why and how his/her project is better or worse than the other projects reviewed. The evaluations may include statements such as "compared to other project proposals". However, there is a need to objectively describe not only the weaknesses but also the strengths of each project
- Expertise-based arguments, i.e. any statement must be supported by professional arguments. Subjective opinions or claims of the rapporteur's insufficient qualification do not belong in the reports
- Ethical correctness, i.e. in particular no allusions to the Applicant's personal characteristics or those of the team members that could be considered personal, discriminatory or derogatory (e.g. age, gender, origin)
- No place for information that has nothing to do with the professional review of the project and the institutional conditions for its success
- Any arguments necessary for the assessment of the project must be sought only within the framework of the proposal submitted – no further information or speculation or reading between the lines may be given or taken into account in the assessment

Members of the discipline committees and members of the evaluation panels are obliged to follow GACR's Code of Ethics for Evaluators when reviewing project proposals.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EVALUATION

- Any **conflict of interest** must be reported immediately
- **Sufficient attention** must be paid to each project
- Analogous issues must always be **decided consistently**
- Only the project proposal should be evaluated - **no other information may be taken into account**
- For the sake of fairness of the evaluation, it is inadmissible to take into account the Applicant's age or gender; on the contrary, the evaluation of the Applicant should **reflect the length of his/her scientific career and any career** breaks
- **Respectful language** and unambiguous wording must be used in the written report
- The assessment of the quality of the project must always be supported by a **specific explanation**

WHAT TO AVOID

- Insufficient explanation of a project's weaknesses - need to be specific
- Questioning the evaluator's own expertise
- Assumptions, unethical or offensive statements
- Commenting on the age/gender of the Applicant
- Criticisms of the absence of the number of outputs planned
- Miscalculation of the workloads and involvement of students and postdocs (we recommend commenting on the research team in general)
- Unfinished sentences, grammatical errors, typos
- Assessment of application potential - not central to basic research; potential applied research projects to be screened out and disqualified by the panel
- Gender equality plans are checked by the GACR Office - panel members do not evaluate those
- Sharing project proposals, including AI tools

HOW TO NOMINATE EXTERNAL REVIEWERS FROM ABROAD

For project proposals graded **A** or **B**, the rapporteurs nominate external reviewers during the preparation period for the panel meetings. In addition to their own recommendation, rapporteurs may use the GACR's internal database (if necessary, keywords can be used to search for a suitable external reviewer)

POOR QUALITY PROJECTS - Cn

Any project proposals from an Applicant whose project has been graded "**Cn**" will be disqualified from all tenders and calls announced by the Czech Science Foundation in the following calendar year.

No quotas are set in advance for the number of project proposals to be graded "**Cn**". In order to grade a project proposal "**Cn**", the category of "project far below average" is used, as indicated in the evaluation form. If the Panel agrees at its meeting to grade a project proposal "**Cn**", this must be stated explicitly in the proposal evaluation report, including a detailed explanation.

International Projects

Panels also evaluate proposals for international projects, i.e. projects that involve teams from two or more countries working together. Proposals for international projects should be compared with those submitted to GACR's Standard Projects grant scheme.

Project proposals within the Lead Agency calls are evaluated only by panel members from one country designated by the Applicant; for bilateral projects, consensus is required from both agencies in the evaluation.

Both the reviews and the evaluation report are written in English.

Restart Grants

The Restart Grants tender is being launched for the first time in 2025 and aims to enable scientists to restart their careers after a break due to parental leave or dependent care. These are individual projects with the option to involve students and technical staff. The project runs for 2-4 years depending on the amount of workload dedicated by the researcher.

The Specifics of Evaluating Return Grants

- In addition to the criteria that are common to all tenders, this type of project is also evaluated on whether it will contribute **to the professional growth of the Applicant and his/her long-term career in research**

POSTDOC INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP

There are two types of Postdoc Individual Fellowships:

- **POSTDOC INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP OUTGOING**
  In the first phase of the Fellowship, the Applicant (becoming the Investigator if funded) carries out his/her continuous fellowship lasting 730 days (a minimum of 670 days) at an institution abroad and, subsequently, completes the project at his/her home Organization.

- **POSTDOC INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP INCOMING**
  The Applicant is a scientist from another country or a Czech scientist with long-term international experience who is not currently working at any Czech institution, and who will be given the opportunity to carry out his/her own scientific project at an institution in the Czech Republic for the entire duration of the project

The Specifics of Evaluating PIFs

- Emphasis on **professional standard, originality and scientific quality of the project proposals,** as with evaluations of other types of projects
- Taking into account the project's desired **future contribution to improving the quality of the scientific environment** in the Czech Republic through supporting high quality scientists coming from an established foreign institution, or through supporting Czech scientists who, as a result of the PIF project, return to the country, for example after a postdoctoral fellowship. The aim of this public tender is not to support postdocs from abroad who are already in the Czech Republic (albeit briefly), but to facilitate the arrival of **talented scientists** who would otherwise not come here (PIF INCOMING)
- A **diligent assessment of the professional standard, quality and readiness of the host institutions** selected for Czech fellowships abroad (PIF OUTGOING)
- **Taking into account the scientific results** achieved by the Applicants, their **creative contribution to the field of science** and their impact in the Czech Republic (PIF OUTGOING) or abroad (PIF INCOMING) before the fellowship

Evaluation Process

Standard Projects | International Projects | POSTDOC INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP | Restart Grants

The evaluation process is inspired by the European Research Council process (ERC) and its main objective is to recommend the best quality projects for funding. After discussion at the panel, the ranking of projects is confirmed by the relevant Discipline Committee composed of the chairs and vice-chairs of the panels. The evaluation made by these panels is then confirmed by the GACR Office.

YEAR 2024

2,780 **project proposals reviewed**

513 **projects funded**

THREE-TIER EVALUATION PROCEDURE

5 **members** appointed by the Czech Government

GACR PRESIDIUM

Approves the launch of public tenders and decides on awarding grants on the basis of recommendations and evaluations of professional and expert advisory bodies.

76 panel **chairs and vice-chairs**

5 DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES

Expert bodies of the Presidium composed of 12-20 members each, dedicated to five areas:

- **DC 1 Technical Sciences**
- **DC 2 Physical Sciences**
- **DC 3 Medical and Biological Sciences**
- **DC 4 Social Sciences and Humanities**
- **DC 5 Agricultural and Biological-Environmental Sciences**

410+ **top scientists** across all disciplines

38 EVALUATION PANELS

Expert bodies of the Discipline Committees which evaluate project proposals, draw up internal reviews, and prepare materials and recommendations for the meetings of the Discipline Committees.

Inspired by the process of the European Research Council

TENDERS EVALUATED BY CZECH PANELS

Standard Projects

Proposals for projects of usually 3-year duration are open to all researchers and their teams regardless of the length of their scientific careers.

- GACR's most frequent grant scheme since 1993
- Several hundred projects are funded each year from all fields basic research

International Projects

Projects are carried out by scientists from the Czech Republic and from abroad - each agency is responsible for the costs of its own scientists.

- **Lead Agency** - projects are evaluated only by one agency and the other accepts the results (usually the Applicant chooses the evaluating agency). Trilateral projects are possible, too
- **Bilateral projects** - projects are evaluated by both agencies independently of each other, and the agencies must both agree to fund a project

POSTDOC INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP

Individual grant for funding the mobility of early career researchers up to 4 years after completion of their PhD.

- **OUTGOING** - makes it possible for Czech scientists to spend two years researching at a prestigious institution abroad, and one more year back in the Czech Republic
- **INCOMING** - international scientists or scientists returning from abroad can spend 3 years researching at a Czech institution

Restart Grants

These schemes allow excellent scientists to restart their careers after a break due to a parental leave or dependent care

- Individual projects with the option to involve technical staff and students
- 2-4 years project duration according to the workload

TENDERS EVALUATED BY EXTERNAL PANELS EXCLUSIVELY

JUNIOR STAR

For excellent scientists up to 8 years after completing their Ph.D. who have the ambition to build an independent scientific career with the ability to create their own team

- Up to CZK 25 million (€1.06 million) for a 5-year project
- Only a few dozen projects funded every year

EX|PRO

A highly selective grant that has the potential to make a breakthrough in its field (high risk/high gain)

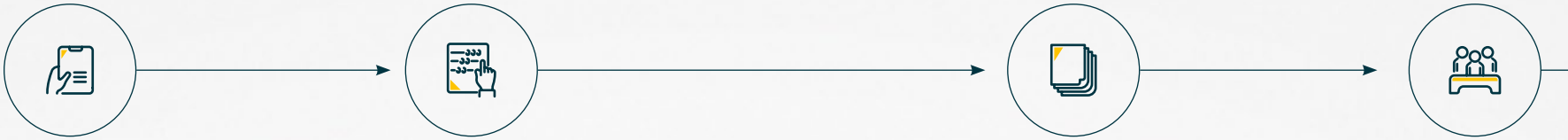
- A five-year grant worth up to CZK 50 million (€2.12 million) for seasoned scientists
- This tender is launched every two years

Oriented Basic Research

The latest grant scheme which will only be launched if there is broad demand for a specific research topic across Czech society

- The topic of the grant scheme will be determined by GACR's Presidium together with GACR's Scientific Council

EVALUATION PHASE 1



1. Project proposal is assigned to rapporteurs and reviewers

- The chair and the vice-chair of the panel jointly designate the lead rapporteur
- The second rapporteur and the two reviewers are selected randomly by the GRIS app from among the panel members who do not have a conflict of interest
- Evaluators do not know who else on the panel is evaluating the same project and thus cannot discuss their evaluations
- In addition, in the case of interdisciplinary projects, the third rapporteur from the other relevant panel is designated

early April

2. Reviews are written, proposals graded, and sorted into categories

- Rapporteurs and reviewers study the project proposal. The rapporteurs will also prepare their own independent assessments
- Through the GRIS application, each panel member grades all the project proposals assigned to him/her and sorts them by quality into four categories:

  A – top quality project proposal, recommended to proceed to Phase 2 (max. 30%)

  B – a quality project proposal, recommended to proceed to Phase 2

  C – the project proposal is not recommended to proceed to Phase 2 (min. 30%, including **Cn**)

  Cn – poor quality project

first half of May

3. Panel members become familiar with reviews and evaluations before the panel meeting

- Prior to the panel meeting, each panel member gets access through GRIS to all proposals from his/her panel, except for project proposals where he/she has a conflict of interest
- Each panel member becomes thoroughly familiar with all project proposals and their evaluations
- For projects graded A and B, the lead rapporteur and the second rapporteur for a project will propose suitable external reviewers

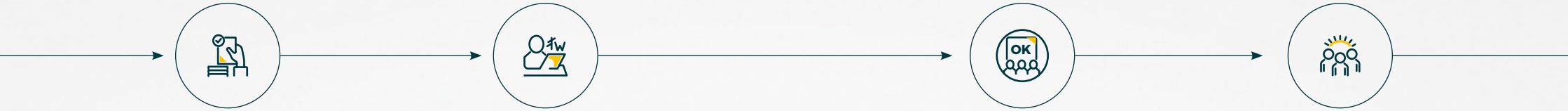
late May / early June

4. Project proposals are discussed at the Phase 1 panel meeting

At its meeting, the panel will collectively review and discuss each project proposal and its evaluation and, based on consensus, grade it **A**, **B**, **C** or **Cn**

- Particular attention is paid to those projects where there is no consensus on their evaluation
- If there is a conflict of interest, the conflicted panel member does not participate in the discussion of the project proposal and leaves the meeting room

EVALUATION PHASE 1



5. Project proposals are categorised by quality at the panel meeting

- The outcome of the panel meeting is a categorisation of projects. A maximum of 25% of all projects may be assigned to the **A** category. At least 50% of projects must be assigned to the **C** + **Cn** categories (a maximum of 60% is recommended)
- For projects categorised as **C** and **Cn**, an evaluation report is prepared for each of them by the lead rapporteur after the panel meeting. The report clearly explains the conclusion of the collective assessment by the panel.
- If the conclusion of the panel is inconsistent with any of the rapporteurs' reviews, such inconsistency in the evaluation report for that project proposal is explained

late May / early June
panel meeting

6. External reviewers are assigned at the panel meeting

- Based on the recommendations of the rapporteurs, the panel will also decide on the assignment of external reviewers for projects in categories **A** and **B** and on the order in which they will be addressed

7. Discipline Committee evaluates in Phase 1

- Before the meeting, the members of the Discipline Committee become familiar with the evaluation of the proposals in the panels, the reviews of the rapporteurs, the proposed categorisation as **A**, **B**, **C** and **Cn** from the evaluators, and the external reviewer nominations
- Discipline Committees discuss and propose the final grading and categorisation of project proposals as **A**, **B**, **C** and **Cn**. Attention is paid mainly to projects graded **C** and **Cn**, i.e. projects that are not recommended for Phase 2 evaluation

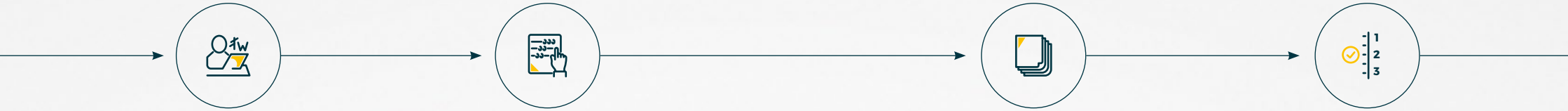
mid-June

8. GACR Presidium involvement in Phase 1 and Phase 2

- The GACR Presidium becomes familiar with the results of the evaluation from the individual Discipline Committees, and approves or modifies the categorisation of the project proposals into the individual categories. On the basis of the recommendations of the expert bodies, the Presidium may also decide to disqualify a project proposal from the tender if it has not met the conditions set by the tender document. The decision to disqualify projects may be taken at any time throughout the evaluation period

second half
of June

EVALUATION PHASE 2



9. External reviews are received

- Reviews are received from external reviewers from other countries who are not affiliated with the Czech academic environment and who were nominated in Phase 1 for all the projects that have advanced to the second phase of the evaluation

10. Proposals are evaluated individually on the basis of the external reviews

- Each panel member - if not conflicted - becomes familiar with all of the reviews, including the external ones, and grades all proposals proceeding to Phase 2 within the given panel independently based on quality, using the GRIS application, categorising the proposals into the following categories:

  a – a high quality project that is among the top 30% of the best projects in the panel in Phase 2 of the evaluation, and is clearly recommended for funding

  b – quality project, recommended for funding

  c – average project proposal, not recommended for funding (min. 30%)

11. Panel members become familiar with reviews and evaluations from Phase 2

- Prior to the panel meeting, each panel member will be given access to all proposals from their panel via GRIS, except for project proposals that present a conflict of interest for them
- Each member of a panel becomes thoroughly familiar with all project proposals and their evaluations

12. Project proposals are discussed at the Phase 2 panel meeting (1/2)

- At the meeting, the Panel will again discuss in detail all the project proposals that have advanced to Phase 2, rank the proposals, and categorise them into three groups:

  A – projects recommended for funding (max. 25%)

  B – projects recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available

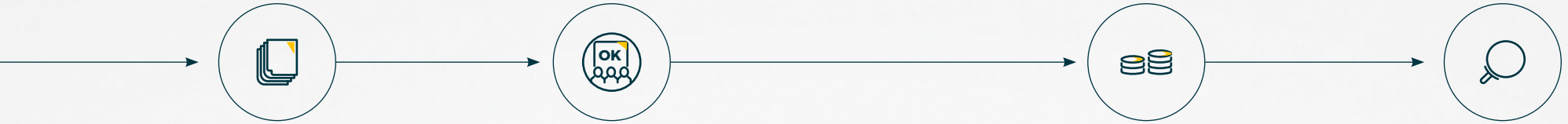
  C – projects not recommended for funding

- The discussion pays particular attention to projects where previous individual grading is not clear. Potential conflicts of interest are addressed in the same manner as in Phase 1

second half of September

October

EVALUATION PHASE 2



13. Project proposals are discussed at the Phase 2 panel meeting (2/2)

- If the panel agrees on a more critical evaluation than the external reviewers, then this situation is objectively commented on in detail in the evaluation report for the project proposal
- On the basis of the discussion and mutual comparisons of individual project proposals, the panel will propose the order of projects in categories **A** and **B**
- The panel votes on the outcome of its meeting and on the proposed ranking order of project proposals, and the result is recorded in the evaluation report; the proceedings are recorded in the minutes, which serve as the basis for the project proposal evaluation report containing the panel's opinion

October

14. Discipline Committee evaluates proposals in Phase 2

- Before the meeting, the members of the Discipline Committee become familiar with the evaluation of the proposals in the panels, the reviews of the external reviewers, the evaluation of the foreign rapporteurs and the proposed rankings in the panels and those in the Discipline Committee
- Each Discipline Committee will discuss panel proposals and determine the order of project proposals as set by the Committee. If the DC changes the order of the projects proposed by the panel, it will explain its decision in the evaluation report for the project proposal.

mid-November

15. The Presidium makes the funding decisions

- Taking into account the proposals of the Discipline Committees, the Presidium will prepare the final project funding decision, which it will discuss in the presence of the chairs of the Discipline Committees. It will then make its decision and announce the results of the public tender
- The funding decision takes place in the context of the financial resources available to the Czech Science Foundation

mid-November

16. Results are announced, including the disclosure of reviews and evaluation reports

- The Applicants, after the results are announced, may open the GRIS application to view all of the reviews of their project proposals as well as the evaluation reports, which contain the panel's commentary, the commentary of the Discipline Committee, and the position of the GACR Presidium. GACR publishes information about the release of review reports and project proposal evaluation reports in GRIS on its website

end of November

The role of the panels is not only to recommend the best projects for funding, but also to monitor the ongoing projects and grade completed ones.

An important part of the panel members' work is also to evaluate the success of the project once completed. A maximum of one-fifth of the projects will achieve the best grade - Outstanding - and the very best projects will be recommended by the panel for GACR President's Award. On the other hand, an "Incomplete" grade may reduce the Applicant's chances of receiving another grant from GACR.

PRINCIPLES OF EVALUATION

High professional standard in drafting the evaluation reports and rapporteurs' assessments

Deficiencies and defects in the project approach and methodology are described **objectively, in detail, specifically and fairly**

Any statements are always supported by **expert arguments**

All evaluations, reviews, and reports are made available to the applicants in GRIS

The evaluation report is the **collective opinion** of the panel, not one of an individual (do not write the report in the 1st person singular)

Panel meetings dealing with project reports are usually held in February/March, postponed Final Reports are discussed also in the autumn

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Achievement of the declared purpose
2. Progress of the project work and its alignment with the stated objectives
3. Provision of technical and human resources for the project
4. Use of the equipment acquired from the grant funds
5. Evaluation of the management funds granted to date (elements to check: the drawdowns of the grant funds, how effectively the funds are spent, and compliance with the prescribed structure of the funds)
6. Assessment of results broken down by the types of results defined, with an emphasis on quality rather than quantity

INTERIM REPORT

The Interim Report contains information on the progress of the grant project so far, results achieved, and the management of the grant funds.

- The Interim Report must be drawn up for each calendar year of the grant project, except for the last year of the project
- Once the report is delivered, it will be made available in GRIS to the main rapporteur, who will draft and finalise the evaluation report
- The Interim Report, which is submitted after the first year of the project, includes an overview of the project results to date, in addition to the financial part.

  A detailed analysis and description of the project's progress to date and the evaluation of the scientific development of the project will only be included in an Interim Report in the event of a significant divergence from the original project plan
- In Year 2, the Interim Report must contain a detailed analysis and description of the project's progress to date and an evaluation of the scientific development of the project
- If the project has diverged significantly from the original project plan, it is necessary to assess this divergence

FINAL REPORT AND POSTPONED FINAL REPORT

The Final Report evaluates the success of the project after its completion.

- After submission, the report is made available in GRIS to the lead and secondary rapporteurs - the secondary rapporteur prepares his/her review, the lead rapporteur prepares an evaluation report in addition to his/her review
- Once the evaluation reports and reviews have been finalised, all panel members can view the Final or Postponed Final Report in GRIS, which are to be discussed at the panel meeting, and the evaluation of those report(s)
- The evaluation of a completed grant project is carried out by the relevant Discipline Committee on the basis of the review from the panel

GRADING SCALE

Outstanding - the stated objectives have been achieved, the project has generated original, significant results that advance the current state of knowledge; the results are supported by publications in the relevant field and are outstanding in terms of scope, quality and potential impact or potential applications in addressing the problems addressed by the project, and will significantly contribute to the development of the field, especially in an international context; no more than one-fifth of the projects evaluated are expected to be proposed by the panel for the "Outstanding" grade

Complete – the stated objectives have been achieved, the project has achieved original results expanding the current state of knowledge, and the results have been documented by publications

Complete with reservation – the declared objectives have only been met partially or the project has only achieved results that can be thought of as not exceeding the current state of knowledge

Incomplete – the declared objectives have not been achieved or the published or otherwise applied results from the project (publications, or other results) are not sufficient in terms of scope and potential impact or potential response or use in solving the problems defined in the project, and are unlikely to significantly affect the development of the field

A project is graded Incomplete if:

- Not all parts of the Final Report have been received
- The provider has withdrawn from the Grant Funding Agreement, terminated it, or revoked the Decision on Grant Funding
- The conditions for submitting the results to the IS VaVal system - Results Information Register (RIV) have not been met
- In the case of PIF OUT, if the fellowship abroad declared in the project proposal has not been carried out according to the conditions approved in the Grant Funding Agreement for the expected duration (730 days), but at least 670 days

- **For a completed project, unlike past practice, the subject-matter part of the Final Report is not evaluated until one year after the end of the project.** The Beneficiary still has the option to submit a complete Final Report including the substantiation of the subject-matter part of the project immediately, or to request an extension of the deadline for the evaluation of the Final Report for a further 6 months
  - You can find out whether the Beneficiary has made use of this option by checking to see if the item in the Final Report titled "Request for extension of the deadline for evaluation of the project results" contains the date by which the remaining parts of the of the Final Report will be delivered

DEFICIENCIES AND AMENDMENT REQUESTS

Serious Misconduct

This includes, for example, long-term inactivity or any other misuse of funds. Misconduct such as misuse of funds, in particular, is grounds for a financial audit to take place, or for a proposal to have the project discontinued. In case of a completed project, this is a reason to propose "incomplete with penalty" as the grade.

Minor Formal Shortcomings

The Investigator may be asked to provide additional information in the Interim and/or Final Report (including Postponed Final Report). Such request is entered into GRIS using the "Amendment Requests" tab in the project details. The Investigator will then be contacted by the relevant department of the GACR office. A member of the evaluation panel may never contact the project Investigator directly.

ACCEPTABILITY OF PUBLICATIONS

It is necessary to physically check the existence of the copies of any publications and other results for the previous year of the grant project, and for the entire project period in case of the Final Report. Simply stating in the text of the Interim/Final Report that publications have been documented is insufficient. However, it is possible to request copies of the results from the Investigator, and they are also available in the annexes to the Interim Reports from the previous years.

Publications must meet the conditions for inclusion in the individual categories of the types of results according to the 2017+ Methodology:

- J - peer-reviewed article in a professional periodical (journal)
- B - scientific book
- C - chapter in a scientific book
- D – article in proceedings registered in the Scopus database or in the Web of Science Conference Proceedings Citation Index

Only those publications which meet the following criteria can be accepted as the result/outcome of a project:

- the publication must be related to the project; (if the relationship of the publication to the project is not clear from the Project Proposal, it should be clear from the Interim and/or Final Project Report)
- at least one of the authors of the publication must be listed in the Project Proposal or in the Interim Report as a member of the project's research team, and must be affiliated to the Beneficiary or Co-beneficiary institution; (if the affiliation to the Beneficiary or Co-beneficiary is not present in the publication, then the publication cannot be assigned to the institution (Beneficiary or Co-beneficiary), and therefore cannot be claimed as a result of the GACR grant project)
- the publication must be accepted for publication on or after the date of the project launch; if it has not been published in its final version, the investigator must provide its DOI
- it must be stated in the publication that the work was carried out with funding from the Czech Science Foundation stating the exact registration number of the project (e.g. The work on this paper was funded by the Czech Science Foundation grant 20-00000S; The study was funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GACR), project No. 20-00000S; The research was financed by Czech Science Foundation Grant No. 20-00000S)
- if the publication contains acknowledgements to other projects funded through targeted aid, these multiple credits must be sufficiently explained (the explanation for the multiple credits must clarify which author is acknowledging which project, what contribution each project made to the publication output of the project, and must describe factually which specific part of the publication was supported by the project - e.g. data collection, results processing, etc.)
- the mere fact that an author whose salary is paid out of the funds of a given GACR project has contributed to the article is not a sufficient reason to accept the publication, nor is it required that an author whose salary is paid out of a GACR grant should state on publications not related to the topic of the project that the work was carried out with the financial support of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic
- the publication result must be correctly classified into one of the types of results defined in the existing Methodology (Jimp - an original / review article in a professional periodical, which is included in the Web of Science database with the "Article", "Review", or "Letter" flag; only articles published in journals with a non-zero impact factor registered in the WoS Core Collection database can be accepted as Jimp outputs in accordance with the evaluation guidelines defined by Methodology 17+ and GACR rules)

What matters in projects evaluation is not the quantity of outputs, but their quality!

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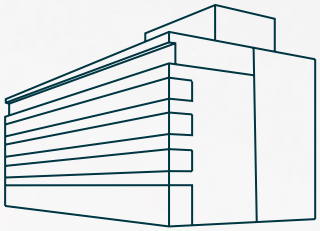

facebook.com/GrantovaAgenturaCR

www.GACR.cz

USEFUL LINKS

GACR's grant management application
www.GRIS.cz

Tender documents
gacr.cz/en/tender-documents/

Web of Science
www.webofscience.com