



Methodology for Evaluators in the “Open Science II Mini-Projects” Calls

This methodology is binding for all evaluators in the Calls for cooperation in Open Science II Mini-Projects.





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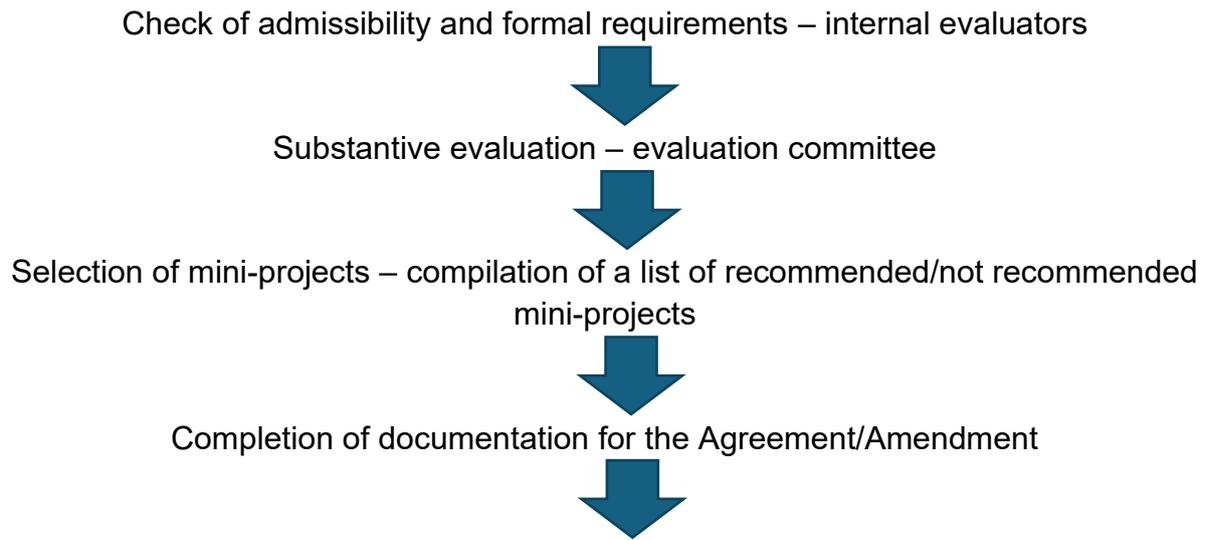
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Evaluation process for mini-projects

The evaluation of mini-projects is a two-stage process. The first stage consists of a formal assessment and an assessment of admissibility. The second stage is a substantive evaluation.



The following principle applies throughout the evaluation process: if the application for a mini-project is submitted in Czech, the entire process shall be conducted in Czech. If an application for a mini-project is submitted in English, the entire process shall be conducted in English.

A. 1st phase of evaluation – formal evaluation and evaluation of admissibility

Formal evaluations and evaluations of admissibility are performed by internal evaluators, who are guarantors of the grant scheme. The guarantors of the grant scheme are employees of the departments of the Rectorate of Charles University (CU). This ensures their impartiality. In the case of CU, mini-projects are prepared by academic staff at individual faculties/units of CU. The guarantors of the grant scheme must comply with the CU Code of Ethics (<https://cuni.cz/UKEN-731.html>). Prior to the commencement of the evaluation, the guarantors of the grant scheme sign a Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality (see template in Annex no. 6 of the Minutes of the Evaluation Committee Meeting, which constitutes Annex no. 3 of this Methodology).

The criteria for the formal evaluation and evaluation of admissibility are set out in Annex no. 1 of the Calls.



The guarantors of the grant scheme perform the evaluation of formal requirements and the evaluation of admissibility in a single step (1st phase of evaluation).

The criteria for evaluating formal requirements and admissibility have an exclusionary function, i.e. they are classified as fulfilled/unfulfilled (or the criterion is irrelevant to the given application for a mini-project).

The criteria for checking formal requirements and admissibility are rectifiable (i.e. it is possible for the applicant to complete the approval process on the basis of a request from CU to eliminate defects) and non-rectifiable (i.e. failure to comply shall in all cases result in exclusion from the approval process without the possibility of adjustment by the applicant).

In the event of failure to meet any of the rectifiable criteria and, at the same time, provided that all the non-rectifiable criteria are met, the applicant is asked through the Věda Information System (IS Věda) to eliminate the defects in the application for a mini-project (e.g. provision of missing information/documents), usually within five working days from the date of delivery of the request to eliminate defects. The deadline for the elimination of defects may be extended on the basis of a request from the applicant, which must be sent to CU through an internal message in IS Věda before the deadline for the elimination of defects. The request for an extension of the deadline for the elimination of defects must contain a justification for the request and the period by which the deadline for the elimination of defects is to be extended. The guarantor of the grant scheme shall make a decision on the extension/non-extension of the deadline within two working days and inform the applicant of their decision via an internal message in IS Věda.

Modifications to the application by the applicant that go beyond the scope of the request for the rectification of defects are not allowed. CU recommends that applicant consult the university immediately through IS Věda in the event of any ambiguities related to the request for the elimination of defects.

In the event that the applicant fails to eliminate the defect within the specified deadline following a request to do so, the application for a mini-project shall be excluded from the approval process.

If any non-rectifiable criterion is not met, the application for a mini-project is excluded from later stages of the approval process.

In the event that it is not possible to evaluate any of the non-rectifiable criteria for obvious and objective reasons:

- the guarantors of the grant scheme do not have sufficient documents;
- the documents are incomplete;
- the information provided in the application for the mini-project and/or its annexes is inconsistent with each other;



the criterion is not evaluated and the applicant is invited to remedy the defects so that the criterion conforms with the relevant rectifiable criterion of formal requirements (criteria: All mandatory data are entered in the application for funding; all annexes are documented and in the required form), if possible. This procedure must in no way undermine the equal treatment of all applicants and the transparency of the approval process. Requests for the rectification of defects shall concern solely the evaluation of formal requirements and admissibility, and not the objective content/quality of the application for the mini-project. Therefore, an applicant cannot be asked, for example, to supplement a missing job description, an incomplete description/justification in one part of the application, to adjust the budget, or to complete a submitted application for a mini-project.

The results of the evaluation of formal requirements and admissibility will be made available to applicants in IS Věda (protocol from the first phase of evaluation); applicants are informed about this through an internal message in IS Věda. Successful applicants proceed to the phase of the substantive evaluation of applications for mini-projects (second phase of evaluation).

B. Opinion of the thematic/domain EOSC CZ Working Group (EOSC CZ WG)

The opinion of the domain/thematic EOSC CZ WG is a mandatory annex to applications for a mini-project and its submission is evaluated as part of the admissibility criteria. The positive opinion of an EOSC CZ WG on the output of a mini-project is a condition for submission of the mini-project to the process and is therefore a necessary prerequisite for entry to both the formal and the substantive evaluation process.

The relevant EOSC CZ WG confirms that the planned output(s) of the mini-project:

- correspond(s) to the output type from the Catalogue of Outputs to which the applicant has assigned it;
- develops or responds to the requirements of scientific and domain EOSC communities;
- builds on the outputs of previous projects and activities of the EOSC CZ initiative and thus meets the requirements of the NDI;
- evaluates the brief description of the criteria for the functionality or scope of the planned output, which will be formulated in terms of specifying the general characteristics of type outputs in the Catalogue of Outputs (annex to the Call) in relation to the planned output.

The vote on the issuing of an Opinion must take place after the collection of applications for the issuing of an Opinion is completed.

Therefore, the vote is preceded by a meeting of the relevant EOSC CZ WG (in person or online), at which the applicants present the outputs of individual mini-projects with regard to the aforementioned evaluation criteria. The meetings for each of the Open





Science II Mini-Projects Call must take place separately and within the period (one month) designated for the evaluation of outputs.

Voting takes place separately, on a date different from the date of the aforementioned meeting. Voting on an Opinion is open to members of the EOSC CZ WG who:

- a) at the time of completion of the collection of applications for an Opinion of the EOSC CZ WG for a specific Call are members of the relevant working group;
- b) will not be affiliated to a research organization (RO) applying for a mini-project (in the case of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS), they must not be from the same institute as the applicant);
- c) have not declared another conflict of interest.

Any member of the relevant EOSC CZ WG who does not meet condition a) may not vote on an Opinion on any mini-project.

Any member of the relevant EOSC CZ WG who is affiliated to a RO that is requesting an Opinion on a mini-project (point b) above) may not take part in a vote on a mini-project(s) submitted by that RO (typically these are employees of the RO in question, even if the employment relationship is in the form of an agreement to perform work or to complete a job).

In the case of point c), a conflict of interest may exist due to family ties, etc.

Such a member shall clearly state before or during the vote of the relevant EOSC CZ WG that he/she cannot participate in the vote and for what reasons.

Minutes are taken from the vote, in which it will be stated what % of the eligible members of the relevant EOSC CZ WG participated in the vote, the results of the vote (number of votes for/against/abstentions) and the overall result of the vote on the individual outputs presented in the mini-projects. The minutes shall also list the (names of) members who excluded themselves from voting on a particular mini-project for the reasons set out in points a), b) and c) above.

Voting can take place per rollam using online tools.

In the case of mini-projects that contain multiple outputs, each output must be voted on separately.

The beginning of the voting shall be based on the agreement of the specific working group. Eligible members of EOSC CZ Working Groups may vote on an opinion over a period of three calendar days.

In order for the opinion of a EOSC CZ WG on a specific mini-project or its individual outputs to be valid, the assessment of the mini-project must be attended by at least



30% of the authorised members of the EOSC CZ WG¹. The decision to issue an opinion of a EOSC CZ WG for a specific mini-project will be made on the basis of the decision of the majority of voting eligible members of the EOSC CZ WG for the assessment of the mini-project.

If less than 30% of the eligible members of the EOSC CZ WG express an opinion on a specific mini-project in the vote on the opinion, a vote on that mini-project will be held again on an alternative date. If the mini-project fails to receive a valid positive opinion in the second round of voting, this will be considered a negative opinion for the purposes of the specific Call for mini-projects.

The opinion of the EOSC CZ WG for a specific mini-project is confirmed by the secretary of the EOSC CZ WG, who oversees the correct course of the entire process.

Applicants receive the opinion of the relevant EOSC CZ WG within 30 calendar days from the end of the receiving period for applications for an Opinion. The applicant then attaches the Opinion of the relevant EOSC CZ WG, as well as the Request for an Opinion on the basis of which the Opinion of the EOSC CZ WG was provided, to the application for a mini-project in IS Věda.

C. 2nd phase of evaluation – substantive evaluation by expert evaluators

The substantive evaluation is carried out by an Evaluation Committee (EC). ECs are usually established for each domain/thematic cluster and always for each Call separately according to the number of mini-project registered for domain/thematic clusters and according to the expertise of the members of the evaluation committee in connection with the domain-specific inclusion of planned outputs in the Application for a Mini-Project. In the case of applications for mini-projects of an interdisciplinary nature, a joint interdisciplinary evaluation committee will be set up. No EC is established in the event that no application for a mini-project in a given domain/thematic cluster is received in a given Call.

C.1. Selection of members of the Evaluation Committee (EC)

The members of the EC are selected by the guarantor of the grant scheme. Expert evaluators are selected for ECs from a list of evaluators for the Open Science II Mini-Project Calls who are registered in IS Věda. The registration of evaluators is based on the recruitment of candidates for substantive evaluation, which is carried out in cooperation with the EOSC Initiative in the Czech Republic. Candidates can apply by filling out the form at <https://www.eosc.cz/en/projects/open-science-ii/recruitment-of-evaluators> .

¹ Example: In a given EOSC CZ WG there are 100 members. Nine members come from the same institution as the applicant for a mini-project and one member from another institution declares a conflict of interest, e.g. they are currently engaged in cooperation with the applicant. 30% participation will therefore be calculated from the total number (100-9-1 =) of 90 members.



The guarantor of the grant scheme from registered evaluators in IS Věda selects members of ECs on the basis of:

- Assignment of candidates for evaluation to a thematic/domain cluster
- The list of ROs that have submitted an application for a mini-project in a given domain/thematic cluster and Call (this is therefore the first step to excluding a possible conflict of interest on the part of a member of the EC).

Every EC has a minimum of three members.

C.1.1 Method of acceptance of the evaluation

Expert evaluators are approached by the guarantor of the grant scheme by e-mail with an offer to accept membership in the EC. At the same time, they are sent a list of mini-projects that are to be the subject of evaluation (a list of applicants, i.e. RO). The expert evaluator then states whether he/she accepts membership in the EC, while at the same time stating any bias/conflict of interest towards any of the mini-projects (see Chapter D). Subsequently, the guarantor of the grant scheme sends the expert evaluator a document on his/her appointment as a member of the EC (members of ECs are appointed by the Rector of Charles University) and access data to IS Věda. All communication with evaluators and candidates for evaluation takes place via e-mail at hodnoceni_minizamery@ruk.cuni.cz.

C.2 Substantive evaluation

Substantive evaluations are carried out by ECs according to the evaluation criteria. The criteria for substantive evaluation, including their function and a description of the evaluation method, are contained in a separate annex of the Open Science II Mini-Project Calls (Annex no. 1 of the Call).

The guarantor of the grant scheme shall make the documents in IS Věda (applications for mini-projects) available to the members of the ECs no later than five working days after their appointment as members of the ECs.

Meetings of ECs usually commence within twenty calendar days from the date of the granting of access to applications for mini-projects in IS Věda and are usually concluded within thirty calendar days from this date.

Individual members of evaluation committees are obliged to familiarize themselves with the documents for individual applications for mini-projects in IS Věda in the period between the granting of access to the documents in IS Věda and the meeting of the EC.

The Evaluation Committee is governed by the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee, the templates of which are attached to this Methodology.



The substantive evaluation criteria have an exclusionary or combined function:

- Exclusion criteria are criteria which, if not met by the applicant, result in the exclusion of the application for a mini-project from the approval process.
- Combined criteria are criteria for which points are awarded; if the minimum threshold of points set by the Call is not met, the application for a mini-project is excluded from the approval process.

The EC performs the evaluation of individual mini-projects in the evaluation protocol in IS Věda, in which it evaluates individual criteria and provides a comment/justification for each evaluation.

Each combined criterion is assigned a verbal descriptor by the evaluation committee, which is converted into a score expressed as a number. The EC assigns the rating expressed by the descriptor based on the severity of the reservations formulated. In the substantive evaluation form, the EC comments on the reason for choosing the assigned descriptor. If it assigns a rating of "good" or "insufficient", it must always provide a rationale for its reservations and provide a recommendation for change, even in the case of a budget. Even if the EC assigns a rating of "excellent", a comment must also be provided for the criterion, especially from the point of view of 3E. The specific set of descriptors that can be allocated is listed for each individual criterion in Annex no. 1 of the Call.

If an application for a mini-project does not contain information in the scope/detail/quality sufficient for the evaluation of a specific criterion, the EC shall state this fact in a comment and evaluate the criterion as not met or give the minimum possible descriptor or number of points (zero).

The maximum number of points that an EC can assign to each application for a mini-project is 85. Based on the results of the substantive evaluation, the EC determines whether it recommends/does not recommend the application for a mini-project for signature of an Agreement/Amendment:

- YES – if the application for funding receives 50 or more points and at the same time meets the minimum points threshold for all combined criteria while at the same time meeting the exclusion criterion. The application for a mini-project progresses to the next stage of the approval process.
- NO – if the application for funding receives less than 50 points and/or does not meet the minimum points threshold for at least one of the combined criteria and/or does not meet the exclusion criterion. The application for a mini-project is excluded from later stages of the approval process.

The EC must provide justification for its opinions in all cases. The minutes of meetings of the EC are published no later than 15 working days from the date of termination of the meeting on the website <https://www.eosc.cz/en/about-eosc-cz/initiative-eosc-cz>. The evaluation protocols are made available to the applicant in IS Věda after the end



of the meeting of the EC; the applicant is informed about this fact via an internal message in IS Věda.

Applications for a mini-project that meet the conditions for a substantive evaluation proceed to the selection stage for mini-projects.

C.3 Selection of mini-projects

The selection phase for mini-projects includes the compilation of lists of mini-projects that have been recommended/not recommended (lists are compiled by the guarantors of the grant scheme based on the results of the meeting of the EC). The guarantors of the grant scheme compile one list in which mini-projects are ranked according to the number of assigned points from the substantive evaluation. This is prepared using the lists of recommended mini-projects from all EC meetings, i.e. without taking into account the domain/thematic cluster. Following its signature by the Rector of Charles University, the resulting list is published on the website <https://www.eosc.cz/en/about-eosc-cz/initiative-eosc-cz>.

Successful applicants are invited by the guarantors of the grant scheme to prepare the documents necessary for the conclusion of the Agreement/Amendment (see Chapter 5.4 of the Methodology for Applicants and Participating Institutions).

Applicants whose mini-projects meet the conditions of the Call will be asked to sign an Agreement/Amendment in order of the number of points earned. In the event that points totals are equal, the order in which applications for mini-projects were submitted is decisive until the Call allocation is exhausted.

C.4 Objection to results of evaluation

The procedure to be followed by applicants when submitting an objection to the results of evaluation is described in chapter 5.5 of the Methodology for Applicants and Participating Institutions.

The guarantors of the grant scheme shall assess the Objection to the Results of Evaluation ("Objection") in relation to the facts set out in Chapter 5.5 of the Methodology for Applicants and Participating Institutions. This assessment shall take place at a joint meeting of the grant scheme guarantors, the project manager and the expert project manager.

Comments in the Objection that meet any of the conditions below will not be upheld by CU:

- appeal against the expert opinion of the evaluator (in the case of admissibility criteria and formal criteria), or the EC without providing evidence of a breach of a specific rule of the Call and its documentation;



- which are confusing (it is not clear what the applicant is seeking or which of the evaluations of the evaluators or the evaluation committee it disagrees with, contain factual errors, etc.);
- appeal against non-recommendation to sign an Agreement/Amendment due to insufficient financial allocation of the Call;
- appealing against non-recommendation to sign an Agreement/Addendum due to support for applications for mini-projects that received a higher number of points in the substantive evaluation;
- in the event of repeated submission of an Objection to the result of a single stage of the approval process.

Objections received shall be handled in one of the following ways:

- Upheld, if the Objection is found to be justified;
- Upheld, if the Objection is found to be partially justified;
- Dismissed, if the Objection is found to be unjustified or was not sent in the prescribed manner/within the prescribed deadline. The deadline for processing an Objection is set at 30 calendar days from the date it is sent by the applicant in IS Věda.

If an Objection is found to be justified or partially justified, CU will take the necessary remedial measures. In the case of admissibility criteria and/or formal criteria, the re-evaluation of the criteria is discussed immediately and, in the event of a change in the evaluation that reverses the result of the original evaluation in the first round of evaluation, the mini-project advances to the second phase of the substantive evaluation, which is carried out by the remedial committee. The re-evaluation of the mini-projects for which the Objection was submitted for the second phase of the evaluation shall take place only in cases where, taking into account the possible maximum of points in the re-evaluated criteria, it is possible to reverse the result of the evaluation, i.e. to recommend an application for a mini-project that was not initially recommended for the signing of an Agreement/Amendment.

If an Objection is found to be unjustified, the outcome of the evaluation process does not change and the application for a mini-project is not recommended for signature of an Agreement/Amendment or remains in the queue of mini-projects.

In the event that the Objection is found to be justified/partially justified, the guarantor of the grant scheme will propose to the Rector of Charles University the establishment of a remedial EC. This remedial EC will consist of a minimum of three members, who will also be expert evaluators of domain/thematic clusters of all mini-projects that are intended for remedial substantive evaluation. If necessary, an interdisciplinary remedial committee may be established. This shall be composed of expert evaluators from across domain clusters in order to ensure the substantive evaluation of all mini-projects evaluated by the remedial committee. Other procedures for the



evaluation and negotiation of remedial ECs are governed by the rules set out in this chapter (in particular C.1, C.1.1 and C.2) of the Methodology.

At the same time, in its assessment the remedial EC deals only with those substantive criteria for which the Objection was found to be justified/partially justified (with the exception of mini-projects for which it conducts a substantive assessment based on the results of the assessment of the Objection to the results of the first phase of the evaluation).

In its assessment, the remedial EC may agree with the original assessment; such an opinion must be duly justified. In a remedial evaluation, the EC may change the entire evaluation of the criterion in question. However, within the evaluation protocol it must not discuss the evaluation of substantive criteria that do not concern the justified/partial Objection.

Following the meeting of the remedial EC an evaluation protocol is created to replace the original evaluation protocol.

D. Other obligations of evaluators (members of the EC)

D.1 Conflict of interest/bias

- a) Specific Calls: If an evaluator is a member of the research team for a mini-project, he/she is obliged to notify the guarantor of the grant scheme immediately during pre-selection if he/she is approached for the evaluation of mini-projects. On this basis, he/she is subsequently excluded from the evaluation of mini-projects in the relevant Call.
- b) Specific mini-projects: Any evaluator who is at risk of a conflict of interest due to a connection with the submitter of/research team for the mini-project must give notification of this fact, including the justification, to the guarantor of the grant scheme and immediately withdraw from the evaluation process of the relevant application for the mini-project. It is the responsibility of every evaluator to consider whether any current or past cooperation with the submitter of/research team for the application for the mini-project does not create a conflict of interest under the signed declaration or not, i.e. whether his/her independence is unimpeachable. The guarantor of the grant scheme shall state such fact at the beginning of the meeting of the EC. The evaluator in question does not participate in the discussion of the evaluation of the relevant mini-project and this fact will also be stated in the minutes of the meeting.

D.2 Impartiality and confidentiality

All information related to the evaluation/selection process for mini-projects, as well as the content of the mini-projects themselves, is confidential. Evaluators are obliged to maintain complete confidentiality towards all entities/persons, with the exception of entities/persons who are responsible for the monitoring of the evaluation and





selection process for mini-projects and are also obliged to ensure the integrity of the entire evaluation process. Any doubts about a breach of this rule must be investigated and may lead to the termination of cooperation with the evaluator and, as a last resort, to the suspension of the entire evaluation process, with all the consequences that entails. It is therefore necessary to prevent any leakage of information, even if due to mere negligence. Evaluators must approach the assessed project objectively and impartially, utilising all their knowledge and skills, or utilising publicly available information. Under no circumstances are evaluators involved in the evaluation process permitted to contact applicants, including for the purpose of supplementing or explaining data contained in an application for a mini-project. All evaluators (members of ECs) are obliged to submit a completed and signed Evaluator's Declaration at the beginning of the meeting of the EC (see annex Minutes of the EC Meeting).

E. Overview of annexes

Annex no. 1 Template for the Statutes of Evaluation Committees for Call

Annex no. 2 Template for the Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee

Annex no. 3 Template for the Minutes of the Evaluation Committee Meeting

Annexes of the Minutes of the Evaluation Committee Meeting:

- no. 1 List of evaluated mini-projects*
- no. 2 List of mini-projects with assigned number of points from the substantive evaluation.*
- no. 3 List of mini-projects eliminated in the second phase of the evaluation*
- no. 4 List of mini-projects recommended by the Committee for signature of an Agreement/Amendment*
- no. 5 Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality by members of the Evaluation Committee*
- no. 6 Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality by the guarantor of the grant scheme regarding the evaluation process*
- no. 7 Evaluation criteria - Check of formal requirements for the Open Science II Mini-Projects Call*
- no. 8 Evaluation criteria – Admissibility check for Open Science II Mini-Projects Call*
- no. 9 Evaluation criteria – Substantive Evaluation*

