



## Cooperation - Clusters - Call II

The main goal of the call is the development of innovation clusters as a tool for increasing the intensity of joint research, development and innovation activities among business entities and the research sector.

### TIMETABLE

#### Receipt of grant applications:

- 25.04.2024 - 05.04.2025

### SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

The following activities will be supported:

- Collective research – research and development activities that meet the innovation needs of small and medium-sized enterprises of a given industrial sector or specific technological area within the cluster. The results of the project are always usable by several companies that can develop their own specific solutions for new products, processes and services based on the results.
- Shared infrastructure – establishment/development and equipment of an open access cluster centre for industrial research, development and innovation with the aim of increasing the research and innovation capacity of SMEs to implement new innovative solutions and advanced technologies.
- Innovation cluster development - activities aimed at increasing the capacities and knowledge of a cluster organization, which will improve and expand specialized support services for SMEs.

### THE APPLICANT

- is a **legal entity** that has been **assigned a Czech ID number** and is **authorized to do business**<sup>1</sup>.
- is authorized to conduct business corresponding to the **economic activity**<sup>2</sup> in which the project is implemented.
- is a purpose-built association of entrepreneurs with research and knowledge-dissemination organisations or other institutions and organizations, which aims to fulfil the objectives set out in Chapter 2 of the Call. The articles of association of the applicant must state that one of its main activities is the support of innovation and

<sup>1</sup> This is a trade license or license to do business according to other legal regulations (unless otherwise stated in the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries of OP TAC - specific part).

<sup>2</sup> In the application in IS KP21+, the applicant indicated the CZ-NACE in which the project is implemented, which corresponds to the activity recorded in the public registers. The registered CZ-NACE must not be listed in the Call Annex under the title "Unsupported CZ-NACE".

increased competitiveness, and the subject of activity of the aid beneficiary as specified in the articles of association or founding agreement must include the establishment and operation of the cluster.

- There must be at least 15 members in an immature cluster, 20 in a mature cluster, and 30 in a cluster of excellence.
- At least one research and knowledge-dissemination organization<sup>3</sup> must be a member of the cluster, i.e. an entity meeting the definition of a research and knowledge-dissemination organization as set out in Article 2(83) GBER.
- The cluster must be open to new members, the rules for the entry and exit of members will be included directly in the Statutes or the Founding agreement, and must also be managed in a transparent manner. Each member has 1 vote when voting.
- meets the minimum conditions defined for the individual categories of cluster maturity according to the Annex 8 to the Call.
- provided **the data to the extent required in Section 14, paragraph 3, letter e) of Act No 218/2000 Coll.**, the Act on Budgetary Rules and amending certain related acts, as amended:
  - in IS KP21+, it entered information on the identification of persons acting on behalf of the applicant, indicating whether they act as its statutory body or whether these persons act on the basis of a granted power of attorney,
  - has registered the real owners of the legal entity in accordance with Act No 37/2021 Coll., on the registration of real owners (fulfilment of the condition will be verified by IB),
  - in IS KP21+, it entered information on the identification of the entities in which it has a share and the amount of this share.
- According to its sworn statement, it **is not in liquidation**.
- According to its sworn statement, it has been registered as an income tax payer in the Czech Republic continuously for at least two tax periods<sup>4</sup> preceding the date of submission of the grant application for activity 4.1c), and at least for two tax periods for activities 4.1a) and 4.1b).

## TERRITORIAL FOCUS

- Target territory: The territory of the Czech Republic, except NUTS 2 Prague
- The territorial acceptability is not assessed based on the registered office of the applicant (beneficiary) but based on the actual place of project implementation, i.e. the territory where the physical implementation takes place and the project expenses are incurred. For the purposes of this Call, this is the business establishment in which the project is implemented.

## MAIN CONDITIONS OF THE CALL

- The project must not violate horizontal EU policies and their basic principles. In particular, the project must comply:
  - with principles of non-discrimination (primarily non-discrimination based on race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability, age or sexual orientation),
  - with the principles of sustainable development,

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of fulfilling this condition, a research and knowledge-dissemination organization is also considered a member if the relationship is based on a written contract. This member must also have 1 vote when voting.

<sup>4</sup> This is a tax period according to Section 16b for natural persons / Section 21a for legal entities of Act No 586/1992 Coll., on income taxes.

- with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- The project objectives shall be in line with the objectives of the operational programme and the Call.
- For projects whose total eligible expenses are equal to/higher than CZK 5 million, the score obtained in the simplified economic assessment, which expresses the financial health of the applicant, must not be lower than 4 points (only applies to activities 4.1a and 4.1b).
- According to the declaration form for the application of DNSH (the principle of "do no significant harm"), the project does not significantly harm the environmental objectives within the meaning of Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council (does not apply to activity 4.1c).<sup>5</sup>
- Grant applications of applicants who have submitted a similar active project (in any PP status up to PP37 including) under OP TAC will not be approved in the phase of appraisal of formal requirements and eligibility, unless the applicant has withdrawn from the project. A similar project is a project that has the same place of implementation (up to the level of the municipality), similar activities and a similar amount of budget and its structure. The aim of the above-mentioned measure is to prevent the blocking of budget funds by the fact that the still unfinished projects are submitted again in an identical wording, or slightly modified.<sup>6</sup>

## ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

- Eligible expenditure for activity 4.1 a)
  - Personnel costs, externally procured services in research and development (contractual research, consulting services), material, additional overhead costs.
  - Contracts for externally procured research and development services cannot be awarded to a personally or economically related person<sup>7</sup>.
  - Expenditure for this activity is eligible only under the condition that the project or its supported part falls entirely into the category of industrial research or experimental development according to Article 25 GBER.
  - Additional overhead costs are applied at a flat rate of up to 15% of the Personnel expenses budget item.
- Eligible expenditure for activity 4.1 b)
  - Investments in intangible and tangible assets according to Article 27 GBER.
  - Machinery and equipment including hardware and networks, software and data, intellectual property rights.
- Eligible expenditure for activity 4.1 c)
  - Costs of the operation of the innovation cluster according to Article 27 GBER.
  - Personnel expenses, travel expenses, services of consultants, experts, studies, marketing and promotion, seminars, conferences, rent, overheads.
  - Overhead costs are applied at a flat rate of up to 15% from the Personnel expenses budget item.
  - The cost of obtaining the ESCA (The European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis) stamp of excellence in the de minimis scheme

<sup>5</sup> For activity 4.1c) announced in this Call, the MA verified compliance with the DNSH principle for each environmental objective according to the detailed DNSH assessment table. It has been assessed that, for activity 4.1c) of this Call, a negligible impact on the environmental objectives under Article 9 of Regulation 2020/852 (taxonomy regulation) is expected.

<sup>6</sup> For activity 4.1c), the project cannot be approved in the phase of appraisal of formal requirements and eligibility of the grant application, if the applicant has an active project in this activity under Call I Cooperation - Clusters.

<sup>7</sup> A personally and economically related person means a person who holds more than a 50% share in the applicant, a person in whom the applicant has more than a 50% share, a person who is a member of the statutory body both of the contracting authority and of the project investigator/co-investigator, and can make independent decisions and thus exercise decision-making influence.

## FORM AND AMOUNT OF AID

- The aid is provided in the form of a grant.
- The aid will be paid in accordance with the "Rules for the co-financing of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for financial support for border management and visas for the 2021-2027 programming period<sup>8</sup>" and will be reimbursed **retrospectively after the end of the project** or its stage (if the project is staged in accordance with the Rules for applicants and beneficiaries - general part) provided that the conditions of the Decision are met.
- The beneficiary is obliged to ensure the financing of expenses for the implementation of the project, including VAT.
- Support is provided exclusively to the beneficiary, i.e. the legal entity that operates the innovation cluster. Fees charged for using the facilities of a given cluster and participating in its activities must correspond to the market price or reflect the relevant costs of the cluster, including a reasonable margin.
- The aid may not be provided for the same project expenses for which other aid from public sources has already been or will be provided, including an aid from Union funds that are centrally managed by bodies, agencies, joint ventures and other Union entities and that are not directly or indirectly under control of member states.
- The aid may not be provided to a beneficiary who has an unpaid obligation arising from a recovery order issued after a previous decision of the Commission declaring that the aid received from a provider from the Czech Republic is illegal and incompatible with the internal market.

## AID INTENSITY AND BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING SOURCES<sup>9</sup>

The total eligible expenditure (TEE) of the project must be at least CZK 2 million<sup>10</sup>.

- Maximum TEE per project under activity 4.1a)
  - CZK 70,000,000 for excellent clusters/ max.
  - CZK 35,000,000 for 1 sub-project. CZK 35,000,000 for mature clusters/ max. CZK 20,000,000 for 1 sub-project.
- Maximum TEE per project under activity 4.1b)
  - CZK 80,000,000 for excellent clusters/ CZK 40,000,000 for mature clusters.
- Maximum TEE per project under activity 4.1c)
  - CZK 16,000,000 for excellent clusters/CZK 20,000,000 if the project includes outputs in activity 4.1c) iii
  - CZK 10,000,000 for mature clusters/CZK 16,000,000 if the project includes outputs in activity 4.1c) iii
  - CZK 6,000,000 for immature clusters/CZK 10,000,000 if the project includes outputs in activity 4.1c) iii

Projects with TEE lower than the minimum are ineligible and will not be accepted into the appraisal process. The maximum TEE level is unsurpassable.

<sup>8</sup> Document of the Ministry of Finance approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in Resolution No 354 of 12 April 2021.

<sup>9</sup> The chapter shows the EU share. The remaining part of the funding will be covered from the beneficiary's resources.

<sup>10</sup> Valid at the stage of approval by the selection committee.

Type of entity	EU share
Activity 4.1 a)	
Small enterprise	Industrial research 70%
	Experimental development 45%
Medium-sized enterprise	Industrial research 60%
	Experimental development 35%
Large enterprise	Industrial research 50%
	Experimental development 25%
Activity 4.1 b) and c)	
regardless of size	50%