

Sustainability Strategy

**Socially responsible approach
of the Czech National Agency
for International Education
and Research**





MISSION – VISION – VALUES



The Sustainability Strategy of the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (DZS) is based on the overall strategy and orientation of our organisation.

DZS is the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research. Our organisation's main mission is to help develop high-quality international education and research in the Czech Republic, support the implementation of projects of international co-operation in education and research, and build the reputation of the Czech education system abroad. We were established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.



**We are a Czech
National Agency
for International
Education and
Research**

Mission

Our main mission is to support and facilitate international co-operation at all levels of formal and non-formal education and, since 2021, also in research and development.

Our community, bilateral and national programmes provide financial and organisational support for implementing international projects and developing international education in the Czech Republic.

We represent, promote, and advertise Czech education, research, and development abroad, and help build up the Czech Republic's global reputation.

We serve as an internationalisation centre in the Czech Republic – we provide information, consulting, and analytical services for all target groups in education and research.

We are a source of data, information, know-how, and inspiration in international education and research. We disseminate the results of international co-operation projects, inform about current trends, and mediate the transfer of experience and good practice examples from abroad.

Vision

DZS will continue to actively contribute to developing international education and research and reinforce its role as an internationalisation centre in the Czech Republic. As a close collaborator with all key actors in education and research in the Czech Republic and abroad, DZS will systematically enhance the international character of education and research in the Czech Republic and promote the acquisition of global competencies required to accomplish the objectives of sustainable development.

DZS will place an emphasis on openly communicating and promoting all its activities and contribute significantly to a positive perception of the effects of internationalisation on individuals, institutions, and society.

In line with European and national policies in the field of education and research, DZS strives to integrate the widest possible range of individuals and institutions into international education and research and contribute to developing alternative forms of international co-operation.

DZS will continue to actively participate in professional discussions in the field of international education and research both in the Czech Republic and abroad, and – through joint international activities – play an important role within the network of national agencies and other international associations.



We strive to integrate the widest possible range of individuals and institutions into international education and research

Values

In our work, we uphold the **values** that permeate all our activities as well as communication with stakeholders:

Transparency, openness, and equal access

We act in a way that is honest, appropriate, and open to ourselves and our partners. We approach our work responsibly and with respect for the individual requirements of all target groups in education and research.

Expertise and professionalism

We help our employees reach their professional and personal potential. We create a work environment that allows them to broaden their knowledge and keep up with current trends. We grow the organisation's professional know-how and actively contribute to the debate in the field of international education and research. We help each employee realize their potential and develop their abilities.

Quality in all areas

We regularly set quality objectives, monitor and evaluate the quality management system in place, and take adequate corrective measures. We strive to continuously improve the quality of all our activities and services aiming to develop high-quality international education and research in the Czech Republic.

Effective communication and promotion

We aim to communicate in a clear and comprehensive way. We always modify the content and form of our message to meet the needs of our end clients. We represent, promote, and advertise Czech education, research, and development abroad.

Applying principles of social responsibility

In our daily activities, we take on economic, social, and environmental responsibility and do our best to lead by example. We see sustainability as an essential prerequisite for the success of our operations and accomplishment of our mission.

Economy

We make sound use of public funds. We use material, human, and financial resources efficiently and effectively to achieve maximum effect and to respect our founder's requirements.



Sustainable Development Goals



Education is a fundamental tool to achieve sustainable development.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (*Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs*) are a global programme which aims to achieve a sustainable future. Successful implementation of SDGs depends on the effort and co-operation of all members of society around the world, including educational institutions.

Our activities at DZS contribute significantly towards these goals, especially **Goal 4: Quality Education**. We ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Through the programmes and projects we implement, we cultivate our society, teach tolerance, respect, promote co-operation and equality, and encourage active citizenship. Educational programmes are open to anyone interested and are set up to ensure that participants are not limited by language, geographical, educational, health, cultural, socio-economic, gender, or administrative barriers.

We want to have a better-educated society prepared to face future challenges, which is why we help individuals and organisations reach their potential.

We contribute significantly to the development of in-school educational activities and the professional growth of teachers, adult educators, and youth workers. We provide students, pupils, and young people with opportunities to gain experience abroad and improve their chances in the labour market, fulfilling our role as a responsible member of society with a long-term positive impact.

Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure – has recently become a key objective for DZS as it has begun to support research. In 2021, DZS expanded its operations to Brussels, taking over the management of the Czech Liaison Office for Research, Development and Innovation (CZELO). Having become actively involved in advancing Czech research and development – in addition to education – we aim to improve the prospects of Czech researchers within the context of international co-operation.



We participate in developing and shaping the future form of education and research and engage in an active dialogue with the professional community

Main areas of our sustainability strategy

Sustainable development goals are reflected in all priority areas and objectives of our Sustainability Strategy, which focuses on **co-operation with other experts** in advancing the quality of education and research, **sustainable behaviour of participants** in educational programmes, and the **overall responsible operation of DZS** in line with stakeholder requirements and expectations.

Area 1:

The professional community – Co-operation with other experts in advancing the quality of education and research

The work of the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research and the priorities of its activities build on a number of European and national strategies. Within these, there have recently been many voices calling for modifications to the education system, an **expansion of the function of education, and the development of key competencies** related to technologies, changes in the labour market, and active citizenship. There are also appeals to utilize the potential of extra-curricular and non-formal education. **Inclusion, equal opportunities, and inter-cultural tolerance are also being emphasised to a great extent.** Furthermore, the prevailing effort is to educate a society that is globally-minded and respectful. International co-operation in education and research plays an important

role here, and DZS is in the privileged position of being able to influence the successful implementation of these steps in the Czech environment.

We want to participate in developing and shaping the future form of education and research and engage in an active dialogue with the professional community, share our knowledge of the needs, limitations, and challenges of all target groups, and transfer changes to mobility and co-operation programmes.

Having expanded to the Brussels-based CZELO office, we also have an opportunity **to support the development of innovative projects on an international scale**, which will strengthen the Czech Republic's position in the field of research and education.

In crisis situations that may arise (e.g. COVID-19), we want to strengthen our role as a responsible partner and be able to respond quickly and effectively to the current situation and adapt our services to benefit all stakeholders.



**We support
the social and
environmental
responsibility
of international
mobilities and
projects**

Area 2:

Participants in programmes – Education in sustainable development

In the international education community, there has been a growing interest in sustainable policies and practices and an increasing commitment to incorporate them into programmes offered all over the world. The aim is not to stop or limit global mobility. On the contrary, it will help future leaders acquire the necessary competencies, values, and attitudes to make important decisions responsibly and to face global challenges such as the climate crisis.

Our objective is to introduce a sustainable dimension into international education and national partner programmes, and to provide coordinators, students, and other participants in educational stays (not only) abroad with the knowledge and skills required to actively implement the SDGs. Through raising their awareness of and educating them on sustainable development – offering them tips and guidance – we hope to motivate them on how to understand and consider social and environmental responsibility during their stays abroad and their work on international projects.

Area 3:

Our organisation – Responsible operation of DZS

The sustainable development of our organisation is a way to make our operations more efficient, develop our human potential, and innovate our work in general. In the long run, we strive to make our operations more environmentally friendly, provide strategic assistance in the community, and satisfy our employees and other stakeholders. We want to achieve long-term effectiveness in fulfilling and monitoring our Sustainability Strategy. By putting in place measurable indicators and reporting, we want **to further strengthen our transparency and open communication.**



We see sustainability as an essential prerequisite for the success of our operations and for accomplishing our mission

Priorities 2021–2025

We have set the following priorities for 2021–2025, which will help us contribute to a more sustainable future, in education and elsewhere:

Priority 1:

High-quality and inclusive international education and research

We respond to the changes that are required in education, and we support the widest possible involvement of individuals and institutions in international education and research.

- We work with key partners to strengthen the international character of education and research in the Czech Republic.
- We support the acquisition of global competencies through international co-operation, mobility, national projects, and training across all sectors of education.
- We ensure equal access to international education and research programmes.
- We contribute to the development of alternative forms of international co-operation.
- We provide a supportive environment to Czech researchers in international co-operation.

Priority 2:

Sustainability of international mobility and co-operation projects

We promote the concept of sustainable development and inspire participants in international mobility and projects to behave responsibly.

- We introduce sustainable development topics into dialogue with partner organisations and grant beneficiaries.
- We promote sustainable modes of transport in mobility and projects.
- We provide mobility participants with tips and resources to make their international experience sustainable.
- We share examples of national and international projects on sustainability-related topics.
- We support the computerisation and paperless administration of project documentation.



We build the organization's professional know-how and develop the potential of our employees

Priority 3: **Responsible operation of the organisation**

We operate responsibly across all processes connected to our activities.

- In all our spheres of influence, we are ethical, transparent, and we respect human rights.
- We listen to stakeholders, take their expectations into account in our decisions, and support their socially responsible business behaviour.
- We reduce the environmental impact of our organisation, and we regularly report on the results.

Priority 4: **Employee development**

Our work environment is inspiring and respectful. We support the professional and personal growth of our employees.

- We live our values and uphold them in our everyday work.
- We create an environment that allows employees to broaden their knowledge and keep up with current trends.
- We support open communication and create a shared culture based on professionalism and responsibility.
- We empower our people to develop their talents and to strike a good balance between their personal and professional lives.
- We grow the organisation's professional know-how and actively contribute to the debate in the field of international education and research.

Our main sustainability goals for 2025:

- Expanding the portfolio of grant applicants through an **inclusive approach** to international education and research.
- Actively supporting the acquisition of **global competencies that are important, and not only for accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals**.
- Promoting a **sustainable dimension in international education and co-operation** in all programmes
- Strengthening the **international dimension of research** and development in the Czech Republic.
- **Identifying, measuring and reducing** the main **environmental impacts** of our activities and, by extension, setting an example for key stakeholders.
- **Reflecting the principles of diversity** in our everyday work.
- Supporting employees in **active citizenship** through **community assistance and expert volunteering**.

For questions and comments on the Strategy or on the topic of social responsibility at DZS, please feel free to contact us at csr@dzs.cz. We appreciate your feedback.

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