

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT

FM14-21

Czech Republic

CZ-EDUCATION Education

2021

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, the programme CZ-EDUCATION continued with the implementation of the projects selected in the first and the second round of the Calls (2018 and 2019) and with the project selection from the third round of the Calls published in the autumn 2020. Guidance and support to the running projects were provided according to the plan. Out of 19 projects approved in the first round of the Calls for proposals, 15 were completed by the end of 2021 (eight projects were completed in 2020 and seven in 2021). Evaluation of the two final project reports is still in the process. Four projects are still running and their final results will be available in the autumn 2022. All 38 projects approved in the second round of the Calls for proposals are running, no project has been completed so far, and the first final reports for these projects are expected in the autumn 2022. The third round of the Calls for proposals was launched in the autumn 2020 and the submission deadlines were in February 2021. 37 projects were selected and their activities started in August 2021. First results of these projects will be available in 2022. The additional fourth Call for the Outcome 1, which was duly announced on October 15, 2021, is currently open for proposals, with the deadline in mid-February 2022.

Recent changes and developments in the national policy context and the national priorities may have a positive impact on the implementation of the programme CZ-EDUCATION, in particular the Strategy for Education Policy in the Czech Republic 2030+. On the other hand, the realisation of the projects, in particular Mobility projects (Outcome 2), has been significantly affected by the restrictions related to the spread of COVID-19. Some project activities were adapted to the on-line form. However, some activities cannot be realised on-line and especially within the mobility projects, interest in on-line mobilities has been low. The Project Promoters prefer to prolong the project period, to postpone the mobilities and realise them later, physically.

As a reaction to the COVID-19 persisting restrictions, the Programme Operator continued in the well-established practice and organised both on-line and physical events. It was proved that through short on-line webinars or consultations, wider audiences can be reached, whereas physical meetings are more convenient for informal or all-day events. Despite the delay in achieving the project outputs due to COVID-19, some indicators have already been fulfilled. On the other hand, a low interest in the Outcomes 3 and 4 after all the three planned selection rounds forced the Programme Operator to modify the Programme Agreement and launch an additional Call for proposals in order to improve the use of the available funds.

The Programme CZ-EDUCATION is open to all levels of education and all projects are bilateral (i.e. partnership with entities from the donor states is mandatory). As demonstrated by the interim and final reports, all the projects contribute to the strengthening of bilateral relations and work towards the achievement of the programme objectives.

The EEA Grants and the Programme CZ-EDUCATION were presented at six events, such as conferences, education fairs and meetings. The Programme operator organised 16 seminars for potential and actual beneficiaries and for the public and published 16 social media posts and 16 articles. Four of those articles were published in a professional journal or on an internet news portal. Newly, a podcast was published about one of the institutional cooperation projects.

The overall risk of the programme has remained on the level 3 because of the continuing COVID-19 restrictions.