



# Ongoing evaluation of implementation of the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education

Ministry of Education, Youth and  
Sports

## Progress Report 02 Executive Summary

June 2017  
Final version



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Structural and Investing Funds  
Operational Programme Research,  
Development and Education



## Executive summary



Factual progress partially corresponds with the anticipated state of implementation of OP RDE to a given date.

The fulfilment of the real values of the result and output indicators given by the programme document was, as of December 31, 2016, zero excluding seven indicators. Commitments by projects were made in only 50 out of 152 programme indicators in this period<sup>1</sup>. The calls available in MS2014+ covered a total of 139 announced programme indicators. A total of 13 programme indicators were not addressed by calls to a given date.



The fulfilment of the real values of the result and output indicators given by the programme document was, as of December 31, 2016, zero excluding seven indicators. This Progress report cannot assess the factual progress of OP RDE reached by implementation of projects.

Due to zero values of output and result indicators, this Progress report cannot assess the factual progress of OP RDE reached by implementation of projects. In respect to situation described, the evaluator decided to make predictions for target values and milestones based on the data available – target values of indicators in announced calls and target values of indicators, which are obligatory for applicants and recipients of financial aid from OR RDE.



The risk of not-fulfilling target values and the risk of over-fulfilling target values has been identified.

Current level of potential of indicators to reach target values is considered sufficient in most cases. The risk of not-fulfilling target value has been identified for thirteen of the programme indicators. This was due to the fact that they have not been addressed by a single call so far and it is therefore desirable that they should appear in the calls with the announcement in the near future. A list of the indicators is given in the table below:

---

<sup>1</sup> Compared with the previous progress report, the number of indicators was adjusted. In the Progress Report 01, indicators were not monitored as divided into LDR and MDR. In this report, indicators are counted if they were divided into MDR and LDR as two indicators.



**Table 1 Executive summary - the risk of not-fulfilling target values**

PO / IP	Indicator
PA1	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions (LDR and MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of supported people in management and implementation of RDI (MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of supported products of LL (LDR and MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of new project intentions supported by Smart Accelerator (MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of new tools for RDI support at regional level (MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of newly created courses of LL (LDR and MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of organizations affected by systemic interventions (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP2	Number of organizations where quality and education for inclusiveness has been strengthened (LDR and MDR)

Based on relatively high coverage of target values of indicators by calls the risk of over-fulfilling target values was identified at the following indicators:

**Table 2 Executive summary - the risk of over-fulfilling target values**

PO / IP	Indicator
PA1 IP 1	Number of research employees who work in modernized research infrastructures (MDR)
PA1 IP 1	Number of newly built, expanded or modernised research infrastructures, and centres of excellence (MDR)
PA1 IP 1	Number of new products modernizing strategic management RDI (MDR)
PA1 IP 1	Number of supported people in management and implementation of RDI
PA2 IP1	Number of new products modernizing strategic management systems in research organisations (LDR and MDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of new project intentions supported by Smart Accelerator (LDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of new tools for RDI support at regional level (LDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of new practice-oriented Bachelor study programmes (LDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of study programmes taught in a foreign language (LDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of organizations whose workers have raised their qualifications in RD, its management and other areas (LDR)
PA2 IP1	Number of organizations affected by systemic interventions (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP1	Number of supported co-operations (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP1	Number of products in system projects (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP1	Total number of participants (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP2	Number of products in system projects (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP2	Number of organizations affected by systemic interventions (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP2	Number of organizations affected by systemic interventions (LDR and MDR)
PA3 IP3	Number of research employees who work in modernized research infrastructures (MDR)



The risk of failure to meet milestone values in 2018 of factual indicators has been identified.

The fulfilment of the factual indicators of the milestone 2018 is considered to be at risk in case of these indicators:



**Table 3 Executive summary - the risk of failure to meet the milestone values in 2018**

PO	Indicator	Risk
PA1	Number of newly built, expanded or modernised research infrastructures and centres of excellence	Medium
PA2	Total number of participants	High
PA2	Acquired information sources	Medium
PA2	Number of students who use the newly built, expanded or modernized infrastructure for research -focused curricula	Medium
PA3	Total number of participants	Low



Financial progress is lower than anticipated in programme document OP RDE.

As of December 31, 2016 a total of CZK 13.565m was payable, representing 14.6% of the allocation. According to the OP RDE programming document, the total allocation for 2015 and 2016 (main allocation and productivity reserve) is CZK 30.790m. The share of reimbursed funds to the allocation is only 0.35% and is therefore significantly below the expected level. The financial volume of the announced calls is 57% of the OP allocation (44% of the ESF allocation and 67% of the ERDF allocation). A detailed overview is provided in the following table.

**Table 4 Financial performance in funds perspective**

Priority axis	Fund	Share of allocation of calls to the allocation of OP RDE	Share of financial resources under commitments to allocation of OP RDE	Share of financial resources paid to the allocation of OP RDE
PA1	ERDF	68.95 %	22.85 %	0.46 %
PA2	ERDF	68.76 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
	ESF	48.35 %	1.01 %	0.00 %
PA3	ESF	42.15 %	15.47 %	0.05 %
PA4	ERDF	37.20 %	37.15 %	4.94 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>ERDF</b>	<b>66.90 %</b>	<b>17.28 %</b>	<b>0.61 %</b>
	<b>ESF</b>	<b>43.94 %</b>	<b>11.29 %</b>	<b>0.04 %</b>
	<b>ERDF+ESF</b>	<b>56.63 %</b>	<b>14.60 %</b>	<b>0.35 %</b>

In PA1, it is possible to predict the fulfilment of the financial Indicator of the milestone with sufficient margin, including the predicted RS for the 3rd quarter of 2018.

In PA2, reaching of 100% of the financial indicators of the milestone is marginal, the fulfilment at the level of 85% can be predicted with a margin. A fundamental prerequisite for meeting 100% of these financial milestones for both funds is the rapid launch of the projects of higher education. Another prerequisite is the use of backward capability, which would accelerate drawing in the first phase. Faster drawing at the beginning of the project should compensate for the delay in evaluating the calls.

In PA3, it is possible to predict the fulfilment of the financial indicator of the milestone with sufficient margin, and only if the predicted RS are included for the 3rd quarter of 2018.





On the basis of the current state of financial progress as of December 31, 2016, the risk of non-utilization of allocated resources of the OP RDE was not identified.



All specific objectives of the OP RDE, except for PA2 SO3 Improving the conditions for lifelong learning at higher education institutions, are covered by a declared or completed call(s) or at least by a call in the call schedule.



OP RDE interventions are directly linked to the relevant strategic documents. The themes of strategies that have not yet been covered by the calls of for OP RDE were identified.

The Strategy of the Czech Republic's Education Policy by 2020 is most strongly implemented by OP RDE interventions. The second strongest strategy is represented by the National RIS3 Strategy. The third strongest strategy is represented by the National Reform Program of the Czech Republic 2014. A weaker link between OP RDE interventions to strategic and other documents was identified in the documents of the Czech Library Development Concept for 2011-2015, the draft of the Czech Library Development Concept for the Years 2017-2020 with a view to 2025 the conception of the management and development of school facilities for the implementation of constitutional or protective education and preventive educational care set up by the MEYS for the period 2014-2020 and the Strategy of Digital Education for 2020.

The strategies identified activities which could be supported in the calls of OP RDE and which have not been supported so far. These are activities of these strategic documents:

Long-term Plan for Education and Development of the Educational System of the Czech Republic for the period 2015-2020

- To motivate families from groups and locations threatened by social exclusion to place their children in nursery schools or other pre-school children's facilities
- To support manual skills and elements of polytechnic education in nursery schools
- To use the funds and necessary equipment in the development of literacy, competencies, manual skills and technical education in the framework of the OP RDE
- Link the content of the study programme Education to health with practical implementation of a healthy lifestyle in the school environment and beyond
- To encourage cooperation between schools and other organizations in the development and integration of children at risk of early school leaving in out-of-school activities
- To support the work of schools in the integration of foreigner in school education by appropriate means

The Concept of Development of Czech Libraries for 2011-2015

- To digitize text documents and collecting digital documents as part of the cultural and scientific heritage



## National Reform Program of the Czech Republic 2014

- To finance research organizations

## The Concept of Development of Czech Libraries for 2011-2015

- To develop the educational functions of libraries, especially in the area of lifelong learning and civic education in cooperation with educational institutions and other partners at national, regional and local level
- To promote research projects at major interdisciplinary conferences and strengthen the media impact of these projects on the broader levels of society

## Digital Education Strategy for 2020

- In the form of calls from operational programmes (OP RDE, IROP - MRD etc.) and MEYS development programmes (e.g. small grants), the activities of individuals and non-profit organizations aiming at creation of learning opportunities and on-line environment will be supported
- To encourage cooperation of the private sector with research workplaces to develop new facilities or procedures to facilitate the achievement of necessary pedagogically relevant learning objectives, to support the combination of theoretical and practical teaching and cooperation in providing teaching in innovative fields, etc.



Various factors that might have a severe negative impact on effective programme implementation were identified.

The identified factors, which currently affect the progress of the programme implementation, are listed in the following table. Factors are divided into the most serious (red), moderate (orange) and least severe (green) ones.

**Table 5 Factors influencing the state of implementation of the programme**


Factor	Description	Factor severity
Lack of functionality of MS2014+ including a portal IS KP14+	<p><b>The factor persists from the previous monitored period (Progress Report 01), the risk is stated in the Summary Risk Management Report in OP RDE, No. 01/56 MS2014 + Monitoring System - unpreparedness across modules and agendas.</b></p> <p><u>On the side of MEYS:</u></p> <p>As of the date of the evaluation, the system did not allow MA representatives or external evaluators to create their own exports in the system. Exports are created through requirements assigned to the supplier who will prepare the exports. This fact makes the work of evaluators very difficult, for example. The MEYS draws attention to other problems with MS2014 + at risk No. 01/59".</p> <p><u>On the side of the receiver</u></p> <p>MS2014+ users negatively rate working with IS KP14+. From the perspective of beneficiaries, the system works slowly and unreliably and technical issues may cause delay in filing the application for payment.</p>	
Insufficient personal staffing of the legal department	<p>The risk is reported in the Risk Management Report in OP RDE.</p> <p>In addressing the issues of the Department of Administration, the problem of the insufficient staffing capacity of the Legal Aid Unit is often encountered. Particularly in the process of publishing legal acts of the IP administration - in many cases, when issuing legal acts, these are acts not falling under the qualifications of employees of the</p>	










Factor	Description	Factor severity
	IP administration. There is a lack of legal support in issuing legal patterns, and patterns are passed through adjustments done by people with non-legal education. This can be a major risk for the future. At the end of 2016, 43% of the project applications were undecided, 41% of the project applications were approved and 16% of the project applications were rejected.	
Lack of competence across departments and departments in the programming documentation	The risk is reported in the Risk Management Report in OP RDE.  A major problem is the unclear and incomplete delineation of competencies among departments and departments in the programming documentation. Often, there is no clear opinion as to who is responsible for the activity - see, for example, the process of issuing legal acts and the lifecycle of the call. There is currently no formal mechanism that clearly identifies the competence to solve the problem in the event of a competence problem.	●
Insufficient personnel Capacity at the Department of Project Evaluation and Approvals (433)	The risk is reported in the Risk Management Report in OP RDE - No. 04/02 Insufficient administrative capacity.  In order to evaluate applications from a substantive point of view, according to the MEYS, there are not enough employees in the evaluation department (for evaluation of calls 02_15_001 - 02_15_007, the department should have borrowed additional 40 staff from other departments). The lack of factual evaluators may be reflected in the fact that only the formal fulfilment / non-fulfilment of the application items is checked in the evaluation. Also, the overwork of the department 433 causes delay in the announcement of the results of the calls, which causes shifts in the start of the implementation of the projects (this may cause problems with the factual implementation of the project - personnel issues which may result in the impaired ability of the projects to fulfil their indicators. This factor has been identified in the field surveys for this report and in the evaluation of the first calls and is also included in the MEYS Summary Report on risk management in OP RDE.	●
High turnover of IP administration staff	The risk is reported in the Risk Management Report in OP RDE - No. 04/02 Turnover.  The problem of IP administration departments is the relatively high turnover of employees and the long time needed to complete the capacities and recruit new employees as a result of the Staff Act which can, for example in the administration of simplified projects, cause problems for the future where three as many projects to be administered is expected.	●
Risk of failure to meet the financial milestone of the project KIPR by May 2017	The risk is not reported in the Risk Management Report in OP RDE.  There is a risk of failure to meet the financial milestone in May 2017. In order to meet the financial milestone, the project has to manage, in the near future, to present a bill of expenditure of about CZK 16m within the application for payment. This amount far exceeds the amounts submitted so far. It is currently not certain that this required amount will be charged in full and on time (there is a risk that the beneficiary will not be able to charge and document the expenditure in the required amount). If the project fails to charge this amount (taking into account the tolerance for fulfilment of the milestone) by the deadline of May 30, 2017, the milestone will not be reached.	●



Factor	Description	Factor severity
Not an optimal setting of announcement and call management within the OP RDE Operational Manual	<p>The risk is not reported in the Risk Management Report in OP RDE.</p> <p>Some MA processes are being regarded as inefficient, areas which are currently not sufficiently process-based have been identified. The following areas have been identified as problem areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient methodological support within the MA OP RDE - personally undersized department of methodological management, insufficiently anchored methodology, long reaction time for methodical support;</li> <li>• Complexity of the announced calls - from the applicants' point of view, impact on the administrative burden on the side of MA;</li> <li>• The duplication of the financial forecasting agenda - created in the administration departments as well as in the financial management department;</li> <li>• Insufficient communication and sharing of information among departments - sharing does not take place systemically;</li> <li>• Slowness of the process of declining the request for support - lengthiness, applicants prefer canceling the application and submitting a new one</li> </ul>	

The following set of recommendations was created on the basis of the analyses performed. These recommendations are divided into the most serious (red), moderate (orange) and least severe (green) ones.

**Table 6 Recommendations resulting from the findings**

Recommendations		Prioritization
<b>Continue to eliminate the risk factor according to the planned procedures of the MEYS (MS2014 +)</b>	MEYS is aware of the risk of the inadequate functionality of the MS2014+, including the ISFR Portal. The risk is regularly monitored (most recently in the General Risk Management Report in OP RDE for the period 1.7.2016 - 31.12.2016). The MEYS has been continually working on elimination or reduction of the risk factor.	
<b>Establish a clear procedure for resolving conflicts of jurisdiction within the programming documentation</b>	According to the administration departments, there is generally no clear definition of the procedure by which conflicts of jurisdiction among departments are to be resolved. In cases where it is not clear under which department the issue should fall, it is necessary to define how this situation should be dealt with.	
<b>Cooperate intensely with the KIPR project to eliminate technical problems that prevent the proper administration of the Project in MS2014 +</b>	Technical problems on the side of MS2014+ may cause the fact that the project will be unable to raise additional funds after exhaustion of funds provided for pre-financing. Unless the Payment Request or System Implementation Report is not approved in the MS2014+ system, the MA is technically not able to send additional funds to the beneficiary for implementation of the project (ex-ante funding).	
<b>Cooperate with the KIPR project to provide a statement of expenditure of about 16m in the RS by May 2017</b>	There is a risk of failure to meet the financial milestone in May 2017. In order to meet the financial milestone, the project has manage to submit a statement of expenditure of about CZK 16m in the application for payment in the near future. This amount exceeds the amounts submitted by far. Currently, it is not certain that this required amount will be charged in full and on time (there is a risk that the developer will not be able to charge and document the expenditure in the required amount). If the project fails to settle this amount (taking into account the tolerance for fulfilling the milestone) by the deadline of May 30, 2017, the milestone will not be fulfilled.	
<b>Occupation of the departments of legal aid</b>	Administration departments identified a serious problem of inadequate legal support in their activities, especially when issuing legal acts. Inadequate staffing capacity of the department of legal aid causes that the staff of the administration departments perform activities for which they do not have qualifications (e.g. adjustments to legal acts) for whose legal accuracy they are responsible. The solution is to increase staffing capacities of the department of legal aid so that	





Recommendations		Prioritization
	employees of the administration department have the possibility of expert consultation.	
<b>Occupation of the department of methodological management</b>	Administration departments identified a serious problem in the lack of support from the department of methodological management. It does not have sufficient staffing capacities to provide all the activities required by other MEYS departments. The solution is to increase staffing capacities of the department of methodological management so that employees of the administration department have the possibility of expert consultation.	●
<b>Start negotiations with the European Commission to change target values for indicators and milestones</b>	In PA1 - PA4, significant risks of over-fulfilling the output and result indicators were identified. At the same time, the risks of not meeting 13 Indicators, which have not been addressed by a single call, have been identified. It also applied to output indicators in PA1, PA2, and PA3 of milestone 2018. Changes in target values of indicators and values of the milestone are only recommended for indicators which do not have a realistic chance from the MA's perspective that target values / milestones will be met in a different way (additional calls, accelerated approval of projects, etc.).	●
<b>Announce calls / raise call allocations in PA1, PA2, and PA3 to meet the performance benchmark in the appropriate PO and to meet the target values of the indicators</b>	Based on the analysis, risks were identified in the area of compliance with the indicator of 2018. Furthermore, partial risks were identified in the area of meeting the target values of the indicators. One of the ways to respond to these risks is to promptly announce the calls and increase the allocation of the respective challenges (possibly speeding up the process of assessing applications - quick removal of projects into implementation) to meet the required target values and the 2018 milestone.	●
<b>Monitor the quality and sufficiency of external foreign evaluators</b>	It is advisable to continuously monitor the rating of the evaluators. Based on this rating, see whether the MEYS has enough high-quality foreign evaluators to evaluate project applications for upcoming calls. In case there is a shortage, they MEYS should take steps to complete the database of external evaluators.	●
<b>Perform a process-personnel analysis to find free capacity of MEYS for evaluating and administering projects from planned calls</b>	The analysis should, based on the call schedule and expected number of project applications, identify bottlenecks in the expected development of project applications. Subsequently, it should be decided whether MEYS is able to cover the expected workload with the evaluation of applications from the current HR (Department 433 and other relevant departments). On the basis of this analysis, MEYS should take steps to ensure sufficient personnel capacity for timely evaluation of the announced calls.	●
<b>Set up a unified communications platform and form of sharing methodological information inside and across the sections</b>	Communication and mutual sharing of information across departments was identified as problematic. For the efficient sharing of information, it is advisable to establish a single tool, which will search for information and share it in a structured and systematic manner.	●
<b>Verify the possibility of simplifying the preparation of the application for applicants by documenting statutory declaration</b>	In the calls, it is recommended to state that only the statutory declaration (e.g. extract from the criminal record) is sufficient for the relevant documents in the project application. These documents would be documented in their full form only after approval of the application, i.e. before the decision to grant a subsidy is signed. The MA should verify whether this simplification could be carried out with respect to the Uniform Methodical Environment 2014-2020, the legislation in force and other internal MEYS regulations.	●
<b>When planning a Smart Accelerator II call, take into account all relevant feedback from the implementers of Smart Accelerator</b>	For the next call in the area of the Smart accelerator, the following shortcomings have been identified in the current calls of the Smart Accelerator and these should be removed in the relevant cases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The call requires the Smart Accelerator Training Plan to contain at least 80 hours of training per year for the RIS3 Manager. This range of training is considered by the project promoters to be disproportionately high.</li> <li>The transfer of best practice to the Czech Republic should be ensured by the optional Twinning activity; according to the implementers, these activities should be better coordinated by MEYS in order to avoid the</li> </ul>	●



Recommendations		Prioritization
	<p>identification and transfer of best practices to the Czech Republic individually and in duplicate. At the same time, the implementers would welcome a more detailed description of the outputs of the individual activities (both mandatory and non-mandatory) in the call text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The eligible applicants and therefore the beneficiaries of the subsidy are currently only higher territorial self-governing units (regions). This is linked to the high administrative burden imposed on the recipient of the grant who manages the funds centrally for all project partners (implementing agencies). The project implementers would appreciate if the Smart Accelerator call was accompanied by a follow-up call, where the implementing agencies, which are to implement the activities planned with Smart Accelerator, would be the beneficiaries of the funds.</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus on the control of functionality of project management and personnel coverage of activities of the KIPR project</b>	<p>When checking the KIPR project, the MEYS should also focus on evaluating whether the current project management is the functional (Project Manager) and whether the staffing coverage of the activities of the KIPR project is functional (methodological teams). At the beginning of the project implementation, the project faced difficulties in filling the positions of the main project manager and methodological teams. The audit should give a clear opinion on whether the project is managed in accordance with the requirements of the MA and is effectively geared towards meeting its objectives. It should also find out whether the staffing of the KIPR project methodology teams is adequate to the objectives of the KIPR project.</p>	●
<b>Clarify (with MRD) the publicity rules for developers who implement multiple OP RDE projects at the same time</b>	<p>It may be problematic when the institution implements several projects of OP RDE at the same time. Publicity rules require that project executives place a billboard for each project of the OP RDE. Buildings may not have enough space to install these billboards (for example, if they implement 3 or more projects, the developers evaluate the placement of multiple billboards on the outside of the building negatively for aesthetic reasons). No MRD opinion has yet been issued on whether more than one project can be merged into one billboard if an institution implements multiple OP RDE projects simultaneously.</p>	●
<b>Fixed flat-rate of indirect costs for ERDF projects</b>	<p>Beneficiaries of ERDF funds are confronted with uncertainties regarding the reporting of indirect costs to the project. This is different for ERDF projects where the level of indirect costs has to be calculated and approved individually for each project, from the ESF projects where the flat rate of indirect costs is determined according to the direct costs of the project. The project implementers of the ERDF would welcome a simplification in that a flat-rate flat rate could be applied to their projects.</p>	●

Disclaimer:

This document is English translation of original document in Czech. In case of discrepancy between the Czech original text and the English translation, the Czech text shall prevail. The contractor is responsible for the correctness of the English translation.

