

**Evaluation of the
Systemic Project
„National Center for
Electronic Information
Resources - CzechELib“
co-funded from PA1 OP
RDE**

Interim Report for 2019

Ernst & Young, s.r.o.
Na Florenci 2116/15
110 00 Praha 1 - Nové Město
Corporate ID: 26705338



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List of Abbreviations

AK VŠ	ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARIES OF CZECH UNIVERSITIES
CAS	CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
CAWI	COMPUTER ASSISTED WEB INTERVIEWING
CRC	CZECH RECTORS CONFERENCE
CS (TG)	TARGET GROUP
EIR	ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES
EQ	EVALUATION QUESTION
ERMS	ELECTRONIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FTE	FULL TIME EQUIVALENT
ISP	INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMIC PROJECT
JŘBU (NPPP)	NEGOTIATED PROCEDURES WITHOUT PRIOR PUBLICATION
KA	KEY ACTIVITY
MA	MANAGING AUTHORITY
MRD - NCA	MINISTRY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT - NATIONAL COORDINATION AUTHORITY
MŠMT (MEYS)	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS
NA	NOT AVAILABLE
NTK	CZECH NATIONAL LIBRARY OF TECHNOLOGY
OA	OPEN ACCESS
OP VVV (OP RDE)	OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION
PO (PA)	PRIORITY AXIS
PR	PUBLIC RELATIONS
PRI	PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTITUTION
VO (RO)	RESEARCH ORGANISATION
RVŠ (HEC)	COUNCIL OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION
RVVI (RDI COUNCIL)	COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION
VaVal (RDI)	RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION
VZ (PP)	PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



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Definitions

EIR Provider	For the purposes of simplifying and if not otherwise stated below the provider of electronic information resources shall be an entity, which is a publisher or exclusive supplier of electronic information resources.
Member Institution	If not stated otherwise member institutions in this text shall be, in addition to member institutions (institutions with a signed agreement for centralized procurement) also participating institutions (institutions that are interested to sign an agreement for centralized procurement with CzechElib, but the agreement has not been yet signed).



1. Executive summary

1.1. Introduction

The second interim report has been prepared in compliance with the contract for work dated October 18, 2017 signed by and between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (hereinafter the “MEYS” or the “Contracting Authority”) and Ernst & Young, s.r.o. (hereinafter also “EY”). The contract has been signed under the criteria for awarding the procurement contract Evaluation of the Systemic Project “National Centre for Electronic Information Resources – CzechELib” co-funded from PA1 OP RDE. EY is responsible for the accuracy of the translation.

According to the procurement documents the evaluation objectives are as follows:

- ▶ To perform an ongoing qualitative and quantitative assessment of the project implementation and an indication of the extent to which the evaluated project achieves its objectives.
- ▶ To provide feedback to the Managing Authority of the OP RDE and the implementor of the ISP together with recommendations concerning the CzechELib project implementation.

The inception report defines a total of fourteen evaluation questions, with this interim evaluation report (hereinafter also “2. IER “) focused on the eight evaluation questions listed below (also “EQ”).

- ▶ EQ1 – How had the implementation of the project progressed?
- ▶ EQ2 – To what extent are the selected target groups aware of the existence and the overall concept of the CzechELib project? Are the project publicity and EIR promotion effective?
- ▶ EQ3 – To what extent are selected representatives of the target groups satisfied with the information and methodological support provided by the national licensing centre?
- ▶ EQ4 – What is the ongoing perceived benefit of the project for the representatives of the institutions involved in the project?
- ▶ EQ5 – What is the continuously perceived benefit of the project by other key stakeholders?
- ▶ EQ6 – Is the preparation and the implementation of internal evaluations, i.e. evaluations performed in the course of the project, effective?
- ▶ EQ7 – To what extent is the established national licensing centre operational and fulfilling its role?
- ▶ EQ9 – Is it possible to identify any other (unresolved) shortcomings/weaknesses or gaps in the centralised purchasing system that need to be addressed? If so, what are these and what solutions are proposed?



1.2. Key Findings and Conclusions

In the evaluation period June 2018-May 2019, the activities of the project were focused mainly on concluding contracts for other electronic information sources¹ (requested EIR, which were not yet available in the project, the additional involvement of the member institutions in existing EIR through participation in existing consortia or an establishment of new consortia), ensuring ERMS² for the management of EIR and software for statistics on the use of EIR for member institutions (the collection of requirements of member institutions and selection of providers have been carried out). Compared to the previous evaluation period, delays in the project activities were minimised, especially as a result of experience with the EIR acquisition process (both the CzechELib the project implementation team and EIR providers) and a better definition of requirements for control. From the budgetary point of view, the project succeeded in achieving a continuous financial milestone as of June 2019 and, given the number of secured EIR, the final milestone is also expected to be met.

The project (although with some exceptions) meets the needs of EIR member institutions. Member institutions and other stakeholders (representatives of the MEYS and the RDI Council) perceive benefits of the CzechELib project, namely the acquisition of EIR, the stabilisation of the financing system, savings of resources and the reduction of administrative burden. Cooperation and communication (the website and the provision of information by the project's implementation team, regular meetings) is evaluated positively by the member institutions.

In terms of risks and a long-term sustainability of the results achieved, the system for financing of the national licensing Centre (hereinafter also as the CzechELib) and purchasing EIR in the period after year 2020 is crucial. An EIR funding source after year 2020 is currently being discussed. The EIR funding source should be known no later than 1Q 2020 in order to extend (or terminate) contracts with existing EIR providers.

¹ Hereinafter EIR

² Electronic resources management system



1.3. Recommendations

- ▶ **Systematically introduce elements of an internal evaluation** for the purpose of ongoing evaluation of the project in year 2020 - systematic internal evaluation has not been implemented in the project yet and for the purpose of quality elaboration of ongoing evaluation, the evaluator recommends introducing some of the other elements of an internal evaluation with a clearly defined responsibility.
 - Reason – due to the need for an ongoing evaluation, situation where the necessary data for evaluation is not available at the time required could occur.
- ▶ **Take into account the setup of the Open Access within the constraints of the project** and communicate it to the member institutions – the evaluator recommends informing the designated persons at the member institutions about planned changes in the OA area and preparing the member institutions for possible risks related to the transition to the OA. The evaluator also recommends addressing the Open Access theme and its setting within the project with the subsidy provider.
 - Reason – In the long term, this topic is perceived by representatives of member institutions as essential, taking into account the financial situation of organisations involved.
- ▶ **Create a detailed communication strategy** – The evaluator recommends creating the communication strategy for the year 2020, which will take into account the diversity of the member institutions and will clearly formulate communication activities towards key stakeholders in relation to further development in the RD area after year 2020.
 - Reason – The current Communication Management Strategy, or rather communication plan, are formally processed and do not provide an adequate basis for managing communication of the project in relation to different types of member institutions and other stakeholders.
- ▶ **Take advantage of potential free capacity of the implementation team and funding to support member institutions beyond purchasing EIR** – The evaluator recommends, through the collection of feedback (e.g. through internal evaluation), to continually analyse the needs of the member institutions and to consider them, within the bounds of possibility of the project, when making use of free capacities. A possible way of getting feedback from the member institutions can be, for example, regular meetings of member institutions or a short survey among designated persons. Any specific forms of support will be chosen based on an adequate demand from member institutions so as not to unduly individualise the support and to burden the project implementer with the specific requirements of member institutions.
 - Reason – within the evaluation, possible forms of support for member institutions were identified, e.g. a manual of the simplified procedure for acquiring EIR for member institutions acquiring part of EIR outside the CzechELib project or support member institutions in promoting the use of EIR within institutions (one of the expected benefits of project implementation is, according to the Charter, raised awareness of the use of EIR).



2. Summary of the existing evaluation activities and activity plan for future period

2.1. Description of undertaken activities

The evaluation activities in the second interim report were mainly focused on the ongoing evaluation of the benefits of the CzechELib project by representatives of the member institutions, on the implementation, the course of the project, communication and cooperation between the project implementation team and the designated persons of member institutions. Compared to the first interim evaluation report (hereinafter also “1. IER “), information was also obtained from other stakeholders such as representatives in the RD area or university students. The scope of the focus of evaluation stems from the number of relevant evaluation questions for the interim report 2019, which is eight (in 1. IER three evaluation questions were relevant).

A questionnaire survey was carried out among representatives of member institutions at the beginning of 2019 (February – March). In particular, the questionnaire survey served to provide feedback from representatives of member institutions that are provided with EIR within the project. The questionnaire survey was commented on and agreed by the implementing team and the Contracting Authority and piloted on a sample of member institutions. In April-May, the questionnaire survey was complemented by qualitative semi-structured interviews to obtain a more detailed insight into the key themes of the evaluation. Information on evaluation activities carried out was the subject to regular reports for the Contracting Authority of the evaluation. In April 2019, an EY meeting with representatives of the project's implementation team was held, in the course of which the following areas were discussed in particular:

- ▶ Public procurement of EIR and additional demand for EIR from the member institutions,
- ▶ ERMS and the EIR usage statistics module,
- ▶ Project management and planned activities,
- ▶ Communication with other stakeholders,
- ▶ Open Access,
- ▶ Education and training.

2.2. Work Plan

Activities in the next period will be based specifically on relevant evaluation questions for the interim report 2020 (EQ1, EQ6 and EQ8, see Inception Report). The relevant specific themes for the following period are in particular:

- ▶ Meeting member institutions' demand for EIR and perceived benefits,
- ▶ Evaluation of the ERMS and the EIR usage statistics module by the member institutions,
- ▶ Progress in the project implementation and planned activities,



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- ▶ Setting up the system of internal evaluations,
- ▶ Communication strategy.

2.3. EY Approach to Evaluation

In order to answer evaluation questions, the questionnaire survey was carried out (the main survey was aimed at the member institutions, complementary survey to obtain information from university students), which was complemented by structured interviews with the representatives of the member institutions, academia and public administration.

Information was obtained from the following representatives of the member institutions:

- ▶ Public Research Institutions (PRI),
- ▶ Universities,
- ▶ Hospitals (including university hospitals),
- ▶ Other research organisations,
- ▶ Libraries outside the aforementioned organisations (e.g. regional libraries).

Questionnaire survey among member institutions

The questionnaire survey was aimed at identifying the stance of member institutions and their expectations associated with the project and to recognise perceived benefits of the involvement of organisations in the CzechELib project.

The questionnaire survey covers in particular the following themes:

- ▶ CzechELib project benefits evaluation,
- ▶ Cooperation and communication of the CzechELib's implementation team with the representatives of member institutions,
- ▶ Evaluation of the project's progress and key processes (e.g. method of selecting EIR),
- ▶ Additional support and training opportunities for the member institutions within the CzechELib.

The survey was carried out in an online form (CAWI). The internal tool eSurvey has been utilized for data collection. For the purpose of collecting data, a total of 139 contacts representing 121 institutions were delivered by the CzechELib implementation team³. At least partly the survey was completed by 125 people (90%), of which a total of 115 respondents completed the survey (83%).

³ Two representatives were approached at a total of 18 member institutions, i.e. designated persons (to communicate with the CzechELib project) and a representative of the CzechELib member institution. The sent list of contacts contained also some participating institutions, i.e. Institutions with which the project was negotiated, but these institutions did not obtain any EIR through the CzechELib project. The total number of member institutions that have obtained EIR through CzechELib is currently 113.



Thus, the return on the survey was significantly higher compared to the one in 2018, in which the survey was completed only by 55% of respondents.

The largest representation among respondents had representatives of PRI, representation of all types of organisations is shown in the following table:

Table 1 Structure of CAWI respondents as per type of an organization (N=115)

Type of organization	Representation in CAWI (%)
Public Research Institutions (PRI)	41,7 %
Universities	25,2 %
Hospitals (including university hospitals)	7,8 %
Other research organisations (RO)	10,4 %
Libraries outside the aforementioned organisations	11,3 %
Other⁴	3,5 %

In case of three types of organizations, we have assessed their size (universities, PRI and libraries) in order to identify possible differences between organizations of different sizes. Information on the representation of each subgroup is given in annex No. 1.

Persons who are responsible for or involved in administration and purchase of EIR were interviewed. The largest representations had respondents with the responsibility for purchasing EIR. Detailed structure of respondents according to the type of their involvement in the purchase and administration of EIR is shown in Tab. 2.⁵

Table 2 Structure of CAWI respondents as per their role within an organisation

Role of a respondent in relation to EIR	Representation in CAWI (%)
Person responsible for acquisition of EIR in organisation	63,5 %
Person responsible for EIR administration in organization	34,8 %

⁴ Respondents as others indicated e.g. Public sector organisation or museum.

⁵ Multiple answers could be marked, and the total does not equal 100%. Given the results, it can be noted that respondents' roles in purchasing and administrating EIR in the organization often overlap.



Person participating in acquisition of EIR in organisation	20,0 %
Person participating in EIR administration in organisation	14,8 %
EIR user (exclusively)⁶	1,7 %
Other role (for example contact person)⁷	6,1 %

Similarly, as in the case of the type of organisation, all respondents' roles in relation to an administration/purchase of EIR in the organisation were sufficiently included in the survey.

The information gained from the questionnaire survey is given for each relevant evaluation question and then in the technical report and in the Annex No 2.3 (anonymised CAWI results). For the purpose of generalisation, open questions were encoded into comprehensive categories (e.g. the open question on satisfaction with communication and cooperation was encoded into four different evaluations, see annex 1).

Structured interviews with representatives of the member institutions

Following the questionnaire survey, selected respondents were approached for a structured interview. The topics of the semi-structured interview were based on relevant evaluation questions, on the structure of the questionnaire survey and partly on the experience with the structured interview scenario from 2018.

Based on several test interviews, the interview scenario was adapted to the final form available in annex No. 2.5. The final form of the scenario was consulted with the Contracting Authority and with the implementation team of the CzechELib project.

A total of 15 structured interviews took place. To a large extent, the contacts left by respondents in the questionnaire survey were used. The list of representatives of member institutions provided by the CzechELib project implementation team was used as an additional source of contacts.

When selecting respondents, a geographic location of a member institution was taken into account. Seven respondents were represented by a member institution based in Prague, two respondents from Czech counties outside Prague, and the remaining six respondents represented organizations based in Moravia or Silesia (mainly in Brno and Ostrava).

⁶ Despite of exclusive EIR user being given an option, both respondents who indicated this option also indicated participation in a purchase and administration of EIR. For this reason, we have left both respondents in the sample.

⁷ These were, for example, a contact person (according to respondents, EIR acquisition is decided by the management of an organisation, the same can also be assumed for the part of the organisations whose representatives indicated that they are responsible for the acquisition).



Most interviews were conducted with representatives of PRI. The number of respondents to structured interviews as per organisation type is included in Tab. 3:

Table 3 Number of respondents to structured interviews as per organisation type (N=15)

Organisation type	Number
Public research institutions (PRI)	6
Universities	3
Hospitals (including university hospitals)	2
Other research organisations (RO)	1
Libraries outside aforementioned organisations	3

Structured interviews with representatives of other key stakeholders

In addition, structured interviews with representatives of other key stakeholders were carried out (e.g. MEYS or RDI Council representatives). An interview with these respondents was mainly focused on the following topics:

- ▶ Knowledge of the CzechELib project and availability of information,
- ▶ Evaluation of the existing benefits of the CzechELib project,
- ▶ Comparison with related projects implemented before the CzechELib project,
- ▶ Sustainability of achieved results of the CzechELib project.

Due to time constraints of potential respondents, three personal and telephone interviews in total duration of two hours were carried out at the end of May.

Questionnaire survey among university students

University students are the next group from which feedback has been collected within the evaluation. In order to answer the relevant EQ, a short online survey (CAWI) was designed, whose presentation on social networks of the university or on the library's website were arranged with the representatives of four university libraries (member institutions). The questionnaire survey was also located on the web portal vedavyzkum.cz, which informs about current affairs in RD.

At the end of May 2019, the number of respondents of this survey was 23 and therefore the information gained did not have a sufficient explanatory value. The sub-findings, with reference to the low number of respondents, are reported for relevant evaluation questions.



3. Assessment of Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions were assessed within the second interim report:

- ▶ EQ1 – How had the implementation of the project progressed?
- ▶ EQ2 – To what extent are the selected target groups aware of the existence and an overall concept of the CzechELib project? Are the project publicity and EIR promotion effective?
- ▶ EQ3 – To what extent are selected representatives of the target groups satisfied with the information and methodological support provided by the national licensing centre?
- ▶ EQ4 – What is the ongoing perceived benefit of the project for the representatives of the institutions involved in the project?
- ▶ EQ5 – What is the ongoing benefit of the project perceived by other key stakeholders?
- ▶ EQ6 – Is the preparation and performance of internal evaluations, i.e. evaluations performed in the course of the project, effective?
- ▶ EQ7 – To what extent is the established national licensing centre operational and fulfilling its role?
- ▶ EQ 9 – Is it possible to identify any other (unsolved) shortcomings/weaknesses or gaps in the centralised purchasing system that need to be addressed? If so, what are these and what solutions are proposed?

3.1. Evaluation of EQ1

Evaluation of EQ1 – How had the implementation of the project progressed?

The implementation of the project largely corresponds to the planned schedule and needs of the target groups. EIR selection system was created within the previous evaluation period. In the evaluation period, created procedures and contracting of EIR for the member institutions are being implemented. Given a slightly lower prices for EIR compared to the prices expected in 2016, from the budget perspective, a certain financial reserve, which can be used to extend or support some existing activity or to carry out new activities, that would match the project's focus and its settings (in the case of a project change approval), is expected. Potential savings will be assessed in September 2019 and its use will be decided on by the Steering Committee and the subsidy provider (MA OP RDE).

Delay of one of the main activities of the project, i.e. an EIR acquisition administration, in comparison with 2017, the delay is no longer applicable. In February 2019, all licensing agreements for access to EIR for the period 2019 – 2022 were signed (another 14 licence agreements for the period 2019 onwards were signed).



The following table shows the progress of the project as scheduled in the Project Charter (version valid in May 2019).

Table 4 Implementation of project phases

Activity	Schedule	Current status
Project launch.	1. Q 2017	Done
Development of systems for the commission, procurement, administration and evaluation of EIR.	4. Q 2018	Done partially – in the reporting period, EIR administration and evaluation system was created and this activity should be finished in the course of 2019. Systems are currently tested by the member institutions.
Development of methodologies for administration, workflow, financial flow, negotiation strategies for EIR purchase and others.	2017 a 2018	Done. The procedures for the selection and acquisition of EIR have been established (e.g. the method of payment of member institutions for EIR taking into account possible exchange rate changes).
Web development and implementation of functionalities.	2.–3. Q 2017	Done. Web pages that contain information about the project and EIR offered were created.
Signing contracts with local and international EIR providers.	2018, 2019, 2020	Done partially. ⁸ In mid-March 2019, all planned licensing agreements between NTK and EIR providers for access to EIR for the period 2019 – 2022, were signed. ⁹
Purchase / Provision of EIRs for project users.	2017, 2018, 2019	Done. In March 2019, all contracts between NTK and the member institutions to make EIR available for access to EIR for

⁸ The activity is being carried out according to the schedule. However, the activity is planned until 2020, so it cannot be marked as done.

⁹ Some EIR were not purchased for the entire period 2019 – 2022, but only for a part of it. In rare cases a shorter period was negotiated (metric instruments with the consent of the Managerial board or EIR, which were not possible to negotiate with a provider for the whole period).



		the period 2019 – 2022 were signed.
Contract terms negotiation for the commission of EIR in the future, possible gradual transition to OA.	2020	NA
Running the center, possible further transitions to OA, evaluations, recommendations for the future operation of the center.	2021–2022	NA
Negotiations of the EIR purchase conditions for the following period.	2022	NA
Project completion.	4. Q 2022	NA
Evaluation of CzechELib's benefits and operation.	1. Q 2022 – until completion of programme OP RDE	NA

Delays from the beginning of the project have been eliminated mainly because of gaining and utilizing experience by the project implementer, providers of EIR, member institutions and other relevant entities. At the same time, the largest amount of electronic resources, in terms of funds, has been negotiated and discussed at the beginning of the project (2018 and 2019) and in the following years it is mainly about making less demanded EIR or industry-relevant EIR available, acquisition of these EIR was postponed due to a sustainability of projects from the OP Research and Development for Innovations

A detailed description of each sub-question is given below.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question - How are the project key activities implemented?

Activities necessary for running the project **are continuously implemented, namely KA1** (Project Management), **KA2** (Creation, operation and evaluation of CzechELib), **KA4** (Administration of the system of access to EIR and its evaluation) and **KA5** (Provision of the technological needs of the centre's administration). **In part, the activities of KA3** (Rules setting of the system, procurement procedures to provide for EIR licences, and evaluation) and **KA6** (Project publicity, EIR promotion and CzechELib user support) are implemented. **KA7** (Final evaluation and recommendations) is planned for the final phase of the project and **is not currently in progress**.

The KA1 activity is carried out throughout the evaluation period. In comparison to the previous evaluation period, there was no significant delay in the implementation, compared to the schedule. A financial milestone for the year 2019 has been met, according to current forecasts, a continuous financial milestone in 2020 should be fulfilled. To effectively manage the project, not filled key



position of the guarantor of publicity, who is responsible for KA6, is also important. The non-appointment to the role is mainly due to a wage constraints of the project and also due to a approval process (the request must be approved by several persons). For the purpose of successful recruitment, possible activities and eligibility of associated costs (e.g. promotion of an advertisement) should be identified by the project implementer and the subsidy provider. Some positions got filled in the period prior to submitting of this interim report e.g. filling vacancy of the project's chief economist from April 2019. At the time of the evaluation, the post of CzechELib director was already filled, it is performed by the same person as the post of the main project manager. At the same time, existing positions were adjusted to simplify the organisational structure and to maintain the clearly defined responsibilities of an individual staff towards management.

KA2, which focuses on the establishment and operation of the national licensing centre CzechELib, is on schedule. Established Licensing Centre fulfils to a large extent the needs of participating member institutions (see EQ7) and the cooperation of the staff of this centre with the designated persons of the member institutions is assessed positively. However, there is not yet an internal evaluation of the functioning of the national licensing centre CzechELib by the CzechELib project implementation team.

Within **KA3**, the updated EIR procurement methodology was created in 2018. As of February 2019, all licensing agreements for access to EIR for the period 2019 – 2022 and as of March 2019, all contracts for securing and making available EIR for 2019+ were signed. In March 2019, requirements of member institutions for EIR since 2020, which were not contracted yet, were gathered. By the end of May, member institutions received a price proposal and, by the end of June, a potential confirmation of interest by member institutions will take place. In the case of confirmation, public procurement will be announced during 3Q. Furthermore, there is an additional involvement of member institutions in the already-contracted EIR in form of engagement in existing consortia, up to a limit of 10% of the value of the original contract, up to the below-the-threshold value defined by the Public procurement law. In the course of the evaluation period, due to insufficient capacities of the supplier, there was a change of provider of legal services and administration of PP, while cooperation with the project implementation team and the company providing administration of public procurement and the company providing legal services is performed according to the evaluation of the CzechELib project representatives excellently. Within key activity, systematic internal evaluation of the key activity has not been performed yet.

Administration of the system of access to EIRs and its evaluation (**KA4**) works according to the plan, within the activity the use of EIR is being monitored, which is intended, in addition to the project implementer, for member institutions whose representatives evaluate available statistics on the use of EIR as beneficial.

In the case of **KA5**, which is currently a crucial key activity, in which selection of a supplier and a creation of the ERMS for the administration of EIR took place, the ERMS should simplify the operation with EIR to designated persons from member institutions. Representatives of member institutions were also able to comment on the form of the tender documents for this system. The ERMS is available to member institutions so far in the basic version for the purpose of commenting, evaluation of the full version will be one of main topics of the next interim evaluation report.

The proper implementation of Project publicity, EIR promotion and CzechELib user support (**KA6**) is currently threatened by not appointing the publicity guarantor. The Communication Management Strategy has been elaborated in the course of the project, but it is largely a formal document (see 1. IER). In the second half of 2018, a more detailed communication strategy was



created for the year 2019, approved by the Steering Committee. However, the communication strategy does not include a more detailed segmentation of member institutions (see perceived benefits, evaluation of EIR selection procedures and EIR pricing for member institutions) and the assignment of specific communication tools to an individual stakeholder in the RD area (e.g. public administration or professional public beyond the presentation at events organized or co-organised by the CzechELib).

KA7 Final evaluations and recommendations are not in progress, only external evaluations provided by the EY are being performed on May 2019. An internal evaluation within the project is not formally carried out, however, the incentives are collected by the project manager regularly through a project diary according to the methodology PRINCE2 and evaluated once every six months at the meeting with the project team. Compulsory evaluation study for the first phase of the project will be elaborated in 2020, the second study will follow in 2022.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question - Do the implementation of key activities and outputs of the timetable correspond to actual needs?

The implementation of key activities and outputs largely reflects the timetable and current needs. In the table with the activities at the beginning of this chapter, it can be noticed that the **delay from the previous year was significantly reduced.** The ERMS is also one of the outputs of the project, from which representatives of member institutions expect to further simplify administration and management of EIR used. In connection with the introduction of the ERMS and a possibility to monitor the use of EIR, according to the implementation team, designated persons of member institutions are being trained and, by September 2019, representatives of member institutions have the opportunity to comment on the form of training.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Are there any risks that threaten the project implementation and the achievement of its goals?

Project risks stem from the Project Charter. In the table below, the risks identified by the Charter at the beginning of the project are continually evaluated by the evaluator in terms of relevance, likelihood of fulfilment and measures leading to their elimination.

		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
1.	Title	Time-consuming administration of public procurement according to regulations of MEYS within MEYS departments.	The risk is lower than in the previous evaluation period but is still relevant. Despite the lower amount of finance per PP, their control over the long term is one of the most time-consuming components of the administration on the part of the subsidy provider. The control and approval of the PP by the subsidy provider and other entities (e.g. the Government of the Czech
	Description	A number of smaller and larger public procurement tenders will be conducted in 2017 that, if delayed or not completed, could impact the project schedule and delivery of individual project stages.	
	Measure	Adoption of such exceptional measures at MEYS that will enable initiation of the tenders within the required deadlines. Flawlessly prepared tenders' documentation.	



		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
			Republic or the consultation of the MEYS management) further influences the exclusive use of NPPP. However, due to the lower volume of PP for EIR, the time intensity is less than in the previous evaluation period.
2.	Title	Complexity of public procurement (PP)	
	Description	As the experience from the previous programming period shows, the public procurement agenda is known to be complicated and problematic. The risk of incorrect procedure during the procurement process taken by the contractor is relatively high. In the case of tenders with such specific focus as is in this project (for most EIR there is only one supplier that is their publisher) the risk is even higher. It is possible to significantly decrease the risk by provision of external legal supervision over the entire process and the relevant documentation.	The risk is still up to date. Legal oversight is ensured by an external contractor and existing checks of PP for EIR by the subsidy provider were made, according to the project implementer, without financial impact. The external law firm has changed, cooperation with the current contractor is taking place, according to the realization team, excellently. The supplier also has considerable erudition in the area of PP.
	Measure	Securing external service (legal supervision) providing oversight of the entire process, advance planning for sufficient funds for this service, perfectly prepared tender documentation.	
3.	Title	Delayed start of project implementation	
	Description	A significant majority of licenses for access to EIR contracted under the current decentralized model are only valid until the end of 2017. It is therefore necessary to secure new licenses during 2017. For that, not only does the functional national licensing centre CzechELib needs to be established but also new licenses from publishers have to be acquired in the course of the year 2017.	The risk is not up to date. In the course of the evaluation period, there was an elimination of delays in the area of EIR.
	Measure	The maximum possible shortening of deadlines for communication with the community, intensive involvement of the expert group. Direct accelerated appointment of the Expert Council by its chairman for the first phase of the project. Possible launch of some activities that do not	



		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
		explicitly require costs prior to the project commencement.	
4.	Title	Failure to meet the objectives of the project by the end date of its implementation	The risk is, according to obtained information, still up-to-date, the initial setup of the project does not always allow sufficient flexibility to react to changes in the external environment, and the low inclusion of the OA theme may lead to a reduction of perceived benefits among member institutions.
	Description	It is not possible to rule out a situation in the course of the project in which the necessary changes to the project will not be compatible with its approved version. An important factor could be a transformation of the business model for e-journals to Gold Open Access.	
	Measure	The risk is partially eliminated by shortening of the OP RDE-subsidized period to three years (a shorter time-frame allows greater flexibility to respond to the situation).	
5.	Title	Sustainability of the project after the end of the funding period from OP RDE	Given the way the state budget is being created, this risk is still up to date. The measure may be to increase the targeting of the communication strategy to key RD stakeholders in order to ensure the incentive to allocate sufficient resources for the operation of the centre and to purchase EIR. Future options are subject to negotiation within section III of the MEYS as well as between section III and the MA of OP RDE.
	Description	There is a risk that the MEYS will not ensure sufficient number of staff with appropriate salary funds for a part of employees operating the CzechELib.	
	Measure	At the end of the support from the OP RDE, the aid will continue to be provided at least for the national centre, alternatively for the purchase of EIR from national sources.	
6.	Title	Decision by the government to not provide support from the SB after the end of support from OP RDE	See risk No. 5
	Description	There is a risk that the concerted efforts of the MEYS, CRC, CHEI and CAS fail to persuade CRDI to renew the support of EIR from the RDI budget as of the beginning of 2020. There is a danger of a major exodus of the CzechELib users if funding is not provided for the purchase of EIR, after the end of support from OP RDE.	



		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
	Measure	1. CzechELib will provide materials for intensive lobbying at the government level. 2. The quality of its services will persuade the CzechELib users to remain even under these conditions.	
7.	Title	A closure of the software supplier	Risk is not up to date, NTK is the owner of source codes
	Description	It is not possible to rule out that the company producing and maintaining the ordered software will not close.	
	Measure	The software will be mandatorily produced as open and documented code; functionality will be divided into separate, independent applications	
8.	Title	Housing of CzechELib in NTK	The risk was not confirmed, according to structured interviews, conversely, the risk would be transferring the CzechELib under another institution.
	Description	There is currently no space available in NTK for about 20 employees of the CzechELib center.	
	Measure	The situation could improve through integration of the Central Library of CTU in the same way as the UCTP and IOCB libraries. Recruitment of a significant number of experts from the beneficiary's current staff (who already have their own space), alternatively, recruitment of staff already located in the Dejvice campus (who have their own space, within walking distance to the team meetings). Use of teleconferencing for communicating with distant team members.	
9.	Title	Funding of the purchase of EIR at the national level from the SB will not be secured or will be provided to a limited extent.	See risk No. 5
	Description	There is a risk that the state budget will not allocate sufficient funds for the purchase of EIR.	
	Measure	CzechELib will ask the MEYS to request from CRDI a renewal of support for EIR acquisition from 2020. At the same time CzechELib will ask the representative bodies of universities (CRC, CHEI) and the representation of AS CR for support of this request.	
10.	Title	Staffing of the licensing centre - project management	The risk is up to date. The labour market situation still



		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
	Description	Taking into account the need for a specific qualification of the chief project manager and the project team members, it is possible that they will not be recruited in time.	persists and increases the risk of insufficient staffing of CzechELib in general. By the deadline for submitting the interim report, the staffing of the project's implementation team is not complete (e.g. publicity guarantor is lacking – KA6).
	Measure	Identification of potential expert employees and their contacting began in Q3 2016. An adequate amount of planned salaries costs will increase recruitment success.	
11.	Title	Staffing of the licencing centre – experts	See risk No. 10
	Description	With regard to the need for high-level and specific qualification of the experts of the national licensing centre CzechELib, it is possible that they will not be recruited in time and in sufficient numbers.	
	Measure	Identification of potential expert employees and their contacting began in Q3 2016. An adequate amount of planned salary costs will increase recruitment success.	
12.	Title	Failure to ensure transition of current experts who already have experience negotiating licensing and pricing of EIR to the central organization.	See risk No. 10
	Description	There is a risk that experts in negotiating licenses and prices of EIR (especially leaders of consortia within the implementation of MEYS support programs) will not be interested in working within the central organization or that these experts will not be addressed.	
	Measure	Identification of potential expert employees and their contacting began in Q3 2016. An adequate amount of planned salary costs will increase recruitment success.	
13.	Title	Hardware failure during the project implementation.	The risk is minimal, as expressed by the project implementation team, hardware was acquired to ensure
	Description	Failure of common hardware cannot be ruled out.	



		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
	Measure	Sufficient resources for replacement of consumer hardware will be allocated. Contractual security guarantees will be secured for so called enterprise hardware for the duration of the project sustainability period.	sufficient capacity. In the event of an outage, it is possible to use the NTK reserve beyond the project.
14.	Title	Sustainability and security of data	The risk is minimal, there was no change in severity of the risk in the course of the evaluation period.
	Description	Given that the data will contain sensitive information such as pricing and contract terms it is essential to ensure their security and prevention of theft.	
	Measure	The risk is eliminated by the fact that the software will run in a local installation, not as SaaS.	
15.	Title	Lack of willingness of the EIR users to use the licensing centre CzechELib.	The risk is partly still up to date, part of EIR is acquired outside the CzechELib project. However, this applies for a minority of EIR and the risk has not yet had a major impact on the project's progress.
	Description	A risk exists that some of the potential participants will purchase EIR independently from their own budgets, or due to the required cost of participation will seek other sources for financing of EIR purchases. This would subsequently lead to fragmentation of the portfolio of EIR.	
	Measure	The amount of funding is a key for attraction of institutions. The risk is significantly reduced by the shortening of the pilot period - a reasonably low cost of participation. During the period of funding of EIR from the SB their willingness to participate will depend on the amount of support. The quality of CzechELib services will convince users to participate in the project, and to continue during the sustainability period and after.	
16.	Title	Hardware will not cope with the traffic	The risk is minimal, there was no change in severity of the risk in the evaluation period.
	Description	Hardware is designed for high utilization, but in the case of an over-achievement of the project objectives, its capacity could be temporarily exceeded.	
	Measure	Hardware solution will take into account the peak utilization. Appropriately substantial hardware will be purchased.	



		Title – Description – Measures	EY risk evaluation in evaluation period
17.	Title	Establishment of an alternative institution aimed at central purchase of EIR in the Czech Republic, decentralization of the system.	There may be a decentralisation of funds intended to purchase EIR, the potential risk of increased administrative burden on EIR purchases for member institutions. The existence of an action plan for the implementation of the National strategy for open access to scientific information 2017 – 2020 should minimise the risk assessed.
	Description	A risk exists that some organizations might establish an alternative association to purchase EIR.	
	Measure	The amount of funding is a key for attraction of institutions. An alternative association without the support does not make sense and is not appealing. Quality of CzechELib services will convince users to participate in the project.	

According to the evaluator, other risks, beyond the risks identified in the Charter, are the following:

- ▶ **Different willingness and motivation of member institutions to participate in the project**, particularly in relation to the size of member institutions (differences in the perceived benefits of the project, different satisfaction with the method of selecting EIR and the calculation of a price, a significant impact of this risk has not been identified yet, but collected data suggests that the risk is still up-to-date);
- ▶ **Any differing rate of financial participation in the period after year 2020** could lead to the lower perceived benefit of the project by member institutions and possible withdrawal from the project, alternatively less cooperation with the national licensing centre CzechELib – this may be due to terms and conditions of financing in the next programming period (funding of member institutions based in Prague).

Lower perceived benefits of the project among large key institutions (and, where appropriate, institutions without the financial contribution from the CzechELib) may negatively affect their cooperation and negotiations in the period after the end of the CzechELib project. One of the measures may be targeted communication, focusing in particular on larger member institutions. The risk rate will be subject of evaluation of further evaluation reports.

3.2. Evaluation of EQ2

Evaluation of EQ2 – To what extent are the selected target groups aware of the existence and an overall concept of the CzechELib project? Are the project publicity and EIR promotion effective?

Publicity and promotion are particularly focused on member institutions, the vast majority of which have **sufficient information about the project** and the communication and cooperation is evaluated as very satisfactory. According to representatives of member institutions, the **communication** with the CzechELib project implementation team **has improved in comparison**



with the previous evaluation period¹⁰ (see EQ3 for more details). Information on a concept of the project is transferred mainly through regular meetings of member institutions and further through the website of the project. Meetings and content along with clarity of the website are evaluated positively by member institutions, although with some exceptions.

Communication with other target groups (representatives of public administration in RD area or RDI Council) takes place in a similar manner to the previous evaluation period, i.e. Communication is taking place mainly within the Technical board and the Managerial board of the CzechELib project, in which representatives of the project implementer and also of the MEYS, AK VŠ, CRC, and CAS are involved.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – What is the level of the identified target groups' awareness of the existence and general concept of the CzechELib project?

In case of **other stakeholders, awareness of the project's existence and its concept is also high**. Representatives of the public administration (MEYS and RDI Council) know about activities of the CzechELib project, especially through participation in the Expert Council of the project, in which they gather information about a development of the project and have an opportunity to comment on a course of the project and its outputs.

In case of university students who were respondents to the second survey, knowledge of the CzechELib project is relatively low, only four respondents heard about the project.

It is important to note that university students are a target group of the project (as users of outputs or project beneficiaries), but they are not the target group of the project communication and member institutions are responsible for promoting EIR within member institutions. That is an additional information found in the survey, but given low number of respondents, these results cannot be considered as representative.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – How is publicity ensured and to what effect? Is the project publicity effective?

Communication with the member institutions takes place through regular **joint meetings** (June 2018, January 2019) and also **individually** in relation to an EIR negotiation and resolution of possible problems. Collected data suggests that cooperation and communication with member institutions can be considered for the most part as very good (see previous particular question).

A publicity of the project and the communication with other stakeholders is carried out in particular by the following communication channels:

- ▶ Project webpage,
- ▶ Professional conferences (for example CzechELib conference in June 2019 or Open Access-focused conference Krecon in November 2019),

¹⁰ The previous evaluation period covered the course of the project from its initiation til May 2018



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- ▶ Meetings of Managing Committees,
- ▶ Project presentation within platforms such as RDI Council or HEC.
- ▶ info@czechelib.cz

Communication with stakeholders is ensured in particular in following documents:

- ▶ Communication Management Strategy,
- ▶ CzechELib 2018 Communication Strategy.

However, these **documents** are still **mainly formal** in nature and publicity takes place within standard activities mentioned above. An important factor is the **absence of publicity guarantor**, who is, among others, responsible for managing publicity of the project, creating press documents and reports, or communicating with end users. During the evaluation period, selection procedures for this position are taking place, but at the end selected candidates called off joining the project, at the date of writing 2. IER the position was not still filled. In the context of publicity, a communication strategy was established for the year 2019, which was approved in April 2019 by the Managing Committee of the project.

Communication towards member institutions can be evaluated as **effective and functional**. A more detailed distinction between the different subgroups of member institutions would contribute to a greater functionality of publicity. In case of other interested parties, a more detailed communication strategy, including segmentation of individual target groups and their characteristics, is lacking.

3.3. Evaluation of EQ3

Evaluation of EQ3 – To what extent are selected representatives of the target groups satisfied with the information and methodological support provided by the national licensing centre?

An information and methodological support of the national licensing centre CzechELib is, in most cases, **appreciated by member institutions**. Designated persons of member institutions have expressed **their satisfaction with the scope and accuracy of the information provided**. In long-term horizon of the project implementation, a possible **theme for the support of member institutions** is the **Open Access theme**, in which representatives of member institutions are interested, as indicated in both the questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews, they consider it as important. The need of member institutions is addressed by planned Krecon conference on Open Access, which will take place in November 2019 as a part of the CzechELib project.

The methodological recommendation for a negotiation of EIR outside of the CzechELib resulted from interviews as a topic of possible useful support provided by the national licensing centre CzechELib. In relation to an experience of members of the project implementation team with the negotiation of EIR purchase with providers, basic recommendations, especially for small organizations or recently involved designated persons, for negotiating resources that cannot be purchased within CzechELib, would be useful.



Representatives of member institutions are satisfied with communication, cooperation and being informed (78% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with cooperation and communication, another 12% are satisfied with small reservations) and a **communication** with the implementation team **is evaluated as professional**. A positive change occurred in the area of communication, especially in its speed, i.e. deadlines associated with the negotiation of EIR purchase are not being postponed.

In comparison with the previous evaluation period, **communication and cooperation was improved**, according to data collected. Reasons for better communication and cooperation can be sought mainly in the **stabilisation of communication** given by the more advanced phase of the project (representatives of member institutions know who to contact and what information they can expect). However, due to the more advanced phase of the project, the above-mentioned problems were resolved and the communication and cooperation has stabilized.

Shortcomings in several cases related to **delays in deadlines, insufficiency and inaccuracies in the information provided were identified**. In all cases, these are larger member institutions where time requirements for processing of administrative formalities in relation to the CzechELib agenda may be higher than for smaller organisations (e.g. a more complex approval mechanism). However, with regard to the total number of member institutions and respondents to the survey, **this applies only for units of cases**. The website of the project is, in most cases, evaluated as **clear, understandable and sufficient** in terms of the extent of the information provided.

3.4. Evaluation of EQ4

Evaluation of EQ4 – What is the ongoing perceived benefit of the project for the representatives of the institutions involved in the project?

Benefit of the participation in the CzechELib project perceived by member institutions can be **classified as high**. On the basis of the questionnaire survey and interviews carried out, following benefits of the CzechELib project have been positively evaluated, in particular:

- ▶ Higher number of purchased EIR,
- ▶ Saving of financial resources,¹¹
- ▶ Reduced administration,
- ▶ Stabilization of funding (for example more effective budget planning).

The questionnaire survey was aimed at evaluation of eight different benefits stemming from the Project Charter and discussions with the Contracting Authority and representatives of the CzechELib project. Representatives of member institutions have **evaluated all benefits positively**¹². Most of CzechELib's main benefits were evaluated by respondents at a very similar

¹¹ These two benefits are significantly connected, an amount of EIR purchased is in many cases higher because of fund savings due to joining the CzechELib project.

¹² Benefits were rated on the scale of 1 (great benefit) to 6 (no benefit) and thus average rating was at 3,5.



level. The greatest benefit was, according to respondents, **the stabilization of an EIR funding system, unification of invoicing procedures, reduction in EIR costs and reduction in the administration.** Detailed evaluation of individual benefits can be found in the following table:

Note No 1 scale 1=great benefit, 6=no benefit

Benefit	Rating
Stabilization of an EIR funding system	2,3
Unification of invoicing procedure	2,4
EIR cost reduction	2,4
Reducing administration for member institutions	2,4
Unification of licence terms and conditions	2,5
Enhancement of user comfort and level of services	2,9
Faster purchase of EIR	3,0
Monitoring of EIR use and statistics	3,4

A statistical software is **currently in preparation**, member institutions received an overview of the use of EIR acquired within the CzechELib project by their institutions in April 2019. Therefore, due to a planned launch of statistical software and an automation of data downloading, a **better assessment** of this benefit in the next evaluation period can be expected.

If compared to the 2018 benefit evaluation, it is possible to positively evaluate the fact that the **best-rated benefits at the moment were perceived in 2018 by the representatives of member institutions as factors most influencing an availability of EIR** (EIR acquisition costs have a significant impact on an availability of EIR according to 87% of respondents, a stability of financing to 69%, an administrative complexity of EIR negotiation has a significant impact on 29% of respondents, a moderate impact on availability is perceived by another 49% of respondents). According to available data, project activities **contribute significantly to increasing the availability of EIR** for participating organisations.

Apart from evaluation of current benefits, **member institutions' expectations** from the project were also examined. The most common expectations of member institutions are the reduction of EIR costs and the stabilisation of the financing system. Conversely, the least anticipated benefit is a faster acquisition of EIR. Expectations of representatives of member institutions



were examined also in 2018 and, as compared, expectations of member institutions were stable.¹³

A two-dimensional assessment¹⁴ of the individual benefits has been carried out within the evaluation, **comparing a significance** of the area to respondents (their expectations), together with the **evaluation of current benefits** in the area to identify important areas where expectations of member institutions are not fulfilled. The grey diagonal line in the image below marks the same values for both criteria, i.e. evaluation of current benefits corresponds to expectations of member institutions. The farther the benefit is from the grey line, the difference between current benefits' evaluation and expectations is bigger. If the point is below the diagonal line, it means higher expectations than the current evaluation, but, conversely, if the point is above the diagonal line, current perceived benefits was higher than expectations of member institutions.

The main two areas, which till the date of implementation of the questionnaire survey (February-March 2019) **failed to fulfil the subjective expectations** of representatives of member institutions, are i) **a reduction of costs of EIR**, which is due in particular to high expectations of stakeholders¹⁵ and ii) **monitoring of the use of EIR and statistics** which have not been fully implemented yet¹⁶. The current evaluations and expectations of all these benefits are shown in the picture below:

¹³In the questionnaire survey of 2018, the evaluation was carried out differently (respondents were to indicate all expected benefits of the CzechELib project), but the order of benefits included in both 2018 and 2019 is identical.

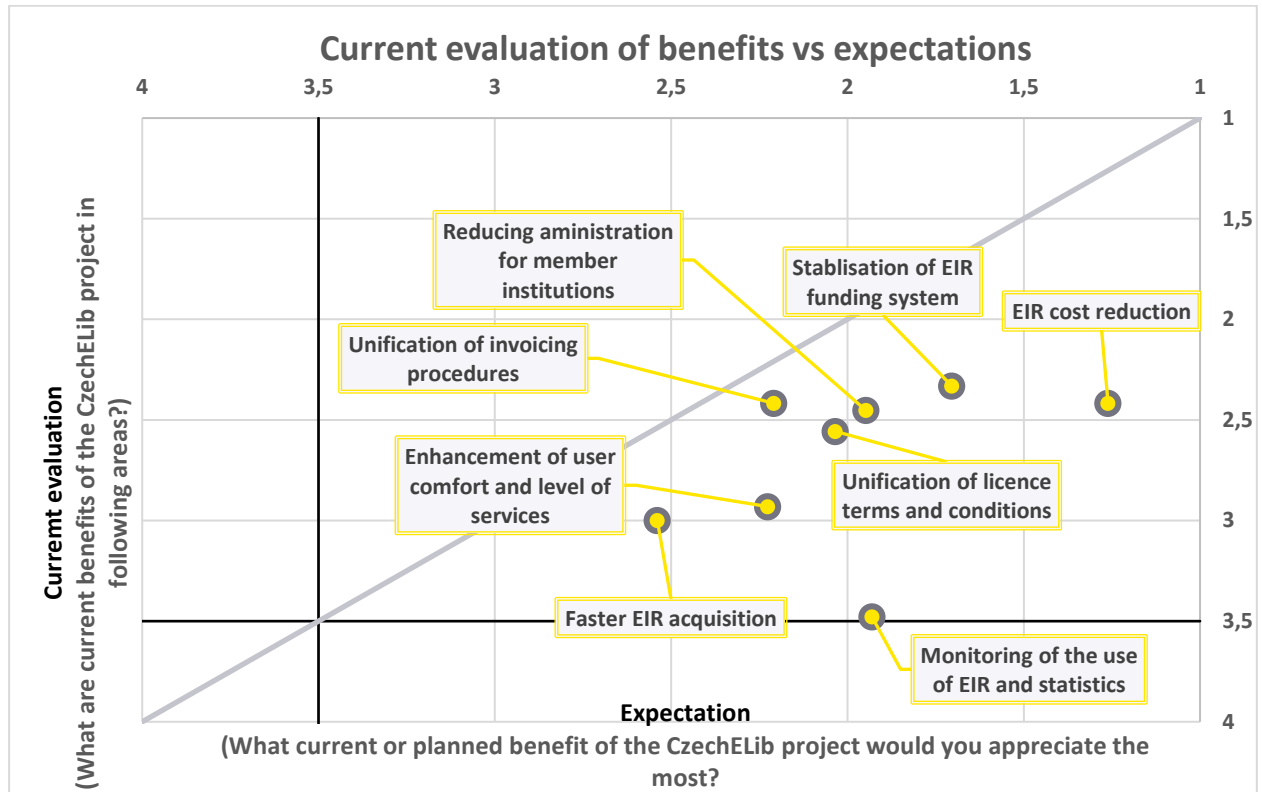
¹⁴ The main advantage of such evaluation is an identification of key benefits that are not assessed positively and are also of high importance. For example "Fast acquisition of EIR" is among worse-rated current benefits, but respondents did not have high expectations of the CzechELib project in regard to the EIR acquisition speed. In terms of project implementation, the worse rating of speed of EIR acquisition would be significantly more problematic if respondents had high expectations of the project in this area.

¹⁵ An EIR cost reduction had an expectation of 1,2, with respondents rating the individual benefits on a scale of 1 = I would greatly appreciate up to 6 = I would not appreciate at all.

¹⁶ Statistical software is to be available in August 2019, a collection of comments from representatives of member institutions took place in May, and in June 2019 their incorporation was carried out.



Picture 1 Comparison of expected and current rating of benefits



In case of the "EIR cost reduction" benefit, which is perceived as the most important by representatives of member institutions, it is possible to take a closer look at the changes in the volume of EIR purchased from member institutions. **Almost half** (49%) of member institutions **stated a positive financial impact of the project**. Approximately **one third** (36%) stated, that EIR prices are **about as high** as in the past.¹⁷

The remaining **15% of respondents** said that the **overall financial impact was rather negative** compared to the past. The most frequently mentioned reason was the amount of co-financing, the status of an organisation¹⁸ and EIR getting more expensive. The benefit of funding stability is then positively reflected in particular by member institutions in the higher knowledge of prices of EIR by 2022 and a capability of **better planning of an EIR budget**. Some respondents to telephone interviews **securing legal matters** as another benefit, as an organisation would not be able to afford a legal service necessary when purchasing EIR.

Awareness of the project among university students is low (the project is known by 4 out of 23 respondents), while respondents state that the project unifies EIR for various institutions or that

¹⁷ Given the continuous rise in EIR prices, the stability of EIR prices can be attributed to the project as a benefit.

¹⁸ Target groups within the CzechELib project has been expanded to professional public (defined by a call) without the status of RO so they can receive EIR cofunding within the project from 2020 onwards.



they know the project. However, awareness of the project among university students is not one of the objectives of the project and it is therefore just an additional descriptive statistic related to this evaluation question.¹⁹

Overall, **perceived benefits of the CzechELib project for member institutions can be rated as high**, with the evaluation of monitoring and statistics of the use of EIR to be expected (in the next interim report) to change dependent on the implementation of related planned activities (module form, related training and more.) until May 2020.

3.5. Evaluation of EQ5

Evaluation of EQ5 – What is the continuously perceived benefit of the project by other key stakeholders?

Benefits of the project perceived by other key stakeholders are **assessed positively**. **Benefits perceived by representatives of other stakeholders** give, in comparison to answers of member institutions, more **detailed information**, also because of the length and the depth of interviews.

In total, main perceived benefits of the project are following:

- ▶ Centralisation of a system, financial savings and better position in EIR negotiations,
- ▶ Professional team and industry leaders in one organization
- ▶ Platform for a communication of key stakeholders.

One of the main benefits of the CzechELib project is, according to respondents, the **centralisation of the system**, which has several significant implications. Centralization leads primarily to **financial savings** and complies with the **3E principle**.²⁰ Respondents suggest that EIR prices may not always be lower than in the past, but there may be a **lower annual increase in prices** than in the case of negotiations led by a few smaller consortia. Centralisation is further reflected in a **better position for negotiating EIR purchase**, where central negotiations, which are secured by CzechELib members, are (according to respondents) more favourable than separate negotiations of individual consortium. According to the respondents, centralisation also leads to a **better international position of the Czech Republic in the RD area**, when representatives of the CzechELib project represent the Czech Republic in negotiations with foreign institutions (apart from EIR providers). Finally, the result of centralisation is also an **increased transparency of the entire EIR acquisition process**, which includes for example methodically demanding public procurement, management of financial flows or a whole process of selection and pricing of EIR.

¹⁹ According to the list of evaluation questions, university students are one of target groups, from which information is collected as part of this evaluation question.

²⁰ Economy, efficiency, effectiveness.



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Another benefit of the project, which also stems from the centralisation, according to the representatives of the key stakeholders, is the **association of experts and establishment of a professional team** that deals with several aspects related to EIR. In addition to experts on EIR (more precisely RD in general), the national licensing centre addresses for example also legal issues or IT needed for the EIR delivery. According to interviews, it would be **advisable to continue to professionalise the team, to acquire further know-how and to maintain it**, but finding experts in various fields in combination with managerial competences is difficult (which corresponds to not filling part of vacancies in the CzechELib project).

The third significant benefit of the project, which goes beyond the objectives stated in the Project Charter, is the **establishment and existence of a platform for meetings of key stakeholders in the EIR area**, more precisely in the RD area in general. Key institutions such as representatives of relevant sections of MEYS, university or research representatives (e.g. CAS) are represented in the Technical board. According to interviews, the RD community is partly fragmented, and the CzechELib project serves as a place to strengthen cooperation among key stakeholders.

3.6. Evaluation of EQ6

Evaluation of EQ6 – Is the preparation and performance of internal evaluations, i.e. evaluations performed in the course of the project, effective?

Systematic internal evaluation as well as in the previous evaluation period is not being conducted and conclusions of evaluations are largely the same as in the 1. IER. In the framework of project management, standard activities such as a risk management and an evaluation of implementation plan are conducted, which can be assessed as an implicit use of certain elements of the process evaluation. Two times a year, an evaluation of the past period (half-year) is conducted at the meeting and a plan for the next period is prepared.

Formally, so far, evaluations are carried out only externally through the Contractor, outputs from an external evaluation serve as a source of feedback from target groups of the project and should serve as one of the sources of a change management of the project. According to an interview with project representatives, a continuous internal evaluation of the project should occur during the year 2020.

A setting of an internal evaluation is not in the Project Charter (content-wise or term-wise), only the final evaluation of the project is defined, evaluation should be conducted in the last two years of the project implementation). According to the project implementation team, outputs of an internal evaluation are planned for April 2021 and December 2022.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Is the evaluation methodology and the scope of collection of input data sufficient to evaluate the results and implications of the subsidized project?



An internal evaluation is not clearly methodically defined, currently a project manager is monitoring suggestions, which are evaluated together with the implementing team at regular meeting organized twice a year. An evaluation, namely the collection of data to evaluate results and impacts, is mainly done implicitly for the purpose of more efficient project management. Risk assessment and feedback from stakeholders involved in the project can be considered as elements of the internal process evaluation, e.g. in the form of regular meetings of member institutions. There is a continuous revision of the project, e.g. adaptation of methodologies to simplify processes (a total of 30 change sheets have been created so far).

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Does the beneficiary implement the findings and recommendations resulting from the evaluations?

Within a project management **there are not created any formal outputs of an internal evaluation** and sources for a possible change management (analysis of the project progress) are thus outputs of external evaluation carried out by the Contractor, evaluations are communicated with the beneficiary in the form of annual evaluation reports. Project representatives are also continuously informed about key evaluation activities, such as surveys or structured interviews. An internal evaluation will be carried out at 4Q 2020 and the first half of the year 2021 according to the project implementation team.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Does the beneficiary perceive the evaluation - as performed – as a useful tool for project management?

Due to the absence of systematic internal evaluation, the particular evaluation question cannot be evaluated at the time of writing this interim report.

3.7. Evaluation of EQ7

Evaluation of EQ7 – To what extent is the established national licensing centre operational and fulfilling its role?

Operation of the national licensing centre CzechELib can be evaluated as functional and corresponding to its role. From a perspective of member institutions, the cooperation and communication with the national licensing centre CzechELib are **positively assessed** and **requirements of member institutions regarding EIR are satisfied to a great extent.** Exceptions are in some cases highly specialised EIR, where a partial failure to meet demand of member institutions can be identified, as also in case of additional access of member institutions to existing EIR.²¹

²¹Currently there is an adjustment of the methodology, more precisely the centralised framework contract, which would make it easier to amend original commitments.



Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Does the CzechELib centre provide complex information support regarding newly introduced system of access to EIR? If yes, how effectively?

Information support of member institutions regarding access to EIR is **sufficient** according to information gathered in the survey and structured interviews. Information support is carried out on an individual basis (communication between designated persons of member institutions and staff of the national licensing centre CzechELib) and in the form of regular meetings of member institutions in which member institutions are informed of current and planned project activities.

An awareness of the CzechELib project is low among university students (see EQ4) and a functionality of the national licensing centre CzechELib in this regard cannot be assessed.²²

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – How beneficial are the conducted educational activities, seminars, conference etc.?

Representatives of member institutions assess, according to interviews, **positively in particular regular meetings of member institutions**. Demand of representatives of member institutions for further educational activities was recorded by a survey.

Almost half of respondents (41%) **does not need any additional training**. The reason is most often the sufficiency of a training provided by member institution itself or a sufficiency of a trainings completed.

Parts of member institutions **are lacking in education in particular the Open Access area**. Open Access as a theme of education would be appreciated by 22% of respondents, the topic of managing/monitoring the use of EIR, which is currently planned in the project, would be appreciated by 17% of respondents. In addition, work with EIR, or current development in the area of EIR (17%) appeared as a training topic. One of the proposed topics was also the promotion of EIR to end-users (i.e. supporting member institutions in promoting EIR inside their institutions, e.g. by sharing good practice).

In the light of information mentioned above, it is necessary to provide a broader context to Open Access themes and to work with individual EIR as well. Open Access theme is not a core part of the CzechELib project and therefore possibilities of providing training on this topic are significantly limited. Given the general importance of the topic, which appeared to be key in terms of future developments in the EIR area, and also because of findings from semi-structured interviews, project implementer and the Contracting Authority are advised to consider higher involvement of the Open Access theme to the project in order to respond to needs of member institutions.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Does the centre manage to meet the needs for purchasing licences? If yes, to what extent?

²² According to the list of evaluation questions, university students are one of target groups, from which information is collected as part of this evaluation question.



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Purchase of EIR within the project to a great extent meets the needs of member institutions. Member institutions purchase a large amount of EIR through the CzechELib project, and part of them acquires more EIR than in the past thanks to a participation in the project.

An evaluation of meeting needs of member institutions is based, in particular, on the EIR share acquired by member institutions through the CzechELib and a change in the number of EIR purchased.

EIR is exclusively purchased through the national licensing centre CzechELib only approximately by one third of member institution (30%), according to the survey. These organisations spend fewer resources in average on EIR than member institutions that purchase EIR also outside the CzechELib. Research organisations (58% acquire EIR only through the project) and RDI (42%) acquire EIR exclusively through the project.

However, the majority of member institutions acquiring EIR outside the CzechELib project (80 in total of 115 respondents) are still acquiring a significant part of EIR through the project.

Member institutions (61 %) acquire EIR also outside the CzechELib project. An additional 30% of such member institutions acquire more than a third of EIR through the project, only seven member institutions stated that they purchase EIR through the project for less than a third of resources allocated to EIR. It can be noted that, **thanks to the CzechELib project, member institutions purchase a significant amount of EIR** that they need and that the national licensing centre CzechELib is largely successful in meeting a demand of member institutions.

However, a **need for EIR** of member institutions **is not fully met**, especially for the following reasons. According to a part of respondents (about 40 cases), these are highly specialised sources (or individual titles, e.g. e-book), for which there are not enough candidates, so sources do not comply with the methodology of the project (at least three member institutions interested in acquiring EIR through the CzechELib project, hereinafter as “3+rule”). According to interviews, on the other hand, an **occasional unavailability** of specialised EIR or individual titles due to 3+ rule **is understandable** by member institutions.

In case of later access of member institutions to EIR already acquired, a value of a public procurement of CZK 3.873 million may be exceeded.²³ In this case it is necessary to proceed to an announcement of a new PP, EIR must be additionally requested by three or more institutions.²⁴

A long-term contract with an EIR provider is then the reason for acquiring EIR outside the CzechELib **in 20 cases** (i.e. 25% of member institutions acquiring EIR also outside the CzechELib project). 14 respondents state that it is favourable for them to acquire EIR in other way than through the project. **In less than half of cases it is an acquisition of EIR through another project** (VISK8A),²⁵ another reason is an acquisition of an individual titles and therefore it is not

²³ An exception is the appendix for institutions that were included in the tender documentation and a change of commitment is up to 10% of the initial commitment or below-the-threshold according to the Public Procurement Act.

²⁴ According to one structured interview, an option to later subscription to certain EIR was not clearly communicated at the start of the project.

²⁵ The VISK8 program is designed especially for public libraries and project settings, including purchase of licenses for EIR differs from the CzechELib project.



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favourable for member institutions to pay for an entire database. The last reason which was stated by only units of representatives of member institutions is a lack of willingness to subscribe to the EIR for a longer period.

Representatives of member institutions were further interviewed whether an amount of EIR they acquire changed due to the project. **More than half of member institutions (53%) acquire the same amount of EIR as before joining the CzechELib.** At the same time, for a large part of organisations, taking part in the project has a positive financial impact (see EQ4) and it is very common case of a member institution that purchases the same amount (probably necessary) of EIR in the long term, but realize savings due to the CzechELib project.

More than a third of the member institutions (35%) acquires more EIR (7% significantly more, 28% more EIR) as a result of taking part in the project. According to interviews, these are mainly member institutions that could not afford certain titles, and thanks to financial savings for existing EIR they could afford to purchase more resources.

Minority of member institutions (12%) stated that, after joining the project, they purchase **less EIR**, in particular because of **the organisation's status**, which does not allow EIR to be subsidized and also because of increased price of some demanded EIR. The change in an inclusion of some member institutions which would allow financial support from the CzechELib is currently one of the topics dealt with by the CzechELib project implementation team. In order to improve the situation, revision of the Project Chart has been carried out.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – How cooperating institutions perceive the way in which they are involved in the system implemented by the project (did voluntary approach proved to be useful or would they prefer directive approach)?

The system of involvement in purchasing EIR through the CzechELib project **is assessed** by representatives of member institutions **positively**. Within semi-structured interviews, a satisfaction of designated persons with their involvement in the project was recorded. Respondents consistently stated that their **participation in the project was adequate and the way in which EIR was chosen (EIR) was adequate**. In several cases, representatives of smaller member institutions stated that they perceived their role in the project as smaller and that adapting to centrally set rules was not a problem for them, or more precisely, they passively respond to offered EIR, which are demanded by other member institutions.

Evaluation of partial evaluation question – Can project management be considered effective?

Project management, more precisely the national licensing centre CzechELib, in the evaluation period, **fulfils its purpose**, i.e. **meets, to a large extent, the needs of EIR member institutions** and designated persons of member institutions assess project's benefits positively. Compared to the previous evaluation period, there are no, to a large degree, delays in activities and missing of deadlines



3.8. Evaluation of EQ9

Evaluation EQ9 – Is it possible to identify any other (unresolved) shortcomings/weaknesses or gaps in the centralised purchasing system that need to be addressed? If so, what are these and what solutions are proposed?

A survey and structured interviews show an **overall satisfaction of representatives of member institutions with the centralised purchasing system** (EIR selection for acquisition and their pricing) and **the current centralised purchasing system can be considered as adequate.**

More than nine of the ten representatives of member institutions interviewed (91%) **is definitely or rather satisfied** with the EIR selection procedure. Reasons for a dissatisfaction, which were examined in the survey and structured interviews, were then stated by units of representatives of member institutions. In several cases, the “3+” rule has been challenged in the light of a number of member institutions required or the way in which a member institution is counted.²⁶

The number of institutions needed (3+) is relevant from an evaluator's point of view, as the reduction in the number of institutions needed for the purchase of a specific EIR could significantly increase an administrative burden and the number of public contracts implemented within the project.

The second perceived deficiency was, in two cases, a **method of counting an above-average sized member institution**, where, in the selection of EIR, a member institution has one vote regardless of its size. For example, in case of universities with a high number of faculties, some EIR are purchased for the university as a whole, while others only for some faculties. This deficiency has also been identified by some member institutions in 1. IER, but compared to the data, perception of this deficiency has decreased. Other perceived deficiencies in EIR selection, such as an impossibility to purchase individual titles have been identified only by one member institution and is listed in the interim report annex. A procedure for selecting EIR and the same voting right for all member institutions is, from the implementor's point of view, effort to secure transparent approach, i.e. all member institutions have the same rights when selecting EIR.

Satisfaction with the calculation of a price of EIR is high for member institutions, 94% of institutions are definitely or rather satisfied with the price calculation procedure. 21 respondents stated they did not know or they could not answer. Reasons for dissatisfaction, which appeared similarly to the way EIR is selected for purchase only in case of units of member institutions, is an increase in prices for EIR or a failure to reach a subsidy (resulting from the status of a member institution, see EQ7). This issue is being solved by the implementation team and the Project Charter has been modified.

²⁶ The minimum number of member institutions required to negotiate a purchase of a specific EIR is set at three, where each member institution has one vote, irrespective of a size of an institution. According to an interview with the project implementation team, a lower number of votes needed would significantly increase the number of EIR and that the number of votes reflects foreign practice.



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In the course of data collection, specific recommendations to change the EIR selection procedure were not given twice or more and thus the recommendations obtained cannot be generalised. On the basis of collected data from years 2018 and 2019, it can be said that any dissatisfaction with the EIR selection procedure and its price is greater for larger institutions. Therefore, a possible recommendation is not to change established procedures, but **to better target communication of advantages of the current system to larger member institutions.**



4. Conclusions and recommendations

This Chapter includes a summary of the conclusions concerning each evaluation question followed by recommendations relating to the selected conclusions. The conclusions are based on the findings described in Chapter 3.

4.1. Key conclusions of the second interim report

In the evaluation period, more EIR (2019+ and 2020+)²⁷ is being contracted and partially, member institutions are joining existing consortia or new PP on EIR 2020+ are being listed (if the connection of member institution to an existing consortium would mean exceeding a contract limit of CZK 3.873 million, excluding an increase by no more than 10% of the original value, in that case it is necessary to announce a new PP). Compared to the previous year, the **financial value of contracted EIR is significantly lower, which is in line with the project's intent, i.e. primary acquisition of important and more expensive EIR**. The project **succeeded in achieving the financial milestone and meeting the final financial milestone can be expected**.

Given the lower financial value of EIR demanded, the experience gained on the part of the implementation team, EIR providers and other stakeholders involved (e.g. representatives of the member institutions or the commission for transparent PP), as well as the stabilisation of processes together with **keeping up with the schedule has significantly improved compared to the previous evaluation period**.

The project manages to a large extent meet the demand of the member institutions for EIR. Benefits of the CzechELib project perceived by the member institutions and other RD stakeholders can be further identified as compared to the previous evaluation period. **The main benefits of the project**, perceived by the representatives of member institutions include in particular the **higher number of EIR purchased, saving of funds, the reduction in administration and the stabilisation of funding** (e.g. more efficient budget planning).

Cooperation and communication of the implementation team with the designated persons at member institutions **is assessed positively**, representatives of the participating institutions have in most cases sufficient information and the website is content-wise evaluated as a clear and sufficient.

Significant majority of the member institutions is content with the way that EIR is selected as well as with its pricing. The main reasons for dissatisfaction are the price increase or no contribution of the project to EIR purchase if institutions do not have the status of a research organisation. Because of cooperation between the project implementor and the subsidy provider, methodology for consortia extension was changed in 2019, public professional and specialized libraries will be able to draw funds from the projects budget from 2020, this should lead to increased perception of benefits at least for the part of institutions that could not draw funds so far.

²⁷ I.e. EIR with effect from the given year.



Further developments in the RD area are continuously being discussed, this area is key in terms of **sustainability of the results achieved**. The funding after the end of the project support of EIR is currently being assessed. Possible funding options are being discussed.

4.2. Evaluation of the implementation of recommendations from the 1. Interim evaluation report

The 1. interim report contained a total of three recommendations. An overview of their implementation is given to each recommendation below:

- ▶ **Establishment of a thorough project communication strategy** – In the evaluation period, a communication strategy for 2019 was created, focusing, in addition to the representatives of member institutions, on other RD stakeholders.
- ▶ **Establishment of an internal evaluation process and its use in project management** – In the evaluation period, systematic internal evaluation was not set up, some elements of the process evaluation (e.g. risk assessment) are used implicitly.
- ▶ **Preparation of sufficient supporting documentation for the control/audit authorities containing the reasons for using the negotiated procedure without prior publication** – In the evaluation period, the provider of legal services was exchanged and also due to a significant reduction in the PP, ex-post checks in 2019 (up to now) did not contain a single finding.



4.3. Recommendations

In view of findings on the individual evaluation questions, we summarize below recommendations for the next phase of the project.

Systematically introduce elements of internal evaluation to continuously evaluate the project 2020

In relation to EQ6, the evaluator recommends **systematic introduction of an internal evaluation**. Plan of internal evaluation should include in particular a **determination of responsibility** for evaluation activities, identification of **specific areas** (e.g. in the form of evaluation questions) **and target groups of an evaluation** (e.g. the project implementation team, member institutions) and the schedule for an internal evaluation based on deadlines for planned outputs of an internal evaluation.

Internal evaluation should **take into account outputs of external evaluation** to avoid the duplication of activities and outputs. An evaluation should include an **analysis of the needs of the member institutions** that are currently not met, and which could be the subject of additional project activities in case of potential free capacity of the project implementation team. The recommendation stems from the unfulfilled recommendation from the first interim report.

Establish a thorough communication strategy

Within the project, the evaluator recommends **establishing a detailed communication strategy for 2020**, which will take into account the diversity of member institutions in perceived benefits of the CzechELib. Furthermore, the communication strategy should **clearly set activities towards key stakeholders**, in particular with regard to sustainability of results achieved in the project. The evaluator assumes creation of a communication strategy for the next period by a new publicity guarantor, whose appointment is currently being solved.

Consider the Open Access theme within the project setting constraints

Data gathered **imply the need for member institutions to be better informed and prepared for a possible gradual transition to OA**. The evaluator is aware of constraints of the project in the Open Access area, however, recommends identifying needs of member institutions in this area and **considering the OA theme in the area of information and methodological support** within project implementation (e.g. through sharing good practice or incorporating a theme in regular meetings of the member institutions). This topic is crucial in the long term for the member institutions in terms of financing publications and securing EIR. In order to consider the OA theme, the evaluator also recommends addressing the Open Access theme and its settings within the project (e.g. eligibility of OA-related expenditure) with the subsidy provider.

Use potential capacity and funding for additional support of the member institutions



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Take advantage of potential free capacity of the implementation team and funding to extend **support for the member institutions beyond the EIR purchase** – The evaluator recommends **analysing the needs of member institutions through feedback collection** (see recommendation on internal evaluation) and, within the bounds of possibility of the project, consider it while using free capacity. **A possible form of collecting feedback** from the member institutions are regular meetings of the member institutions or short survey among designated persons (in the course of the evaluation, possible examples of support of the member institutions were identified, e.g. in the form of a **simplified procedure for an acquisition of EIR** for the member institutions purchasing part of the EIR outside the CzechELib project or **supporting the member institutions in promoting the use of EIR within institutions**, although this is not an activity stated in the Project Charter).



5. List of references

The following sources of information have been consulted during the composition of 2. Interim report:

1. Methodologies and Procedures - ESIF/evaluations:

- ▶ Operational programme Research, Development and Education,
- ▶ Evaluation plan of Operational programme Research, Development and Education,
- ▶ Methodological documents of Ministry of Regional Development-National Coordination Authority for programming period 2014–2020.

2. Project Documentation

- ▶ Project proposal,
- ▶ Project Charter (version valid as of 14. 5. 2019),
- ▶ Communication Management Strategy,
- ▶ Communication of the CzechELib 2018,
- ▶ Documents related to the project management (Risk Management Strategy, Risk Register 2017 and 2018, Phase Plan),
- ▶ Methodological document "Preparation and Management of Individual Systemic Projects in the Implementation of the Operational Program Research, Development and Education".

3. CAWI Survey among the CzechELib member institutions

4. Structured interviews with the CzechELib member institutions

5. Structured interviews with the representatives of other organisations (e.g. public sector organisation)

6. CAWI Survey among university students

7. Meeting with the implementation team of the CzechELib.

6. Annex

List of Annexes:

Annex no. 1 – The Technical report (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 2.1 – Example of the Questionnaire for member institutions (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 2.2 – Example of the Questionnaire for university students (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 2.3 – Anonymized results of the survey for member institutions (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 2.4 – Anonymized results of the survey for university students (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 2.5 – Scenario interview with member institutions and anonymized transcripts (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 2.6 – Scenario interview with other stakeholders and anonymized transcripts (available in the Czech version)

Annex no. 3 – Graphical overview of the evaluation outputs

Annex no. 3 – Graphical overview of the evaluation outputs

Results of the Second Interim Evaluation Report of the project Evaluation of the Systemic Project "National Centre for Electronic Information Resources - CzechELib"

Key activities of the Project implemented in the period under review



Selection and purchase of additional EIR, joining of the member institutions to existing consortia is being supported



Creation of the EMRS for EIR administration



Information and methodological support of the member institutions



Providing overview of EIR use to the member institutions

Key findings

- ▶ The project, with exceptions, meets the needs of the EIR member institutions, the way EIR is selected and the calculation of their price is mostly positively assessed by the member institutions
- ▶ Delays in the project activities were minimised, mainly due to process stabilization and lower amount of negotiated EIR
- ▶ Communication with project team representatives is evaluated very positively by member institutions
- ▶ Benefits of the project perceived by the member institutions and other stakeholders are in particular the higher number of EIR purchased, the saving of resources, the stabilization of financing and the reduction of administrative burden

Recommendations

- ▶ Systematically set up internal evaluation activities of the project with regard to the interim evaluation in the year 2020
- ▶ Consider the Open Access theme within the constraints of the project
- ▶ Establish thorough communication strategy with regard to segmentation of the member institutions and key stakeholders for further development in the EIR area
- ▶ Use potential free capacity for additional support of the member institutions beyond a EIR procurement



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