

REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF CAS INSTITUTES FOR THE PERIOD 2020–2024

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Report on the Evaluation of the Research and Professional Activities of CAS Institutes for the Period 2020–2024

Introduction

The management of the Czech Academy of Sciences (hereinafter the “CAS”) places continuous emphasis on improving the quality of scientific and professional activities involving institutes in international scientific activities and quality performance of the CAS’ other functions set out by the relevant legislative regulations, thus it organises regular evaluation of the institutes, and has done so since the CAS came into existence in 1993.

The evaluation of research and professional activities of research-oriented CAS institutes is performed by the CAS, as the founder and provider of institutional funding for a research organisation’s long-term conceptual development, based on Act No. 130/2002 Coll., on the support of research, experimental development and innovations using public funds and on amendments to related acts (Act on Support of Research, Experimental Development and Innovations), as amended. It is the basis for fulfilment of the provisions of Section 7(7) of this act: *“The provider will grant the institutional support for a long-term conceptual development of the research organisation on the basis of its evaluation, which was carried out pursuant to a methodology prepared in compliance with sec. 35 (2)(c).”* The evaluation results therefore serve as one of the background materials for differentiated institutional funding of a research organisation’s long-term conceptual development for CAS institutes.

The CAS maintains a sustained, strategic focus on the evaluation of research. It develops its evaluation system using trends and experience from scientifically advanced countries, but also based on evaluation of its own experience. After each evaluation, **the CAS collects feedback from all participants of the evaluation in order to obtain an objective view of the benefits of the evaluation and the ways in which it was conducted.** Based on such analysis, the CAS optimises its evaluation system so as to reflect its needs and the needs of its institutes and research teams, as well as global developments in research and society’s changing needs. The CAS is actively involved in international initiatives that promote a responsible approach to the evaluation of research and, within the Czech environment, is one of the scientific organisations that take into account current international trends and principles when developing their evaluation systems. In the evaluation of CAS institutes for the period 2020–2024, the basic framework and proven main principles of previous evaluations were retained, while the necessary changes reflecting the changing environment were adopted at the same time, with the objective of ensuring a high-quality and responsible evaluation of CAS institutes.

The evaluation of 52 research-oriented institutes and two research-infrastructure institutes was carried out according to two different methodologies that reflect their different missions. **The Methodology of Evaluation of Research and Professional Activities of Research-oriented Institutes for the Period 2020–2024** placed emphasis on the quality of research and research results achieved, societal relevance, the quality of management and the vision and strategy for the future period, primarily in relation to promoting research quality, societal relevance and the development of human resources and the research environment. **The Methodology for**

Research-infrastructure Institutes focused primarily on the evaluation of the quality and relevance (in terms of their necessity and benefits) of the professional activities that research-infrastructure institutes provide for the CAS and its institutes, as well as on the evaluation of the quality of management and the vision and strategy for the future period in relation to the mission and functions that these institutes are required to fulfil on the basis of their founding charters.

Evaluation of Research and Professional Activities of Research-oriented Institutes for the Period 2020–2024

Evaluation Methodology

The Methodology of Evaluation of Research and Professional Activities of Research-oriented CAS Institutes for the Period 2020–2024 (hereinafter the “Evaluation Methodology”) was approved by the CAS Academy Council at its 39th session on 3 October 2024. It was circulated to institutes by bulk letter No. 16 dated 17 October 2024.

It has been prepared since 2022 by the Commission for the Evaluation of CAS Institutes, an advisory body to the CAS Academy Council (hereinafter the “Academy Council”). The Commission included representatives of the management of the Academy Council and the CAS Science Council (hereinafter the “Science Council”). Based on feedback from the evaluation for the period 2015–2019, the Commission identified the key elements of the evaluation, analysed them and formulated recommendations for their future form in the Evaluation Methodology. It submitted these recommendations to the Academy Council on an ongoing basis for discussion and decision. The Evaluation Methodology as a whole was subsequently submitted to the Science Council for comments.

Evaluation Objectives

The CAS aims to be the highest-quality scientific institution in the Czech Republic and to achieve, in scientific and professional activities and institutional management, the standards of leading institutions in scientifically advanced countries. Periodic evaluation of the CAS institutes is one of the tools for achieving this objective.

The specific objective of the evaluation is to obtain independent and objective information with the highest possible informative value about CAS institutes and research teams. This information will be used:

- to increase the quality of research teams’ activities and their international competitiveness; for an overview of the scientific level of research teams in comparison with the level in the relevant research areas in scientifically advanced countries;
- for identification of the directions and topics through which research teams may continue to develop their current scientific and professional activities;
- for an overview of the quality of institutes in comparison with the standards of scientifically advanced institutions;
- for quality management at the level of institutes enabling, inter alia, decisions on the impact of the evaluation on research teams, their support and further

development and leading to improvements in the conditions at institutes with the objective of achieving institutional excellence;

- for quality governance and decision-making at the level of the CAS management, inter alia on the provision of institutional support for CAS institutes;
- for an overview of the CAS management on the progress of institutes and developments in the CAS as a whole.

Principles of Evaluation

The evaluation was based on the following principles:

- **Qualitative informed peer review:** Qualitative peer review using supporting information. The following evaluation tools were used: peer review of selected outputs, information about institutes and individual research teams and on-site visits to institutes.
- **Formative character of evaluation:** Provision of independent and objective feedback to institutes and research teams that they can use to improve the quality of their activities and international competitiveness.
- **International dimension of evaluation:** Inspiration from advanced foreign evaluation systems (including the British REF system) and from the principles of international initiatives supporting a responsible approach to the evaluation of research. The CAS has joined the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) and has become a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment – [COARA](#). Foreign experts formed the majority in CAS evaluation bodies, from whom it was possible to obtain information on how research teams and institutes compare with the level and standards in scientifically advanced countries and institutions.
- **Respect for research fields differences:** Evaluation was performed by experts with the relevant field or interdisciplinary expertise, who assessed research teams and institutes in comparison with the level and standards in the relevant research areas in scientifically advanced countries and institutions while respecting field and interdisciplinary specifics.
- **Level of teams and institutes:** To achieve an objective and detailed evaluation of research activities, the evaluation was carried out at the level of individual research teams. Institutional aspects were assessed at the level of the institute, particularly in the area of management and strategy for its further development. At these two levels, inputs to the evaluation were defined, and background materials for evaluation and outputs from evaluation were prepared.
- **Two-phase character:** The evaluation of every CAS institute had two related phases, both of which were carried out by one international evaluation commission.
 - Phase I: evaluation of selected outputs from scientific activities by research teams of the institute using external evaluators,
 - Phase II: evaluation of the institute and its research teams.
- **Independence:** Evaluation was performed by independent experts, who must not have been in any conflict of interest.

- **Transparency:** Key evaluation documents are made available to institutes and the public on the CAS website.
- **Separate evaluation and funding:** During the evaluation of research teams and institutes, international evaluation commissions focused on the quality of research and professional activities without taking economic aspects into consideration. The evaluation results serve as one of the background materials for subsequent decisions by the CAS management on funding. The CAS Academy Assembly decides on institutional support for long-term conceptual development of CAS institutes in connection with the results of evaluations at the proposal of the CAS Academy Council.

Evaluation Commissions

The evaluation was performed through **52 international evaluation commissions** (hereinafter the “commissions”) established for both phases of the evaluation process and for each institute separately. When selecting experts for the commissions, care was taken to ensure that they were primarily foreign experts with high expertise and an international reputation from scientifically advanced countries and without conflicts of interest. Experts could be members of multiple commissions.

General Principles for Phase I and Phase II of Evaluation

- **In Phase I, remote peer review evaluation of selected individual outputs** of scientific activities by research teams was carried out. External evaluators proposed by the commissions prepared expert assessments of their scientific quality, and on that basis, the commission determined the final evaluation of the outputs in accordance with the criteria set out in the Methodology.
- For Phase I of the evaluation, research teams were required to select the outputs they considered to be of the highest quality and that had been created at the evaluated institute.
- No bibliometric analyses were prepared for the outputs, even as supporting information.
- The results of Phase I were compiled into a Report on Phase I in a uniform format for all registered research teams. The Report on Phase I was one of the background materials for evaluation in Phase II.
- **In Phase II of the evaluation, peer review (evaluation) of institutes and research teams was conducted using the Background Materials for Phase II, which included the Report on Phase I and the on-site visit to the institute.** Evaluation was performed only by the commission in accordance with the evaluation criteria.
- The output from Phase II, and thus of the whole evaluation, were **Final Reports** prepared in a uniform format by the relevant commission for each institute and its registered research teams.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria of Phase I

In Phase I, selected outputs from each research team were evaluated by commissions and remote evaluators according to the criterion of scientific quality. **The scientific quality of the selected output was evaluated by classifying the output into one of the five quality levels on the evaluation scale in terms of originality, significance and rigour.** The levels and characteristics of outputs according to the individual levels are shown in the table *Characteristics of Outputs in Accordance with Individual Quality Levels on Evaluation Scale*.

Table: Characteristics of Outputs in Accordance with Individual Quality Levels on Evaluation Scale

Quality levels on the evaluation scale	Characteristics of outputs
Outstanding In assessing work as being of outstanding quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour, evaluators will expect to see some of the following types of characteristics:	- research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area - great novelty or creativity in developing new thinking, new techniques and paradigms - major influence on a research theme or field - developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research - a primary or essential point of reference - application of exceptionally rigorous research design, method, execution and analysis
Excellent In assessing work as being of excellent quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour, evaluators will expect to see some of the following types of characteristics:	- making important contributions to the field - contributing very important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence - an important point of reference - application of robust and appropriate research design, method, execution and analysis
Standard In assessing work as being of standard quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour, evaluators will expect to see some of the following types of characteristics:	- providing useful knowledge and moderately influencing the field - involving incremental advances, which might include new knowledge which conforms with existing ideas and paradigms, or model calculations using established techniques or approaches - thorough and professional application of appropriate research design, method, execution and analysis

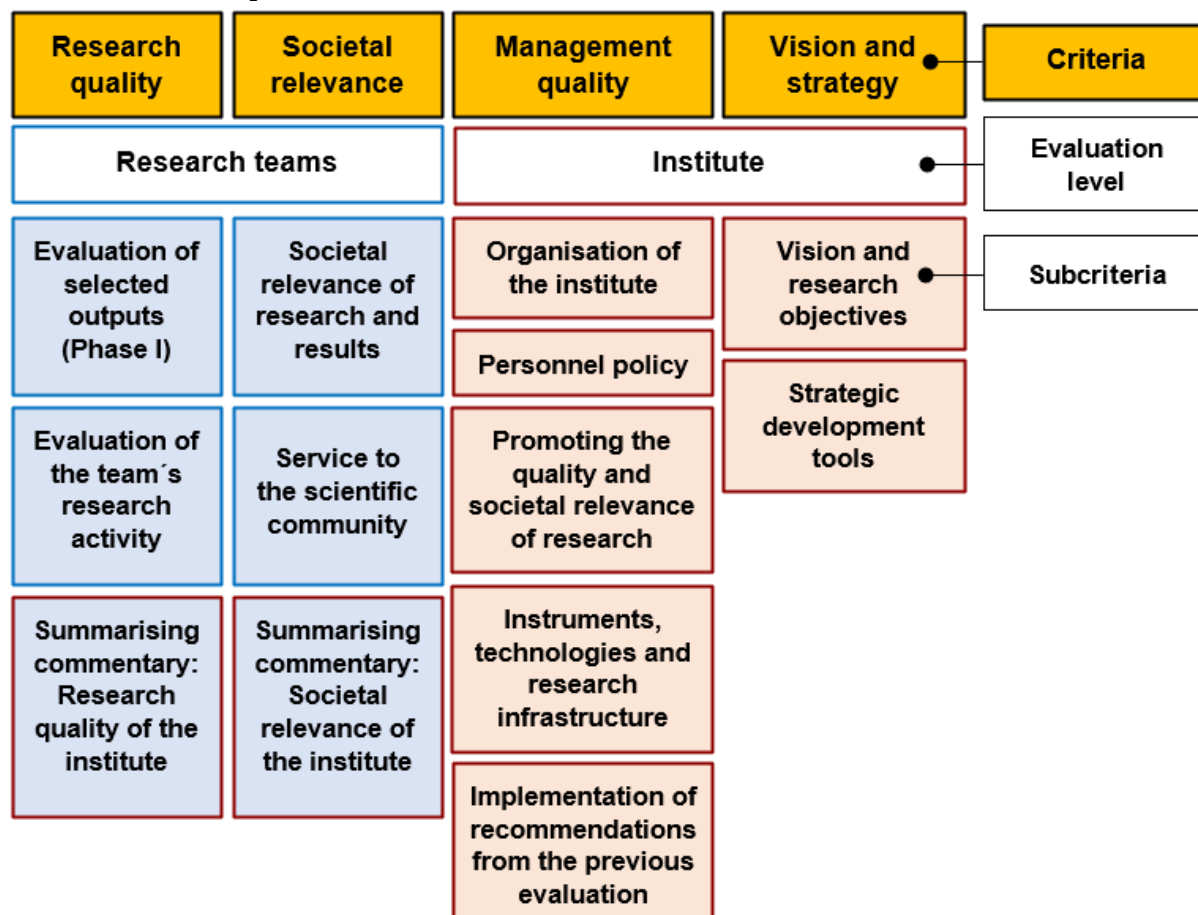
Acceptable In assessing work as being of acceptable quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour, evaluators will expect to see some of the following types of characteristics:	- providing useful knowledge, but unlikely to have more than a minor influence - identifiably contributing to understanding, but largely framed by existing paradigms or traditions of enquiry - competent application of appropriate research design, method, execution and analysis
Unsatisfactory	- falls below quality levels described above

For individual outputs, the commission also made statement on the team's contribution to the selected output and assigned one of three possible levels: *High, Medium a Low contribution*.

Evaluation Criteria for Phase II

Four criteria were set for Phase II of the evaluation: Research Quality, Societal Relevance, Management Quality and Vision and Strategy. This time the criteria were defined separately for the level of research teams (Research Quality and Societal Relevance) and for the level of institute (Management Quality and Vision and Strategy); the evaluation criteria were therefore not duplicated at the level of research teams and at the level of institute. The criteria of Research Quality and Societal Relevance were applied at the institute level in the form of summarising commentary based on the evaluation of research teams. The criteria were further divided into subcriteria, which were used to assess individual areas. The division of criteria into subcriteria is shown in the chart *Summary of Criteria and Subcriteria in Phase II of Evaluation*.

Chart: Summary of Criteria and Subcriteria in Phase II of Evaluation



Background Materials and Inputs for Evaluation

In accordance with the Evaluation Methodology, CAS institutes prepared an electronic application for evaluation using a uniform content structure, comprising four mandatory and additional optional, non-mandatory background materials:

- Part 1: General Background Materials about Institute and Its Research Teams.
- Part 2: Background Materials for Phase I of Evaluation (for each research team).
- Part 3: Background Materials for Phase II of Evaluation (for each research team).
- Part 4: Background Materials for Phase II of Evaluation (for institute as a whole).
- Optional, Non-mandatory Background Materials for Phase II of Evaluation (for institute as a whole):
 - Research Focus and Activities of New Research Units.
 - Research and Infrastructure Activities of Research-service Units.
 - Statement of the International Advisory Board on the Institute.

Institutes entered the General Background Materials about Institute and Its Research Teams and the Background Materials for Phase I of Evaluation into the KIS information system by the set deadline of 20 March 2025, and submitted the Background Materials for Phase II, including optional materials, by 20 June 2025.

The deadlines for submitting the background materials were set to give institutes as much time as possible to prepare the materials used in each phase, while also allowing them to be processed and made available for the commissions' activities. The background materials were linked to the evaluation criteria and designed to provide information for preparing the Final Report. They included instructions intended to ensure a comparable quality and depth of information from institutes and their research teams. At the same time, the instructions enabled institutes and teams to present their research activities, results achieved, and management-related aspects of the institute to the commissions as effectively as possible.

The Background Materials for Phase I of Evaluation included a selection of outputs for each team in the prescribed number. Only selected types of documents could be submitted (with a code designation in accordance with the ASEP classification): impacted journal article (JI), article in a scholarly journal (J), monograph, book (as a whole) (B), chapters in monographs, books (M) and electronic documents (E). Outputs of applied type (patents, prototypes, utility models, standards and guidelines) were evaluated in Phase II of evaluation in accordance with the Societal Relevance criterion, in the context of case studies. Selected outputs of the institutes from research areas I and II could, with regard to the international dimension of the evaluation, be submitted solely in English. Institutes from Research Area III could also submit outputs in other languages in accordance with field customs. Other background materials for evaluation in both phases were submitted only in English.

The quota for the number of selected outputs for evaluation in Phase I was set at $1 \cdot k$, where k corresponds to the size of the aggregate average FTE for researchers classified in category 3a (postdoctoral fellow), 3b (associate researcher), 4 (researcher) or 5 (senior researcher) within the meaning of Article III(1) of the CAS Career Development Rules for the five-year evaluation period. Outputs for Phase I were selected in the KIS system from the list of all outputs registered in the ASEP repository, administered by the Library of the CAS, based on interconnection between the two systems. For individual outputs, institutes added identifying and descriptive information, access to full texts and other information, in particular an explanation of the quality and significance of the output.

The Background Materials for Phase II of Evaluation took the form of activity reports. Important inputs for Phase II included Reports on Phase I of the evaluation for the institute's individual research teams, Final Reports on evaluation for the period 2015–2019, and findings made during the on-site visit to the institute, including presentations and discussions.

Information Events on Evaluation

On 16 December 2024, **the first targeted information event was held to introduce institutes to the Evaluation Methodology, the application and the KIS information system for evaluation.** The event had two parts: one in English for international researchers who lead or work in the teams being evaluated, and one in Czech for evaluation coordinators, such as institute directors, their deputies and scientific secretaries, who coordinated the collection of background materials at institutes,

as well as for the leaders of the teams. This was followed by **two further events, focusing on specific questions concerning the application** for evaluation, mainly from evaluation coordinators, held on 20 February 2025 and 15 May 2025. Representatives of all institutes attended, either in person or remotely. Presentations from the seminars were continuously published on the CAS internal web portal and were also available in the KIS information system. A recording was also made of each event and made available to institutes in the KIS information system. The presentations were prepared on the basis of frequently asked questions; ongoing questions received from institutes were handled by the evaluation organisational team from the CAS Head Office (hereinafter the “organisational team”) via email and telephone.

Preparations for the evaluation were also discussed regularly at meetings between the CAS management and institute directors from autumn 2022 onwards; key information on the preparation of the evaluation was also continuously provided to the Science Council and at meetings of staff of the technical-economic administrations of CAS institutes. In addition, discussions on the evaluation were held at individual CAS institutes in the presence of the member of the Academy Council responsible for preparing the evaluation, and in April 2024 an information seminar on evaluation was held for early career researchers. Reporting to the Academy Council, the Science Council and institute directors continued during the evaluation.

Preparation for Evaluation

In May 2024, the Academy Council approved the establishment of the **Coordination Board of the Evaluation (hereinafter the “Coordination Board”)**, an advisory body primarily responsible for monitoring the proper course of evaluation and ensuring compliance with the evaluation principles across all CAS institutes. The Coordination Board’s specific responsibilities included preparing recommendations on proposals for dividing all CAS institutes into research teams for evaluation purposes, or into professional units in the case of the two research-infrastructure institutes, addressing conflicts of interest and deciding on objections raised by directors of CAS institutes to the commissions’ Final Reports in Phase II. In April 2025, the composition of the Coordination Board was also updated following changes in the composition of the Academy Council.

On 22 April 2024, institutes were contacted by bulk letter No. 11 with a request to **submit, by 31 May 2024, proposals for the division of the institute into research teams together with specifications of their research focus**. Institutes could also apply for an exception allowing the registration of research teams with fewer than 4 FTE researchers in terms of aggregate average FTE. They could also request permission to combine several smaller research units into a single team where they addressed closely related research topics. The collection of background materials also included information on the thematic focus of research teams, which was used to identify suitable experts for the evaluation.

In accordance with the Evaluation Methodology, the proposals received were forwarded to the Coordination Board, which reviewed them and prepared recommendations for the Academy Council between June and August 2024. **The Academy Council approved the registration of 408 research teams from 52 institutes, ranging from 2 to 30 teams per institute**. 37 institutes registered research teams in line with their organisational structure, while 15 institutes registered teams that differed from their organisational structure, which the Academy Council accepted.

14 institutes registered research teams with fewer than 4 FTE researchers; this was also accepted by the Academy Council. The individual institutes were subsequently informed of the final decision.

Development of the evaluation application within the KIS information system, together with ongoing testing, began in February 2024. At its 37th session on 25 June 2024, the Academy Council approved the remuneration for experts and the principles governing reimbursement of travel expenses for experts serving on commissions. **The selection of experts for the evaluation began in August 2024. Experts began to be contacted from September 2024 onwards, and the first commission members were appointed one month later.** This process continued over the following months. Where experts resigned, efforts were made to find replacements. Particular emphasis was placed on avoiding conflicts of interest when selecting experts. Where doubts arose as to whether a conflict of interest existed, the Coordination Board was consulted.

In March 2025, the evaluation organisational team was expanded to include additional coordinators from the CAS Head Office, who subsequently underwent training.

Organisation of Phase I of Evaluation

As of 20 March 2025, institutes had submitted a total of 3,941 outputs, of which 3,752 were submitted once, 93 twice and one three times, as the Evaluation Methodology allows an output to be submitted by multiple research teams from different and/or the same institutes. **In total, 3,846 unique outputs were submitted for evaluation.** An overview of the number of selected outputs submitted is provided in the table.

Table: Overview of the Number of Selected Outputs Submitted for Phase I by CAS Institutes

Institute name	Number of outputs submitted for Phase I
Institute of Archaeology of the CAS, Prague	41
Institute of Archaeology of the CAS, Brno	21
Astronomical Institute of the CAS	68
Biology Centre of the CAS	230
Institute of Biophysics of the CAS	84
Institute of Biotechnology of the CAS	64
Institute of Botany of the CAS	101
Economics Institute of the CAS	22
Institute of Ethnology of the CAS	33
Institute of Physiology of the CAS	119
Institute of Philosophy of the CAS	117
Institute of Physics of the CAS	373
Institute of Geophysics of the CAS	43
Institute of Geology of the CAS	34
Heyrovský Institute of the CAS	146
Institute of History of the CAS	45
Institute of Hydrology of the CAS	14

Institute of Microbiology of the CAS	198
Institute of Mathematics of the CAS	56
Masaryk Institute and Archives of the CAS	51
Oriental Institute of the CAS	25
Institute of Psychology of the CAS	31
Institute of Slavonic Studies of the CAS	24
Institute of Sociology of the CAS	49
Institute of Inorganic Chemistry of the CAS	33
Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS	48
Institute of Czech Literature of the CAS	62
Institute of Art History of the CAS	46
Institute of Experimental Botany of the CAS	123
Institute of Experimental Medicine of the CAS	60
Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the CAS	50
Institute of Photonics and Electronics of the CAS	34
Institute of Physics of Materials of the CAS	62
Institute of Plasma Physics of the CAS	92
Institute of Geonics of the CAS	47
Institute of Chemical Process Fundamentals of the CAS	73
Institute of Computer Science of the CAS	51
Institute of Analytical Chemistry of the CAS	42
Czech Language Institute of the CAS	51
Nuclear Physics Institute of the CAS	86
Institute of Molecular Genetics of the CAS	123
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the CAS	96
Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the CAS	207
Institute of Scientific Instruments of the CAS	77
Institute of Contemporary History of the CAS	45
Institute of Rock Structure and Mechanics of the CAS	47
Institute of State and Law of the CAS	31
Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS	78
Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics of the CAS	34
Institute of Information Theory and Automation of the CAS	74
Global Change Research Institute of the CAS	116
Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics of the CAS	64
Total	3941

Online briefings for the chairs and members of the 52 commissions were held on 24 and 26 March 2025, during which they were informed about the course of Phase I, the schedule and the individual tasks. The commissions were also provided with guidelines for working in KIS and further instructions. **The evaluation itself began on 1 April 2025 and was carried out remotely using the KIS information system and remote communication tools.**

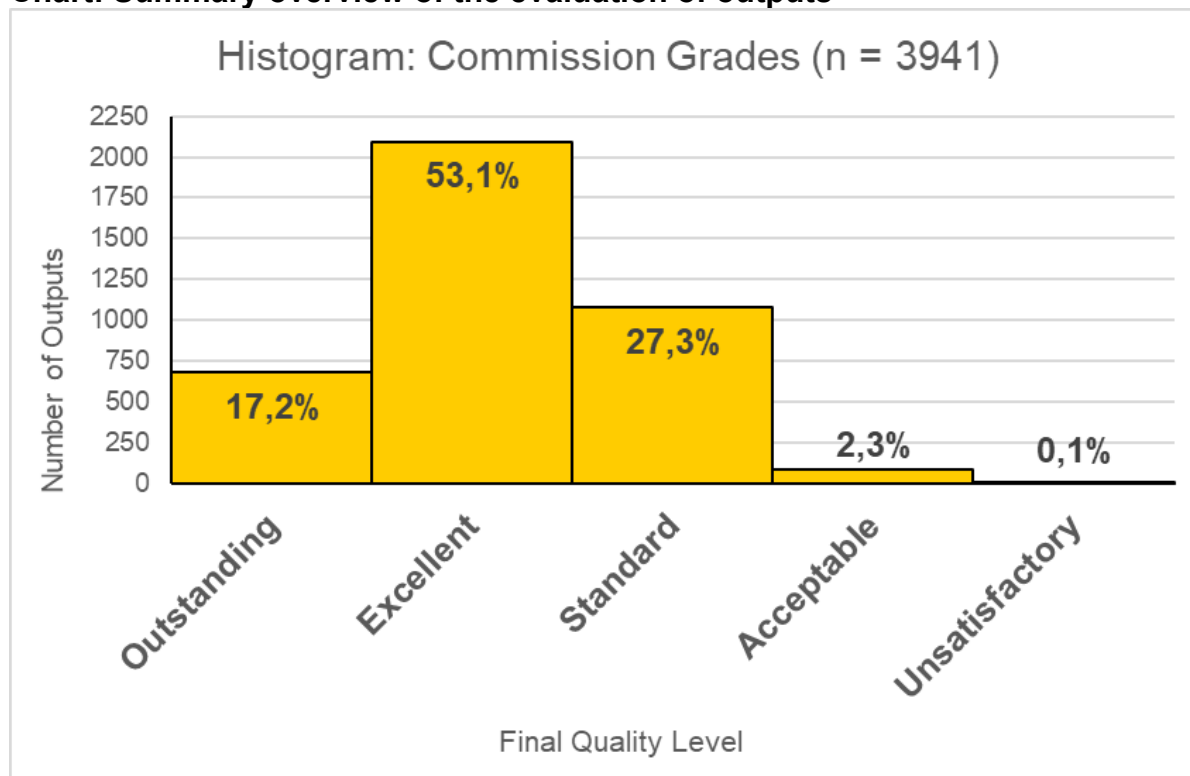
At the start of Phase I, the commission chair assigned portfolios of selected outputs to the commission members. Each output was assessed by independent external evaluators, usually two, but in some cases one or three, selected by a commission member. If there was a consensus between the external evaluators' assessments, the commission member verified the quality of the assessments, and the evaluation of the output was concluded. Where the evaluators' assessments differed, or where it was not possible to obtain two assessments for an output, the commission member responsible for the output prepared a proposal for its evaluation, and the commission then decided on its final classification. The decision-making process included an online meeting to discuss outputs on which the evaluators had not reached consensus. The evaluation was conducted following the evaluation criteria set out above.

In addition to assigning quality levels, the evaluators also provided written comments. These were mostly factual and specific, usually consisting of one or two short paragraphs summarising the content, originality and significance of the output and explaining the assigned quality level. Most comments identified specific strengths or weaker aspects of the work. The commission's final comments were shorter, typically confirming agreement with the evaluators or explaining any divergencies. The commission's statement on the team's contribution to the output was usually brief, most often noting the team's leading role or its contribution within the author team. Even so, these comments were useful because they explained the final decision. Overall, the written assessments by the evaluators and the commission were largely informative and specific, and enhancing the clarity of the whole process.

Results of Phase I of Evaluation

All 3,941 outputs submitted for Phase I were evaluated. A total of 12,239 requests for assessments were sent out, based on which 1,552 evaluators from 51 countries prepared 7,411 assessments. A summary overview of the evaluation of outputs is provided in the chart.

Chart: Summary overview of the evaluation of outputs



The most frequent rating was Excellent (2,091 outputs, approximately 53%). Outstanding was awarded to 678 outputs (approximately 17%), while 1,078 outputs were rated Standard (approximately 27%). Only 89 outputs (approximately 2%) were rated Acceptable, and just five outputs (approximately 0.1%) were rated Unsatisfactory. **More than 70% of the evaluated submitted outputs were therefore of above-standard quality (Excellent or Outstanding).** This distribution reflects the fact that most submitted outputs were selected as the teams' best results achieved during the period.

For 48% of outputs, there was a consensus among all evaluators, and the commission was required to accept them following a quality control of the assessments in accordance with the Methodology. For a further 47%, the commission agreed with the evaluation of one of the evaluators. Only 5% of results received a commission evaluation that differed from the individual evaluators' assessments, typically falling between them. The level of consensus between the individual evaluators' assessments and the commission's final evaluation was therefore very high. In 70% of cases, the evaluator's assessment matched the commission's final evaluation, while in 28% of cases it differed by one level. A difference by two levels was recorded in only 2% of assessments, and a difference by three levels in 0.1% of assessments. This demonstrates that the process was consistent and transparent.

In addition to the quality of the output, the commissions also provided commentary on the team's contribution to the selected outputs. They assigned each output one of the possible levels – High, Medium or Low – expressing the extent of the team's contribution to the output, independently of its quality. A high contribution means that the team played a leading role or carried out essential work, while a low contribution indicates a more marginal role. According to the commissions' statements, most submitted outputs involved a high contribution by the team (3,113 outputs, 79%).

A medium contribution was assigned to 689 outputs (17.5%), and a low contribution to 139 outputs (approximately 3.5%). The team's role was therefore decisive in almost four out of five outputs, and only exceptionally was its contribution minor or marginal. There is no significant correlation between the final quality rating of an output and the level of the team's contribution. The evaluation of output quality was therefore independent of the level of the team's contribution, in line with the requirements of the Evaluation Methodology.

After the completion of Phase I of the evaluation, in September 2025, the Institute of Philosophy of the CAS, the Institute of Sociology of the CAS and the Institute of Chemical Process Fundamentals of the CAS submitted objections to the Coordination Board concerning the determination of team contributions to the selected outputs in the Report on Phase I of the evaluation. The first two institutes also raised objections concerning procedural matters. The Coordination Board assessed the objections and, based on information from the evaluation process, found the procedural objections to be unjustified. For nine outputs from these institutes, it stated that the relevant commissions should have taken into account that the authors of the output were exclusively from the given team or that the team had a higher level of co-authorship than indicated by the Low or Medium level. The Coordination Board therefore forwarded the objections concerning the determination of contribution for the nine outputs to the commissions and asked them to take those objections into account in the relevant Final Reports.

Evaluation Commissions and Evaluators

A total of 336 commission chairs and members, all based abroad and mostly from scientifically advanced countries and research institutions, were actively involved in Phase I.

These experts contacted 1,552 independent evaluators, 98.8% of whom were based outside the Czech Republic. A total of 938 evaluators (60%) were from the original EU15 countries, while a further 211 came from the United States, Canada, Australia or Switzerland. Because outputs in Czech were included in the evaluation in field-specific cases, such as Czech (Bohemian) studies, 19 evaluators from the Czech Republic were also involved.

In this phase, the commissions had between 4 and 13 experts. In one commission, a situation arose in which an expert first acted as an evaluator and assessed outputs in that role, and subsequently served as a commission member. This was an operational solution to supplement the commission after the unexpected resignation of one of its members during Phase I of the evaluation.

Only two experts served on more than one commission in Phase I. In four commissions, it was accepted in Phase I that the chair would also act as a commission member, i.e. would also be involved in the evaluation of outputs. This was due either to the resignation of the chair and the appointment of a commission member to that role, the resignation of a commission member during the evaluation, or the absence of highly specialised expertise that was already covered by the previously appointed chair, where appointing an additional commission member would not have been efficient.

In one commission, the chair was dismissed because of an undeclared conflict of interest involving collaboration on a project with the leader of a research team

at the institute. A replacement was appointed from among the commission members. At the time of dismissal, the commission chair had only assigned outputs to individual commission members according to their specialisations and had not carried out any expert activities.

A total of 10 commissions were allowed to complete their work on Phase I of the evaluation by 11 July 2025, after the deadline of 30 June 2025 set out in the framework schedule. The same approach had also been used in the previous evaluations in 2015 and 2020. The extension enabled all outputs to be evaluated, and most of these commissions completed their work before 11 July 2025. The main reason for extending the deadline was resignations from commissions at the start of Phase I, which delayed the assignment of evaluators.

On 17 July 2025, all commission chairs and members were thanked and asked to provide feedback on the methodology and the evaluation process using an electronic questionnaire. A total of 84 experts responded.

Outputs from Phase I of Evaluation

Based on the results of Phase I of the evaluation, Reports on Phase I were prepared for the individual research teams of the 52 research-oriented institutes. The reports consisted of an overview of the evaluation of the research team's selected outputs in Phase I and a summary of the Phase I evaluation results in the form of Quality Profiles. The reports were provided to the evaluation commissions and institutes before Phase II.

Preparation and Organisation of Phase II of Evaluation

Preparation of Phase II of Evaluation

Preparations for Phase II began in April 2025 **with the identification of dates for the on-site visits, which were to take place, and subsequently did take place, in accordance with the framework schedule between 22 September 2025 and 17 October 2025.** The list of on-site visit dates is provided in the table below, entitled Dates of On-site Visits to 52 CAS Institutes. The dates depended on the availability of the evaluation commission and the institute, and were therefore not prescribed in advance but agreed gradually, with the last date agreed in May 2025. The length of the on-site visit to each institute was based on the number of teams evaluated and was 1 day / 1–2 days / 2 days / 3 days.

Table – Dates of On-site Visits to 52 CAS Institutes

Institute	Date of visit	Location
Institute of Contemporary History of the CAS	22. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Computer Science of the CAS	23. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Molecular Genetics of the CAS	23. 9. – 24. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Plasma Physics of the CAS	24. 9. 2025	Prague
Economics Institute of the CAS	24. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Art History of the CAS	24. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of History of the CAS	29. 9. 2025	Prague
Oriental Institute of the CAS	29. 9. 2025	Prague
Czech Language Institute of the CAS	29. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the CAS	29. 9. – 1. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Biotechnology of the CAS	29. 9. – 30. 9. 2025	Vestec
Institute of Physics of Materials of the CAS	30. 9. 2025	Brno
Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS	30. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Ethnology of the CAS	30. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Hydrology of the CAS	30. 9. 2025	Prague
Institute of Inorganic Chemistry of the CAS	30. 9. 2025	Řež
Institute of Microbiology of the CAS	30. 9. – 1. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Archaeology of the CAS, Prague	1. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics of the CAS	1. 10. 2025	Liběchov
Institute of Chemical Process Fundamentals of the CAS	1. 10. – 2. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Physiology of the CAS	1. 10. – 2. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Physics of the CAS	1. 10. – 2. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the CAS	2. 10. 2025	Prague

Institute of Photonics and Electronics of the CAS	2. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Philosophy of the CAS	2. 10.– 3. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Archaeology of the CAS, Brno	3. 10. 2025	Brno
Institute of Geonics of the CAS	3. 10. 2025	Ostrava
Institute of Slavonic Studies of the CAS	6. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Czech Literature of the CAS	6. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Rock Structure and Mechanics of the CAS	6. 10. 2025	Prague
Biology Centre of the CAS	6. 10. – 7. 10. 2025	České Budějovice
Heyrovský Institute of the CAS	6. 10. – 7. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS	7. 10. 2025	Brno
Global Change Research Institute of the CAS	7. 10. 2025	Brno
Institute of Botany of the CAS	7. 10. – 8. 10. 2025	Průhonice
Nuclear Physics Institute of the CAS	7. 10. – 8. 10. 2025	Řež
Institute of Psychology of the CAS	9. 10. 2025	Brno
Institute of Mathematics of the CAS	9. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Sociology of the CAS	9. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Experimental Botany of the CAS	9. 10. – 10. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Experimental Medicine of the CAS	9. 10. – 10. 10. 2025	Prague
Astronomical Institute of the CAS	10. 10. 2025	Ondřejov
Institute of Geophysics of the CAS	10. 10. 2025	Prague
Masaryk Institute and Archives of the CAS	13. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of State and Law of the CAS	13. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Biophysics of the CAS	13. 10. -14. 10. 2025	Brno
Institute of Information Theory and Automation of the CAS	14. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Geology of the CAS	15. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics of the CAS	16. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the CAS	16. 10. 2025	Prague
Institute of Analytical Chemistry of the CAS	17. 10. 2025	Brno
Institute of Scientific Instruments of the CAS	17. 10. 2025	Brno

On 24 July 2025, institutes were contacted with a request for cooperation in preparing the **visit itinerary** and were provided with more detailed guidance on how to complete it. They also received additional information and recommendations concerning the organisation of the visit. The itinerary followed a mandatory framework that was identical for all commissions (see the overview Time Framework for the Programme of the On-site Visit /Itinerary/). These details were further clarified for institutes on 21 August 2025.

Overview – Time Framework for the On-site Visit Programme (Itinerary)

Agenda item	Length in minutes
1. Introductory meeting of commission members (commission only)	20–30 min
2. Welcome by the director of the institute and opening by the commission chair	5–10 min
3. Public presentation by the director of the institute (retrospective and prospective) including discussion	45 min, including 30 min for the presentation and 15 min for discussion with the commission
4. Meeting of the commission with members of the Board of the institute (optional)	15–20 min
5. Online meeting of the commission with the chair of IAB (optional)	15–20 min
6. Presentation of the activities of individual research teams (retrospective and prospective)	30 minutes for each team, of which 15 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for discussion with the commission
7. Meeting between the commission and the director of the institute	30 min
8. Visit to the institute's facilities	45–60 min
9. Meeting between the commission, students and young researchers (postdoctoral research fellows)	20–30 min
10. Final debrief of the commission (commission only)	20–30 min
11. Conclusion of the visit by the commission chair, statement by the CAS observer and the institute on the course of the evaluation	15–20 min

To oversee compliance with the rules set out in the Methodology during the preparation of Phase II of the evaluation and during the on-site visits, the Academy Council appointed an **observer for each institute on behalf of the provider from among the members of the Academy Council and the Science Council**. The list of 20 observers was approved by the Academy Council in its fifth per rollam vote on 1 August 2025 and updated at its fifth session on 2 September 2025. For operational reasons, all approved observers could also act as deputy observers. This occurred, for example, in connection with participation in preparatory online commission meetings, which were scheduled ad hoc and were therefore difficult to coordinate in terms of timing. The evaluation organisational team informed both the commissions and the institutes of the identity of their observers and explained the observers' role to them. On 10 and 18 September 2025, the observers were also briefed in greater detail on their

responsibilities and received a list of frequently asked questions raised by commissions, prepared on the basis of previous evaluations. The training sessions were also attended by commission coordinators, with whom the observers cooperated in carrying out their tasks.

In June 2025, institutes received **draft templates for the Final Reports for both institutes and research teams**, giving them a clearer idea of how the background materials would be reflected in the evaluation and the reports.

In July 2025, following the completion of Phase I of the evaluation, **the commissions were informed about the tasks awaiting them at the start of Phase II**, received assistance with planning travel to the Czech Republic, were asked to reserve time for online training sessions and were informed that the Reports on Phase I of the evaluation had been completed.

In August 2025, the Academy Council received a request from the Institute of Biophysics of the CAS for the chair of the International Advisory Board to attend the on-site visit in person, or alternatively to be present in person during the discussion of matters relating to the activities of the International Advisory Board. The Academy Council discussed the request at its fifth session on 2 September 2025, but did not grant the exception.

As the start of Phase II of the evaluation approached, it became increasingly clear that ensuring the in-person attendance of all commission members at the on-site visits would be difficult, and that in exceptional cases it might be necessary to consider allowing hybrid meetings. The Academy Council was informed of this situation at its fourth session on 24 June 2025 and stated that it continued to require in-person attendance at the visits, with any exceptions to be dealt with on an operational basis as the visit dates approached. During September and October 2025, requests for exceptions concerning specific commission members were submitted to the Academy Council, which allowed them to participate online. In total, this concerned seven members across seven commissions. The main reasons were serious and unexpected illness, the need to care for a close family member, and employer restrictions in the United States.

For operational reasons, some commissions held their preparatory online meetings for Phase II of the evaluation before 1 September 2025. For the same reasons, the Background Materials for Phase II were also made available to the commissions at the end of August.

Organisation of Phase II of Evaluation

Phase II of the evaluation began on 1 September 2025. It was conducted in person and, where necessary, in hybrid format, using KIS and remote communication tools. At the start of the phase, the commissions were given access to the Background Materials for Phase II, including the Report on Phase I of the Evaluation, and reviewed them. Before the on-site visit, commission members held at least one joint online meeting to prepare for the visit and for drafting the Final Report. The relevant observers appointed on behalf of the provider also attended these online meetings.

On 11 September 2025, training was held for the commissions on the methodology of evaluation in Phase II, the evaluation criteria, background materials, the on-site visit and preparation of the Final Report. They also received

instructions on how to use the KIS information system. A recording of the training was made available to the commission members in KIS.

The first on-site visit to an institute began on 22 September 2025. Following each visit, the commission chair prepared brief minutes for the commission. The commissions then prepared Final Reports based on the Background Materials for Phase II and the on-site visit. Many commissions held further online meetings for this purpose or, where appropriate, communicated by email.

After the on-site visits, the observers concluded their work with the commissions and submitted statements on the course of the visits to the evaluation organisational team. All statements confirmed that the visits had been conducted properly.

The evaluation commissions submitted the results of Phase II in the form of **Final Reports** between 16 October and 5 December 2025. The deadline for preparing each report depended on the date of the visit; 14 commissions submitted their reports late, while 38 submitted them early or on time. Unlike in previous evaluations, it was not possible to set a single deadline for completion of the reports, so each commission and institute followed an individual schedule.

After checking each report, the evaluation organisational team forwarded it to the relevant institute and invited the institute to submit its **statement on the course of Phase II of the evaluation and on the Final Report**. The deadline for preparing the statement depended on when the institute received the Final Report. With only a few exceptions, institutes met the deadline.

Directors of CAS institutes received instructions on the deadlines and on how to prepare these statements. In accordance with the Evaluation Methodology, institutes could raise objections in their statement concerning the course of Phase II or the Final Report and ask the Evaluation Coordination Board to review the Final Report. At the meeting with directors on 25 November 2025, institutes were given specific examples of objections to a Final Report and were informed that the final check of the Final Reports before publication would focus on formatting and grammar. If an institute considered that the Final Report did not comply with the Methodology, that some facts had been misinterpreted in the Final Report or that the report contained formal deficiencies, and wished these deficiencies to be revised, it had to raise objections in its statement on the Final Report and ask the Coordination Board to review it.

Of the total of 52 statements on the course of the evaluation, only one contained an objection. This was discussed at the fourth meeting of the Coordination Board and assessed not as an objection to the evaluation process, but as an objection to the Final Report on the evaluation, against which the institute had also raised objections.

Of the 52 statements on the Final Reports, 30 contained an objection and a request for the Coordination Board to forward the objections to the commissions. At four meetings held on 4 December 2025, 17 December 2025, 7 January 2026 and 14 January 2026, the Coordination Board discussed the objections and forwarded those it found justified to the commissions for resolution. The commissions dealt with the objections, updated the reports and prepared commentaries on the revisions made. Almost all of the partial objections forwarded were incorporated; where commissions did not incorporate them, they provided reasons in their commentaries. The updated reports were forwarded to the institute directors between December 2025 and January 2026, and the directors were asked to submit updated statements on the Final Report.

The chair of the Coordination Board subsequently informed each commission, through the organisational team, that the evaluation in Phase II had been completed.

The Institute of Physics of the CAS exercised its right to appeal to the Academy Council against the Coordination Board's procedure for assessing whether the objections were justified. The Academy Council discussed the appeal at its 11th session on 3 March 2026 and instructed the Coordination Board to reassess the relevant objections and supplement its decision with written reasons.

Evaluation Commissions

A total of 341 commission chairs and members, all based outside the Czech Republic, were actively involved in Phase II. The commission members came from 30 countries. Of these, 77% were from the original EU15 countries; together with experts from the United States, Canada, Switzerland and Australia, they accounted for 87%. Four experts served on more than one commission. The commissions had between 4 and 14 experts, depending on the size of the institute, the number of teams registered for evaluation by the commission and field specifics. The difference in the number of experts between Phases I and II was due to resignations by Phase I experts and efforts to reduce the workload of individual commission members. The proportion of women on the commissions (these data are not recorded by the organisational team) was estimated at approximately 20%; 11 commissions had no female members. Across both phases, a total of 1,746 experts went through the nomination and verification process for commission membership.

Outputs from Phase II of Evaluation

Based on the results of Phase II of the evaluation, **52 Final Reports were prepared for institutes and their individual research teams** using a uniform structure. They contained:

- Evaluation in accordance with the defined evaluation criteria.
- Recommendations by the commission for improvements in the future.
- Qualitative assessment in comparison with the level and standards in scientifically advanced countries and institutions.
- A final summary outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the institute and teams.

Attached to each Final Report were the statement of the observer for the provider on the course of the on-site visit, and the statement by the director of the relevant institute on the course of Phase II of the evaluation and on the Final Report.

The Final Reports were submitted to the 11th session of the Academy Council on 3 March 2026. The reports will serve as one of the background materials for setting the level of institutional support for the long-term conceptual development of CAS institutes for the period 2027–2031 and, as part of strategic management by the CAS management, inter alia they will also be used for internal analytical purposes, informed discussions with the management of individual institutes and informed decision-making. Last but not least, the reports are used for the national evaluation under

Methodology 2017+ (2025+) and constitute important background material for determining the scaling of individual CAS institutes.

Main Changes in the Evaluation Methodology for the Period 2020–2024 Compared with the Evaluation for the Period 2015–2019

The following is a summary of the main changes in the Evaluation Methodology compared with the evaluation for the period 2015–2019:

- The evaluation was carried out by 52 commissions composed of experts in the main research topics of the respective institute, appointed for both phases of the evaluation. They evaluated selected outputs in Phase I using remote evaluators and also evaluated the institute and its research teams, including through the on-site visit. This model replaced the previous concept of field panels and commissions (12 panels for Phase I and 15 commissions for Phase II, with partial overlap of experts), which evaluated field-relevant outputs and teams from several institutes. Overall, the number of experts serving on evaluation bodies increased by approximately 20%, with a larger number of specialists in the relevant fields involved. The aim of the change was to further strengthen the formative character of the evaluation and improve the quality of the feedback that institutes received from the evaluation commission through the Final Report.
- The evaluation abandoned the use of proxy metrics such as the IF or AIS of journals in assessing the quality of science and its impact.
- The criteria for evaluation at team level and institute level were separated. Teams were evaluated according to the criteria Research Quality and Societal Relevance, while institutes were evaluated according to Management Quality and Vision and Strategy. This reduced the amount of background material required from institutes and teams for the evaluation. The reduction in scope was more significant at team level.
- The evaluation of applied outputs, such as patents, utility models and prototypes, was moved from Phase I to Phase II of the evaluation, where they were evaluated in the broader context from basic research through to application of the result in practice, including its benefits for society, in the form of so-called case studies.
- The evaluation scale for assessing selected outputs in Phase I was revised: the global or national context within the evaluation levels was replaced by the scientific quality of the output in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- The quota for the number of selected outputs for Phase I of the evaluation was reduced (from 2*FTE of the team's researchers, including PhD students, to 1*FTE of the team's researchers, excluding PhD students). As a result, the number of outputs evaluated in Phase I fell by approximately 44%. The aim of reducing the quota was to ensure a sufficiently representative number of evaluated outputs while reducing the overall administrative burden and evaluation costs.
- The on-site visits to institutes were extended. They lasted from one to two days, with a three-day visit at the institute with the largest number of registered

research teams. The on-site visits included time for presentations as well as discussion formats designed to support the exchange of information needed for high-quality evaluation.

Evaluation of Professional Activities of Research-infrastructure CAS Institutes for the Period 2020–2024

Evaluation Methodology

The Methodology of Evaluation of Professional Activities of Research-infrastructure CAS Institutes for the Period 2020–2024 (hereinafter the “Evaluation Methodology”) was approved by the CAS Academy Council at its 41st session on 26 November 2024. Before that, it was also discussed by the Presidium of the Science Council. Both institutes were informed of the Evaluation Methodology by bulk letter No. 21/2024.

The Evaluation Methodology was prepared by the Commission for Evaluation of CAS Institutes in 2024. Feedback from the evaluation for the period 2015–2019 was also important in preparing it; more important, however, was the effort to develop the two evaluation methodologies so that they were complementary and shared the same structure, while reflecting the specific position of both institutes: Library of the CAS (hereinafter the “Library”) and Centre of Administration and Operations of the CAS (hereinafter the “CAO”).

Position of Research-infrastructure Institutes within the CAS

Research-infrastructure institutes of the CAS are established to provide infrastructure for research and development, consisting primarily of professional activities carried out for the CAS and the public research institutions it has established. Subject to the conditions laid down by legislation, these professional activities may also be provided to external entities and/or the public. Professional activities are understood to mean activities requiring specialist knowledge, expertise or tools that produce professional outputs (analyses, opinions, methodologies, strategies and projects, etc.), and/or ensure the operation and development of infrastructure (technological, information-based or otherwise), and/or provide various services (support for applying research results in practice, dissemination of research results, support for policy implementation at CAS institutes, science communication, the provision of services and facilities to the scientific community, etc.).

Evaluation Objectives

The objective of evaluating the professional activities of research-infrastructure institutes was therefore to obtain independent and objective information with the highest possible informative value about the institutes and their professional units, to be used:

- to improve the quality and relevance of the professional activities provided by the institute through its professional units,
- to provide an overview of the standard of professional activities in comparison with standards in the relevant fields of activities,
- to identify opportunities and directions for the further development of professional activities,

- to support quality management at the institute level, enabling, inter alia, decision-making on the impact of the evaluation on professional units, their support and further development, and contributing to improvements of conditions within institutes,
- to support quality management and decision-making at the level of the CAS management, including decisions on financial support for CAS institutes,
- to provide the CAS management with an overview on the progress of institutes and developments in the CAS as a whole.

Principles of Evaluation

The evaluation was based on the following principles:

- **Formative character of evaluation:** The purpose of the evaluation was to provide institutes and their professional units with independent and objective feedback that they could use to improve the quality of their professional activities.
- **Informed evaluation by expert commissions:** The evaluation was carried out by expert evaluation commissions using written information on the institutes and information gathered during on-site visits.
- **Level of professional units and institutes:** To ensure the objective and targeted evaluation of the institute's professional activities, the evaluation was conducted through assessment of the professional units that carry out these activities. The evaluation therefore takes place both at the level of professional units and at institute level. At these levels, the inputs for the evaluation are defined and the relevant background materials and outputs are prepared.
- **Independence:** The evaluation is carried out by independent experts.
- **Transparency:** Key evaluation documents are made available to institutes and the public through publication on the CAS website.
- **Separate evaluation and funding:** The evaluation commissions focused on assessing the quality and relevance of the professional activities and institutional management of research-infrastructure institutes, while taking economic aspects into account. However, the commissions do not decide on the level of institutional support for the long-term conceptual development of research organisations or on the level of any other financial support for these institutes.

Evaluation Commissions

The evaluation was carried out by two evaluation commissions (hereinafter the "commissions"), with one established separately for each institute. They consisted primarily of members from the Czech Republic with professional expertise relevant to the institutes' professional activities.

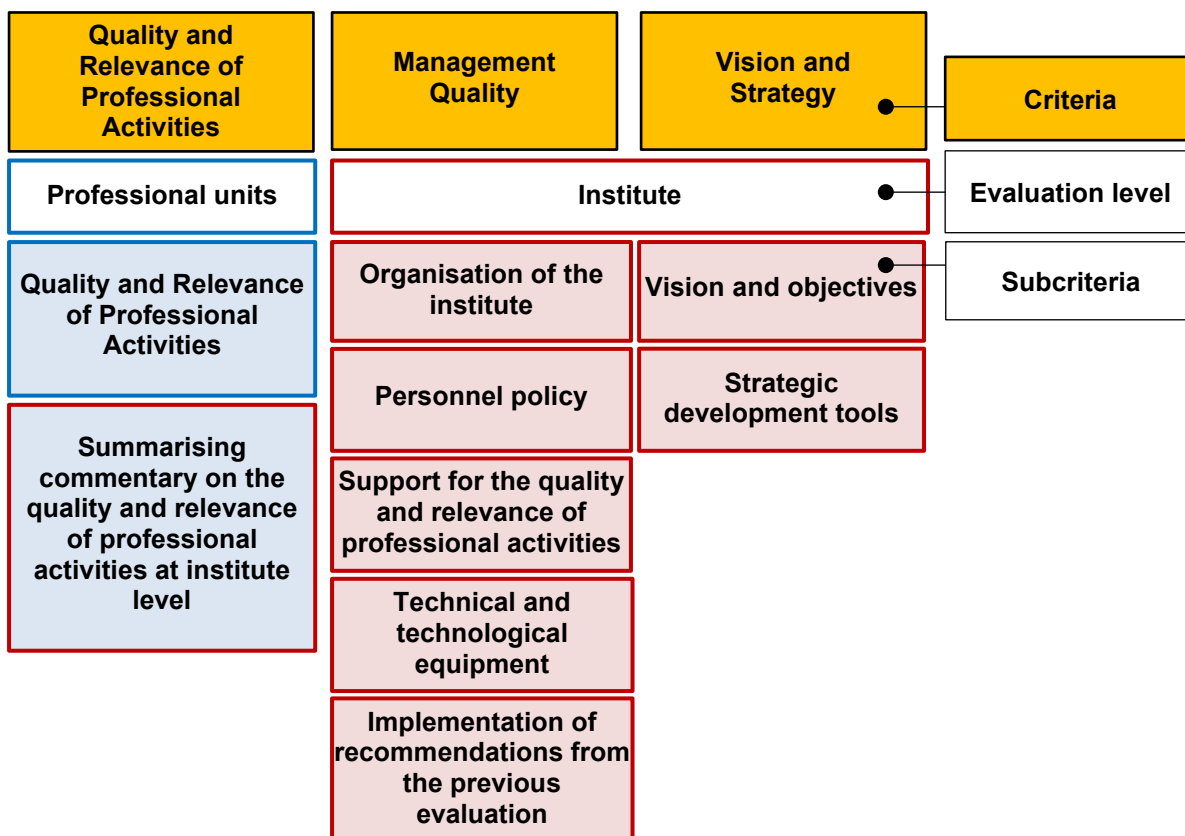
General Principles of Evaluation

- The evaluation of research-infrastructure institutes was carried out by expert commissions primarily by assessing the fulfilment of the institutes' strategic objectives and functions against the mission and activities set out in their founding charters.
- The evaluation took the form of assessment by expert commissions using the background materials and an on-site visit to the institute, in accordance with the evaluation criteria.
- The outputs of the evaluation were Final Reports prepared in a uniform format by the relevant commission for each institute and its professional units.

Evaluation Criteria

Three criteria were established for the evaluation of the Library and the CAO: Quality and Relevance of Professional Activities, Management Quality, and Vision and Strategy. The criteria were defined separately for the level of professional units (Quality and Relevance of Professional Activities) and for the institute level (Management Quality and Vision and Strategy); the evaluation criteria were not duplicated between the level of professional units and the institute level. At institute level, the criterion Quality and Relevance of Professional Activities was applied only in the form of a summary comment based on the evaluation of the professional units. The criteria are further divided into subcriteria used to assess the individual areas. The breakdown of the criteria into subcriteria is shown in the diagram Overview of Criteria and Subcriteria for the Evaluation of Research-infrastructure Institutes.

Diagram: Overview of Criteria and Subcriteria for the Evaluation of Research-infrastructure Institutes



Background Materials and Inputs for Evaluation

In accordance with the Evaluation Methodology, the institutes prepared an electronic application for evaluation using a uniform content structure comprising three mandatory and one optional background material:

- Part 1: General Background Materials about the Institute and Its Professional Units.
- Part 2: Background Materials for Evaluation for Each Professional Unit.
- Part 3: Background Materials for Evaluation for the Institute.
- Optional Background Material for Evaluation (for the Institute as a Whole):
 - Professional Activities of Support Units.

The institutes uploaded these background materials into the KIS information system by the set deadline of 20 June 2025.

In addition to the background materials prepared by the institutes, important inputs for the evaluation included the institutes' Final Reports from the Evaluation of Professional Activities of Research-infrastructure CAS Institutes for the Period 2015–2019 and reports from the questionnaire survey focused on the evaluation of professional activities. These inputs covered the results, infrastructure and services provided by research-infrastructure institutes to the CAS and its research-oriented institutes, as well as findings obtained during the on-site visits to the institutes and their professional units, including presentations by directors and heads of professional units and discussions.

The aim of the questionnaire survey was to assess the perceptions, importance, use and satisfaction of research-oriented institutes with the professional activities provided by research-infrastructure institutes, including the provision of professional results, infrastructure and services. The survey also aimed to collect suggestions for future improvement and to use the feedback from research-oriented institutes as one of the background materials for the evaluation of the professional activities of research-infrastructure institutes for the period 2020–2024.

Preparation of Evaluation

On 6 December 2024, the institutes were contacted by bulk letter No. 21 with a request to submit, by 15 January 2025, **a proposal for dividing the institute into professional units** and a list of those units' activities. The proposals were discussed by the Evaluation Coordination Board at its fourth meeting on 23 January 2025 and recommended for approval by the Academy Council, which approved them at its 43rd session on 4 February 2025.

In December 2024, the institutes were also asked to provide information for the **questionnaire survey** by 31 January 2025, which both did. The survey was carried out at the 52 research-oriented institutes between April and May 2025. Anonymised reports based on the survey were prepared in August 2025 and provided to the commissions, the institutes and the observers.

In February 2025, the Academy Council approved the **remuneration for experts and the principles governing reimbursement of travel expenses for experts** serving on evaluation commissions, allowing the process of identifying and contacting experts to begin. For the evaluation of research-infrastructure institutes, the Academy Council **appointed experts to the commissions** between May and August 2025. The commission for the evaluation of the professional activities of the Library had 5 members, while the CAO commission had 8 members. The specialisations of the teams submitted for evaluation were taken into consideration when appointing the commissions. The rule applied was that no more than one third of the members of each commission could be employed at CAS institutes; in practice, this meant one member of each commission. In June 2025, **the Academy Council also approved observers** on behalf of the provider for the on-site visits; these were the Vice Presidents of the Academy Council responsible for the two institutes. **Contracts** with the experts **were concluded** in August 2025.

In early August 2025, the institutes were contacted with a request for cooperation in preparing the **visit itinerary** and received more detailed instructions for completing it. The itinerary followed a mandatory framework identical for all commissions (see the overview Time Framework for the On-site Visit Programme /Itinerary/).

Overview: Time Framework for the On-site Visit Programme (Itinerary)

Agenda item	Length in minutes
1. Introductory meeting of commission members (commission only)	20–30 min
2. Welcome by the director of the institute and opening by the commission chair	5–10 min
3. Public presentation by the institute director Part 1: Presentation of the institute and its specific characteristics Part 2: Retrospective evaluation and prospective outlook, including discussion	Part 1: 15 min Part 2: 45 min, including 30 min for the presentation and 15 min for discussion with the commission
4. Meeting of the commission with members of the Board of the institute (optional)	15–20 min
5. Presentation of the activities of individual professional units (retrospective and prospective)	30 min per unit, including 15 min for the presentation and 15 min for discussion with the commission
6. Meeting between the commission and the institute director	30 min
7. Visit to the institute's facilities (optional)	45–60 min
8. Final debriefing of the commission (commission only)	20–30 min
9. Closing of the visit by the commission chair, followed by the statement by the CAS observer and the institute on the course of the evaluation	15–20 min

In August 2025, the institutes were sent **draft templates for the Final Reports for both institutes and professional units**, giving them a clearer idea of how the background materials would be reflected in the reports. **Both institutes were kept informed about the preparation and course of the evaluation** through meetings between CAS institute directors and the CAS Academy Council, bulk letters and other forms of communication. No information events were organised for them, but the evaluation organisational team was available to answer their questions by email, telephone and in person.

Course of Evaluation

In early September 2025, **all background materials for the evaluation and the questionnaire survey reports were provided** to the institutes and commission, **together with instructions** for their work in the evaluation.

Visits by the evaluation commissions to the evaluated institutes took place on: 23 September 2025 (CAO) and 17 October 2025 (Library), following the time framework set out in the Evaluation Methodology. Both observers confirmed that the visits had been conducted properly. The commissions prepared the Final Reports within the agreed timeframes. The institutes submitted statements on the reports and on the course of the evaluation without raising any objections, and the evaluation was therefore completed in January 2026.

Outputs from Evaluation

Based on the results of the evaluation, the commissions prepared **Final Reports for the institutes and their individual professional units** (hereinafter the “Final Report”) in the following structure:

- Evaluation in accordance with the defined evaluation criteria.
- Recommendations by the commission for improvements in the future.
- Qualitative evaluation in comparison with standards in the relevant fields of activity.
- A final summary outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the institute and professional units.

Attached to each Final Report were the statement by the observer on behalf of the provider on the course of the on-site visit and the statement by the director of the relevant institute on the course of the evaluation and on the Final Report.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the research and professional activities of CAS institutes for the period 2020–2024 was carried out according to two methodologies reflecting the different missions of research-oriented and research-infrastructure institutes. In both cases, the aim was to obtain independent and expert feedback on the standard of activities of the institutes and their research teams or professional units, and to support their further development as well as strategic management by the CAS management.

The evaluation of the 52 research-oriented institutes was based on an international peer review carried out by foreign experts and was designed in line with the principles of responsible research assessment promoted in scientifically advanced countries. This made it possible to assess the results and activities of CAS institutes in comparison with the level and standards in the relevant research areas in an international context.

The evaluation resulted in Final Reports prepared in a uniform structure, providing an assessment of the institutes' strengths and weaknesses, the quality of their activities and recommendations for the next period. These reports will serve as one of the background materials for decisions on institutional support for CAS institutes, for strategic management by the CAS management and for further analytical and conceptual work.

The evaluation also provided valuable experience that will be used in preparing the next evaluation cycle. The CAS will continue to develop its evaluation system so that it reflects the principles of responsible research assessment, respects field-specific differences and helps to improve the quality of the research and professional activities of its institutes.