

## Government council: draft science budget for 2021 looking to exceed CZK 40 billion

**On Friday 24 July there was an extraordinary session of the government's Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) at the Straka Academy. The main item on the agenda was the proposed state budget expenditure on research, experimental development and innovation for 2021, with the medium-term outlook for 2022–2023 and long-term outlook till 2027.**



*From the extraordinary session of the Council. Photo: Government Office*

At a time when the timetable for drawing up the budget had been set back by the pandemic and the state budget for this year was confirmed a few days ago, the government is now starting to finalise the budget for 2021. For the government's discussion, the Council approved the following total amounts of the initial Draft Expenditure on Science and Research with outlooks up to 2023:

a total of **CZK 38.2 billion** for **2021**

a total of **CZK 39.5 billion** for **2022**

a total of **CZK 39.5 billion** for **2023**

Consequently, the existing **draft budget for 2021** is CZK 1.96 billion higher than the 2020 budget and **CZK 743 million higher than the approved medium-term outlook** for 2021, which was CZK 37.5 billion. Expenditure in the proposed medium-term outlook for 2022 is CZK 1.49 billion higher than the government-approved medium-term outlook for 2022, and the proposed medium-term outlook for 2023 is CZK 47 million higher than the proposed expenditure for 2022.

Compared to the previous draft from April this year, the total expenditure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the years 2021–2023 was also increased by CZK 11.1 million per annum. These funds are earmarked for new research requirements arising in consequence of the coronavirus crisis. The draft budget is now going into a shortened interdepartmental consultation process.

The Council, which is headed by prime minister Andrej Babiš, also tasked its deputy chairman and deputy prime minister Karel Havlíček with negotiating **a further extraordinary budget increase of up to CZK 45 billion**. These funds should go towards **financing research projects focusing on problems of a global nature**,

**especially in the field of healthcare**, in connection with Measure No. 27 of the approved National Research, Development and Innovation Policy 2021+.

*"As much as CZK 3 billion of the planned further increase should be channelled into healthcare and medical research, but not exclusively in connection with the COVID-19 issue,"* said deputy prime minister and Council vice-chairman Karel Havlíček.

*"It is currently envisaged that the increased finances will go in part towards one or two robust, centralised and multidisciplinary projects focusing on healthcare and bio-medicine with an implementation of seven years as a rule, and in part towards standard, smaller-scale basic and applied research projects that will be funded and managed by the relevant providers,"* added first vice-chairman of the Council Petr Dvořák.

*"When formulating these projects – targeting research designed to strengthen society's resilience to current threats, including those linked to human health – the emphasis must be placed on a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach,"* concluded deputy chairman of the Council Pavel Baran.

The distribution of such substantially increased funding should be overseen directly by the prime minister and the Council. Certain Council members will form a **group for preparation of the draft increased funding allocation to comprehensive protection of human health**. Experience with the impacts of the crisis brought about by SARS-CoV-2 has made it clear that the pandemic situation brings a number of multifaceted pan-societal impacts, including non-health impacts, according to Council representatives. Roman Prymula, the government plenipotentiary for science and research in health, will play an important role in the group.

Source: RD&I Council press release | 27. 7. 2020