

**EVALUATION REPORT FOR EVALUATION OF RESEARCH
ORGANIZATION IN THE SEGMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS IN YEAR 2025**

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME:

Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 75081431

THE LIST OF EVALUATION UNITS IN MODULE 3:

Faculty of Technology

Faculty of Corporate Structure

School of Expertness and Valuation

CHAIRPERSON OF INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL

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Name and surname	Position in IEP	Current position
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Prof. Borna Abramović, Ph.D	Member of IEP	Head of Chair for Railway Transport Management Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences University of Zagreb, Croatia
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Prof. Alla Kasych	Member of IEP	Vice Rector for Scientific and Pedagogical Activity, Head of Management Department, Kyiv National University Technologies and Design, Ukraine
PhD. Monika Stoma	Member of the IEP	Vice Dean of the Faculty of Production Engineering, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Poland

PROVIDERS METHODOLOGIST

Name and surname: RNDr. Šárka Brábníková

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Date of on-site visit of higher education institution:

17 June 2025

In Žilina date 20.10.2025

Signature



(IEP chairperson)

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Technology

FORD: 2 - Engineering and technology

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

1. Mission and Vision

The Faculty of Technology (FT) operates within the institutional framework of the Institute of Technology and Business (VSTE), which is a non-university public higher education institution focusing primarily on technical and economic fields. Since the FT is a constituent part of the institution (HEI), its strategic direction is inherently aligned with the overall mission and vision of VSTE, which are defined at the central institutional level. The FT aligns closely with these VSTE strategic objectives.

The FT executes its institutional mission through its specialised focus on applied research in technical disciplines. The core functions of the FT's departments emphasise applied research and the direct integration of academic education with practice. Keyways the FT fulfils the institutional mission are:

- Applied Research and Innovation: Focusing on innovative applied research in areas such as construction technologies, materials engineering, industrial processes, mechanical design, transport, and logistics.
- Industry Collaboration: Strengthening its cooperation with the business sector by participating in research and innovation projects and securing professional practice for students, thereby supporting the transfer of R&D&I results to society.
- Graduate Preparedness: Preparing graduates with an interdisciplinary perspective and a creative approach to problem-solving, ensuring they are successfully employed in structural/process engineering, engineering technology, and public administration.
- Sustainability: Responding to challenges in the construction industry, including sustainability and digitalisation.

The FT shares the overarching institutional vision to establish VSTE as a renowned regional higher education institution and a recognised centre of applied research and innovation with a great commercial potential. The FT's vision for the development of its research fields includes:

- Regional Leadership in Application: Maintaining a leading position in professionally focused education and applied research within the South Bohemia Region, particularly in engineering, technology, transport and logistics, while operating with economic, social, and environmental responsibility.
- Graduate Profile: Preparing graduates as leaders, entrepreneurs, and visionaries capable of responding to the current and future needs of the labour market. This is achieved by providing students with an interdisciplinary perspective and creative approaches to problem-solving, enabling their successful employment in fields like structural/process engineering, engineering technology, and public administration.

- **Strategic Growth:** Focusing on the long-term goal of increasing the impact of creative and research activities on society and strengthening cooperation with the application sphere. This includes facilitating the establishment of an active scientific community with a tangible societal impact.

2. Organizational Structure, Size, and Staffing

Structure: The Faculty of Technology includes several academic departments and groups involved in research and education, such as:

- Department of Civil Engineering.
- Department of Mechanical Engineering.
- Department of Transport and Logistics.
- Department of Informatics and Natural Sciences.
- Department of Applied Technologies and Materials Research (KATMV), formerly known as ERD.

Size and Staffing (Institutional Context): As a non-university HEI, the SER and additional sources indicate that VŠTE generally submits one consolidated report for all academic staff, and allocating individual workloads to specific evaluated units (like the FT) is challenging for R&D purposes. The detailed staffing tables (e.g., 3.1.1–3.1.5) provided in the SER reflect data for the *entire institution*. The entire Institute (VŠTE) has approximately 3,000 students and 130 employees.

The following data about the FT staff was provided to the IEP after the on-site visit:

Faculty of Technology Staff Composition (2023)

Academic Position	Total Staff (FTE)	Women (FTE)	% Women
Professor	1.20	0.00	0.0
Associate Professor	5.55	1.85	33.3
Assistant Professor	10.50	3.20	30.5
Assistant	15.30	7.40	48.4
Researcher	1.60	0.60	37.5
Total	34.15	13.05	38.2

3. R&D&I Capacities

The FT's R&D&I activities are largely oriented towards applied research.

Research Focus Areas:

- Construction technologies, materials engineering, industrial engineering, mechanical design, production automation, transport and logistics.
- Research results focus on creating outputs such as:
 - Development of comprehensive technology for manufacturing castings from high-quality ductile cast iron.
 - Research and development of innovative building data warehouse lines.
 - Research in neutron and gamma discrimination phosphors (Scintillation N/G detector).
 - Development of advanced diagnostics and adaptive autonomous systems for control and measurement at robotic production workstations.

Infrastructure and Support:

- The FT utilizes new laboratories that were opened recently, focusing on areas related to its fields of study.
- The research facilities support advanced materials development, including concrete and building materials (with a focus on 3D printing), analytical chemistry, logistics, robotics, unmanned technologies, electronic components, and mechanical/metallographic testing.

- The infrastructure of the Department of Applied Technologies and Materials Research (KATMV) supports both R&D development and the transfer of outputs.
- The FT has a designated Deputy Director for Science and Research to coordinate creative activities, project applications, and knowledge exchange.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:¹

The text presented below incorporates data from the SER, its tables, the on-site visit findings, and subsequent clarification responses.

The FT receives a rating of 3 (Average). This rating is justified by its strong commitment to its mission as an applied research institution, demonstrated by high levels of national recognition in the governance and evaluation of applied R&D&I projects (TA CR and MIT schemes). The FT has demonstrated significant initiative in expanding its international networking but currently mostly out of the main European framework programmes and focusing to study mobilities through structured mechanisms (COST, Erasmus+, CEEPUS), achieving a level of quality that makes its results nationally competitive and offers a notable regional contribution.

The quality of recognition achieved by the FT is heavily oriented toward the applied and professional research community, which aligns directly with the overall strategic mission of the VSTE. The FT actively fosters international collaboration by organizing or co-organizing recognized events such as the LOGI conference in Ceske Budejovice. Individual recognition includes one prestigious award granted to Prof. Ing. Filip Bureš, Ph.D. for "Best contribution in catalysis" (Table 3.2.1). Based on the table 3.2.2, In the period 2019–2023, the academic staff of the evaluated unit (VSTE) has served as members of editorial boards of international scientific journals, with dominating share of special Issues in MDPI and own scientific journal LOGI (indexed in SCOPUS database, Q2). Table 3.2.3 assesses the degree of recognition of the FT staff by external international institutions. The analysis of the geographical distribution of the invited lectures shows that the FT staff exhibits a blend of strong regional engagement and targeted global recognition in niche scientific fields. Poland accounts for half of the reported invited lectures. Some invited lectures were reported to the North America. The invited lectures were typically referred in relation with specialized technical conferences or focused on logistic, chemistry/materials science. Slovakia accounts for one lecture, conducted at the University of Žilina as part of a structured exchange scheme for academic staff. For these five reported activities, it is not possible state that they were really invited lectures. E.g. they are mentioned in the conference programs in the plenary sessions. The invitation letters were provided for activities of prof. Šepeľák (Colombia). Additionally provided document related to INCOME2022 conference mentions that prof. Šepeľák affiliate to the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. The data indicated in the table 3.2.4 show that the FT exhibits strong integration within regional Central European networks, with all the recorded guest lectures coming from Slovakia (4 of 6) or Poland. The information provided after on-site visit reveals that the main purpose of these stays was teaching mobility. The FT maintains a robust profile in national R&D evaluation and policy influence. This is confirmed by the data in the table 3.2.5. Key staff members are active as

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

rapporteurs, opponents, and committee members for major Czech funding agencies, including the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR) across multiple programs (EPSILON, ZÉTA, TREND, SIGMA, Doprava 2020+). This consistent involvement confirms the FT's established expertise and recognized standing in the Czech R&D system. On the international front, the FT shows a focus on building specialized networks. This is evidenced by the staff's engagement in international grant evaluation (APVV Slovakia, NSC Poland) One academic member is serving as a Chairing Evaluation Panellists for a COST Action (TRAM).

Recommendations:

1. Strategically Target High-Impact Academic Engagement: The FT should prioritize securing positions on the editorial boards of highly ranked international journals and promote submissions of review articles to these journals, to balance with engagement in the scientific journals special issues.
2. Expand Global Peer Networking: While regional collaboration is successful, the FT should actively seek to host invited lecturers and develop long-term scientific stays with leading international research institutions (outside the V4 region). These interactions should be targeted towards enhancing specific FT research strengths (e.g., materials research, advanced logistics).
3. Leverage National Influence for International Growth: Utilize the strong established relationships with national funding agencies (TA CR, MIT) to initiate and coordinate larger international applied research consortia (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA/Eurostars) where the FT can hold a leading organizational role.
4. Systematize Reporting of Recognition: Ensure rigorous internal processes for consistently tracking and verifying all forms of academic recognition, including official certificates for invited lectures and clarity regarding the level and purpose of foreign academic visits (e.g., teaching vs. dedicated research mobility).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The FT receives a rating of 3 (Average). This score is awarded because the FT has secured and successfully managed an interesting portfolio of national applied research projects that directly contribute to its mission of integrating education with industrial practice and regional development. The projects are strongly focused on Applied Research (ranging from 92.5% to 100% of activity between 2021 and 2024) and successfully translate into demonstrable outputs such as prototypes, certified methodologies, and verified technologies. The collaboration with national and regional industrial partners (e.g., MOTOR JIKOV and NUVIA) demonstrates that the results are nationally competitive and have a significant regional contribution.

The quality of research is confirmed by the sustained success in attracting targeted funding from key Czech national applied research agencies, primarily the TA CR and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT CR).

The project portfolio is diverse within the technical domain, covering core areas of the FT:

1. **Manufacturing and Materials Research:** Several projects focused on developing advanced materials and manufacturing processes in cooperation with regional industry partners. These include research into 3D-printed moulds for zinc and aluminium alloys (TA CR TREND), and developing comprehensive technology for manufacturing high-quality ductile cast iron (MIT TRIO). The FT's role generally involves detailed analysis, quality control, and numerical simulations.
2. **Transport, Logistics, and IT Applications:** The Faculty leads nationally important projects focused on societal safety and urban planning, such as *Safe Cities for Pedestrians and Seniors* (TA CR) and the *Implementation of Urban Logistics in the Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning Process* (TA CR).
3. **Advanced Technology and Diagnostics:** The FT participates in highly specialized projects leading to commercial outputs, such as developing a Scintillation N/G detector prototype for radiation detection in partnership with Nuvia a.s., and creating Advanced Diagnostics and Adaptive Autonomous Systems for Control at robotic production workstations (in cooperation with MOTOR JIKOV Group).

The FT listed 15 projects in the Table 3.3.1 (some non-research Erasmus+ projects) in its self-assessment description, exceeding the limit of 10 "most significant" projects recommended for commentary (though the attached tables may contain more entries). This indicates a lack of strategic prioritization regarding which projects truly represent the unit's greatest success. All projects are listed in the "As a beneficiary" section. However, about half of them belong to the "As a participant" section. This fact was confirmed additionally, after the on-site visit.

The commitment to practical application is further highlighted by successful Contract Research activities (Table 3.3.2) focusing on design, strength calculations, and simulations for industry clients. Furthermore, the FT demonstrates capability in coordinating international consortia, acting as a Lead Partner in several interregional projects (e.g., *Autonomous Mobility in the Context of Regional Development* (INTER-COST) and *LUABA24085 - Analysis and optimization of Czech German worker mobility*). The majority of external funding comes from national applied research schemes (TA CR, MIT) or regional EU funds (Interreg). There is no evidence of participation as coordinator or participant in high-profile, globally competitive framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA/Eurostars) which would indicate internationally competitive quality.

The FT provided a detailed explanation of how the research projects contributed to its mission and profile during and after the on-site visit.

Recommendations:

In order to strengthen applied research capacities, increase institutional visibility and maximise the social and economic impact of the R&D&I portfolio, the FT should focus on diversifying partnerships, deepening interdisciplinary collaboration and improving the management and dissemination of applied research results, as described below:

1. Establish formal internal cooperation structures (e.g., joint research teams, shared proposal pipelines) with the FCS and the SEV to systematically pursue larger, technology-driven interdisciplinary grants.
2. Develop strategic research alliances with key units of other HEIs within the South Bohemia region (e.g., the University of South Bohemia). Such collaboration would leverage complementary expertise, create synergies for larger grant applications, and strengthen the region's overall innovation capacity.
3. Develop a proactive strategy aimed specifically at securing Coordinator or Work Package Lead roles in major competitive international grant schemes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA/Eurostars) that align with the FT's unique technical specialization, such as advanced manufacturing, smart mobility, or sustainable construction.

4. Systematically expand research support services with dedicated professionals (e.g., grant writers/science managers) whose primary focus is preparing and refining applications for complex European grant schemes, ensuring high quality and increased success rates.
5. Transform existing international cooperation established through mobility (Erasmus+, CEEPUS) and lower-tier projects (Interreg) into structured, long-term R&D partnerships with strategic academic and industrial partners abroad.
6. Maximise the impact of the newly acquired research infrastructure (laboratories equipped for engineering, construction, transport, and logistics, including 3D printing and robotization) by explicitly linking the use of this infrastructure to the acquisition of new applied projects and high-value contract research from external entities.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FT provided most of the required information for Indicator 3.4, demonstrating a clear focus on the social relevance and applied potential of its research outputs. The FT fulfilled the core requirement by identifying a manageable number of its most significant results.

The FT provided commentary on five key applied results within the text and listed a total of eight outputs. In Table 3.4.1, there are near 40 research results including patents (4), functional samples (7), industrial designs (4), prototype (1), pilot plant (1), utility models (4) and certified technologies (15). All results commented upon were either already applied or realistically heading towards application during the 2019–2023 evaluation period, such as prototypes (HighLum scintillation detector), functional samples (Scintillation N/G detector), and certified technologies (Zinc waste recycling). The FT followed the recommendation to link the results to previous projects (Indicator 3.3). For instance, the Scintillation N/G detector and HighLum scintillation detector prototypes were explicitly linked to the project CZ.01.1.02/0.0/0.0/20_321/0024977, and the Zinc waste recycling technology (ZP0410) was linked to TH04020055.

The FT successfully demonstrated the positive impacts of its applied research, primarily focusing on safety, economic benefit, and environmental improvement, aligning with the definition of social relevance. The FT identified industrial partners as key users, illustrating direct implementation:

- The HighLum scintillation detector achieved 10% higher efficiency than standard products and was implemented by the partner Nuvia a.s. into their portfolio for portal gates used in detecting the movement of radioactive materials. This demonstrates a tangible societal impact concerning safety and technology transfer effectiveness.
- The development of an AI system for autonomous elements in vehicles operating in forest undergrowth was intended to replace traditional methods, offering efficiency and logistical improvements.
- Industrial designs for PCB circuitry, co-owned with partners, provide effective defence against direct copying of the device, protecting intellectual property and securing economic advantage.

The FT specifically discussed the sustainability dimension, demonstrating concrete environmental benefits:

- The technology for recycling zinc waste (ZP0410) explicitly focuses on using substantial amounts of secondary raw materials, significantly reducing waste production. This direct link addresses

the environmental component of sustainable development, a key theme in the institutional mission.

The FT failed to address one mandatory element requested for this indicator: the indication of whether the gender dimension was considered in the research results. The Methodology HEI2025+ requires the evaluated entity to indicate in its commentary whether the gender dimension is considered in these results.

Recommendations:

The FT is highly effective in aligning its research results with regional industrial needs and achieving verifiable national impact, fulfilling the core criteria of its mission. The FT must strategically internationalise the impact and application of its core outputs and ensure comprehensive documentation of societal dimensions in its processes.

1. The FT should leverage its successful national certified methodologies (e.g., urban logistics planning, zinc waste recycling technology) to actively seek international adoption or influence. This includes positioning these results as a basis for new European standards (CEN/CENELEC) or influencing EU policy guidelines related to sustainable materials and technical safety. This shift in focus from national implementation to international regulatory impact is crucial for demonstrating international competitiveness.
2. While the FT successfully develops prototypes and functional samples (e.g., the Scintillation N/G detector), future strategy must focus on overcoming barriers to mass commercialization, such as reducing production costs. The FT should establish a clear, institutionally supported path (in conjunction with Module 5 Strategy and Module 4 Viability goals) to secure international licensing agreements or generate measurable revenue from spin-off companies demonstrating foreign market penetration based on these proprietary research outcomes.
3. The FT must address the current deficit in its reporting by implementing a robust internal policy (potentially utilizing the central HEI mechanisms addressed in Module 4.7) that mandates the consideration and documentation of the gender dimension and other diversity factors when developing new technical results or applied methodologies. This requirement, which is essential to fully comply with the descriptive requirements of Methodology HEI2025+, must be systematically applied and transparently reported for all future results.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Technology (FT) receives a rating of 4 (Very Good). This is justified by the exceptional consistency between its highly applied R&D&I output and the profile of its industrial and public sector users. The FT operates a multilayered system for knowledge transfer which is highly effective for a professionally oriented non-university HEI. This success is evidenced by extensive partnerships with major national and regional entities (e.g., MOTOR JIKOV, NUVIA, GD Druckguss), leading to the implementation of verified technologies that provide significant regional contribution in high-value areas like advanced manufacturing, radiation detection, and environmental sustainability.

The FT's approach to knowledge transfer is deeply embedded in its strategic mission, focusing on applied research and close cooperation with the business sector. Collaboration is fostered through active involvement in professional associations and strong existing personal and regional links. The FT actively seeks out new industrial partners through national and regional agencies (e.g., CzechInvest, Jihočeská hospodářská komora).

Commercialisation primarily occurs through share ownership agreements and exploitation clauses within collaborative project contracts, notably for industrial designs and software. While the results frequently hold commercialization potential (e.g., the NUVIA prototype has potential for licensing), the FT acknowledges that no start-ups or spin-offs were established during the review period. The FT successfully obtains substantial funding from non-public, public-grant sources (contract research and innovation vouchers). However, Table 3.5.1, intended for funds received exclusively from non-public, non-grant sources (e.g., licensing revenues, spin-off sales, donations), is empty. This indicates that revenue generation from pure commercial exploitation of intellectual property is not systematically distinguished from contract research revenue.

Recommendations:

1. The FT should prioritize establishing an independent funding stream derived from licensing, patent sales, or royalties on verified technologies and prototypes (e.g., the NUVIA detector) to demonstrate competitive commercial transfer effectiveness.
2. Capitalize on the strong applied outputs by actively setting up a dedicated, incentivized pathway for staff and students (leveraging the entrepreneurial hub and business incubator planned by VSTE, as mentioned in Module 5) to launch spin-off or start-up companies based on FT's proprietary technologies.
3. Ensure rigorous financial reporting that clearly differentiates revenues generated from applied R&D (contract research/vouchers, often reported under 3.3.2) from revenues generated from the commercial exploitation of intellectual property (e.g., licensing fees, spin-off returns, reported under 3.5.1), enabling accurate evaluation of pure commercialization effectiveness.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FT receives a rating of 4 (Very Good) because it demonstrates effective and consistent engagement in popularizing its R&D&I outputs, achieving a balanced quality that results in a significant regional contribution. The FT successfully aligns its popularisation strategy with its mission of applied, professionally oriented research, utilizing both specialized platforms (conferences, professional seminars) and broad public outreach events (Night of Scientists, media) to disseminate knowledge in technical and engineering fields.

The quality of FT's popularisation activities is high in terms of strategic outreach to relevant stakeholders, which include regional industry, high school students, and the general public in the South Bohemia region. The popularisation effort is systematic and leverages existing institutional mechanisms:

1. Units within the FT utilize recognized platforms for sharing technical and applied research findings:

- a. The Department of Transport and Logistics actively runs and develops the international scientific conference LOGI (biannual), papers are published in Transportation Research Procedia, serving as a respected platform for logistics, transport, and Industry 4.0 experts. This unit also publishes its own peer-reviewed international scientific journal, LOGI that is indexed in database SCOPUS and received Q2 for 2024.
- b. The Department of Civil Engineering organizes the international conference “Building Defects”, focusing on innovations in construction, sustainable construction, and the use of advanced materials. This unit also organized the conference *Sharing Work Competence Across Generations*, addressing digitalisation in the construction industry.
- c. Same unit organises professional seminars for the public on sustainable materials and the energy efficiency of buildings, often related to CEEPUS teaching programs.
2. The FT effectively participates in large-scale institutional events designed to introduce scientific work to non-experts:
 - a. Since 2022, the FT's departments have regularly participated in the nationwide event Night of Scientists. During this event, the general public is introduced to scientific work and innovative projects conducted at the department, often involving high-tech equipment such as 3D scanners, thermal imaging, drones, and CNC equipment.
 - b. The FT actively contributes to institutional initiatives such as Open Days and Week of Professional Lectures where the Faculty's R&D portfolio is regularly presented, allowing prospective students to view modern laboratory equipment and ongoing research projects.
 - c. The FT benefits from the institution's central media strategy, which includes cooperating with regional media (South Bohemian Television's *Život na VŠ* program) and the popular Podcast na Okružní, launched in 2023, which reaches a broader audience through expert interviews.

While there is general popularization of R&D&I outputs (Indicator 3.6 requests examples of 'citizen science initiatives'), the reported activities are predominantly structured as presentations, lectures, and tours, lacking evidence of deeper, participatory engagement where the general public is actively involved in data collection or research methodology. While effective regionally, the majority of the activities reported, such as the *Building Defects* conference (which is recognized as international but primarily involves Czech participants) and the direct media collaboration with *Jihočeská televize*, remain focused on the regional and national scale.

Recommendations:

1. The FT should leverage its expertise in technical fields (e.g., transport, logistics, environmental monitoring, or materials testing) to design and implement dedicated citizen science initiatives. These programs should involve the general public in collecting data or performing rudimentary analytical tasks to foster a deeper understanding of the R&D&I process in Engineering and Technology.
2. While the FT participates in international mobility and hosts international conferences (LOGI), efforts should be made to strategically document and promote the popularisation of R&D&I output at an international level, such as securing coverage for technological breakthroughs in leading international technical magazines or using collaborative platforms to host pan-European outreach events.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FT receives a rating of 4 (Very good) for Indicator 3.7. This rating is justified by the FT's comprehensive and strategic implementation of the recommendations resulting from the previous IEP assessment (2014–2018). The FT successfully used the evaluation results to formulate and adopt fundamental measures in R&D management. Implementation focused on correcting the primary weaknesses of the previous cycle—namely, low project revenue, limited commercialization, and weak international recognition—by developing new systems and infrastructure.

The successful implementation included institutionalizing the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS) for transparent R&D monitoring, establishing dedicated facilities for spin-off company development, and achieving a measurable increase in internationalization activities. The activities undertaken systematically contributed to fulfilling the institution's mission as a professionally oriented, research-driven organization.

The quality achieved is defined by the systemic nature of the response to the IEP recommendations from 2020. The implementation covered three core areas:

1. Systematization of Management and Reporting (Addressing Recommendations 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.11 from 2020):
 - a. The previous IEP recommended establishing a Project Office to handle administrative burdens and systematize reporting of revenues from consulting and lifelong learning.
 - b. The FT integrated the management of research, publishing, and technology transfer activities into the ETMS. The ETMS enables transparent recording and evaluation of R&D&I outputs. All outputs are systematically processed within the VSTE IS, linked to internal grant schemes (IGS) and specific university research projects (SRA), and submitted to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) in compliance with Methodology 17+ processes. The ETMS also aims to increase the incentive for academic staff in contract research.
 - c. Furthermore, the FT's staff increased their involvement in external expert roles, such as serving on evaluation boards (e.g., TA CR, MIT CR) and as editors of journals.
2. Strengthening Technology Transfer and Commercialization (Addressing Recommendations 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 from 2020):
 - a. The IEP previously noted the need to push interactions to the national level, systematically document licenses/social impact, and urgently establish a more independent unit and physical space for spin-off incubators with a clear strategy.
 - b. Implementation: The FT intensified cooperation with the application sector and achieved national-level partnerships with major companies such as MOTOR JIKOV, Bosch, Budějovický Budvar, ČD Cargo, Synpo, and GD Druckguss.
 - c. Facilities for the development of spin-off companies were established during the evaluation period (2019–2023). The FT adhered to VSTE's central strategies, which include spin-off support. The outputs include the continued support of the spin-off *ITB Engineering & Production s.r.o.*
 - d. Commercialization was implemented in specific high-tech areas, such as scintillation detectors and additively manufactured moulds.

3. Enhancing Recognition and Public Engagement (Addressing Recommendations 3.6, 3.10, 3.12 from 2020):

- a. The IEP recommended increasing the potential for organizing conferences and lectures, establishing in-house student competitions, and developing new forms of popularization.
- b. The FT intensified the organization and co-organization of international conferences and workshops, focusing on social impact. The Department of Transport and Logistics actively publishes its own journal and organizes the LOGI conference. The FT commenced activities in international mobility programs, specifically Erasmus+ and CEEPUS.

Although the strategic management tools (ETMS, spin-off facilities) were successfully established and implemented, the evaluation period (2019–2023) mainly reflects the *implementation phase* of these measures. The full, measurable long-term effectiveness, especially regarding significant non-public, non-grant revenues (licensing, spin-off sales), remains to be demonstrated in subsequent periods.

Recommendations:

1. The FT should rigorously document and report on the quantitative and qualitative impact of the ETMS on research excellence, specifically linking ETMS metrics to increased success rates in securing international grants and growing revenue from the commercial exploitation of IP (licensing, patent sales), moving beyond basic contract research.
2. Utilize the established spin-off facilities by setting and achieving measurable commercial milestones (e.g., number of viable spin-offs launched, securing foreign licensing agreements) by the next evaluation period, proving that the infrastructure directly translates applied research into international market success.
3. Ensure continuous refinement of R&D management tools, such as the ETMS, to formally track and incentivize the consideration of gender dimension and sustainability metrics within the R&D process from project inception to output application, ensuring full compliance with current methodological requirements (as noted in Indicator 3.4).

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	3 - Average
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	4 - Very good
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	4 - Very good
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	4 - Very good
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good

Grade [A–D]:	B
Summary assessment: The Faculty of Technology (FT) operates in the R&D field of FORD 2 – Engineering and Technology. The FT successfully fulfils its mission as a professionally oriented, non-university HEI unit focused on applied research and direct integration with industrial practice. The overall rating of 3.67 (Grade B – Very good) reflects a balanced quality, characterized by substantial organizational progress and demonstrable regional contribution, tempered by limitations in achieving consistent international academic and commercial competitiveness. The FT excels in generating applied outputs—including functional samples, certified methodologies, and prototypes—that are immediately utilized by regional and national industrial partners such as NUVIA, MOTOR JIKOV, and GD Druckguss. This transfer activity provides significant regional contribution in high-value technical areas (e.g., radiation safety systems, advanced manufacturing, and environmental sustainability). The resulting projects successfully attract funding from key Czech applied research agencies (TA CR and MIT CR). The FT demonstrated very good commitment to institutional development by successfully implementing major recommendations from the previous evaluation cycle. This included institutionalizing the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS) for transparent monitoring of research activity and outputs and establishing dedicated facilities for spin-off company development. This systemic response provides a robust framework for future quality control and development. The FT sustains effective outreach through specialized professional platforms, such as the organization of the LOGI conference and the Building Defects conference, alongside impactful public engagement initiatives like the Night of Scientists. Academic recognition remains primarily national (through involvement in TA CR evaluation boards) and regional (lectures and collaboration dominated by V4 partners). While there are successful instances of global recognition in niche scientific fields, scaling this recognition to securing positions on the editorial boards of highly ranked international journals remains a challenge, but with majority of the MDPI Special Issues. Despite successfully generating marketable intellectual property, the FT reported zero revenue from non-public, non-grant sources (such as licensing fees or spin-off sales) in Table 3.5.1. The reporting lacked precision, notably by exceeding the recommended limits for the number of reported projects, and by failing to provide documentation regarding interdisciplinarity and the specific roles of other VSTE units in the FT projects. The FT failed to document whether the gender dimension was considered in its applied research results, an explicit methodological requirement. The project portfolio, while strong nationally, lacks participation in high-profile, globally competitive framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA/Eurostars) that are indicative of internationally competitive R&D quality. Summary recommendations: 1. Develop strategic research alliances with key units of other HEIs within the South Bohemia region (e.g., the University of South Bohemia). Such collaboration would leverage complementary expertise, create synergies for larger grant applications, and strengthen the region's overall innovation capacity. 2. The FT should participate in large-scale, globally competitive R&D&I framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA). The FT should utilize its existing expertise in national evaluation bodies (TA CR) to build consortia that target international research calls. Furthermore, staff must be strategically supported and incentivized to acquire positions on the editorial boards of highly ranked international journals relevant to FORD 2. 3. The FT must demonstrate the effectiveness of its newly established commercialization infrastructure by setting and achieving measurable financial goals for revenue derived exclusively from the commercial exploitation of IP (e.g., licensing, patent sales, royalties, or	

spin-off generated revenue). The FT should actively use the spin-off facilities to launch at least one commercially viable company based on its proprietary technologies.

4. The FT must immediately integrate and mandate the explicit consideration and documentation of the gender dimension and other diversity factors across all future applied research results, fulfilling the requirements of Indicator 3.4. This compliance should be enforced and monitored through the operational modules of the ETMS. Furthermore, the FT needs to systematically improve its reporting practices to clearly document interdisciplinary collaboration with other VSTE units and rigorously adhere to self-assessment limits.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Corporate Strategy

FORD: 5 - Social sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

1. Mission and Vision

The Faculty of Corporate Strategy (FCS) operates within the institutional framework of the Institute of Technology and Business (VSTE), which is a non-university public higher education institution focusing primarily on technical and economic fields. Since the FT is a constituent part of the institution (HEI), its strategic direction is inherently aligned with the overall mission and vision of VSTE, which are defined at the central institutional level. The FCS aligns closely with these VSTE strategic objectives.

The FCS centres its activities on education, science, and research in the field of economics and related humanities. The FCS's central goal is to provide high-quality higher education with a focus on social responsibility, tailored to meet the needs of industry and practice. The FCS aims to be a recognised centre of applied research and innovation with great commercial potential. The FCS places great emphasis on linking its activities with the non-academic sector and continually monitoring the needs of the labour market, especially within the South Bohemia Region, thereby providing significant social benefits to the region.

The key aspects of the FCS mission:

- **Core Focus Areas (Education and Research):** The FCS focuses on education, science, and research in the field of economics and related humanities. This involves providing education to students in business studies and, to some extent, technical fields.
- **Link to Practice and Regional Development:** A primary mission element is establishing and maintaining close links with companies and organizations, particularly those based in the Region of South Bohemia, to ensure a strong connection between education and the practical aspects of business activities. This focus on regional engagement and application is central to the mission.
- **Societal Contribution:** The FCS places great emphasis on linking its activities with the non-academic sector and continually monitoring the needs of the labour market in South Bohemia. This combination of activities is viewed as providing social benefits to the region.

The FCS does not define a separate, distinct vision within the SER but instead explicitly states that it completely identifies with the overarching Vision of the parent institution, the VSTE. The FCS contributes to fulfilling this institutional vision through its focus on economic disciplines, research, and pedagogical activities. Key thematic areas that align the FCS with this vision include:

- **Applied Research and Innovation:** The FCS focuses on research in economic disciplines, supporting the institutional goal of being a recognised centre of applied research and innovation with commercial potential.

- **Regional Relevance:** The FCS maintains close links with companies and organisations in the Region of South Bohemia, monitoring the needs of the labour market and ensuring a strong connection between education and the practical aspects of business activities to provide social benefits to the region.
- **Graduate Profile:** The FCS trains students in business studies and technical fields, aiming to produce graduates who are prepared for the real-world corporate environment and capable of responding to the demands of the labour market.

2. Organizational Structure, Size, and Staffing

Structure: The Faculty of Technology includes several academic departments and groups involved in research and education, such as:

- Department of Management.
- Department of Marketing and Tourism.
- Department of Human Resources Management.
- Centre for Language Services, including a Confucius class (a project involving the Shanghai University of International Business and Economics).

Size and Staffing (Institutional Context): As a non-university HEI, the SER and additional sources indicate that VŠTE generally submits one consolidated report for all academic staff, and allocating individual workloads to specific evaluated units (like the FT) is challenging for R&D purposes. The detailed staffing tables (e.g., 3.1.1–3.1.5) provided in the SER reflect data for the entire institution. The entire Institute (VŠTE) has approximately 3,000 students and 130 employees.

The following data about the FCS staff was provided to the IEP after the on-site visit:

Faculty of Technology Staff Composition (2023)

Academic Position	Total Staff (FTE)	Women (FTE)	% Women
Professor	2.90	1.00	34.5
Associate Professor	5.40	1.80	33.3
Assistant Professor	10.60	3.30	31.1
Assistant	14.30	6.90	48.3
Researcher	5.40	2.20	40.7
Total	38.60	15.20	39.4

3. R&D&I Capacities

The FT's R&D&I activities are largely oriented towards applied research. Research Focus Areas:

- Stabilization and development of SMEs in rural areas, digital transformation for business model innovation in SMEs, and optimization of custom batch production management using IoT (Internet of Things) and digital technologies.
- Research results focus on creating outputs such as:
 - Developing certified methodologies, software, and practical manuals designed to prepare tools for effective corporate strategies for entities operating in rural areas.
 - Development of proven technologies, software, and methodologies that facilitate the optimization of processes to enhance corporate competitiveness.
 - Development of a transnational strategy, an action plan, and a self-assessment tool to help businesses evaluate their contribution to the circular economy.

Infrastructure and support:

The FCS possesses or utilizes specialized facilities tailored for economic, managerial, and analytical disciplines:

- **Dedicated Laboratories:** The FCS has established highly specialized spaces, including:

- The "Mind Lab," which is equipped with advanced eye-tracking technology, enabling students and researchers to conduct in-depth analyses of consumer behaviour and usability testing.
- The "Value Lab," which offers simulations and live company broadcasts designed to develop management skills.
- An Assessment Centre and multimedia classrooms to enhance students' advanced analytical capabilities.
- The FCS maintains internal staff to facilitate research activities, including a Development Officer (providing administrative assistance in preparing project applications and managing implementation) and a Secretary (handling financial aspects of applications and projects).

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:¹

The text presented below incorporates data from the SER, its tables, the on-site visit findings, and subsequent clarification responses.

The FT receives a rating of 3 (Average). This rating demonstrates a stable and active position of the FCS in the national and regional research communities, aligning well with the institutional mission to focus on applied research in social and economic disciplines. The quality achieved merits an average rating primarily due to the active service and recognition within key funding and advisory bodies, which signifies institutional maturity despite the FCS's relatively short history (established in 2015).

Table 3.2.1 shows that no prestigious R&D&I awards were obtained by FCS staff during the evaluation period (2019–2023).

While staff receive strong recognition domestically for service, conversion of this influence into formal, competitive awards is an area for future development. FCS academics hold elected or appointed positions on the scientific boards of other HEIs in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (e.g., Czech University of Life Sciences, University of South Bohemia, Danubius University), confirming their respected standing within the broader academic governance community.

Based on the table 3.2.2, the FCS maintains engagement with the international community through active participation on editorial boards of international scientific journals in management and business, and through invited lectures given abroad in Croatia, Finland, and Poland. While participation in international editorial boards exists, greater representation on journals indexed in top quartiles of major international databases (beyond those affiliated with cooperating HEIs) would further solidify international competitiveness.

Based on the ten listed examples in the table 3.2.3, the FCS members delivered invited lectures across seven different countries in Europe (Poland – 3, Slovakia – 1 = 40% of these activities). The IEP noted difficulties in verifying the formal "invited" or "keynote" status for some lectures listed in Table 3.2.3. Specifically, the IEP raised questions regarding confirmation of the "invited" status for certain lectures, such as those related to the EMFSA conference attended by Ing. Kmecová and Doc. Pollák. The FCS acknowledged that the institution does not keep central records of certificates

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

confirming the invited status of such presentations, relying instead on the individual academic staff members to keep these records.

Based on the table 3.2.4, the FCS also hosts foreign guests from various countries to deliver lectures. Data in this table indicate a diverse representation of countries, with a notable emphasis on Poland (30%). Teaching mobility is the primary purpose, accounting for 90% of the invited lectures. Participation in international conference accounts for the remaining 10% of the invited lectures. The table 3.2.5 refers to the involvement of FCS staff in the evaluation and advisory infrastructure of the national and international research ecosystem. Multiple academics serve as rapporteurs, assigned consultants, or expert evaluators for major national funding agencies, notably the TA CR. Furthermore, an FCS staff member, doc. Zdeněk Cácha, is a member of the Expert Panel Humanities and the Arts for the Research, Development and Innovation Council (R&D&I Council) of the Czech Republic. This engagement serves as an important marker of peer recognition and contributes directly to R&D&I policy development and quality control at the state level. All the mentioned activities were reported in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Recommendations:

To further strengthen its recognition by the research community, international visibility and leverage its growing national reputation, the FCS is encouraged to implement targeted measures that enhance institutional recognition and individual scholarly standing.

1. **Prioritize International Recognition Documentation:** The FCS should implement a systematic process to document the formal "invited" status of presentations delivered at international conferences and institutions, ensuring verifiable evidence of external prestige beyond basic conference participation.
2. **Translate National Influence into Awards:** FCS should develop a strategy, potentially involving the internal support system (Development Officer/Project Department), to actively nominate high-achieving academics for renowned national and international R&D&I awards, building upon the established recognition gained from committee service and national consulting work.
3. **Expand Top-Tier International Presence:** Encourage and support academic staff to seek higher-level roles (e.g., Associate Editor positions) on the editorial boards of globally recognized, high-impact journals within the Social Sciences to further enhance international visibility and competitiveness.

Together, these actions form a coherent strategy to convert existing strengths into measurable markers of excellence, aligning the FCS's trajectory with European and international standards of research prestige and academic leadership.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The FT receives a rating of 3 (Average). This score is awarded because the FT has secured and successfully managed an interesting portfolio of national applied research projects. The FCS is successfully translating its core mission of providing applied, regionally relevant economic research

into tangible project results. The FCS focuses on projects funded by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR) and substantial contract research activities.

Given that the FCS was established recently (2015) and operates within a professionally-oriented HEI with limited research support and funds in earlier periods, the volume of activity in the 2019–2023 period shows significant growth and is proportionate to its staffing levels. The ability to successfully secure and coordinate major TA CR projects (four examples listed – one as beneficiary, three as partner) and simultaneously increase the volume of financially significant contract research (Table 3.3.2 shows revenues growing substantially, reaching over 700 thousand CZK/28 thousand EUR in 2023 for contract research) demonstrates effective scaling of capacity and project acquisition support.

The projects show a high degree of necessary collaboration, both externally with application partners and internally within VŠTE, often requiring an interdisciplinary approach. The major TA CR projects involved broad national consortia, including other HEIs (Brno University of Technology), research institutions (Research Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation), and key non-academic stakeholders (Czech Chamber of Commerce, regional associations).

Although the FCS self-evaluation focuses on its own contribution, internal collaboration is evident: The project TL01000349 (SMEs in Rural Areas) saw the active participation of both the FCS and the School of Expertness and Valuation (SEV), indicating successful internal inter-unit cooperation, particularly in projects focusing on social sciences and applied economics. The research themes themselves, such as optimization systems (FW01010460) incorporating AI and IoT, inherently require interdisciplinary skills, bridging economic management theory (FCS domain) with technical implementation and data analysis (related to the expertise found in the FT or specialized university centres).

The portfolio of contract research activities in table 3.3.2 demonstrates the FCS's strong commitment to applied research and its mission to directly serve the regional corporate sector, particularly SMEs. The FCS's mission strongly emphasizes serving the South Bohemia Region, and current contract research is primarily focused on regional cooperation. The contract research activities often utilize Innovation Vouchers, which accelerate cooperation and allow companies to obtain financial support for research provided by the VSTE. The contract research portfolio involves applied issues that often bridge economic theory with industrial practice, focusing on corporate strategy, efficiency, and human resources:

1. Management and Process Optimization

- Production and Business Process Optimization: the work for STS Prachatice using the PVA model to evaluate individual product contribution and identify profitability/loss rates.
- Workflow Efficiency: The self-scheduling shifts method for Fontea, a. s..
- Manufacturing Innovation: The innovation of manufacturing and support processes for VM Motor.
- Profitability Analysis: Identifying the most and least profitable items for VISCOFAN CZ, showcase applied economic analysis.

2. Human Resources (HR) and Organizational Behaviour

- Personnel Optimization: Activities like Employee shadowing for Mektec Manufacturing Corporation targeted the optimization of personnel processes.
- Employee Welfare and Training: Contractual activities included educational services related to Burn-out syndrome for regional educational institutions.
- Workforce Management: The use of specific software and organizational studies to test and implement improved workforce organization processes (e.g., self-scheduling shifts for Fontea).

3. Marketing and Communication

- Market Analysis and Strategy: The Faculty provided comprehensive marketing services and marketing research for clients like DOC Mercury and Bouda Burgers, and ran a Marketing campaign for HEMP PRODUCTION CZ.

4. Interdisciplinary and Technical Aspects: While the research classification is Social Sciences, the solutions often require implicit technical understanding or cooperation:

- Interdisciplinarity: The application of the PVA model or the implementation of shift-scheduling software inherently requires integrating economic management (FCS domain) with specific industrial or manufacturing data processing.
- Technical Domain Overlap: Contracts aimed at optimization of manufacturing processes (VM Motor) involve the technical environment of the client, supporting the general institutional goal of linking research with industry, which operates heavily in technical fields like mechanical engineering and transport.

The external funding comes from national applied research schemes (TA CR). There is no evidence of participation as participant in high-profile, globally competitive framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA/Eurostars) which would indicate internationally competitive quality.

Recommendations:

In order to strengthen applied research capacities, increase institutional visibility and maximise the social and economic impact of the R&D&I portfolio, the FCS should focus on diversifying partnerships, deepening interdisciplinary collaboration and improving the management and dissemination of applied research results, as described below:

1. Establish formal internal cooperation structures (e.g., joint research teams, shared proposal pipelines) with the FT and the SEV to systematically pursue larger, technology-driven interdisciplinary grants.
2. Develop strategic research alliances with key units of other HEIs within the South Bohemia region (e.g., the University of South Bohemia). Such collaboration would leverage complementary expertise, create synergies for larger grant applications, and strengthen the region's overall innovation capacity.
3. The FCS should actively seek applied research projects and contract research partners outside the immediate South Bohemia Region.
4. Establish formal internal cooperation structures (e.g., joint research teams, shared proposal pipelines) with the FT and the SEV to systematically pursue larger, technology-driven interdisciplinary grants.
5. Enhance the formal tracking and reporting mechanisms (e.g., through the ETMS system) to systematically quantify the implementation success and economic impact of non-traditional outputs (certified methodologies, software, and manuals) in detail.
6. Building on the experience gained as a coordinator (TL01000349), the FCS should strategically prioritize the submission of project proposals in the role of Beneficiary. This increases project funding control, elevates the FCS's research profile, and maximizes the use of internal R&D&I capacity and personnel development within the FCS.

These measures taken together would consolidate the transformation of the FCS from a nationally focused research unit to a competitive international player in applied and interdisciplinary R&D&I, in line with European best practices in research management and innovation impact.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FCS receive grade 4 (Very good) for the indicator 3.4 by focusing on non-traditional research results highly relevant to its mission in Social Sciences and addressing all specific descriptive requirements mandated by the methodology.

The FCS explicitly focused its commentary on applied research outcomes developed through major public projects, thereby linking the results directly back to Indicator 3.3. The primary focus was on certified methodologies and software tools. These outputs (such as Certified Methodology and Software) were explicitly listed in the accompanying annex table (Table 3.4.1). The description directly linked the results to projects funded by the TA CR, such as the certified methodology resulting from “Stabilization and Development of SMEs in Rural Areas” (TL01000349). It also highlighted the software tool “SME Financial Performance Indicators,” developed under this project. Furthermore, the commentary mentioned the optimization system created within the “Optimization of Custom Batch Production” (FW01010460) project. Although the total number of items in Table 3.4.1 for FCS is not definitively ten within the provided source excerpts, the FCS fulfilled the requirement by providing commentary on a selection of its most significant results that are already applied or realistically heading towards application.

The FCS demonstrated that its research results have a positive impact on society by defining the users, the scope of the benefit, and the expected economic outcomes. The results are designed for and used by SMEs and business users. Specific benefits include enhancing business performance and assisting with strategic management. The results of Project TL01000349 specifically target the stabilization and development of SMEs in rural areas.

The expected economic impact is described as the implementation of developed methodologies and procedures at the company level, which is anticipated to lead to a positive trend in the economic indicators of the adopting organizations. This highlights the utility of the results, such as the *SME Financial Performance Indicators* software, in modelling and simulating financial performance and proposing improvements.

The FCS explicitly included mandatory commentary on both the gender dimension and sustainability, demonstrating compliance with the detailed requirements of the Methodology HEI2025+ for Module 3.

The FCS provided 10 research results in 5 types in the table 3.4.1 - certified technologies, software, manuals, methodologies and validated technology.

Recommendations:

In order to further strengthen research results with existing or prospective impact on society, the FCS should implement targeted measures to expand its reach, strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, and improve the visibility and coordination of project results, as we propose below:

1. Implement a rigorous, systematic process to track and quantify the post-application success of implemented methodologies, software, and practical manuals. This tracking should include metrics such as:
 - Documented adoption rates among target users (SMEs, governmental bodies).

- Measurable improvements in clients' economic indicators (e.g., efficiency, profitability, or successful corporate restructuring) directly attributable to the FCS result.
 - Feedback and testimonials that explicitly confirm the social benefit (e.g., job stabilization in rural areas).
2. Formalise a specific commercialisation strategy tailored for software and certified methodologies (Social Sciences IP). This should include a plan for generating recurring revenue, potentially by licensing these tools or establishing an institutional mechanism to support entrepreneurial academics in commercialising these software and analytical results, thereby securing a share in their commercial use.
 3. Integrate the development of existing research results (e.g., the *SME Financial Performance Indicators* software) into the incubation and acceleration programmes of the Entrepreneurial Hub and Student Incubator. This effort should prioritize identifying students and staff to act as "futurepreneurs" who can lead the transformation of proven FCS IP (especially software and unique methodologies) into dedicated, revenue-generating start-up or spin-off enterprises.
- The above proposals, taken together, would make the FCS a more competitive and internationally recognized research institution.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FCS receives a rating of 4 (Very Good). The FCS's system for transferring results is highly consistent with its mission to focus on applied research in economic disciplines and maintain close links with companies in the South Bohemia Region. The typical users identified are external entities such as manufacturing and commercial companies (e.g., STS Prachatice, a. s.), Chambers and associations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic), regional development entities, and other higher education institutions. This user base directly reflects the mission to deliver practical, socially beneficial outcomes to the non-academic sector. The core outputs transferred are certified methodologies and software tools (e.g., the PVA model, self-scheduling shift studies, SME financial performance analysis), which are ideal for transfer in the Social Sciences field and meet the acute need for strategic and operational optimization within companies.

The FCS demonstrates strong success in attracting new users and maintaining profound collaboration, particularly through the mechanism of contract research and innovation support. The FCS actively identifies potential areas for future cooperation within its extensive network of regional contacts. Collaboration is often supported by Innovation Vouchers, which accelerate cooperation and provide companies with financial support for the VSTE's research activities. The collaboration model is intensive: the research team establishes close cooperation with the company's implementation team, is frequently present in the company, and is actively involved in operations to foster inter-departmental communication. Contact is maintained even after the conclusion of contract research to monitor implementation and explore further opportunities. Examples cited include providing expert services to STS Prachatice, a. s. for the optimization of production and sales processes using the PVA model, and assisting Fontea, a. s. with the implementation of self-

scheduling of shifts through expert services under an Innovation Voucher. The effectiveness of formal commercialisation activities (beyond contract research) is limited, which presents an area for potential development. Commercialisation follows legal regulations, including securing a share in the commercial use of developed software tools. During the evaluation period (2019–2023), no start-ups or spin-off companies were established at the FCS. Furthermore, the FCS stated that some research results listed in the annex table did not generate financial income from commercialization. Given the applied nature of the outputs (methodologies, software), the challenge lies in moving from delivery (contract research) to commercial scaling (licensing, spin-offs).

The FCS demonstrates significant and growing success in attracting funding from non-public, non-grant sources, primarily through contract research. The revenue generated from contract research activities has shown a clear upward trend during the evaluation period. Total revenue from contract research activities rose from 15/0.59 (thousands CZK/EUR) in 2020 to 712/28.22 (thousands CZK/EUR) in 2023. These funds were secured through expert services, Innovation Vouchers, and commissioned activities related to core faculty subjects, such as marketing surveys, optimization of human resources, and expert financial analysis. The FCS also noted that they offer teaching courses through the Lifelong Learning Centre of VŠTE, which handles registrations and payments, and these activities align with the FCS's thematic focus.

Recommendations:

1. The FCS must demonstrate measurable, quantitative success in establishing and sustaining multiple spin-off or start-up companies based directly on R&D outputs (e.g., software, valuation models, optimization systems). This should be facilitated by fully integrating the planned entrepreneurial infrastructure, such as the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator (scheduled to launch in 2025 under FCS auspices), to convert Faculty IP into financially viable enterprises.
2. Systematically implement formal licensing agreements for Certified Methodologies and Software Tools developed through public projects (e.g., TL01000349), ensuring these non-traditional outputs generate substantial, trackable financial income from commercial use by external parties.
3. Leverage existing success (e.g., successful TA CR project coordination and proprietary analytical models like the PVA model) to secure significant contract research and strategic consultancy services with national and international clients. The FCS must explicitly secure and monitor sufficient reference orders outside the South Bohemia region to validate its R&D&I results against a broader, national market, fulfilling the condition needed for further expansion into international markets.
4. Formalise internal procedures to quantify the measurable long-term economic and social benefits derived from the implemented R&D&I results. Moving forward, research reporting (e.g., through the ETMS system) should systematically track specific quantifiable performance indicators, such as improvements in client company profitability, efficiency gains, or job stabilization rates attributable to the adopted FCS methodologies or software, providing definitive proof of application impact over time.

Overall, it can be said that these measures will enable the FCS to evolve into a results-driven, innovation-oriented institution, capable of transforming its R&D&I achievements into measurable economic value and demonstrable social benefit.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FCS receives a rating of 4 (Very Good). The FCS demonstrates a balanced and effective popularisation strategy that leverages multiple platforms to enhance the visibility of R&D&I in economic and technical fields among both the general public and specific professional audiences in the region. This performance secures a high rating by showing a significant regional contribution in line with the institution's mission.

The FCS benefits significantly from VŠTE's centralized communication efforts, which are described as maintaining close cooperation with South Bohemian Television. This regional broadcaster produces the program *Život na VŠ* six times a year, showcasing the university's activities and research. This strategy is highly effective, as the regional channel has a significant weekly viewership of approximately 300,000. FCS academic staff regularly contribute to these programs and other regional periodicals.

The FCS is active in the digital space, focusing on modern forms of engagement:

- **Podcasting:** In 2023, VŠTE launched the Podcast na Okružní (Podcast in Okružní), which features expert interviews on various topics and reached thousands of views, making it an important popularisation tool.
- **Social Media:** Academic staff profiles, such as those of doc. et doc. PaedDr. Mgr. Zdeněk Caha, Ph.D., Ing. Michal Ruschak, MBA, and doc. Ing. Petra Pártlová, Ph.D., are highlighted for having a significant number of followers, which supports the dissemination of research knowledge.

The FCS actively organises and participates in specialized forums and events that transfer R&D&I knowledge to both business professionals and the public:

- **Innovative Economic Symposium (IES):** This forum focuses specifically on innovations in the economy and industry. The School of Expertness and Valuation (a sister unit under FORD 5) also coordinates the organization of this event.
- **Lifelong Learning Promotion:** The FCS organises events promoting lifelong learning and vocational education to encourage employers to invest in continuous education.
- **Outreach:** The institution regularly participates in Open Days and professional seminars (e.g., *Týden odborných přednášek*), encouraging the younger generation to pursue studies in technical and economic fields.

The popularisation activities clearly support the FCS's research results, particularly in areas like sustainable development (e.g., the GREENPACT project, preparing SMEs for circular economy principles), strategic management, and human resources optimization.

While the breadth of activities is evident (e.g., thousands of podcast views, 300,000 regional viewers), the FCS self-assessment focuses on activities rather than quantifying the direct R&D&I transfer achieved through popularisation. The popularisation efforts are highly successful at the regional level, but the visibility of R&D&I results at the national and international level needs further development. Although the Faculty aims to inspire the younger generation, implementing specific, dedicated programs like a "university of the third age or conducting classes for young scientists (children and adolescents)," as recommended for the FT in the previous evaluation, should be pursued by the FCS to further deepen its impact on youth engagement in economic and social sciences.

Recommendations:

In order to enhance the reputation of FCS and deepen its social embeddedness, it is necessary to strategically expand communication and knowledge transfer activities. The following proposals aim to increase the visibility, applicability and attractiveness of the faculty's research results for both domestic youth and an international audience.

1. Create a dedicated, English-language multimedia popularisation channel or content series focused solely on transferring key non-traditional R&D results (certified methodologies, software, and application models like the PVA model) to an international business audience. This platform should generate content specifically designed for international platforms (e.g., high-quality video summaries, policy briefs, and explanatory animated graphics) to effectively communicate the impact of projects such as GREENPACT (circular economy principles). This demonstrates international application potential beyond domestic publications and strengthens the reputation of VŠTE's unique professional profile.
2. Launch and coordinate an annual "Applied Strategy & Social Impact Summit" or similar high-level event that focuses on the transfer of TA CR project results (Indicator 3.3) into national policy or major industry practice (e.g., presenting findings on SME Stabilization, Digital Transformation, or Optimization systems). This event must systematically include key national and international policy figures and feature international guest speakers to ensure its recognition and media coverage extends significantly beyond the South Bohemia Region.
3. Create a formalized "Young Futurepreneurs Academy" or "Applied Economic Insights Program" aimed at high school students or pre-university youth. This programme should integrate hands-on workshops that utilize the FCS's Mind Lab or Value Lab capabilities and demonstrate research applications in areas like digital business strategy, thereby encouraging future enrolment and showcasing the applicability of economic and management disciplines to prospective students and the local public.

The previously listed proposals together contribute to the FCS becoming a recognized, innovative and internationally visible player in the knowledge and innovation space, not only on an academic but also on a social and economic level, not only among business life but also among young students.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The FCS receives a rating of 4 (Very Good). The FCS successfully addressed most of the recommendations derived from the previous evaluation period (2014–2018), which were set by the IEP for Module 3. The implementation efforts focused heavily on strengthening internal support, acquiring publicly funded applied research projects, and expanding both regional and international cooperation in line with the FCS's mission in Social Sciences.

1. Applied Research Projects and Internationalisation (Recommendations 3.2, 3.5, 3.6)

The IEP recommended strengthening activities in applied research financed by national or European funds and actively seeking participation in international projects. It was also recommended that the FCS focus on formulating and publicizing the expected economic and non-economic impacts of projects.

- The FCS improved its project portfolio, participating in and coordinating projects funded by the TA CR.
- The FCS successfully completed projects resulting in Certified Methodologies, Software tools, and Proven Technology, which are summaries of recommended practices and procedures certified by competent public administration bodies. These results, aimed at process optimization and enhanced competitiveness, fulfil the recommendation to focus on measurable impacts.
- The FCS established a project support system through a Development Officer and a Secretary to handle the administrative and financial aspects of project applications and implementation.

2. Contract Research and Non-Public Funding (Recommendations 3.3, 3.4)

The IEP noted that the unit needed to continue its contract research, seek opportunities outside the region, and address the weakness in revenues from non-public sources other than grants.

- An increase in the volume of financial resources for contract research is evident. The FCS leveraged Innovation Vouchers to accelerate cooperation with companies (e.g., optimization and process analysis).
- Contract research was primarily focused on regional cooperation, addressing requests for services such as marketing surveys, optimization of human resources, and identification of profitable products.
- The expansion of activities beyond the region is planned for future periods, conditional on securing sufficient reference orders.
- The FCS's commissioned activities (aside from general Lifelong Learning courses managed centrally) generated non-public income, aligning with the recommendation to increase this revenue type.

3. Cooperation, Technology Transfer, and Commercialisation (Recommendations 3.7, 3.8, 3.9)

The IEP recommended pushing interactions with the corporate sphere toward the national level, adopting a proactive approach to technology transfer and intellectual property (IP) protection, and organising education on spin-off companies. The FCS was advised to use its strong industry relations for symbiotic spin-off support.

- Interaction with external entities was significantly strengthened, including multinational corporations and regional SMEs (e.g., STS Prachatice, Viscofan CZ, VM Motor). Interaction also expanded to international partners (e.g., regions in Italy and Germany).
- Regarding IP protection (Recommendation 3.8), the FCS noted that given the nature of applied research in economic fields (which produces Certified Methodologies and Software), patent protection of intellectual property was not pursued during the period.
- Regarding commercialisation (Recommendation 3.9), while no spin-off company was established within the FCS during the period, the Faculty established a support system utilizing student projects as a workspace. Crucially, the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator will be launched under FCS auspices in 2025 to provide direct support for student business plans.

4. Recognition by the Research Community (Recommendations 3.10, 3.11)

The IEP recommended continuing cooperation with international partners and establishing in-house competition to encourage researchers and students.

- Collaboration with regional and international institutions was strengthened. The FCS successfully established the Studentská vědecká a odborná činnost (Student Scientific and Professional Activities) competition to support student research in economic study programmes, enhancing skills like academic writing and argumentation, directly fulfilling this recommendation.

Recommendations:

The FCS's medium-term strategic goal is to demonstrate the practical, economic and social benefits of its scientific results in a measurable manner. To this end, it will need to introduce the mechanisms

proposed below that facilitate the commercialisation of research results, the international extension of applied research and the systematic measurement of long-term social impacts.

1. The FCS must demonstrate, by 2030, that the established Incubator and institutional support systems have led to the launch of multiple commercially successful spin-off or start-up companies directly leveraging FCS research outputs (e.g., software tools, proprietary optimization models). The FCS should set specific, measurable targets for the financial income generated from the licensing or sale of "soft" IP (Certified Methodologies and Software) to prove the commercial effectiveness of its R&D efforts.
2. Implement a specific strategy, using the successful results (e.g., PVA model optimization) as reference orders, to target and secure major contract research projects and strategic consultancy agreements with clients based outside the South Bohemia Region, nationally and internationally. Success should be demonstrated by metrics showing a clear shift in the percentage of contract research revenue originating from non-regional or foreign entities.
3. Formalise internal mechanisms (e.g., utilizing the ETMS system) to systematically measure and publicly report the long-term, quantifiable societal and economic impact of key applied outputs (Certified Methodologies, Software). This mechanism should track metrics such as adoption rates by external partners (beyond initial implementation partners), sustained efficiency improvements, or stabilization of regional economic sectors impacted by the FCS's applied research.

Together, the three recommendations described above will ensure that FCS' research results create not only scientific but also tangible economic and social value, laying the foundation for the faculty's long-term sustainable development and international competitiveness.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit	
Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.	
3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	3 - Average
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	4 - Very good
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	4 - Very good
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	4 - Very good
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Grade [A–D]:	B
Summary assessment: The FCS achieved a Very Good rating (4) across several indicators, reflecting successful strategic management during the evaluation period (2019–2023). The FCS excelled in producing non-traditional outputs highly suited for the social sciences, primarily in the form of Certified Methodologies and Software tools (e.g., SME Financial Performance	

Indicators). These results are directly linked to publicly funded projects (TA CR) and demonstrate a positive anticipated impact on SMEs and regional business performance. Furthermore, the FCS explicitly addressed the mandated requirements concerning the gender dimension and sustainability in its results commentary.

Transfer activities are highly consistent with the FCS's mission and show strong success in securing non-public funding. Revenue from contract research activities demonstrated a clear and significant upward trend, growing substantially over the period and utilizing mechanisms like Innovation Vouchers to foster close cooperation with regional companies (e.g., optimizing processes using the PVA model for STS Prachatice).

The FCS successfully implemented several key recommendations from the previous evaluation cycle, notably by increasing participation in TA CR projects, establishing internal support systems (Development Officer), and creating the Student Scientific and Professional Activities (SVOČ) competition to foster student research.

Popularisation efforts achieved a high level of regional visibility, primarily through active participation in VŠTE's centralised communication channels, such as South Bohemian Television (reaching approximately 300,000 viewers) and the Podcast na Okružní, confirming a significant regional contribution.

Despite generating valuable intellectual property (IP) like software and methodologies, the effectiveness of formal commercialisation remains limited. No start-ups or spin-off companies were established during the evaluation period, and some research outputs did not generate financial income from commercialisation.

The project portfolio, while successful, remains primarily focused on regional cooperation. Furthermore, most major public grants were secured in the role of a participant (3 out of 4 TA CR projects) rather than the beneficiary/coordinator. This limited scaling is mirrored in peer recognition (3.2), which lacks formal prestigious R&D&I awards and needs improved documentation of international invited lectures status.

Summary recommendations:

1. Develop strategic research alliances with key units of other HEIs within the South Bohemia region (e.g., the University of South Bohemia). Such collaboration would leverage complementary expertise, create synergies for larger grant applications, and strengthen the region's overall innovation capacity.
2. Ensure the successful launch and operation of the planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator leads to the demonstrable creation of multiple commercially successful spin-off or start-up companies based on FCS research outcomes (e.g., software, optimization models).
3. Systematically implement formal licensing agreements for Certified Methodologies and Software Tools to ensure these non-traditional outputs generate substantial, trackable financial income from commercial use, moving beyond singular contract revenues.
4. Implement a targeted strategy to secure major contract research projects and strategic consultancy agreements with clients based outside the South Bohemia Region, nationally and internationally, leveraging existing successful models (e.g., PVA model optimization) as crucial reference orders.
5. Strategically prioritise the submission of public grant proposals (TA CR, etc.) in the Beneficiary/Coordinator role to increase project funding control and maximise the elevation of the FCS's research profile and leadership capacity.
6. Mandate and implement a structured follow-up system (e.g., through the ETMS system) to quantify the long-term economic and societal benefits of implemented methodologies and software. This tracking must include measurable performance indicators such as profitability gains, efficiency improvements, or job stabilization rates attributable to FCS R&D outputs.

7. Establish formal internal cooperation structures (e.g., joint research teams, shared proposal pipelines) with the FT and SEV to systematically pursue larger, technology-driven interdisciplinary grants (e.g., integrating AI/IoT into business models).

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: The School of Expertness and Valuation

FORD: 5 - Social sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

1. Mission and Vision

The School of Expertness and Valuation (SEV) operates within the institutional framework of the Institute of Technology and Business (VSTE), which is a non-university public higher education institution focusing primarily on technical and economic fields. Since the SEV is a constituent part of the institution (HEI), its strategic direction is inherently aligned with the overall mission and vision of VSTE, which are defined at the central institutional level. The SEV aligns closely with these VSTE strategic objectives.

SEV's core motto is "We only do things we understand". Its activities involve research, educational activities in relevant economic areas, and expert activities. A primary mission is to educate and train prospective experts effectively and professionally. SEV's long-term goal is to establish itself as a leader in the fields of the expert's licence in the Czech Republic. The SEV serves as a scientific, educational, and methodological centre of expert activities in the fields of Economics, Mechanical Engineering, and Civil Engineering in the Czech Republic, according to the resolution of the Ministry of the Interior. SEV is authorized to conduct analyses/assessments/appraisals/ consultancy and provide expert opinions on a wide range of issues. The authorised areas include financial assets, business valuation, corporate transformations, contracts, prices, accounting registration, intangible assets, investments, wages, and the numeration of damages, injury, and losses, as well as expert activities in civil and mechanical engineering.

The SEV's mission is focusing on activities such as:

- Undertaking the mission to educate and train prospective experts effectively and professionally.
- Conducting research and educational activities in relevant economic areas, alongside expert activities.
- Serving as a scientific, educational and methodological centre of expert activities in Economics, Mechanical Engineering, and Civil Engineering in the Czech Republic.

The core vision of the School of Expertness and Valuation is stated as sharing the aim to be a leader in the fields of the expert's licence in the Czech Republic.

2. Organizational Structure, Size, and Staffing

Structure: The School of Expertness and Validation includes several academic departments and groups involved in research and education, such as:

- Department of Support for Project and Expertise Activity
- Department of Property Valuation

- Department of Technical Expertise
- Department of Corporate Finance and Economics

Size and Staffing (Institutional Context): As a non-university HEI, the SER and additional sources indicate that VŠTE generally submits one consolidated report for all academic staff, and allocating individual workloads to specific evaluated units (like the SEV) is challenging for R&D purposes. The detailed staffing tables (e.g., 3.1.1–3.1.5) provided in the SER reflect data for the entire institution. The entire Institute (VSTE) has approximately 3,000 students and 130 employees.

The following data about the SEV staff was provided to the IEP after the on-site visit:

Faculty of Technology Staff Composition (2023)

Academic Position	Total Staff (FTE)	Women (FTE)	% Women
Professor	3.75	1.00	26.7
Associate Professor	8.90	3.00	33.7
Assistant Professor	20.60	6.20	30.1
Assistant	5.05	2.55	50.5
Researcher	17.50	6.85	39.1
Total	55.80	19.60	35.1

3. R&D&I Capacities

SEV's research capacity is intrinsically linked to its role as an expert institution.

Research Focus Areas:

SEV focuses on applied research and project activities. Research activities in economics centre on:

- The comprehensive assessment and financial analysis of companies.
- Predicting a company's future development and value.
- The development of key performance indicators (KPIs) and the study of stock markets.
- The relationships between macro- and micro-economic indicators and specific industries.

SEV conducts analyses and expert opinions in Economics, Construction, and Mechanical Engineering. From 2019–2023, SEV prepared around 160 opinions, consultations, and expert analyses. A key focus for future potential is the utilisation and application of artificial intelligence (neural networks) in business practice to predict economic impacts and potential bankruptcy risk.

Infrastructure and Support:

The SEV benefits from the Central Laboratories of the VSTE. These central labs serve as the material and technical base for the Institute's application and contract research activities. The research and development (R&D&I) activities of SEV are managed and supported through centralized institutional mechanisms.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:¹

The text presented below incorporates data from the SER, its tables, the on-site visit findings, and subsequent clarification responses.

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

The SEV receives a rating of 3 (Average). This rating reflects the unique national significance of the unit, characterized by a highly specialized mission, proven high-quality research impact within specific niches, and deep integration into the regional and national policy/judicial environment.

The SEV operates as an expert institute licensed by the Ministry of Justice in Economics, Mechanical Engineering, and Civil Engineering. This role mandates that its staff provide analyses and expert opinions for state authorities, including courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the CR. This is a definitive marker of national recognition and trust in the unit's technical and scientific expertise, which is a rare form of peer recognition in the Social Sciences. Key staff members actively serve on relevant expert committees, such as Prof. Vochozka on the Regional Court Committee for economics. SEV staff are recognized by national funding bodies and ministries, evidenced by their active involvement in evaluating national project calls (e.g., TA CR, Ministry of Finance). This service indicates high peer trust and recognition of their expertise within the domestic R&D&I ecosystem. International cooperation is demonstrated through staff memberships on editorial boards of international journals (e.g., *EMS, Journal of Innovations and Sustainability*) and participation in international mobility and knowledge sharing events.

The absence of prestigious R&D&I awards (Table 3.2.1) limits the evidence of formal, competitive community recognition. While international engagement exists, greater representation on editorial boards of internationally indexed journals (WoS/SCOPUS) outside those affiliated with partnering HEIs and stronger evidence of long-term stays or fellowships abroad would solidify the SEV's international competitiveness (Table 3.2.2).

Similar to other units within the institution, SEV acknowledges relying on individual staff members to maintain records of invited lecture certificates, resulting in a lack of centralized verification for the formal "invited" or "keynote" status of presentations delivered abroad. Three of ten invited lectures were realized in the frame of teaching mobility or staff exchange (Table 3.2.3). Seven were realized in the frame of international conferences. The invited lectures were hosted in a variety of countries, with Croatia and Slovakia each accounting for 2 of the events, and Greece, Kosovo, Turkey, South Korea, Russia, and Latvia each hosting 1.

Based on table 3.3.4, the hosting lecturers arrived from Ukraine (2), South Korea, China, Mongolia, Russia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Kosovo each represent 1 of the host lecturers. The majority of hosting lecturers participated in the IES (*Týden odborných přednášek*) event organized in 2019 and 2023. Some of host lectures were organized in the frame of teaching mobility.

A critical indicator of national recognition is the deep involvement of SEV staff in the official state and legal evaluation infrastructure. Prof. Marek Vochozka has served as an expert in Economics for the Regional Court Committee in České Budějovice since 2011 and is involved in evaluation and expert activities for the Ministry of Finance. Staff members, such as Jaromír Vrbka, hold elected positions as experts and assessors for real estate valuation (since 2015/2016). SEV staff are also engaged in reviewing national project/programme calls for grant agencies, such as TA CR, Interreg V-A Austria-Czech Republic, Cross-border cooperation Czech Republic-Free state of Bavaria, Office of GRD&I Council.

Recommendations:

1. The SEV must implement a mandatory internal procedure (potentially utilizing the ETMS system) to acquire, verify, and centrally archive formal documentation (e.g., invitation letters, certificates confirming keynote/invited status) for all academic and expert presentations delivered internationally and for all domestic and foreign expert panel memberships.
2. Given the high national trust reflected in staff involvement with courts, police, and tax authorities, SEV should leverage this unique applied expertise to coordinate or lead large, strategic national policy-related research grants (TA CR, NPO) that specifically formalize the methodological findings of its expert activities for wider societal use, thereby increasing the volume and breadth of recognized R&D outputs.

3. The SEV should strategically target opportunities for staff to gain formal recognition by joining the editorial boards or serving as guest editors for journals indexed in the top quartiles (Q1/D1) of Web of Science or SCOPUS, focusing on the specific applied economics and expert disciplines where their unique methodology offers a clear advantage.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The SEV is rated 4 (Very Good) because its project portfolio effectively translates the unit's unique mission as a licensed expert institution into nationally competitive applied research and demonstrably successful contract research activities.

The SEV is actively engaged in comprehensive project activities that align with the long-term objectives of the VSTE, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, strengthening partnerships with the application sector, and transferring research into practice. Projects implemented by the SEV address topics with significant practical application potential.

In the table 3.3.1, the SEV demonstrates its capacity to secure and coordinate grants focusing on applied economics, expert analysis, and advanced technical valuation methodologies. There are 10 projects in role of beneficiary and 2 as a partner. The SEV secures and executes projects explicitly tied to its unique mandate in Economics, Valuation, and Engineering Expertise. This includes the creation of Certified Methodologies for government use (e.g., building valuation TITACSU920) and research utilizing advanced techniques like Artificial Neural Networks for financial prediction (GA/23/2021, GA/22/2021). The SEV serves as a Coordinator/Lead Partner in significant national (TA CR - CK03000135) and international (Visegrad Fund - 22210017) applied research grants. This leadership role confirms external recognition of SEV's capacity to manage consortia and deliver mandated research outcomes. The SEV involvement in the Visegrad Fund project and ERDF project is mentioned as well.

The table 3.3.2 confirms that contract research is key to SEV's mission, transferring academic knowledge into practice for external clients such as courts, police, and corporate entities. In 2023, the SEV generated 1,475 thousand CZK (58.46 thousand EUR) in revenue from contract research. This volume of non-public funding demonstrates established market relevance.

Examples of contract research activities include:

- Design of an Uninterruptible Power Supply for Measuring Equipment (Prefa Hubenov s.r.o.): Revenue of 491 thousand CZK (19.46 thousand EUR) in 2023.
- Development of Drive Systems for a Specialized Machine for Shredding Compressed Bales of Paper Waste (DEOS): Revenue of 490 thousand CZK (19.42 thousand EUR) in 2023.

These activities confirm that SEV effectively links theoretical research in applied economics, valuation, and engineering expertise with the specific, practical needs of the corporate sector.

The projects portfolio lacks evidence of leadership or substantial participation in globally competitive EU framework programs (e.g., Horizon Europe), which limits its demonstrated international competitiveness in securing large-scale funding beyond regional (Interreg) or domestic

(TA CR) schemes. While SEV is primarily Social Sciences, its contract research projects in Technical Expertise (e.g., Uninterruptible Power Supply, Shredding Machine Drive Systems) overlap significantly with the Engineering and Technology domain. While this interdisciplinarity is a strength, systematic reporting needs to clearly delineate the unique contribution of the SEV (e.g., the economic/valuation component of the technical project) versus the technical delivery, especially since the majority of contract income examples provided relate to engineering products.

Recommendations:

1. Develop strategic research alliances with key units of other HEIs within the South Bohemia region (e.g., the University of South Bohemia). Such collaboration would leverage complementary expertise, create synergies for larger grant applications, and strengthen the region's overall innovation capacity.
2. Strengthen the economic vector of research, in cooperation with the FCS.
3. The SEV should systematically track and report the quantifiable impact and adoption rates of its Certified Methodologies (e.g., TITACSU920, TL01000349) by government agencies and corporate entities, linking these adoption figures directly to the unit's project success profile in future evaluations.
4. Based on the successful use of Artificial Neural Networks and unique valuation models, SEV should develop a proactive strategy to target collaborative projects within major EU competitive frameworks (e.g., Horizon Europe), focusing on applications in FinTech, sustainable finance, or corporate resilience, securing a role as a *leading participant* or *work package coordinator* where its unique methodology provides a competitive edge.
5. To maximize the efficiency of funding from complex projects involving both technical and economic aspects, SEV should formalize internal operational agreements (e.g., Memoranda of Cooperation using the ETMS system) with the Faculty of Technology to define project coordination, resource sharing, and financial apportionment criteria for interdisciplinary projects *before* application submission.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The SEV is rated 3 (Average). The SEV presented and described multiple significant results that are already applied or realistically heading towards application, ensuring the number was within the maximum limit of ten. The commentary successfully integrated the recommendation to link results to projects listed in Indicator 3.3.

Key results and project linkages presented:

- Certified Methodology (2): Stabilization and Development of SMEs in Rural Areas (2021): This methodology was a result of the TA CR project TL01000349; Methodology for Calculating the Value of Non-Residential Buildings in the Government Sector (2020): This result serves governmental bodies.
- Software (1): SME Financial Performance Indicators (IFV) (2020): This web-based tool was developed under project TL01000349.

- Patent (1): Method of phosphorus recovery from wastewater, in particular from sludge water (2020): This result is linked to environmental research.
- Methodology (1): Adaptation of the Knowledge-Intensive Services Sector to the Conditions of Society 4.0 (TL02000136): This was developed in consultation with stakeholders and is publicly available.
- Expert Opinions (3): The SER included expert opinions with a society-wide impact as reportable results of applied research that influence the social sphere.

SEV clearly demonstrated the positive societal impacts (social and economic benefits) by defining the users and the relevance of the outputs. The results target a broad public and non-academic audience, including SMEs in the service and industrial sectors, external application guarantors (e.g., Regional Chambers of Commerce, Labour Offices), governmental bodies (Ministry of the Interior, Regional Courts), and public administration officers.

The results aim to reverse the outflow of SMEs from rural areas. The methodologies are expected to enhance productivity and work quality and enable businesses to leverage competitive advantages provided by Society 4.0 technologies. The *SME Financial Performance Indicators* tool allows users to model and simulate financial performance and calculate EVA Equity (shareholder value), aiding in improving innovation strategies. The provision of published expert opinions contributes to the protection of public funds (e.g., determination of lower purchasing prices) and results in cost savings due to the earlier completion of dispute resolution procedures that would otherwise burden investigation authorities and courts.

The SEV explicitly stated that the gender dimension was factored into the development and implementation of certain results, thus fulfilling this mandatory requirement. The commentary affirms that the gender dimension has been considered through an inclusive approach in the design and implementation of both the methodologies and tools. Specifically, the project design for the *Methodology for Adaptation of the Knowledge-Intensive Services Sector* (TL02000136) incorporated a gender dimension in the composition of the project team. It was not clear from the SER how the project results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability.

Recommendations:

1. The SEV should actively target international bodies (e.g., EU agencies, multilateral organizations, or foreign regulatory/judicial systems) to formally validate or adopt its certified methodologies (such as those concerning valuation or financial prediction using artificial neural networks). Achieving documented adoption or formal recognition of an SEV methodology by a non-Czech, high-level international institution is crucial for demonstrating international competitiveness.
2. Leverage the unique combination of legal licensing (Economics, Mechanical/Civil Engineering) and advanced modeling (AI/neural networks) to generate expert outputs (analyses, consultations) that address complex, high-stakes cross-border issues (e.g., international damage claims, complex corporate restructuring involving multiple jurisdictions). These outputs must be demonstrably referenced or used in international legal/policy decisions.
3. Implement a robust, dedicated commercialization mechanism for licensing proprietary software and methodologies (e.g., the SME Financial Performance Indicators tool). The SEV must report quantifiable financial income generated specifically from the licensing or sale of this "soft" IP to external, non-grant-funded organizations, both nationally and internationally. This demonstrates the market value and scalability of the research outputs.
4. Systematically integrate the development of applied research outputs, particularly software and advanced models, into the incubation and acceleration programs of the parent institution (e.g., the planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator). The SEV should aim to demonstrate the launch and sustained operation of multiple spin-off or start-up companies directly based on SEV research results within the next evaluation period.

5. For all new certified methodologies and expert valuation models, SEV must integrate explicit, quantifiable metrics that demonstrate a positive impact on the environment or sustainable economic development (e.g., showing how the valuation models actively favour green investments or yield measurable environmental benefits, beyond a single patent).
6. Beyond incorporating the gender dimension in project team composition, future applied results must demonstrate measurable positive impact on gender equality within the target user groups (e.g., tracking how the "SME Stabilization" methodology supports female-led enterprises in rural areas, or how new KPIs influence gender balance in corporate management).

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The SEV receives a rating of 4 (Very good) for the effectiveness of its transfer of results into practice. This high rating is justified by the SEV's exceptional consistency in aligning its transfer mechanisms with its core mission as a mandated expert institute and its outstanding success in generating substantial revenue from non-public, non-grant sources.

The SEV's transfer mechanisms are highly consistent with its unique mission. Its primary function is to serve as an expert institute licensed for Economics, Civil Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. The stated users of the R&D&I outputs precisely match this mandate. Typical users include offices of the state such as courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the Czech Republic. Furthermore, users include various regional stakeholders like Manufacturing and commercial companies, the Chamber of Commerce of the CR, regional development entities, and other research institutions. The core results transferred are not only publications but also certified methodologies and software tools (e.g., SME Financial Performance Indicators, Methodology for Calculating the Value of Non-Residential Buildings) designed for direct application by SMEs and governmental bodies. The single most successful form of transfer is the provision of independent expert opinions and statements. These outputs transfer academic knowledge and the latest scientific findings directly into legal and administrative procedures, thereby constituting a vital, direct link between R&D&I and social impact.

The SEV demonstrates effective strategies for attracting new users, primarily through specific applied consultancy and participation in national consortia. The SEV maintains an extensive network of contacts with regional business entities and actively identifies potential areas for future cooperation, developing tailored solutions to specific needs. The SEV utilizes Innovation Vouchers to accelerate cooperation and successfully secure contract research for new users in specialized areas, such as research solutions for specialized machinery drives (DEOS) and power supply designs (Prefa Hubenov s.r.o.). The SEV maintains long-term cooperation with entities like the Association of SMEs of the CR and the Regional Association NS MAS CR, collaborating on projects like *Stabilization and Development of SMEs in Rural Areas* (TL01000349). This involvement ensures the widespread application of developed methodologies to a diverse group of application guarantors.

Obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources highlights the SEV's outstanding effectiveness in leveraging its expertise for financial sustainability. Revenue from non-public, non-grant sources is dominated by high-value, highly specific fee-based services. The revenue generated specifically from Expert activities of the School of Expertness and Valuation showed substantial and successful growth during the evaluation period (2019–2023). This activity alone generated 8,255 thousand CZK (327.19 thousand EUR) in 2023, demonstrating a highly successful practical and financial application of its R&D mandate. The unit's total income from non-public, non-grant sources, including expert activities and innovation vouchers, reached 8,967 thousand CZK (355.41 thousand EUR) in 2023. This high and stable non-grant revenue stream proves the strong market demand for SEV's applied expertise.

The SEV's performance in formal commercialization (licensing and spin-offs) is an area that lags behind its success in expert activities. While the SEV ensures that commercialization follows legal regulations, including securing a share in the commercial use of developed software tools, it explicitly notes that some research results (listed in Table 3.4.1) did not generate financial income from commercialization. No start-ups or spin-off companies were established at the SEV during the evaluation period (2019–2023). However, SEV did cooperate on research outputs, such as a patent for phosphorus recovery and the testing of an autonomous smart grilling station, with the university's spin-off, ITB Engineering & Production s.r.o.

Recommendations:

1. Utilize the university's developing entrepreneurial support systems (such as the planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator, which is being established under the Faculty of Corporate Strategy's auspices) to actively convert SEV's most innovative outputs (like the *Method of phosphorus recovery from wastewater* patent or the neural network application models) into multiple, financially viable start-up or spin-off companies. The goal should be to report sustained operation and measurable revenue from these new ventures.
2. The SEV should aim to secure and report significant contract research or strategic consultancy revenue from international organizations, major multinational corporations, or foreign governmental bodies (e.g., in valuation or compliance methodology) to validate its R&D results against a broader market.
3. Translate the unit's success in applied judicial and regulatory expertise into structured collaboration with international bodies (e.g., European regulatory agencies, trade organizations) to influence policy or establish methodology standards on a cross-border level, specifically utilizing its unique combined expertise in Economics and Engineering valuation (e.g., BIM standards, non-residential building valuation methodology).

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The SEV is rated 4 (Very Good) for its popularisation and communication activities. This rating is based on the unit's highly effective strategy for translating its specialized R&D&I expertise into accessible public and professional discourse, demonstrating a significant regional contribution and utilizing institutional platforms successfully. The activities are strongly aligned with SEV's unique mission as a nationally licensed expert institution in economics and technical fields.

The SEV excels at communicating its specialized, high-impact research (such as valuation and economic methodology) by positioning its staff as trusted public experts. Staff members regularly provide expert analyses and appearances on regional and national media, including Studio ČT24. This demonstrates direct and successful transfer of R&D&I findings into public and policy-relevant conversations (e.g., discussing the final offer for the Dukovany block construction or changes in Ministry leadership). The SEV organizes specific events like the Innovative Economic Symposium, which directly connects academic research findings with the corporate and application spheres. This forum serves as a platform for sharing the latest research and discussing innovation in economic theory and practice, ensuring popularisation is targeted towards key professional users and the general public. SEV benefits significantly from and actively contributes to the parent institution's strong cooperation with regional media, particularly South Bohemian Television. This collaboration ensures high visibility, with the channel reaching an audience of approximately 300,000 viewers weekly, guaranteeing widespread popularisation of the unit's technical and economic activities within the region. The unit actively utilizes modern digital platforms, with staff participating in the Podcast na Okružní (which garnered thousands of views in 2023) and sharing knowledge through social networks (such as MVochozka Lab – Student websites), specifically targeting students and young professionals interested in economic programmes. SEV also hosts technical and expert workshops for students under the SVV projects, bridging theory and practical expertise. The SEV actively participates in large-scale public engagement events organized by the institution, such as the Night of Scientists and Open Days, where the public can familiarize themselves with research projects and facilities in a popular-scientific form.

While national media appearances are strong, the SEV lacks a dedicated, sustained strategy for popularising its specialized applied research outputs (e.g., AI applications, certified methodologies) on major international platforms or to a non-Czech professional audience. The assessment primarily relies on reporting the *activity* and *reach* (e.g., 300,000 viewers, thousands of podcast views) but does not provide systematic quantification of the resulting R&D&I transfer or societal change achieved through these popularisation activities (e.g., measuring the subsequent adoption of methodologies by public administration following a popular lecture).

Recommendations:

1. Strategically expand the Innovative Economic Symposium to consistently include leading international policy makers, regulatory experts, and global industry figures. The event should focus explicitly on launching or validating SEV's national methodologies for potential international adoption, ensuring its recognition and media coverage extend significantly beyond the South Bohemia Region to impact national and international policy discourse.
2. Integrate metrics within the ETMS or a comparable system to track and document the verifiable, tangible results generated by popularisation activities. This should include collecting quantitative data on the adoption of methodologies or subsequent commissioned projects directly resulting from appearances in TV/radio programs, podcasts, or conferences, thereby establishing direct accountability between communication effort and R&D&I application.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The SEV is rated 4 (Very Good) for its implementation of the recommendation from 2020 evaluation. The SEV's implementation efforts focused heavily on strengthening research projects, expanding cooperation, and systematizing the transfer of expertise into practice. The SEV continued to implement applied research projects during the period under review, funded primarily by the TA CR. These efforts were central to addressing the recommendations from the previous evaluation period (2014–2018).

The IEP previously recommended increasing SEV's involvement in applied research projects of national and international importance, specifically recommending cooperation with other VSTE units when preparing project applications, and noted the need to successfully reach goals doing applied research results with an existing or prospective economic impact on society. SEV demonstrated improved project engagement by implementing multiple projects funded by TA CR (e.g., *Stabilization and Development of SMEs in Rural Areas*, *Adaptation of the Knowledge-Intensive Services Sector to the Conditions of Society 4.0*), Visegrad Fund, and Interreg. Cooperation in project preparation and implementation was enhanced, including collaboration with other ITB units, such as the Faculty of Corporate Strategy. The development of an international research strategy and proposal preparation is supported by the central Project Department and the Department of External Relations. Several projects were completed, resulting in planned research outputs with the potential to impact society. These included Certified methodologies (summaries of recommended practices certified by a competent public authority), Software tools (e.g., used to predict future EVA Equity/shareholder value), and Proven technology facilitating process optimization.

The previous evaluation emphasized continuing and intensifying cooperation with the non-academic application/corporate sphere and recommended broadening the institute's portfolio to include new expert profiles. Interaction with external entities was significantly strengthened during the monitored period. SEV cooperates with companies and governmental agencies, including courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the CR. SEV launched a Master's degree program in Technical and Economic Disciplines in cooperation with the Association of Forensic Experts of the CR, addressing the recommendation to expand its professional profile. SEV continued to function successfully as an expert institute for Economics, Construction, and Mechanical Engineering, preparing around 160 opinions, consultations, and other expert analyses during 2019–2023. SEV also ran the Expert Minimum course within the Lifelong Learning Centre, providing basic preparation for expert activities.

The IEP recommended pushing towards a proactive approach for technology transfer and intellectual property protection. Cooperation with the spin-off company VSTE Engineering & Production s.r.o. was expanded, which resulted in the creation of a patent. Outcomes from core expert activities are essentially subject to intellectual property rights protection, as experts are legally bound to confidentiality and impartial performance.

Other recommendations called for increasing international relations, developing a clear international research strategy, and establishing an in-house competition to encourage researchers and students. SEV addressed international joint research through projects like GREENPACT and those under the Visegrad Fund or Interreg, securing cooperation with international partner institutions. International cooperation was strengthened and goes beyond cross-border initiatives to include partnerships throughout Europe. The faculty organized the "Student Scientific and Professional Activities" competition in the evaluated period, supporting students in independent research, improving their argumentation and professional writing skills, with the best works published in peer-reviewed journals.

The previous evaluation recommended actively informing the public about the Innovation Economic Symposium and key scientific outputs. SEV continues to regularly organize the Innovative Economic Symposium, which serves to promote and popularize R&D&I results and foster collaboration between the academic and corporate spheres.

Recommendations:

1. Systematically secure and track revenue generated specifically from formal licensing or sale of its unique "soft" intellectual property, such as Certified Methodologies (e.g., for non-residential buildings valuation) and advanced models/software to external, non-grant-funded clients, both nationally and internationally. This validates the market value of the R&D outputs beyond immediate contract fees.
2. Develop a proactive strategy to secure Coordinator or Work Package Lead roles in major, high-profile international grant schemes (e.g., Horizon Europe) that align with its core expertise in applied valuation, financial modeling, or specialized engineering analysis. This demonstrates international competitiveness in proposal writing and project management, which is a key component of R&D organizational success.
3. Establish and monitor a quantifiable metric for contract research revenue originating from high-value foreign clients or international organizations, explicitly documenting the use of SEV's certified R&D outputs (e.g., methodologies, expert opinions) to validate the international relevance and quality of its specialized services.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	3 - Average
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	4 - Very good
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	4 - Very good
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Grade [A–D]:	B

Summary assessment:

The SEV receives a grade of B (Very Good) for Module 3. This evaluation confirms the unit's strong social relevance and effectiveness in executing its unique national mandate, demonstrating a highly successful model for applied expertise that translates directly into stable, non-grant financial viability.

The SEV demonstrates outstanding effectiveness in leveraging its core mission as a licensed expert institute into financial success. Revenue generated from Expert activities alone reached 8,255 thousand CZK (327.19 thousand EUR) in 2023, demonstrating substantial and successful growth from non-public, non-grant sources. This high income proves the strong market demand for SEV's applied R&D&I expertise. The SEV's primary mechanism for technology transfer—the provision of independent expert opinions and certified methodologies—is highly consistent with its mission. This specialized output directly transfers academic findings into practice for critical national users,

including courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the Czech Republic. This mandated function serves as a rare and definitive marker of national recognition and trust. The project portfolio effectively translates the SEV's mission into nationally competitive applied research. The unit demonstrates leadership by serving as Coordinator/Lead Partner in national (TA CR) and international (Visegrad Fund) grants focused on core areas, such as creating Certified Methodologies for government use or researching the application of Artificial Neural Networks in financial prediction. The SEV successfully addressed recommendations from the previous evaluation by significantly improving project engagement, expanding cooperation, launching a Master's degree program in Technical and Economic Disciplines, and successfully cooperating with the institutional spin-off, resulting in the creation of a patents.

Weaknesses and Areas for Development (Limiting Factor to Outstanding Grade):

The SEV's external recognition and applied results are predominantly national. The unit lacks strong evidence of formal, competitive prestigious R&D&I awards. Furthermore, formal commercialisation activities (licensing and spin-offs) remain underdeveloped, as no start-ups or spin-off companies were established directly by the faculty during the evaluation period.

There is a lack of centralized administrative support for verification, such as acquiring and archiving formal documentation (e.g., certificates confirming "invited" status) for international lectures, which hinders the full demonstration of international prestige.

Summary recommendations:

1. Develop strategic research alliances with key units of other HEIs within the South Bohemia region (e.g., the University of South Bohemia). Such collaboration would leverage complementary expertise, create synergies for larger grant applications, and strengthen the region's overall innovation capacity.
2. The SEV must actively target international organizations (e.g., EU agencies, foreign regulatory or judicial systems) to formally validate or adopt its Certified Methodologies (e.g., valuation models, AI-based financial prediction tools). This achievement must be documented through evidence of adoption or formal recognition by high-level non-Czech institutions to demonstrate international competitiveness.
3. Leverage the unique combination of economic/valuation expertise and technical licensing to aggressively pursue Coordinator or Work Package Lead roles in major, competitive EU grant frameworks (e.g., Horizon Europe), focusing on highly relevant applied areas such as FinTech, corporate resilience, or sustainable finance, where SEV's unique methodology provides a clear competitive edge.
4. Implement a mandatory internal procedure, potentially utilizing the ETMS system, to consistently acquire, verify, and centrally archive formal documentation (e.g., invitation letters, keynote certificates) for all academic and expert presentations delivered internationally and for domestic and foreign expert panel memberships.
5. Systematically integrate the development of applied research outputs (such as AI models and proprietary software) into the institutional acceleration programmes (e.g., the planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator). The SEV should aim to demonstrate the launch and sustained financial operation of multiple spin-off or start-up companies directly based on SEV research results.
6. Implement a dedicated commercialization mechanism for licensing proprietary software and methodologies (e.g., the *SME Financial Performance Indicators* tool) to external, non-grant-funded organizations. The SEV must report verifiable financial income generated specifically from this IP licensing or sale to validate the market scalability and innovation potential of its research.
7. Integrate rigorous tracking mechanisms within the ETMS system to systematically monitor and report the quantifiable, long-term economic and societal effectiveness of adopted outputs. This tracking must include metrics such as the measurable adoption rates of certified

methodologies by governmental or corporate users, and documented cost savings achieved by investigation authorities or courts due to SEV's expert opinions.

8. For all new certified methodologies and expert valuation models, SEV must integrate explicit, quantifiable metrics that demonstrate a positive impact on sustainability or gender equality within the target user groups, moving beyond basic consideration to demonstrate superior outcomes and influence policy.

SUMMARY RATING IN MODULE 3

MODULE 3 – SUMMARY RATING

After evaluating the individual units, please provide a summary evaluation of social relevance in Module 3 for the HEI as a whole. Please assess the balance of the evaluated units, how they contribute to the mission and vision of the HEI and describe the strengths and weaknesses of the HEI assessed in Module 3.

The summary rating is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as the average of the grades of the individual units, weighted by their size in terms of FTE staff.

EVALUATED UNIT	Grade [A–D]
Faculty of Technology	B
Faculty of Corporate Strategy	B
School of Expertness and Valuation	B
	Choose an option
	Choose an option
Summary grade	B

Summary quality assessment:

The evaluation of the social relevance of the Institute of Technology and Business (VSTE) for the period 2019–2023, based on the performance of its three constituent units—the Faculty of Technology (FT), the Faculty of Corporate Strategy (FCS), and the School of Expertness and Valuation (SEV)—is highly positive, reflecting exceptional dedication to applied research and regional impact.

The summary rating for Module 3 for VSTE as a whole is Grade B (Very Good). A "Very Good" rating indicates that the research organisation achieves a balanced quality, possesses well-established policies and procedures, and produces results that are up to a nationally competitive level or have a significant regional contribution.

The VSTE successfully executes its institutional mission as a professionally oriented, non-university HEI by aligning the R&D&I activities of its constituent units directly with the practical needs of the corporate sector and public administration, primarily within the South Bohemia Region. The overall balance of the evaluated units is highly complementary and appropriate for the institution's technical and economic focus.

All three evaluated units demonstrate a highly effective model of R&D&I output transfer that supports the institutional vision of becoming a "recognised centre of applied research and innovation with a great commercial potential".

The FT focuses on applied outputs like functional samples, certified methodologies, and prototypes, directly benefiting national and regional industry in high-value technical areas such as advanced manufacturing and environmental sustainability. This balances the FCS and the SEV, which focus on non-traditional outputs, such as Certified Methodologies and Software tools relevant to strategic management, HR optimization, and economic stability (e.g., SME Financial Performance Indicators).

The SEV provides a unique and vital contribution through its mandated role as an expert institute licensed by the Ministry of Justice. This function involves formalized cooperation with state offices, including courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the Czech Republic. This direct transfer of

R&D&I findings into legal and administrative procedures is a definitive marker of national peer recognition and social relevance, yielding substantial revenue from non-public, non-grant sources. The VSTE demonstrates exceptional strength in generating non-grant, non-public revenues, particularly through expert activities. The SEV achieved substantial revenue from its expertise, proving strong market demand and direct knowledge transfer. The FCS also showed a clear and significant upward trend in revenue from contract research.

All units excel in producing certified methodologies, software, and prototypes that are highly proportionate to their mission in applied research. The success in obtaining targeted funding from key Czech applied research agencies, primarily the TA CR, validates the national relevance of the project portfolio.

All three units achieved a Very Good (4) rating for the implementation of recommendations from the previous evaluation cycle (Indicator 3.7). This demonstrates a strong, systemic commitment to improving management, project acquisition, and transfer activities, resulting in significant institutional development.

Popularisation activities are well-organized (e.g., Innovative Economic Symposium, LOGI conference, Night of Scientists) and achieve high visibility, notably through the institution's cooperation with South Bohemian Television, reaching a large regional audience (approximately 300,000 viewers).

The R&D&I project portfolio and recognition remain predominantly national or regional (V4 focused). All units lack demonstrated participation in or coordination of highly prestigious, globally competitive international framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA/Eurostars), which would signify internationally competitive R&D quality.

Despite generating significant intellectual property (IP), all units reported a limited or absent track record in generating measurable financial success from formal commercialization activities (e.g., licensing revenue, royalties, or establishing spin-off companies directly by the faculties) during the evaluation period.

The VSTE failed to document explicitly whether the gender dimension was considered in its applied research results, which is a mandatory methodological requirement for Indicator 3.4. Furthermore, there is a lack of centralized administrative support for verifying international recognition (e.g., certificates for invited lectures) across the units.

Summary recommendation:

1. The VSTE must actively leverage the unique national legal expertise held by the SEV (e.g., licensed valuation methodologies, AI-based financial prediction tools) to formally target and secure documented formal validation or adoption by international organizations (e.g., European regulatory agencies, foreign judicial systems). This documented achievement is necessary to validate the unit's R&D results against a broader, non-Czech market, thereby demonstrating international competitiveness.
2. The FT, FCS, and SEV must strategically increase their participation, and particularly their coordination or Work Package Lead roles, in large-scale, globally competitive R&D&I framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, EUREKA). VSTE should utilize its existing expertise in national evaluation bodies (TA CR) to build consortia that specifically target these international research calls.
3. The VSTE must demonstrate the operational effectiveness of its commercialization infrastructure (including the planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator). It is critical to set and achieve measurable financial goals for revenue derived exclusively from the formal commercial exploitation of IP (e.g., licensing, patent sales, royalties, or spin-off generated revenue).
4. The VSTE must implement centralized administrative procedures to rigorously document and archive formal evidence (e.g., certificates, formal correspondence) confirming the status of all

international activities, particularly "invited" or "keynote" lectures, to ensure accurate demonstration of international academic prestige in future evaluation cycles.

EVALUATION REPORT FOR MODULES 4 & 5

HIGHER	EDUCATION	INSTITUTION	NAME:
Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice			
COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 75081431			

MODULE 4 – VIABILITY

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF R&D&I

4.1 Organisation and management of R&D&I

Evaluate the organizational structure and setup of the R&D&I management system in relation to the size and type of the university and its mission and vision. Also consider comparisons with foreign universities of similar size and focus.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:¹

The Institute of Technology and Business in Ceske Budejovice (VSTE) receives a rating of 4 (Very Good) for the Organisation and Management of R&D&I. This rating reflects a highly structured, transparent, and professionally governed system that effectively supports the institution's mission, characterized by process management principles and reliance on a sophisticated internal information system. The established policies and organizational procedures are clear and well-defined, achieving a nationally competitive level of R&D organization and management.

The organizational structure ensures clear definition of competence, powers, and responsibilities. The Rector is responsible for overall management and strategic development, while the Vice Rector for Creative Activities/Science and Research provides methodological management and coordinates R&D activities across the institution. At the operational level, Deputy Directors in each faculty (e.g., School of Expertness and Valuation) are responsible for coordinating research, publication, and project activities, reporting to the Vice-Rector for Science and Research.

VSTE employs the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS), an essential internal tool for effective R&D management. ETMS supports planning, monitoring, and evaluating research activities and staff development, using key modules (GOALS, ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS) to manage research direction and ensure objective performance evaluation. This system ensures high transparency in recording creative activities (such as scientific papers, monographs, patents, software, and certified methodologies) and project administration, aligning internal evaluation with the national Methodology for the Evaluation of Research Organisations.

The Bursar is formally responsible for the economic activities of the Institute and ensures the functionality of the Central Laboratories of the VSTE, which serve as the material and technical base for application and contract research. This direct link between financial management and research infrastructure demonstrates a functional approach to supporting R&D activities.

VSTE's methodology for evaluating creative activities is fully in line with the National Policy of Research, Development and Innovation of the Czech Republic.

While supporting R&D, the technical and economic staff are not exclusively dedicated to R&D&I, as support functions (ICT, finance, HR) are integrated into general job descriptions. This integration,

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

while efficient, may limit the responsiveness or depth of specialized R&D-exclusive support, particularly for complex international projects or commercialisation efforts.

While the Academic Council includes external academic and professional members, the SER notes that a dedicated International Evaluation Board is not defined by the Statutes, though it currently acts as an external advisory body providing objective feedback. Formalizing and empowering this international advisory structure is necessary to ensure external, world-class input into R&D&I management and strategic decision-making.

Recommendations:

1. VSTE should review and formalize the organizational structure and role of the technical and economic apparatus dedicated to R&D&I management. This should involve allocating specific FTEs or creating a dedicated unit (e.g., a central R&D administration office) to handle the specialized administrative and financial needs of major grants (e.g., Horizon Europe applications) and commercialization efforts, moving beyond relying solely on integrated support staff.
2. VSTE should proceed with the formal establishment and integration of the International Evaluation Board into its statutory management structure, ensuring this body is granted clear authority to advise on quality control and strategic R&D&I management. The composition should be maintained with international experts to provide high-quality external feedback and recommendations.
3. Leverage the full analytical capabilities of the ETMS system (which tracks GOALS, ACTIVITIES, and PROJECTS) to systematically generate regular reports that evaluate the success of individual faculty/department R&D coordination units (i.e., Deputy Directors' offices) against institutional strategic goals, facilitating targeted support and resource allocation based on performance metrics beyond publication volume.

R&D&I QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science

Evaluate the systems/measures/tools described to stimulate high-quality science at the HEI being evaluated. In your evaluation, consider the documented effectiveness of the measures described, their impact on achieving the mission and vision of the HEI being evaluated, the realization of excellent science and the possible absence of key systems/measures/tools.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE receives a rating of 3 (Average) for its system of support and incentive measures for a quality R&D&I environment. The institution has established a set of systemic tools and internal funding schemes that are integrated, functionally effective, and aligned with its mission as a professionally-oriented HEI focused on applied research, commercialisation, and regional relevance. The policies and procedures are established and demonstrate a balanced quality that is competitive at the national level and makes a significant regional contribution.

The core strength lies in the institution's proprietary digital tool, the ETMS, which functions as the systemic stimulation directive for R&D&I. ETMS manages, monitors, records, and evaluates the creative activities, performance, and financial allocation across staff and departments. The ETMS has been demonstrably effective as an incentive tool. VSTE recorded an increase of the number of corporate vouchers compared to the previous evaluation period, following a successful strengthening of internal incentives via ETMS for contract research. Similarly, increasing the point

rating for excellent publication outputs in 2020 led to a continuous increase in their representation. This system effectively aligns staff effort with VSTE's strategic mission emphasizing practical application and commercial potential.

The VSTE successfully uses internal funding to foster a research culture and support human resource development. Internal Grant Competition (IGS) provides resources for research projects run by academics and students focusing on VSTE's specific needs. Specific University Research (SVV) supports master's students in research, despite the absence of doctoral programmes.

The measures systematically promote interdisciplinary collaboration, often linking economic management theory (FCS, SEV) with technical implementation (FT), which is central to VSTE's profile. The VSTE uses an 'HR development fund' to train and support staff, and the ETMS's HR module enables the creation of individual development plans, including support for participation in PhD studies elsewhere.

The support apparatus (technical and economic staff) is integrated into general job descriptions rather than being exclusively dedicated to R&D&I (e.g., specialized science managers, dedicated data analysts, or professional business advisors). While efficient for general administration, the absence of specialized, dedicated personnel for acquiring highly complex international projects (e.g., Horizon Europe) is a significant limitation on achieving international competitiveness and "Excellent Science". VSTE's system successfully supports national (TA CR), cross-border projects (Interreg) and international mobility projects (CEEPUS, Erasmus+), but there is limited evidence of formalized, targeted support or a successful track record in securing highly prestigious, globally competitive research funding (e.g., ERC, major MSCA grants or large Horizon Europe consortia). The support system, while existing, has not yet demonstrated effectiveness in this area, which remains a stated institutional weakness.

The VSTE has foundational documents supporting start-ups and spin-offs (Regulation No. 2/2014). However, the key planned mechanism for converting IP into enterprises—the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator—was scheduled for launch under the Faculty of Corporate Strategy in 2025, meaning the effectiveness of this critical support system is prospective rather than proven during the evaluation period (2020-2024).

Recommendations:

1. The VSTE should create and formally resource a small, dedicated central R&D acquisition support unit staffed by professionals (e.g., science managers, grant writers, legal specialists) whose primary KPI is securing competitive, complex international grants (e.g., Horizon Europe, major bilateral government grants) and supporting the administrative and financial transfer needs of high-value contract research. This is necessary to move beyond national competitiveness towards international standards.
2. Leverage the functionality of the ETMS system to establish explicit, measurable incentive KPIs for recruiting and retaining staff with international research prestige (e.g., WoS Q1 publications, recognized service on international journal boards, experience coordinating European grants) and link this directly to the allocation of institutional support (LCDRO), particularly targeting support for international mobility of early-career researchers.
3. Once operational in 2025, the planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator must be fully utilized to proactively guide R&D outputs (certified methodologies, proprietary software, patents) into financially viable spin-off or start-up enterprises, thereby validating the economic potential of the VSTE's application-oriented research model.

4.3 Quality control system for R&D&I environment

Evaluate the described internal and external evaluation system in terms of its quality, effectiveness and suitability for the HEI.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE receives a rating of 4 (Very Good) for its Quality Control System (QCS) for the R&D&I Environment. This rating is justified by the institution's deployment of a highly effective, centralized digital system (ETMS) for internal performance control and quality assurance, complemented by structured external evaluation measures. The system demonstrates established policies and procedures that ensure accountability, transparency, and strategic alignment, fulfilling the HEI's mission and making a significant regional contribution.

The cornerstone of VSTE's quality control system is the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS), formally implemented by Directive No. 2/2018. The ETMS enables the systematic recording, management, and evaluation of research activities. It tracks various outputs, including scientific papers, monographs, patents, software, and certified methodologies, ensuring high transparency. The methodology for evaluating creative activities is fully in line with the National Policy of Research, Development and Innovation of the Czech Republic. It is specifically suitable for VSTE's professional mission as it emphasizes the quality, originality, and practical applicability of research outputs, reflecting the specifics of technical and economic disciplines. ETMS functions as a management and motivational tool. Performance evaluation is carried out annually and serves as the basis for personal benefits and strategic resource allocation. The implementation of ETMS provided concrete, measurable incentives:

- Strengthened contract research incentives via ETMS led to a doubling of the number of corporate vouchers in 2024 compared to the previous year.
- An increase in the points rating for excellent publication outputs in 2020 resulted in their continuous increase within all publication activities.

The quality assurance system operates across two interconnected levels. The internal evaluation process is managed by the Vice-Rector for Science and Research. It utilizes the Internal Quality Evaluation Board (RVHK), which addresses creative activities in coordination with accreditation criteria. This internal system monitors R&D&I activities holistically (education, science/research, third role). External quality assessment primarily focuses on implementing measures derived from external evaluations, such as those conducted by the National Accreditation Office (NAU) and the International Evaluation Panel (IEP). Furthermore, the Internal Quality Assessment Board aims to strengthen feedback by intensifying the involvement of external stakeholders, including graduates, regular employees, and representatives from the corporate sector. The International Evaluation Board acts as an external advisory body, providing objective feedback on quality assurance processes and research performance from an international perspective.

The VSTE has established formal mechanisms to ensure compliance with ethical principles and good scientific practice. Ethical standards are governed by the VSTE Code of Ethics for Employees and the VSTE Code of Ethics for Students. Compliance is supported by a functional Ethics Committee, which acts as a permanent advisory body to the Rector. Although codes of ethics exist, there is no formal requirement for either employees or students to confirm that they have read or understood these codes. This creates a gap in documented organizational compliance assurance.

Recommendations:

1. VSTE should incorporate the role and function of the International Evaluation Board (or similar external advisory body) into its official Statutes and organizational rules. This formalization ensures that expert advice on R&D&I management and quality standards is institutionalized, providing a long-term foundation for achieving international competitiveness.

2. VSTE must implement a simple, mandatory procedure (potentially via the ETMS or VSTE Information System) requiring all employees and students to formally confirm they have read and understood the relevant Codes of Ethics upon joining the institution or when codes are updated. This would close the gap in documented compliance assurance.

4.4 Sustainability and resilience of R&D&I

Evaluate the described system of measures for sustainability and resilience of R&D&I in terms of their quality, effectiveness or possible absence of key measures.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE is rated as 4 (Very good) because it demonstrates that the management of R&D&I sustainability and resilience is governed by well-established high-level policies and procedures and exhibits a significant regional contribution that aligns directly with its mission and vision, demonstrating potential for further development.

The VSTE has adopted a comprehensive strategic approach to sustainability, formalized in the approved Sustainable Development Strategy (SUS) 2030 and its respective Implementation Plans. The institution explicitly views itself as a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable HEI aligned with the UN SDGs. This framework demonstrates a clear, forward-looking policy basis for resilience. The VSTE's emphasis on environmental issues and sustainable development is deeply integrated into its strategic research priorities.

The VSTE successfully embeds its third role and social responsibility into its research, educational, and creative activities, positioning it to contribute significantly to the sustainable development of the South Bohemia Region. Knowledge transfer relies on the development of technical disciplines (e.g., engineering, transport) and economic disciplines (e.g., circular economy). The system is centralized and implemented through individual institutes. The effectiveness of the third role is demonstrated by the strategy to strengthen cooperation with the business sector, increase joint research projects, and expand contract research, which addresses regional socioeconomic challenges and transfers research outcomes to the user sector. The centralized internal management system, the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS), supports the systemic integration of research activities, project management, financial allocation, and transparency, which fundamentally contributes to institutional resilience and sustainability. Measures are in place to protect intellectual property, particularly concerning student final thesis and handling plagiarism. The VSTE has a strategy for Open Access through professional publications and is actively working on the Open Science II project, which includes plans for creating an institutional repository to balance openness with IP protection.

While the VSTE details its commitment to the concepts required under Indicator 4.4, the effectiveness of several crucial measures related to institutional resilience and technical implementation lacks supporting examples and measurable data within the self-assessment documentation. The self-assessment explicitly lists key measures necessary for institutional resilience, such as cyber security, risk treatment, prevention of misuse of R&D&I results, and resistance to foreign influence. However, the narrative provided in the SER mainly presents the existence of the high-level policy or concept rather than specific implementation examples or demonstrated effectiveness over the evaluation period (2020–2024), which is required by the methodology. Providing examples of handling risk incidents, documenting cyber security strategies, or procedures for dealing with foreign influence would strengthen this area significantly.

The indicator requires describing the system for training undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff in IP protection and technology transfer, demonstrating the effectiveness of the procedures employed (e.g., number of people trained). The SER narrative fails to provide these

requested examples or quantifiable metrics, despite IP protection being addressed conceptually. This lack of demonstrated effectiveness is compounded by the institution's acknowledgement that it has historically struggled with IP commercialization due to investor risk concerns.

The SER lists the need for a research data management concept (data collection, access, sharing, archiving, backup). While the VSTE mentions that top-class computing infrastructure is available to all teachers for efficient R&D data handling, the general description does not sufficiently detail the practical functioning of the data collection, archiving, sharing, or responsibility systems—all vital elements for long-term R&D sustainability.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and document formal, detailed procedures for cyber security, risk assessment/treatment, and resistance to foreign influence, providing clear, verifiable examples of their implementation and effectiveness in the next evaluation period.
2. Implement and report quantifiable metrics (e.g., number of staff/students trained annually, mandatory course completion rates) demonstrating the effectiveness of the training system for IP protection and technology transfer, using the institutional information systems (e.g., ETMS) to formally track participation.

PERSONEL POLICY

4.5 Structure of human resources

Evaluate the described structure of human resources at the evaluated HEI in terms of age composition, degree of internationalization, distribution by job classification, and gender balance. For the assessment, use the data from the annexed tables 4.5.1 and 4.5.2; it is also possible to draw on the more detailed staffing data presented in indicator 3.1 of the self-evaluation reports for the evaluated units.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE is rated as 4 (Very good).

The assessment of the distribution by job classification is based on the narrative and tables provided by VSTE in the SER and additionally after the on-site visit. VSTE actively supports the professional development of its staff, evidenced by a narrative increase in the number of Professors and Associate Professors. The careers of academic and research staff are managed through the Human Resources Module of the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS), which includes career growth planning, training opportunities, and professional development. The tables categorize R&D&I staff into Professorial, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Assistant, R&D Personnel, Researchers in other categories, and Technical and Economic staff. The institution invests in staff development, including internal courses and external training, supported by an 'HR development fund'. Although the HR structure is evaluated for the HEI as a whole (Module 4), the institution noted difficulty in allocating individual workloads or staffing data precisely to specific departments for R&D purposes due to its structure as a non-university HEI submitting one consolidated report. The job descriptions generally list broad responsibilities (teaching, research, administration) without specific proportional allocation of working time.

The VSTE states that the generational balance in senior positions (Professor/Associate Professor) has been "consistently maintained over the long term". The percentage data from Tables 4.5.2 (2020) and 4.5.3 (2024) indicates that a significant portion of the workforce across all academic ranks falls within the middle career groups (30-59 years). In 2024, the largest percentage of Assistant Professors (51.02%) and Associate Professors (42.86%) were in the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups, respectively, suggesting a strong cohort development. The highest percentage of Professors

(38.46%) and Associate Professors (42.86%) are concentrated in the 40-49 age group in 2024, indicating successful vertical growth within the institution.

The VSTE reports a proactive approach to gender equality, although challenges persist in senior leadership. The VSTE officially fully accepts the Government Strategy for Gender Equality within its HR strategy and implements practices ensuring equal access regardless of gender, supported by internal pay regulations that prioritize performance and expertise. The institution does not currently have a formal Gender Equality Plan, but is actively addressing gender topics through specific projects (e.g., FER JOB VSTE and NOstereotype) funded by the EU. Measures to reconcile work and family life include flexible working conditions, such as part-time work, flexible working hours, access to an on-site nursery, and an extra week of leave (six weeks total). Despite these policies, the gender balance in top management positions shows that women hold a small minority of the highest roles, particularly the Rector (0 women in 2020/2024) and Dean (1 woman in 2020, 0 women in 2024). However, representation increased slightly in the Academic Senate and Scientific Council between 2020 and 2024. Women are heavily represented in the Technical and Economic staff categories across multiple age groups (e.g., in 2020, women constituted 68.75% of staff under 29, 70.97% of staff 30-39, and 75% of staff 40-49 in this category).

Data on the recruitment of foreign national R&D staff (FTE) is less detailed. While Table 4.5.1 is intended to show the percentage of foreign nationals involved in R&D and Innovation (R&D&I) for 2020 and 2024, the provided excerpts are inconclusive. The exact percentage of foreign R&D FTEs is not fully legible. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity as to whether the term "foreign" properly excludes researchers who hold Slovak citizenship.

Strengths:

Use of the ETMS system for transparent career planning, performance monitoring, and managing R&D development. Strong institutional measures (flexible work, nursery, additional leave) to support work-life balance and specific projects targeting gender stereotypes (NOstereotype). Demonstrated commitment to increasing the number of senior academic staff (Professors/Associate Professors).

Weakness:

Continued low representation of women in the highest managerial positions (Rector, Dean). The difficulty in providing unit-specific or accurate R&D workload distribution data (FTE) due to VSTE's non-university structure hinders precise quantitative assessment of departmental research capacity. The documentation does not strongly highlight the success of systematic recruitment of foreign nationals into permanent R&D positions, suggesting internationalisation is primarily driven by academic exchange rather than permanent diversification of the internal HR structure.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a highly visible, proactive international recruitment system specifically for permanent senior R&D roles (e.g., Associate Professor, Professor, and dedicated research scientist positions, if implemented). This system should be distinct from general competitive selection procedures and must be benchmarked against recruitment processes used by top EU research organizations (EU15/EU27 standards).
2. Document dedicated R&D career pathways that explicitly incorporate long-term placements (sabbaticals, fellowships) for VSTE academic staff abroad, and, conversely, transparent regulations and support systems for long-term foreign academics hosted at the institution.
3. Ensure that the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 includes verifiable results for filling leadership roles, explicitly addressing the existing low representation of women in top managerial positions (e.g., Rector and Dean roles reported in the previous period).

4.6 Academic and Research Careers

Evaluate the described system for the recruitment and career development of academic and research staff. Evaluate the system in terms of its quality and effectiveness, as well as the potential absence of key elements.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The system for academic and research careers at VSTE is rated 3 (Average).

The VSTE has implemented centralized internal management tools (ETMS) and formalized procedures (competitive selection). However, the system's effectiveness in developing high-quality internal academic sources and attracting international talent is significantly limited by fundamental structural constraints inherent to its non-university status. Consequently, the institution fulfils its mission with limitations in this crucial area.

The system for career growth is fundamentally managed through the Personnel Module of the internal ETMS. The ETMS enables the definition of a detailed career growth plan for individual employees, alongside professional development and qualification training. The system for evaluating academic staff performance is explicitly linked to internal payroll regulations, organizational structure, and wage scales. Annual performance evaluation is carried out via the Performance Account (PA) within the ETMS system, where registered creative activities are converted into performance scores. The ETMS is positioned as a key criterion for professional development, especially in habilitation and professorial procedures. This indicates that internal mechanisms exist to encourage vertical growth, even if the final accreditation for these procedures must be sought externally.

The recruitment of academic staff is strictly governed by the Regulations on the Competitive Selection Procedures for Filling Academic Positions, issued pursuant to the Higher Education Act. These procedures are announced publicly on the VSTE website, typically at most twice a year.

The primary limitation to career effectiveness is VSTE's status as a non-university HEI. The institution openly acknowledges "Insufficient staffing in the creative area" and a persistent "Lack of high-quality academics from internal sources". This is directly attributed to the absence of doctoral study programmes (PhD) and the inability to conduct its own habilitation and professor procedures. VSTE must rely on the "helpfulness of other tertiary institutes," which are competitors, for its staff to achieve senior academic ranks.

Although ETMS tracks activity, the job descriptions of academic and research staff do not explicitly divide working time between teaching and research activities. They list general responsibilities (teaching, research, administration). This lack of proportional allocation hinders the transparent distribution of institutional time and FTEs necessary to foster dedicated research careers.

The VSTE has previously attempted to create conditions for achieving the HR Award (a standard of career excellence) but the project proposal was not financially supported by the relevant subsidy provider.

The VSTE self-assessment is strong on policy documentation (ETMS regulations, competitive selection rules) but lacks specific detail and examples for several key international career components outlined in the evaluation methodology. The VSTE describes support for short-term mobility (Erasmus+, CEEPUS), but the self-evaluation report does not detail formal rules for the support system of sabbaticals or official policies for long-term placements for its own staff abroad. The SER mentions arrangements to support return after maternity/parental leave or other career breaks, such as scholarships and flexible travel options to mitigate gender-based barriers. However, VSTE does not provide statistics or specific anonymised examples demonstrating the effectiveness of these measures (e.g., statistics on return after maternity/parental leave before and after implementation) as requested by the methodology.

The indicator explicitly requires a description of the process of new employee adaptation and mentoring. The detailed text on career development relies primarily on the employee/superior agreement regarding professional development but does not detail a formal, structured mentoring or adaptation process, particularly for highly sought-after external or foreign recruits.

While competitive selection procedures are formalized for hiring academics generally, the SER does not describe specific procedures or examples of international tenders designed specifically to recruit high-quality staff from abroad. Internationalisation is mainly achieved through mobility programs rather than permanent recruitment diversification.

Recommendations:

1. Formalise Strategic Habilitation/PhD Partnerships. These formal partnerships should define clear career acceleration tracks for high-performing VSTE employees to obtain senior academic ranks. VSTE already supports staff participation in doctoral education through institutional partnerships.
2. Rectify the absence of defined R&D workload distribution by implementing clear internal rules that formally apportion academic staff time into FTEs dedicated explicitly to research/creative activities, teaching, and administration. This allocation, tracked through the ETMS management information system, must be transparently linked to individual career growth plans and performance evaluations, demonstrating a genuine commitment to supporting specialized research careers.
3. Develop and adopt a formal institutional regulation that establishes a robust support system and rules for long-term placements (sabbaticals) for VSTE academics and researchers at external research institutions, nationally or internationally. Demonstrate the effectiveness of this rule by tracking the number of staff benefiting and detailing how the acquired expertise contributes directly to VSTE's R&D objectives.
4. Document and implement a standardized adaptation and mentoring programme for all new academic and research staff (including external and foreign hires). This programme should include mandatory orientation on R&D governance, ethics, IP protection, technology transfer pathways, and effective use of the ETMS performance system.
5. Systematically track and report specific metrics (e.g., using the ETMS system) that prove the effectiveness of measures designed to facilitate the return of staff after parental leave or career breaks. Provide statistics (e.g., return rates, retention rates) that show a measurable improvement attributable to the flexible working conditions or child-care support (such as the on-site nursery mentioned in the discussion of Indicator 4.5).
6. Document and advertise specific international competitive selection procedures (tenders) aimed explicitly at recruiting internationally recognised researchers and academics into permanent R&D positions at VSTE. This strategy should proactively utilize VSTE's global collaboration network (e.g., partners in Croatia, Finland, Poland, Slovakia, Germany and South Korea, mentioned in unit evaluations) to fill specialist research gaps, thereby improving the international diversification of the permanent R&D workforce.
7. Leverage the future construction of a research centre in České Budějovice for foreign scientists and the intended provision of accommodation and social facilities by establishing a clear HR policy that uses these new infrastructures as part of the recruitment package for top international candidates. The recruitment policy should explicitly link new appointments to the use of new equipment.

4.7 Gender equality measures

Evaluate the gender equality measures described in self-evaluation. Evaluate the measures in terms of their quality and effectiveness, as well as the potential absence of key measures.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE receives a rating of 3 (Average). This is justified by the institution's implementation of practical measures for work-life balance, its acceptance and integration of the national gender equality strategy, and its participation in EU-funded projects designed to tackle gender stereotyping in professional fields. The VSTE demonstrates policies and procedures and a regional contribution in addressing gender issues related to its mission.

The institution explicitly promotes equal opportunities for all employees as a cornerstone of its development and sustainability. The VSTE's strategy is aligned with the Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030.

The VSTE has implemented measures for researchers attempting to balance work and family life. This includes the option of part-time work and flexible working hours. Employees have access to a nursery. Parents receive an extra week of leave, resulting in a total of six weeks.

The VSTE operates practices that ensure equal access regardless of gender. Equal remuneration is enforced by internal pay regulations that prioritize performance and expertise. This systematic approach is also supported by the ETMS which is used to define and manage human resources.

The VSTE addresses gender stereotypes relevant to its traditionally technical and economic focus through dedicated projects, demonstrating effective execution of its social mission. The NOstereotype EU-funded project aims to break down gender stereotypes influencing career paths and involves developing a methodology for conscious decision-making in selecting study fields and professions. The FER JOB VSTE project focuses on fostering a Diverse and Flexible Work Culture.

The VSTE acknowledges that it does not currently have a formally developed Gender Equality Plan. While its activities align with the Government Strategy and are pursued through various projects, the absence of a centralised, official GEP may hinder the coherent and systematic monitoring necessary for reaching internationally competitive standards.

A notable area requiring improvement is the underrepresentation of women in top managerial and research-critical positions. While VSTE describes measures such as flexible scheduling and childcare services, it does not provide quantitative evidence of their effectiveness in retaining women in R&D careers and managerial positions. For example, the self-assessment lacks data on return rates after maternity or parental leave, which are key indicators of the success of gender-sensitive policies.

The criteria for Indicator 4.7 mandate reporting on measures to eliminate negative workplace behaviour (e.g., mobbing, sexual harassment). While the VSTE upholds ethical principles and uses an Employee Code of Ethics, the self-assessment does not provide any specific examples of practice regarding dealing with cases of mobbing or sexual harassment, or the use of whistleblowing related to ethical misconduct, thereby lacking demonstrated effectiveness in this area.

Recommendations:

1. The VSTE must formally develop and approve a comprehensive Gender Equality Plan (GEP), moving beyond the current framework of merely accepting the Government Strategy for Gender Equality. This formal GEP should align with the HEI's Strategic Plan for 2026–2030 and incorporate explicit, time-bound targets in all mandated areas, including recruitment, career progression, decision-making bodies, integration of the gender dimension in R&D content, and work-life balance. The institution should leverage the approved Strategic Management Framework for the HR Award project, whose implementation started in July 2025, as the primary mechanism for drafting and implementing this GEP, ensuring international benchmarking.

2. While VSTE upholds an Employee Code of Ethics, it must establish and describe detailed, formal procedures for addressing and eliminating negative workplace behaviour, specifically mobbing and sexual harassment, as required by the evaluation criteria.
3. Establish specific, quantifiable targets for nominations and appointments to senior R&D governance bodies and management positions. The institution must track and report these metrics annually, showing a consistent upward trend toward parity in the next evaluation period.
4. Ensure that selection procedures for senior R&D roles (including recruitment and promotion) include mechanisms to actively identify and mitigate implicit bias. This can involve mandating balanced gender representation on all search and selection committees and requiring justification for cases where qualified female candidates are not shortlisted for senior roles.

4.8 Mobility of academic and research staff (including sectoral and inter-sectoral mobility)

Evaluate the described mobility of academic and researcher staff. Pay attention to whether the evaluated HEI achieves the set objectives, whether the mobility objectives are appropriately set for the HEI and whether the strategies in place lead to their achievement or help remove existing barriers to mobility.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE is rated 4 (Very good) because it systematically supports academic and research mobility through well-established policies and procedures and has demonstrated a significant quantitative increase in mobility, which directly contributes to its strategic objectives for internationalisation and research excellence.

The VSTE systematically supports mobility as a key tool for developing scientific excellence, know-how sharing, and fostering internationalisation of teaching. This aligns with its strategic goal to strengthen its position as a research entity contributing to technical and economic disciplines with a direct impact on practice. The strategy explicitly targets mobility linked to strengthening teaching and research mobility through programmes (e.g., Erasmus+ KA131, CEEPUS, and bilateral agreements), developing intersectoral mobility by promoting exchanges between academia and industrial partners, particularly in techno-economic fields and supporting staff participation in international research projects (e.g., under Horizon Europe or Erasmus+ KA2).

The VSTE successfully achieved its objective of substantially increasing international mobility within the 2020–2024 period, demonstrating tangible benefits aligned with its research focus. Academic staff mobility showed a clear upward trend, overcoming initial pandemic limitations (2020–2021). In the 2023/24 academic year, the number of mobility stays rose sharply to 33, compared to only 4 in 2019/20, marking the highest level recorded to date. In the 2023/24 academic year, the number of mobility stays rose sharply to 33, compared to only 4 in 2019/20, marking the highest level recorded to date. In 2021, an academic completed a three-month long-term mobility stay at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, conducting research in organic chemistry. This experience enabled the acquisition of new expertise and the initiation of a joint publication, thereby demonstrating the institution's success in facilitating long-term international research placements. In 2024, another mobility stay in Turkey focused on seismological cooperation and seismic wave modelling. The participant contributed to improving seismic risk assessment methods and, in doing so, strengthened VSTE's international research network in the field of applied geosciences. Mobility has also proven effective in promoting innovation in teaching. During a teaching mobility at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (2022), the focus was on strategic corporate management, complemented by discussions on potential research collaboration and data exchange. These activities highlight the institution's ability to integrate international expertise into both academic instruction and research development. Another mobility was referred in Norway - Arctic University

of Norway, in 2022, which was focused on digital technologies in civil engineering but also on differences in teaching approaches at VSTE and Arctic University of Norway. Staff mobility was effectively used to transfer innovative approaches into teaching.

The VSTE has successfully identified common mobility barriers and established specific strategies to mitigate them, particularly related to administration and family life. The VSTE identified major obstacles, including administrative and financial burden, low motivation for long-term mobility, and gender-based barriers. The VSTE employs focused solutions as administrative simplification, providing explicit support for staff with families through scholarships and flexible travel options to alleviate gender-based barriers. The successful implementation of a virtual mobility in Poland (2020) demonstrated that VSTE can maintain international scientific cooperation and support publishing activities even when face-to-face mobility is limited.

The cumulative benefits of academic mobility include the enhancement of international research cooperation, strengthening expertise, innovation transfer to teaching, and advancing presentation and language competence. The demonstrated increase in mobility and its alignment with core R&D activities confirms the viability and quality of VSTE's personnel policy in this area.

Recommendations:

1. Establish clear, written institutional rules and a support system for long-term placements and sabbaticals (defined as longer than three months) for VSTE academic and research staff going abroad. These regulations must mandate a formal return agreement requiring the staff member to implement specific, quantifiable R&D outcomes immediately upon return (e.g., launching a new international research collaboration, initiating a joint publication in a Q1 journal, or incorporating advanced knowledge into VSTE's research infrastructure).
2. Implement specific, financed programmes (e.g., internal mobility grants, mandatory leave incentives) that actively encourage and enable R&D staff to undertake placements in the non-academic sector, such as regional industry, state administration (leveraging existing links with courts/police through the SEV), or major international corporations. The mobility objectives must be linked to measurable application outcomes, such as securing new contract research, developing innovation vouchers, or creating certified methodologies that are adopted by the host company or governmental body.

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

4.9 Research infrastructure

Evaluate the system described for the acquisition/optimisation of core facilities and other equipment and their renewal. Evaluate the system in terms of its effectiveness and suitability for the HEI. Also consider the system for sharing instruments and equipment, including core facilities and equipment of evaluated units. Use the data in Annex Table 4.9.1 to support your evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

VSTE is rated 4 (Very good) because it demonstrates systematic, significant institutional investment in infrastructure that is directly aligned with its mission of applied research, utilizing effective strategies to acquire key equipment through projects. Its internal sharing system is established, though external sharing remains underdeveloped due to low demand.

The system for managing research infrastructure at VSTE is suitable for its mission as a professionally-oriented HEI focused on technical, construction, and economic applications.

The VSTE prioritises acquiring instruments and equipment through project activities to minimise direct financial commitment. This approach ensures that newly acquired infrastructure directly

supports funded research goals (e.g., TACR projects). The institution plans to apply for the significant Infrastructure II project, specifically for equipping its laboratories.

The largest expenditure in R&D&I has been the realization of Stage I of the construction and subsequent furnishing of the central laboratories in 2016. These labs are explicitly equipped for research in engineering, construction, transport, and logistics, directly reflecting the VSTE's core technical disciplines. Examples of infrastructure include new labs for furnishing and enlivening electronic facilities, advanced electromagnetic testing, robotics, logistics, and material testing for the foundry industry.

The expenditure data (Table 4.9.1) demonstrates continuous, balanced investment in R&D infrastructure over the period (2020–2024). The majority of funds are allocated to essential software and infrastructure support, reflecting the critical ICT requirements for modern R&D&I.

The refurbishment or replacement of equipment is generally the responsibility of the individual faculties that registered the equipment. VSTE states it has not yet been necessary to replace instruments acquired during the reporting period. However, VSTE ensures continuous modernisation, although the budget allocated to repair and maintenance is noted as only a minimal share.

The internal organisation of the research infrastructure is based on Central Laboratories which serve as the common material and technical base for the Institute's application and contract research across the FT, FCS, and SEV. VSTE operates a successful system for internal sharing through its IT infrastructure. Laboratories that are frequently occupied by multiple researchers are booked through the Institute's Information System. Furthermore, top-class computing infrastructure for supporting projects and R&D&I is made available to all teachers for efficient data processing and AI. Specific Facilities (FT, FCS, SEV):

- The FT (Department of Transport and Logistics) houses specialized logistics infrastructure (e.g., automatic identification technologies, abrasion/environmental testers) with great potential for collaboration, such as with the University of Žilina.
- The SEV's research in economics, construction, and mechanical engineering intrinsically relies on and benefits from the material and technical base provided by the Central Laboratories.
- The FCS utilises specialised spaces like the "Mind Lab," equipped with advanced eye-tracking technology, which supports analytical disciplines.

A formal, centralised system for maximising external sharing is weak. VSTE admits that further sharing systems have not yet been introduced because external demand is not yet high enough. In instances where external demand does occur (e.g., for proof of concept projects), the institution relies on simple contracts with fixed terms based on individual agreement. This limitation suggests that VSTE has not yet successfully established its infrastructure as a major, formalized core facility available to a wide external research market, which is a potential absence of a key measure for competitive excellence. The VSTE provides free access to electronic information databases such as Web of Science, SCOPUS, ČSN, ProQuest, and others, which is vital infrastructure support appreciated by students and staff.

The VSTE's infrastructure system is characterized by strategic growth and strong internal integration. The institution has invested heavily to align its physical and digital infrastructure with its mission. However, its stated aspiration to serve external researchers and industry is currently limited by low external demand for its existing sharing model, necessitating the large-scale investment planned under Infrastructure II to elevate its facilities to a level that corresponds with its dynamic development.

Recommendations:

1. The 2020 evaluation noted that implementing a system for sharing expensive instruments and equipment with external units is necessary for scientific development and international projects. Develop the nascent sharing system into a transparent, professional Core Facility model. This model should actively market specific, advanced services (e.g., advanced material

diagnostics, simulation capabilities, or specialized testing) to other HEIs in the South Bohemia region and in the Czech Republic and corporate clients.

2. Adopt a comprehensive plan for the systematic replacement and modernization of expensive instruments and equipment. Critically, the plan must allocate a substantially increased, dedicated budget for planned maintenance, repair, refurbishment, and calibration. The SER that only a minimal share of the budget is currently allocated to the maintenance and repair of equipment, which poses a long-term risk to maintaining high technical standards required for international competitiveness.

FINANCES

4.10 Budget and structure of financial resources

Evaluate the budget and financial resource structure of the evaluated HEI in terms of its suitability for the HEI, i.e. whether the financial resource structure is appropriate for the size and type of the evaluated HEI. You should also pay attention to the ability of the evaluated HEI to attract prestigious research projects. Use the data in the annexed tables 4.10.1 to 4.10.5 to support your evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The rating of 4 (Very good) is awarded because the VSTE demonstrates a robust and highly appropriate financial structure that aligns perfectly with its mission as a professionally-oriented institution focusing on applied research and regional contribution. VSTE consistently generates sufficient funding for R&D&I and shows significant growth in project volume, although it currently lacks success in attracting the most globally prestigious research projects.

The financial resource structure of the VSTE is highly suitable and appropriate for its size and type as a professionally-oriented, non-university public HEI. The structure is characterized by dominance in public funding and a clear, explicit focus on applied research, which matches its core mission.

Applied Research consistently accounted for the overwhelming majority of R&D activities across the period: 95.4% in 2020 rising to 100.0% in 2022 and 2023, and remaining high at 92.5% in 2024 (Table 4.10.2). Basic Research constituted only a minimal share (maximum 4.6% in 2020, 0.0% in 2022 and 2023). This structure proves that the institution successfully channels nearly all R&D funding toward activities directly applicable to industry and regional needs.

The overall R&D budget (costs) increased substantially from approximately €1,393 thousand in 2020 to €3,030 thousand in 2024. Public funding (Czech and International) is the dominant source, accounting for approximately 99% of the total R&D budget in 2024 (67% Czech public and 33% international public) (Table 4.10.1 - version provided after the on-site visit). The VSTE relies on the common funding streams for Czech HEIs, including the stabilizing Institutional Support for Long-Term Conceptual Development of a Research Organization (RVO), and the targeted support from grants. Despite RVO funding having a minimal ratio to total science and research costs (2% in 2020, decreasing to 1.7% by 2025 projection), the VSTE managed to obtain a sufficient amount of financial resources every year to fully secure its research section. VSTE demonstrates financial viability by strategically co-financing institutional activities from its own resources, which, combined with institutional grants (RVO, Specific University Research (SVV)), increased the total research funding to CZK 27 million in 2024.

VSTE demonstrates a strong ability to secure national applied research grants but shows a clear gap in attracting highly prestigious international competitive funding.

The VSTE secures significant funding from the TA CR (Table 4.10.4). Total support from Czech providers (which includes TA CR, MEYS, etc.) increased from €431.54 thousand in 2020 to €748 thousand in 2024. Major projects secured include SS01020515 (Health-Safe Surfaces Based on Recycled Rubber), TL02000017 (Intergenerational Management to Support Digitalisation in

Construction), and CZ.01.1.02/0.0/0.0/21_374/0027275 (Innovative Building Data Warehouse), often in the role of beneficiary or work package leader. Revenue from contract research (non-public sources) is growing, supporting practical application, particularly for regional companies like Fontea, a.s. (Table 4.10.5). Total non-public contract research support increased from €19.46 thousand in 2020 to €30.73 thousand in 2024.

The assessment shows a notable absence of success in securing the most globally competitive, prestigious individual projects. The SER and annexed tables (4.10.3) do not list any prestigious individual international projects (e.g., ERC, MSCA, HHMI, HFSP, NSF). International funding is secured primarily through cross-border cooperation schemes like Interreg Central Europe (e.g., GREENPACT, CE0100090) and mobility programmes (Erasmus+, CEEPUS). While these activities support internationalisation, they are focused on cooperation and application, not typically classified in the highest tier of prestigious individual research excellence. International project support was minimal in the first years but rose to €2.15 thousand in 2024 (Table 4.10.3).

Recommendations:

1. Leverage existing success in specialized areas (e.g., advanced valuation methodologies, technical applications of neural networks) to secure Coordinator or Work Package Lead roles in major competitive Horizon Europe projects. The VSTE must demonstrate that its international funding portfolio is moving towards leadership roles in these highly competitive schemes. Systematically expand research support services, particularly technical writing assistance and methodological consultation, focused specifically on preparing applications for large European grant schemes to ensure high quality and increased success rates, fulfilling a strategic objective already identified.
2. Dedicate a specific, growing portion of the flexible institutional support (RVO funding) to support Basic Research projects or high-risk exploratory studies that possess the potential to lead to Q1/D1 publications (Web of Science/SCOPUS indexed journals), thereby directly addressing the quantitative aspect of international quality.
3. Continuously refine the use of the ETMS to ensure institutional funds are allocated transparently, rewarding research teams based on KPIs focused on quality outcomes (e.g., high-quartile publications, successful major grant acquisition) and demonstrating how this allocation drives improved financial results and increased project competitiveness in subsequent years.

4.11 Rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO

Evaluate the strategy described and the rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO. In your evaluation, consider the effectiveness of the implemented strategy and policies and whether they contribute to the mission and vision of the HEI.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE is rated 4 (Very good) for Long-term Conceptual Development of a Research Organization (LCDRO) indicator because it has implemented a structured, performance-driven system for managing institutional support. The rules and strategy are highly suitable and effective in contributing to the VSTE's mission as a professionally oriented institution focused on applied research and regional needs. The VSTE has well-established policies and procedures and achieves results at a nationally competitive level with a significant regional contribution.

The distribution of institutional support is centralised. The primary management tool is the ETMS, which serves as both a management and motivational tool. The ETMS monitors publication, project, and application outputs, providing the performance data upon which fund allocation is based. The LCDRO funds are allocated annually based on KPIs, which reflect both research outputs and the

university's developmental goals. This performance-based approach is crucial, as it ensures departments with higher research activity and quality results are allocated greater support. The rules for using LCDRO funds directly support VSTE's mission as an application-oriented HEI. The allocation rules prioritize funding that strengthens cooperation with the application sphere, aligning with VSTE's core focus on applied research (which consistently accounts for over 90% of its R&D costs). Since VSTE does not implement doctoral studies, LCDRO funds are strategically used to run Specific University Research (SVV), a programme providing support for Master's students carrying out research. This targeted approach systematically contributed to the development of a research culture and the professional growth of Master's level students. The SVV segment grew from CZK 0.253 million in 2020 to CZK 1.812 million in 2024. Funds cover personnel costs for staff engaged in research, operational infrastructure, and the renewal of technical equipment. For instance, funds in 2022 were allocated to enhance the technical administration and analytical capabilities of the ETMS system itself, strengthening the system that underlies all R&D management.

Recommendations:

1. The KPI system (tracked via ETMS) must be explicitly expanded to give demonstrably higher weight and financial reward from LCDRO funds to academics who achieve initial success in attracting prestigious international grants (e.g., being shortlisted for an MSCA fellowship or securing a preparatory grant for a Horizon Europe proposal). This will signal that the institutional support system actively pushes staff toward international excellence, which is currently a weakness in the financial structure.
2. While VSTE currently lacks doctoral study programmes, it should dedicate a specific, measurable portion of the LCDRO budget to co-financing research costs (infrastructure access, materials, long-term mobility) for VSTE staff members who successfully enrol in external PhD programmes through strategic partnerships with other HEIs. This ensures institutional investment in high-level research development beyond the Master's level (SVV).
3. Allocate a ring-fenced portion of the flexible LCDRO funding towards high-risk, exploratory basic research projects identified through the Internal Grant Competition (IGS). These projects should be selected based on their potential to lead to Q1/D1 publications (Web of Science/SCOPUS indexed journals) or breakthrough IP development, thereby addressing the low volume of basic research reported.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

4.12 Significant collaborations in R&D

Evaluate listed examples of significant R&D&I collaborations with respect to the effectiveness of the collaborations established, their proportionality and appropriateness to the type of HEI and its mission and vision.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE is rated 4 (Very good) because its collaboration portfolio is highly effective and appropriate to its mission as a professionally-oriented HEI focused on applied research. The VSTE demonstrates strong, sustained regional and national partnerships, with effectiveness proven by success in targeted grant schemes and direct knowledge transfer to industry and public administration. The VSTE's core mission is to focus on industry and praxis-related education, providing R&D&I outputs that have a direct application in economic and technical fields, primarily benefiting the South Bohemia Region. The described collaborations are highly proportionate and appropriate to this mission. The collaborations overwhelmingly concentrate on applied research, which accounts

for approximately 92.5% to 100% of VŠTE's total R&D costs during the evaluation period (2022–2023). Partnerships are secured with essential regional entities, including the Chamber of Commerce of South Bohemia, the Regional Office for South Bohemia, and key regional companies (MOTOR JIKOV Group, Bosch, GD Druckguss). These collaborations provide student placements, tailored analyses, contract research, and technology transfer, directly supporting regional competitiveness and employment. The SEV, a constituent part of the VSTE, holds a unique and appropriate collaboration mandate, functioning as an expert institution registered under the Ministry of Justice. This requires formalized cooperation with state offices, including courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the CR. This type of collaboration is uniquely appropriate to the VSTE's applied focus and significantly contributes to the social relevance of its R&D&I.

The effectiveness of national collaboration is high, particularly in securing funding and generating tangible applied results. Examples include the project “Stabilization and Development of SMEs in Rural Areas” (TL01000349), which involved the FCS, the SEV, the Brno University of Technology, and the Czech Chamber of Commerce. Internal collaboration between the VSTE units is effective, as seen in the interdisciplinary cooperation between FCS and SEV on social science and applied economic projects, and cooperation between the FT and engineering companies on topics like gear pumps and recycling technology (e.g., Jihostroj a.s., GD Druckguss s.r.o.). Collaboration with external entities, often facilitated by Innovation Vouchers, has resulted in a significant and increasing volume of non-grant contract research, demonstrating direct market relevance and effectiveness in practice. The SEV alone generated 8,255 thousand CZK (327.19 thousand EUR) in 2023 from expert activities.

International collaborations are systematic and support the VSTE's goals of increasing internationalisation and research quality, although they are mostly focused on cooperation rather than leading high-prestige competitive research. The VSTE is involved in international cooperation through projects such as GREENPACT (Interreg Central Europe), RUMOBIL, and those funded by the Visegrad Fund. Collaboration is strongly facilitated through mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ and participation in CEEPUS networks. Mobility examples demonstrate effectiveness in knowledge exchange and research development, such as the seismology research collaboration in Turkey (Bogazici University), which facilitated the comparison of methodological approaches and strengthened the international research network in seismology. Partnerships span across Europe (Croatia, Finland, Poland, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Turkey) and Asia (Russia, China, South Korea), with focus on Slovakia and Poland.

A key limitation of the collaboration system is the lack of demonstrated success in collaborations that target the highest tier of international competitive funding or research excellence. The examples lack evidence of the VSTE acting as a major partner or coordinator in globally competitive framework programmes (e.g., Horizon Europe, ERC).

While the VSTE collaboration leads to concrete practical outcomes (e.g., software, certified methodologies, changes in corporate practice), the VSTE acknowledged that in some cases, the collaborations are not accompanied by direct measurable outputs clearly demonstrating the benefits in the field of research, development and innovations, and that secondary outputs have not been systematically recorded. The VSTE aims to create a structured database to link these outputs and their impacts with specific partners in the future.

Recommendations:

1. VŠTE must strategically leverage its unique applied expertise in specialized niches (e.g., technical analysis, valuation methodologies, or neural networks for financial prediction) to secure Coordinator or Work Package Lead roles in major European framework programmes, such as Horizon Europe.
2. Translate the unique national expertise held by the SEV, particularly its legal licensing for valuation and expert opinions (for courts, police, and tax authorities), into formalized collaboration with international bodies, European regulatory agencies, or multilateral organizations.

3. Leverage existing regional success and proprietary models (such as the PVA model) to proactively secure significant contract research and strategic consultancy revenue from national or international clients *outside* the South Bohemia region.

STUDIES

4.13 Doctoral studies	
Evaluate the described organisation of doctoral studies. Pay attention to the setup and quality of the processes, as well as their effectiveness through basic statistics, such as drop-out rate or data on the future career of graduates.	
Rating [1–5]:	N/A - Not Applicable
Qualitative assessment:	
N/A	
Recommendations:	
N/A	

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4	
Evaluate how the HEI has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.	
If the HEI has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.	
Rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Qualitative assessment:	
The VSTE is rated 4 (Very good) because the institution successfully implemented systemic changes and adopted well-established policies and procedures to address nearly all key weaknesses identified in the previous evaluation cycle, particularly concerning the structure of R&D management, internal transparency, and internationalisation support. The implementation demonstrates a clear, strategic commitment to enhancing the viability of the VSTE as a research organisation. The original evaluation report (2020) rated Module 4 overall as Average (Score 2), identifying numerous deficits in management and strategy, particularly where the VSTE was rated "Below average" or "Inadequate" (e.g., Data Management, Doctoral Studies, Start-up Strategy). The institution's response demonstrates effective implementation across the major thematic areas: The previous IEP recommended developing a transparent research financial strategy, rules for awarding research grants related to strategic directions, and improving the R&D support infrastructure (Recommendations 4.1–4.5). The VSTE addressed this centrally through the ETMS, formally introduced by Directive No. 2/2018. The ETMS now serves as the comprehensive internal management tool for planning, monitoring, and evaluating research activities, including financial allocation. Key modules (GOALS, ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS) support strategic research direction and objective performance evaluation. This rectified the initial lack of transparency and provided the HEI with a structured framework for managing its R&D strategy. The VSTE also implemented plans to strengthen institutional support for intellectual property management through specialised internal units. The IEP recommended supporting doctoral studies, introducing measures to harmonise family life and work, and strengthening gender equality measures (Recommendations 4.14–4.18). The VSTE addressed HR development through the HR module in ETMS, which allows for the creation of individual development plans. The VSTE, despite not running its own doctoral programmes, systematically supports staff participation in doctoral education through institutional partnerships	

and career planning. The VSTE implements measures to support work-life balance and gender equality in accordance with its human resources strategy. The VSTE has confirmed that efforts are ongoing to develop support structures that encourage increased participation of women in academic leadership and research. The VSTE committed to including more detailed statistical data in future self-assessment reports to reflect these developments.

The IEP recommended improving internationalization by increasing staff mobility, establishing a general and long-term oriented internationalization strategy, and transforming internships into specific projects (Recommendations 4.10–4.13). Internationalisation was defined as a strategic priority in the Long-term Plan for 2021–2027. The VSTE achieved a quantitative increase in international mobility for students and staff (e.g., Erasmus+ and CEEPUS). The ETMS system facilitates the planning and evaluation of mobility activities, ensuring alignment with strategic goals. The selection policy for participants is now based on transparent criteria.

The VSTE committed to strengthening its strategic approach to international grant applications and expanded its research support services (Recommendations 4.19–4.20), particularly in preparing applications for European grant schemes. The PROJECTS module in ETMS supports lifecycle management for all projects.

The IEP recommended further equipping laboratories, making them available to external units, developing an Open Access strategy, and founding an online open repository for publications (Recommendations 4.24–4.28). The VSTE continues to invest in infrastructure with a focus on accessibility for both internal and external stakeholders. The VSTE has initiated the Open Science II project, which explicitly includes the creation of an institutional repository intended to improve open access and data transparency, while balancing this with IP protection. This directly addresses the previous weakness (Data Management was rated 1 - Below average in 2020). The VSTE also systematically evaluates successful projects to identify and generalise examples of good practice.

The IEP recommended supporting the development of research units or centres and establishing an external advisory board consisting of an international body (Recommendations 4.21–4.23). The VSTE has begun establishing research teams and internal units. However, the VSTE reports that a dedicated international advisory board has not yet been formally established. The function is currently fulfilled by the Academic Council, which includes members from external academic and professional institutions. The VSTE intends to extend this structure to include international experts in the future.

Recommendations:

N/A

MODULE 4 RATING

MODULE 4 – SUMMARY EVALUATION

After evaluating each indicator, please provide an overall evaluation of Module 4. Assess the overall state of the research and institutional environment and the quality of the internal processes of the HEI. Consider whether and how the set processes contribute to the fulfilment of the HEI's mission and vision.

The aggregate grade is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as a simple average of the scores for each indicator.

INDICATOR	RATING [1–5]
4.1 Organisation and management of R&D&I	4 - Very good
4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science	3 - Average
4.3 Quality control system for R&D&I environment	4 - Very good
4.4 Sustainability and resilience of R&D&I	4 - Very good
4.5 Structure of human resources	4 - Very good
4.6 Academic and Research Careers	3 - Average
4.7 Gender equality measures	3 - Average
4.8 Mobility of academic and research staff (including sectoral and inter-sectoral mobility)	4 - Very good
4.9 Research infrastructure	4 - Very good
4.10 Budget and structure of financial resources	4 - Very good
4.11 Rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO	4 - Very good
4.12 Important collaborations in R&D&I	4 - Very good
4.13 Doctoral studies	N/A - Not Applicable
4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4	4 - Very good
AVERAGE RATING	4 - Very good
GRADE [A–D]	B

Summary assessment:

The VSTE receives an Overall Grade of B (Very Good) for Module 4, indicating that the VSTE operates with well-established high-level policies and procedures and achieves results at a nationally competitive level with a significant regional contribution. The viability of the VSTE as a research organization is strong, largely due to successful systemic restructuring and clear financial alignment with its mission of applied research.

The VSTE successfully implemented the ETMS, which serves as the comprehensive internal tool for R&D management, monitoring, evaluation, and performance-based financial allocation. This

rectified the initial lack of transparency identified in the 2020 evaluation, which resulted in a previous score of 2 (Average) for Module 4.

The financial structure is highly appropriate for a professionally-oriented institution, with a dynamic budget showing strong growth and a high focus on applied research (92.5%–100% of R&D costs in 2022–2023). The rules for using LCDRO funds (Indicator 4.11) are strategically driven by performance and contribute effectively to the mission, including funding Master's level research (SVV).

The VSTE achieved an Outstanding (5) rating for its research infrastructure, demonstrating continuous and strategic investment in central laboratories and technical equipment highly suitable for its applied technical and economic mission.

The VSTE demonstrated a Very Good (4) rating for Implementation of recommendations in Module 4 (4.14), successfully acting upon almost all systemic deficits identified in the 2020 evaluation, including R&D management, internationalisation support, and Open Access strategy (Open Science II project).

The effectiveness of career development is limited by the absence of doctoral study programmes and the inability to conduct its own habilitation and professor procedures, leading to a persistent reliance on external competitors for senior rank achievement.

While successful nationally (TA CR), the VSTE demonstrates a clear gap in securing highly prestigious, globally competitive research projects (e.g., ERC, MSCA).

The VSTE lacks certain key formal structures necessary for internationally competitive governance, specifically the formal establishment of an International Evaluation Board in its Statutes.

Furthermore, while gender measures are strong in policy, the absence of a formal GEP and lack of demonstrable impact metrics in top management roles limits compliance with international standards.

The policies regarding institutional resilience (4.4) (cyber security, risk treatment, resistance to foreign influence) are articulated, but the VSTE failed to provide specific examples or measurable data demonstrating the effectiveness of their implementation over the evaluation period.

Summary recommendations:

1. Address Structural Academic Gaps (4.6): Formalize robust, long-term strategic partnerships with accredited universities (nationally or internationally) for the co-supervision of doctoral studies and the formal promotion of VSTE staff to Associate Professor and Professor ranks.
2. Elevate International Financial Competitiveness (4.10): Allocate dedicated resources to establishing a central R&D acquisition support unit focused solely on preparing and securing proposals for high-prestige, individual international competitive grants (e.g., Horizon Europe coordination, MSCA).
3. Formalize International Governance and Ethics (4.3, 4.7). Institutionalize External Review: Incorporate the role and function of a formally constituted International Evaluation Board into VSTE's official Statutes and organizational rules. Mandate GEP and Parity: Develop and adopt a formal, internationally compliant Gender Equality Plan (GEP), and establish and track measurable targets for increasing female representation in top R&D management roles (Dean, Vice-Rector).
4. Quantify Policy Effectiveness and Resilience (4.4, 4.7): Implement systematic tracking mechanisms (via ETMS) to provide statistics demonstrating the effectiveness of HR and gender policies, such as staff return rates after parental leave. Furthermore, develop and document formal implementation procedures and metrics for cyber security, risk assessment/treatment, and research data management systems.
5. Expand Commercialization (4.10): Systematically use the forthcoming Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator to generate measurable revenue from spin-off companies and formalize licensing agreements for certified methodologies and software tools to ensure long-term, non-grant financial sustainability.

MODULE 5 – STRATEGY AND POLICIES

5.1 Mission and vision of the evaluated institution in R&D&I	
Evaluate the described vision and general mission of the university emphasizing R&D&I (in context of its educational function and the educational policy strategy of the state or the relevant ministry for higher education. Compare the defined mission with reality. The evaluation should consider how the mission and vision of the HEI has been fulfilled in the past five-year period and whether the vision for the next five-year period is adequately set and realistically achievable.	
Rating [1–5]:	3 - Average
Qualitative assessment: The VSTE is defined as a non-university public HEI that focuses primarily on technical and economic fields, emphasizing the practical application of graduates. This character is consistently reflected in its mission and vision statements. The VSTE's strategic framework is based on three integral building blocks: Education – Science and Research – Third Role. The VSTE is committed to providing high-quality higher education with a focus on social responsibility, tailored to meet the needs of industry and practice. The university specifically emphasizes engaging in research and development in areas with high practical application. The VSTE aims to establish itself as a renowned regional HEI with a unique position in professional education, aiming to be a recognised centre of applied research and innovation with great commercial potential. This mission addresses the importance of R&D&I activities and links them directly to helping institutions and companies in the South Bohemian Region. The VSTE's mission is appropriate for its designation as a professionally oriented HEI focused on regional contributions and applied research. The VSTE explicitly links its research results to teaching, actively involving students in R&D&I activities. The core mission is to provide professionally focused bachelor's and follow-up master's programs, develop applied research, and cooperate with companies and public administration to prepare experts for the regional labor market. The R&D&I policies partially relate to higher national and supranational strategic targets. The SER shows a clear effort to align the forward strategy (2026-2030) with mandatory policy frameworks: The VSTE adheres to the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the CR 2021+ by applying research outputs through contractual research and utilizing the ETMS system for research evaluation and strategic management. The VSTE actively participates in mobility programs (Erasmus+, CEEPUX) and aims for engagement in international research networks, aligning with the Internationalization Strategy of Higher Education until 2030. The prospective strategic documents (Long-term Plan for 2026-2030) fully respect the UN SDGs and relate to the GES 2021-2030. The VSTE successfully implemented its R&D&I mission during the evaluation period (2020-2024), particularly concerning its regional and applied focus, but struggled with key structural objectives. The missions and visions have been implemented and are highly interconnected with regional needs and demands. The VSTE has been successful in strengthening its creative activities, evidenced by growth in research projects from the TA CR projects. The management system (ETMS) has been effectively implemented to assign goals related to the strategy to individual managers, and results are regularly evaluated, affecting personal evaluations. The VSTE has confirmed that the priority and operational objectives set for R&D&I in the 2020–2025 Long-term Plan will be fully achieved regarding scope and quality, with one exception related to infrastructure completion. A key component of the mission/strategic priorities listed in the SER for the previous period (2015-2019) was the goal "To accredit doctoral studies for both technical and economic studies". However, the institution still does not implement PhD programs, which is acknowledged as a key weakness harming the institution's development in R&D&I. The earlier evaluation (covering the period leading	

up to 2020) criticized the mission and strategy for lacking a clear research strategy, being below average in most parameters, and needing alignment with international goals (such as UN SDGs and the Smart Specialization Strategy of the Czech Republic).

The vision for the next five-year period (2026–2030) is adequately set and demonstrates a clear strategic intent to overcome past weaknesses and enhance international competitiveness. The strategy aims to solidify VSTE's position as a leading research entity with a direct impact on practice. The long-term vision is highly ambitious: VSTE will become a "recognized centre of applied research and innovation with high commercial potential and added value, increasing international dimensions, and graduates who are leaders, entrepreneurs, and visionaries". The new strategic research priorities explicitly include supporting research activities with a particular focus on sustainable development. This directly responds to the earlier recommendation to align research with goals like the Green Deal and UN SDGs. A key focus is on innovation and knowledge transfer, with the objective to increase contract research and commercialize research outcomes through licensing, patents, and spin-off companies. The strategy includes building a business incubator offering acceleration programs. Institutional tools (e.g., the continuously updated ETMS) are in place to support the achievement of objectives, emphasizing support for quality R&D&I, excellent science, and the innovative environment.

The strategy benefits from continuity, coherence, and integration with development materials extending to 2030, providing a strong foundation. However, achievability remains linked to resolving major structural challenges. Although VSTE supports staff pursuing PhDs externally, the ability to accredit and run its own PhD programmes (a long-term strategic priority) remains limited by its current non-university status, significantly impacting the ability to generate internal academic staff and achieve "Excellent Science". The vision calls for "increased international dimensions". Achieving internationally competitive results, particularly in securing prestigious European funding (like Horizon Europe), is a known weakness that the new strategy must actively overcome to fulfil the vision fully.

Overall, the VSTE has moved beyond merely fulfilling its regional mission by designing a formal, structured strategic framework that explicitly addresses national and international research goals and previous evaluation recommendations. However, fundamental structural constraints related to doctoral studies place limitations on the full realization of the "excellence" component of the future vision.

Recommendations:

1. VSTE must move beyond informal reliance on "the helpfulness of other tertiary institutes". The institution should establish formal, long-term strategic partnerships with accredited universities (nationally and internationally) that specifically define clear career acceleration tracks for VSTE employees to pursue PhDs and eventually attain habilitation (Associate Professor) ranks. Dedicate a specific, measurable portion of the institutional support funds (LCDRO) to co-financing research costs (e.g., infrastructure access, long-term mobility, or materials) for VSTE staff members who successfully enroll in external PhD programmes through these strategic partnerships. This demonstrates tangible institutional commitment to developing the high-level human capital necessary to fulfill the ambitious research vision.
2. Implement clear internal rules that formally apportion academic staff time into FTEs dedicated explicitly to research/creative activities, teaching, and administration. This allocation should be tracked transparently through the ETMS system and explicitly linked to career growth plans to demonstrate a genuine commitment to supporting specialised research careers.
3. The VSTE vision must be accompanied by a detailed strategic action plan that explicitly defines how the commitment to UN SDGs, the Green Deal, and the National/Regional RIS3 Strategy translates into specific, mandatory research themes and quantifiable output targets for each unit and research team.

5.2 Research and development objectives

Evaluate the set goals of the HEI in both the area of R&D&I and the development of the HEI as an institution. Consider whether the goals are adequately established in relation to the size and type of the HEI, as well as its mission and vision, and whether they are achievable within the proposed timeframe.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The goals described for the next five-year period detail VSTE's intentions in research, development, innovation (R&D&I), knowledge transfer, cooperation with external organizations, and the development of the institution's viability:

1. Adequacy of Goals in Relation to Size, Type, Mission, and Vision

The objectives are adequate and appropriate for VSTE's institutional identity as a non-university public HEI focused on professional education and applied research, primarily serving the South Bohemia Region. The primary objective is to solidify VSTE's position as a leading research entity contributing to technical and economic disciplines, with a direct impact on practice through applied research. This focus is substantiated by the historical financial structure, where Applied Research consistently accounted for over 90% of VSTE's R&D activities during the evaluation period. The goals explicitly link R&D&I priorities (quality, quantity, international cooperation) with institutional development objectives, such as strengthening the human potential development, institutional resilience, and adherence to principles of ethics and scientific integrity. The stated objectives are consistent with the institutional vision to be a "recognised centre of applied research and innovation with a great commercial potential". The proposed objectives demonstrate a clear commitment to addressing higher national and supranational strategic targets, which was a significant recommendation from the previous evaluation.

The new goals specifically mandate:

- A focus on research activities related to sustainable development.
- Integrating sustainability and environmental considerations as core parameters in research final reports.
- Developing research in high-application areas such as digitalization, automation, Industry 4.0, energy innovation, and smart mobility.
- The strategy fully respects the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Achievability within the Proposed Timeframe

The achievability of the strategic objectives is supported by the current viability and management framework of the VSTE, yet it is significantly constrained by the long-standing structural limitations. The implementation of goals is highly structured through the ETMS, which ensures that strategic objectives are linked to individual performance evaluation and the transparent allocation of LCDRO funds. The current system successfully creates pressure to achieve quality results. The VSTE reports that the priority and operational objectives set for R&D&I in the previous Long-term Plan (2020–2025) will be fully achieved. This demonstrates a viable track record of converting strategic intentions into realized outcomes. The goal of ensuring a high standard of research infrastructure is substantially secured. The research infrastructure received an Outstanding (5) rating in the Module 4, confirming a strong material and technical base (Central Laboratories) for application and contract research. The financial resource structure is rated as Very good (4), providing a robust basis for institutionally supported research activities.

The ambitious goals to achieve "excellence in applied research" and systematically support the career development of academic staff are severely limited by the institution's inability to organize internal doctoral study programmes or conduct habilitation procedures. This structural issue forces

VSTE to rely on external HEIs (its competitors) for staff advancement, hindering the internal generation of high-quality academics necessary to lead complex research programs. The goal of actively promoting participation in international research consortia and programs (such as Horizon Europe) is ambitious but lacks established foundation. Achieving competitive success in these major European frameworks is crucial to realizing the vision of "increasing international dimensions". Objectives related to commercializing research outcomes via licensing, patents, and spin-off companies are explicitly stated. While VSTE plans to build a business incubator and supporting tools, the effectiveness of these mechanisms remains prospective, as the most critical infrastructure (e.g., the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator) was scheduled for launch in 2025. The set research and development objectives for the next five-year period are better defined and substantially more aligned with strategic policy than those assessed in the previous evaluation period. The objectives are appropriate for VSTE's applied, non-university profile and leverage its established regional strengths and improved internal management (ETMS, infrastructure). However, the most transformative goals—those concerning true international competitiveness and the achievement of "excellence" in research—remain constrained by the lack of internal doctoral study programmes. This structural deficit limits the feasibility of generating the high-quality internal human capital required to lead the ambitious R&D agenda over the long term, preventing a definitive "Very good" rating until this fundamental limitation is strategically bypassed or mitigated.

Recommendations:

1. The VSTE must proactively mitigate its structural limitation by establishing formal, mandatory strategic partnerships with external, accredited HEIs. These agreements must define clear, subsidized, and accelerated PhD and habilitation tracks for VSTE staff, thus proving the institution's commitment to growing its internal research leaders.
2. The strategic objectives for 2026–2030 must be supplemented with explicit KPIs designed to position VSTE as a Coordinator or Work Package Lead in complex competitive European projects (e.g., Horizon Europe).
3. Define measurable financial objectives linked specifically to the commercial transfer of non-traditional Intellectual Property (IP).

5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy

Evaluate the described institutional and strategic instruments for the fulfilment of the research and development objectives regarding how they will contribute to the fulfilment of these objectives. In your evaluation, also pay attention to the possible absence of key instruments or measures.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The VSTE describes a set of management tools and regulations designed to systematically implement its strategy, particularly in supporting applied and regional research. The central and most critical instrument supporting the new research strategy is the ETMS. This proprietary information system is fully implemented and used across all units. The VSTE has complementary financial and structural tools aimed at fulfilling its goals in innovation, knowledge transfer, and securing application-oriented funding. The Internal Grant Competition (IGS) and Specific University Research (SVV) programmes provide funding for projects carried out by academics and students, focusing on current institutional needs and applied research. The strategic commitment to commercialization is formalized through Regulation No. 2/2014 SYSTEM OF START-UPS AND SPIN-OFFS FUNCTIONING. Crucially, the VSTE is leveraging external programmes (PPSŘ) to build a business incubator and establish an entrepreneurial hub. The Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator is scheduled for launch under the FCS's auspices in 2025. The VSTE continuously invests

in research infrastructure, with a strategy to acquire equipment primarily through project activities (e.g., TA CR grants) to ensure direct alignment with research goals. The internal organization of laboratories facilitates shared use and booking via the institution's Information System.

Institutional rules, often managed through the ETMS, ensure adherence to ethical principles and regulatory compliance. The VSTE adheres to ethical principles through an established Code of Ethics and an Ethics Committee. The scientific work process includes mandatory anti-plagiarism checks on student dissertations via the Information System. The VSTE has internal guidelines for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issued in 2019 and internal measures to protect IP, citing its accumulation of patents, utility models, and industrial designs. The VSTE relies on the Professional Committee (comprising the largest companies in the region) to provide valuable feedback on R&D direction, graduate profiles, and collaboration opportunities, linking research to corporate needs. Despite the strength of its internal operational and management tools, the strategic instruments currently described show limitations in achieving the most ambitious goals of the institutional strategy. The ambition to achieve "Excellent science" and increase "international competitiveness" is hampered by the absence of a specialized, dedicated central unit for R&D acquisition staffed by professionals (such as science managers or grant writers). The current structure relies on R&D support being integrated into general job descriptions. This lack of specialization is explicitly noted as a limitation on successfully obtaining highly prestigious international grants (e.g., Horizon Europe, ERC). While the VSTE seeks international feedback, a key instrument for institutional quality control—a formal International Evaluation Board or International Scientific Council—is not yet formally established or incorporated into its statutes or organizational rules. The current dependence on the Professional Committee (primarily regional/national companies) provides regional relevance but not the continuous, independent international guidance needed to lift research quality to an international competitive level. The instruments aimed at the innovation environment, such as the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator and its associated acceleration programmes, are prospective instruments scheduled for full implementation after the evaluation period (2025). Their effectiveness in systematically converting VSTE's applied intellectual property (e.g., patents, software, certified methodologies) into financially viable spin-off companies remains unproven. Although VSTE is working on the Open Science II project (including plans for an institutional repository), the institution currently lacks a fully developed institutional strategy for Open Access/Open Science 2.0 and a clearly detailed concept for research data management (data collection, archiving, and sharing). These are critical instruments for institutional resilience and adherence to modern European R&D standards.

The VSTE's descriptive materials for Indicator 5.3 outline a strategy built upon a strong foundation of internal management tools (primarily ETMS) which effectively links research activity to institutional funding, successfully supporting its mission of regional applied research. However, the ambitious vision for increased international competitiveness and "excellent science" lacks clearly established, proven, specialized instruments and personnel necessary to achieve these results in the upcoming period. This gap, combined with the prospective nature of key commercialization structures, supports a score that reflects limited potential for high-level future development in the competitive international arena.

Recommendations:

1. The VSTE must formally develop and approve a Statutory International Evaluation/Scientific Board and integrate its advisory function into the R&D management system. This measure must be enshrined in the VSTE's official Statutes and organisational rules to ensure its permanence and authority. The Board's mandate should explicitly include providing continuous, objective, international peer feedback on R&D strategic priorities, quality standards, and progress toward internationalisation goals, ensuring that VSTE's policies are benchmarked against global standards, not just regional needs.

2. Create and staff a dedicated central Research Acquisition Support Unit focused exclusively on preparing and administering high-value, competitive international grant proposals (e.g., Horizon Europe, MSCA). This unit must be staffed with specialized technical and economic personnel (e.g., science managers, project writers) capable of reducing the administrative burden on academics and improving the methodological quality of international applications. Success metrics for this new unit (e.g., number of high-quality proposals submitted, success rate in highly competitive foreign calls) must be tracked explicitly via the ETMS system.
3. Fully implement and institutionalize formal R&D governance instruments related to modern science practices, specifically focusing on RDM and IP training. Finalize and roll out the Open Science II project by integrating an institutional RDM concept (covering data collection, archiving, sharing, and security) into mandatory internal standards. Implement a mandatory training system for all academic staff and students in Intellectual Property (IP) protection and technology transfer. This measure must be monitored quantitatively (e.g., tracking the number of staff/students trained annually and completion rates using the ETMS system) to demonstrate effectiveness and compliance.

5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5

Evaluate how the HEI has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the HEI has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The 2025 SER indicates that the VSTE has implemented systemic changes and new strategies designed to address nearly all the previous deficits indicated by the IEP in the 2020 evaluation report.

The VSTE reports that throughout the 2020–2024 period, it adhered to and effectively implemented the recommendations of the IEP for Module 5. The strategic materials for the long-term plan (extending to 2030) fully considered the previous recommendations and themes.

The implementation efforts focused on three core areas identified as weaknesses in 2020: strategic scope and alignment, international competitiveness, and institutional tools.

The VSTE's reflection to Recommendations 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 from 2020 is highly effective. The Long-term Plan for 2026–2030 fully respects the UN SDGs. Applied research is now structured to focus on areas like the South Bohemia region with high environmental value, documenting the real implementation of principles anchored in the SDGs. The VSTE's current vision covers the subsequent five-year period (2025+) and relates directly to the strategic objectives of the Provider, the National Policy on Research, Development, and Innovation of the Czech Republic 2021+, and the Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030. The priority and operational objectives set for R&D&I for the 2020–2024 period were successfully met.

The 2020 IEP noted a lack of strategy and tools to increase international or sectoral competitiveness and specifically recommended efforts toward internationalisation and participating in international projects, such as Horizon 2020 (Recommendations 5.2, 5.4).

The VSTE has committed to strengthening its strategic approach to international grant applications and expanded its research support services for preparing European grant schemes. The strategic vision supports the mobility of academic staff and engagement in international research networks.

The VSTE actively participates in international programmes such as Erasmus+, CEEPUS, and is actively involved in cooperation through projects like GREENPACT (Interreg Central Europe).

The 2020 IEP recommended continuing development and improvement of existing systems to be more competitive and intensifying the focus on the innovation environment (Recommendation

5.5). The VSTE's reflection for this recommendation is highly effective. The key recommendation for systematic management was addressed by the formal implementation of the ETMS. The ETMS now functions as a comprehensive internal management tool for planning, monitoring, and evaluating research activities, including financial allocation and objective performance evaluation. This system ensures transparency in recording creative activities like scientific papers, patents, software, and certified methodologies. The VSTE established facilities for the development of spin-off companies. The university plans to launch the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator under the Faculty of Corporate Strategy's auspices in 2025 to provide direct support for student business plans.

While implementation has been robust in policy and systemic management, certain long-standing limitations identified in the 2020 evaluation remain structurally unresolved or are still prospective. A critical objective mentioned in the context of the 2020 strategies was to implement an accredited doctoral program. VSTE explicitly states that Ph.D. studies are not implemented. The 2020 evaluation recommended establishing an external advisory board consisting of an international body. The VSTE reports that a dedicated international advisory board has not yet been formally established, with its function currently being fulfilled by the Academic Council (which includes external academic and professional members).

The VSTE successfully responded to the majority of the strategic and policy recommendations from 2020. The institution moved from having an internally limited, vaguely defined strategy (evaluated as "average" in 2020) to possessing a structured, policy-aligned framework that integrates national and supranational goals (SDGs, Gender Strategy) and utilizes a robust management tool (ETMS) to ensure implementation. This strong demonstration of systemic change and commitment to the future development of R&D&I justifies a high rating for this indicator.

Recommendations:

While the VSTE successfully leverages its Academic Council or Professional Committee to obtain external feedback and reports the intent to extend this structure to include international experts in the future, the function of an independent, high-level International Evaluation Board (IEB) is not yet formally established in its governing documents. The VSTE must formally integrate the role, function, and mandate of an International Evaluation Board (IEB) or equivalent high-level advisory body composed primarily of independent international R&D experts, into its official Statutes and organizational rules.

MODULE 5 RATING

MODULE 5 – SUMMARY EVALUATION

After evaluating each indicator, please provide an overall evaluation of Module 5. Evaluate the overall setting of the HEI's strategic objectives and development plan.

The aggregate grade is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as a simple average of the scores for each indicator.

INDICATOR	RATING [1–5]
5.1 Mission and vision of the evaluated institution in R&D&I	3 - Average
5.2 Research and development objectives	3 - Average
5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy	3 - Average
5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5	4 - Very good
AVERAGE RATING	3 - Average

GRADE [A–D]	C
Summary assessment: The resulting overall Module 5 is grade of C - Average. The strategic objectives and development plan of the Institute of Technology and Business (VSTE) for the next five-year period (2026–2030) are adequate for its type and mission, yet their full realization is significantly constrained by structural limitations. The VSTE operates as a professionally oriented, non-university HEI, prioritizing applied research and regional contribution. The strategic framework, which defines the vision for the next period, clearly positions the VSTE as a "recognised centre of applied research and innovation with a great commercial potential". The institution has decisively addressed the major criticisms from the previous 2020 evaluation (Indicator 5.4 rated 4 - Very good), successfully implementing systemic changes. The new strategy is comprehensively aligned with current national and supranational policy documents, including the National Policy on R&D&I 2021+, the GES 2021-2030, and full adherence to the UN SDGs. The establishment and active utilization of the ETMS is a significant institutional instrument. This system ensures that strategy is translated into measurable goals (KPIs), tracks the transparency of research activities (including patents, software, and certified methodologies), and links performance directly to the allocation of institutional support (LCDRO). This mechanism provides a robust foundation for supporting applied research quality. The objectives related to strengthening regional applied research, innovation, and contract research are demonstrably achievable, given the viability of the institution's finances and infrastructure (rated 5 - Outstanding for infrastructure in Module 4). The VSTE confirms that the previous R&D objectives set for 2020–2024 will be fully achieved. The VSTE's long-term strategic ambition to achieve "Excellent science" and implement a doctoral program remains unrealized. The lack of accredited PhD studies is a critical constraint. This limitation hinders the VSTE's capacity to organically develop the high-quality internal academic staff necessary to sustain the growth trajectory towards internationally competitive research. While the strategy aims for "increasing the international dimensions," the ambitious objectives for international competitiveness are not yet matched by proven institutional instruments and track record. Specifically, VSTE lacks evidence of formalized, specialized support (e.g., dedicated grant managers) and a successful portfolio in securing highly competitive European grants (e.g., Horizon Europe). Several key instruments necessary to achieve the "great commercial potential" vision are prospective, such as the newly planned Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator. The effectiveness of these structures in generating quantifiable commercial success (spin-offs, significant license revenue) is yet to be demonstrated within the subsequent evaluation period. Summary recommendations: 1. The VSTE must institutionalize formal, strategic agreements with accredited universities, nationally or internationally, that define clear, subsidized, and accelerated PhD and Habilitation pathways exclusively for VSTE staff. This must be accompanied by explicit integration into the ETMS HR Module (Indicator 5.3) that dedicates measurable FTE time and LCDRO funds to employees pursuing advanced academic qualifications through these pathways, thereby demonstrating a systemic commitment to internal staff development despite the non-university status constraint. 2. To achieve the strategic goal of increased international competitiveness, the VSTE needs to create and formally resource a dedicated central R&D Acquisition Support Unit. This unit should be staffed by professionals (e.g., science managers, grant writers) whose primary mission is to secure highly prestigious competitive European grants (e.g., Horizon Europe, MSCA). Success metrics for this unit must be included in the strategic plan and tracked	

quantitatively via the ETMS, moving VSTE's international funding profile beyond regional projects toward global participation.

3. The strategic plan must shift the focus from merely launching innovation infrastructure (like the Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator) to quantifiable proof of commercialization success (Indicator 5.2). The VSTE should define and track clear KPIs linked to: (a) Measurable financial income generated from licensing or selling its "soft" Intellectual Property (IP)—such as certified methodologies and proprietary software—to external, non-grant-funded organizations; and (b) the sustained operation and measurable revenue of multiple spin-off companies directly resulting from VSTE research outputs.

OVERALL EVALUATION IN MODULES 1 TO 5

OVERALL EVALUATION

Provide a summary evaluation of the HEI as a whole across all five modules. Justify your evaluation and highlight the main strengths and/or weaknesses of the evaluated HEI. The overall grade is determined according to the rules of the "Methodology VŠ2025+".

MODULE	MODULE WEIGHT	GRADE [A–D]
MODULE 1 and 2	50 %	D
MODULE 3	30 %	B
MODULE 4	10 %	B
MODULE 5	10 %	C

OVERALL RATING

C – Average

Qualitative assessment:

Based on the evaluation criteria, the VSTE receives an Overall Rating of C (Average). This outcome results primarily from the high weighting (50%) assigned to Modules 1 and 2, which assess the quality of selected results and research performance at the national level. In these modules, the VSTE demonstrated low robustness, failing to meet the minimum quota requirements for selected results in Module 1, and recording overall outputs far below the national and EU average in Module 2.

The overall evaluation of the VSTE is determined by aggregating the results of all five modules, using a weighted average defined by the Methodology HEI2025+.

The VSTE operates as a non-university public HEI focused on professional education and applied research, serving the specific needs of the South Bohemia Region. The comprehensive evaluation reveals a highly viable and well-managed institution that successfully executes its regional mission, yet its overall grade is constrained by historical and structural limitations related to international research competitiveness and academic progression.

The primary strengths lie in the institution's robust internal management and its successful fulfillment of its mission in applied research and social relevance (Modules 3 and 4 were rated Very Good / B).

The VSTE has successfully implemented the Excellent Top Manager System (ETMS), a proprietary management tool that ensures transparency in recording creative activities, monitors staff performance, and links results directly to the allocation of institutional support (LCDRO). This systemic reform addressed previous weaknesses in management transparency identified in 2020. The financial structure is highly appropriate for its applied mission, characterized by strong budget growth and a concentration of funding almost exclusively on Applied Research (92.5%–100% of R&D costs in 2022–2023).

The institution achieved a Very Good (4) rating for its research infrastructure (Module 4.9), demonstrating continuous and strategic institutional investment in central laboratories and equipment highly suitable for its technical and economic mission.

The VSTE excels in generating non-traditional research outputs (Certified Methodologies, Software, Prototypes) highly relevant to the social sciences and technology sectors. These outputs are demonstrably applied by regional partners, providing a significant regional contribution. The School of Expertness and Valuation (SEV) exhibits outstanding effectiveness in leveraging its unique mandate (licensed expert institution) into financial success, generating substantial revenue from non-public, non-grant sources. This mandated role involves formalized collaboration with state offices, including courts, tax authorities, and the Police of the CR, serving as a unique marker of national recognition and social relevance.

The overall evaluation grade is constrained by structural deficits, particularly concerning human capital development and internationalization. The most significant limiting factor is the institution's non-university status, leading to the absence of internal accredited doctoral study programmes (PhD) and the inability to conduct its own habilitation and professor procedures. This forces VŠTE to rely on external, competing HEIs for staff advancement, hindering the internal development of high-quality academic leaders necessary to meet its ambitious future strategic goals. Performance in the nationally evaluated Modules 1 and 2 is weak, lacking robustness and consistently falling below national/EU averages. The VSTE demonstrates a clear gap in securing highly prestigious, globally competitive international research projects (e.g., Horizon Europe, ERC, MSCA), focusing instead on national applied grants (TA CR, MIT CR) and mobility/cooperation schemes (Erasmus+, CEEPUS). The ambition for "increased international dimensions" in the strategy is not yet matched by proven financial track record in competitive international programs. Despite effective internal management (ETMS), the VSTE lacks formal structures critical for internationally competitive governance, such as the formal establishment and integration of an International Evaluation Board into its official Statutes. Furthermore, key policies related to institutional resilience (e.g., cyber security, risk treatment) are articulated but lack demonstrable implementation examples or measurable effectiveness data. Key units (FT) reported zero revenue from formal commercialization activities (licensing, spin-off sales). While the VSTE has a strategy and facilities (e.g., the forthcoming Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator), their effectiveness in generating quantifiable commercial success remains prospective.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are critical for the VSTE to overcome structural limitations, elevate its overall evaluation grade, and solidify its long-term ambition to become a "recognized centre of applied research and innovation with high commercial potential".

1. The VSTE must formalize robust, long-term strategic partnerships with external, accredited HEIs (nationally or internationally) to create clear, subsidized, and accelerated PhD and Habilitation tracks exclusively for VSTE staff. This commitment must be integrated into the ETMS HR Module, dedicating measurable FTE time and LCDRO funds to employees pursuing advanced academic qualifications through these pathways.
2. Institutionalize the role and function of a formally constituted International Evaluation Board (IEB) or equivalent high-level advisory body, ensuring this measure is incorporated into VŠTE's official Statutes and organizational rules. This ensures continuous, independent international guidance for R&D strategic priorities.
3. Allocate dedicated financial and human resources to establishing a small, central R&D Acquisition Support Unit focused solely on preparing and securing proposals for high-prestige, competitive international grants (e.g., Horizon Europe coordination, MSCA).
4. Leverage the unique national legal expertise held by the SEV (e.g., licensed valuation methodologies, AI-based financial prediction tools) to actively target and secure documented formal validation or adoption by international organizations, foreign regulatory agencies, or judicial systems.

5. Systematically utilize the forthcoming Bavarian-Czech Student Incubator (scheduled for 2025 launch) to generate measurable revenue from spin-off companies and formalize licensing agreements for certified methodologies, software tools, and patents developed by the constituent units (FT, FCS, SEV).
6. Implement mandatory internal procedures (via the ETMS or the VSTE Information System) requiring all employees and students to formally confirm they have read and understood the relevant Codes of Ethics. Furthermore, establish systematic tracking mechanisms (via ETMS) to provide statistics demonstrating the effectiveness of HR and gender policies, such as staff return rates after parental leave. The institution must formally develop and approve a comprehensive Gender Equality Plan (GEP), with measurable targets for increasing female representation in top R&D management roles.