

# Frequently asked questions and comments on the Call for ecological and climate sustainability to the Czech Academy of Sciences

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During December 2019, we received a number of questions and critical comments regarding the Call. We appreciate all these comments. We respond to some of the most common ones below.

1. *What is the purpose of the Call? The Czech Academy of Sciences has a well-functioning [Committee for the Environment](#), the management of my institute organise public lectures on environmental issues, communicate with politicians, recently it had our building thermally insulated, ...*

We are in touch with employees of some worksites of the Academy who are proud of the attitude of their management and their own contribution. However, we believe that the issue of sustainable management and other activities mentioned in the call is a matter that should be coordinated with regards to all worksites of the Academy. We are also aware of the work of the Committee for the Environment and appreciate their activities on important environmental issues (e.g. microplastics, urban air pollution, drought). All the Commission's activities so far have been directed towards external affairs (for example, the recent expert opinion on the amendment to the Forestry Act). It is understandable that, given their limited capacity, the Commission preferred to address these issues (often with a countrywide impact). We believe that a similar systemic and expert approach should be developed for the purposes of the inner workings of the Academy, too.

2. *What specific steps should the Call lead to?*

The Call is intentionally formulated in general terms and does not contain any specific recommendations. We believe that an effective approach to sustainable development within the Academy requires deep and broad discussion and expertise beyond the competencies of the authors of the Call. In many respects, however, the Academy can be inspired by functioning steps taken at foreign academic institutions. In particular, the existence of a central unit that would

systematically address the issue of the sustainable management of individual workplaces seems crucial.

3. *You do not have any specific requirements under the first point.*

The Call is meant to give a framework on important sustainability issues the Academy should support and coordinate. We appreciate that there is already a debate about promoting research of particular social importance. The [AV21 strategy](#) is currently the most important product of this debate and several of its programs contribute to sustainability research, in particular

- program 3. [Efficient Energy Conversion and Storage](#),
- program 4. [Natural hazards](#),
- program 8. [Foods for the Future](#),
- program 9. [Diversity of Life and Health of Ecosystems](#).

We believe that this debate should continue and that it can bring other means of support.

4. *In the description of the second point, you encourage the Academy to speak with one voice in a dogmatic way on the issue of climate change.*

Not at all. We encourage communicating the issue of climate change in its whole complexity and emphasizing that many important issues about climate change have not been settled in the scientific community. Freedom of individual researchers to communicate their findings and the state-of-the-art knowledge in their field is of the utmost importance. Thus, the role of the Academy in this regard be for example coordinating and organizing public lecture series involving several worksites.

We also believe that the [Code of Ethics for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences](#) in points I.f), I.g), I.k) obliges researchers, including those in the top management of the Academy, to point out any serious distortion of current scientific knowledge, whether in academic or societal discourse.

5. *The central coordination of sustainable activities would endanger the independence of the individual institutes.*

We respect and appreciate the independence of individual institutes of the Academy and the specificity of their research. The coordination activities of the Academy are particularly important in those areas where the individual institutes do not have sufficient independent capacity (e.g. operation of kindergartens for employees, IT services). These complex activities beyond the usual expertise and capacity of individual workplaces also include ecologization of operations. As the references included in the Call show, such coordination is an essential aspect of sustainability management at foreign institutions of comparable sizes.