

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

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME: Mendel University in Brno

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 62156489

THE LIST OF EVALUATION UNITS IN MODULE 3:

Faculty of AgriSciences

Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology

Faculty of Business and Economics

Faculty of Horticulture

Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies

Institute of Lifelong Learning

CHAIRPERSON OF INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL

Name and surname: **Avi Schroeder**

Phone number: [REDACTED]

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LIST OF INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL MEMBERS		
Name and surname	Position in IEP	Current position
Avi Schroeder	chairperson	Full Professor of Chemical Engineering at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology
Jesús Crespo Cuaresma	member	Professor of Economics at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU)
Heinrich Grausgruber	member	Associate Professor at BOKU (Universität für Bodenkultur Wien), Vienna
Giovanna Martelli	member	Full Professor of Animal Science at the Department of Veterinary Medical Sciences (DIMEVET), University of Bologna
Juan Picos Martín	member	Professor at the School of Forestry Engineering, University of Vigo
Laura Mugnai	member	Full Professor in Plant Pathology at the University of Florence
Ismo Sarajärvi	member	Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Rovaniemi, Finland
Anastasiya Shamshur	member	Professor of Finance and Accounting at King's Business School, King's College London
Iva Kleiberová	secretary	Mendel University in Brno, Department of

		Scientific and Pedagogical Information and Services
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PROVIDERS METHODOLOGIST

Name and surname: Tomáš Barták

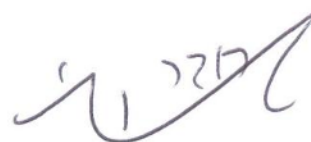
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Date of on-site visit of higher education institution:

In Brno, date 13. 5. 2025 – 14. 5. 2025

Signature



(IEP chairperson)

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of AgriSciences

FORD: 4 - Agriculture and veterinary 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:

FA has clearly articulated its mission and vision, aligning them with current global challenges in agriculture, food safety, sustainability, and landscape management. The mission emphasizes the education of professionals, the pursuit of both basic and applied research, and the transfer of scientific knowledge into practice. The vision reflects ambitions to strengthen the international reputation of the faculty and to contribute to the solution of pressing global issues.

The SER provides a structured overview of the FA's organisational structure and size. FA consists of 15 professional departments and employs approximately 400 staff members (around 280–300 FTE), while annually educating approximately 2,200 students across Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral programmes offered in Czech and English. The gender balance among students slightly favours women (~60%), and the representation of women among academic staff, especially associate and full professors, shows a positive increasing trend, although gender imbalance persists.

The description of research activities is comprehensive, providing a clear distribution between basic and applied research across multiple disciplines. The FA has published approximately 1,500 impact articles and achieved around 200 applied results over the evaluated period. Research activities are aligned with societal needs, especially in sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, and environmental protection. The division into ten thematic research blocks, complemented by the related FORD, enables easy orientation and demonstrates the FA's strategic research focus.

The FA's societal contribution is explicitly emphasized, building on previous achievements such as the Intersucho.cz platform, and further extending into areas like precision agriculture, antibiotic substitution in animal production, biotechnology, and sustainable tourism. Long-term development goals are well-defined, ambitious, and reflect a commitment to innovation, practical application, and societal impact.

Compared to the previous evaluation, the FA has maintained and strengthened its strategic position. The description of its societal relevance, staffing, research activities, and future goals is detailed and well-structured, fully corresponding to the requirements and accent points set for this evaluation phase.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:¹

FA has significantly strengthened its standing in the national and international scientific community. Compared to previous evaluations, there is a clear progression not only in the number of prestigious awards and recognitions, but also in the quality and international FA's visibility.

The increasing recognition of FA is evidenced by the fact that its researchers are repeatedly awarded by prestigious bodies such as the IUCN and leading global companies like Esri. Efforts to connect top-tier science with practical solutions have been recognized also in the start-up sector at European level, highlighting the FA growing entrepreneurial and application-oriented profile. The FA research excellence is further demonstrated by the invitations of its researchers by globally renowned institutions such as the University of Cambridge (Cambridge Zero Climate Change Festival) or key events hosted in Washington D.C. under the AIM4Climate initiative, reflecting that researchers contribute to the shaping of major global agendas such as climate-smart agriculture and biotechnological innovation. An extraordinary indicator of the FA's international reputation is the fact that key invited foreign lecturers during the period - Sir Paul Nurse, Emmanuelle Charpentier are Nobel Prize laureates, underscoring the FA to the very top of the global scientific elite. The participation of academic staff in the editorial boards of highly ranked international journals (e.g., *Microchimica Acta*, Q1) and their involvement in the evaluation of major European research funding schemes (ERC, NATO SPS) further confirm the high level of trust placed in our expertise by the international research community.

The FA has not only maintained but demonstrably improved its recognition in the scientific community. This improvement is reflected both in prestigious individual awards and in structural indicators such as active participation in major grant evaluations, editorial activities, and the ability to attract Nobel laureates for academic cooperation.

Recommendations:

- **Continuing to strengthen international collaborations**, particularly by inviting leading foreign experts and participating in high-profile international event is recommended.
- At the same time, we recommend **maintaining systematic support for publication activities in high-quality international journals** and ensuring effective communication of research results to both the expert community and the broader public in order to attract an attention of distinguished international partners.
- We suggest **considering support for long-term international mobility of academic staff including PhD students** and striving for a more balanced distribution of international experience across FA. If international activities are concentrated around only a few individuals, the FA as a whole may not be able to fully develop its international profile.
- The Zabčice experimental farm represents a distinctive asset for the faculty, offering rare infrastructural capacity in both animal and crop sciences at the European level. **Further efforts are needed to enhance its visibility** and better communicate its strategic value.

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.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

FA has significantly strengthened its project activities both in quantity and quality. The faculty managed more than 80 projects as a main beneficiary and participated in an additional 85 projects, with a total external funding exceeding EUR 22 million and contract research reaching almost EUR 1.8 million. The selected projects clearly demonstrate a strong alignment with the FA's mission, emphasizing applied outputs, interdisciplinarity, and cooperation with national and international partners.

FA was successful both in coordinating and participating in key national and international projects focusing on sustainability, environmental security, and innovation in agriculture and food production, including Horizon 2020, TA ČR schemes, and structural fund programs. One major initiative involved updating the Crisis Plan of the Ministry of the Environment, including the creation of strategies to mitigate environmental and food security threats. Another project developed an agrometeorological early warning system to predict weather-related risks affecting agriculture. Research also focused on precision agriculture and smart farming, with projects dedicated to optimizing pesticide use and improving the efficiency of agricultural machinery. Collaboration with the brewing industry resulted in the development of innovative uses for Czech raw materials and products. Other important projects included biotechnology research in plant biology and veterinary medicine, aimed at improving crop resistance, animal health, and sustainable food production. Several projects addressed antibiotic reduction, using natural alternatives like phyto additives or nanomaterials. These were successfully commercialized and exported. Finally, under the EU Horizon 2020 program, a project on cultural tourism developed tools for sustainable regional development, offering support to both overloaded and underdeveloped areas. Collectively, these activities confirm the faculty's strong role in addressing current challenges in agriculture, food safety, and environmental sustainability through applied research and interdisciplinary cooperation. Several projects, such as the Centre for Experimental Plant Biology and the National Centre for Biotechnology in Veterinary Medicine, underline the faculty's growing interdisciplinary expertise and capacity to contribute to major national research infrastructures.

Additionally, FA actively used research project outputs in updating or founding study programs. The interdisciplinary nature of many projects and the strengthening of partnerships with both academic and business sectors have clearly enhanced the faculty's overall research profile and societal impact.

Recommendations:

- Over the next five years, the faculty should **continue focusing on consolidating its strengths in applied and interdisciplinary research.**
- It is recommended to **maintain and slightly expand participation in high-prestige international research projects** while further **supporting commercialization and practical application of project results.**

- **Strengthening internal support mechanisms for project preparation, interdisciplinary collaboration** across FA/university departments, and maintaining active partnerships with key national and international stakeholders will be important.
- Given the already substantial achievements, it would be realistic to aim for a **gradual and sustainable increase in the number of internationally funded projects**, without overextending the FA's capacities.
- Building on the existing experience from international projects, the FA could moderately **expand its role as a project coordinator**.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

FA has demonstrated a strong ability to generate research results with both direct and indirect societal impacts. The presented results are closely linked to the projects outlined in Chapter 3.3, which is evidence of the FA's effective strategy and strong focus. It makes SER coherent and demonstrates a clear connection between research activities and strategic objectives.

Key areas of research focus on environmental sustainability, agricultural efficiency, and the application of advanced technologies in agri-machinery and engineering. These innovations address current practical needs while also holding potential for future economic benefits and long-term sustainability. Additionally, FA has developed methodologies and technologies that are widely applied across various sectors, from agriculture to sustainable farming and fisheries. These results not only enhance operational efficiency but also integrate environmental and socio-economic considerations. Sustainability is a central theme across the FA's work, with a particular emphasis on improving environmental practices, supporting social stability, and fostering sustainable cultural tourism. Notable projects contribute to regional development and European cohesion, addressing the needs of less developed areas and promoting cultural heritage preservation. The inclusion of gender considerations in several research outcomes highlights the FA's commitment to equality and social inclusion, particularly in projects addressing societal changes and sustainable development. Moreover, FA has shown resilience and adaptability in responding to emerging challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and socio-economic shifts. Its ability to adjust research priorities and explore new funding opportunities has strengthened its long-term strategic direction.

Overall, the FA's research results have measurable societal impacts, contribute to sustainable development, and meet high standards of practical applicability.

Recommendations:

- FA should **enhance interdisciplinary collaboration** to address the complex global challenges of today, particularly in areas like climate change and sustainable agriculture.
- These issues require **integrated solutions across multiple research fields**, and **fostering collaboration** will strengthen the FA's capacity to tackle them effectively.
- Additionally, **strengthening partnerships with industry and governmental bodies** (i.e. by building communities of practice or focus groups) will ensure that the research remains

relevant and has a direct impact on both policy and practice. These collaborations could also help to align the FA's research with the practical needs of society and enhance its visibility in applied research sectors.

- A further focus should be placed on the **digital transformation and innovation**, particularly in the development of smart technologies. This is critical as innovations in precision agriculture (including precision livestock farming – PLF), environmental monitoring, and data-driven solutions (while building and ensuring cyber security) could significantly enhance agricultural and environmental practices, contributing to both sustainability and efficiency.
- At the same time, it is important to **continue integrating gender and diversity perspectives into research and project design**. This ensures inclusivity, fosters equal opportunities, and maximizes the societal benefits of the FA's work.
- Finally, the FA should **invest in long-term sustainability and resilience strategies**. By anticipating future challenges and focusing on adaptability, it will ensure that its research remains not only relevant in the current context but also resilient to evolving global conditions. This proactive approach will equip the FA to continue leading in research that contributes to both academic excellence and societal well-being.

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:

FA demonstrates a strong orientation towards applied research, evidenced by extensive collaboration with industry through contractual research and participation in national and European industrial R&D projects. The integration of applied outputs into the internal reward and evaluation system, as well as the pilot evaluation of excellent applied results, represents a positive institutional step. FA highlights several successful examples of knowledge transfer and cooperation with external users, including start-up support (e.g., Lightly Technologies, NANTEO), commercial use of infrastructure (e.g., MEWERY, field station Žabčice), and direct service provision. The AgroContact.cz platform is another valuable tool connecting students and the job market, underlining broader societal engagement.

However, while these activities are commendable, FA still lacks a fully established, systematic framework for technology transfer and commercialization. The processes around IP protection, licensing, spin-off formation, and investor engagement remain underdeveloped. Despite some promising start-up cases, institutionalized support mechanisms (e.g., incubation services, legal and business consulting, post-contract continuity) are in an early or fragmented stage. The planned university MENDELU Innovation Hub (OP JAK) represents an important strategic move and a potentially transformative step forward. However, at the time of evaluation, its full functionality is still pending. In terms of funding, FA reports increased revenues from both international projects and commercial cooperation, though income from licensing or commercialization of IP remains limited.

Overall, while progress has been made and promising elements are in place, the area of commercialization still represents the most significant opportunity for strategic development within the Faculty's R&D&I activities.

Recommendations:

- Given the clear efforts of FA to strengthen cooperation with the application sphere and support knowledge transfer into practice, a key area for further development appears to be the **systematization and institutional anchoring of processes related to the commercialization of R&D results**.
- FA has taken a number of concrete steps, such as motivating staff, cooperating in the creation of start-ups, and involvement in the MENDELU Innovation Hub preparation. However, the current system does not yet fully cover the entire support process - from identifying commercially viable results, through legal protection, to market application. We therefore recommend **further developing a comprehensive support system for commercialization**, not only at the faculty level but in close coordination with university structures. Most of the proposed measures go beyond the competencies of the individual faculty and should be addressed systemically - for example, in the areas of intellectual property protection, establishing and supporting start-ups/spin-offs, managing licenses, legal services, or investor support.
- In this context, we also recommend that FA **continues and strengthens its role in the development and monitoring of sustainable certification schemes** — as exemplified by the "Sustainable Fish Farming" initiative — which represent an important mechanism for transferring research into practice and enhancing societal impact.
- It may also be beneficial to **consider supporting incubator space for researchers and students** to ensure that promising research outcomes are not lost due to administrative or personnel limitations.
- At the same time, FA could **focus more on actively identifying commercial partners and users of research results** through targeted tools (e.g., a database of outputs with application potential, matchmaking events, or systematic collection of feedback from application partners).

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

FA has demonstrated a strong commitment to the popularization of its research and development activities, achieving significant visibility both within the Czech Republic and internationally. The wide range of initiatives, including popular lectures, seminars, exhibitions, citizen science projects, and media engagement, reflects the FA's well-rounded approach to communicating scientific research. Particularly notable is the integration of hands-on experiences such as exhibitions, workshops, and events like Researchers' Night, which engage the public and offer insight into the faculty's research focus, especially in areas such as sustainable agriculture, climate change, and biodiversity.

FA's use of digital media platforms, including podcasts, social media, and YouTube, significantly amplifies its reach and effectively communicates scientific findings to a broader audience.

Additionally, the availability of an English-language website further supports its international outreach. However, the English-language website still has potential for further improvements, for example the presentation of all (research) staff with their scientific expertise (projects, publications, etc.). In its current form the full range of research at FA is not visible. The integration of citizen science initiatives, like the Educational Trails and InterDrought project, highlights the FA's dedication to involving the public in active scientific research.

However, while the national scope of the FA's activities is commendable, international engagement could be further expanded. The FA's social media presence is strong, but more effort could be made to strengthen its international collaborations and enhance the multilingual quality of its digital content.

Recommendations:

- To improve its popularization efforts, FA should **consider expanding its international reach**. This could be achieved by participating in global conferences, scientific fairs, and increasing its presence at international events.
- Furthermore, **strengthening collaborations with international research institutions** and showcasing these partnerships in public events would enhance the FA's visibility on the global stage.
- FA should also focus on **improving the multilingual quality of its content**, particularly the English versions of its website and digital materials. Ensuring accurate translations and maintaining high-quality content across all languages will make its research more accessible to international audiences.
- Another recommendation is to **further develop partnerships with industry and private sector stakeholders**. Hosting targeted events or creating collaborative research platforms could help showcase the commercial potential of the faculty's innovations and foster industry-academia collaboration.

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:

Recommendations 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 have been addressed in a comprehensive manner, demonstrating a clear strategic focus on the development of applied research and its commercialization. FA has developed intensive collaboration with the commercial sector through contractual research and industrial projects, with applied research outcomes being integrated into the staff motivation and performance evaluation systems. The launch of a pilot system for evaluating excellent applied results represents a positive institutional step. The faculty is also strengthening its cooperation with practice through the commercial use of research infrastructure and support for start-ups (e.g., MEWERY s.r.o.), effectively connecting the academic and business spheres. A significant advancement is the planned establishment of the MENDELU Innovation Hub, which has the potential to greatly enhance technology transfer and entrepreneurial support. However, the Faculty itself acknowledges persisting challenges - particularly the need for a comprehensive

institutional framework for commercialization, including IP protection, the formation of spin-off companies, and licensing processes. In terms of internationalization, a positive trend is evident in the growing volume of funding from European projects. Overall, FA has made substantial progress in fulfilling the recommendations, with many promising initiatives underway. Nonetheless, certain areas—particularly the systematic support for commercialization - remain under development and represent important opportunities for strategic growth.

Recommendations 3.5 and 3.6 have been well addressed through a proactive response to current challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and related societal and economic shifts. These themes are systematically reflected in both research and teaching. FA has launched relevant projects that leverage new funding opportunities and promote collaboration with external partners. Its focus on resilience and adaptability is evident in strategic planning and everyday operations. This approach not only enhances the faculty's academic relevance but also strengthens its contribution to addressing complex global issues in a changing world.

Recommendations 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9 have been partially addressed. While the system for commercialization and technology transfer is still developing, the faculty actively supports start-ups based on its own research outcomes. Examples include Lightly Technologies and NANTEO, both of which are built on university know-how and demonstrate strong commercial potential. These activities indicate positive progress toward institutionalizing applied research support. However, there are still gaps in establishing a systematic framework, IP protection, and investor engagement. Nevertheless, the FA is gaining valuable experience for future strategic development in this area.

Recommendations 3.10 and 3.11 have been fully met. FA continues to build on its long-term, result-oriented efforts and maintains a strong position nationally and internationally. Ongoing development of innovative technologies and sustained scientific recognition confirm its role as a reliable and attractive partner for cooperation.

Recommendation 3.12 has been well addressed. FA demonstrates a strong commitment to science popularization through diverse, modern communication tools, such as social media, podcasts, and the af.magazín. These platforms effectively engage the public and potential students. National visibility is reinforced through media cooperation and outreach activities, including school lectures and excursions. The faculty also participates in and organizes international scientific events, strengthening its global presence. Importantly, the FA is actively improving its English web content, ensuring international audiences have access to updated information about research, achievements, and collaboration opportunities. This reflects a clear awareness of the need to expand visibility and accessibility on a global level.

Recommendations:

Specific recommendations for individual sections have been provided throughout the SER. In this concluding section, we offer general guidance on how to approach and embrace these recommendations.

Commitment to Systematic Development: FA should maintain a strong focus on addressing areas for improvement, especially in commercialization, technology transfer, and international collaboration, turning challenges into strategic opportunities; **Encouraging Innovation and Flexibility:** FA should foster innovation and adaptability, ensuring responsiveness to evolving research needs and global challenges, such as climate change and societal shifts; **Strengthening Internal Frameworks and Support Systems:** FA should strengthen frameworks for commercialization, IP management, and entrepreneurial ecosystems, focusing on refining IP protection and collaborating with investors; **Expanding International Engagement:** FA should continue pursuing global research and funding collaborations to solidify its position as a reliable partner in the global scientific community; **Enhancing Public and Stakeholder Engagement:** FA should expand its popularization efforts to increase visibility, using digital platforms, outreach, and media collaborations; **Resilience and Sustainability:** FA should proactively integrate sustainability into research, teaching, and operations, addressing global challenges like climate change.

By embracing these strategies, FA will turn recommendations into actionable steps, driving continued growth and excellence.

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	5 - Outstanding
3.3 Research projects	5 - Outstanding
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
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	5 - Outstanding
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	4 - Very good
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A
Summary assessment: Since the last evaluation, the FA improved significantly the acquisition of funding and the research output, especially in peer-reviewed publications in higher-ranked SCI journals. The FA, however, still has hitherto unexploited opportunities to further improve their international visibility, reputation, cooperation and scientific output.	
Summary recommendations: With the experimental farm in Zabčice the FA has a unique facility to be partner for European research projects in both animal and crop sciences. Facilities in this dimension are hardly to find in Europe and the lower costs in Czechia makes this FA unit an optimal partner for field experiments. The visibility and promotion of this facility need to be strengthened. Moreover, the FA is advised to critically discuss their organisation into so many departments which are moreover partly heterogeneous, have no critical mass and complicated long names (compared to similar international agricultural universities or on a national level (i.e., Czech Univ. Life Sci.). A focus on the main areas of agricultural sciences, e.g. crop sciences, animal sciences, chemistry, biology (zoology, botany, genetics) should be visible in the number and names of departments. This would also align the structure with international standards commonly found in comparable faculties of agricultural sciences (such as those at Wageningen, Hohenheim, or BOKU).	

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology

FORD: 4 - Agriculture and veterinary 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:

The Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology (FFWT) is an academic and research institution dedicated to advancing knowledge in forest sciences, wood technology, and environmental sciences. For over a hundred years, since the Faculty was first established, FFWT has been providing high-quality education that seamlessly combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience. FFWT follows trends: in forestry – focusing on production ecology within the ecosystem concept; in landscaping – emphasizing landscape management as a tool for maintaining balance of cultural landscape, primarily by use of renewable resources; and in wood technology and furniture – promoting the development of wood-based materials, products and technologies, including energy application. Research in these fields concentrate on the production and stability of forest ecosystems, the processing and utilization of wood and other renewable natural resources while maintaining stable production within a balanced landscape.

The FFWT is led by dean prof. Libor Jankovský and supported by a team of 6 vice-deans responsible for areas such as strategies and internal relations, external relations, practice cooperation and accreditation, educational activities, foreign affairs, creative activities, and integration into the European Research Area. The faculty comprises 12 Departments and 2 Labs and intensively incorporates the University Forest Enterprise Masaryk Forest in Křtiny. These faculty units facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and comprehensive education in their respective fields.

FFWT employs approximately 400 staff members, 60% of whom are academic staff. 37% are women and about 30% are academics under the age of 35.

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]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:¹

During the monitored period, FFWT has strengthened its position as a dynamically growing unit and an internationally respected institution. Its engagement with prestigious national and international organizations, clusters and platforms (IUFRO, EFI, Cluster of Czech Furniture Manufacturers, Erasmus Forestry Network, etc.), provides access to the latest scientific advances, international policy discussions, and best practices in forest management and the development of bio-based materials.

FFWT participates in leading research networks, strong strategic partnerships and international consortia. Faculty members act as evaluators for prestigious funding bodies, including the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, and international organizations such as the German Research Council and the VEGA Commission.

FFWT has achieved notable recognition through various prestigious awards, underscoring its research excellence and societal impact. Among the highlights are the CzechInno Visionary Award (2022, 2023) awarded to Professor Radomír Ulrich for pioneering work in renewable energy, and the STREAM project's award for sustainability from the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research in 2023.

Student creativity excellence is promoted with awards such as the Jindřich Halabala Prize recognizing outstanding contributions in furniture and interior design, thus affirming the faculty's ability to foster creativity and professional competence among its students.

FFWT has established a strong presence within the international scientific community. Faculty academic and research staff are members of editorial boards of esteemed journals such as *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change*, *Forests*, *Siberian Journal of Forest Science*, and *Journal of Landscape Ecology*, among others.

FFWT cooperates intensively with universities and institutions abroad and strengthens its position as a key partner in the field in Europe and worldwide. It is evident through frequent international invited lectures by its staff at renowned institutions such as the University of Ljubljana, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, and the Technical University of Munich. At the same time, FFWT actively welcomes foreign scholars, enriching its research environment with global perspectives, such as through collaborations with scientists from Mongolia, Belgium, Thailand, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Recommendations:

The high-level potential of FFWT meets the quality of comparable international institutions.

- Faculty should **strengthen the use of this potential at the international level**, such as through awards, ERC grants, hosting recognized researchers, membership in editorial boards of journals, and direct sharing of faculty research infrastructure.
- It is worth **keeping relations with existing international networks active**. FFWT plays a significant role in forestry education networks within the EU, but also more broadly globally. Active participation and cooperation through them create an easy and good foundation for all collaboration and keeps MU visible and also creates new connections.
- The University's efforts to consolidate the European University Alliance HEROES — which does not include other faculties beyond FFWT in the fields of Forestry or Wood Technology — should not lessen its commitment to the thematic international networks that the faculty is already actively developing in these areas.

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.

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]:	5 - Outstanding
Qualitative assessment: Between 2019 and 2023, FFWT significantly expanded its international and interdisciplinary cooperation, notably through successful implementation of projects funded by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Industry and Trade Czech Republic, Czech Science Foundation, Horizon Europe, Interreg, Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and LIFE projects. These initiatives resulted in prototypes, patents, and validated technologies with real-world impact. The number of contract research projects (169), including international collaborations (e.g., UNDP, Forestry Lab Bibracte), has grown substantially. The faculty actively utilizes the University Forest Enterprise as a living laboratory for research and education. European projects now account for 30% of the total project portfolio, opening new research opportunities in forest ecosystem adaptation, biodiversity, and ecological innovations. FFWT affirms its position as a modern, internationally respected research institution. Projects such as 2020 ASFORCLIC (Grant Agreement ID: 952314), HEU PURPEST (Grant Agreement ID: 101060634), HEU EXCELLENTIA (Grant Agreement ID: 101087262), HEU ARAGORN Grant agreement ID: 101112723, LIFE WILD WOLVES (ID: LIFE21-NAT-IT-4417), ERC-CZ DYNATREE (Grant Agreement ID: LL1909), and Interreg CE LECA (ID: CE0100170) introduce new research directions focused on the climate resilience of forest ecosystems, biodiversity, and ecological threats. The development of international partnerships in Africa and Asia highlights the faculty's global reach and its commitment to sustainable development issues. Within the HEU and Erasmus+ projects, the Masaryk Forest School Enterprise is becoming a centre for experimental validation and educational activities at the European level. FFWT is aware of the need for applied research projects and cooperation with practice. At the same time, the importance of involvement in programmes such as the ERC and MSCA is essential for the future and in the upcoming period. Activities in reporting period covers support of ERC applicant by national program ERC CZ, and project proposal of MSCA, finally supported for next period from MSCA Fellowship CZ. FFWT intensify activities aimed at ERC and MSCA projects in the next reporting period, at the same time, it emphasizes collaboration with partners in and out of the university to enhance interdisciplinary consortia in the submitted projects.	
Recommendations: - To promote and support the involvement in international consortia and applying of MSCA, HEU, ERC grant applications. - Ensuring the sustainability of current research and project teams can be a major challenge.	

- Long-term research activities on selected strategic main themes and sufficient stability of experienced research teams are important. **The most important strategic lines of FFWT research and development activities must be precisely defined.**
- In order to ensure the selected research lines can be advanced in the long term and at least partly with the same research teams, future projects and **project funding should primarily support the selected strategic research lines and themes.**
- **Strengthen the international profile and potential of the University Forest Enterprise as a living laboratory for research and education.**

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:

FFWT has achieved a significant volume of applicable outcomes, including 1 European patent, 8 Czech patents, 38 utility models, 27 prototypes, 20 industrial designs, and 20 certified methodologies. The results provide specific solutions for practice in forestry, wood processing, agriculture, and urban environments. They contribute to environmental protection, increase economic efficiency, and support sustainability, all while being gender neutral. All presented outcomes emphasize sustainability from reducing emissions and energy consumption to promoting renewable materials, highlighting their long-term positive impact on the environment.

Among the mentioned applied research outputs, two are particularly noteworthy: the innovative technologies that improve the properties of wood-based materials and the certified methodology for establishing coppices through direct sowing of tree mixtures representing a breakthrough in erosion control and land management, especially for small farmers.

Recommendations:

- Although the volume of applied results is high, most results have a national or local focus with limited global visibility. An **increase in global commercial and non-commercial impact should be one of the priorities** for the next periods. However, it is natural that the majority of solutions in applied research in forest and wood technology focus on national and local needs everywhere, because research topics in the forest and wood sector are often tied to the ecology, culture and needs of their research environment.
- Given the growing need for forest owners and managers to adapt to climate change—and the strong expertise of the faculty's researchers—**Forest Extension activities** represent a valuable opportunity to enhance the faculty's impact on society and **should be actively promoted.**

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

FFWT shows strong potential and partial success in transferring R&D&I results into practice, especially in collaboration with Czech industry and applied sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and wood technology. However, to further enhance effectiveness, the faculty should strengthen systematic commercialization practices, broaden the international reach, and monitor actual uptake and economic impact of its outputs more rigorously.

While several outputs are technically ready for use, the documentation lacks quantitative data on their market adoption, licensing income, or actual usage rates across sectors. It is unclear how widely these technologies are being used outside pilot or test settings

Despite successful individual cases, there is no evidence of a coherent, faculty-wide strategy for intellectual property management, spin-offs, or coordinated commercialization pathways. Only one European patent during the evaluated period suggests limited international reach of some results.

Recommendations:

- FFWT should **intensify cooperation with the university Technology Transfer Department or knowledge-transfer offices** out of the university, **improve the level of the above-mentioned identified gaps** and **strengthen the effectiveness of transfer of research outputs** to practice and its commercialising.
- A **clear process and guidelines** need to be created within the university **for the commercialization of innovations**. The process must involve active cooperation with industry, funders and relevant authorities. In addition, **adequate incentive systems for researchers** (e.g. performance bonuses for inventions) are needed.

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:

FFWT has improved multi-channel strategy that ensures visibility and relevance in key societal debates, especially around climate change and environmental health. Faculty actively publishes in both professional and popular science journals, maintaining relevance in academic and public discussions, utilizes digital platforms (website, Facebook, X, YouTube, LinkedIn, ResearchGate) to share research and expert insights, extending its reach. Consistent presence in national media

(Czech TV, Czech Radio) with expert commentary indicates trust and credibility in public science communication. Participation in Trade Fairs (Silva Regina, GAUDEAMUS) builds bridge between academia, industry, and public. Organization of national and international conferences (Ecology2022, OMGN2022) shows a leadership position in the scientific community. Initiatives like Researchers' Night, nature trails, and arboretum tours invite public participation in science. FFWT tries to increase activities aimed at best practices in science communication and public engagement and is still working on improving the website, which were completely redesigned in evaluated period.

Recommendations:

- FFWT should **intensify visibility and popularisation of activities at international level**.
- In order to make information work more efficient, it would be a good idea to **assess the significance and effectiveness of different information channels**. After that, the most important channels can be selected, and information can also be directed more to international channels. Other channels can be used based on the situation and separate consideration.
- **Thorough media instructions and training for all MU actors** is important.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

IEP 2020 recommendations and FFWT's measures:

3.2, 3.3, 3.4 (...to support project collaboration, applied and contract research; new international partnerships; support for publishing activities; collaboration with university forest enterprise...)

-- the R&D&I department was strengthened and formally institutionalized into the faculty structure, new Faculty Grant Office as a part of the department directly supports project collaboration, applied and contract research (408 new projects, 169 contract research)

-- cooperation with the University Department of Technology Transfer, with the new MENDELU Open Science Centre (within the Department of Scientific and Pedagogical Information and Services), coordination Open Access Funds (at the university level and faculty level)

-- new international partnerships and consortia (H2020, HEU, Interreg, Erasmus, LIFE)

-- new joint research and projects with University Forest Enterprise, Erasmus projects, EXCELLENTIA - ERA-Chair (HEU), joint research plots, joint publications

3.5, 3.6 (...project support...)

-- new position of Vice-Dean for Integration into the European Research Area

-- new Faculty Grant Office, support of pre-award and post-award project phases, boost of pre-award activities and promotion, new grant incentives for researchers

3.7 and 3.8 (...support in processing applied outcomes and patents...)

- 9 patents, 38 utility models, 27 prototypes, 20 industrial designs, 20 certified methodologies in the period
- strengthen systematic commercialization practices, broadening the international reach
- support for interdisciplinary approach and collaboration with other university units and the Department of Technology Transfer MENDELU in processing applied outcomes and patents (intellectual property management, coordinated commercialization pathways)

3.10. and 3.11. (...incentives for researchers and students; involvement in international programmes...)

- Internal Grant Agency FFWT, program MENDELU Ph.D. Talent – support of young researchers
- Open Access Fund, new activities supporting publishing and Open Science
- promotion of participation in the MCSA and ERC
- participation of academic staff in the Journal's editorial boards and Evaluation Panels

3.12. (...faculty promotion...)

- new tools for FFWT promotion: redesigned/upgraded CZ/EN website, section "News" on the faculty website and digital platforms / social media Instagram, X, Facebook, Youtube, Threads, LinkedIn
- Active communication with media (TV, radio, press release), Citizen Science
- new department "design lab MENDELU" focused on design, exhibitions, events, and conferences, students for students, space, lectures and meeting point - café

Recommendations:

FFWT reflected the recommendations from the 2020 evaluation in most points, it used effective tools (institutional structural changes, measures visible). However, an **increase in international commercial and non-commercial impact and the visibility** should be one of the priorities for the next periods.

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	4 - Very good
3.3 Research projects	5 - Outstanding
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	4 - Very good
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	5 - Outstanding
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	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A

Summary assessment:

Strong points

- wide focus and direct impact on the national forestry and wood science sector in society at various levels
- strong applied research with private commercial partners (companies in the field) supported by national grants
- sustainable and balanced budget and financial portfolio of departments (research projects x education, basic x applied research)
- functional project support (faculty office), an increasing number of international collaborations and projects (HEU etc.)
- an increasing number of high-cited and high-quality publishing results (Q1 + Q2), international presence
- functional system for support of PhD and international mobilities
- resources and infrastructure (university forest enterprise, research centres with, labs)

Weak points

- international visibility is not yet maximized, the visibility of FFWT special facilities should be improved
- a lot of applied results have a national or local focus with low commercial potential or global social impact
- the multifaceted nature of the institution's activities and administrative burden hinder excellence in research
- international collaboration in private sector should be strengthened
- international intellectual property sphere is not yet covered
- system for support of postdoc researchers is not fully developed
- sustainability of current research and project teams must be ensured
- the number of MSCA and ERC applications should be increased

Summary recommendations:

- Continue **strengthening international profile and visibility**, especially of faculty's infrastructure.
- **Focus and sustain strategic research themes**, prioritize project funding and staffing around these key themes.
- **Strengthen the commercialization of innovations** by developing and implementing university-wide processes and guidelines.
- **Promote societal engagement and forest extension.**
- **Enhance internal capacity and communication competence.**

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Business and Economics

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:

The Faculty of Business and Economics provides a comprehensive and structured overview of its mission, vision, and organisational setting. The self-evaluation outlines a clear institutional structure, encompassing the core governing bodies. It offers detailed information on staffing by academic role, gender, and age, and describes the faculty's recent organisational and strategic reforms. A defining feature of the faculty's internal organisation is its matrix structure, where departments are primarily responsible for delivering teaching and ensuring disciplinary development, while research institutes and thematic centres supporting research excellence. This setup enables interdisciplinary collaboration and aligns research output with the faculty's strategic goals and societal needs. Research institutes transcend departmental boundaries, particularly in areas such as public policy, sustainability, and digitalisation.

The current structure reveals considerable disparities in the size and capacity of individual departments. Some departments are very small in terms of staff numbers, which may lead to inefficiencies, fragmented management, and a limited ability to contribute meaningfully to the faculty's strategic research directions. Over the last years, the Faculty of Business and Economics has carried out overarching structural reforms aimed at increasing research productivity, which appear to already bear fruits in terms of increases in publications per researcher, as well as the quality of the outlets in which their work is getting published. Further consolidation efforts should be guided by functional synergies, thematic overlap, and capacity to contribute to teaching and research priorities. In particular, given the considerable overlap in research themes and academic focus between FBE and parts of FRDIS, it may be appropriate to consider closer integration within the Business School framework or, at a minimum, to intensify institutional linkages.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:¹

The Faculty of Business and Economics presents strong evidence of growing integration and visibility in both the national and international research communities. The self-evaluation report documents a number of awards, editorial roles, and invitations to speak at expert forums. Importantly, the conversations with faculty management during the on-site visit reveal the large extent to which reforms have been carried out and the effort that the faculty management has invested in facilitating this transition. Such reforms have taken place in parallel to a clear improvement in international recognition since the last evaluation period. Faculty members are increasingly publishing in recognized international outlets, participating in European research networks, and collaborative projects with international partners.

Particularly noteworthy is the growing presence of faculty researchers in expert roles for EU institutions and policy-related working groups, reflecting both academic credibility and applied policy impact. These developments indicate a positive upward trajectory in international engagement and visibility, which has the potential of strengthening itself further in the coming years.

Despite this progress, there remains untapped potential in expanding internationalisation, particularly in increasing the number of long-term foreign academic partnerships, joint publications with international co-authors, and faculty participation in global professional societies. Moreover, while the qualitative examples are compelling, the current monitoring of these recognition activities appears to be ad hoc and largely narrative-based.

Recommendations:

- The faculty should **continue building on its upward momentum in international recognition** by completing the reform process, targeting strategic partnerships with leading universities, increasing participation in international consortia, and encouraging researchers to apply for EU and global scientific awards.
- To support this trajectory, it is recommended to **develop a formal monitoring system for academic recognition activities**. This could take the form of a centralised dashboard or database that tracks invitations, awards, panel participations, editorial roles, keynote lectures, and other indicators over time. Such a tool would improve internal strategic oversight, help identify gaps or underrepresented areas, and provide strong evidence for future evaluations.
- The **implementation of research information management systems** such as those employed in other universities is a necessary step in the modernization transition that the faculty is going through at the moment.
- Additionally, attention should be given to increasing inclusivity in international activities, by **supporting early-career researchers** and ensuring balanced representation across disciplines and departments.

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.

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 faculty presents a rich and diverse portfolio of research projects that clearly align with its mission and societal orientation. The self-evaluation report evidences a significant increase in the number of applied research projects compared to the previous evaluation period. These projects cover key societal themes including digitalisation, sustainability, public finance, and social inclusion.

Notably, the Faculty has also achieved an observable growth in international research activity, engaging in collaborative projects under European programmes such as COST and Erasmus+. This reflects both increased competitiveness and a stronger institutional capacity to engage in cross-border research efforts. The interdisciplinary character of many projects, often bridging economics, technology, and public policy, is consistent with the faculty's matrix structure and enhances both the relevance and transferability of research outputs.

The growing volume of externally funded projects also shows improved internal coordination and the maturation of research support structures. The projects listed in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 demonstrate both academic quality and application potential, with some results already contributing to legislative or regulatory change.

Recommendations:

- The faculty should **consolidate its progress in project volume by placing greater strategic focus on securing participation in highly competitive, high-prestige international projects**, particularly within the Horizon Europe framework and other globally visible programmes. This would elevate the institution's research profile and increase access to international networks.
- Internal project selection, support, and mentoring mechanisms could be aligned to **prioritise excellence and impact, helping project teams** better position themselves for success in demanding calls.
- It is also recommended to **track and evaluate project performance longitudinally**, including output metrics, citation rates, user engagement, and policy uptake. This would support evidence-based planning and strengthen future funding applications.

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 faculty presents a growing and increasingly diverse portfolio of research results with real or prospective societal impact. One of the key developments since the last evaluation is the significant expansion of applied outputs, particularly in the form of software tools designed for businesses and public institutions. These include machine-learning applications, natural language processing platforms, and simulation tools, many of which are actively used by Czech companies and public sector stakeholders. The usability and technical innovation of these products demonstrate the faculty's strong responsiveness to practical needs.

Several research studies have also been commissioned or utilised by international institutions, including impactful analytical work conducted for the European Parliament. These contributions illustrate the faculty's potential to influence European-level policy dialogue and decision-making, especially in areas like migration, taxation, and digital markets.

Despite these achievements, the impact of most recent research results remains largely national or local in scope, often limited to implementation within Czech firms or ministries. The faculty is well-positioned to extend this impact internationally but will need to increase strategic efforts to translate its findings into formats and partnerships suited for a global audience. The consolidation efforts that are taking place at the faculty are also expected to contribute to the fulfilment of this objective by increasing international competitiveness.

Recommendations:

- Building on its current momentum, the faculty should take concrete steps to **broaden the international reach of its research results**. This includes publishing case studies or white papers, engaging in cross-border (international) dissemination, and establishing strategic partnerships with international think tanks, NGOs, and multinational companies.
- Future research **proposals and outputs should incorporate clear internationalisation strategies**, ensuring that the design, and dissemination of results are oriented beyond national implementation.
- Finally, it is recommended to **implement an internal systematic review process for selected research outputs**, assessing both realised and potential societal impact across geographical scales. This would help prioritise outputs with broader applicability and support continuous improvement in impact generation.

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 Business and Economics demonstrates a structured and well-established approach to transferring research results into practice. The self-evaluation identifies and distinguishes multiple stakeholder groups that benefit from the Faculty's R&D&I activities, including national ministries, regional authorities, EU institutions, private enterprises, and non-profit organisations. This structured stakeholder mapping reflects a professionalised approach to application and outreach, enabling the faculty to target relevant user communities with tailored research outputs.

The faculty's results have been transferred into practice through commissioned reports, methodological tools, and especially through software solutions developed for firms, which support financial modelling, customer segmentation, or policy simulations. These are complemented by policy studies that feed into institutional decisions at both national and European levels.

Another strength of the faculty's approach lies in the integration of students into applied research and transfer activities, primarily through competitions, collaborative projects, and thesis work based on real-world datasets. However, while students are increasingly involved during their studies, the potential of the alumni network as a channel for research transfer and strategic feedback remains underdeveloped.

Recommendations:

- The faculty should **continue to build on its differentiated stakeholder strategy by developing tailored engagement models for each group**, including regular feedback loops with ministries, user panels for firms, and collaborative pilots with NGOs.
- **More emphasis should be placed on systematically involving students in applied projects**, not only through coursework but also via internships, hackathons, and mentorship in externally funded projects. This would **strengthen the research–practice–education nexus**.
- It is further recommended to **activate the alumni network as an extended transfer ecosystem**. Alumni, especially those in leadership positions in business or public service, can serve as ambassadors, clients, and evaluators of applied research. Formalising this relationship through a strategic alumni engagement programme would **enhance long-term impact and visibility**.
- Additionally, **expanding internal training in intellectual property and research commercialisation** would support broader staff participation.

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 Faculty of Business and Economics has laid the groundwork for popularisation of R&D&I, and the presentation highlights a notable change in the internal motivation system introduced in the previous year. This reform links popularisation and outreach activities with internal recognition and career incentives, which has the potential to significantly improve staff engagement in communicating research to broader audiences.

The faculty's applied outputs, such as the Strategy Game, Smart Migration platform, or socio-economic simulations, are inherently accessible to public and professional audiences, and some have already received media attention. However, the discussions acknowledge that only a limited number of senior researchers currently take an active leadership role in popularising research findings. Most public communication appears to rely on individual initiative rather than coordinated institutional support.

Furthermore, the Faculty's popularisation efforts are predominantly focused on national and local audiences, despite having several research results and policy studies that would be of international interest.

Recommendations:

- The faculty should **capitalise on its revised motivation system by introducing a structured annual award or recognition scheme for excellence** in science communication, open to both senior and early-career researchers.
- It is strongly recommended to **develop a dedicated popularisation strategy** with international components. This may include publishing research briefs in English, contributing to international blogs or commentary platforms (e.g., The Conversation), or creating visual explainers and short videos aimed at non-specialist audiences abroad.
- The faculty could also consider **appointing a science communication coordinator or forming a small media and outreach team** within its research office, tasked with translating key findings into formats suitable for public dissemination, both domestically and internationally.
- Finally, to address the concentration of outreach responsibility among a few individuals, the faculty should **encourage peer mentoring and team-based communication**, where experienced researchers support junior colleagues in engaging with the media, schools, or NGOs.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Business and Economics has made substantial and well-documented progress in implementing the recommendations from the previous institutional evaluation. These changes are not only reflected in policy reforms and structural reorganisation but are also tracked systematically, as demonstrated in the structured mapping of recommendations to actions.

Key examples of successful implementation include:

- Restructuring of departments, including the merger of smaller units, addressing previous concerns regarding operational efficiency and interdisciplinary capacity.
- Introduction of new budgetary rules and internal motivation programmes, specifically designed to promote international cooperation, increase participation in editorial boards and expert panels, and support staff applying for international recognition and awards.
- Expansion of international partnerships with institutions in the USA, India, and Germany, as well as participation in new strategic international projects (e.g., Horizon Europe proposals, COST Actions).
- Establishment of institutional support for commercialisation and entrepreneurship, including StartUP Mendelu, MENDELU Boost, and new partnerships with CzechInvest and the South Moravian Innovation Centre.
- Improvements in public communication infrastructure, such as restructuring the PR office, expanding social media presence, and organising direct interactions with globally recognised scholars.

This level of activity reflects a deliberate and strategic approach to institutional development and accountability and is explicitly welcomed by the panel.

Recommendations:

- The faculty is encouraged to **maintain and regularly update its structured tracking of recommendation implementation**, ideally integrating it into its internal quality assurance system. This tool could be refined to include timelines, responsible offices, and indicators of impact. As implementation is transitioning from action to consolidation, the next step is to **evaluate the outcomes of the implemented changes**.
- Finally, the Faculty should also **consider involving external stakeholders** (e.g., alumni, industry partners, or advisory boards) in assessing the relevance and impact of changes introduced in response to evaluation feedback.

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	5 - Outstanding
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
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	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Grade [A–D]:	B
Summary assessment: The Faculty of Business and Economics has demonstrated substantial progress and institutional maturity in research, development, and innovation (R&D&I). Its organisational structure, grounded in a matrix model combining departments and interdisciplinary research institutes, supports a clear alignment between education, research, and societal needs. Recent reforms—such as departmental mergers and a revised internal funding and motivation system—signal a proactive response to past evaluation recommendations and a capacity for evidence-based institutional development. A key strength of the faculty lies in its growing reputation within the national and international research communities. The number of applied research projects has significantly increased, with a rising share of externally funded and interdisciplinary initiatives. The faculty is actively involved in international research consortia and policy-focused collaborations, including high-profile studies for the European Parliament. Societal impact is evident through a growing portfolio of applied outputs, particularly software tools and simulations used by firms and public bodies, and through transfer mechanisms tailored to various stakeholder groups. Students are increasingly engaged in real-world applications, and the faculty's collaboration with the commercial sector is strong and expanding. However, many outputs still have predominantly national reach, and international popularisation and commercialisation remain areas for future development. The faculty has responded robustly and systematically to the recommendations of the previous evaluation. Implemented measures include restructuring and consolidation of the faculty, new motivational schemes, internationalisation efforts, entrepreneurship support, and PR system improvements. The existence of a structured recommendation-to-action mapping system illustrates a strategic and accountable management culture.	
Summary recommendations: • Strengthen the international visibility and competitiveness of the faculty's research by actively supporting participation in flagship international programmes (e.g. Horizon	

Europe), expanding high-impact international collaborations, and encouraging researchers at all career stages to pursue global awards and recognitions.

- **Support the broader international dissemination of applied outputs**, especially those with policy or commercial relevance. This includes preparing summaries, policy briefs, technical documentation, and open-access resources for international partners and end-users.
- **Deepen the role of students and alumni in research transfer and innovation**, building structured mechanisms for their participation in externally funded projects, start-ups, and outreach activities. Alumni can serve as key multipliers for visibility, industry links, and knowledge valorisation.
- **Promote international-level popularisation of R&D&I results**, including targeted engagement with international media platforms, science outreach events, and the development of multimedia content (e.g. expert blogs, podcasts, and explainer videos) aimed at public and policy audiences abroad.
- While strategic reforms are already embedded in the faculty's planning processes and stakeholder dialogue, there is a need to **enhance the internal information system for monitoring and evaluating research activities**. This includes creating integrated dashboards or databases to track academic recognition, project implementation, knowledge transfer, and societal impact over time.
- **Continue using and refining the structured tracking of past recommendations** as a transparent tool for internal reflection and external accountability, and as a basis for communicating progress to national authorities and institutional stakeholders.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Horticulture

FORD: 4 - Agriculture and veterinary 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:

The Faculty of Horticulture at Mendel University in Brno conducts scientific research across a broad spectrum of topics. Its primary research efforts are directed toward applied research, with a strong emphasis on production horticulture, postharvest processing and storage of horticultural goods, evaluation of plant production quality, and plant breeding. An important part of the faculty's research also focuses on investigating fungal and viral diseases that impact different plant species.

Another important area of expertise is landscape architecture, developed with a strong emphasis on the sustainable development of urban and rural environments, as well as the overall conservation and restoration of the landscape.

The faculty is structured into ten departments, each specializing in specific scientific disciplines. Its research capacity is significantly enhanced by the integration of laboratory research outcomes with experimental plantings of grapevine, fruit, vegetable, and ornamental species, made possible by extensive field facilities. These plantings represent a valuable gene pool of numerous fruit and vegetable crops and include an experimental vineyard with a broad assortment of grapevine varieties.

This broad scope of scientific activities contributes to the high quality of education provided by the faculty, with students — especially those in doctoral programs — actively participating in research projects.

Research activities are funded through mainly national grants.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:¹

The staff of the Faculty of Horticulture are actively engaged in international professional communities within their respective fields. Particularly noteworthy is their participation in foreign lectures delivered as invited speakers. It is also important to highlight that the Faculty of Horticulture invites lecturers from foreign universities, not only from neighbouring countries but also from the USA, Africa, Thailand, Japan, and other nations. In this context, it is crucial that the faculty actively participates in projects such as Erasmus+, CEEPUS, COST, and other international exchange programs. It is also evident that the staff members of the Faculty of Horticulture serve on the editorial boards of scientific and professional journals. Typically, membership on an editorial board is by invitation, which requires significant international visibility. Such visibility is achieved through publications but also the organisation of and participation in international conferences, thereby showcasing the unique expertise of both the individual researchers and the Faculty of Horticulture.

Recommendations:

- The Faculty of Horticulture achieves a number of high-quality results. For further development, it is recommended to **increase the number of international staff mobilities**, particularly with the aim of more actively engaging in European research projects such as Horizon Europe.
- **Greater participation in international competitions** and the strategic development of relationships with prestigious (Q1) scientific journals could significantly enhance the faculty's visibility.
- In this context, the introduction of **professional support for the preparation of scientific publications and project applications** in English could effectively improve the faculty's success in the international arena.

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 Faculty of Horticulture at Mendel University in Brno presented a list of projects it is involved in supported by significant funding from granting institutions. It is worth noticing that the increasing international activity of the FoH researchers is also proven by the many applications to European projects, that – even not at all easy to be selected - shows the larger international contacts that they are developing.

A significant indicator of progress is the continuous annual increase in the volume of acquired funding, accompanied by a noticeable shift from project participant to Principal Beneficiary. This

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.

trend demonstrates the faculty's strategic orientation and proactive approach to research management.

The aforementioned projects made a significant contribution to fulfilling the mission of the evaluated unit, which encompasses research and development in horticultural sciences as well as the preservation of cultural landscapes and historical structures. All projects were of an interdisciplinary nature and were conducted in collaboration with external institutions, facilitating the synergistic integration of expertise across diverse academic fields.

Five key projects from the evaluation period include:

1. Utilising New Fruit Species for the Long-Term Maintenance of the Production Potential of Fruit Plantations in the Context of Climate Change, (QK1910137), provider: Ministry of Agriculture (MZe), duration: 2019–2023, role in the project: coordinator, total allocated funds/means allocated to MENDELU: CZK 18,970,000 CZK/748,323 EUR/7,384,000 CZK/291,282 EUR
2. Metagenomic Survey of Vineyard Health and Use of GTD Antagonists of the Family Pseudonocardiaceae, (TJ02000096), provider: TA ČR, duration: 2019–2021, role in the project: coordinator, total allocated funds/means allocated to MENDELU: CZK 2,325,000 CZK/91,716 EUR/1,975,000 CZK/77,909 EUR
3. Revitalisation of Agricultural Land in Drought-Prone Areas of the Czech Republic, (TH02030073), provider: TA ČR, duration: 2017–2020, role in the project: coordinator, total allocated funds/means allocated to MENDELU: CZK 11,148,000 CZK/439,763 EUR/3,214,000 CZK/126,785 EUR
4. Overlooked Topics in Landscape Architecture for Heritage Conservation Needs, (DG18P02OVV007), provider: Ministry of Culture, duration: 2018–2022, role in the project: coordinator, total allocated funds/means allocated to MENDELU: CZK 19,993,000 CZK/788,679 EUR/16,446,000 CZK/648,757 EUR
5. Viticulture and Winemaking for the Preservation and Restoration of the Cultural Identity of Wine-growing Regions in Moravia, (DG16P02R017), provider: Ministry of Culture, duration: 2016–2020, role in the project: coordinator, total allocated funds/funds allocated to MENDELU: CZK 20,739,000 CZK/818,107 EUR/12,287,000 CZK/484,694 EUR

Recommendations:

To enhance participation in EU-funded projects, the unit should **strengthen researchers' skills through targeted training, actively support international networking, and establish internal assistance for project preparation**. Incentives for successful applications and strategic alignment with EU funding priorities are also recommended.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The Most Important Outcomes Include:

1. BAROŇ, M., KUMŠTA, M., LICEK, J. Use of a Mixture of Medium-Chain Fatty Acids to Reduce the Content of Carbonyl Compounds in Wine. Patent; No. document: 309771. The research brings technology to improve wine quality by reducing the content of undesirable carbonyl compounds that affect the taste and stability of wine. This innovation is important for winemaking companies seeking to improve the quality of their products.
2. HÍC, P., BALÍK, J., KULICHOVÁ, J., ŠNURKOVIČ, P., HOUSKA, M., STROHALM, J., LANDFELD, A., TŘÍSKA, J., VRCHOTOVA, N. Beer or Beer-Based Beverage Containing Lignans and Method of Production. European patent; document No.: EP3313973. The patent brings innovation in the food and beverage industry by adding lignans (natural antioxidants) to beer beverages. The resulting product is attractive both to consumers looking for healthier alternatives and to breweries looking to offer new types of products. Economic impacts include the potential for new markets and increased demand for healthier drinks.
3. NOVOTNÝ, D., BARÁNEK, M., EICHMEIER, A., SALAVA, J., PEŇÁZOVÁ, E., PEČENKA, J., KOUDELA, M. Diagnostics and Protection Measures Against Selected Harmful Microorganisms in Cabbage. Certified methodology applied; ISBN: 978-80-7427-291-2. The result contributes to the protection of vegetable crops, especially cabbage, against harmful microorganisms. Innovation is key for farmers and horticultural companies involved in the production of this crop. The economic benefits are reduced losses due to disease and improved crop quality.
4. SALAŠ, P., VYMYSLICKÝ, T., PEKAŘ, M., LOŠÁK, M. Preparation for Revitalisation of Soil Environment Affected by Drought. Utility Model; Document No.: 34750. The research has led to the development of a preparation that increases the drought resistance of soils, thereby supporting sustainable agriculture in areas that face frequent droughts. The results are crucial for farmers and landscape managers who need to adapt their practices to climate change.
5. BAROŇ, M., SOCHOR J., KUMŠTA, M. A Mixture of Purified Fermentation Gases from Grape Must, a Filtration System for Purification, and a Carbonated Beverage Enriched with These Gases. Utility Model; No.: 36582. The result is an innovative use of fermentation gases from wine production, which after purification are used to produce carbonated beverages. This process has the potential to reduce waste gas emissions from winemaking and contributes to sustainable production.

Recommendations:

Applied results constitute a significant part of the scientific output of the Faculty of Horticulture, with the majority being legally protected. It is recommended to **strengthen the transfer of these technologies into practice**, particularly through the licensing of patents and bred plant varieties, where the faculty holds considerable potential. Successful technology transfer can be supported by the **active involvement of academic inventors and students in the business environment**, while training students in entrepreneurship and regulatory affairs can enhance their prospects of employment in start-ups and licensing companies.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The faculty systematically supports the transfer of results into practice through close cooperation with industry, agricultural enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and other application partners. This collaboration includes the development, testing, and optimization of technologies based on user feedback, supported by contract research, direct technology transfer, and participation in professional events. The MENDELU Technology Transfer Department plays a key role in facilitating communication with practice. A major success was the sale of a utility model related to fermentation gas purification for CZK 4,247,000 (EUR 167,535), for which the faculty received the "Achievement of the Year 2021" award. Additional licensing agreements, including those for apricot varieties, are being realized through international partners. Cooperation is further supported by grant schemes such as NAZV and TA ČR.

Recommendations:

It is recommended to **strengthen the system for the commercialization of research results through a dedicated agenda for transfer, partner identification, and sales management**. The Faculty of Horticulture is making progress in this area and is currently establishing two centers focused on supporting commercialization.

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:

Most of the popularisation activities presenting R&D&I at the Faculty of Horticulture are conducted through the faculty website, as well as its Facebook and Instagram pages. These platforms have predominantly national reach, covering the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Regarding organised events and major achievements, the Faculty of Horticulture also utilises other media beyond the online environment, primarily regional media – specifically regional television and radio stations. Events organised by the faculty are further promoted through traditional means, including posters, newspaper articles, and information distributed at tourist and information centres.

The addition of new social media tools (such as LinkedIn, Twitter, a Google Scholar profile, etc.) is essential for increasing international visibility and expanding financial opportunities.

Recommendations:

The Faculty of Horticulture is actively strengthening its international collaboration and research teams.

- To support this effort, it is essential to ensure that the **faculty website and all social media platforms** (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube) **provide information on research and development activities also in English**.
- A user-friendly design, facilitating direct contact with relevant staff members, will **enhance the faculty's international visibility and attractiveness** for future collaborations.
- **Establishing dedicated support for communication and promotion**, as practiced by leading universities, is strongly recommended.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Horticulture systematically fulfils the recommendations outlined in the evaluation document. The faculty actively develops international collaboration, strengthens its involvement in European projects (during the evaluation period, applications were submitted to programmes such as Horizon Europe, LIFE, Interreg, etc.), enhances specialized centres focused on technology transfer, and increases the legal protection of applied research results.

Popularisation activities are systematically expanded with a strong emphasis on international outreach, including the extension of communication through social media and the preparation of English versions of web content. Special attention is given to creating user-friendly connections with relevant experts

Through these activities, the Faculty of Horticulture fulfils its strategic objectives aimed at increasing visibility, improving the quality of results, and strengthening its position within the European and global research area, as recommended in the previous evaluation.

Recommendations:

- **Increase participation in international projects** by strengthening support for proposal submissions and building partnerships (although the faculty is submitting project applications, the success rate in calls remains low).
- **Enhance global visibility** through active promotion of research results and a stronger presence on academic platforms.
- **Encourage long research periods of the PhD students** in laboratories in other countries will also help in developing fruitful collaborations.
- **Support the creation of spin-off companies** by fostering entrepreneurial and innovation activities.
- **Diversify funding sources** through even greater collaboration with the private sector.

Improve the visibility and attractiveness of the faculty's website.

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	5 - Outstanding
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	5 - Outstanding
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	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A
Summary assessment: Research and development at the Faculty of Horticulture (FoH) has made significant progress in recent years, driven by strategic leadership and increasing grant funding. The faculty is strengthening its commercialization activities, particularly in the breeding of new plant varieties and the licensing of technologies, while systematically building a network of commercial and academic partners. However, there remains a need to increase participation and success rates in international project calls and to further develop strategic partnerships. FoH is expanding its involvement in international research teams and development projects, such as through the INTERACT-Africa program and COST projects. With its unique infrastructure and highly qualified staff, the faculty holds strong potential for international expansion. The key challenge is to enhance global visibility, strengthen English-language communication, and support the creation of spin-off companies and collaboration with the private sector.	
Summary recommendations: • Increase participation and success in international project calls by enhancing internal support for proposal preparation and strategic partnership building. • Expand global visibility through improved English-language communication, professional international promotion, and active presence on academic and professional platforms. • Strengthen commercialization efforts by supporting the creation of spin-off companies and fostering entrepreneurship among staff and students. • Further develop partnerships with both academic institutions and the private sector to diversify funding sources and amplify research impact. • Leverage unique infrastructure and expertise to position the faculty as a leading international centre in horticultural sciences.	

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT:

Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies

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:

The Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies (FRDIS) is a young and relatively small faculty within Mendel University in Brno. Founded with the aim to respond to contemporary socio-economic and environmental challenges, the faculty is characterised by its strong interdisciplinary orientation, bridging disciplines such as economics, political science, sociology, geography, and elements of environmental and agricultural sciences.

Its academic and research activities are focused primarily on two study areas – Regional Development and International Territorial Studies – enabling a clear and coherent profile while maintaining interdisciplinary flexibility. This dual focus allows the faculty to address complex economic, societal and environmental issues at local, regional, national and global levels.

Over the evaluated period, FRDIS has gradually shifted from a primary focus on teaching activities towards strengthening its research profile and public relevance. This development is reflected in a steady growth in research projects, publications in respected scientific journals, linking with practise and an increase in international cooperation. The stabilisation of the academic team, both in terms of quantity and quality, has contributed significantly to this evolution, creating a strong foundation for further academic and research development. It also builds partnerships with foreign institutions through the Visegrad Fund and Interreg projects with results that have the potential to have a positive impact on society (social relevance) and scientific research (contribution to knowledge).

The number of academic staff in the period under review ranged from 50–55 FTE, of which over 40% were women. The structure of the staff is classic; more than half of the academics are assistant professors, one fifth are assistants and one quarter were associate professors and professors, respectively. Women predominate as assistant professors and assistants.

Although the academic team has stabilised in recent years, FRDIS remains a relatively small faculty in terms of staff numbers. In particular in the context of an interdisciplinary methodological framework, this may lead to certain inefficiencies in operation, fragmented management structures, and a limited capacity to contribute more substantially to the University's strategic research priorities. Given the considerable overlap in research themes and academic focus with the Faculty of Business and Economics, it may be appropriate to consider a closer integration of FRDIS (or parts of it) within the framework of the Business School, or at least to intensify institutional linkages. Such

a step could support more efficient use of resources, enhance interdisciplinary cooperation, and strengthen alignment with broader institutional goals.

The total cumulative number of students for the 2019–2023 reporting period was 5,163, of which 3,349 were women. The number of students increased by 28% to 1,114 students in the period under review. The faster growth in the number of students was in the bachelor's degree. The number of female students grew less dynamically, by 17%. The cumulative total of students in the Master's programmes was 1,317, of whom 851 were women. These data show that women make up approximately 65% of students at both Bachelor's and master's level, reflecting the significant representation of women in these degree programmes. The faculty is attractive for students coming from abroad. In the English-taught study programs, 70–100 international students were enrolled each year. They accounted for 9–11 % of the faculty's students in the period under review, and all continents except Australia were represented.

The faculty's ambition remains to continue connecting academic research with practical societal needs, enhancing its reputation as an institution that not only educates highly employable graduates but also actively contributes to solving pressing challenges of sustainable development and global cooperation.

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 faculty has continued to develop its position within the R&D&I community over the evaluated period. Recognition by the research community is demonstrated through a number of awards, active participation in international scientific societies, involvement in editorial boards of international journals, and a growing number of invited lectures and international cooperation activities.

Several members of the academic staff have received notable national and international awards for their research outputs, including recognition from institutions such as the European Microfinance Network, Palacký University Olomouc, and the Czech Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Compared to the previous evaluation period, there is a broader thematic diversity among the awarded outputs, reflecting the interdisciplinary character of the faculty's research.

The faculty's academic staff have also expanded their involvement in international scientific societies and editorial boards. Staff members actively participate in 19 international and 13 national scientific societies and are engaged in 15 editorial boards of international journals, demonstrating a consistent effort to integrate into the international research community. This represents a slight, but steady increase compared to the previous period.

FRDIS has further strengthened its international profile through the organisation and hosting of foreign experts, as well as through the participation of its academic staff in invited lectures abroad, covering a broad geographic range including Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and

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.

Southeast Asia. This expansion of international activities reflects the faculty's strategic focus on enhancing global academic cooperation.

Academic staff also contributed to the evaluation of national and international research projects, participating in evaluations organised by agencies such as the French National Research Agency, the Czech Science Foundation, and the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic. This engagement underlines the faculty's growing recognition as a relevant partner in both national and international research environments.

Recommendations:

- **Implement internal evaluation tools** that consider prestigious awards, membership in editorial boards and scientific societies, and participation in evaluation panels of prestigious grant calls.
- **Provide targeted institutional support** (e.g. administrative, financial, or teaching relief) for staff applying to lead or coordinate large-scale international projects.
- **Offer diverse outreach activities** (e.g. seminars, public lectures) for the expert and broader community, with targeted external communication.
- **Intensively involve practitioners and excellent academics** (both from the Czech Republic and abroad) in teaching.
- **Support the involvement of FRDIS academic staff in national and international projects** that help build contacts and visibility within the scientific community.
- **Develop an internal mentoring programme to support junior researchers** in project acquisition and international publishing.

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:

In the evaluated period, the faculty has significantly strengthened its project activities, reflecting the strategic emphasis on research development and the application of research results in practice. Compared to the previous evaluation period, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of implemented projects, their financial volume, as well as the diversity of funding sources.

The most significant projects covered a wide range of topics corresponding to the faculty's interdisciplinary profile, including regional development, sustainable agriculture, international relations and policy, and public health. FRDIS successfully acted both as a coordinator and as a partner in projects supported by various national and international agencies.

The selected projects demonstrate a strong application potential, with practical impacts on public policy, local and regional development strategies, international policy, public health improvement, environmental protection, and sustainable agriculture. This direct link between research outputs

and practice aligns with the faculty's declared mission to connect academic knowledge with societal needs.

The interdisciplinary nature of research projects is evident in the integration of economic, sociological, political, environmental, and geographical perspectives. Cooperation within Mendel University has been strengthened through joint activities with other faculties, and external collaborations have expanded through participation in national and international consortia.

Despite the limited human resources typical of a young and smaller faculty, FRDIS has managed to proportionally increase its project activity, demonstrating growing research capacity and organisational maturity. This progress confirms the faculty's strategic orientation towards enhancing the quality and relevance of its research activities.

Recommendations:

- **Provide targeted and systematic support to FRDIS academics coordinating projects** and achieving excellent results in projects and publications. Continue supporting the project centre, which should also act as an initiator of project proposals based on open call monitoring.
- **Implement clear and consistent rewards for excellent outputs** in journals and for securing international projects.
- **Accept international projects that are not purely research-based but have potential** for network-building and follow-up scientific cooperation.
- **Support interdisciplinary research and enhance research teams** focused on international and area studies.
- **Establish a faculty-level research advisory group** to review and guide interdisciplinary project proposals before 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:

During the evaluated period, the Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies (FRDIS) produced several research results with a clear societal impact or significant potential for future application. The results selected for evaluation demonstrate a growing ability to link academic research with the practical needs of society, despite the relatively limited R&D&I capacities typical for a young and smaller faculty.

The faculty's outputs addressed a wide range of socially relevant issues, including financial inclusion in peripheral regions, health inequalities, rural development, sustainable agriculture, and resilience to climate change. These results were not only academically recognised (e.g., through awards such as the EMN Research Award) but were also transferred into practice, for example through direct use in policymaking, regional planning, and support for local governance initiatives.

The results align with the faculty's mission to contribute to sustainable development and the strengthening of regional and international cooperation. They often take into account three

dimensions of sustainability — economic, social and environmental — and, where relevant, also address aspects related to the gender dimension, particularly in fields such as financial inclusion and social cohesion.

Compared to the previous evaluation period, there is a broader thematic scope of research results and a higher degree of interdisciplinarity, reflecting the faculty's strategic focus on enhancing societal relevance. Although the Faculty still has potential for further strengthening the direct economic impacts of its research outputs, the overall development trend is positive, and the integration of research results into practice is gradually becoming more systematic.

Recommendations:

- **Implement a mechanism for systematic recognition of applied research results with positive societal impact** and communicate the faculty's role in this process.
- **Reform the student final thesis system** by introducing an applied project option to strengthen practical links and showcase the faculty's societal contribution through teaching.
- **Recognise contract research results as key R&D&I outputs**, integrating them into evaluation and reporting frameworks.
- **Strengthen collaboration with international institutions** to expand research impact and networks, as well as to enhance the quality of potential publications.
- **Create a repository of policy-relevant research outputs**, accessible to public institutions and stakeholders.

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]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The faculty has made gradual progress in transferring research results into practice during the evaluated period. The outputs produced by the faculty are closely aligned with its mission of supporting regional development, social cohesion, sustainable management of natural resources, and the promotion of international cooperation.

The main forms of transfer have included the application of research findings in public administration (e.g., strategic documents for municipalities and regions), support for decision-making processes in rural and regional development, and contributions to public health and education policy. The faculty has been successful in involving practical users, including municipalities, regional development agencies, NGOs, and international organisations. Several results have been directly applied in the preparation of development strategies, local climate adaptation measures, and in improving the quality of local governance.

Although the commercialisation of research outputs in the form of licenses, spin-offs or extensive contracts with private enterprises remains limited and not used — which is consistent with the predominantly social science and public sector orientation of the faculty's research — there has been a gradual strengthening of contract research activities and efforts to secure funding from non-

public sources. This development reflects a better strategic alignment between research activities and societal needs.

The faculty has also demonstrated an ability to systematically build networks of application partners, both at the local and international levels, which is essential for increasing the impact and visibility of its applied research results. Compared to the previous evaluation period, a broader range of users and stakeholders have been engaged, and the faculty has made first steps toward a more structured approach to knowledge and technology transfer.

Recommendations:

- **Define the Faculty's strategy on commercialising R&D&I results** and securing funding from non-public, non-grant sources, aligning with its public-sector orientation.
- **Establish a transparent reward system recognizing successful commercialisation efforts** and acquisition of non-public funding, such as contract research with private or public entities.
- **Develop a structured model for stakeholder feedback** and involvement in shaping the research agenda and dissemination of results.

Pilot short-term secondments or exchanges of academic staff to public or regional institutions to enhance practical relevance and mutual knowledge transfer.

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 faculty has sustained a strong and steadily advancing presence in the popularization of research, development, and innovation (R&D&I), as well as in communication with the broader public throughout the evaluated period. The faculty's academic staff regularly engage in activities aimed at communicating research findings to non-specialist audiences. These include participation in public lectures, workshops, and conferences targeting both professional and lay audiences. The faculty has also been active in promoting scientific findings through media appearances, popular science publications, and participation in selected events.

A notable element of the faculty's popularization efforts is its strong orientation towards topics with a clear societal relevance — regional development, EU and international policy, sustainable management, international cooperation, and social innovation. These themes resonate well with public interests and contribute to raising awareness about current socio-economic and environmental challenges.

The faculty has also made efforts to involve external stakeholders, including schools, NGOs, and local and regional authorities, in its outreach activities. International cooperation and the hosting of foreign experts have further expanded the scope of public engagement activities, adding a global dimension to the faculty's communication efforts.

Compared to the previous evaluation period, there has been a gradual diversification of communication channels and formats, including a growing use of digital tools and online dissemination, which has increased the accessibility of the faculty's research to a wider audience.

The faculty's popularization activities are consistent with its mission and vision, and they contribute to strengthening its public profile and societal impact.

Recommendations:

- **Maintain a wide range of communicated activities.**
- **Expand the platforms through which results are communicated**, based on target group preferences.
- **Ensure selected outputs are communicated also to international audiences.**
- **Provide systematic support and training for academics** who communicate research results.
- **Regularly monitor and evaluate PR activities** to improve outreach effectiveness.
- **Organise events to reinforce the faculty's identity** and showcase its interdisciplinary strengths to both internal and external audiences.

Increase participation in international academic networks aligned with regional development and area studies.

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]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies has addressed the recommendations made in the previous evaluation cycle across the various aspects evaluated in Module 3.

In response to Recommendations 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 (strengthening participation in research projects and building application potential), FRDIS restructured and professionalised its project management system, clarified project management competencies, and strategically supported research activities through regular evaluation of creative indicators and targeted motivation. As a result, the number of submitted projects doubled compared to the previous period, the success rate improved, and international cooperation within research consortia expanded.

Regarding Recommendations 3.5 and 3.6 (enhancing the transfer of research results into practice), the faculty has increased its number of contract research projects and strengthened partnerships with stakeholders from public administration, NGOs, and selected private sector actors. Research outputs have been directed towards practical applications, particularly in the fields of regional development, public administration, and environmental protection.

In the field of public engagement and popularization (Recommendations 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9), FRDIS redesigned its communication strategy, increased activities in popular science events, expanded its digital communication channels (particularly social media), and actively engaged with broader audiences, including schools and regional authorities.

Recommendations 3.10 and 3.11 (raising the quality and impact of research outputs) were addressed through the revision of the publication strategy, with a focus on high-quality journals (Q1

and Q2) and international cooperation. The share of publications in top-tier journals and the number of citations of FRDIS academic staff have significantly increased during the evaluated period.

Finally, Recommendation 3.12 (strengthening internationalization and international visibility) was reflected in targeted support for international mobility, employment of foreign researchers, participation in international projects and consortia, and expansion of international public engagement activities, including cooperation with foreign academic and institutional partners.

Recommendations:

- Following Recommendation 3.2 and 3.3 from the previous evaluation, which called for increased participation in research projects and improved project management support, the faculty has restructured its internal processes, clarified responsibilities, and increased both submitted and awarded projects. To ensure continuity, this direction is further developed in the current recommendations under section 3.3, focusing on enhanced support for FRDIS academics in leadership roles and the establishment of a research advisory group.
- In response to Recommendation 3.4 on societal relevance and research application, the faculty developed procedures aligning research with public needs and initiated contract research activities. These efforts are reflected in the current recommendations in sections 3.4 and 3.5, which propose continued institutional recognition of socially impactful results and their systematic communication.
- Building on Recommendations 3.5 and 3.6 on transferring results into practice, FRDIS expanded collaboration with public institutions and NGOs and began shaping its stance on commercialisation. The current recommendations in section 3.5 support further refinement of this strategic positioning and introduce reward mechanisms for contract research and non-grant income.
- To address Recommendations 3.7 to 3.9, which emphasised the need to expand and evaluate popularisation activities, the faculty redesigned its communication strategy, increased media presence, and improved digital outreach. These advances are carried forward in section 3.6, which recommends regular PR monitoring, targeted communication channels, and identity-building events.
- Aligning with Recommendations 3.10 and 3.11 to improve research quality and high-impact publishing, FRDIS revised its publication strategy and improved citation metrics. The current recommendations under section 3.2 and 3.3 promote further support for excellence through targeted mentoring and recognition systems.
- In continuation of Recommendation 3.12, which called for stronger internationalisation, the faculty has increased its international mobility and partnerships. This direction is reinforced in sections 3.2 and 3.6, which propose deeper integration into international academic networks and wider global communication.

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	3 - Average
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	3 - Average
Average rating [1–5]:	3 - Average
Grade [A–D]:	C

Summary assessment:

During the evaluated period, the Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies has demonstrated a steady and strategic development in strengthening its societal relevance. The faculty continues to build on its interdisciplinary focus, combining expertise from economics, political science, sociology, geography, and environmental studies, and has gradually expanded its research and project activities while maintaining a clear link to its declared mission and vision.

There has been a noticeable increase in the number, diversity, and application potential of research projects, as well as a broadening of international cooperation within research consortia. FRDIS has enhanced the transfer of research results into practice, especially towards public administration, regional development stakeholders, international institutions and non-governmental organizations, even though its profile naturally limits opportunities for commercialisation in the traditional sense.

In terms of public engagement and popularisation of science, the faculty has significantly expanded its activities and diversified its communication channels, successfully improving its visibility both nationally and internationally. Attention to the societal impact of research results, integration of sustainability aspects, and gradual strengthening of interdisciplinary cooperation have become more systematic features of the faculty's development.

The faculty has implemented targeted measures responding to previous recommendations in project support, applied research, popularisation, internationalisation, and research quality enhancement. These efforts reflect its growing maturity and alignment with strategic priorities.

Summary recommendations:

The Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies has made consistent progress in strengthening its societal relevance and research visibility over the evaluated period. Building on its interdisciplinary profile and a clear mission to link academic knowledge with societal needs, the faculty has gradually matured in its research activities and external engagement.

- In the area of recognition by the research community (3.2), the faculty should **continue developing internal mechanisms to systematically value and promote academic excellence**, including participation in scientific societies, editorial boards, and prestigious grant schemes. Support for early-career researchers through mentoring programmes could further enhance long-term international visibility.
- Regarding research projects (3.3), the faculty has demonstrated a clear shift towards more active project involvement and successful fundraising. To maintain this trajectory, it is recommended to **strengthen institutional support for project leaders, foster interdisciplinary teams, and strategically engage in international partnerships**, including network-building initiatives beyond core research calls.
- In terms of research results with societal impact (3.4), FRDIS has increased its engagement with real-world challenges. Going forward, the faculty should **develop institutional tools for recognising applied results, promote student involvement in applied research, and further**

connect with international actors focused on sustainable development and regional transformation.

- Regarding the transfer of results into practice (3.5), the faculty has established valuable connections with public institutions and NGOs. To build on this, it is advised to **define its strategic positioning in relation to knowledge and technology transfer and implement reward systems** for contract research and other non-grant-based outputs, in line with the faculty's public mission.
- Finally, in the area of popularisation and communication of R&D&I (3.6), FRDIS has diversified its outreach and improved visibility. Continued development in this area should focus on **systematic monitoring of communication tools, support for academic engagement with the public, and activities that strengthen the faculty's internal identity** and its image as a unique interdisciplinary institution addressing regional and international issues.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Institute of Lifelong Learning

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:

The Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL) is a university-wide institute at Mendel University in Brno that serves as a key pillar in further education and professional development. Its mission includes the support of various target groups such as university students, academic and non-academic staff, seniors, and the broader public through diverse educational activities. The Institute contributes to career development, language and personal competencies, accessibility of education, and intergenerational learning, aligning with the university's core values of education, science, and social responsibility.

Although the Institute is not primarily research-oriented, research activities are carried out by the Department of Social Sciences, a small academic unit typically comprising 8 to 12 staff members. The department focuses on human and social sciences including pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and andragogy. A unique aspect of the research profile is its focus on vocational education in socialist Czechoslovakia, with outputs such as a GAČR-funded project and a monograph on everyday school life during this era.

The Institute comprises several departments, including the Department of Continuing Education, the Counselling Centre, and the Department of Senior Education. These offer a wide range of accredited and non-accredited educational programs, short-term courses, and counselling services. The University of the Third Age, run by the ILL, has expanded regionally and engages seniors in educational and intergenerational activities.

The Institute continues to develop modern approaches to education, such as microcredentials and distance learning, with the long-term goal of becoming a centre of excellence in adult education. Its staffing and programme structure, student numbers, and research capacities are documented in the relevant data tables.

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]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:¹

The Institute of Lifelong Learning is recognised within the research community for its interdisciplinary focus and its role in promoting innovation and lifelong learning. Its staff contribute to professional and academic development not only through teaching but also through research, publications, and active involvement in national and international academic networks.

Members of the Institute have received awards for significant contributions to civil society, such as the Rector's Award given for innovative intergenerational education initiatives and psychological support services during the COVID-19 pandemic. These awards highlight the Institute's societal impact and its capacity to respond to real-world challenges.

Academic staff have participated in editorial boards of international scientific journals, serving as editors or section editors. These include journals indexed in databases such as ERIH, EBSCO, and SCOPUS. Some staff members have also acted as evaluators for grant agencies and national research councils, demonstrating their expertise and standing in the scientific community.

The Institute's academics have been invited to deliver lectures at foreign universities and conferences across Europe, including in Latvia, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, and Italy. In some cases, these collaborations have led to institutional partnerships, such as support in establishing lifelong learning programs abroad.

The Institute maintains active involvement in a wide range of professional and academic associations, both Czech and international. These include societies in the fields of education, psychology, coaching, oral history, and age management. Several staff members have held elected positions in these associations, further underlining their recognition within the broader research and practice community.

Recommendations:

It is important to underline that research is not the Institute's core mission. Its activities are predominantly oriented toward applied and community-based interventions, with a strong focus on intergenerational education, digital literacy, and psychological support.

- While recognising and valuing the specific expertise and individual prerogatives of each academic and researcher, it is also suggested to **identify strategic thematic areas** to create internal research clusters to allow a full exploitation of existing internal skills while obtaining a critical mass that makes it possible to recognize the Institute as a point of reference for social sciences.
- It is acknowledged the great effort made to improve the activation of **international networks** and increase participation in scientific events. This can be further improved **strengthening project skills further and promote more systematic participation in competitive funding programs**. Such activities would significantly enhance scientific production, and the sustainability and visibility of the many activities carried out by the Institute in the medium and long term.
- Finally, although the scientific activity of the Institute is firmly rooted in the educational sciences and social sciences, further room for development lies in **strengthening interdisciplinary collaborations**. This should be done (in particular) with the STEM sectors, with the objective of innovating the contents of research, of facilitating the dissemination of results at an international level, and of expanding the social impact of the scientific activities carried out.

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.

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: Although the Institute of Lifelong Learning is not primarily a research-focused unit, it has successfully implemented or participated in several significant projects in recent years. These projects reflect its applied and interdisciplinary approach, as well as its focus on educational innovation, social inclusion, and support for diverse learner groups. One key project was funded by the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) and focused on the history of everyday life in secondary vocational schools during socialist Czechoslovakia. Using oral history and archival research, the project provided new insights into the educational context of the period and resulted in a professional monograph and international conference presentations. Another major initiative was the implementation of the TAPATE model in the Czech environment, supported by the Ministry of Education. The project involved teacher training in communication and cooperation, aiming to improve the classroom climate and reduce challenging situations. It integrated methods from pedagogy, psychology, and communication studies. The Erasmus+ 60 project, led by a consortium of European universities, explored the educational needs of citizens aged 60+. The project developed online courses, intergenerational methodologies, and digital tools to support senior learners and enhance their engagement with higher education. Contract research projects included collaboration with St. Anne's University Hospital in Brno, where a comprehensive training system for technical-economic staff was developed, and a project with Age Management z. s., which analysed work capability in organisations using internationally recognised tools. The Institute also participated in a cross-border Interreg project aimed at developing digital competencies among secondary school teachers and pupils. The research focused on IT skills, digital security, and online education, and resulted in training models applicable across Czech and Slovak regions.	
Recommendations: - The high scientific quality and the notable ethical relevance of the submitted projects attest the outstanding competence of the Institute's members and highlight a potential that has perhaps not yet been fully realised. - Implementing the recommendations outlined in section 3.2 (Recognition by the Research Community), particularly concerning fostering cooperation in STEM fields, which could initially be developed within Mendelu's institutional framework, may facilitate a greater inflow of funding, including external contracts. Such resources (currently still limited, especially in the case of external contracts) and the availability of qualified personnel	

represent key factors for increasing the number and quality of the Institute's research projects in the coming years.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The research activities of the Institute of Lifelong Learning are closely tied to societal needs, with several projects generating results that have either already been applied in practice or show strong potential for future impact. These outcomes are typically aligned with the Institute's mission to promote professional development, educational innovation, and social inclusion.

One of the key impact's stems from the GAČR-funded project on the history of secondary vocational schools in socialist Czechoslovakia. The monograph and related outputs have been used not only in academic contexts but also as educational material in courses for future teachers and researchers, contributing to intergenerational learning and reflection on historical educational practices.

The TAPATE model project has had direct application in the field of teacher training. Tools and methodologies developed in the project are now used to improve communication and classroom management in Czech schools. These outcomes enhance teacher competencies and support systemic improvements in education.

The Erasmus+ 60 project has influenced the design of educational opportunities for older adults. Outputs include a set of pilot online courses and methodological tools for intergenerational learning, contributing to inclusive education policies. The results are being used at both institutional and international levels to shape strategies in lifelong learning for seniors.

Contract research for St. Anne's University Hospital resulted in the design of a training system that is already in use and aims to improve employee onboarding, upskilling, and talent management. Similarly, the Age Management project has led to concrete recommendations for companies regarding the maintenance and development of employee work capabilities.

Additional results include a study on the mental health of academic staff during the COVID-19 pandemic (COVIDiSTRESS), an analysis of movement activity and motivation among seniors, and research into youth at risk and volunteering. Some of these outcomes have been reflected in public policy documents, methodological materials, and awareness campaigns, thereby extending their societal reach and prospective impact.

Recommendations:

The research activities presented demonstrate a distinctive strength of the Institute: a holistic, person-centred approach that places the individual at the centre of every educational, institutional, or social mechanism analysed. The various topics explored demonstrate a commendable commitment to addressing real-world challenges through a multidisciplinary perspective.

- The constant **attention to gender equity, sustainability, and social cohesion** further underlines the Institute's alignment with the broader goals of responsible and inclusive research.
- It is essential that this valuable approach **continue to guide the Institute's research, activities, and services**, ensuring long-term consistency with the principles of inclusion, responsibility, and social relevance.

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 Institute of Lifelong Learning applies a structured approach to transferring research and development results into practice. This is achieved through long-term cooperation with public institutions, nonprofit organisations, schools, and educational providers. The Institute focuses on applied research in lifelong learning, vocational didactics, and educational needs, and actively seeks new users of its results through targeted outreach, conferences, and partnerships.

Key examples of practical application include:

- St. Anne's University Hospital Brno, where a comprehensive training system for technical and administrative staff was designed and implemented, based on the analysis of their educational needs.
- Age Management, z. s., which uses the Personnel and Company Radar tools developed by the Institute to assess and improve working conditions in selected organisations.
- Secondary schools in the Slovak - Czech border region, which benefited from digital education programmes delivered through the Interreg SK-CZ project.
- Seniors participating in the University of the Third Age or Erasmus+ 60 project, who access educational content enhancing digital skills, critical thinking and intergenerational communication.

The Institute also supports knowledge transfer through its collaboration with the Department of Technology Transfer at MENDELU (DTT), which facilitates contacts with industrial partners, analyses commercial potential of outputs, and organises presentations for stakeholders. Commercialisation of R&D&I outputs is not the Institute's primary focus, but selected results have been used in contract research and externally funded consultancy.

In the 2019–2023 period, the Institute attracted non-grant, non-public funding through contract research activities with partners such as St. Anne's University Hospital (2023–2024) and Age Management, z. s. (2022–2025), generating verifiable impact and societal benefit.

This comprehensive transfer strategy, based on networking, targeted education, and collaboration, ensures that the Institute's outputs reach relevant user groups and address concrete societal and professional challenges.

Recommendations:

One of the Institute's main strengths is its ability to develop research and training models that respond to social and educational needs.

- The Institute could **more systematically identify and engage a broader range of users** to improve the translation of research results into practice.
- Some developed **models could be further refined and offered as training packages**, consultancy services or digital tools, opening new opportunities for commercial application.
- In parallel, **strengthening longitudinal and comparative research perspectives** by integrating long-term follow-up would improve the ability to measure the lasting impact of educational and social interventions.
- These improvements, pursued gradually and without compromising the flexibility and responsiveness that are clearly among the Institute's main strengths, could help **consolidate its role as a key player in socially impactful and ethically grounded research**.

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 Institute of Lifelong Learning has significantly expanded its popularisation and public communication activities during the 2019–2023 period. Its approach combines traditional outreach formats with modern communication channels to effectively engage various target groups.

The Institute has developed its presence on social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of followers on the Institute's Facebook page increased from 898 to 2,245, reflecting growing public interest. These platforms are actively used to promote events, share news about research and education, and engage with both the professional community and the general public.

Alongside digital communication, the Institute also makes use of traditional media. Its work has been featured in television programmes such as *Události v regionech* and *Studio ČT24*, in radio interviews, and in print and online magazines. These contributions help communicate both research findings and educational initiatives to a broad audience, enhancing the public understanding of science and promoting lifelong learning.

Public-facing activities include lectures, open days, participation in university-wide events such as Researchers' Night and Gaudeamus, and educational activities offered by the University of the Third Age (U3V). These initiatives promote intergenerational learning and support active ageing.

A notable innovation in this period was the involvement of student ambassadors. These students helped promote the Institute's activities at public events and through direct communication with prospective learners via email and social networks. Their active engagement contributed to raising awareness of the Institute's offerings and strengthening its reputation as an open and inclusive educational centre.

By combining personal contact, traditional media, and digital outreach, the Institute has strengthened its role as a key public communicator of academic and educational knowledge.

Recommendations:

The efforts made by the Institute in recent years to promote its activities through social media, traditional media, and direct public engagement are clearly evident and this represent a clear improvement.

- To **guide future communication strategies even more effectively**, it is recommended to use simple tools, such as website and social media analytics or short audience surveys, to better understand which outreach activities are most effective and how they can be improved.
- The launch of the student ambassador program is a highly commendable initiative. To ensure its continued effectiveness, it is recommended to **provide the participating students with dedicated training in science communication and public engagement skills**.
- When promoting events or initiatives, it is also advisable to **clearly indicate the research projects or results on which they are based**. This will help to highlight the scientific value and impact of the Institute's work and position communication as a strategic tool to attract new users and potential sources of funding.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Following the previous evaluation period (2015–2018), the Institute of Lifelong Learning undertook several strategic and structural changes in response to the recommendations provided. A major turning point was the change in leadership in 2018, which initiated a revision of internal management processes. This led to stronger interdepartmental collaboration and had a direct impact on the quality and scope of research and development activities.

As a result of these changes, the Institute has seen a notable increase in project proposals and funding applications submitted by its staff, particularly from the Department of Social Sciences. The department's publication activity has significantly improved, both in quantity and quality, with a tenfold increase in results submitted to the national research output registry (RIV) between 2018 and 2023.

The Institute also contributed to the development of internal strategies for the education and career development of MENDELU staff and played a more active role in the promotion of technology transfer and intellectual property protection. Collaboration with other faculties has become more frequent, especially in the creation of interdisciplinary educational programmes.

In terms of outreach, the Institute expanded its activities in teaching Czech to refugees from Ukraine, supporting students with special needs, and launching new counselling and personal development services. The number of students requiring special support tripled compared to the previous period.

The Centre also introduced EEG biofeedback therapy and offered entrepreneurial education through elective courses reaching hundreds of students.

These actions illustrate the Institute's ongoing effort to address past recommendations and enhance its role as a provider of socially relevant, inclusive, and innovation-driven education.

Recommendations:

Regarding the implementation of the previous recommendations, it should first be noted that, at the time of the last evaluation, it was difficult to fully align the specific nature of the Institute with the assessment criteria applied. Among the main areas identified as weaknesses were the limited focus on research, the lack of cooperation with the private sector, and insufficient participation in international events. Over the past five years, the Institute has made commendable efforts to address these issues: research activities and access to funding have been strengthened even though research is not the Institute's primary mission, and collaboration with private partners has clearly increased, with further development potential. Participation in international initiatives has improved, and communication regarding the Institute's results and activities has been significantly expanded. **While these efforts are evident, as reflected in the comments and recommendations at the end of each section of this evaluation, they remain open to further improvement and consolidation in the coming years.**

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	4 - Very good
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
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	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Grade [A–D]:	B
Summary assessment: The Institute for Lifelong Learning (ILL) stands out for its holistic and inclusive approach, which places the individual at the centre of every educational, institutional or social process. This perspective inspires the Institute's activities in education, consultancy, research and advocacy, and is clearly aligned with its mission and social role. Although research is not the main focus of the Institute, its outputs are of high quality and social relevance, particularly in areas such as vocational training, intergenerational learning and adult education.	

The Institute has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing previously identified weaknesses, in particular by increasing research productivity, opening to collaboration with the private sector and participating more actively in international academic networks.

Public communication and knowledge transfer have also improved significantly, thanks to the use of digital media, partnerships and the involvement of student ambassadors.

At the same time, some areas remain open to further development (see recommendations).

Overall, the Institute shows a clear trajectory of growth and consolidation, with considerable potential to further strengthen its scientific visibility and societal impact in the coming years.

Summary recommendations:

- The Institute is encouraged to **further define its strategic research priorities and develop internal research clusters**, in accordance with the specific expertise and profiles of individual staff members, in order to enhance its visibility and impact.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly with STEM fields, should be strengthened** to support innovation and international dissemination.
- **Increased participation in competitive funding and contract research** would improve the Institute's sustainability and autonomy. Developing tools to assess the impact of long-term results would also be useful.
- **Efforts to engage with the public** should continue, ensuring a clear link between communication activities and research results.
- Based on interviews, **additional staff may be needed to support the growing educational demand**, particularly for teaching.
- Overall, the Institute deserves **strong institutional support to continue its development**, with the expectation that any future support will translate into measurable improvements in results.

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 AgriSciences	A
Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology	A
Faculty of Business and Economics	B
Faculty of Horticulture	A
Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies	C
Institute of Lifelong Learning	B
Summary grade	A

Summary quality assessment:

Mendel University in Brno (MENDELU) demonstrates a mature, strategically coherent, and socially engaged institutional profile, characterized by a strong commitment to sustainable development, applied research, and interdisciplinary education. The university's faculty-based structure successfully integrates basic and applied research across diverse fields—agriculture, forestry, economics, regional development, horticulture, and lifelong learning—while aligning with European and global priorities.

All faculties show substantial progress in strengthening their research output, societal relevance, and institutional development. The faculties and institute collectively reflect a well-balanced profile, spanning agriculture, forestry, economics, regional development, horticulture, and lifelong learning—each aligned with MENDELU's strategic priorities and the evolving needs of Czech and global society.

Notable achievements include improved research productivity (particularly in high-impact journals), expanded national and international project participation, effective organizational reforms (especially within the Faculty of Business and Economics), and robust infrastructures such as the University Forest Enterprise and the experimental farm in Žabčice, which serve as living laboratories of practical relevance.

The faculties of Agrisciences, Forestry and Wood Technology, and Horticulture demonstrate strong alignment with environmental and sustainability goals and offer unique, competitive assets for international collaboration. Their applied research outputs—ranging from smart agriculture tools to innovative bioengineering solutions and forest management practices promise good position for further collaborations with public agencies, commercial entities, and sectoral stakeholders. Those faculties possess strong infrastructure for practice-oriented education and research (e.g. farms, forest enterprise, horticultural sites).

The Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies, the Institute of Lifelong Learning and the Faculty of Business and Economy contribute significantly to societal outreach, policy-relevant research, applied economic models, regional development frameworks, interdisciplinary integration, and lifelong education. The Faculty of Business and Economics shows institutional maturity, innovation in structure, and responsiveness to external evaluations. Though further integration and strategic alignment could reduce fragmentation and enhance institutional efficiency.

The Institute of Lifelong Learning offers a unique societal contribution by advancing inclusive education, vocational retraining, and intergenerational learning. It effectively supports MENDELU's public mission and reaches target groups often underrepresented in traditional university settings.

Nevertheless, challenges remain—particularly in maximizing international visibility, enhancing support for postdoctoral researchers, increasing participation in ERC/MSCA-level funding, and consolidating overlapping academic profiles (e.g., between FBE and FRDIS). More strategic coordination in areas such as technology transfer, communication and sharing infrastructure would support broader impact and international competitiveness.

Overall, MENDELU is a dynamic, forward-looking institution with a well-established foundation for long-term academic excellence, societal impact, and global engagement. It demonstrates consistent progress toward its strategic objectives and is well-positioned to strengthen its leadership both nationally and in the wider European context by 2030.

Summary recommendation:

- Strengthen **international visibility and competitiveness** by supporting participation in major global research programmes (especially to smaller university units), academic networks and systematically enhancing English-language communication tools and promotion.
- Consolidate and focus **strategic research themes** across faculties, align internal structures (e.g. departmental organization, project staffing, shared infrastructure) with international best practices, and ensure long-term sustainability of key research teams.
- Professionalize **knowledge and technology transfer** processes through clear commercialization pathways, incentive systems for researchers, and stronger links with industry and policy actors.
- Deepen **interdisciplinary collaboration**—particularly with international partners—while fostering student, alumni, and postdoctoral involvement in research, innovation, and outreach to public as a means of expanding societal and global impact.
- Develop an integrated institutional system for **monitoring research quality**, impact, and communication, including dashboards for tracking project success, stakeholder engagement, academic recognition, and the effectiveness of public outreach activities.
- Provide stronger institutional support **for small-scale university units** to enable their continued development, with the expectation that such support will lead to measurable improvements in outcomes.
- Enhance support for **Ph.D. and postdoctoral researchers**, with a focus on mobility, project involvement, and working conditions.

EVALUATION REPORT FOR MODULES 4 & 5

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME: Mendel University in Brno

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 62156489

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:¹

Mendel University in Brno (MENDELU) demonstrates a well-structured and strategically aligned R&D&I management system that reflects its mission as a research-intensive university focused on sustainable development. The organizational setup supports its multidisciplinary research approach through a robust faculty- and institute-based structure that integrates both basic and applied research across key thematic areas such as agriculture, forestry, and landscape management. Unique assets such as the University Forest Enterprise Masaryk Forest Křtiny and the University Agriculture Enterprise in Žabčice serve as exemplary “living labs,” anchoring MENDELU’s applied research and stakeholder collaboration.

The university has made impressive progress over the past 5 years. Strategic leadership is cohesive, hardworking and motivated. It is effectively centralized under the Rector and Vice-rectors, with clearly defined roles for research governance and support bodies, such as the Scientific Board, Grant Agency, and Commercialisation Board. The emphasis on support services – including project offices, IT, HR, open science, and technology transfer – illustrates a strong administrative backbone that enables research productivity. Interfaculty and interdisciplinary cooperation are embedded in the university’s structure, but their practical implementation and strategic use could be further strengthened to fully realise their potential for improved organizational alignment. The Faculty of Business and Economics and the Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies show thematic overlap, particularly in economics, international relations, and business development. Their current separation may limit coherence and international visibility, as similar disciplines are often integrated into unified business schools at peer institutions.

The Institute of Lifelong Learning plays an increasingly important role within MENDELU’s academic ecosystem. It offers a diverse and innovative portfolio that responds to evolving societal and labour market needs, particularly in adult education and upskilling. Its alignment with global trends positions it as a key driver of broader access, institutional impact, and potential new revenue streams through industry partnerships and professional development programs.

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.

In comparison with foreign universities of similar size and research orientation (e.g., Wageningen University, BOKU Vienna), MENDELU shows strengths in application-focused research and sectoral cooperation. However, its international profile and language environment are still evolving, and further integration into global research networks may enhance its competitiveness and visibility.

Recommendations:

- **Further promote multidisciplinary collaboration** within and across research themes, leveraging the potential of university-wide institutes.
- Enhance MENDELU's international R&D&I profile by supporting greater engagement in global research networks, joint international projects, and increasing the visibility of research outputs.
- **Publicize the university on social media** focused on young people around the EU.
- Maintain and further develop professional research support services, ensuring their capacity to adapt to evolving demands in project management, open science, and technology transfer.
- **Further strengthen the interdisciplinary profile** of the university, by mapping existing collaborations within MENDELU, nationally and internationally, and strategically encouraging faculty-level cooperation and co-mentorship across departments and institutes. Consider appointing adjunct international faculty who will co-publish and co-supervise students at MENDELU.
- **Consider restructuring departments for visibility, institutional coherence, accessibility** for external stakeholders **and capacity for strategic collaborations** by creating smaller number of departments with clearly defined and internationally recognizable names, based on coherent disciplinary identities, and merging complementary departments to form interdisciplinary units.
- **Scaling up the Institute of Lifelong Learning**, leveraging its innovative offerings to respond to labour market trends, support adult learning, and create new revenue streams through industry partnerships and professional development programs.

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]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU demonstrates a comprehensive and evolving ecosystem of tools and measures aimed at stimulating high-quality science, well aligned with its research-focused mission.

The Project Office acts as a central hub for methodological support, training, and communication, underpinned by a clear internal structure and growing international capacity (e.g., Horizon Europe expertise). Its documented impact-evident in training participation and the development of guidelines shows consistent institutional engagement.

The Gregor Johann Mendel Grant Agency (GA GJM) and Internal Grant Agency (IGA) create a dual-tier internal funding framework targeting both early-stage researchers and interdisciplinary teams. While GAGJM supports excellence, interdisciplinarity, and applied research with societal relevance, IGA sustains a long-standing tradition of nurturing PhD and master's student research. Further, the

Ph.D. Talent competition, structured project support, and integration of research infrastructures and living labs amplify MENDELU's commitment to excellence and application.

Crucially, the Technology Transfer Office, in conjunction with internal grants, ensures commercial pathways and relevance of scientific output-evident in successful Proof of Concept projects. However, while systems are robust, full realization of MENDELU's ambition to achieve internationally recognized scientific excellence would benefit from greater scale, enhanced targeting of top-tier researchers, and expanded international research teams.

Recommendations:

- **Enhance international competitiveness and visibility** by strengthening support for high-impact international publications, participation in prestigious research consortia, organizing workshops with editors of high-impact journals and provide targeted support for manuscript revisions to increase acceptance in Q1 publications.
- **Identify and support excellent research teams** using independent external evaluation panels to assess the level of research excellence.
- **Promote incoming researcher mobility** through programmes such as MSCA and Horizon Europe, and foster academic exchange by inviting international scholars to engage with undergraduate and graduate students through guest lectures and seminars.
- **Maintain and further strengthen the IGA and GAGJM internal grant scheme**, ensuring its continuity and development across all categories (A–D) with emphasis on interdisciplinary cooperation, research leadership, alignment with institutional strategic goals and support the attraction of research talent.
- **Expand and promote the MENDELU Research Chair programme (Category B)** to attract internationally recognised researchers and develop flagship research lines that enhance MENDELU's scientific identity and excellence.
- **Enhance micro-credentials in key research areas** to help position MENDELU as a lifelong learning leader and support industry engagement.

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:

MENDELU has developed a **robust internal and external evaluation system** that aligns well with national standards (Methodology 17+) and the University's strategic goals. The external evaluation through Modules 1 and 2 ensures a balanced focus on both **qualitative research excellence** (via peer review) and **quantitative performance metrics** (via bibliometrics such as AIS and SJR). The University's improved rankings and scores, particularly within the Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Forestry and Fisheries domain, confirm the system's growing effectiveness.

Internally, evaluation mechanisms are directly tied to **funding allocation** for long-term conceptual development, using clearly defined performance indicators, thus creating **strong incentives for excellence** in publishing, grant acquisition, and applied research. The use of peer review for selected high-quality outputs since 2022 strengthens the credibility and focus of internal assessment. The

Commercialisation Council, with external majority representation, brings market relevance to applied research evaluations.

Furthermore, MENDELU has significantly strengthened its **research ethics and integrity framework**, ensuring compliance with national legislation, ethical risk management, and transparency. The establishment of multiple ethics committees, centralised platforms for guidance, and active engagement with international networks (e. g. ENAI) reinforce a culture of **responsibility, compliance, and integrity**.

Recommendations:

- **Introduce five-year internal evaluation plans** aligned with the national methodology, focusing on achieving excellent publication and non-publication top-tier outcomes. Emphasis should be placed on top-tier outputs (e. g. high-impact publications and innovation results).
- **Maintain continuous monitoring of collaborative, applied, and institutional development objectives.**
- **Set a goal of increasing research performance** (e.g., publications, grants) e. g. by 10% annually across faculties, to drive strategic growth.
- **Establish a systematic and regular evaluation process for research teams and individual researchers**, combining both qualitative and quantitative indicators, including impact metrics, interdisciplinarity, and contribution to the university's strategic objectives.
- **Continue to develop the ethical framework for research** by updating and implementing internal regulations in line with national and European standards, and by reinforcing ethics training and awareness among researchers.
- **Establish a standing promotion committee** that meets regularly to evaluate faculty for academic advancement, based on their academic portfolio and contributions and to be more proactive in addressing bottlenecks in the progression to full professor roles.

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:

MENDELU has developed a comprehensive and forward-looking system to support the sustainability and resilience of its R&D&I ecosystem. The Sustainability Strategy 2025–2030, anchored in the UN SDGs, is institutionally embedded and managed through the Strategy and Analysis Department and the MENDELU Sustainability Working Group. The strategy's integration into annual implementation plans ensures relevance and operational alignment, with R&D&I positioned as a strategic pillar.

Knowledge and research results transfer is an active and developing area at MENDELU, supported by the Technology Transfer Department, patenting and licensing activities, internal instruments (e.g., GA GJM – Category D), and cooperation with commercial and public stakeholders. While foundational structures are in place and institutional activity is evident, this area requires substantial strengthening, further systematisation, and staff development to fully leverage its potential. The university has been successful in securing new external funding to support proof-of-concept activities, reflecting an increasing focus on translating research into practice.

MENDELU offers a structured and diverse system of support for undergraduate and postgraduate student education, complemented by entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented initiatives such as Podnikni to!, Start-up MENDELU, and JIC PHD Academy, while activities like MENDELU Boost encourage student participation in technology transfer and practical application of knowledge.

The Open Science Centre and university-wide data stewardship contribute to MENDELU's alignment with national and EU open research strategies and are reinforced by strong cybersecurity, data protection, and risk management frameworks.

Institutional's resilience is supported by a well-developed cybersecurity infrastructure, including a dedicated cybersecurity committee, along with digitised operations and the implementation of smart technologies across research and administration; initiatives in digitalisation, internal training, and risk awareness contribute to institutional adaptability and preparedness.

Recommendations:

- **Further strengthen the technology transfer ecosystem** by systematising internal processes, expanding staff capacity, deepening collaboration with external stakeholders and external funding, building on recent success in proof-of-concept funding acquisition.
- **Continue supporting entrepreneurship and innovation education programmes** targeting undergraduate and postgraduate students, ensuring their sustained integration with research and knowledge application activities across faculties.
- **Continue strengthening processes to protect research integrity and institutional autonomy**, including awareness-raising, training, and risk assessment in international cooperation.
- Consider leveraging MENDELU's natural infrastructure to **develop "outdoor living labs,"** which can serve both research and educational goals, while also addressing youth mental health and sustainability education through experiential learning environments.

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 development of the age structure indicates an aging of the entire employee population. The university recognizes the importance of this issue and, for example, includes the following measure in its Gender Equality Plan: "Familiarize university management and senior staff with the principles of age management and the possibilities of its application in the university environment." In order to effectively address the aging of its employee population, the university should implement a comprehensive set of measures focused on maintaining performance, transferring knowledge, and ensuring generational renewal.

Based on the available data, it can be stated that the university shows an increase in the proportion of international staff, particularly in junior research positions. This trend reflects a growing level of internationalization and the interest of foreign experts in participating in the university's research activities. All academic and research vacancies are advertised on Euraxess, and the university has its own Welcome Office for international staff. To further strengthen this area, it would also be appropriate to support the integration of international employees into the university environment.

The university has recorded a slight increase in the employee population in academic positions. It pays attention to early-career researchers through activities such as the Ph.D. School and Ph.D. Talent. There is room for improvement in the development of career paths and also in the definition of postdoctoral status.

From the perspective of gender distribution in academic and leadership positions, there is a noticeable gradual decline in the number of women toward higher-level roles. The university has a Gender Equality Plan in which several measures are established to address this issue. Support for women should be directed particularly toward the reconciliation of work and parenthood, as well as toward talent management, overcoming gender biases, and combating gender-based violence. A good working conditions for women were also declared by female employees during the on-site visit.

Recommendations:

- **Introduce a comprehensive age management strategy** to address workforce aging, focusing on maintaining performance, facilitating knowledge transfer between generations, and ensuring effective succession planning. Consider early retirement schemes to support generational renewal and attract young, motivated researchers.
- **Strengthen the Gender Equality Plan** through leadership training on age management and targeted **support for women in academic leadership**, including mentorship, work-life balance measures, and addressing structural barriers such as gender bias.
- **Strengthen international staff integration** by expanding onboarding, language support, and community-building initiatives. In parallel, collaborate with research funding institutions and foundations to enhance compensation packages and increase the attractiveness of positions for internationally recognized talent.
- **Increase monitoring of diversity indicators** (age, gender, nationality, career stage) through regular reporting to support evidence-based human resource planning and policy adjustments.

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]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has made substantial progress in aligning its recruitment processes with the principles of Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R). Notable strengths include the revision of internal Selection Procedure Rules, the establishment of a dedicated careers website, the

appointment of a recruiter, implementation of an interview handbook to ensure standardized interview quality, and the establishment of a Welcome Office to support international employees. All recruitment-related materials, including job postings and HR policies, are now available in both Czech and English, enhancing international visibility. These steps have significantly increased transparency and accessibility for both domestic and international candidates.

MENDELU has taken several positive steps to enhance career development for its academic and research personnel. The introduction of a Directive on Human Resources Management, the preparation of competency models, and efforts to link performance evaluation to personal development planning are all signs of a systematic and strategic approach to career growth. The university also supports researchers through access to training and development opportunities.

A strong focus is also placed on improving the working environment – MENDELU is committed to continuously enhancing workplace conditions, including effective work–life balance, which contributes to higher employee satisfaction.

MENDELU was the first Czech higher education institution to receive the prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award (HR Award) from the European Commission. Receiving the HR Award has increased the university's prestige and its attractiveness to international researchers, thus supporting the internationalization of research.

MENDELU demonstrates a strong commitment to modernizing and professionalizing its recruitment system and made an effort to improve career development, with foundational structures in place and a strong strategic vision. However, the institution must accelerate implementation of its policies and focus on building a consistent, transparent, and inclusive career support system for all researcher levels. Further efforts are needed to ensure fully structured onboarding processes.

Recommendations:

- **Formalize a comprehensive onboarding and mentoring system** for all new hires (especially international staff) to ensure consistent support across all units.
- **Develop structured career pathways for early-career researchers**, including clear postdoctoral frameworks, tenure-track models, and professional development opportunities to support academic progression.
- **Accelerate measures to resolve dual-role conflicts** (academic/managerial) by clarifying workloads and ensuring strategic time allocations for research-intensive staff.
- **Expand the Return Grant program** and consider broader funding for reintegration after non-family career interruptions (e.g., international fellowships, industry secondments).
- **Enhance succession planning** by building fast-track leadership programs for early- and mid-career researchers and technical staff.
- **Increase targeted international recruitment** campaigns for senior academic positions to balance current trends, paired with spousal/partner support programs for incoming foreign hires.
- **Strengthen data-driven HR monitoring** by systematically tracking outcomes of recruitment and development initiatives.
- **Improve English curriculum**, allow students to take extra courses in English. Improving English language is a tool for student success.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has demonstrated a strong and systematic commitment to promoting gender equality, anchored in the issuance and implementation of two successive Gender Equality Plans (2022–2024 and 2025–2028) aligned with European standards and Horizon Europe requirements. The University has taken a data-driven approach, supported by gender audits, re-audits, surveys, and interviews, ensuring that actions respond to real institutional needs.

Gender equality measures cover recruitment, career development, management appointments, pay equity, and work-life balance. Recruitment and selection processes actively promote gender balance through committee composition, training on unconscious bias, and gender-sensitive communication. Initiatives such as the Return Grant, flexible working conditions, and Safe MENDELU platform for workplace behaviour issues create a supportive environment for career continuity and employee well-being.

The LOGIB pay analysis (2021) and subsequent wage cohesion project (2024) confirm a relatively small adjusted gender pay gap (5.3 %), better than national averages. Awareness campaigns, role model visibility (e.g., events with Nobel laureate Professor Charpentier), and educational programs for managers reinforce cultural change.

However, challenges remain. Despite improvements, gender imbalance persists in top leadership roles (e.g., no women Deans in 2024), and career progression for women into higher academic and management ranks is slower. Additionally, while flexible work is offered, the adaptation and standardization of career reintegration practices after maternity/parental leave could be strengthened further.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure long-term sustainability** of GEP measures by gradually reducing reliance on temporary project-based funding and embedding key actions into the university's core budget and governance structures.
- **Expand the scope of intersectionality** in the plan by addressing overlapping dimensions of inequality beyond gender (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, social background) to foster a more inclusive academic environment.
- **Strengthen qualitative impact assessment** by incorporating tools to evaluate cultural change, user satisfaction, and lived experiences, in addition to standard quantitative indicators.
- **Enhance institutional ownership and visibility** of the GEP through continued leadership engagement, regular communication, and integration into strategic university documents.
- **Continue and scale up successful initiatives** such as mentoring programmes for women, training activities on gender equality, return grants, pay equity audits, and the Safe MENDELU platform, ensuring their availability across all faculties and units.
- **Maintain and deepen awareness-raising and training activities** on gender equality, bias, and inclusive practices to build long-term capacity and cultural change among all staff and students.

- **Regularly monitor and report progress** using clearly defined indicators and timelines, with adjustments based on evaluation results and stakeholder feedback.

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:

In the area of internationalization, the key pillars are student and employee **mobility**, the implementation of foreign projects (Erasmus, Horizon) and the creation of international networks (CEEPUS). The Covid-19 pandemic has meant a decline in mobility for students and employees. The number of mobilities has been increasing since 2020. In the last year (2024), the number of mobilities exceeded the number in the pre-Covid-19 period. The goal of equalizing the number of outgoing and incoming students has been achieved. Ph.D. students must complete foreign mobility, this will lead to a further increase in the number of outgoing students.

Considering mobility an essential tool, further development can be reached with targeted funding—particularly for participation in conferences and scientific bodies (including youth science boards) to maintain momentum and advancing internationalisation efforts. This may include joint affiliations with leading faculties and local labs, facilitating travel to MENDELU and supporting funded student involvement.

The university tries to support the completion of students' final theses through long-term internships, where the teacher travels abroad with a group of students and, with the support of the local university, completes their bachelor's and master's theses abroad.

The university successfully joined the Alliance of European Universities HEROES, its financial support was decided in 2024. The alliance represents an opportunity to obtain further international projects, share infrastructure and transfer results into practice within Europe.

The university environment has become more international since the last evaluation. Internal regulations are issued in English, language courses for employees have been supported (the goal is to continuously improve the language skills of employees), and the university is active on social networks, where it promotes the results of science and research in English (LinkedIn). These measures aim to become a bilingual university and increase the attractiveness of the university for incoming researchers and students, yet MENDELU's web pages still have room for an improvement.

Recommendations:

- **Increase financial support for student and staff mobility** programs, or establish targeted mobility funds to sustain the positive post-pandemic growth in international exchanges and MENDELU's global visibility.
- **Maintain the requirement for foreign mobility for Ph.D. students**, and explore ways to integrate similar mobility elements into master's level programs to strengthen international experience across study levels.

- **Further develop long-term thesis internships abroad**, including institutional support, not only financial, but also organizational and motivational. for accompanying staff, as a strategic tool for enhancing internationalization, joint research, and collaborative publishing.
- **Promote a bilingual university environment** by improving staff English proficiency through structured training and ensuring consistent bilingualism in communication, including websites, regulations, applications, and promotional materials, to enhance accessibility and international visibility.
- **Strengthen the university's English-language presence on social media**, especially for disseminating research and innovation outcomes to global audiences.

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:

MENDELU demonstrates a **strategic, coordinated, and well-funded approach** to the acquisition, optimisation, and renewal of its research infrastructure. The University integrates equipment planning with long-term sustainability and scientific goals, using **consultations with research groups**, and **faculty-level renewal plans** to align investments with user needs. Importantly, infrastructure development is supported by extensive external funding, including **14 OP RDE projects, National Recovery Plan, and OP JAK projects**, with total funding exceeding **CZK 1.36 billion (EUR 53.8 million)**.

The sharing of research infrastructure and equipment at MENDELU is already practiced in several cases, particularly within faculties and between closely collaborating units. While these efforts reflect a pragmatic approach to resource use, the current system remains largely decentralised. Expanding structured mechanisms for inter-faculty and university-wide sharing could further increase the efficiency, accessibility, and strategic utilisation of existing equipment, improving cost-effectiveness and fostering interfaculty collaboration.

Recommendations:

- **Continue to secure external funding** to support the development and renewal of research infrastructure.
- **Surveying the needs of research teams** in the process of acquiring the instruments.
- **Further enhance efficient equipment-sharing** across faculties by developing centralized digital platforms for inventory visibility and access coordination, while continuously supporting shared use of instruments through centralized core facilities that serve multiple faculties, improving cost-effectiveness and fostering interfaculty collaboration.

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:

MENDELU demonstrates a financial structure well-aligned with its profile as a public research-intensive institution. The University successfully maintains a high reliance on domestic public funding. The main sources of public funding are from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic. Another notable contributor is the Ministry of Agriculture.

At the same time, MENDELU is gradually **increasing its capacity to attract prestigious international research funding**, as shown by participation in Horizon Europe, COST, Interreg, Fulbright, and ERA Chair projects. Flagship projects like Tree Dynamics (ERC CZ) illustrate the university's competitiveness in securing high-profile, frontier research funding. MENDELU has made progress in attracting international public funding, highlighting this as an area where increased strategic focus and further development are recommended.

From Table 4.10.2, the distribution of project funding across basic research (53%), applied research (38%), and experimental development (9%) indicates orientation toward foundational scientific output. This balance is appropriate for MENDELU's interdisciplinary mission and its applied focus in fields such as forestry, agriculture, and rural development.

The ability of funding from other sources as showed in the Table 4.10.1. corresponds with the size of each faculty, while the biggest faculties FA and FFWT show highest numbers the FRDIS shows higher number despite of its smaller size. During the period under review, cooperation with industry through contractual research was conducted with nearly 500 entities (Table 4.10.5).

Recommendations:

- **Intensify efforts to diversify funding sources**, especially through increased engagement with Horizon Europe, MSCA, and industry partnerships to reduce dependence on domestic public funds.
- **Increase support for Horizon Europe leadership roles**, including coordination of large-scale consortia
- **Promote faculty-level strategic support units** to identify and coordinate international research opportunities, offering mentoring and administrative assistance in proposal writing.
- **Encourage the creation of a faculty-based outreach office** that connects researchers to funding calls and assists in building consortia for Horizon Europe and similar international projects.
- **Incentivize industry partnerships** that lead to contracted research and knowledge transfer. International experts can facilitate collaborations with EU universities and secure grants.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has developed a strategically sound and performance-oriented system for the use of institutional LCDRO support. The funding mechanism effectively links support to output-based criteria, such as publications in high-impact journals, participation in competitive international programmes (e.g. Horizon Europe, COST), and the generation of applicable results, including patents and commercialization.

The university has demonstrated a unique ability to manage its funds in such a way that, even with a lower budget, it is able to produce a higher volume of outputs. As a result, the recalculated cost per publication ranks among the lowest compared with Czech HEIs.

The distribution model is clearly aligned with the university's mission to promote scientific excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation transfer, and is implemented through transparent rules that assign 73% of funds to research quality and innovation, 15% to international projects, 8% to national grants, and 4% to contractual research.

The Gregor Johann Mendel Grant Agency (GA GJM) is one of MENDELU's internal instruments supporting the long-term conceptual development of research, primarily through structured categories of competitive calls, including support for emerging researchers, interdisciplinary projects, and proof-of-concept activities. It complements the objectives of the LCDRO framework and plays a role in stimulating research excellence. The MENDELU Ph.D. Talent programme further contributes by motivating doctoral students to engage in competitive research and prepare quality projects, thereby strengthening the university's talent pipeline.

Overall, the system is effective and appropriate for a mid-sized research university with an applied focus, and shows measurable results in terms of patents, licenses, start-ups, and international recognition; nonetheless, further support for structured institutional mechanisms would help unlock its full potential.

Recommendations:

- **Set focused medium-term goals** aimed at enhancing high-quality publications, practically applicable research results, participation in prestigious international projects, spin-off creation, and successful commercialization, as a basis for continuous improvement.
- **Further develop the system of distribution LCDRO** so the university development, vision and mission are more reflected.
- **Further strengthen structured institutional mechanisms** such as GA GJM by increasing their strategic visibility and ensuring broader access to LCDRO funding
- **Continue supporting the MENDELU Ph.D. Talent programme** as a key tool for developing competitive and research-oriented doctoral students.

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:

MENDELU demonstrates a well-balanced and mission-driven portfolio of national and international R&D&I collaborations, effectively aligned with its core focus on sustainability, interdisciplinary science, and regional relevance. The university participates in prestigious EU-funded consortia (Horizon Europe, COST, ERC CZ, H2020) and has successfully coordinated multiple large-scale international projects, including the *STREAM* and *SPOT* projects, which underline MENDELU's leadership in areas like forestry, sustainable development, and cultural policy.

The international collaborations are proportionate to the size and focus of MENDELU as a specialized university, and reflect diverse disciplinary reach, ranging from plant health and bio-remediation (*PIURPEST*, *GREENER*) to rural sociology (*DIGI net*, *FLIARA*), and food system resilience. These partnerships foster capacity building, international networking, and policy engagement, which supports MENDELU's strategic vision of contributing to global challenges through applied, interdisciplinary research.

At the national level, MENDELU is involved in several impactful projects, most notably *NaCeBiVet* in veterinary biotechnology and *Smart Migration* in socio-demographic studies, demonstrating both scientific depth and societal relevance. Importantly, MENDELU often serves as project coordinator, evidencing maturity in research leadership and project management.

Collaborations also support long-term value creation, as seen in successful commercialization of research outputs, interdisciplinary team formation, student engagement, and cross-sector partnerships. These outcomes highlight MENDELU's effectiveness in leveraging collaborations to generate both academic and practical impact.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen national and international R&D cooperation** by actively pursuing Horizon Europe, MSCA, and industry-linked projects.
- **Maintain international relations alive and ensure the sustainability of both network and bilateral relations**, the benefits must be reciprocal for all parties involved.
- **New cooperation** agreements and projects should be considered more closely through the concrete **benefits they bring to teaching and research activities**
- **Map and promote successful MENDELU alumni** in science and industry, highlighting their career outcomes and connections to MENDELU education. This visibility can enhance MENDELU's reputation and attract future students and partners.
- **Fully leverage membership in the HEROES Alliance**, particularly by initiating joint projects, sharing infrastructure, and promoting best practices in innovation transfer across the network.

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]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU offers several dozen study programs, some of which are taught in English. Over the past five years, the number of doctoral students has decreased on average. However, this decline has not affected the number of study programs offered. It has, however, had an impact on the overall quality of students and their academic output. A planned amendment to the Higher Education Act aims to strengthen the selectivity of doctoral candidates and provide them with better financial support, which is expected to enhance the quality of doctoral students at MENDELU.

In general, the organization of doctoral studies at MENDELU is considered optimal, with the supervisor–doctoral student relationship playing a central role. One area with potential for improvement is the expansion of the joint PhD school across university faculties. This would improve cost efficiency, foster collaboration among students, and enhance the multidisciplinary nature of their research outcomes.

Another promising direction for development is the introduction and promotion of cotutelle agreements—joint supervision of PhD students between MENDELU and foreign partner institutions. This model would strengthen international research cooperation, offer students broader academic perspectives, and enhance the global competitiveness of both the graduates and the university itself.

MENDELU has also introduced a mandatory international mobility component into all doctoral programs, which is a highly commendable step. Although the dropout rate remains relatively high, it is comparable to that of other Czech universities. It is encouraging that the university acknowledges this issue and is actively seeking solutions to address it.

Recommendations:

- **Consider reducing the number of doctoral study programs** to concentrate resources, enhance the attractiveness, improve administrative efficiency, and strengthen the quality of the research environment.
- **Support the expansion of the university-wide Ph.D. school** across faculties to enhance cost-effectiveness, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and improve the quality of doctoral research outcomes.
- **Explore national solutions to provide better financial support for PhD students.** Poor financing affects the quality and impact of research, the attractiveness of a research career (retention power) and international competitiveness. In parallel, **encourage the development of cotutelle PhD agreements** with leading EU universities.
- **Support Ph.D. student 's development** within an internationally connected research environment. PhD students should be guided and encouraged to undertake longer research stays abroad, allowing for deeper engagement with host institutions and stronger integration into global scientific networks.

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: MENDELU has effectively addressed and implemented the key recommendations from the previous IEP evaluation across multiple strategic areas. A strategic and proactive approach to project development is evident, with funding opportunities effectively aligned to societal needs and interdisciplinary collaboration being actively supported. In open science and research accessibility, MENDELU adopted a comprehensive Open Access and Open Science Strategy 2023–2030, established a support centre, and significantly expanded its open repository and article funding support, aligning with best European practices. The human resources strategy has been strengthened through the adoption of unified HR policies, systematic development plans for academic and technical staff, transparent recruitment under the OTM-R policy, and targeted support for early-career researchers. MENDELU also made visible efforts toward internationalisation, with the Welcome Office, bilingual documentation, and specific financial support for foreign staff. Mobility improvements, particularly through the HEROES European Universities project, demonstrate MENDELU's commitment to restoring and expanding staff and student international exchanges post-pandemic. The development of new mobility programs and targeted support for administrative staff further reinforces systemic inclusiveness. Overall, MENDELU's actions show a robust and well-coordinated response to the previous evaluation, effectively aligning institutional development with European and national expectations.	
Recommendations: Continue strengthening strategic project development, human resources management, internationalisation, and mobility by building on existing initiatives, enhancing transparency and support systems, and aligning activities with long-term institutional goals and societal needs.	

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	5 - Outstanding
4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science	4 - Very good
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	4 - Very good
4.7 Gender equality measures	5 - Outstanding
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	5 - Outstanding
4.12 Important collaborations in R&D&I	4 - Very good
4.13 Doctoral studies	4 - Very good
4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4	4 - Very good
AVERAGE RATING	4 - Very good
GRADE [A–D]	B
Summary assessment: MENDELU demonstrates a robust institutional framework for research and development. Strategic management is systematic, personnel policies are transparent and inclusive, and measures supporting mobility, open science, and gender equality align with European standards. The institution actively responds to previous evaluation recommendations, confirming a strong internal cohesion and a clear orientation toward quality improvement. However, it remains essential for the university to continue improving in all of the aspects mentioned.	
Summary recommendations: • Maintain strong participation in national research funding schemes while actively pursuing higher success rates in international programmes, particularly Horizon Europe and MSCA. • Sustain institutional support for open science with a focused effort on expanding shared access to research infrastructure across faculties.	

- **Promote internationalisation through strategic global partnerships**, notably by consolidating participation in international university alliances such as HEROES.
- **Further develop the system of LCDRO distribution and consider refining** the internal research evaluation framework to better align with the university's development priorities, medium-term research planning, and its strategic mission and impact.
- **Strengthen the institutional framework for knowledge and technology transfer** by deepening cooperation between central units and faculties, expanding the portfolio of transferable outputs, and ensuring sufficient HR capacity to support collaboration with the commercial sector and research commercialisation.
- **Enhance equipment-sharing across faculties** through centralized digital platforms and core facilities to improve access, reduce duplication, and foster collaboration.
- **Focus on Ph.D. students'/postdoc's study and work conditions** and requirements to enhance their performance and global standing.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has developed a **mission and vision that are highly consistent** with its profile as a research-oriented, practice-integrated institution focusing on sustainability, interdisciplinarity, and societal relevance. Its mission "*University for life*" is coherently reflected in strategic areas such as sustainable landscape management, climate change adaptation, biotechnology innovation, and digitalisation, fully aligned with the State Education Policy Strategy 2030+, Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019–2030, and the European Green Deal.

During the past five years, MENDELU made substantial progress toward fulfilling its mission:

- **Modernised its infrastructure and educational environment** via OP JAK funding, with direct impacts on research quality and international competitiveness.
- **Strengthened technology transfer** through the development of the Technology Transfer Department, achieving applied outputs, patents, licensing, and start-up cooperation.
- **Increased institutional capacity to prepare and manage complex projects through a structured project office** and clear distribution of competencies.
- **Actively engaged in international networks** and development cooperation, notably in Africa and Central Europe, promoting sustainability and the bioeconomy.
- **Human resources development** through implementation of HRS4R actions and extensive support for young researchers and doctoral candidates.
- **Strategic internationalization**, establishment of global partnerships, and significantly increased foreign staff/student support.

The University's Strategic Plan 2025–2030 builds upon previous achievements and is well-rooted in national and European strategies, maintaining realistic yet ambitious goals. The shift towards strengthening interdisciplinary research (e.g., environmental and biological sciences, social studies) and commitment to sustainability in all operations ensure the vision is not only achievable but future-proofed against evolving societal needs.

Recommendations:

- **Enhance research excellence visibility** by increasing MENDELU's leadership roles in Horizon Europe consortia and strengthening its European partnerships to solidify global reputation.
- **Accelerate doctoral programme support**, especially first-year retention measures and international cotutelle agreements, to foster elite research training and career progression.
- **Further systematize technology transfer initiatives**, expanding startup incubator activities and bridging academia-industry gaps through focused seed funding and mentoring programs.
- **Make greater use of the Institute of Lifelong Learning's offerings** in continuing and adult education, which align with global trends and respond to current societal and labour market needs, including opportunities for professionals seeking to upskill or reskill.

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]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has set ambitious yet realistically achievable goals for the next five-year period that closely align with its mission to address global societal challenges, support interdisciplinary excellence, and reinforce its educational function. The objectives in R&D&I, particularly focusing on sustainability, biodiversity, soil and water management, climate resilience, and biotechnology, are proportional to MENDELU's size, disciplinary profile, and evolving strengths in agriculture, forestry, environmental sciences, and regional development.

However, it would be valuable for MENDELU to continue identifying areas where it can achieve global leadership while supporting national needs. Strengthening synergies across departments and faculties could further enhance societally relevant topics such as agriculture and forestry adaptation to climate change, agricultural and forestry extension, natural resource economics, big data applications in agrisciences, outreach to farmers, forest services, and forest owners, as well as food security and AI.

In terms of institutional development, MENDELU's objectives are clearly targeted toward modernization and inclusiveness: major infrastructure upgrades via OP JAK projects, enhanced human resource management (e.g., career planning, talent management, equality, and well-being programs), institutional resilience (e.g., cybersecurity, AI-supported processes), and expanding open science practices (aligned with FAIR and EOSC principles). MENDELU also shows a strong emphasis on knowledge transfer (through clusters, industrial

partnerships, and start-up support), internationalization (via HEROES and partnerships with global organizations), and increasing cooperation with public administration and non-profit sectors.

Given the significant secured funding (EUR 19 million from OP JAK alone), the detailed linkage of goals to national and European strategies (e.g., Strategy 2030+, European Green Deal, Horizon Europe priorities), and an active internal development agenda (e.g., Safe MENDELU, Open Science, and resilience planning), the strategic goals appear well-anchored, scalable, and feasible within the proposed timeframe.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen international cooperation and research application** by deepening involvement in the HEROES alliance, expanding strategic partnerships to increase societal impact and active presence in thematic working groups as a source of future collaborations.
- **Advance knowledge and technology transfer** by building long-term partnerships, refining incentives, and embedding transfer objectives into faculty strategies and university-wide processes.
- **Continue pushing to identify areas where can MENDELU achieve global leadership** while also supporting the needs of the country. Explore synergies between departments and faculties to strengthen areas and societally relevant topics such as agriculture/forestry adaptation to climate change, agricultural/forestry extension, natural resource economics, big data applications in agrisciences, and outreach to farmers, forest services, and forest owners, food security and AI.
- **Direct strategic investments into areas of competitive advantage**, while preserving essential fields and consolidating under-performing units with low student numbers.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has developed a robust, multi-layered system of strategic and institutional instruments designed to support its research, development, and innovation (R&D&I) goals. The pillars, external funding acquisition, internal grant schemes (e.g., GA GJM, IGA), project support offices, and technology transfer activities, are **well-aligned with its mission** to combine academic excellence with practical societal impact.

MENDELU has set clear priorities for human potential development, focusing on career planning, equal pay, inclusive work culture, and staff well-being, as outlined in its strategic documents. Initiatives such as the Safe MENDELU platform and support for work-life balance contribute to a modern, attractive, and respectful institutional environment.

The institution has made commendable progress in areas like Open Science implementation, talent support (MENDELU Ph.D. Talent), and internationalisation. Active participation in the HEROES

Alliance further strengthens MENDELU's positioning in interdisciplinary collaboration and institutional resilience.

While a number of strategic measures, particularly those related to technology transfer, cross-sectoral cooperation, internationalisation of doctoral education, staff competency development, and R&D infrastructure digitisation, are scheduled for implementation in 2025–2030, this reflects MENDELU's forward-looking planning horizon. With continued focus and timely execution, these measures hold strong potential to significantly advance the university's R&D&I ambitions.

Recommendations:

- **Complete the update of LCDRO distribution rules** and related incentive mechanisms to ensure alignment with quality-based funding and the long-term strategic objectives of the university.
- **Implement and institutionalise digital tools for project and research data management** to enhance operational efficiency, support compliance with open science principles, and improve data accessibility across the research lifecycle.
- **Strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation and commercialisation potential** by finalising the updated knowledge transfer strategy and deepening engagement with industrial and public sector partners to accelerate the societal impact of research.
- **Organize stakeholder-targeted events** to demonstrate applied research potential.

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]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

MENDELU has made **clear and systematic progress** in addressing the key recommendations from the previous IEP evaluation. Strategic improvements have been implemented across critical areas:

- **Support for strategic indicators and merit-based remuneration:** MENDELU revised its internal quality assessment and introduced performance-oriented remuneration linked to research excellence and public engagement, fully aligning with strategic development goals.
- **Focus on international visibility:** MENDELU has significantly advanced internationalisation through high-profile achievements, such as signing a global licence agreement with Oro Agri, and strengthening technology transfer via successful start-ups (e.g., Lightly Technologies) and new licensing deals.
- **National research competitiveness:** Improvements in Module M1 evaluations (Methodology 17+) demonstrate increasing research quality. MENDELU is recognized as a **significant research organization** within the agricultural and veterinary sciences fields.
- **Support for excellence and Q1 publishing:** A notable increase in Q1 publications, citation impact, and a rising h-index relative to peer institutions confirms that MENDELU has elevated its research excellence and international academic standing.
- **Participation in international rankings:** MENDELU maintains a steady presence in QS World University Rankings, QS Sustainability Rankings, THE World University Rankings, THE Impact

Rankings, and UI GreenMetric, improving its visibility and reputation globally, with especially strong national performance in sustainability-related SDGs. Overall, MENDELU has systematically implemented the IEP's recommendations with measurable, credible results that enhance its national and international position. The institutional strategies are coherent, ambitious yet realistic, and well-integrated into broader European higher education and R&D frameworks.
Recommendations: Systematically build on recent improvements in research excellence by continuing to support high-quality outputs (Q1 publications), strengthening the internal quality evaluation system, and aligning merit-based remuneration with measurable research performance. Enhance strategic international visibility by deepening participation in global rankings with an increasing trend, increasing engagement in internationally visible research collaborations, and supporting impactful outputs with strong societal and global relevance. Strengthen institutional support for technology transfer and start-up development by expanding funding opportunities for proof-of-concept stages, improving support structures for commercialization, and recognising applied research contributions in internal evaluation and reward systems.

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	5 - Outstanding
5.2 Research and development objectives	4 - Very good
5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy	5 - Outstanding
5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5	5 - Outstanding
AVERAGE RATING	5 - Outstanding
GRADE [A–D]	A
Summary assessment: MENDELU's strategic objectives are ambitious, realistic, and well-aligned with the European Research Area. Significant progress has been made in international visibility, technology transfer, high-impact publishing, and participation in global rankings. Secured funding and long-term planning provide a solid foundation for meeting strategic priorities by 2030. MENDELU demonstrates a clear commitment to excellence, sustainability, inclusivity, and international engagement, making it a strong foundation for institutional development in the coming years.	

Summary recommendations:

- Continue **supporting excellent research outputs** (Q1 publications, citation impact) and refine the internal quality assessment system.
- **Enhance internationalization** through strategic partnerships and globally visible research activities.
- Institutionalize **digital tools for research data and project management**.
- Finalize and embed the **knowledge transfer strategy** across faculties.
- Consider **optimizing the portfolio of doctoral programmes** and systematically support joint Ph.D. schools.

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 %	C
MODULE 3	30 %	A
MODULE 4	10 %	B
MODULE 5	10 %	A
OVERALL RATING		B – Very good

Qualitative assessment:

Mendel University in Brno (MENDELU) stands out as a dynamic and internationally oriented European university with all evaluated units contributing in meaningful ways to the university's overarching mission of sustainability, regional engagement, and the application of research for public benefit. The faculties and institute collectively reflect a well-balanced profile, well-organized research and innovation system which is aligned with global challenges and national priorities, particularly through multidisciplinary strengths in agriculture, forestry, and landscape management. Unique facilities such as the University Forest Enterprise and Agricultural Enterprise serve as effective "living labs," bridging academic research with real-world application and stakeholder collaboration.

IEP commends MENDELU's commitment to high-quality research, growing global partnerships, and responsiveness to contemporary issues like climate change and regional development.

The results of the **Module 1** evaluation were presented in a cumulative format over five years. In the Module 1 assessment, the Expert Panels work with the ratio of good to poor grades of selected outputs which is 116:47. Better evaluations clearly prevail over worse ones.

The **Module 2** evaluation at the national level included bibliometrically traceable outputs applied in the years 2018–2022 with national and international comparison. In Natural Sciences and Social Sciences panels the evaluation is pointing towards grade B. In the key panel, Agricultural Sciences, is MENDELU improving over time yet in overall rating obtains grade C. The IEP has assessed that the university has made impressive progress over the past 5 years, which was also confirmed by the entire IEP during the on-site visit.

All faculties show substantial progress in strengthening their research output, societal relevance, and institutional development. Notable R&D achievements include improved research productivity (particularly in high-impact journals), expanded participation in national and international projects, and robust infrastructures whose potential can be further leveraged to enhance interdisciplinary and international collaboration or to strengthen stakeholder collaborations.

Continued support for early-career researchers, enhanced mobility, and further integration into international academic networks will be key to maintaining momentum. By strengthening core

facilities and internal collaboration infrastructure along with boosting researcher funding and retention will MENDELU secure its competitive edge and international research profile.

MENDELU is well-positioned to enhance its global visibility and impact through strategic investment in people, partnerships, and applied research infrastructure.

The IEP believes that the goals set by MENDELU are ambitious, realistic and achievable thanks to strategic leadership that is cohesive, hardworking and motivated.

Recommendations:

- **Encourage thematic synergy and clarity.** MENDELU could explore ways to improve internal collaboration and thematic coherence across faculties and departments, for example by forming interdisciplinary clusters or shared initiatives around core research themes. This may help enhance the university's external visibility and support more integrated approaches to complex global challenges.
- **Enhance international collaboration.** Expand opportunities for academic staff and doctoral students to participate in long-term research exchanges and global networks, supported by dedicated mobility funding.
- **Develop core shared research facilities.** Evaluate the feasibility of centralized service facilities (e.g., bioinformatics, metabolomics) that can serve multiple faculties and reduce duplication of high-cost infrastructure.
- **Support early-career researchers.** Strengthen internal funding schemes and examine best practices in Europe for improving the career conditions of PhD students and postdocs, including incentives and fair compensation structures.
- **Broaden Lifelong Learning and Industry Engagement.** Scale up the Institute of Lifelong Learning and foster deeper collaboration with industry to expand professional education, boost societal impact, and create new revenue opportunities.
- **Build on positive evaluation trends.** MENDELU should continue to strengthen areas that received high marks in Module 1 and 2, using them as internal benchmarks and sources of best practices to support quality improvements across all disciplines.
- **Promote research excellence through visibility.** As MENDELU advances in global partnerships and socially relevant research, it would benefit from a stronger international communication strategy that highlights success stories, emerging research leaders, and its impact on climate and regional development.