Manual for Submitting an Application (Section B – Details of the Proposed Research)

- **Project title**

Here you need to provide the full and comprehensible project title; abbreviations or working titles are not appropriate. The title will be used in all communication and documentation, so it is important to fill it in accurately and unambiguously.

- **Implementation period**

The project implementation period in the 1st round of the Return Grant Competition is a minimum of 12 months and, in accordance with the announcement timeline, a maximum of 32 months. Start of project implementation in the 1st round – August 2026.

- **Project annotation**

Brief description - max. 500 characters

- **Total project budget according to the Return Grant Application Calculator**

Enter the amount calculated in the Return Grant Application Calculator, which is an active Excel form with preset rates for specific positions, workload levels, etc.

- **Budget justification as calculated in the Return Grant Application Calculator. Involvement of support expert team members (justification of relevance of each team member's involvement)** Budget (max. 4 points)

The total planned project budget (requested funds) corresponds to the planned outputs and individual project activities. The budget is sufficiently justified, including each of the requested partial amounts, and prepared using the MEYS's Activity 3 Return Grant Application Calculator form. The workload is based on the realistically planned number of project working hours. Any planned mobility must have a factual and logical connection to the research conducted. The planned professional training focuses on methods of research work and on subject-specific areas related to the project topic, team leadership, management competencies, preparation of grant applications, familiarity with grant schemes, and similar areas.

- **Justification of Return Grant Application Calculator parameters - the main researcher's academic and research advancement at VŠE** (max. 4 ponits)

Within the project application and its annexes, a detailed and meaningful plan for integrating the main researcher into the academic and research activities at VŠE is described, both during the project's implementation and after its completion. The planned activities, which may include the use of a mentor, international mobility, training, and other measures, are specifically defined and interconnected into a coherent whole. A career development plan is specified, fully aligned with the strategy of the respective department.

- **Support expert team (total FTE of the support team, junior / senior researcher, qualification prerequisites – h-index, publication outputs, research experience, submitted grants, etc.)** Quality of the team (max. 4 points)

The composition and size of the team correspond to the project objectives and to the expected content and scope of work. Based on their publication record (particularly articles in higher-quartile WoS or Scopus journals) the team members provide a solid guarantee of achieving high-quality future outputs. The professional focus and the previous publishing and creative activity of the proposer, researchers as well as mentors fully reflect the focus and objectives of the project. The support expert team may include the following positions, provided they are properly justified: senior researcher, junior researcher (including doctoral students), technical staff (staff providing professional support/operation of the infrastructure used; their job description does not include conducting research), other specialists (staff involved in the implementation of the return grant; their job description does not include conducting research).

- **Project objectives and anticipated impact** (max. 5 points)

The project objectives should correspond to current trends in in the field and develop knowledge at international level. The project should address important little addressed issues in the field of project submission, or the project should use new scientific methods to address issues in the field. Based on a solid understanding of unresolved questions and challenges, conflicting findings, identified trends, and similar factors, it should formulate compelling research questions with the potential to attract the interest of editors of high-quality journals.

- **Current state of knowledge** (max. 4 points)

The applicant is required to use the most recent sources from prestigious world journals and prestigious conferences in the field to prepare the project. The applicant should be very well acquainted with the state of world knowledge in the respective field and be able to clearly formulate the contribution of the project to world knowledge on the basis thereof. It is necessary to describe the current state of knowledge using up-to-date information from articles published in high-impact journals

- **Project timeline description / Project management – schedule, involvement of researchers and mentors** (max. 3 points)

The project schedule is fully described and justified, individual activities are described and their timing is adequately set. The activities listed in the project schedule are linked to the budget, enabling the achievement of the main project objectives. They way of involvement of researchers and mentors is clear. Researchers and mentors are appropriately involved in the project according to their experience and qualifications. The definition of positions and roles, their allocation to individual activities and allocated capacity support the achievement of the main project objectives.

- **Expected publication outputs** (max. 5 points)

The expected research outcomes are described. The author team targets at least one or two publications in a prestigious world indexed peer-reviewed journal ranked in the first or second quartile according to the AIS. Target journals, which well match the objectives and the scope of the project, are listed. Publishing in these journals is realistic given the scope of the project. It is also possible to include monographs published by prestigious international publishers (e.g., Springer, Routledge, Palgrave), or, where appropriate given the disciplinary focus of the project, monographs published by reputable domestic publishers (e.g., Academia, Karolinum). The research team explicitly commits to avoiding data manipulation, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, simultaneous submission of the same article to multiple journals, false authorship (each co-author must genuinely contribute to the preparation of the publication), and submitting articles to predatory journals.

- **Research plan description (research activities, methodology used, etc.)** Project methodology (max. 5 points)

The research sample, data collection methods, and data analysis methods are described in detail. The methods are well aligned with the research questions and project objectives. They correspond to approaches commonly used in high-quality international peer-reviewed journals in the relevant field. The planned methods for data collection (for primary data) as well as the methods for evaluating these data are clearly explained. The description of data collection specifies which existing methods will be used, or, where applicable, which new instruments the applicant plans to develop within the project. Potential risks associated with low respondent/participant engagement are identified, and measures to mitigate these risks are proposed. If the type of research requires generalisation of results, the issue of ensuring sample representativeness is addressed. For research relying solely on secondary data, the data source to be used is clearly specified and accompanied by an explanation of why these particular data are sufficient to answer the research questions. The availability of the data has been verified. The methods the research team will use to analyse the collected data are described (e.g., content analysis, structural equation modelling, multiple regression analysis, meta-analysis, cluster analysis, etc.). The choice of methods is justified in relation to the relevant data and the research questions.

Description of the gender dimension in the research content and its link to potential mobility of the main researcher: In the research content, the applicant will address the topic of gender. They will summarise the issues that should be considered when integrating sex and gender aspects into research—from the formulation of objectives and hypotheses to the analysis and presentation of results. The focus is on whether biological or social differences between women and men may influence the research, whether the methodology is capable of capturing these differences, and how they should subsequently be evaluated. The description also emphasises the transparent communication of results. Further information on gender-related topics is available in the document "Gender Dimension in OP JAK R&D Projects", which is accessible on the OP JAK website. (https://opjak.cz/dokumenty/genderova-dimenze/).

- **Open Science principles (what data will be generated, how it will be handled)**

A brief description of how the principles of open science will be applied in the project at the proposal level, particularly a description of the research data that will be used in the project, the data that will be generated during its implementation, and the possibilities for sharing these data.

- **Project classification according to RIS3**

Basic identification should be provided regarding whether the research plan aligns with any thematic area or mission. In the context of return grants, adherence to the RIS3 principles primarily means focusing on excellence in research, supporting interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening links between academia and the application sector, and creating opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and technologies into practice. The implementation of the return grant should therefore reflect the priority research areas defined in RIS3 and contribute to fulfilling its strategic objectives. This is a classification, not a commitment.

- **Plan for preparing subsequent grant applications**

The applicant shall indicate which grant applications they plan to submit to other funding providers.