



Strengthening research management through institutional transformation

The Czech Technical University in Prague example

Adéla Jiroudková

Head of the Department of Development, Czech Technical University in Prague

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CTU and the Czech context

- Czech Technical University in Prague: eight faculties and university institutes, a strong engineering research base
- Decentralised by design: research support sits mainly in the faculties
- Central and Eastern Europe professionalised research management later than other European Countries; the Czech association CZARMA is young
- Research managers exist at CTU, as individuals rather than as a recognised function

Starting point: what we found

- Capable people spread across the rectorate, eight faculties and institutes
- Different job titles, no shared profiles, no career path
- No systematic professional development, no community across faculties
- Rarely present where research strategy is discussed

A structural gap, not a competence gap. The European literature calls this group “invisible workers”. It fits.

What has already changed: leadership

- The Rector named research management a strategic capacity of the university
- A central project centre is being established; its head is part of the university's management structures, prepares strategic and policy materials and works with the Rector on a regular basis
- Rector's Award extended with a **Professional Service Award**: the first institutional recognition of the people who support (not only) research
- Four-year plan 2026 to 2030 approved by the Rector's Board

Our approach: four principles

- 1 **Use what Europe has built.** RM Comp for competences and levels, RM Roadmap areas for functions, the RM Framework handbook for training design. No home-made framework.
- 2 **Profiles, not titles.** Each position described by its areas, key competences and level (RM1 to RM4). Titles can stay or change later.
- 3 **Subsidiarity.** Faculties keep day-to-day support. The rectorate sets standards, organises development and provides shared services where scale matters.
- 4 **Measure.** Baseline in year one, indicators reviewed every year.

The four-year plan, 2026 to 2030

Year 1 (2026/27)	Year 2 (2027/28)	Year 3 (2028/29)	Year 4 (2029/30)
Mandate, baseline, community Mapping of RM staff and functions with the RM Comp taxonomy Internal RM network Indicators and baseline Target operating model <i>Only small restructuring at central level</i>	Profiles, careers, development 8 to 10 job profiles linked to RM1 to RM4 Pay grades and job descriptions Career path Self-assessment and development plans Training offer and budget	Strategic role, capacity RM input a standard step in strategy and co-financing RM lead on large proposals from concept stage Leadership track, mentoring, mobility Portfolio overview European quality label	Consolidation, evidence Evaluation against baseline Repeat surveys, peer review Development budget secured CTU model shared via CZARMA and EARMA Plan 2030 to 2034

Year one in practice

- Establishing the steering group and committing faculties to the mapping
- **Steering group:** vice-rector, HR, three faculties, one practitioner, one principal investigator, the institutes
- **Mapping:** who supports research, where, in which RM areas, at what level, on what contract. HR data, a short survey, an interview with every faculty
- **Community:** an internal RM network meeting every two months, one practical topic each time
- **Baseline** for the indicators, including a researcher survey

Strategic role: structural, not personal

Research management already contributes to strategy at CTU: strategic and policy materials for leadership, regular work with the Rector and vice-rectors.

Today this rests on individuals and working relationships. From year three it becomes a standard way of working

- RM input as a fixed step in preparing the research strategy and in co-financing decisions
- Heads of faculty research support working the same way with their deans
- An RM lead on every large or strategic proposal from the concept stage

The aim is continuity and reach across the university, not new seats in decision-making bodies.

What we will measure

Indicator	2028	2030
RM positions mapped	100 %	100 %
Positions with a defined profile and level	80 %	100 %
Staff with an individual development plan	70 %	90 %
Training days per person per year	3	5
Researcher satisfaction with research support	+10 pts	+20 pts
Large proposals with an RM lead from concept stage	defined	all

Baseline established in year one. Funding success is reported as context, not set as a target for research management.

Where we are today

- **Done:** Professional Service Award introduced; plan approved, steering group will be nominated in few weeks; mapping launched in few weeks with all faculties
- **In progress:** baseline, indicators, target operating model
- **Not yet:** job profiles, career path, training offer. That is 2027 and 2028.
- **First results:** baseline report, spring/summer 2027

We are a few weeks in. This is a case about how a transformation is designed and started, not about results.

Early lessons, from the design phase

- Get the mandate before designing anything
- Map before you reorganise
- Use what Europe has already built; RM Comp saved us the definitions debate
- Bring HR in on day one; year two depends on them
- Build the community early; it carries the change when leadership attention moves elsewhere
- Be honest about the timeline, internally and externally
- An external commitment (this event) accelerated internal decisions

Thank you for your attention!

Adéla Jiroudková

[LinkedIn](#)

Head of the Department of Development, Czech Technical University in Prague

adela.jiroudkova@cvut.cz