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GUIDELINE FOR R&D INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

ECONOMIC USE AND NON-ECONOMIC USE

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Changes from version 1.1

- Section 1: Clearer distinction between economic and non-economic use (e.g. 2 different evaluation criteria)
- Various linguistic clarifications to improve readability and understanding

PREFACE

The FFG is your partner for research and development. These Guidelines are designed to support you in submitting an application for a project for **economic or non-economic use** under the R&D Infrastructure Funding Programme.

They explain:

how to obtain funding,
what conditions must be met,
how the application process works.

The goals and priorities, the budget and the submission deadlines that are relevant to your project are described in the corresponding call guidelines. The call guidelines also contain clarifications and restrictions on the information provided in the present Guidelines.

1 THE BASIS OF FUNDING

1.1 What are “R&D infrastructure projects”?

R&D infrastructure projects are projects aimed at acquiring, establishing and expanding advanced R&D infrastructure for basic research and applied research. The focus is on R&D infrastructure used cooperatively (i.e. by several organisations or organisational units) for new future-oriented research and innovation fields.

R&D infrastructure projects for the following types of use are eligible for funding:

- **Non-economic use**

Research infrastructure at universities, universities of applied sciences and (non-university) research institutions enabling pioneering scientific research and high quality education in future-oriented research fields as part of non-economic activities.

- **Economic use**

Research infrastructure at universities, universities of applied sciences and (non-university) research institutions and companies enabling companies in particular to develop innovative products, processes or services in future-oriented technology fields.

Replacement investments for the renewal of basic R&D infrastructure equipment are not eligible for funding.

1.2 What are the requirements for the use of the R&D infrastructure?

Access to and use of the infrastructure must also be open to organisations outside the consortium under non-discriminatory and transparent conditions. At least 10% of annual capacity must be available to such other potential users.

A calculation of the usage fees must be set out in the [usage strategy](#) of the project description in [eCall](#). The usage fees must be calculated annually or evidenced in an obligatory annual monitoring report (see [section 1.15](#)).

Economic use

Companies must be charged for infrastructure use at market price/full cost including a profit margin.

Non-economic use

Non-economic activities of research institutions include:

- Primary activities such as education
- Research and development, independent or in an effective collaboration
- Knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer (see also [Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation](#))

Economic use is admissible as an ancillary activity if:

- its scope is limited, i.e. it does not exceed 20% of total annual capacity of the R&D infrastructure and
- the financing, costs and revenues of each type of activity is accounted for separately on the basis of consistently applied and objectively justifiable cost accounting principles and
- it is directly related to and necessary for the operation of the infrastructure or
- it is intrinsically linked to the main non-economic activity, i.e. it involves the same input (e.g. material, equipment, personnel, investment capital) as the non-economic activities.

1.2.1 Usage strategy

When submitting an application, a plausible usage strategy must be presented in the project description in [eCall](#). The strategy must cover the entire useful life of the R&D infrastructure.

The key points of the usage strategy include in particular:

- Management of use (including personnel and resource plan)
- Demand and capacity utilisation
- Cooperative use by third parties (outside the consortium)
- Planned terms and conditions for transparent and non-discriminatory access by third parties
- Calculation of usage fees (process for calculating full costs including profit margin/market prices)
- Calculation of follow-up costs, operating costs and replacement investments, including a sustainable financing concept
- Regulation of ownership structure
- If applicable: planned conditions for preferential access for co-financing organisations
- If applicable: statement of reasons for deviations from the FFG payment plan, including a consistent instalment plan which is in line with the financing plan and meets the conditions specified in [section 4.3](#).

All required permits and licences must be obtained and all official directives and statutory provisions (national and EU law) adhered to in the planned infrastructure acquisition process.

1.3 What are the requirements for funding applicants?

The infrastructure may be acquired by an organisation alone or as part of a consortium.

If the application is submitted by a single organisation, the R&D infrastructure will be owned by the funding recipient. If the application is submitted by a consortium the ownership rights with respect to the R&D infrastructure must be defined in the description of the usage strategy in [eCall](#).

The establishment or branch of the organisation which owns the R&D infrastructure must be situated in Austria.

Collaboration within the consortium and the rights with respect to the competencies acquired through the use of the R&D infrastructure must be specified in a cooperation agreement (consortium agreement). More information and a model consortium agreement can be found at www.ffg.at/Konsortialvertrag.

1.4 Who is eligible for funding?

Eligible institutions and organisations that are not part of the federal administration may participate in a call as a consortium leader or consortium member.

The following organisations are eligible for funding:

Research and knowledge dissemination organisations (see definition [section 5.1](#))

- Universities
- Universities of applied sciences
- Non-university research institutions
- Technology transfer institutions, innovation intermediaries and other research-oriented organisations (e.g. dedicated associations),

Other non-commercial institutions

- Autonomous administrative bodies
- Non-profit organisations such as NPOs (see definition [section 5.1](#))

Additionally, in the event of economic use:

- **Companies** of any legal form (see definition [section 5.1](#))

Applicants must be legal representatives of the submitting organisation (e.g. Rector's office for universities). Legal entities that are linked to each other are considered as one submitting entity. According to the [SME definition](#), an enterprise is considered to be linked if a holding exceeds the threshold of 50 %.

Additional information:

- Co-financing organisations must **not** be entered as "Partners" in eCall.

- National and international consortium members must not be included as subcontractors (“third-party service providers”) in the cost category “third-party costs”.
- Subcontractors (“third-party service providers”) are **not** consortium members. They provide specific services for consortium members which fall under the cost category “third-party costs” and are not entitled to use the project results.

1.5 How much funding is granted?

Funding is granted in the form of **non-repayable subsidies**.

The funding rate varies depending on whether the infrastructure is acquired for economic use or non-economic use:

Table 1: Funding rates for economic use

Type of organisation	Funding rate
Companies	max. 50 %
Research and knowledge dissemination organisations	max. 50 %
Other non-commercial institutions	max. 50 %

Table 2: Funding rates for non-economic use

Type of organisation	Funding rate
Research and knowledge dissemination organisations	max. 100 %
Other non-commercial institutions	max. 100 %

1.6 What costs are eligible?

Module 1: R&D infrastructure acquisition

Module 1 includes exclusively costs for the acquisition of R&D infrastructure with the purpose of undertaking research and development. All other cost categories, such as personnel costs, third-party costs, cost of materials and travel costs are included in Module 2.

The eligible costs shall be the investment costs in tangible and intangible assets. According to the General Block Exemption Regulation of the European Commission (GBER) the term ‘research infrastructure’ means facilities and resources that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields. This definition covers scientific equipment or sets of instruments, knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structured scientific information, enabling information and communication technology-based infrastructures such as grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature

essential to conduct research (GBER, 26/6/2014, p. 25 section (91)). Such infrastructures may be 'single-sited' or 'distributed' (an organised network of resources).

The infrastructure acquisition may concern individual pieces of equipment or a set of different components.

Eligible costs shall include all costs attributable to the R&D infrastructure acquisition that are incurred directly, actually and additionally (to existing R&D infrastructure) and represent investment costs in intangible and tangible assets. Please note that R&D infrastructure acquisition costs can only be charged if documentary evidence is provided (original receipts with clear allocation). Funding is provided only for costs that have been included in the application.

Both new and used facilities and facility parts may be contributed, which subsequently pass into the ownership of the respective consortium member. Used facilities will be valued on the basis of the documented acquisition or manufacturing costs, less deductions for previous use (remaining book value), if applicable. Contribution of fully or partially funded facilities or facility parts is not possible.

Work (e.g. acquisition) may not be started until the funding application has been submitted. 'Start of work' shall be the earlier of either the start of assembly of the R&D infrastructure, construction work relating to the investment, or the first legally binding commitment to order equipment, or any other commitment that makes the investment irreversible.

Before placing a contract for deliveries and services, the funding recipient shall, without prejudice to the provisions of the Public Procurement Act (BVerG 2006), BGBl. I No. 17/2006, obtain several offers for purposes of comparison insofar as this is reasonable with regard to the estimated contract value.

Module 2: Start-up costs

Module 2 shall be taken to include all costs for the assembly of the R&D infrastructure that are incurred prior to regular operation. This also includes the establishment of organisational structures and expertise required to operate the R&D infrastructure as specified in the usage strategy as well as services related to the acquisition of the R&D infrastructure. Start-up funding may also be provided for infrastructure services designed to facilitate collaboration with (potential) users, to inform and attract such users and to develop specialised services to be provided with the help of the infrastructure.

The following start-up costs will be recognised:

- Infrastructure assembly and services designed to support development towards regular operation,
- Establishment of specialised and customised services in connection with the R&D infrastructure,

- Awareness measures aimed at informing other organisations about the availability of the R&D infrastructure and to enhance the visibility of the R&D infrastructure and
- Organisation of education and training measures, workshops designed to promote the exchange of knowledge and networking.

Economic use

Funding is provided exclusively for costs related to Module 1 – infrastructure acquisition. Acquisition costs represent the only cost category eligible for funding.

Non-economic use

Funding is provided for both R&D infrastructure acquisition costs (Module 1) and start-up costs (Module 2) which are required for proper commissioning of the funded R&D infrastructure. The call guideline may contain relevant supplementary/modifying provisions.

The following costs are **not eligible** for both types of use:

- Acquisition costs for real estate and immovable assets
- Building investments that go beyond necessary adaptations and building equipment (e.g. supply lines)
- Costs that are not directly related to the funded project
- Costs that have been incurred prior to submission of the funding application
- Costs that are not considered as eligible costs based on EU law.

More information about eligible and non-eligible costs can be found in the [Cost Guidelines](#). The call guidelines may contain supplementary/modifying provisions, which shall take precedence over the general provisions of the [Cost Guidelines](#).

The following shall apply in addition to the provisions of the [Cost Guidelines](#):

- No overhead costs can be charged for Module 1 costs.
- Funding applicants and funded consortium members must not act as subcontractors ('third-party service providers').
- Funding for foreign consortium members must not exceed 20% of the total funding amount.

1.7 What are the requirements for residual financing?

Economic use

Funding represents state aid within the meaning of competition law (the relevant date is the date on which the funding is granted; a change to 'non-state aid' at a later date is not possible). This means that the funding recipient is **not entitled to receive additional public funds** (e.g. from funds of the global budget/performance agreement for universities or from other funding programmes, e.g. of provincial governments).

The remaining share (min. 50 %) must be covered by internal funds which are not attributable to public funds (e.g., income from contract research or research services) and/or by applicant or co-financing companies.

Non-economic use

The remaining share may be covered either by funds qualified as private (e.g. financing by companies, income from contract research or research services) or by public funds. Since the funding does not represent state aid, the funding recipient may receive additional public funds (e.g., from funds of the global budget/performance agreement for universities or from other funding programmes, e.g. of provincial governments).

The following applies to both types of use:

If the funded R&D infrastructure is used in a funded R&D project, the acquisition costs (depreciation) of this R&D infrastructure are not eligible for funding, i.e. double funding of acquisition costs as part of funded R&D projects must be excluded.

Co-financing organisations

Co-financing organisations which have financed at least 10% of the infrastructure investment costs through cash contributions (co-financing possible only through cash contributions) may be given preferential access at more favourable conditions. Preferential access is limited to the equivalent of the cash contribution received from the co-financing organisation. The extent of such preferential treatment (including priority access) shall be calculated on the basis of regular market prices/full costs. The conditions under which preferential treatment is granted must be publicly available and presented in an annual monitoring report.

1.8 What are the responsibilities of the consortium leader?

The consortium leader has the following responsibilities throughout the project duration:

- project management
- communications with the funding agency and the consortium members
- examining the reports and accounts provided by the consortium members

In your capacity as consortium leader you undertake:

- to manage and distribute the funding yourself,
- to communicate any changes in due time,
- to provide accounts and reports in accordance with the funding contract (incl. monitoring reports beyond the funding period).

Prior to payment of the 1st instalment, the consortium leader must confirm that

- a cooperation agreement has been concluded before the start of the project, which includes all the regulations required by the [Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation](#).
- all required permits and licences will be obtained and all official directives and statutory provisions (national and EU law) complied with.

The consortium leader also confirms that:

- the costs included in the accounts can be clearly attributed to the project,
- the project costs and content are used in accordance with the approval.

1.9 May the consortium include members from abroad?

A consortium may include members from abroad provided these are not affiliated with any of the Austrian organisations in the consortium.

The following conditions apply:

- The international consortium members create benefit for the consortium and/or Austria as a business and research location;
- This benefit is explicitly indicated in the application for funding;
- Grants paid to international consortium members do not exceed 20% of the total funding amount;
- The evaluation committee recommends providing funding to the international consortium member;
- The international consortium member accepts the FFG's obligation and entitlement to review the project as specified in the funding contract and submits relevant documentary evidence in German or English.

Alternatively, organisations from abroad may cover their costs from own funds and/or from funds provided by their home country.

Organisations from outside Austria may also be involved as subcontractors ('third-party service providers').

1.10 What rules apply with respect to intellectual property rights?

Intellectual property rights relating to the project results belong to the consortium. The provisions of the [Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation](#), 2014/C 198/11, apply to collaborations between undertakings and research organisations.

This document stipulates that the intellectual property rights are to be allocated to the research organisations in a manner which adequately reflects their work, contributions and respective interests. If the rights are assigned to the participating

undertakings, the research organisations shall receive compensation equivalent to the market price.

The cooperation between the consortium members and the allocation of intellectual property rights within the consortium should be regulated in the course of the application process, and in any case prior to the commencement of work.

The FFG points out in this context that expenses incurred for the protection of intellectual property (IPR) are eligible for funding. This includes in particular cost for patent applications and patent searches. Patent maintenance costs are not eligible for funding.

1.11 What criteria are used to evaluate applications for funding?

Applications for funding are **evaluated** according to **four criteria**:

1. Quality of the project
2. Suitability of funding applicants / project partners
3. Benefit of the project
4. Relevance of the project

The projects are evaluated by awarding points in each criterion. Projects not reaching the stated threshold value for a certain criterion will be rejected. Projects which receive zero points in any of the sub-criteria of criterion 4, "Relevance of the project", will also be rejected.

The following tables show the evaluation criteria, including the relevant sub-criteria.

1.11.1 Evaluation criteria for economic use

Table 3: Evaluation criteria for economic use – Quality of the project

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
1.1 Innovation content	
– To what extent does the innovation content of the project exceed the current state of the art at national, European and international level?	max. points 10
– What is the added value of the project as compared to existing infrastructures?	

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
<p>1.2 Planning</p> <p>What is the quality and efficiency of planning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the structure of the work packages and the associated division of work adequate to the goals of the project? – Have the risks in the work packages been adequately addressed and corresponding measures provided? – Are the approaches suitable for achieving the goals of the individual work packages? – Have all relevant aspects for establishment of the R&D infrastructure been taken into account (time schedule, cost plan, resource plan, etc.)? 	<p>max. points 10</p>
<p>1.3 Concept of use</p> <p>Has the concept of use been clearly presented with regard to the following points?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Management of use (incl. personnel and resource plan) – Demand and capacity utilisation – Cooperative use by third parties (including outside the consortium) – Planned terms and conditions for transparent and non-discriminatory access by third parties – Pricing (process for calculating full costs including profit margin/market prices) – Calculation of follow-up costs, operating costs and replacement investments, including a sustainable financing concept – Regulation of ownership structure – If applicable: planned conditions for preferential access for co-financing organisations 	<p>max. points 10</p>

Table 4: Evaluation criteria for economic use – Suitability of funding applicants / project partners

2. Suitability of funding applicants / project partners (threshold = 15 points)	max. points 25
2.1 Expertise of the consortium and potential for implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent does the consortium possess the necessary qualifications and resources to ensure the successful implementation of the R&D infrastructure acquisition and the usage strategy? – To what extent does the implementation of the project within the present consortium represent an added value? 	max. points 17
2.2 Gender balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Have aspects of gender balance been taken into account in the composition of the project team? (gender balance must be evaluated for all genders equally) – Is the approach taken designed to improve the relevant status quo in the sector or discipline? 	max. points 8

Table 5: Evaluation criteria for economic use – Benefit of the project

3. Benefit of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
3.1 Cooperative research and innovation activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How will the additional opportunities created by the new infrastructure influence future research and innovation activities, in particular those in cooperation with companies (quantitatively and qualitatively)? – Can results with a high degree of innovation and novelty be expected? How will they be exploited? – What effect will the planned innovation activities have on the visibility of Austria as an innovation location in the international environment? 	max. points 12
3.2 Gender-specific topics If the research and innovation activity relates to persons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent have gender-specific topics been taken into account in the planning process? – Quality of the analysis of gender-specific topics – Consideration of gender-specific topics in the methodological approach taken in the project <p>N.B.: If (groups of) persons are the subject of the research and innovation or if persons will be affected by the R&D results, this must be reflected in the research design. Projects in which content and focus have no gender relevance according to this analysis will score full points in this subcategory.</p>	max. points 6

3. Benefit of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
3.3 Development potential	
What is the development potential of the funding applicants in terms of the following points:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Connectivity to existing innovation fields and focal areas of innovation – Contribution to advancement of innovation fields and focal areas of innovation – Potential for new opportunities for collaboration with industry and with research institutions and universities 	max. points 12

Table 6: Evaluation criteria for economic use – Relevance of the project

4. Relevance of the project (threshold = 9 points)	max. points 15
4.1 Demand	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are the arguments justifying the acquisition conclusive? (demand analysis, taking into account the size, type and availability of existing resources in Austria and Europe) 	max. points 10
4.2 Impact of funding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent is the incentive effect of the funding necessary to implement the project as planned? 	max. points 5

1.11.2 Evaluation criteria for non-economic use

Table 7: Evaluation criteria for non-economic use – Quality of the project

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
1.1. Innovation content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent does the innovation content of the project exceed the current state of the art at national, European and international level? – What is the added value of the project compared with existing infrastructures? 	max. points 10

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
1.2. Planning What is the quality and efficiency of planning?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the structure of the work packages and the associated division of work adequate to the goals of the project? – Have the risks in the work packages been adequately addressed and corresponding measures provided? – Are the approaches suitable for achieving the goals of the individual work packages? – Have all relevant aspects for establishment of the R&D infrastructure been taken into account (time schedule, cost plan, resource plan, etc.)? 	max. points 10
1.3. Concept of use Has the concept of use been clearly presented with regard to the following points?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Management of use (incl. personnel and resource plan) – Demand and capacity utilisation – Cooperative use by third parties (including outside the consortium) – Planned terms and conditions for transparent and non-discriminatory access by third parties – Pricing (process for calculating full costs including profit margin/market prices) – Calculation of follow-up costs, operating costs and replacement investments, including a sustainable financing concept – Regulation of ownership structure – If applicable: planned conditions for preferential access for co-financing organisations 	max. points 10

Table 8: Evaluation criteria for non-economic use – Suitability of funding applicants / project partners

2. Suitability of funding applicants / project partners (threshold = 15 points)	max. points 25
2.1 Expertise of the consortium and potential for implementation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent does the consortium possess the necessary qualifications and resources to ensure the successful implementation of the R&D infrastructure acquisition and the usage strategy? 	max. points 17

2. Suitability of funding applicants / project partners (threshold = 15 points)	max. points 25
2.2 Gender balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Have aspects of gender balance been taken into account in the composition of the project team? (the gender balance must be evaluated equally for all genders) – Is the approach taken designed to improve the relevant status quo in the sector or discipline? 	max. points 8

Table 9: Evaluation criteria for non-economic use – Benefit of the project

3. Benefit of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
3.1 Research excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How will the additional opportunities created by the new infrastructure influence the future research activities (quantitatively and qualitatively)? – Can ground-breaking scientific results be expected (results with a high degree of innovation and novelty)? How will the results be exploited? – What effect will the planned research activities have on the visibility of Austria as a research location in the international environment? 	max. points 12
3.2 Gender-specific topics If the research activity relates to persons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent have gender-specific topics been taken into account in the planning process? – Quality of the analysis for gender-specific topics – Consideration of gender-specific topics in the methodological approach taken in the project <p>N.B.: If (groups of) persons are the subject of the research or if persons will be affected by the research results, this must be reflected in the research design. Projects in which content and focus have no gender relevance according to this analysis will score full points in this subcategory.</p>	max. points 6

3. Benefit of the project (threshold = 18 points)		max. points 30
3.3 Development potential		
What is the development potential of the funding applicants in terms of the following points:		
– Connectivity to existing research fields and focal areas of research		max. points 12
– Contribution to advancement of research fields and focal areas of research		
– Potential for new opportunities for collaboration with other research institutions, universities and/or with industry		

Table 10: Evaluation criteria for non-economic use – Relevance of the project

4. Relevance of the project (threshold = 9 points)		max. points 15
4.1 Demand		
– Are the arguments justifying the acquisition conclusive? (demand analysis, taking into account the size, type and availability of existing resources in Austria and Europe)		max. points 10
4.2 Impact of funding		
– To what extent is the incentive effect of the funding necessary to implement the project as planned?		max. points 5

1.12 What documents are required for submission?








Projects may only be submitted electronically via [eCall](#). The project application consists of:

eCall Online cost plan – enter directly in eCall

 Project description – upload PDF in eCall

The following table lists all documents required for submission.

Table 11: Overview of annexes to the application

Obligatory annexes	
	Project description template
	CV of project manager (no template)
	LOIs of at least two organisations which will potentially use the R&D infrastructure (no template)
	Written confirmation that the remaining funds will be contributed in the event of a positive funding decision (no template)
	For co-financing organisations: LOI for co-financing in the form of cash contributions (no template)
eCall	Mandatory master data: Annual accounts of the past two years (all consortium members)
Optional annexes	
	CVs of key personnel (no template)
	Other additional information relevant to the project, e.g. overviews, graphics, max. 5 pages (no template).

1.13 Is it necessary to mention other projects?

Applicants are required to list additional projects related to the proposed project in order to facilitate the evaluation. The results and expertise obtained must be presented. Relevant projects include:

- previous projects whose results provide the basis for the proposed project,
- ongoing or completed projects (of the previous 3 years) that are thematically related to the proposed project,
- project applications that are thematically related to the call,
- project applications that are related to the submitted project.

Double funding of costs that have already been funded is not permitted. The proposed project must be clearly differentiated from thematically related projects that have already received funding.

The complete presentation of previous funding granted or requested does not reduce the chance of receiving funding in this thematic area, but rather demonstrates the expertise of the consortium in this area.

1.14 Is research integrity ensured?

Funding may only be granted to applicants who demonstrate scientific integrity during application and project execution.

The FFG is a member of the [Austrian Agency for Research Integrity \(OeAWI\)](#) and is thus committed to safeguarding good scientific practice.

If a lack of scientific integrity or misconduct is suspected in the course of the evaluation process or project reviews, the relevant documents may be forwarded to the OeAWI Commission for Scientific Integrity, which will then decide whether to initiate an independent investigation procedure and, if necessary, will undertake the necessary investigations.

If the investigation reveals a lack of scientific integrity or misconduct (e.g. plagiarism), the application must be rejected for formal reasons. If funding has already been granted, the funding must be reduced, retained or reclaimed.

1.15 What is done to monitor the use of the funded R&D infrastructure?

If public funding is provided for an infrastructure for economic or non-economic use, EU Member States are required to put in place a monitoring system including claw-back mechanisms.

Note for non-economic use: This is designed to ensure that the actual funding intensity will not be exceeded as a result of an increase in economic activities (with reference to the originally planned values).

An annual monitoring report must be submitted from the commissioning of the funded infrastructure (= start of depreciation) throughout the entire depreciation period of the infrastructure. If the infrastructure consists of several components, the longest depreciation period shall apply.

The monitoring report presents the economic and non-economic use and also compliance with the access regulations for the consortium and third parties.

The report must be submitted within one month of the end of the monitoring year and must be sent to the FFG as an attachment via [eCall](#) message.

The FFG must be notified of the commissioning via [eCall](#) message no later than one month after the funded infrastructure has been put into operation. The depreciation period must also be indicated in the message.

The following applies:

- The assessment basis for monitoring the use of the R&D infrastructure is the same as that used for the funding of the acquisition costs.
- The monitoring begins upon commissioning of the R&D infrastructure.
- Access to the funded R&D infrastructure must be open to other organisations outside the consortium (transparent and non-discriminatory access).
- Co-financing organisations contributing at least 10% of the costs of the acquired infrastructure may be granted preferential access and preferential treatment up to the equivalent of their cash contribution. The extent of such preferential treatment (including priority access) shall be calculated on the basis of regular market prices/full costs. The conditions under which preferential treatment is granted must be publicly available.
- If the funded R&D infrastructure is used in a funded R&D project, the acquisition costs (depreciation) of this R&D infrastructure are not eligible for funding, i.e. double funding of acquisition costs as part of funded R&D projects must be excluded.
- When using the funded R&D infrastructure in R&D projects, it must be ensured that such use does not constitute indirect aid, i.e. economic use (by companies or other organisations) is possible only at market prices or full cost plus profit margin.

2 SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

2.1 What is the procedure for submission?

Applications must be electronically submitted via [eCall](#) before the deadline.

Not required:

Additional submission of a duly signed copy by post.

Not possible:

- Sending additional documents after the submission deadline.
- Revising the funding application after it has been sent.

The application documents are to be submitted by the consortium leader or by duly authorised representatives. The FFG may request evidence that this person is authorised to represent the consortium leader. If you are unable to provide such evidence the FFG reserves the right to reject the application for formal reasons.

Step-by-step instructions can be found in the [eCall-Tutorial](#).

2.2 How will confidential project data be used?

The FFG processes the personal data of funding applicants and funding recipients provided by the data subjects as part of the application for funding, data collected by the FFG for the purpose of concluding the funding contract, and data generated by searches in the transparency portal according to Sec. 32 (5) of the Transparency Database Act (TDBG 2012) for the following purposes:

- Processing of the funding application and assessment of whether the general and specific funding requirements have been met,
- Conclusion of the funding contract and (if a funding contract has been concluded) compliance with the relevant contractual obligations, including but not limited to administration of the funding payments and monitoring of compliance with funding requirements,
- Compliance with statutory obligations, including but not limited to reporting obligations and control purposes in order to avoid double funding (i.e. Sec. 38 in conjunction with 18, 27, 28 ARR, as well as Sec. 12 FTFG and Sec. 9 FFG-G).

The legal basis of processing is therefore Art. 6 (1) (b) GDPR, i.e. performance of a contract, and Art 6 (1) (c) GDPR, i.e. compliance with legal obligations.

The personal data will be disclosed to the following institutions in compliance with legal obligations:

- the FFG's owner ministries, other contracting authorities for the management of funding measures (e.g. other federal ministries, regional governments, KLIEN)
- third parties, which may include the Court of Audit, EU bodies, and other federal or regional funding agencies.

External experts may be commissioned to evaluate projects in individual cases. Such experts act as processors in the name and on behalf of the FFG and are required to take technical and organisational measures to ensure data security and data confidentiality.

Project content and results may only be published (e.g. on the website or in social media forums) with the consent of the funding recipient (Art 6 (1) (a) GDPR) unless the FFG has a legal obligation to do so.

The FFG must also obtain the consent of the data subject for any other data use exceeding these provisions.

The FFG is under a legal obligation to maintain secrecy about all company and project information pursuant to Sec. 9 (4) of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency Act (FFG-G, Federal Law Gazette BGBl. I No. 73/2004).

The FFG will ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk in terms of confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of the systems by implementing technical and organisational measures within the meaning of Art. 32 GDPR that are sufficient and appropriate for protecting the data against accidental or unlawful destruction, loss and unauthorised access.

Further information about ensuring the confidentiality and security of personal data during the course of the project is available in the [eCall Tutorial](#).

3 EVALUATION AND DECISION

3.1 What is the formal check?

In the formal check the FFG examines the application for formal correctness and completeness, but not for thematic content.

The FFG will communicate the result of the formal check within 4 weeks of submission via an [eCall](#) message:

If the formal criteria are not met and the deficiencies cannot be corrected, the application for funding will not enter the subsequent steps of the procedure.

If the deficiencies can be corrected, you may rectify these problems within a reasonable period of time.

Should it transpire after the formal check that incorrect information has been given, the funding application may also be removed from consideration at a subsequent point in the procedure.

The checklist for the formal check can be found in the Project Description template.

3.2 How is the evaluation procedure organised?

The documents submitted will be reviewed by national and international experts based on the criteria given in [section 1.11](#). These experts will submit a funding recommendation.

It is possible to exclude reviewers (individuals or staff of particular organisations), stating the reasons. [eCall](#) includes an entry field for this purpose.

FFG experts examine the financial potential of the companies involved, including credit rating and liquidity. Undertakings in difficulty are not eligible for funding. The decision as to whether an undertaking is considered to be 'in difficulty' is made based on the definition contained in the [General Block Exemption Regulation](#) (OJ L 187 p. 19), which provides the European legal basis of the present funding scheme.

Recommendations and requirements can be defined as part of the evaluation process. Recommendations are non-binding remarks and opinions of the evaluation committee, which are designed to support the consortium in implementing their project.

Requirements are binding – see [section 4.2](#).

3.3 Who makes the funding decision?

The funding decision will be made by the decision makers specified in the relevant funding guideline (RTI or FFG Guideline) on the basis of the funding recommendation made by the evaluation committee.

4 THE FUNDING PROCEDURE

4.1 How is the funding contract concluded?

In the event of a positive funding decision, the consortium will receive a document or a view with basic parameters of the funding contract via the [eCall](#) system. If the consortium accepts the document or view in due time, a funding contract will be prepared.

The funding contract includes the following information:

- funding recipient
- project title
- type and level of eligible costs
- amount of funding granted
- funding period
- payment modalities
- reporting obligations and additional requirements
- control and participation in the evaluation, if applicable
- provisions on suspension and repayment of funding (ac. to § 25 ARR 2014)

If the document or view is accepted within the given deadline, the FFG will prepare the funding contract and send it to the consortium. The consortium must return the duly signed **funding contract within the specified period** to make it legally valid. There shall be no entitlement to funding until the signed contract has been returned.

4.2 How are requirements taken into account?

Binding requirements may be imposed in the course of the assessment. Two types of additional requirements are possible:

- Requirements that must be met prior to the conclusion of the funding contract.
- Requirements that must be met by the consortium during the course of the project.

These requirements shall form an integral part of the contract.

Prior to payment of the 1st instalment, the consortium leader must confirm that

- all required permits and licences will be obtained and all official directives and statutory provisions (national and EU law) complied with in the course of the planned infrastructure acquisition,
- a cooperation agreement has been concluded before the start of the project, which includes all the regulations required by the [Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation](#). The agreement need not be sent to the FFG.

Requirement in the course of the project

- Funding recipients from the university sector undertake to enter the funded R&D infrastructure into [the research infrastructure database of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research \(BMBWF\)](#):

4.3 How are the funding instalments paid?

The first instalment will be paid once the requirements have been met and the funding contract has been signed. The amount will be transferred to the bank account of the consortium leader.

Subsequent instalments will be paid in accordance with the progress of the project:

- Once the interim reports and interim accounts have been approved
- Where necessary: once additional requirements have been met
- Payments will be made according to the FFG payment plan

If the interim reports indicate a delay in project progress or if the costs are below budget the instalment can be reduced.

The payment of funding during the course of the project does not imply approval of the costs.

Table 12: FFG funding scheme

Number of reports and instalments	0 to 18 months project duration	19 to 30 months project duration	31 to 42 months project duration	43 to 54 months project duration	44 to 60 months project duration
Number of reports (interim reports and final report)	1	2	3	4	5
1st instalment in % of funding amount at contract conclusion	50%	50%	30%	30%	30%
2nd instalment up to % of contractual funding amount	none	40%	30%	20%	15%
3rd instalment up to % of contractual funding amount	none	none	30%	20%	15%
4th instalment up to % of contractual funding amount	none	none	none	20 %	15%
5th instalment up to % of contractual funding amount	none	none	none	none	15%
Final instalment up to % of contractual funding amount	50%	10%	10%	10%	10%

Important notice: A deviation from the above FFG payment plan is possible in exceptional cases. In such a case, the applicant is required to explain the reason for the deviation in the description of the usage strategy in [eCall](#) and present a plausible payment plan which must be in line with the financial plan. Please note that the final instalment must be at least 10%. The remaining instalments can be chosen freely, but the individual instalments must be at least 5% of the total funding.

4.4 What reports and accounts are required?

- An interim report and interim accounts must be submitted via the [eCall](#) reporting function within 1 month after the reporting deadlines specified in the funding contract.
- The submission of interim accounts is not necessary for projects with a duration of up to 12 months.

- A final report and the final accounts must be submitted within 3 months of the conclusion of the project, again via the [eCall](#) reporting function.
- If the project is aborted during the project term the consortium must submit a final report and final accounts. The FFG is entitled to reclaim money if the funding already paid exceeds the eligible costs.
- An annual monitoring report must be submitted from the commissioning of the funded R&D infrastructure to the end of the depreciation period in accordance with the provisions specified by the funding agency (see [section 1.15](#)).

The reports and accounts must meet the following requirements:

- They include a description of the activities of the entire consortium and the cost statements of all the consortium partners.

Support of public relations:

The funding recipients agree to work together with the FFG and the responsible ministries to support PR work, if required. This includes in particular the provision of non-confidential project information and images for electronic dissemination portals and other media purposes.

Funding recipients from the university sector must enter the funded R&D infrastructure into [the research infrastructure database of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research \(BMBWF\)](#):

4.5 What is the procedure for on-site audits?

In addition to the reports, the FFG will conduct an on-site audit during or after the project, if applicable.

The original receipts and associated documentation of payments (e.g. account statement) must be made available for these on-site audits. The FFG's audits will be announced in good time.

4.6 How should changes to the project be communicated?

Any changes to contractual points such as project content, consortium, costs, deadlines or funding period must be substantiated and submitted for approval:

- via [eCall](#) message
- in the interim or final report

Please upload the relevant documents as an attachment to the [eCall](#) message. Any modifications to the contract parameters require the approval of the FFG.

Immediate notification is required for:

- substantial changes to the project

- changes to the consortium such as withdrawal of members, new ownership structure or insolvency proceedings

The following changes must be communicated in the **interim or final report**:

- cost reallocations between cost categories, e. g. material costs to personnel costs
- cost reallocations between consortium members

4.7 Can the funding period be extended?

If the project goals have not yet been achieved and the approved level of costs has not been exceeded, the funding period may be extended for up to 1 year on a cost-neutral basis. Please observe, however, that the maximum funding period is 3 years.

The following requirements must be met:

- The funding recipients are not responsible for the delay;
- The project is still eligible for funding;
- An [eCall](#) application for extension has been submitted within the approved funding period.

4.8 What happens after the conclusion of the project?

Following the conclusion of the project, the consortium must submit the final report and the final accounts. The FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division will examine these and check whether the funding has been used appropriately. The audit will establish the final eligible costs.

You will receive the result of the audit in writing:

- In the event of a **positive** result, the appropriate use of the funding will be confirmed.
- In the event of a **negative** result, procedures may be initiated to secure repayment of funding.

Funding details: The specified final instalment will be transferred once the specified costs have been reached. If the project is underspent the level of funding will be reduced accordingly. The funding amount may also be reduced for scientific reasons, as well as on formal or legal grounds.

For more information about eligible costs, see the [Cost Guidelines](#).

Please note that even after the end of the project, the consortium leader must ensure that an annual monitoring report is submitted in accordance with the provisions of the funding agency until the end of the depreciation period of the funded R&D infrastructure (see also [section 1.15](#)).

5 FURTHER INFORMATION

This section contains information and services which you may find useful in connection with funding applications or funded projects.

5.1 Glossary of the Guideline

Incentive effect

Funding may only be granted if it has an incentive effect, i.e. the funding must change the behaviour of the funding recipients in such a way that they engage in additional activity which they would not carry out without the funding or would carry out in a restricted or different manner or at another location.

The following criteria may be used as evidence of the incentive effect of the funding:

- Implementation: the funding enables the project to be implemented in the first place
- Acceleration: the funding accelerates implementation
- Scope: the funding increases the size of the project
- Range: the funding makes the project more ambitious through:
 - a more radical innovation approach
 - higher risk
 - new or extended collaborations
 - long-term strategic orientation

Research and knowledge dissemination organisation

A restricted definition of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation shall apply (1.3ee - 2014/C 198/01):

"Research and knowledge dissemination organisation" or "research organisation" means an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct basic research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also pursues economic activities the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, in the

quality of, for example, shareholders or members, may not enjoy preferential access to the results generated by it.

Non-profit organisations (NPOs)

A "non-profit organisation" does not distribute profits to owners, members or other natural or legal persons in accordance with its legal status or its Articles of Association.

University

The smallest organisational unit that can participate on behalf of a university is the university institute or a comparable organisational unit pursuant to the University Organisation Act (UOG 2002/§ 20). The participating organisational unit (institute or comparable unit) must be duly authorised according to UOG 2002/§ 27. Subordinate organisational units (e.g. working groups) are not eligible to act as consortium members.

Enterprise

An enterprise is any entity engaged in an economic activity, regardless of its legal status.

5.2 FFG Project Database

The public access [FFG Project Database](#) provides the opportunity to publish brief information about funded projects and an overview of the project partners involved. This enables you to present your project and your consortium partners to the interested public. The database can also be used to search for cooperation partners.

Once funding is granted, the applicants are informed via [eCall](#) that they can publish specific brief information about their project in the FFG Project Database. The information will only be published if active consent is given in the [eCall](#) system.

More information can be found on the [FFG website](#).

5.3 Milestones of the call (up to first instalment)

Figure 1 Milestones of the call

