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Innovation und Technologie

CALL IN THE FIELD OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 17.07.2023  
DATE: VIENNA, APRIL 2023

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**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR GREEN –  
BILATERAL CALL WITH THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
CALL GUIDELINE**

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## 1 KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

The present Call Guideline applies to Austrian partners. It provides information about the bilateral call in the topic Digital Technologies for Green. The call promotes the bilateral cooperation in application oriented research and development projects. A total of EUR 1 Million in funding is available for Austrian partners. The call is carried out jointly by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Table 1: Overview of the funding initiative

Funding instrument	Research category	Max. funding in €	Funding rate	Duration in months	Cooperation required
<b>Cooperative R&amp;D project</b>	Industrial research or experimental development	min. EUR 100,000 to max. EUR 1 Million.	max. 85%	max. 36	yes

Table 2: Budget - Deadlines - Contacts

Further information	Details
<b>Total budget</b>	1 Million €
<b>Submission deadline</b>	17.07.2023, 12:00
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Contact</b>	Julia Neuschmid, T (0) 57755-5143; E <a href="mailto:julia.neuschmid@ffg.at">julia.neuschmid@ffg.at</a> Peter Kersch, T (0) 57755-5022; E <a href="mailto:peter.kersch@ffg.at">peter.kersch@ffg.at</a>
<b>Information on the web</b>	<a href="https://www.ffg.at/digitaltechnologies-china2023">https://www.ffg.at/digitaltechnologies-china2023</a>
<b>Submission portal</b>	<a href="https://ecall.ffg.at">https://ecall.ffg.at</a>

## 2 OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

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This call is part of the strategic subject area "Digital Technologies". The focus is on further development of digital technologies, and exploration of new research topics in digital technologies.

### 2.1 Promoting digital technologies that support climate protection and sustainability

Digital technologies enable efficiency and resource-savings for products and processes. Therefore, the objective of this call is to exploit the potential of digital technologies for sustainability, and to support the ecological transformation of the economy, especially with regard to climate and environmental protection. This involves the development, testing and use of digital platforms, tools, methods, business models, procurement models or standards. The call also aims to promote sustainable digital technologies, for example digital technologies that consume little energy resources. Innovative applications, services and integrated solutions must make a positive contribution to the energy transition, mobility transition, circular economy or climate-neutral city. Projects have to be in line with, and possibly even clearly relate to the goals of the [EU Green Deal](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations \(SDGs\)](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.2 Visibility of Austrian companies and research institutions on a transnational level

The bilateral call in cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Sciences aims at establishing links to the Chinese innovation system, facilitating access to the Chinese market for Austrian companies, and expanding Austrian-Chinese cooperation in application-oriented research in the area of Digital Technologies for Green.

### 2.3 Cross-cutting objectives

#### 2.3.1 Conscious use of R&D data

Projects must take a well-structured and well-documented approach to their data from the planning stage onwards. Unless competition reasons do not allow it, it is recommended to publish such data. At the same time, all measures to protect privacy need to be taken when dealing with person-related data. The conscious use of data concerns both the dimension of data protection and security, and the dimension of open data/open access. Please refer to chapter 7.4 for recommendations regarding the data management plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to [Agenda 2023](#).

### 2.3.2 Ethical aspects and human-centered design

Ethical aspects and responsible technology assessment are important in the conception of the solution, during the entire runtime of the project as well as in the post-project phase. The document ["EU Grants: How to complete your ethics self-assessment"](#) is recommended as an aid to take ethical aspects into account.

Especially chapter 2 "Humans", chapter 4 "Personal data", chapter 8 "Artificial intelligence", and chapter 10 "Crosscutting issue: potential misuse of results" are recommended. In terms of human-centered<sup>2</sup> design, knowledge about future user groups and the context of future use should be part of the research and development of new systems. Systems should be developed for, together with and sometimes even by users.

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<sup>2</sup> Human-Centered Design describes the generation of knowledge involving the future user groups and the context of future use in the research and development of new systems (hard and software). Users can be embedded at various social levels such as the working environment with business processes and models, informal best practices etc.

## 3 CALL TOPICS

### 3.1 Digital Technologies for Green

The call topic is designed to leverage common fields of expertise of Austria and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Table 3: Call topic

Topic	Description
<b>Digital Technologies for Green</b>	<p>This topic includes digital technologies that save resources and that support climate protection and sustainability.</p> <p><i>Examples: Projects can focus on digital technologies that support the circular economy or technologies that support energy and resource savings in digital production. Another example is digital technologies that help replace, conserve or recover scarce resources such as energy, water, valuable materials, or rare earth elements. Projects can address sustainable microelectronics. Projects can also focus on digital technologies for democracy and participation in the context of sustainability and climate protection.</i></p>

The examples listed above are suggestions only. Projects in other development areas related to the specified topic can also be submitted.

**Please notice that the following subject areas are excluded from the call:**

- Cyber security and data transmission of digital technologies (e.g. quantum technology, IoT), also in the context of networked and automated mobility;
- Critical infrastructure technologies (supply and transport);
- Technologies that can be used to restrict European fundamental rights and freedoms (e.g. surveillance, biometrics, automated text and image analysis);
- Power electronics for the control and conversion of electric power and process technology.

### 3.2 Thematic fields of digital technologies

The projects of this call must address one (or more) of the following thematic fields of digital technologies (**Please keep in mind the subject areas above that are excluded from the call**):

- Mastering complex solutions
  - Rigorous systems engineering
  - Adaptive systems
  - Autonomous systems

- Data-driven technologies and intelligent systems
  - Data analysis and integration
  - Semantic processing
  - Cognitive systems
- Ensuring interoperability
  - Interfaces
  - Compatibility
  - Technologies and tools for interfaces



## **4 REQUIREMENTS**

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### **4.1 General requirements for the Chinese-Austrian consortium**

The requirements and procedures described in the “Call Fiche” apply to the consortium. The following criteria must be met:

- The consortium shall consist of at least one partner from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and at least one Austrian partner.
- The consortium shall include at least one Austrian industrial partner.
- Individual enterprises account for a maximum of 70% of the eligible project costs with shares of affiliated companies counting as one enterprise.
- Companies share is a minimum of 20% and a maximum of 90%.
- The research institution(s) bear(s) at least 10% and a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs (relates to the total share of Austrian research institutions and CAS research groups). This applies to the entire bilateral consortium in deviation from the Austrian Technical Guidelines for Cooperative R&D Projects at a Transnational Level. Therefore as a matter of fact, Chapter 2.2 in the Technical Guidelines for Cooperative R&D Projects is not valid for this call.
- The research institution(s) shall be entitled to publish the results of the research carried out by the respective institution(s).
- Any other commercial and/or export restrictions currently in place must be observed.
- A Consortium Agreement signed by all partners must be forwarded to FFG via eCall and to CAS Chinese Academy of Sciences prior to the preparation of the national funding agreement.
- The Joint Proposal must be submitted via FFG eCall by 17th July 2023, 12:00 C.E.S.T. Central European Summer Time at the latest.
- The Joint Proposal must be submitted to CAS Chinese Academy of Sciences by 17th July 2023, 18:00 C.S.T. China Standard Time at the latest.
- The Joint Proposal submitted to FFG and CAS Chinese Academy of Sciences must be identical. In the event of deviations, FFG reserves the right to reject the proposal for formal reasons.

### **4.2 Austrian national requirements for the call**

Bilateral cooperative research and development projects between Austria and China falling into the research categories ‘Industrial Research’ or ‘Experimental Development’ may only be submitted under this call.

The following requirements shall apply to submissions by Austrian participants to the FFG in addition to the general requirements specified in Chapter 4.1 above:

- the provisions of the Technical [Guidelines for Cooperative R&D Projects](#) at Transnational Level.
- In addition to the Joint Proposal the Austrian national Annex must be uploaded via eCall. The application documents must be submitted via eCall by 17th July 2023, 12:00 C.E.S.T. at the latest.

**The following provisions apply in deviation from the Technical Guidelines for Cooperative R&D Projects at Transnational Level:**

- The amount of funding requested by the Austrian partners must be between EUR 100,000 and EUR 1 Million.
- The following requirements shall apply to the entire Austrian-Chinese consortium instead of the requirements specified in Chapter 2.2 of the Technical Guidelines:
  - the research institution(s) bear(s) at least 10% and a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs
  - Companies share is a minimum of 20% and a maximum of 90%
  - the research institution(s) shall be entitled to publish the results of the research carried out by the respective institution(s)
  - A Consortium Agreement signed by all partners must be forwarded to FFG via eCall prior to the preparation of the national funding agreement.
- The requirements specified in Chapter 2.2 of the Technical Guidelines shall be replaced by the requirement that at least **one Austrian company** must participate in the Austrian-Chinese consortium.
- The Chinese applicant and partners must be from one or more CAS research groups.
- Companies are eligible to apply if they have a permanent establishment or branch (according to Council Directive 2011/96/EU of 30 November 2011, in conjunction with Art. 11 (5) a GBER, No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014) in Austria at the time of submission of the application and payment of funding.
  - Art. 2 (b): ‘Permanent establishment’ means a fixed place of business situated in a Member State through which the business of a company of another Member State is wholly or partly carried on in so far as the profits of that place of business are subject to tax in the Member State in which it is situated by virtue of the relevant bilateral tax treaty or, in the absence of such a treaty, by virtue of national law;
  - Art. 3 (1) Definition of parent company and subsidiary
- Companies are eligible to apply if their main focus is on research and the exploitation of results is in Austria. Subsidiaries based in China may act as sub-contractors in the consortium, if required.
- The EUR-CNY conversion rate of the European Central Bank ECB at the date of submission shall apply. This can either be the reference date specified in the Joint Proposal or the conversion rate provided by the ECB on a monthly basis. The rate

must be specified in the Joint Proposal. The conversion rate shall apply for the duration of the project and for all reports related thereto.

- The participation and financing of additional international partners in the consortium shall be excluded in this bilateral call in deviation from the provisions of the Technical Guidelines.

Austrian partners and partners of CAS may cover their costs by own funds and/or grants provided by Austria or China. Partners from other countries shall be excluded from participating in the consortium. Organisations from outside Austria or China may be involved as sub-contractors of Austrian partners. FFG will check whether the Austrian project part is properly allocated to the research category of 'Industrial Research' or 'Experimental Development' based on the Joint Proposal. This may involve a reduction in the funding rate. FFG will take the funding decision for the Austrian project partners. The Chinese Academy of Sciences shall be responsible for the funding decision for the Chinese partners.

## 5 CALL DOCUMENTS

The call documents apply for Austrian partners. Projects can only be submitted electronically via [eCall](#). The project application consists of:

### eCall

Online cost plan – enter directly in eCall



Bilateral project description „Joint Proposal Template” (Austria-China) – Upload as PDF in eCall



National project description (Austrian Annex) – Upload as PDF in eCall

Please use the templates and call documents provided in the [Download Center](#):

Table 4: Call documents – funding

Funding instrument / other information	Applicable call documents
<b>Cooperative R&amp;D project</b>	<a href="#">Guideline</a> for Cooperative R&D Projects – <a href="#">Template</a> bilateral project description (Joint Proposal) – <a href="#">Template</a> national project description (Austrian Annex) –  Declaration of SME Status (if required) <a href="#">German</a>
<b>General Cost Guidelines</b>	–  Cost Guideline (Cost recognition in FFG projects) <a href="#">German</a> – <a href="#">English</a>

*Please note: A declaration of SME status is required for associations, and sole traders. In the template provided, applicants must (as far as possible) categorise their business for the last three years according to the SME definition.*

## 6 FUNDING DECISION AND LEGAL BASIS

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FFG will take the funding decision for the Austrian project partners on the basis of the funding recommendations of the evaluation panel. The Chinese Academy of Sciences shall be responsible for the funding decision for the Chinese partners. A Joint Selection Panel with FFG and the Chinese Academy of Sciences will carry out the selection of proposals to be funded on the basis of the previous stages of evaluation. The final funding decision for Austrian organisations is made by the Management Board of FFG.

Legal Basis for this call are the Guidelines for the Austrian Research Promotion Agency to promote research, technology, development and innovation to deal with social challenges.

For a definition of SME – small and medium sized enterprises – see the applicable SME definition under EU competition law. Further information is available on the [SME webpage of FFG](#).

All EU regulations are to be applied as amended.

## 7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

### 7.1 Service 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 projects 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 information about their project in the FFG Project Database. The information will only be published if active consent is given in the eCall system.

For more information see the [FAQs to the Project Database](#).

### 7.2 Service BMK Open4Innovation

The [open4innovation](#) platform of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) offers an additional knowledge base for companies and researchers (community support, detailed information, success stories, etc.).

### 7.3 Open Access Publications

Research results obtained with the aid of public funding are to be put to the best use to provide maximum benefit to science, business and society. The Open Access principle should therefore be followed where possible for peer-reviewed publications produced with the support of FFG funding. The principle is „as open as possible, as closed as necessary“, which also applies in European funding schemes.

Publication costs are eligible for funding.

### 7.4 Handling project data – data management plan

A data management plan (DMP) is a tool that supports the efficient and systematic management of all data generated throughout the duration of a project.

DMPs can be created, e.g., using the free tool [DMP Online](#). The "[Guidelines on FAIR Data Management](#)" of the European Commission also provide assistance in this respect.

A data management plan describes

- which data are collected, processed or generated within a project
- how these data are handled within the project
- what methods and standards are applied
- how the data are stored and updated over the long term and
- whether it is planned to make datasets available to third parties for reuse (i.e., open access to research data)

It is recommended to ensure public access to research data which provide the basis for peer-reviewed publications and whose publication is necessary to reproduce and verify the published results.

In the event of publication, the data should be "findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable". Storing data in established and internationally recognised repositories (see the [re3data Webseite](#)) is recommended to ensure broad access.

## 7.5 Further Funding Options of FFG

You are interested in further funding options of FFG?

FFG Funding Service is the central point of contact for your inquiries about FFG's funding and advisory services.

**Contact:** FFG Funding Service, T: +43 (0) 57755-0, E: [foerderservice@ffg.at](mailto:foerderservice@ffg.at)

Web: <https://www.ffg.at/foerderservice>

Further funding opportunities of FFG can be found [here](#).

## 8 ANNEX: CHECKLIST FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

In the formal check FFG examines the application for formal correctness and completeness. Please note: **If the application does not meet the formal requirements for project submissions in accordance with the conditions and criteria of the respective funding instrument and if the deficiencies cannot be corrected the application will be excluded from the further procedure and will be formally rejected without exception in accordance with the principle of equal treatment of applications.**

Table 5: Checklist of formal requirements for project submissions

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>What is checked</i>	<i>Correction of deficiencies possible</i>	<i>Consequence</i>
The application is complete and in the correct language.	Project description is complete (Joint Proposal). Language: English	No	Rejection due to formal reasons
The Joint Proposal submitted to FFG and CAS Chinese Academy of Sciences must be identical.	Joint proposal	No	Rejection due to formal reasons
Mandatory attachments according to the Call Guideline are submitted.	Austrian Annex Language: English	No	Rejection due to formal reasons
Uploads to organization's master data in eCall.	e.g. annual accounts of the last two financial years	Yes	Coorection via eCall after submission
The applicant is eligible for submission of a proposal.	See Chapter 4	No	Rejection due to formal reasons
(Minimum) requirements of the consortium	See chapter 4	No	Rejection due to formal reasons