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Forschung wirkt.

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**GUIDELINE FOR
R&D INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING
ECONOMIC USE**

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Changes from version 1.0

- Chapter 2.4: Reformulation of the guidelines on organisations that are not eligible to participate
- Chapter 3.4: Insertion of a new section on disclosure requirements and freedom of information
- Evaluation criteria: Updating and posting links regarding accessibility in relation to gender balance/gender-specific issues and sustainability (2.2, 3.3 and 3.4)

1 PREFACE

The FFG is your partner for research and development. These Guidelines are designed to support you in submitting an application for R&D infrastructure funding for economic use. 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. Please note that the call guidelines may also contain additional and/or limiting provisions.

2 THE BASIS OF FUNDING

2.1 What are “R&D infrastructure projects for economic use”?

R&D infrastructure projects for economic use are projects aimed at acquiring, establishing and expanding advanced R&D infrastructure for applied research that support the development of innovative products, processes or services in future-oriented technology fields. The focus is on shared-use R&D infrastructure. "Shared use" is taken to mean use by several organisations other than the applicant organisation or members of the applicant consortium.

2.2 What requirements apply to the use of the R&D infrastructure?

2.2.1 Open, non-discriminatory access

The R&D infrastructure must be open to several users and access must be granted under non-discriminatory and transparent conditions. This means that at least 10% of total annual capacity must be made available for use by other organisations. “Other organisations” are taken to mean organisations other than the applicant organisation or consortium members.

2.2.2 Planned use

The R&D infrastructure may be used for economic and non-economic activities (see Commission Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation 2022, OJ 2022/C 414 of 28.10.2022, hereinafter “Commission Framework”).

When using the funded R&D infrastructure for economic activities, it must be ensured that such use does not constitute indirect aid. This means that use for economic activities must be at full cost including profit margin or at market price in order to avoid indirect aid.

2.2.3 Usage strategy

When submitting an application via [eCall](#), a plausible usage strategy must be presented in the content description. The strategy must cover the entire useful life of the R&D infrastructure from start-up to the end of the depreciation period.

The key points of the usage strategy include in particular:

- Management of use (including personnel and resource plan)
- Demand and capacity utilisation
- Shared use by third parties (i.e. organisations other than the applicant organisation or members of the applicant consortium)
- Terms and conditions for transparent and non-discriminatory access by third parties
- Calculation of usage fees (process for calculating full costs including profit margin or market price)
- Calculation of start-up and follow-up costs (operating costs, maintenance costs and replacement investments)
- Sustainable financing concept
- Presentation of ownership structure for the planned R&D infrastructure
- If applicable: planned conditions for preferential access for co-financing organisations.

2.3 What are the requirements for applicant organisations?

The R&D infrastructure may be acquired by one organisation alone or by a consortium. Collaboration within the consortium and the rights with respect to the

findings/results obtained using the R&D infrastructure shall be specified in a legally valid cooperation agreement (consortium agreement) prior to the start of the project. More information and a model consortium agreement is available at www.ffg.at/Konsortialvertrag.

The funding recipients must have ownership of the R&D infrastructure from the start-up date. The ownership rights with respect to the R&D infrastructure must be defined in [eCall](#), in the content description under “usage strategy”.

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

2.4 Who is eligible for funding?

Legal entities, partnerships and sole traders that are not part of the Austrian federal administration are eligible to receive funding.

The following organisations are eligible for funding:

- **Research and knowledge dissemination organisations** (see definition in [section 6.1](#)):
 - Universities (see [section 6.1](#))
 - Universities of applied sciences
 - Non-university research institutions
 - Technology transfer institutions, innovation intermediaries and other research-oriented organisations (e.g. dedicated associations).
- **Undertakings** of any legal form (e.g. AG, GmbH, KG, OG etc.), with the exception of civil law partnerships (GesbR)
- **Other organisations endowed with their own legal personality** (e.g. non-scientifically oriented associations)

The following applies additionally:

- Applicants must be legal representatives of the submitting organisation.
- Linked organisations (e.g. parent companies and subsidiaries) are considered and treated as one organisation or consortium member. According to the SME definition, an enterprise is considered to be linked if a holding exceeds the threshold of 50%.
- Co-financing organisations (see [section 2.8](#)) must **not** be entered as “Partners” in [eCall](#).
- Consortium members must not simultaneously act as subcontractors. Subcontractors are not consortium members. They provide specific services for consortium members and are not entitled to use the project results.

Not eligible to participate:

Organisations which have been commissioned by the FFG, the funding authority, or as part of an EU project (including third-party providers) and could consequently secure an advantage related to the specific Call – whether through involvement in a study, evaluation, the design, or in another manner – are not eligible to participate for reasons of conflict of interest unless their participation has been coordinated with the FFG Call Management and any related concerns have been clarified. In this case, the measures taken to eliminate the conflict of interest must be demonstrated. The FFG reserves the right to exclude organisations from the Call due to a conflict of interest.

2.5 May the consortium include members from outside Austria?

A consortium may include members from outside Austria if these are not economically linked to the Austrian organisations in the consortium. Even consortium members from outside the EU may receive funding.

The following conditions apply:

- The non-Austrian consortium members create benefit for the Austrian consortium members and/or Austria as a research location;
- This benefit is explicitly indicated in the application for funding;
- Funding paid to non-Austrian consortium members does not exceed 20% of the total funding amount;
- The evaluation committee recommends providing funding to the non-Austrian consortium members;
- The non-Austrian consortium members provide evidence of their credit rating and liquidity prior to conclusion of the agreement. They are subject to the same conditions as the Austrian consortium members;
- The non-Austrian consortium members accept the FFG's obligation and entitlement to audit the project as specified in the funding contract and submit relevant documentary evidence in German or English.

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

Non-Austrian organisations may also be involved as subcontractors or as co-financing organisations (see [section 2.8](#)).

2.6 How much funding is granted?

Funding is granted in the form of **non-repayable subsidies**. The **funding rate** is a **maximum of 50%** of eligible costs.

If the project receives additional funding from other funding institutions this must be stated in the application. The cumulative funding must not exceed the state aid limit under European law (see General Block Exemption Regulation of the European Commission: COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ L 187/1, 26.6.2014, as amended by REGULATION (EU) 2023/1315, OJ L 167/1, 30.06.2023, hereinafter GBER).

If the funded R&D infrastructure is to be used in another funded R&D project of the funding recipients, the capitalised costs of acquisition or production may not be charged a second time as depreciation or machine hours, i.e. double charging of R&D infrastructure acquisition costs in other funded R&D projects must be avoided.

2.7 What costs are eligible?

Eligible costs must be allocable directly to the project. This means that:

- they are incurred additionally to the normal operating costs during the funding period,
- they are in accordance with the funding contract,
- they can be evidenced by receipts.

The earliest possible date for the start of the project (start of the funding period) is after submission of the application for funding and must be entered in [eCall](#). Work (e.g. acquisition of the R&D infrastructure) may not be started until the start of the funding period in accordance with the funding contract. “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.

Details on cost recognition can be found in the [Cost Guidelines](#).

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

- Only costs that have been stated in the application will be recognised.
- Funding is granted exclusively for R&D infrastructure acquisition costs. These include:
 - costs for the acquisition of R&D infrastructure with the purpose of undertaking research and development. These may include:

- i) investment costs in tangible and intangible assets. According to the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER), this includes 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. 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.
 - ii) Both new and used facilities and facility parts may be contributed, which subsequently pass into the ownership of the funding recipients. 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. It is not possible to contribute facilities or facility parts that have already been fully or partially funded.
- costs that are directly related to the acquisition of the R&D infrastructure and have been capitalised in the fixed asset register.
 - The costs must be capitalised in the fixed asset register for accounting purposes. The fixed asset register must be presented during the audit of the final accounts.
 - The application of overhead is not possible.
 - Funding for non-Austrian consortium members must not exceed 20% of the total funding.

The following costs are not eligible:

- Replacement investments for renewal of basic equipment of the R&D infrastructure
- 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 considered as eligible costs based on EU law.

2.8 What are the requirements for match funding for R&D infrastructure acquisition costs?

The funding represents state aid. This means that match funding from public funds (e.g. from the global budget/performance agreement for universities or from other funding programmes, e.g. of regional governments) is not permitted. The remaining share (min. 50 %) must be covered by internal funds which do not qualify as public

funds (e.g., income from contract research or research services) and/or by applicant or co-financing organisations.

Co-financing organisations

Organisations co-financing at least 10% of the R&D infrastructure (cash contributions only) may be given preferential access under more favourable conditions up to the equivalent of the cash contribution provided by the co-financing organisation. The extent of such preferential treatment (including priority access) shall be calculated on the basis of regular full costs, including a profit margin, or market prices. The conditions under which preferential treatment is granted must be made publicly available.

2.9 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. This also applies to monitoring reports to be submitted beyond the funding period (see [section 2.13](#)).

The consortium leader shall ensure that the consortium concludes a legally valid cooperation agreement before the start of the project, which contains all provisions required by point 28 of the Commission Framework. 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.

2.10 What rules apply with respect to exploitation rights?

Exploitation rights relating to the project results belong to the funding recipient organisation and/or the consortium. Collaborations between undertakings and research organisations shall be subject to the provisions of section 2.2.2.

"Collaboration with undertakings" of the Commission Framework.

This document stipulates that the exploitation 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.

2.11 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 from these projects 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.

Costs that have already been funded are not eligible under this programme. To avoid double funding, the proposed project must be clearly differentiated from thematically related projects that have already received funding.

2.12 Is research integrity ensured?

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

The FFG is a member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI, see <https://oeawi.at/en/statutes-3/>) 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 Research Integrity, which will then decide whether to initiate an independent investigation procedure and, if necessary, will carry out any 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.

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

If public funding is provided for an R&D infrastructure for economic or non-economic use, EU Member States are required to put in place a monitoring system including claw-back mechanisms. This is designed to ensure that the permitted state aid limits are not exceeded and that other users are granted open access under transparent, non-discriminatory conditions throughout the entire usage period.

The following applies to the monitoring of the R&D infrastructure:

- The monitoring begins upon start-up and covers the entire depreciation period. If the R&D infrastructure consists of several components, the longest depreciation period shall apply.
- The FFG must be notified of the start-up date as well as the depreciation period and the end of the depreciation period via the FFG communication tool ([eCall](#)).
- An annual monitoring report must be submitted from start-up throughout the depreciation period via the FFG communication tool ([eCall](#)). The monitoring report presents details on the economic and non-economic use and also compliance with the access regulations for the consortium and third parties.

The following additional rules for R&D infrastructure use must be observed from start-up to the end of the depreciation period:

- Open, non-discriminatory access (see [section 2.2.1](#))
- Rules for co-financing organisations (see [section 2.8](#))
- No double funding for other funded R&D projects (see [section 2.6](#))
- Rules for usage (see [section 2.2.2](#))

3 SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

3.1 What is the procedure for submission?

Applications must be submitted electronically via [eCall](https://ecall.ffg.at) before the deadline (<https://ecall.ffg.at>).

Important:

Funding applications for consortium projects can only be submitted once all consortium members have completed and submitted their partner applications via [eCall](#)!

How does it work?

- Complete all menu items in [eCall](#)
- Enter project details and the project description consisting of content description, consortium (role/description of participating organisations), work plan, and costs and funding in [eCall](#):
 - Content description ([eCall](#)) presents the project content.
 - Consortium and role of consortium leader/description of participating organisations ([eCall](#)) describes the expertise of the applicant organisation or individual consortium members.
 - Work plan ([eCall](#)) presents the work packages and associated costs as well as project management elements such as a time management plan (GANTT chart), deliverables, milestones, results.
 - Costs and funding ([eCall](#)) describes all R&D infrastructure acquisition costs for each applicant organisation. The sums for each work package are automatically displayed in the work plan.
- Upload the required attachments (see [section 3.2](#))
- Finalise the application in [eCall](#) under menu item "Finalisation" and click "Submit application".
- Upon successful submission, a confirmation of submission will be sent automatically by email.

Not necessary:

- Additional postal submission of a duly executed copy

Not possible:

- Uploading or amending individual parts of the application form after submission
- Revising the online application after submission

The application documents must be submitted by the applicant organisation or consortium leader or by duly authorised representatives. The FFG may request evidence of the power of representation. If you are unable to provide such evidence the FFG reserves the right to reject the application for formal reasons.

Detailed information can be found in the [eCall Tutorial](#).

3.2 What documents are required for submission?

The following documents must be attached to the electronic application:

- At least CV of project manager
- Letters of Intent (LOI) of at least two organisations interested in using or co-financing the R&D infrastructure (no template)

Note: LOIs of organisations that are linked to the applicant organisations (information on linked organisations see [section 2.4](#)) or that are part of the applicant consortium do not count towards this minimum requirement.

3.3 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 (TAB 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 ministries as FFG owners, 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 also be involved in the evaluation of projects in individual cases. National and international experts are given access to the submitted documents as part of project evaluation – see [section 4.3](#). 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 protection 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](#).

3.4 How are disclosure requirements and freedom of information regulated?

The FFG is subject to Austria's Freedom of Information Act (IFG). The FFG publishes information of general interest which is not subject to confidentiality restrictions, for example in the project database. Furthermore, the FFG must respond to requests for information and, where appropriate, publish information in accordance with the statutory requirements. In answering requests for information, the FFG naturally takes every care to protect sensitive information. In accordance with Sec. 6 IFG, information which includes trade secrets, copyrighted content, or personal data is subject to special protective measures which is taken into account in every case. If necessary, the FFG will consult with those affected by the publication of such information.

4 EVALUATION AND DECISION

4.1 What is the formal check?

The formal check serves to examine the application for formal correctness and completeness.

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 criteria for the formal check can be found in the checklist included in the call guideline.

4.2 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
3. Benefit and exploitation
4. Relevance of the project

The projects are evaluated by awarding points in each criterion. Projects which do not reach the stated threshold value for a certain criterion will be rejected. The following tables show the evaluation criteria, including the relevant sub-criteria.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria – 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 in technology/knowledge at national, European and international level? – What is the added value of the project in comparison with existing infrastructures? | max. points 12 |
| 1.2 Planning What is the quality and efficiency of planning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are the work packages and the associated division of work adequate for the goals of the project? – Have the risks in the work packages been adequately addressed and corresponding measures put in place? – Have all relevant aspects been taken into account in establishing the R&D infrastructure (time schedule, cost plan, resource plan, etc.)? | max. points 6 |
| 1.3 Usage strategy Has the usage strategy 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 – Shared use by third parties (i.e. by organisations other than the applicant organisation or members of the applicant consortium) – Terms and conditions for transparent and non-discriminatory access by third parties – Calculation of usage fees (process for calculating full costs including profit margin or market prices) – Calculation of start-up and follow-up costs (operating costs, maintenance costs and replacement investments) – Presentation of sustainable financing – Presentation of ownership structure for the planned R&D infrastructure – If applicable: planned conditions for preferential access for co-financing organisations | max. points 12 |

Table 2: Evaluation criteria– Suitability of funding applicants

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2. Suitability of funding applicants (threshold = 9 points) | max. points 15 |
| 2.1 Expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent do the consortium members possess the necessary qualifications and resources to ensure the successful implementation of the R&D infrastructure acquisition and the usage strategy? – If applicable: To what extent does the implementation of the project by the selected consortium present an added value? | max. points 9 |
| 2.2 Gender balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does the composition of the project team reflect the aim to improve the gender balance in the sector? Further information on equality and diversity (link: https://www.ffg.at/en/equality-and-diversity) | max. points 6 |

Table 3: Evaluation criteria – Benefit and exploitation

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 3. Benefit and exploitation (threshold = 18 points) | max. points 30 |
| 3.1 Cooperative research and innovation activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How will the additional opportunities that are created by the new R&D infrastructure influence prospective future research and innovation activities, especially in cooperation with companies (quantitatively and qualitatively)? – Can results with a high degree of innovation and novelty be expected? – How will they be exploited? | max. points 12 |
| 3.2 Development potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is the development potential of the consortium members in terms of the following points? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Connectivity to existing innovation fields and key areas of innovation – Contribution to advancement of innovation fields and key areas of innovation – Potential for new opportunities for collaboration with industry and with research institutions and universities | max. points 6 |
| 3.3 Gender-specific topics If the contents of the prospective future research and innovation activities or their results relate to individuals: <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 | max. points 6 |

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 3. Benefit and exploitation (threshold = 18 points) | max. points 30 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consideration of gender-specific topics in the methodological approach taken in the project <p>Further information on equality and diversity (link: https://www.ffg.at/en/equality-and-diversity)</p> <p>Projects in which content and focus have no gender relevance according to this analysis will score full points in this sub-criterion.</p> | |
| 3.4 Sustainability | max. points 6 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are the impacts (positive and negative) of the prospective future research and innovation activities in terms of sustainability (social, ecological, economic), in particular concerning climate neutrality? <p>Further information on sustainability aspects (link: https://www.ffg.at/en/nachhaltigkeit-kriterien)</p> <p>Research and innovation activities producing overall (net) negative contributions/effects will score 0 points in this sub-criterion.</p> | |

Table 4: Evaluation criteria – Relevance of the project

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 4. Relevance of the project (threshold = 15 points) | max. points 25 |
| 4.1 Relevance | max. points 10 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How relevant is the project in terms of achieving the objectives and topics of the call? | |
| 4.2 Demand | max. points 5 |
| <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) | |
| 4.3 Location | max. points 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Has the impact on Austria's position as a location for research and innovation been described plausibly? – What impact will the planned research and innovation activities have on the visibility of Austria as a location for research and innovation in an international context? | |
| 4.4 Incentive effect | max. points 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How would you judge the incentive effect of the funding? To what extent will the funding help to implement the project in the first place or complete it in a shorter timeframe, and/or make it more ambitious, and/or increase its scope? | |

4.3 How is the evaluation procedure organised?

National and international experts will review the submitted documents in accordance with the criteria mentioned in [section 4.2](#).

The evaluation committee will make a funding recommendation based on the written reviews.

It is possible to exclude reviewers (individuals or members of specific organisations) stating the reasons. This can be done in [eCall](#) using the menu item “Project data”.

FFG experts examine the financial potential of the companies involved, including credit rating and liquidity. Where necessary, they may request additional documents without which the examination cannot be completed. 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 GBER, 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 the project.

Requirements are binding – see [section 5.2](#).

4.4 Who makes the funding decision?

This information can be found in the relevant call guideline.

5 THE FUNDING PROCEDURE

5.1 How is the funding contract concluded?

In the event of a positive funding decision, the FFG will send the applicant organisation or consortium a data view via the [eCall](#) system, which shows the key details of the funding contract (e.g. amount of funding granted, amount of eligible costs, start and end date of the funding period, reporting obligations and possible binding requirements) and is valid for a specified period of time.

If the data view is accepted within the specified period, the FFG will prepare the funding contract and send it to the applicant organisation or consortium.

The applicant 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.

5.2 How are requirements taken into account?

Requirements may be imposed in the course of the review.

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 in the course of the project

Requirements shall form an integral part of the contract.

5.3 What should be taken into account when acquiring R&D infrastructure(s)?

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

Procurement in FFG projects is subject to stringent regulations. Further information can be found on the [FFG website – Procurement in funded projects](#).

5.4 How are the funding instalments paid?

The funding instalments are generally paid in accordance with the funding contract.

The first instalment of 50% of the approved funding amount will be paid once the imposed requirements have been met and the funding contract has been signed, however, not earlier than one week before the start of the funding period. Payments are made to the bank account of the funding recipient organisation or consortium leader. The final instalment of 50% of the approved funding amount will be paid upon submission of the final account, fulfilment of all requirements and completion of the cost audit.

A different instalment plan may be defined in the call guideline. The final instalment must be at least 10% of the approved funding amount. Any additional instalments will be paid after the interim reports and interim accounts have been reviewed and any additional requirements have been met. Instalment amounts may be reduced if the interim reports indicate a delay in project progress or if the costs are below plan.

Payment of any funding during the course of the project does not imply recognition of costs. The costs will only be approved once the project is granted discharge by the FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division following the final audit.

5.5 What reports and accounts are required?

- A final report and the final accounts must be submitted within 3 months of the conclusion of the project, via the [eCall](#) reporting function.
- If additional instalments have been agreed, an interim report and interim accounts must be submitted within one month of the reporting deadlines specified in the funding contract using the [eCall](#) reporting function.
- If the project is aborted during the project term, a final report and final accounts must be submitted. The FFG is entitled to reclaim money if the funding already paid exceeds the eligible costs.
- A monitoring report must be submitted annually from the date the funded R&D infrastructure is put into operation until the end of the depreciation period in accordance with the provisions specified by the funding agency (see [section 2.13](#)).

The reports and accounts must meet the following requirements:

- They must include a description of the activities of the entire consortium and the cost statements of all consortium members.
- Reports must be prepared using the [eCall](#) system.

Support of public relations

The funding recipients agree to work together with the FFG and the responsible government departments 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.

5.6 How is the on-site audit carried out?

In addition to the reports, the FFG may carry out an on-site audit during or after the end of the project.

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

5.7 How should changes be communicated?

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

- 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, including withdrawal, new ownership structure or insolvency proceedings

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

- cost reallocations between consortium members

5.8 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 one year on a cost-neutral basis.

The following requirements must be met:

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

5.9 What happens after the conclusion of the project?

Following the conclusion of the project, the funding recipient organisations will submit a final report and final accounts. The FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division will 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 and the final instalment paid.

- 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 originally planned 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, formal or legal reasons.

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

Please note:

Even after the end of the project, the funding recipient organisation or 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 2.13](#)).

6 FURTHER INFORMATION

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

6.1 Glossary

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 for the incentive effect the funding has:

- 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
- longer-term strategic orientation

Research and knowledge dissemination organisations

A restricted definition of the Commission Framework shall apply:

"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 or virtual 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.

Universities

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

Undertakings

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

6.2 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 to the interested public. The database can also be used to search for cooperation partners.

Once funding is granted, the applicants are informed via the [eCall](#) system 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 – Questions & Answers on the FFG Project Database](#).

6.3 Milestones of the call (up to first instalment)

Figure 1: Milestones of the call

