



FFG

Promoting Innovation.



**Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria**
Climate Action, Environment,
Energy, Mobility,
Innovation and Technology

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:

FFG VIA ECALL: JANUARY 31ST 2024, 12:00 CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME (C.E.T.)

MOST/CHINA: TBA BEIJING TIME

VERSION 1.1, VIENNA, 19.09.2023

**TECXPOR – 4TH BILATERAL COOPERATION CALL
AUSTRIA – MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(MOST) PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
CALL GUIDELINE**

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1 KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

This call for Austrian-Chinese cooperative R&D projects is jointly supported with funding managed by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) and funding managed by the China Science and Technology Exchange Center (CSTEC) on behalf of the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China (MOST). The call promotes the bilateral collaboration in application-oriented research and development projects. A funding budget of **EUR 1.37 MIO** is available for Austrian partners. **The present Call Guideline applies only to Austrian project partners.** A corresponding [announcement of the Chinese call for proposals](#) has been published by MOST on their website.

Table 1: Call overview

Key Facts	Information
Funding instrument	Cooperative R&D project
Research category	Industrial research or experimental development
Topics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enabling Technologies – Enhance competences in key technologies to utilise renewable energy and increase resource efficiency in the energy sector 2. Energy Systems and Networks 3. Industrial Energy Systems 4. Crosscutting Topics
Funding amount	min. 100,000 EUR to max. 500,000 EUR for total project duration
Funding rate	max. 85%, dependent on organisation type (see Technical Guidelines for Cooperative R&D Projects at transnational level)
Duration	6 - 36 months
Cooperation	Yes, required
Total call budget	1.377.884 EUR
Funding provider	BMK
Submission deadline	Proposal via FFG eCall: 31.01.2024, 12:00 C.E.T.
Language	English

Key Facts	Information
Contact	Alexander Pörtl E: alexander.poertl@ffg.at T: +43 (0)57755-5051
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Information on the Web	https://www.ffg.at/ausschreibung/TecxportMOST-2023

The full set of application documents must be submitted in Austria via [eCall](#) by the submission deadline.

All proposals from the Chinese partners should be submitted to MOST online via their services.

Table 2: Timeline

Selection procedure Austria	Schedule
Submission deadline	31.01.2024, 12:00 C.E.T.
Formal check	February 2024
Evaluation	March 2024
Funding decision	from Mai 2024

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. The FFG's eCall system provides support in this respect, but the ultimate responsibility for compliance with the formal requirements still rests with the applicants. A detailed check list specifying the conditions and criteria of the relevant funding instrument and the call can be found at the beginning of the relevant application forms (Project Description).

2 MOTIVATION

The aim of the call for cooperative R&D projects (later referred to as projects) is to support the jointly identified research topics with mutual interests and scientific excellence based on the existing cooperation agreement between the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China (MOST). The purpose of this call is to foster the joint research cooperation between Austria and China and improve the visibility of the successful collaboration between the two parties.

Projects funded in the framework of this call are intended to intensify scientific and applied research cooperation between Austrian and Chinese research organisations and companies in order to give new impulses for excellent research between the two countries. **Moreover, research partners shall create a base for possible further commercial collaboration.**

The participation of female scientists is particularly welcome.

The goals of this call are to:

1. Strengthen the innovation potential of internationally competitive and resilient companies
2. Begin or extend business collaborations with Chinese partners beyond the project
3. Build up research competences in at least one of the relevant topics stated in the section „call topics“ of the document
4. Improve the access for Austrian R&D and Innovation players to national and international markets
5. Support companies and R&D Institutions to network with relevant decision-makers in the target market
6. Strengthen the business and technology base in Austria and its value creation through targeted support for the marketing of Austrian technology innovations abroad

3 CALL TOPICS

Projects shall contribute to challenge driven research, development and innovation for carbon free and clean energy systems. They shall stimulate the transition towards carbon free and clean energy systems and amplify the cooperation of research with “problem owners” or “need owners” (potential buyers, procurers and users of solutions). Particularly they shall contribute to the following RTDI goals and topics:

1. Enabling Technologies – Enhance competences in key technologies to utilise renewable energy and increase resource efficiency in the energy sector such as:

- solar heating and cooling, bioenergy, heatpumps
- photovoltaics, wind energy, hydro-power, efficient electrical power conversion and inverters
- renewable fuels, hydrogen and fuel cells, geothermal energy, energy storage, carbon capture and use

2. Energy Systems and Networks such as:

- enhancement and digitalisation of energy grids
- system integration of technologies, infrastructures and grids (incl. sector coupling and storage systems)
- regional and local approaches to flexibilisation and resilience of the energy system by optimising the integration of decentralised renewables

3. Industrial Energy Systems such as:

- CO₂-free and efficient provision of energy for industrial processes and sites
- Energy-related aspects of decarbonisation of industrial processes
- Solutions for crafts, trade and service companies

4. Crosscutting Topics such as:

- System innovation and transformation, system analysis with focus on technologies
- Digital transformation for the energy transition
- Innovation ecosystems and interoperability
- Resource efficiency and sustainable value chains for energy technologies

4 REQUIREMENTS

4.1 General Requirements for the Austrian-Chinese consortium

This call shall bring together research capacities from Austrian and Chinese research institutions and companies. The Technical Guidelines for Cooperative R&D projects at transnational level apply to this call. Cooperative R&D Projects are defined as being carried out by at least two consortium partners working together on a common R&D project. The special characteristics of this call and deviations from the relevant guidelines are described below.

The following criteria must be met:

- The consortium shall consist of at least one Chinese company and one Austrian company partner.
- The cooperation between the Chinese and Austrian cooperative units should be basically balanced.
- Collaborative research projects will be supported for a period of 6 – 36 months.
- The consortium can also involve research organisations in addition to the obligatory company partners.
- In addition to that, a collaboration with other non-commercial institutions is possible. In this case, the requirements to the consortium still have to be fulfilled.
- Individual companies account for a maximum of 70% of the eligible project costs, with shares of affiliated companies counting as one company.
- Research institution(s) bear(s) at least 10% and a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs (relates to the total share of Austrian and Chinese research institutions).
- Contract research and research services do not apply as cooperation in the sense of a cooperative R&D project.
- Researchers of both countries should contribute equally to the competence of the partnership. In the partnership, researchers of the participating organisations work on a defined research project, which is divided into coordinated work packages designed to reach a common research goal. The proposal provides sufficient level of skill, equipment and manpower capabilities necessary to work on the defined research project.

- The project shall be **managed jointly by an Austrian and a Chinese Applicant.**
- Research institutions shall be entitled to **publish the results of the research** carried out by the respective institution(s).
- The results of the research shall be shared by the participating Austrian and Chinese researchers.
- All Austrian and Chinese partners involved in the project have to conclude a **Consortium Agreement on issues such as intellectual property rights, liability and confidentiality.** Specifically the following must be included:
 - o The applicant must ensure that the bilateral projects submitted are not aimed at developing weapons or violence-promoting products.
 - o The applicant must ensure that the bilateral projects submitted are not aimed at gambling of any kind (i.e. games in which the outcome is determined exclusively or predominantly by chance).
 - o Any other commercial and/or export restrictions currently in place must be observed.

The payment of funding depends on compliance with these requirements. This **Consortium Agreement**, signed by all partners, has to be provided to FFG before the respective **national funding contract** is signed.

Funding will be provided to each partner by the corresponding national funding agency according to the respective rules.

- Austrian partners and Chinese partners may cover their costs by own funds and/or grants provided by Austria or China.
- Any other commercial and/or export restrictions currently in place must be observed.

4.2 National requirements for submission of proposals

The call is addressed to Austrian technology providers. The target group are manufacturing companies and commercial service providers as well as application-oriented research institutions that have appropriate technology offers or technology-related services and are internationally oriented.

International orientation of the supported companies and corresponding capacity for (subsequent) technology export activities are important.

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

- Austrian applicants must specifically outline how the project will support positioning in China as well as provide specific exploitation strategies. This has to be addressed in proposal chapter 5.1 Relevance.
- Furthermore Austrian applicants must show the contribution the project will make **to increasing the added value in Austria**. This has to be addressed in proposal chapter 5.1 Relevance.

The provisions of the **Technical Guidelines for cooperative projects at the transnational level** have to be met.

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

- At least one Austrian company must participate in the Austrian-Chinese consortium.
- The Austrian company must be the Austrian consortium leader.
- Austrian research institutions may together not exceed 50% of the person months of the Austrian partners within the consortium.
- The amount of funding requested by the Austrian partners must be **between 100,000 EUR to max 500,000 EUR**.
- 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. 1 (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.
- 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 proposal or the conversion rate provided by the ECB on a monthly basis. The rate must be specified in the 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. 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 Project Description. This may involve a reduction in the funding rate.

4.3 Application and evaluation procedure

The full set of **Austrian application documents must be submitted electronically** to FFG via [eCall](#) within the Austrian submission deadline.

Chinese partners are asked to submit their applications to MOST. Rules for submission and funding are communicated by MOST.

Each proposal must follow the regulations of the respective agency. Proposals failing to fulfil all formal requirements and unilateral applications will be rejected. The **content** of the proposals submitted to FFG and MOST **must be consistent**. A **common short title** must be chosen for the Austrian and the Chinese proposal.

The Austrian proposal must indicate **all Austrian and all Chinese project partners**, must clearly **lay down the division of work** between the partners and **must indicate all Austrian and Chinese project costs**.

The proposals will be **evaluated by the respective funding agencies** involved following the respective national evaluation procedures and criteria. A project will be recommended for funding if both involved funding agencies achieve a positive evaluation result.

The **final funding decision** is made by the Management Board of FFG on the basis of the funding recommendations of the evaluation panel. MOST is responsible for the funding decision for the Chinese partners.

5 FUNDING CRITERIA

Applications for funding are evaluated according to 4 criteria:

1. Quality of the project
2. Suitability of project participants
3. Benefit and exploitation
4. Relevance to the call

The tables below show the relevant sub-criteria. In the course of the assessment, points will be assigned to each criterion. Projects not reaching the stated threshold value for a certain criterion will be rejected. Reaching zero points in one of the sub-criteria of the 4th criteria "Relevance to the Call" the project will be rejected as well.

Table 3: Call Criterion „Quality of the project“

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	Max. points 30
1.1 To what extent does the innovation content of the project exceed the state of the art, existing products, services, processes or existing knowledge?	10
1.2 Have the project goals been clearly defined and can they be realistically achieved? Are the approaches suitable for achieving the goals of the individual work packages? Have the risks in the work packages been adequately addressed and corresponding measures provided?	5
1.3 Quality of planning: Is the structure of the work packages and the associated division of work adequate for the goals of the project? Is the overall planning adequate for achieving the project goals?	5
1.4 If the content of the project and the research results affect people: To what extent have gender-specific topics been taken into account in the planning process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quality of the analysis of the gender-specific topics – Consideration in the methodological approach of the project (more information can be found here) Projects in which content and focus have no gender relevance according to this analysis will score full points in this subcategory.	5
1.5 To what extent does the project take into account sustainability goals (ecological, social, economic), in particular in terms of climate neutrality? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How is sustainability, in particular climate neutrality, taken into 	5

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	Max. points 30
account in the planning and implementation of the project and is the methodological approach chosen adequate? (more information can be found here)	

Table 4: Call Criterion „Suitability of project participants“

2. Suitability of project participants (threshold = 12 points)	Max. points 20
2.1 Does the consortium have the necessary subject-specific and management skills and qualifications and the skills required to achieve the sustainability goals?	8
2.2 Does the project plan provide sufficient and appropriate resources for the planned implementation?	8
2.3 Does the composition of the project team reflect the aim to improve the gender balance in the sector?	4

Table 5: Call Criterion „Benefit and exploitation“

3. Benefit and exploitation (threshold = 18 points)	Max. points 30
3.1 What is the benefit of the project for the target group(s) (e.g. users, customers, contracting authorities ...) and what are the impacts and effects (positive and negative) of the project in terms of sustainability (social, ecological, economic), in particular in terms of climate neutrality?	12
3.2 What is the benefit of the project for the project participants (e.g. in terms of expanding R&D capacities, opening up new fields of business etc.)? How concrete, transparent and complete are the exploitation strategy and the exploitation potential ?	18

Table 6: Call Criterion „Relevance to the Call“






4. Relevance to the Call (threshold = 12 points)	Max. points 20
4.1 How relevant/important is the project in terms of achieving the call objectives ? Does the project sufficiently and adequately address the call topic ?	15

4. Relevance to the Call (threshold = 12 points)	Max. points 20
4.2 What is the incentive effect of the funding? To what extent will the funding help to implement the project at all and/or within a shorter timeframe, and/or with higher ambition, and/or in a larger scope?	5

6 CALL DOCUMENTS

The full set of Austrian application documents must be submitted via [eCall](#) as part of the electronic application. The cost plan must show the project costs broken down to work package level. This also applies to accounts rendered as part of the reporting process. Applicants are requested to use the specific templates provided for the submission of their projects. The funding conditions, application procedure and funding criteria are described in the corresponding Technical Guidelines and Call guidelines (present document).

Table 7: Overview of national call documents

Additional documents for Austrian participants	Documents in detail
National Call Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –  Call Guideline for Austrian Applicants (present document) –  Technical Guidelines for Cooperative R&D Projects at Transnational Level (Version 3.5)
Application form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –  Project proposal template (available in Downloadcenter) –  Declaration on SME status (if required)¹
General Cost regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –  Cost Guideline 3.0 (eligibility of costs in FFG projects)
Download	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – https://www.ffg.at/ausschreibung/TecxportMOST-2023

¹ If there is no information available in the Austrian Business Compass (e.g. for associations and start-ups), a Declaration of SME Status must be provided upon submission of the proposal. In the template provided by the FFG, applicants must (as far as possible) categorise their business for the last three years according to the SME definition.

7 LEGAL BASIS

The **final funding decision** is made by the Management Board of FFG on the basis of the funding recommendations of the evaluation panel.

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 ([FFG missions guidelines](#)).

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.

8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

8.1 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 project 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 brief defined 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](#).

8.2 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.).

8.3 Open Access Publications

The research results obtained with public funding are to be exploited in the best possible way for science, industry and society. In this sense, open access should be strived for as far as possible in peer-reviewed publications that are created with the support of the funding awarded by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG). The principle of "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" also applies to European funding. Publication costs are included in the eligible project costs.

8.4 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)

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 website](#)) is recommended to ensure broad access.

8.5 Intellectual property Services

Austrian Technology Providers can get support to identify, protect and exploit their intellectual property.

The Austrian national contact point for intellectual property in open knowledge transfer (in brief: NCP-IP) was arranged by decision of federal government on 02

March 2010 on the basis of the EU IP-Recommendation in [BMBWF](#) together with the [BMAW](#) and with the [BMK](#). The contact point coordinates knowledge transfer activities at a national level, maintains contact with other comparable facilities in the Member States and represents Austria within the corresponding European bodies.

In the operative implementation, the NCP is supported by the professional expertise of the [Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH \(aws\)](#) and the [Austrian Research Promotion Agency \(FFG\)](#).

The support includes (free of charge) [sample contracts \(Intellectual Property Agreement Guide\)](#) from the NCP-IP as well as [consulting packages from aws \(especially for “green SME”\)](#).

8.6 Further Funding Options

Are you interested in other FFG funding opportunities?

The **Funding Service** is the central point of contact for your inquiries about FFG funding and consulting services. Contact us, we will be happy to advise you!

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

Web: [Förderservice](#)

Further [FFG funding](#) opportunities