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GUIDELINE FOR MOBILISATION AND NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

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Changes from version 1.0

- Section 1: Includes note on potential call-specific restrictions
- Section 2.1: Adjustments under the heading "The following are eligible for funding"
- Section 2.2: Reformulation and specification of information about organisations eligible for funding
- Section 2.5: Includes requirement for independent execution and note on association officials
- Section 2.6: Reformulation of the evaluation criterion 2.1 "Involvement and representation"

1 PREFACE

The FFG is your partner for research and development. These Guidelines are designed to support you in submitting your mobilisation and networking activities. It describes:

- 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 announcements. Please note that there might be call-specific specifications or restrictions of these guidelines' regulations (e.g. maximum project duration, maximum funding).

2 BASIS FOR GETTING FUNDING

2.1 What are mobilisation and networking activities?

Mobilisation and networking activities support research and innovation in specific thematic areas. The mobilisation and networking activities are intended to reach the relevant (research) community (universities, research institutions, companies, etc.) in the specific topic.

The activities support

- knowledge exchange and the sharing of experiences in the relevant innovation system
- the positioning and increased visibility of the Austrian community both at home and abroad, especially in the context of European initiatives
- the development of strategies and roadmaps
- the involvement of young research talent

In principle, the mobilisation and networking activities are supported by self-organised networking platforms which are broadly embedded in the innovation system and closely involve the relevant stakeholders in the field concerned.

Mobilisation and networking activities can be submitted by individual applicants or as cooperative projects by several consortium members.

Projects eligible for funding under this funding instrument only include mobilisation and networking activities for **non-economic activities**.

The following are eligible for funding:

- National and international networking of the research community and all other stakeholders in the relevant field
- Activation and involvement of all relevant stakeholder groups, including, for example, users, consumers and solution providers in the thematic field
- The transfer of information and knowledge, as well as projects which address and elaborate on overarching issues important for the thematic area or stakeholder groups
- Activities to establish broad social involvement and facilitation
- Targeted mobilisation of researchers and young talent, e.g. pupils, students, scientists, through competitions, information events
- Activities to disseminate research results
- Services related to strategy development processes
- Development and operation of digital information and exchange platforms

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Economic activities, e.g. events with a commercial purpose, commercial consulting services, etc.
- Research and development activities, e.g. research, development and innovation projects, feasibility studies, etc.

2.2 Who is eligible to receive funding?

Legal entities based in Austria that are not part of the Austrian federal administration are eligible to receive funding as part of their **non-economic activities**¹.

- Institutions of research and knowledge dissemination
 - Universities²
 - Universities of applied sciences
 - Non-university research institutions
 - Technology transfer institutions, innovation agents and other research-oriented organisations (e.g. cluster organisations, associations with a relevant purpose)
- Other institutions with their own legal personality
 - Non-scientific associations
 - Local authorities and autonomous bodies (Note: Activities of local authorities falling within their statutory mandate are not eligible for funding)

Potential applicants can be further specified or restricted in the respective call guidelines.

2.3 For consortium projects: What are the responsibilities of the consortium leader?

Where a proposal is submitted by a consortium, a consortium leader must be specified. The consortium leader has the following responsibilities throughout the project duration:

- Project management
- Communications with the funding agency and the project participants

¹ Any activity consisting in offering goods and services on a market is generally considered to be an economic activity, regardless of whether it is intended to make a profit (cf. section 2 of the [Commission Notice on the notion of State aid](#), OJ 2016/C 262 of 19.07.2016).

If the organisation carries out economic activities that are not related to the funding, separate accounts must be maintained in compliance with state aid provisions.

² The smallest possible unit of a university is an institute of the university or a organisation comparable to a UG 2002/§20 organisation unit. It is a precondition that the participating organisation unit (institute or comparable unit) is authorised with corresponding mandate according to UG 2002/§ 27. Units below (for example working groups) can not act as project participants.

- 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.

The consortium leader must ensure that a legally valid cooperation agreement has been concluded prior to the start of the project, in which all the relevant regulations have been agreed. The consortium leader also confirms that:

- the costs charged can be clearly attributed to the project
- the project costs and content are used in accordance with the approval

2.4 How much funding is granted?

Funding is granted in the form of non-repayable subsidies and is limited to a **maximum of EUR 500,000** per project over a **maximum** period of **3 years**.

The **maximum funding rate is 85%** of the eligible costs.

The maximum funding amount and the maximum funding rate may be restricted in the relevant call guideline.

2.5 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 is after submission of the funding application.

The organisation submitting the application must also carry out a significant share of the project activities.

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

Special regulations apply to association officials registered in the association register, and these are also explained in the [Cost Guidelines](#).

2.6 What criteria are used to assess applications for funding?

Applications for funding are evaluated according to 4 criteria:

- 1 Quality of the project**
- 2 Suitability of project participant/s**
- 3 Benefit and impact**
- 4 Relevance to the call**

The table shows the relevant subcriteria. 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.

Evaluation criteria

Table 1: Quality of the project

1. Quality of the project (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
1.1 What is the assessed quality and coherence of the outlined work programme?	10
1.2 How ambitious is the proposed project? – How ambitious and innovative is the work programme?	10
1.3 If individuals or groups are the subject of the project or if people are affected by the results: To what extent have gender-specific topics been taken into account in the planning process? – Quality of analysis of gender-specific topics – Consideration in the methodological approach of the project (further 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 subcriterion.	5
1.4 To what extent does the project take into account sustainability goals (ecological, social, economic), in particular in terms of climate neutrality? - How is sustainability, in particular climate neutrality, taken into account in the planning and implementation of the project and is the methodological approach adequate? (further information can be found here)	5

Table 2: Suitability of project participant/s

2. Suitability of project participant/s (threshold = 15 points)	max. points 25
2.1 Involvement and representation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What access do the participants have to the relevant innovation and research community? – Is/are the project participant/s able to represent the overall interests of the community? 	10
2.2 Professionalism: Are the available structures and capacities suitable for continuous work and the implementation of projects running over a period of several years?	5
2.3 Expertise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does the project team possess the thematic and management skills and qualifications required to implement the project and achieve the sustainability goals? – For consortia: How well do the consortium partners collaborate? 	5
2.4 Does the composition of the project team reflect the aim to improve the gender balance in the sector?	5

Table 3: Benefit and impact

3. Benefit and impact (threshold = 18 points)	max. points 30
3.1 Mobilisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How well are the target groups addressed? – Does the project adequately address deficits in terms of networking, mobilisation and information offerings? 	10
3.2 Benefit to the research and innovation landscape: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How does the project make the relevant RTI funding more efficient and effective? – How does the project improve the dissemination and implementation of research results? – What effects and impacts (positive and negative) will the project have in terms of sustainability (social, ecological, economic)? 	10
3.3 Networking and visibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How does the project contribute to national and international networking? – How does the project increase national and international visibility? 	10

Table 4: Relevance to the call

4. Relevance to the call (threshold = 9 points)	max. points 15
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 ?	10
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

2.7 Which content and what documents are required for submission?

Project applications may only be submitted electronically via eCall:

<https://ecall.ffg.at>.

The submission of mobilisation and networking activities includes the following elements:

- **Content Description** presents the project content.
- **Consortium** describes the expertise of the project participants.
- **Work Plan** describes the work packages, the associated costs and elements of project management such as the time management plan (GANTT diagram), duties, milestones, results.
- **Cost and Financing** describes all cost categories for each participating organisation. The sums for each individual work package are automatically displayed in the work plan.

Attachments to electronic application:

- For organisations registered in the register of associations: Statutes
- For organisations registered in the company register: Articles of Association
- For organisations carrying out economic activities: Statement on separate accounting

If any additional documents or attachments are required, this will be specified in the call guideline, which also provides more detailed information on project submission.

The call guideline also specifies the language in which applications are to be submitted, which is usually German and/or English.

3 SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

3.1 What is the procedure for submission?

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

The funding application may not be submitted until all participants have submitted their partner applications via eCall.

How does it work?

- Enter the full project description consisting of content description, consortium, work plan, cost and financing via eCall.
- The system will verify whether the costs entered meet the funding conditions (e.g. funding amount, maximum project size)
- Upload the required documents (if necessary)
- Finalise the application in eCall and click "Submit application"
- Upon successful submission, an acknowledgement will be sent automatically by email.

Not necessary:

- additional postal submission of duly executed copy

Not possible:

- Revision of the application after submission

The application documents are to be submitted by the consortium leader or by a duly authorised representative. 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.

An [eCall tutorial](#) is available.

3.2 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 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 federal ministries as owners of the FFG, 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

National and international experts will get access to the submitted documents for the evaluation of the proposals – see Chapter 4.2. Such experts act as processors 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 concerning 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.

4 ASSESSMENT AND DECISION

4.1 What is the formal check?

In the formal check the application is examined for formal correctness and completeness.

You will be notified of the result of the formal check within 4 weeks 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 relevant checklist can be found in the call announcement.

4.2 How is the evaluation procedure organised?

The documents submitted will be reviewed by national and international experts based on the criteria given in Chapter 2.6.

An evaluation committee will make a recommendation on funding taking into account the written reviews.

It is possible to exclude reviewers (individuals or staff of particular organisations) in justified cases. eCall contains an entry field for this purpose.

FFG experts will check the financial potential (credit rating and liquidity) of the participating organisations. They may request additional documents that are required for completing the financial check.

Additional recommendations and requirements may be formulated in the course of the assessment. Recommendations are non-binding remarks of the evaluation committee, which should support the consortium in the implementation of the project.

Requirements are binding, see Chapter 5.2.

4.3 Who takes the funding decision?

Information as to who takes the funding decision can be found in the respective call guideline.

5 FUNDING PROCEDURE

5.1 How is the funding contract concluded?

In case of a positive funding decision, the FFG will provide the beneficiaries with a view in the eCall system with the most important basic parameters of the funding contract (e.g. amount of funding granted, amount of eligible costs, start and ending date of the funding period, reporting obligations and possible binding requirements).

After acceptance of the view within the given deadline, the FFG prepares the funding contract and delivers it to the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries return the duly signed funding contract. Thereby the funding contract is valid in law. Until then, there is no title for being funded.

5.2 How are requirements taken into account?

Binding requirements may be formulated in the course of the assessment of the funding application.

Two types of additional requirements are possible:

- Requirements that must be met prior to the conclusion of a 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.

5.3 How are the instalments of funding paid?

The first instalment will be paid once the 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 specified by the beneficiary. For more information, see the [sample Consortium Agreement](#).

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
- according to the FFG instalment scheme

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.

FFG instalment scheme

Table 5: FFG instalment scheme

Number of reports and instalments	0 to 18 months project duration	19 to 30 months project duration	31 to 36 months project duration
Number of reports (interim reports and final report)	1	2	3
1st instalment in % of funding amount at contract conclusion	50 %	50 %	30 %
2nd instalment up to % of funding amount	n.a.	40 %	30 %
3rd instalment up to % of funding amount	n.a.	n.a.	30 %
Final instalment up to % of funding amount	50 %	10 %	10 %

5.4 What reports and accounts are required?

- Within 1 month after the reporting deadlines specified in the Funding Contract, an interim report and interim accounts must be submitted via the eCall reporting function.
- For projects with a duration of less than 19 month, no interim report is intended.
- Within 3 months of the conclusion of the project a final report, a (publishable) summary and the final accounts must be presented, again via the eCall reporting function. The publication of a summary may be omitted in case of confidentiality obligations because of security reasons or because of data protection regulations.
- 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 funding with regard to the eligible costs.

The reports and accounts must meet the following requirement:

- They contain the description of activities and in addition the cost statements of all consortium partners who are mentioned in the funding contract.
- Reports must be prepared using the eCall templates

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.

5.5 How should changes be communicated?

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

- via eCall message
- in the interim or final report

All relevant documents should be uploaded 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 consortium partners such as new ownership structure or insolvency proceedings

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

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

5.6 Can the funding period be extended?

If the project goals have not 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 eCall application for extension has been submitted within the approved funding period

5.7 What happens after the conclusion of the project?

The consortium submits a final report and final accounts after the end of the project. The FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division will examine whether the funding has been used appropriately. The audit will establish the final level of 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 final instalment will be transferred once the specified cost has been reached. If the project is underspent the level of funding will be reduced accordingly. The funding amount may also be reduced for content-related reasons, as well as on formal and legal grounds.

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

6 ANNEX

6.1 Call milestones

Figure 1: Milestones of a call

