

Recommendation Regarding Key Areas for the National Foundation

On 3 April 2009, the Foundation Board of the National Foundation adopted revised guiding principles, which among other things, stipulate that its strategic priorities will be defined by the Austrian Council. The Foundation therefore requested the Austrian Council to provide it with a list of key thematic areas that are coordinated with those of the ministries and which should also form the basis for decisions concerning applications submitted in 2010. In future, priority when awarding funds should be given to:

- Strategic RTI initiatives (e.g. venture capital and the like)
- Socially relevant RTI initiatives and
- Test phases for new national RTI programmes and projects.

The aim must be to allow new programmes, ideas and initiatives to be financed from Foundation funds. In terms of the allocation of funding, the National Foundation should place a clear emphasis on “high trust” organisations and “high risk” projects.

The Austrian Council recommends that consideration be given to those key areas that were defined in Strategy 2020 in the forthcoming round of calls and when making the funding decisions. Thus, the following requirements can be laid down for the individual institutions:

Austrian Science Fund: Excellence in basic research (e.g. also at clusters of excellence) should be supported. In view of the current difficult situation, an appropriate share of funding should be allocated within the Foundation.

Austrian Research Promotion Agency: Particular consideration must be given to programmes to safeguard Austria as a business location, e.g. the programme lines Research Headquarters and the Bridge programme. The Austrian Council considers that inter-sectoral mobility facilitates

innovation. In its Strategy 2010 and subsequently in the Strategy for Excellence, it therefore recommended expanding the existing FFG and FWF programmes for the promotion of inter-sectoral mobility and developing them further with a view to promoting excellence.

Austrian Academy of Sciences: Programmes are to be submitted that conform to the Foundation's criteria and the key thematic areas defined by the Austrian Council. To ensure planning certainty, the core budget should be completely financed from the ordinary budget. In the view of the Austrian Council, the current imperative is to reduce a substantial shortfall in the remaining budget.

Christian Doppler Research Association: The Austrian Council attaches growing importance to programmes that build bridges between universities, applied research and industry, especially in times of crisis. In particular, the Austrian Council recommends supporting those institutes that are consistent with the current priorities defined by the Austrian Council in terms of their content.

Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft: Funding should be targeted at those institutions or key research areas that are consistent in terms of their content with the priorities as defined and ranked by the Austrian Council.

Austria Wirtschaftsservice: In principle, the Austrian Council welcomes the use of Foundation funds for venture capital activities and recommends that suitable framework conditions be defined and courses of action identified in advance. Sufficient (to be defined during the application process) and long-term funds should be made available by the Foundation for venture capital initiatives.