

Recommendation regarding the use of the funding from the Austria Fund 2016

Preamble

As part of the Tax Reform Act 2015/2016, Federal Law Gazette I no. 118/2015, the legal basis for a new funding mechanism in the Austrian RTI system was created. According to article 12 of this act the RTD National Foundation was allocated an additional EUR 33.7 million in 2016 by way of the “Austria Fund”. The funds from the “Austria Fund” were allocated on the basis of the RTD National Foundation

Act, similar to the previous allocation of funds from the National Foundation through the Foundation Council with consideration of the recommendation by the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development. The applications must differ from the applications of the beneficiaries for the funding from the National Foundation. The funding of the “Austria Fund” will be used, in accordance with § 3 para. 2 of the RTD National Foundation Act, for funding basic research and applied research, as well as for funding technology and innovation development. Based on the invitation of the Foundation Council of 12 April 2016, the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development recommends the awarding of the EUR 33.7 million available to the Austria Fund 2016.

Recommendation

On the basis of the sharp over-subscription of the Austria Fund with EUR 74 million compared with the available EUR 33.7 million, unfortunately it is not possible to recommend full funding for all applications. On the basis of the allocation allowed for in the explanations on Article 13 of the Tax Reform Act – 50 per cent funding for basic and applied research (column 1) and 50 per cent for the research and development of basic industrial technologies in the programmes, production of the future, mobility of the future,

energy of the future and information and communication technologies of the future (column 2) – a corresponding grading of the funding percentages

Beneficiary	Name	Applied for total in millions	Recommendation
FFG	Fronrunner package	27	11.2
FWF	"doc.funds" FWF doctoral colleges follow-up program	10	10
FWF	Jahoda-Lazarsfeld Program (Incoming/Reintegration)	7	3
CDG	Funding of application-oriented basic research in the Life Sciences area in 2 CD labs	5	2.5
LBG	Open(ing) Careers	2	2
ÖAW	Sir Karl Popper doctoral candidates	12	0
aws	Technology internationalisation of Austrian frontrunner companies	5	2
aws	IP.Market: Knowledge transfer and exploitation of intellectual property of Austrian SMEs	5	3
Total		74	33.7

was therefore performed, as documented in the table.

The Austrian Council also determined that the content-related prioritisation allowed for in the Act was only conditionally complied with by the applicants. This is in particular shown for the second column, where the thematic focus was scarcely considered. There were therefore also corresponding deductions with the funding recommendations.

The **Fronrunner Package** of the **FFG** only reflects the content-related focus points allowed for by the Act within limits (e. g. town, production, mobility of the future). An increased headquarters focus is far more evident. The Austrian Council welcomes the IP check proposed in module 4, but it would rather be considered a part of aws due to its strong competencies in the IP area. The Austrian Council recommends the Fronrunner Package be supported with EUR 11.2 million, whereby those modules that are close in topic to the legal requirements will in particular be supported.

To be emphasized here as particularly positive is the intensive addressing of young talent funding, as it is explicitly quoted by law for the first column, by the **FWF** with its doc.funds applications and the Jahoda-Lazarsfeld programme. The **doc.funds** in particular are an important and beneficial revised restructuring of the previous doctoral colleges. The Austrian Council welcomes the autonomy this provides the institutions

in shaping the doctoral programmes. The Austrian Council therefore recommends

doc.funds be supported with **EUR 10 million**. The Austrian Council believes the **Jahoda- Lazarsfeld programme** shows a low

level of innovation with existing measures. There are also duplications here with the existing offering at EU level in this area. Increased cooperation with the ÖAW is recommended with a view to the Sir Karl Popper doctoral candidates it has submitted. An opening of the doctoral candidates for all researchers and their funding via the FWF would provide more valuable stimuli to human capital development. With regard to the Sir-Karl-Popper doctoral candidates the Austrian Council recommends the Jahoda-Lazarsfeld programme be allocated **EUR 3 million**.

The **CDG** addresses the important and legally explicitly defined Life Science area with its structures proven in applied research. In view of the scarcity of funds the Austrian Council recommends funding a **CD lab** with **EUR 2.5 million**.

The Austrian Council believes the Open(ing) Careers are a valuable and in particular a “new” element in young talent funding. It is, however, regrettable that it is restricted to people within the **LBG**. The Austrian Council recommends full funding of EUR 2 million, but it would very much welcome a check by the applicant to determine the degree to which the concept could also be opened up for people outside the LBG. The **ÖAW**-submitted **Sir Karl Popper doctoral candidates** are a good mechanism for young talent funding, but structurally would be better at the FWF. An opening for non-ÖAW members must in particular be targeted. As already quoted above within the scope of the application for the Jahoda-Lazarsfeld Programme, the Austrian Council recommends the ÖAW also seek cooperation with the FWF here with regard to funding.

The **technological internationalisation of Austrian frontrunner** companies makes a valuable contribution to the market transition and international market development for Austrian SMEs in the important technology areas. Due to the scarcity of funding the Austrian Council recommends the project be funded with **EUR 2 million**.

The **IP.Market Initiative** is an important mechanism in the accession process of Austrian SMEs to the potential of better exploitation of their intellectual property. The proposed package of measures, especially the setting up of an IP marketplace and cooperation with the Patent Office, are very welcome. The Austrian Council suggests checking the integration of the IP check proposed by the FFG into this package of measures. The Austrian Council recommends **IP.Market** be supported with **EUR 3 million**.