

Recommendation Concerning the Use of Funds from the National Foundation for RTD in 2009

Preamble

In recent years there has been a rapid decline in the resources of the National Foundation for RTD which now fall well below the amount proposed in the Notes to the Act. The National Foundation estimates that in 2009 it will have only EUR 60 million at its disposal, less than half the amount originally anticipated and also significantly less than the average amount available in recent years. The Foundation as an additional source of funding for research only makes sense if it is also adequately endowed (see also the Notes to the Act). This raises the question of whether the original aims and purpose of the Foundation can still be achieved and fulfilled given the massive reduction in resources.

To enable the Foundation to fulfil its aims and also guarantee multi-year planning certainty, the necessary volume of funds must be made available on a regular basis. The law offers a framework for the endowment of the Foundation:

“Paragraph 4 (3) Furthermore, the Foundation may also be endowed with funds earmarked for this purpose in the yearly Federal Finance Act.”

The Austrian Council once again notes that the discussion regarding the use of Foundation funds can only be conducted taking into account other sources of R&D funding (ordinary budget, indirect funding). One consequence of the principle of communicating vessels is the need for a comprehensive approach in the form of bundled recommendation activities on the part of the Austrian Council and bundled decision-making activities on the part of the Foundation Board.

In 2007 the Austrian Council issued its recommendation for 200 “...subject to the condition that the next decision to be taken regarding the award of funding from the National Foundation for RTD in 2009 fully complies with the purpose of the National Foundation”. (Recommendation concerning the National Foundation for RTD 2008 dated 3 December 2007, page 2) The proposal to attract applications by means of nationwide calls in future is not an attractive one. We must not lose sight of the underlying idea of using existing structures and institutions instead of creating new and additional

structures. Neither can the focus be upon generating greater publicity for the Foundation; however, transparency must be guaranteed during the application process and with regard to the selection procedures (including the criteria), as well as during the handling by the beneficiaries and use of the funds by the beneficiaries and the respective project initiators.

The Austrian Council welcomes the revision of the guiding principles and has already offered to become actively involved in the restructuring process and has taken first steps in this regard. In this connection, the Austrian Council explicitly draws attention to the recommendation it issued on 14 March 2008 to sharpen the profile of the National Foundation for RTD and ensure planning certainty.

Recommendation Concerning the National Foundation for RTD 2009

Pursuant to Paragraph 11 Section 1 Line 1 of the Act establishing the National Foundation for RTD, the Chairman of the National Foundation on 23 September 2008 invited the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development to issue a statement and recommendation by 3 December 2008 concerning the use of the Foundation's resources in 2009 based on the applications received from beneficiaries.

The Council for Research and Technology Development has discussed the applications submitted and unanimously reached the following result:

Beneficiary / Applicant	Recommendation
FFG Bridging Programme (Bridge)	National Foundation financing can be recommended if sufficient funds are available.
FFG Headquarter	The Austrian Council considers that FFG applications qualify for the RTD National Foundation and recommends that funding should be provided. In particular, the Council welcomes the fact that the programme line "Research Headquarter" will be financed from a single source. The programme should be fully funded by the RTD National Foundation.
FWF Lise Meitner Programme for Foreign Researchers	In accordance with the recommendation made on 3. 12. 2007, the Austrian Council recommends that the programme should be funded. However, this funding should not come from the National Foundation but once again from the ordinary budget.
FWF Thematic Programmes (special research areas, national research networks)	The Austrian Council considers that FWF applications qualify for the RTD National Foundation and recommends that funding should be provided.
CDG Christian Doppler Laboratories	The Austrian Council considers that FWF applications qualify for the RTD National Foundation and recommends that funding should be provided.
LBG Ludwig Boltzmann Institute	The Austrian Council recommends financing the programme with funds from the National Foundation. On the basis of the applications, it is recommended that full funding already be provided to a selected institute from the funds for 2009. The Austrian Council suggests selecting for example, the LBI for Cancer Research for support and full funding.
ÖAW Austrian Academy of Sciences	In accordance with the recommendation made on 3. 12. 2007, the Austrian Council recommends that no National Foundation funding should be made available. Instead, all funding should be provided from the budgets of the relevant ministries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Biomedical Ageing Research 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Molecular Epigenetics and Development Genetics of Plants 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Space Research 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic Program 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Climate Research 	In connection with the Institute for Climate Research it should be noted that, in the interests of transparency, this should be funded by the Climate and Energy Fund.
AWS Venture Capital Initiative	In principle, the Austrian Council welcomes the use of the Foundation for venture capital activities, however, funding should not be provided until the model has been revised. The Austrian Council recommends first of all defining suitable framework conditions and identifying possible options. Once the content has been revised and the model adapted, consideration should definitely be given next year to the option of making adequate (to be defined in the course of the revision) long-term funding available from the National Foundation for venture capital initiatives. The Austrian Council therefore recommends that no funding should be provided in 2009. An external report commissioned by the Austrian Council has been forwarded to the Foundation Board.
Sustainable use of energy and renewable resources	Funding is not recommended.
HDS / Frame Sleepers for the USA	Funding is not recommended.