

Recommendation regarding research, technology development and innovation in the Structural Programmes 2007–2013

The European Union is committed to its goal of generating growth and employment through knowledge and innovation. In order to realise this plan, European Structural Funds will also be instrumentalised in the funding period 2007–2013. The tasks and guidelines of the Structural Funds, which in the past were used for regional development, must be adapted for research, technology development and Innovation (RTI).

The EU Structural Funds have always been an important basis for Austria's regions.

However, in the past they were mainly geared to traditional investment promotion activities. But the framework is set to change in the Structural Funds programming period 2007–2013.

By strengthening the focus on research, technology development and measures geared toward innovation, the Structural Funds can now become an important instrument for strengthening regional innovation systems in Austria.

Against this background, the Austrian Council emphasises the importance of a stronger RTI focus in the current Structural Funds programming period. In its Strategy 2010 the Austrian Council addressed the issue of integrating the EU Structural Funds programmes into national research and innovation policy and of effectively networking the regional development programmes co-financed by the EU with national funding activities. Building on this, the Austrian Council has issued the following recommendations for the planned key area "Innovation and Science-Based Economy" for the period 2007–2013.

The Austrian Council recommends

1. Programmes in the period 2007–2013 should be geared more towards measures focusing on RTI.
2. "Soft" measures should be vigorously incorporated into the programming. The purpose of "soft" promotion measures is to make up for missing competences, for example, by providing consulting services or

assistance in the start-up phase or during the search for partners. This also involves providing companies which have so far failed to qualify for RTI project funding with those competences that would make them eligible for funding.

3. Improving the exchange of information, co-ordination and consultation between administrative bodies and funding agencies at the centre and in the provinces as well as between the provinces on the basis of previous activities and discussions concerning research, technology and innovation.