

Recommendation Regarding the Use of the Final Tranche of the Funding Provided by the National Foundation for RTD for 2013

Preamble

In its recommendation dated 8 March 2013 the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development proposed inviting the recipients of National Foundation funding to take part in a special round of applications where they can put forward suggestions for a system change that should lead to “long-term and high-risk” initiatives of the kind envisaged in the National Foundation law.

The Board of Trustees complied with this recommendation in a letter to the beneficiaries of the National Foundation on 20 March 2013 and invited funding recipients to submit applications for suitable projects. Funding recipients were asked to make it clear in their suggestions how they could contribute to bringing about such a system change. A funding framework of up to 3 million euros per initiative can be provided. The original 6 million euros in funding made available by the National Foundation for this round of applications has now been increased to approximately 13 million euros due to an increased endowment from the European Recovery Programme (ERP). This will allow the best initiatives from the beneficiary institutions to receive funding awarded in a competitive procedure.

In accordance with Section 11 Subsection 1 Item 1 of the law on the Austrian National Foundation for RTD, the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development was requested on 23 May 2013 to make a recommendation to this effect.

The applications for supplemental funding submitted by recipients are basically consistent with the Austrian Council’s recommendation regarding key areas for the allocation of funding from the National Foundation dated 14 June 2012 and are therefore in principle eligible for support. In addition, the Austrian Council has analysed the applications in particular with regard to their focus in terms of the framework conditions formulated in the recommendation dated 8 March 2013.

Recommendation

After discussing the applications at length, the Austrian Council recommended that the final tranche of funding be allocated as follows:

Institution	First Tranche 2013 (in EUR mn.)	Second tranche 2013 (in EUR mn.)	Programme or Initiative	Final Tranche 2013 Ranked according to Priority
FFG	24	3.0	Research partnerships	P2
FWF	18.19	2.0	Matching Funds	P1
CDG	4.5	2.5	CD Laboratory for Neurodegeneration	not recommended
LBG	5.62	2.0	International Post-Doc Programme	not recommended
ÖAW	8	0.5 2.5 reallocated	ÖAW Imaging	not recommended
aws	10	3.0	FIRST	P3
Total	70.31	13.0		

The Austrian Council ranked the **FWF**'s Matching Funds initiative first among the projects to receive funding. Matching Funds supports a project of outstanding strategic importance, namely the inclusion of funding from the provinces in the FWF's evaluation guidelines, which are committed to upholding the principles of excellence. By doubling the amount of money provided by the provinces, the initiative also multiplies the impact of the funding from the National Foundation for RTD.

However, the Austrian Council also recommends placing a stronger focus on quality and making a slight modification as regards the target group. The exclusive focus on "young researchers" and "internationalisation" should be dropped.

The programme to promote public-private partnerships for PhD measures and endowed chairs is also recommended. The application tackles a weakness in the tertiary education system identified a long time ago by the Austrian Council and which was addressed most recently inter alia in the Austrian Council Recommendation regarding Barriers to Innovation dated 24 November 2011.

It is also recommended that funding be awarded to the initiative FIRST as requested by the **aws**. This initiative addresses the underdeveloped entrepreneurial spirit in Austria and targets young people. The proposed modules are expected to contribute to bringing about the change in culture that is needed for more dynamic start-up activities.

The applications from the **CDG**, **ÖAW** and **LBG** are in principle eligible for funding, but comply to a far lesser extent with the general conditions set out in the recommendation made on 8 March, namely to make suggestions to bring about a change in the system which will in particular lead to "long-

term and high-risk” initiatives. The Austrian Council therefore recommends that these applications be resubmitted during applications for funding from the National Foundation for RTD in 2014.