



## **Guide for K1 Centres**

**under the Programme  
COMET (Competence Centres for  
Excellent Technologies)**

**Third Call**

**Submission deadline**

4 December 2013

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>CALL OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>CALL DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>LEGAL BASIS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
5.1	What are K1 Centres?.....	8
5.2	What governance structures are required? .....	9
5.3	What criteria must be met by the consortium?.....	10
5.4	What are the responsibilities of the consortium leader? .....	11
5.5	Who is eligible to receive funding and/or to participate? .....	11
5.5.1	Who is eligible for funding? .....	11
5.5.2	Who is eligible to participate?.....	12
5.5.3	Can existing competence centres participate? .....	12
5.6	Can partners from outside Austria participate? .....	12
5.7	How much support is granted? .....	13
5.8	What projects are eligible for funding?.....	13
5.9	How are K1 Centres financed? .....	13
5.9.1	Federal funding.....	13
5.9.2	Provincial funding .....	13
5.9.3	Contribution of scientific partners .....	14
5.9.4	Contribution of company partners .....	15
5.10	What costs are recognised? .....	15
5.11	What points should be considered relating to IPR? .....	16
5.12	What are the evaluation criteria for funding applications? .....	16
5.12.1	Evaluation criteria for K1 Centres .....	16
5.12.2	Key indicators of the Centres .....	19
5.13	What documents are required for submission? .....	20
5.14	Is it necessary to mention other projects? .....	21
5.15	Scientific integrity .....	22
<b>6</b>	<b>SUBMISSION PROCEDURE.....</b>	<b>22</b>
6.1	What is the procedure for submission? .....	22
6.2	Cost Plan [Excel file] .....	23
6.3	What is the procedure for submission in the federal provinces?.....	23
6.4	What measures are taken to protect confidential project data? .....	23
<b>7</b>	<b>PROJECT EVALUATION AND FUNDING DECISION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
7.1	What is the formal check? .....	24
7.2	How is the evaluation procedure organised? .....	24

7.3	Who takes the funding decision? .....	25
<b>8</b>	<b>PROCEDURE AFTER THE FUNDING DECISION .....</b>	<b>25</b>
8.1	How is the funding contract concluded?.....	25
8.2	How should recommendations and conditions be taken into account? .....	25
8.3	How are the instalments of funding paid? .....	26
8.4	What reports and accounts are required? .....	26
8.5	How should changes to the project be communicated? .....	27
8.6	Can the funding period be extended? .....	27
8.7	What happens after the end of the project? .....	27
8.8	When will the mid-term evaluation take place?.....	28
8.9	What does 'phasing-out' mean? .....	28
<b>9</b>	<b>ANNEX I: GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>ANNEX II: ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>31</b>

## PREAMBLE

These Call Guidelines<sup>1</sup> provide you with information about basic requirements, funding conditions and procedures for the submission of K1 Centres and the specifics of the call, the call objectives, budget and submission deadlines.

The Competence Centre Programme COMET (Competence Centres for Excellent Technologies) comprises three programme lines which differ in terms of level of excellence, amount of public funding and duration:

COMET – Competence Centres for Excellent Technologies	
K2 Centres	Public funding: 40 - 55% Federal funding: max. EUR 5 million/year Provincial funding: max. EUR 2.5 million/year Duration: 10 years (5 + 5)
K1 Centres	Public funding: 40 - 55% Federal funding: max. EUR 1.7 million/year Provincial funding: max. EUR 0.85 million/year Duration: 8 years (4 + 4)
K Projects	Public funding: 35 - 45% Federal funding: max. EUR 450,000 /year Provincial funding: max. EUR 225,000 /year Duration: 3 - 4 years

The current call refers exclusively to K1 Centres.

The maximum total duration is 8 years, divided into two funding periods (4 + 4 years). The granting of a second funding period is conditional on a successful mid-term evaluation.

The call addresses both existing competence centres or competence projects as well as new consortia formed between science and industry and is carried out on a competitive basis.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 This document is a translated version of the original German version. In cases of unclear formulation the German version is the decisive document.

## 1 CALL OBJECTIVES

The strategic objectives of COMET are: developing new expertise by initiating and supporting long-term research co-operations between science and industry in top-level research, and establishing and securing the technological leadership of companies. By advancing and bundling existing strengths and by integrating international research expertise Austria is to be strengthened as a research location for the long term.

The objectives in detail are:

- Strengthening the culture of cooperation between science and industry to achieve joint strategic top-level research.
- Aligning the strategic interests of industry and scientific partners, in order to build up joint research expertise, initiate new scientific and technological developments and innovations and prepare commercial exploitation;
- Bundling of players by using thematic synergies, thereby preparing involved players for increasing international competition.
- Establishing several centres, which achieve international visibility through top-level research as well as by integrating worldwide renowned researchers and companies, thus strengthening Austria as a research location.
- Strengthening human resources by attracting outstanding researchers, supporting the know how to industry, and creating attractive career opportunities for research staff to be used in science and industry.
- Gender issues are to be considered in regards to both the research topic and gender balanced participation in research work.

## 2 KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

Key facts	COMET K1 Centres
Short description	Funding is provided for competence centres performing research of academic and economic relevance in research programmes jointly defined by science and industry.
Funding per K1 Centre (EUR)	Federal government: max. EUR 1.7 million/year Provincial government: max. EUR 0.85 million/year These limits must not be exceeded!
Funding rate	40 - 55% (depending on type of research)
Contribution of company/scientific partners	Contribution of company partners: min. 40% Contribution of scientific partners: min. 5%
Duration (years)	Maximum duration: 8 years, divided into 2 funding periods (4+4 years). Applications to be submitted for the 1st funding period.

	The granting of a second funding period is conditional on a successful mid-term evaluation.
<b>Minimum consortium requirements</b>	at least 1 scientific partner and at least 5 company partners
<b>Budget for Third K1 Call</b>	EUR 74.8 million (federal funds)
<b>Start of call</b>	29 July 2013, 09:00 (CET)
<b>Submission deadline</b>	4 December 2013, 12:00 (CET) (for eCall and paper submission)
<b>Hearings</b>	2nd half of June 2014
<b>Jury decision</b>	8/9 July 2014
<b>Project start</b>	1 January 2015 or 1 April 2015 or 1 July 2015
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Funding agency</b>	<b>Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)</b> Structural Programmes office (3rd floor), 1090 Vienna, Sensengasse 1 Opening hours: Mon - Thu 09:00 – 16:00, Fri 9:00 – 13:00
<b>Contact</b>	<p><b>Tel. +43 (0)57755 – extension (ext)</b></p> <p><b>Programme Management:</b>  Otto Starzer, Tel.ext. 2101; E <a href="mailto:otto.starzer@ffg.at">otto.starzer@ffg.at</a>  Ingrid Fleischhacker, Tel.ext. 2102; E <a href="mailto:ingrid.fleischhacker@ffg.at">ingrid.fleischhacker@ffg.at</a>  Budiono Nguyen, Tel.ext. 2104; E <a href="mailto:budiono.nguyen@ffg.at">budiono.nguyen@ffg.at</a>  Julia Bissenberger, Tel.ext. 2103; E <a href="mailto:julia.bissenberger@ffg.at">julia.bissenberger@ffg.at</a> (for eCall)  Rafael Lata, Tel.ext. 2105, E <a href="mailto:rafael.lata@ffg.at">rafael.lata@ffg.at</a> (for eCall)  Reingard Repp, Tel.ext. 2107; E <a href="mailto:reingard.repp@ffg.at">reingard.repp@ffg.at</a> (for eCall)</p> <p><b>Information about costs and financing:</b>  Christa Meyer, Tel.ext. 6080; E <a href="mailto:christa.meyer@ffg.at">christa.meyer@ffg.at</a>  Martina Amon, Tel.ext. 6081; E <a href="mailto:martina.amon@ffg.at">martina.amon@ffg.at</a>  Alexander Glechner, Tel.ext. 6082; E <a href="mailto:alexander.glechner@ffg.at">alexander.glechner@ffg.at</a>  An advisory interview can also be arranged!</p>
<b>Information on the Web</b>	<a href="http://www.ffg.at/comet">http://www.ffg.at/comet</a> <a href="http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren">http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren</a>

### 3 CALL DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENTS	Web
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call Guidelines for COMET K1 Centres, Third Call (present document)</li> <li>• Cost Guidelines for the accounting or project costs in funding applications and reports, as amended (in German and English)</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/com-et-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren">http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/com-et-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ffg.at/Kostenleitfaden">http://www.ffg.at/Kostenleitfaden</a></p>
FORMS FOR FUNDING APPLICATION	Web
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Description K1 Centre</li> <li>• Cost Plan 1<sup>st</sup> FP</li> <li>• Monitoring Tables</li> </ul> <p>Annex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annex 0: 4YE_Recommendations (only for K1 resubmission)</li> <li>• Annex 1: References (no forms available)</li> <li>• Annex 2: Project Sheets</li> <li>• Annex 3: Partner Descriptions</li> <li>• Annex 4: CVs and List of Publications</li> <li>• Annex 5: Letters of Commitment (LOC) Scientific Partners</li> <li>• Annex 6: Letters of Commitment (LOC) Company Partners</li> <li>• Annex 7: Declaration of Federal Province(s) (no forms available)</li> </ul>	<p>Forms available on FFG COMET website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/com-et-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren">http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/com-et-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren</a></p>

## 4 LEGAL BASIS

The following documents are used as a legal basis for this Call:

DOCUMENTS	Web
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTE Guidelines dated 18 October 2007 <sup>2</sup></li> <li>• COMET Programme Document dated 1 July 2013</li> <li>• COMET Evaluation Concept dated 1 July 2013</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.ffg.at/content/comet-downloadcenter">http://www.ffg.at/content/comet-downloadcenter</a></p> <p>see General: points 1.2 and 1.3</p>

Superior provisions may be restricted, but not invalidated, by programme-specific provisions in the Programme Document or these Call Guidelines.

## 5 REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

### 5.1 What are K1 Centres?

K1 Centres are characterised by great research expertise and connection to science as well as by high relevance of implementation for industry.

K1 Centres conduct top-level research focusing on scientific and technological developments and innovations with a view to future relevant markets. They are required to provide outstanding quality in science and a strong focus on excellence in implementation and application.

K1 Centres are based on a collaboration of partners from science and industry. If funding is granted competence centres must be organised as **independent legal entities**, preferably as a limited liability company (GmbH) or similar legal form.

Research activities of competence centres must be pooled in order to achieve the required visibility and attractiveness. More than one location is permissible provided that the hub character of the centre is preserved.

Expertise is built up directly at the Centre, especially through recruitment, qualification measures and the creation of a shared knowledge base in order to ensure the long-term existence of the Centre.

The programme line K1 Centres is open with regard to research fields and topics, but each individual Centre must focus on a clearly defined theme.

---

<sup>2</sup> based on the ‘Community framework for state aid for research and development and innovation’ (2006/C 323/00).



Central to each K1 Centre is a **research programme defined jointly by science and industry** and in which **strategic and “multi firm” projects** play a crucial role. Thus, a K1 Centre does not simply constitute a conglomeration of individual projects but creates substantial added value as a result of cooperation and joint strategic orientation. Bilateral research collaborations (“**single firm projects**”) are possible but limited to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs (see Glossary for a definition of “Project”).

The planned research programme may be divided into **up to 5 Areas**.

An **Area** is defined as a methodically and thematically distinct unit in a K1 Centre’s research programme. It must define a coherent research and development programme for the medium term within the larger context of a K1 Centre (see Glossary for definition of “Area”).

The individual Areas consist of **several individual projects** of an appropriate and reasonable size. Projects may also involve several Areas (cross-cutting projects).

Projects must be described using so-called “Project Sheets” to be annexed to the funding application. At least 60% of the overall costs of the research programme must be incurred on projects and supported by LOCs.

K Centres comprise a funded area, in which the relevant COMET research programme is carried out, and a Non-K area, which does not receive public funding from the COMET programme and is used for projects financed through research contracts, national science funds and international (especially EU) R&D programmes (see Glossary for a definition of “Non-K area”).

## 5.2 What governance structures are required?

Competence centres are unique in the portfolio of funding programmes because of their special governance structures, their long-term orientation and their size.

K1 Centres must have a **balanced ownership structure** without dominance of a single owner. Preference should be given to a balanced mix involving partners from science and industry.

A key factor for the success of the competence centre is an **independent Centre Management** which pursues the Centre’s objectives and interests and is responsible for efficient business operation as well as organisational and scientific management (managing director, scientific director) of the Centre

The Centre Management is responsible for:

- establishing and optimising organisational and decision-making structures
- supporting the build-up of expertise at the Centre by recruiting qualified staff, ensuring staff development and gender mainstreaming, establishing a shared knowledge base etc.
- recruiting experts for key functions such as Key Researchers, Area Managers, Project Managers etc.
- external presentation/PR measures including website in English/German
- benchmarking/self-evaluation of the Centre
- IP policies (regulations between the Centre, company partners and scientific partners)

- ensuring the exchange of knowledge and communication between the Areas in order to use synergies and create a clear added value.

In addition to the bodies prescribed by law, K1 Centres must establish centre- **specific boards** (especially a Strategy Board<sup>3</sup>, an International Advisory Board<sup>4</sup>) which carry out important strategic, advisory and supervisory tasks:

- Monitoring and supervision of the Centre’s strategic goals, especially with regard to excellence, the development of international visibility, IP policies and international networking
- Long-term strategic planning to secure the success and existence of the Centre beyond the funding period (by developing the Non-K area, drawing up a business plan etc.)
- Quality assurance for the research programme
- Safeguarding the Centre’s unique selling proposition
- Monitoring compliance with requirements and recommendations specified by the jury as well as goal achievement and results
- Changes in the research programme and partner structure

The application must show what boards will be established to fulfil these functions. The FFG/funding providers are entitled to participate in relevant boards as observers.

### 5.3 What criteria must be met by the consortium?

Partners may participate in a K1 Centre **either** as a scientific partner **or** as a company partner. Participation as both scientific partner and company partner is expressly excluded.

Applicants can be **consortia** with

- at least **1 scientific partner (SP)** and
- at least **5 independent<sup>5</sup> company partners (CP)**

If one company partner controls another or a group of companies, this group of companies will be regarded as one enterprise. COMET addresses enterprises of all sectors and sizes.

Scientific partners are taken to include research institutions as specified in the FTE Guidelines, such as universities, universities of applied science and non-university research institutions.

Participation in the consortium is evidenced by a “**Letter of Commitment**” (LOC) including the relevant contribution (see LOC template).

The cooperative character of the programme is emphasised by the mandatory conclusion of an **Agreement** specifying the rights and obligations of the partners involved (see Glossary for a definition of “Agreement”).

---

<sup>3</sup> The Strategy Board should provide a balanced mix of scientific and business expertise.

<sup>4</sup> The Advisory Boards should comprise high-calibre, independent international experts.

<sup>5</sup> Definition of independent enterprises according to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 (Official Gazette L 124 of 20 May 2003, pp 36-41); [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme\\_definition/sme\\_user\\_guide\\_de.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_de.pdf).

## **5.4 What are the responsibilities of the consortium leader?**

The consortium leader (the Centre) is responsible for the project management and communications with the funding agency and the partners of the Centre for the entire duration of the programme. This includes checking the reports and financial accounts of all partners based on the data and information provided. The consortium leader confirms to the FFG that

- the costs included in the accounts are relevant to the project, i.e. they can be clearly attributed to the project;
- the project is fully in line with the funding contract in terms of costs and content and that any alterations have been notified in good time;
- the reports and financial accounts are complete and have been prepared in accordance with the funding and programme guidelines.

## **5.5 Who is eligible to receive funding and/or to participate?**

### **5.5.1 Who is eligible for funding?**

The Centre is the sole funding recipient (and contracting party).

Competence centres must be implemented as independent legal entities, preferably as a limited liability company (GmbH) or similar legal form.

Company partners and scientific partners are not considered funding recipients, but may claim eligible costs relevant for the calculation of the total funding amount.

The Centre may purchase services from the scientific partners exceeding the agreed in-kind contribution.

Company partners should in principle charge all services required (personnel and materials) as part of the agreed in-kind contributions. The Centre may purchase services exceeding these contributions in the Non-K area.

### 5.5.2 Who is eligible to participate?

All **legal entities, partnerships** and **sole traders** that are not part of the federal administration are in principle eligible to participate.

Natural persons or legal entities that are part of the federal administration are eligible to participate provided that they do not claim eligible costs and do not provide cash or in-kind contributions to the project as company or scientific partners.

Legal entities	Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporations, such as limited companies, joint stock companies (GmbH; AG);</li> <li>• Universities in accordance with § 6 of the 2002 Universities Act;</li> <li>• Private universities</li> <li>• Associations;</li> <li>• Autonomous bodies;</li> <li>• Legal bodies separate from the State as providers of FH degree programmes and universities of applied sciences (FHs);</li> <li>• European associations (SE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open companies (OG)</li> <li>• Private limited partnerships (KG)</li> <li>• European economic interest groupings (EEIG)</li> </ul>
	<th data-bbox="853 817 1422 880">Sole traders</th>

**Sub-contractors** are not considered as partners in a K Centre. They are not entitled to use the project results and provide defined services for the Centre, which are to be included in the cost category “Third-party costs”.

**Associated partners** may be organisations or persons that do not provide regular services for the Centre and are not Agreement partners. The services are to be included in the cost category “Third-party costs”.

### 5.5.3 Can existing competence centres participate?

A co-operation between existing competence centres is possible. The centres may join as scientific partners. Complementary (sub-)projects may also be carried out within the research programme of the respective centre without joining as a partner. If existing COMET competence centres participate as scientific partners the projects must be carried out in the Centre’s Non-K area (for definition of ‘Non-K area’ see glossary).

## 5.6 Can partners from outside Austria participate?

The international integration of the Centre is a major aim of the Programme in order to strengthen Austria’s position as a research location. The participation of international (research) partners is therefore desired and should be set out accordingly in the application.

The costs of foreign partners – both from within and outside the EU – can be accepted under the following conditions:

The foreign partner accepts the FFG’s obligation and entitlement to monitor the project progress as specified in the funding contract and submits documentation in German or English in accordance with the requirements to be met by Austrian partners.

## 5.7 How much support is granted?

The **maximum** level of **federal funding** is **EUR 1.7 million per year**. The provinces have committed themselves to provide additional funds at a fixed ratio of 2:1 for the COMET Competence Centre Programme. The maximum level of additional **provincial funding** is therefore **EUR 850,000 per year**.

Support is paid in the form of non-repayable grants.

The **overall funding rate** within the range specified for K1 Centres (**40% - 55%** of eligible total costs) results from the research mix in the individual projects and applies for the entire duration of the project. Centres with a stronger focus on basic research will receive a higher funding rate and centres with a stronger focus on applied research will receive a lower funding rate within the specified range. The funding applicants must **propose an overall funding rate** based on the planned research programme. The final funding rate for the entire Centre will be determined in the course of the evaluation process.

This Call invites applications for the first funding period. The approval of a second funding period will depend on a successful mid-term evaluation (see Evaluation Concept). Funding amounts that have not been used cannot be carried over from one funding period to the next.

## 5.8 What projects are eligible for funding?

The COMET Programme provides funding exclusively for the following project types (for a more detailed definition see the FTE Guidelines):

- a) Activities in the field of industrial research
- b) Activities in the field of experimental development
- c) Activities in the field of basic research related to activities listed in a) and b) above
- d) Training measures related to activities listed in a) and b) above
- e) Technological feasibility studies

## 5.9 How are K1 Centres financed?

### 5.9.1 Federal funding

The **Federal Government** has specified a maximum amount of funding per year per K1 Centre. The maximum **amount of federal funding** is **EUR 1,7 million per year**, or EUR 6.8 million over the 4-year duration of the Centre (1<sup>st</sup> funding period).

### 5.9.2 Provincial funding

The provinces provide additional funding to the COMET Competence Centre Programme at a **fixed ratio of 2:1** (2 parts federal funding : 1 part provincial funding) in order to support their regional technology policy goals.

Every funding application **must** therefore be accompanied by a **written declaration of the province of domicile** (i.e. the province in which the K Centre will be based) **and all co-**

**financing provinces.** In justified exceptional cases the declaration of co-financing provinces may be submitted subsequently, at the latest 4 weeks after submission of the application.

The written declaration is usually a letter of reference on behalf of the funding application in which the provincial government confirms its funding commitment in the event that the K1 Centre is approved. The entire amount of provincial funding must in any case be covered by (a) written declaration(s).

If **several provinces participate** in a K Centre the total amount of provincial funding will be divided between the participating provinces.

The province may also confirm in its written declaration that it will **not participate in the K Centre** if it deems the Centre to be incompatible with the interests of the province. In this case the Federal Government reserves the right to provide funding for the K Centre without a contribution being made by the province.

The **level of provincial funding must not be exceeded** in the funded part of the K Centre. The provinces may, however, at any time provide funding for other projects in the Non-K area of the Centre.

The FFG will be responsible for reporting, controlling and auditing the K Centres with regard to both federal and provincial funding. The provinces may accept the results of this audit, but may also perform audits of their own.

The funding applicants are responsible for consulting the relevant contacts in the provinces **in good time** prior to the submission of the funding application.

A list of the relevant contacts in the individual provinces can be found at <http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren>. The list also contains important information about specific submission deadlines etc.

**Example of financing** for a K1 Centre (EUR per year) assuming a 50% funding rate and maximum eligible funding:

Federal funding (max.)	1,700,000	33.33%
Provincial funding (max.)	850,000	16.67%
Contribution of scientific partner	255,000	5%
Contribution of company partner	2,295,000	45%
Overall costs	5,100,000	100%

### 5.9.3 Contribution of scientific partners

The accumulated contributions of the scientific partners must be **at least 5%** of the eligible overall costs and cannot be replaced by contributions from company partners. **Up to 100%** can be in the form of **in-kind contributions**.

In-kind contributions are contributions in the form of materials and/or manpower. Cash contributions are payments in cash.

#### 5.9.4 Contribution of company partners

The contributions of the company partners must be **at least 40%** of the eligible overall costs for K1 Centres

Company partners may provide both **cash contributions** and **in-kind contributions**; a **total of at least 50%** of the contributions must be provided **in cash**. As a matter of principle, company partners are not allowed to provide general co-financing in the form of a basic subsidy. It must be ensured that the companies involved in a K Centre also increase their own research efforts (Additionality, see definition in Annex I).

Costs of the company partners are to be accounted for as in-kind contributions.

#### 5.10 What costs are recognised?

All costs attributable to the project incurred directly, actually and additionally (to the normal operational costs) during the duration of the funded research activity are eligible for funding. Evidence must be provided for actual project costs (e.g. original receipts allocated to the project, payroll accounts, time records).

The earliest possible date for the start of the project is 1 January 2015. The period for which **costs may be recognised** corresponds to the **contractual duration of the Centre**, which commences with the start date and ends with the conclusion of the project. Funding amounts that have not been used cannot be carried over from one funding period to the next.

**Detailed information on eligible and non-eligible costs** is given in the “Guidelines for the Accounting of Project Costs in Funding Applications and Reports” (or briefly “Cost Guidelines”), which may be found at [www.ffg.at/kostenleitfaden](http://www.ffg.at/kostenleitfaden).

The following regulations apply in addition to the provisions of the Cost Guidelines as amended:

- **Personnel costs:** the specified maximum **personnel costs** (hourly rate) may be **exceeded** in justified exceptional cases (e.g. international customary level of remuneration for special research expertise) to ensure that the goal of internationally excellent research is achieved.
- One of the following two methods may be used for reporting **costs of R&D infrastructure use**:
  - applying annual depreciation
  - reporting full acquisition costs in the year of acquisition and correcting the eligible costs by the remaining book value in the last year.
- The following **costs are not eligible for funding** for K Centres: investments in construction, manufacturing equipment and production facilities.
- In contrast to the Cost Guidelines, project costs and services charged to the Centre by the scientific partners are eligible for funding. These costs are to be included in the costs of scientific partners.
- **Bilateral research cooperation** (‘single-firm’ projects) is limited to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs.

## 5.11 What points should be considered relating to IPR?

Before the first instalment of funding is paid, a duly executed Agreement (Cooperation Agreement) must be submitted, which regulates the collaboration and especially the **intellectual property rights (IPR)** relating to the funded project results.

The major areas of regulation have been summarised in the Agreement Guidelines for COMET Centres and the IPR Sideletter (Best Practice – COMET), which are available at <http://www.ffg.at/content/comet-downloadcenter> (Section 5.1).

IPR regulations should be tailored to the individual project types – strategic projects or company projects (single-firm and multi-firm projects) – and their characteristics.

Intellectual property rights relating to the project results belong to the consortium. It must be ensured, however, that the COMET Centre is strengthened in its position as a central knowledge hub and in building up competence at the centre with strategic projects playing a key role in this respect.

In the case of collaborations between commercial companies and research institutions, the research institutions are also entitled to claim intellectual property rights (use, licence fees etc.). The companies must thus pay a consideration at normal market rates to the research establishments for their share of the IPR if they intend to exploit the results commercially. In all cases the provisions of the Community framework for state aid for research and development and innovation (2006/C 323/01) relating to the collaboration between research establishments and commercial companies must be observed.

## 5.12 What are the evaluation criteria for funding applications?

### 5.12.1 Evaluation criteria for K1 Centres

The funding applications will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Research programme defined jointly by science and industry with a mid- to long term perspective
2. Research competence and connection to science
3. Relevance of implementation in industry
4. Quality of cooperation between science and industry, coherence and quality of the consortium
5. Management and implementation
6. Bundling and networking of players to strengthen thematic synergies
7. Human resources development
8. International integration



The table below specifies the relevant criteria and underlying questions in accordance with the Evaluation Form (see Evaluation Concept) and the points awarded for each criterion.

<b>Evaluation criteria for K1 Centres</b>		<b>Points</b>
<b>1. Research programme defined jointly by science and industry with a mid- to long term perspective</b>		
1.1 State of the art and novelty of the research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the goals clearly presented?</li> <li>• Is the work scientifically and technologically relevant and current?</li> <li>• Does the research programme correspond to the international state of the art in the field?</li> <li>• Is enough attention paid to related work performed by other groups in related subject areas?</li> <li>• Is the work directed towards providing new knowledge of central scientific or technological interest?</li> <li>• Are the approaches and methods chosen to address the goals likely to find widespread acceptance in the future?</li> <li>• Are gender aspects adequately considered in the research field?</li> </ul>	0-100
1.2 Relevance of the scientific technological developments and innovation and their market potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the proposed programme initiate relevant scientific and technological developments with a clearly recognisable market potential?</li> <li>• Is the knowledge gained being processed and implemented in a manner that is targeted towards commercial applications?</li> <li>• Do the markets being targeted have a lasting potential for development?</li> <li>• Do the expected results have sufficient chance of being applied or marketed?</li> </ul>	0-100
<b>2. Research competence and connection to science</b>		
2.1 Assessment of the consortium's scientific quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the consortium's scientific standing and its previous research activities sufficient to meet the programme's requirements?</li> <li>• Are the key persons able to point to suitable reference projects (publications, reference projects etc.)?</li> </ul>	0-100
<b>3. Relevance of implementation in industry</b>		
3.1 Assessment of the consortium's quality with regard to the company partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the proposed research programme useful in terms of commercial utilisation? Are the relevant company partners involved?</li> <li>• Are appropriate measures for technology transfer in place?</li> <li>• Does the consortium's quality with regard to the company partners meet the programme's requirements and can the key industry partners point to suitable reference projects?</li> <li>• Is the consortium complete or should the number of</li> </ul>	0-100

	partner firms be increased?	
4. Quality of the cooperation between science and industry, coherence and quality of the consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is all the required expertise present in the consortium? Is the consortium's ability appropriate to the proposed research programme, both in scientific and in industrial terms?</li> <li>• Do the various subprojects complement one another in a sensible manner?</li> <li>• Does the overall research programme show an “added value” and significant synergy effects compared with the sum of the individual projects?</li> </ul>	0-100
5. Management and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the organisational structure and the management of the centre meet the actual needs?</li> <li>• Do the milestones as well as the time schedules and the financial and financing planning correspond to the research plans?</li> </ul>	0-100
6. Pooling and networking of players to strengthen thematic synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a sensible concentration of players, adapted to the topic?</li> <li>• Is enough attention paid to existing research activities in the national and international context, with the goal of attaining “complementarity of activities”?</li> </ul>	0-100
7. Human resources development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the centre's proposed measures to recruit staff and the plans to allow staff to develop consistent with the research programme?</li> <li>• Are there plans to offer training to intensify the scientific and technical qualifications and to provide them with additional qualifications? Do they fit in reasonably with the educational centres in the surroundings?</li> <li>• Will the proposed programme create future opportunities for its scientific and technical personnel, e.g. by integrating them into the university or industry?</li> <li>• How would you assess the planned measures for gender mainstreaming? Has a preferably balanced participation of male and female researchers been foreseen?</li> </ul>	0-100
8. International integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you assess the current international contacts? The planned ones?</li> <li>• Is the international alignment ambitious and appropriate to the topic?</li> </ul>	0-100

The overall evaluation is complemented by an evaluation of the individual research areas (Areas) in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Quality of the research programme of the Area
2. Research expertise
3. Quality of implementation
4. Organisation and position of the Area within the Centre

Good research design takes into account gender aspects if, e.g., persons or groups of persons are the research object and/or will use, apply or be affected by the research results. The assessment will therefore also consider the information provided in the application.

### 5.12.2 Key indicators of the Centres

The evaluation will also involve an assessment of key indicators based on individual target values. The review will determine to what extent these target values are reasonable and realistic in the context of the given research field and environment. The target values defined by the Centre upon submission of the application (or subsequently adjusted, if required) will be included in the reporting process and verified in the mid-term and ex-post evaluations (comparison between target and actual values).

The quantitative target values must be entered in the monitoring table of the application. Both the quantitative and the qualitative indicators must be described in the application. In addition to the general target values that apply to all Centres, each Centre must additionally define 3 specific target values (see Criterion 5 in the table below).

Crit.	List of indicators (target values to be specified by Centres)
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications in relevant journals (number of contributions in peer-reviewed journals, co-publications of science and industry, contributions for peer-reviewed conferences), number of citations*</li> <li>• Share of strategic research projects in the entire research programme</li> <li>• Acquisition of additional external funding from scientific funds</li> </ul>
1.2 and 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of IPRs (patents, utility models, trademarks, designs; copyrights, national/international)</li> <li>• Number of licences</li> <li>• Number of spin-offs</li> <li>• Implementation of marketable products/new processes/procedures or services (e.g. number of prototypes, year of planned market introduction, increase in turnover, ROI)</li> <li>• Development projects within companies as a result of research carried out in the Centre</li> </ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of scientific publications of key personnel using the h-index/TR index etc.</li> <li>• Number of scientific theses (number of habilitations, dissertations, diploma/master theses)</li> </ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional outside funding obtained from contract research</li> <li>• Development of a joint research strategy</li> <li>• Staff mobility between science and industry</li> <li>• Co-publications science – industry</li> </ul>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicators for achieving the goals/milestones of the Centre:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SWOT analysis*</li> <li>- At least 3 additional</li> <li>- specific target values (to be defined by the Centre)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share of administrative staff (FTE) in total staff (FTE)</li> </ul>
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmarking with comparable organisations</li> <li>• Number of planned additional scientific and company partners in the funding period</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of adequate staff numbers (number of R&amp;D staff, number of visiting researchers, number of researchers in R&amp;D staff)</li> <li>• Qualification measures: staff development and development of team skills taking into account gender mainstreaming and structural requirements (number of lecture courses given by Centre staff, (endowed) professorships, number of research stays etc.)</li> <li>• Establishment of knowledge management and knowledge transfer within the teams</li> </ul>
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and contributions of international partners relevant to the Centre (scientific and industrial partners)</li> <li>• Additional outside funding obtained from international sources (amount of additional research funding from international R&amp;D funding programmes such as EU Framework Programmes), participation as partner/coordinator</li> <li>• Activities in committees and events</li> </ul>

\*) for mid-term evaluation

### 5.13 What documents are required for submission?

The templates are available from the FFG website and must be used:  
<http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren>

#### **Project Description K1 Centre**

Project description – thematic funding application (upload as pdf file)

#### **Cost Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Funding Period**

Cost and financial tables for the 1<sup>st</sup> funding period of the Centre (upload as Excel file)

#### **Monitoring Tables**

Monitoring tables including quantitative target values (upload as Excel file)

#### **Annex 0: 4YE Recommendations** (for resubmitting K1 Centres only)

Describes compliance/implementation of requirements/recommendations from the mid-term evaluation/Four Year Evaluation (4YE).

#### **Annex 1: References** (no template)

Gives the literature used in drawing up the application

#### **Annex 2: Project Sheets**

The project description should be no more than 3 pages in length. Please make sure that the information is in agreement with the 'List of Projects' sheet in the Monitoring Tables.

#### **Annex 3: Partner Descriptions**

The partner descriptions should be kept short and to the point. Company partners should additionally address the incentive effect of the funded project (Additionality).

#### **Annex 4: CVs and List of Publications**

Please enclose CVs (no more than 2 pages) for all persons listed in the 'Key Persons' sheet in the Monitoring Tables in alphabetical order, including reference projects and publication lists (no more than 5 pages). The publications of the past 5 years should be listed for each person, marking the publications of most relevance to the project. Please upload all CVs and publications in a single file via eCall.

#### **Annex 5\*: Letters of Commitment (LOC) Scientific Partners and**

#### **Annex 6\*: Letters of Commitment (LOC) Company Partners**

Duly executed letters of commitment of all scientific and company partners including their relevant contributions (cash and in-kind). Please enclose the LOCs of the scientific and company partners in alphabetical order.

If several institutes or research institutions of one university are involved, it is sufficient to issue one LOC for the university, listing the institutes and research institutions involved. The LOC must be signed by a duly authorised person from the university's rector's office and the responsible project manager(s)/head(s) of institute. Please upload the LOCs of the scientific and company partners in two separate files via eCall.

#### **Annex 7\*: Declaration of Federal Province(s)**

Written declaration(s) of the participating provinces (province of domicile must provide a declaration upon submission of the application).

\*) Annexes 5 - 7 need only be uploaded electronically and need NOT be enclosed with the paper application. The LOCs are to be scanned for the electronic application, the originals remain at the Centre.

It is not permitted to enclose additional Annexes.

### **5.14 Is it necessary to mention other projects?**

The funding application must list those projects within the consortium that have received or are receiving public funding from Austria and/or the EU. All current projects must be listed, as well as all projects that have been concluded within the past five years and all projects for which funding has been requested if their content is related to the project submitted. This requirement serves to ensure that the **current project is clearly separated** from past or ongoing funded projects or projects for which funding has been requested.

The complete and comprehensive presentation of all support received or requested in the thematic field does not reduce the chance of receiving funding in the framework of the current call. It rather serves to prevent the risk that the same project might be funded twice and demonstrates the consortium's expertise in the area.

When submitting a COMET follow-up application, the differences to the previous project funded under the COMET scheme (K Centre or K Project) must be clearly set out.

## 5.15 Scientific integrity

Funding may only be granted to applicants who show high scientific quality both in the application and during the course of the project. To ensure that the scientific quality is appropriate, the FFG is a member of the Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity – OeAWI (<http://www.oeawi.at/statuten.html>).

By its membership, the FFG supports the observance of the rules of good scientific practice. During the formal checks on applications and in the event of suspected scientific misconduct the FFG may forward details and any necessary supporting documents to the OeAWI's Commission for Scientific Integrity. The OeAWI will decide whether to initiate an independent investigation and, if necessary, will itself undertake the investigation.

If the investigation reveals details that prove that the scientific quality of the project is insufficient or that scientific misconduct (e.g. plagiarism) has taken place, the FFG may decide to request a revision of the application for funding or may reject it for formal reasons. In the case of projects that have been granted support, such cases may lead to the reduction, retention or reclaiming of financial support that has already been granted and/or transferred.

## 6 SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

### 6.1 What is the procedure for submission?

The funding application must be submitted in both **electronic** (eCall) and **paper form**.

The application forms (see Chapter 3) are available for download from the FFG website at <http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren> and must not be modified.

The paper application must be submitted to FFG in **8 copies** prior to the expiry of the application deadline (**1 original loose leaf version** together with the duly signed documents 'Project Description K1-Centre' and 'Cost Plan 1FP' and **7 copies**).

For **electronic submission** the documents must be uploaded **via eCall** according to the specified folder structure. Annexes 5 to 7 (LOC) need only be submitted electronically.

The **complete** electronic application must be submitted via **eCall in good time** prior to the submission deadline at <https://ecall.ffg.at>.

The funding application may only be submitted once **all invited partners have completed and submitted** their partner applications via eCall.

An **application** is considered to have been submitted if it has been **completed in eCall** by clicking the '**Submit**' button. On successful submission an automatic **confirmation of receipt** will be sent **by e-mail**. It is **not possible to resubmit** the application or parts of it or to revise the application once it has been submitted.

A **detailed tutorial** on eCall is available at <https://ecall.ffg.at/Cockpit/Help.aspx>.

The application is to be submitted by the Centre. If the Centre has not yet been established at the time of submission, the application is to be submitted by the partner appointed as consortium leader by the consortium.

## **6.2 Cost Plan [Excel file]**

Templates for the Cost Plan, which forms an integral part of the funding application, are available for download from the FFG website at <http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren>.

The document must be uploaded as an Excel file in the eCall 'Uploads' section.

The data on costs and financing must be in agreement with the information provided in the thematic part of the funding application (Project Description).

The phasing-in period of the Centre must be taken into account in the cost development (staff recruitment etc.).

## **6.3 What is the procedure for submission in the federal provinces?**

The funding applicants must send the application to the relevant authority of the province(s) involved in compliance with the specified conditions and deadlines (see also Chapter 5.9.2).

A list of the relevant contacts in the individual provinces can be found at <http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-3-ausschreibung-k1-zentren>. The list also contains important information about specific submission deadlines etc.

## **6.4 What measures are taken to protect confidential project data?**

All applications that are submitted will only be made available to the persons involved in the administration of the call. All these persons are sworn to treat the information in strict confidence. In particular, the national and international experts involved in the review and evaluation process must sign a declaration of confidentiality before they start their work.

## 7 PROJECT EVALUATION AND FUNDING DECISION

### 7.1 What is the formal check?

During the formal check, the application is checked for **formal correctness and completeness**. The information contained in the application is not examined during the formal check; this takes place during the evaluation process. Should it transpire after the formal check that incorrect information has been given, the application may also be removed from consideration at a subsequent point in the procedure.

The **result** of the formal check will be communicated to the consortium leader within **one week by means of an eCall message**.

**If the formal criteria are not met and the deficiency(ies) cannot be rectified, the application will fail the formal check and will not enter the subsequent steps of the procedure.**

A relevant '**Checklist- formal criteria**' can be found in the application form.

### 7.2 How is the evaluation procedure organised?

The procedure is defined in the COMET Programme Document (Chapter V) and the Evaluation Concept. K1 Centres are evaluated in **a one-stage process involving a hearing**.

The review is carried out in accordance with the criteria listed in Chapter 5.12 by **national FFG experts** and **external international experts** (peers) based on the documents submitted. The external review is carried out by the Christian Doppler Research Association (CDG) together with the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

It is possible to **exclude up to 5 international reviewers** for justified reasons, especially in the event of disputes on theoretical principles or scientific competition. eCall contains an entry field for this purpose.

After the initial review based on the defined evaluation criteria each Centre will be invited to a **hearing**, which will take place in Vienna. The primary aim of the hearing is to request additional information from the applicants. The hearings will be held in English and are scheduled to last 3.5 hours per consortium: 0.5 h presentation, 1.5 h discussion and 1.5 h closed session (jury only). Any questions arising from the review will be communicated to the consortium leader for clarification during the presentation or discussion at least 1 week prior to the hearing. A maximum of 5 representatives per Centre/consortium may participate in the hearing.

An **evaluation panel (jury)** will subsequently make a funding recommendation based on the reviews and the results of the hearing.



### 7.3 Who takes the funding decision?

The funding decision is the responsibility of the Federal Minister(s) concerned and will be made on the basis of the funding recommendation from the evaluation panel, including any obligations and/or conditions.

- Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT)
- Federal Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ)

## 8 PROCEDURE AFTER THE FUNDING DECISION

### 8.1 How is the funding contract concluded?

If funding is granted, FFG sends the consortium leader (Centre) a **draft contract** which must be accepted within a **specified period of time**. If the consortium leader accepts the draft contract including any requirements contained therein within the specified period of time, a **Funding Contract** will be drawn up. The Centre will be the exclusive funding recipient.

Before the 1<sup>st</sup> instalment can be paid, the consortium must prepare an **Agreement** (see Glossary for definition), which defines the basic principles of cooperation between the partners involved in the Centre (see FFG Agreement Guidelines for information about the structure of the Agreement). The Agreement must be signed by at least 50% of the partners covering at least 50% of the partner contributions.

The Funding Contract specifies, among other points, the project title, the level of eligible costs, the amount of funding approved, the period of funding, the payment of funding, the reporting obligations and any additional conditions and requirements.

The Funding Contract must be duly executed and the original returned to the FFG.

The Centre shall have no legal right to receive support until the Funding Contract has been concluded.

Separate funding contracts must be concluded with the co-financing provinces in accordance with the applicable terms and conditions.

The **Centre Plan** forms an integral part of the Funding Contract and must be drawn up prior to the conclusion of the Funding Contract. Compliance with the obligations as well as the recommendations formulated by the jury and any resulting changes to the application need to be addressed. The Centre Plan consists of a thematic part and a table detailing the costs and financing of the Centre.

### 8.2 How should recommendations and conditions be taken into account?

Recommendations and/or mandatory requirements may be formulated during the evaluation of the application.

Requirements may take the form of conditions for the conclusion of the Funding Contract or the payment of the planned instalment(s) or conditions to be met within the funding period.

The implementation of the recommendations and requirements must be documented in the Centre Plan and interim reports.

### 8.3 How are the instalments of funding paid?

The amount payable for the relevant half-year period will be paid in advance.

- The instalment for the first half-year period will be paid as soon as both parties have signed the Funding Contract and the recipient has met all relevant conditions and requirements. The maximum amount for the first instalment (= 1<sup>st</sup> half-year instalment) for K1 Centres is EUR 850,000 (federal funding).
- The instalments for the following half-year period will be paid once the (semi-annual) reports and the (annual) budget for the following year have been reviewed and approved. The payment amount will in principle be calculated from the costs already incurred and the costs budgeted for the following year applying the funding rate specified in the Funding Contract.
- The semi-annual reports including budget adjustments provide the basis for the payment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment in that funding year. The funding agency reserves the right to reduce the funding amount in justified cases (e.g. actual costs lower than planned costs).
- Final instalment: 10% of the maximum funding approved will be retained and will only be transferred upon approval of the final accounts. The payment amount will be based on the approved eligible costs and the funding rate agreed in the Funding Contract. At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> funding period, the scientific partners and the company partners must have provided their contributions stipulated in the Funding Contract. If the contributions have not been made in full federal funding will be reduced accordingly.

The **payment of funding** during the term of the Centre does **not imply approval** of the costs.

The **costs will only be approved** once the Centre is granted **discharge** by the FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division following the final audit performed after expiry of the 1<sup>st</sup> funding period.

The FFG will carry out (annual) **on-site audits** during the term of the funded K Centre and may also check the final accounts submitted by the funding recipient and the partners for accuracy and the correct and legal use of the funds. The audits will be duly announced by the FFG.

### 8.4 What reports and accounts are required?

A **technical report**, as well as a **description of the costs** (cost table) and **monitoring data** (monitoring table) must be submitted within one month of the reporting deadlines specified in the Funding Contract **using the reporting function of the eCall system**. The reports must be prepared using the templates provided for this purpose (see COMET download center on the FFG website).

The **semi-annual reports** document the actual values achieved until the middle of the funding year and illustrate the development and deviations from the original plan for the entire funding year.

The **annual reports** document the preceding funding year and include the budget for the following year. The cost tables additionally include the accounts provided by all consortium partners.

A scientific **final report** and **final accounts** must be submitted within 2 months of the end of the project **using the reporting function of the eCall system**

**Detailed information** on eligible and non-eligible costs are set out in the “Guidelines for the Accounting of Project Costs in Funding Applications and Reports” available at <http://www.ffg.at/Kostenleitfaden>.

In addition, the funding recipient undertakes to work together with the FFG and the responsible ministry departments to support PR work as and when required. This shall include in particular making available non-confidential project information (e.g. Fact Sheet, Success Stories) and images for electronic dissemination portals and other media purposes.

## 8.5 How should changes to the project be communicated?

Any deviations from the planned or approved activities must be explained in the reports (e.g. changes to the work schedule).

Substantial changes to the research programme and expected major deviations, especially from the values stipulated in the Centre Plan, must be reported to the FFG immediately they become known.

The FFG should generally be notified as soon as possible of any changes that occur in the Centre, and in any case of any major changes in the costs and/or contributions, so that further procedure can be discussed and agreed.

## 8.6 Can the funding period be extended?

The funding period cannot be extended, and funding amounts that have not been used cannot be carried over to the next funding period.

## 8.7 What happens after the end of the project?

After the **final report has been reviewed by external experts and the final accounts have been examined**, the FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division will undertake an audit to establish whether the funding has been used for the intended purpose. During the course of the **audit the final amount of eligible costs will be determined**.

The level of support paid may be reduced for scientific reasons, as well as on formal and legal grounds.

## **8.8 When will the mid-term evaluation take place?**

A mid-term evaluation is carried out in the fourth year after the start of the project as specified in the COMET Evaluation Concept for K1 Centres. This evaluation includes an assessment of the achievements so far (ex-post evaluation) and an ex-ante evaluation of the Centre's plans for the second funding period.

The mid-term evaluation will result in a stop/go decision on whether to continue the K1 Centre in the second funding period.

Each Centre will be assessed based on its own achievements and will not compete with the other K1 Centres.

## **8.9 What does 'phasing-out' mean?**

Existing K1 Centres that have reached the end of their term and have not been successful in reapplying in COMET or which do not pursue continued COMET funding, may apply for a phasing out period of up to 1 year. The phasing-out period is designed to conclude research activities already started as well as to provide the researchers working at the Centre with optimal conditions for their future professional careers.

The funding volume in the phasing-out period is capped at 50% of average annual funding in the preceding funding period. Planned activities and a budget for the phasing-out period must be submitted to the FFG. The jury will decide whether a centre qualifies for a phasing-out period based on minimum quality criteria.

## 9 Annex I: Glossary

### **Additionality**

Under EU Competition Law, research and development projects are only eligible for funding if they are performed in addition to the ongoing business of companies and result in an increase of a company's research performance and consequently, a company's research expenditures.

The following criteria may be used in addition to other quantitative and/or qualitative factors as evidence of the incentive effect:

- increase in project size: increase in the total project costs (without decreased spending by the aid beneficiary by comparison with a situation without aid); increase in the number of people assigned to R&D&I activities;
- increase in scope: increase in the number of the expected deliverables from the project; more ambitious project goals, e.g. higher probability of a scientific or technological breakthrough or a higher risk of failure (notably linked to the higher risk involved in the research project, to the long-term nature of the project and uncertainty about its results);
- increase in speed: shorter time before completion of the project as compared to the same project being carried out without aid;
- increase in total amount spent on R&D&I: increase in total R&D&I spending by the aid beneficiary; changes in the committed budget for the project (without a corresponding decrease in the budget of other projects); increase in R&D&I spending by the aid beneficiary as a proportion of total turnover.

### **Agreement**

The Agreement is concluded by the consortium partners involved (Centre, company partners, scientific partners) and defines the basic principles of cooperation within the Centre. The issues to be regulated include, but are not limited to, the rights and obligations of the contracting parties, IPRs, liability issues, organisational and decision-making procedures, admission and withdrawal of partners, aims and reporting obligations (see FFG Agreement Guidelines and IPR Sideletter for information about the structure of the Agreement).

### **Area**

A working area (Area) is defined as a methodically and thematically distinct unit in the research programme of a K Centre. In line with the general purpose of the centre, an Area must be structured so as to achieve scientific results and commercial exploitation in the medium term.

On the one hand, an Area must be planned in sufficient detail to ensure that the main thrust of activities, the methodology used, and the main objectives can be evaluated. The area must be clearly positioned within the overall concept (what does the Area contribute to the key objectives of the centre, how does it interact with other Areas). On the other hand, the necessary degree of flexibility for a medium-term research project must be maintained so

that it is possible to adapt the Area to current developments during the course of implementation.

Thus, an Area must define a coherent research and development programme for the medium term within the larger context of a K Centre and may not just constitute the total of a number of individual, short-term projects. Each Area is supervised by a Key Researcher.

### **Cash contributions**

Cash contributions are payments in cash.

### **Research programme**

A research programme is defined jointly by science and industry and outlines the area of activity for the entire K Centre. A research programme must relate to a clearly defined subject matter and is divided into working areas (see definition 'Areas') and projects (see definition 'Projects').

### **In-kind contributions**

In-kind contributions are provided in the form of non-cash contributions and/or manpower.

### **Key Researcher**

Key Researchers are renowned scientists who owing to their expertise and standing will exercise a significant influence on the further development of the relevant research topic or programme. As a rule, such Key Researchers will be recruited from among the scientific partners (e.g. university professors).

### **Multi-firm criterion**

The multi-firm criterion stipulates that at least 5 independent company partners must be involved in a K Centre.

### **Non-K area**

The Non-K area is outside the Centre's research programme funded under the COMET initiative. It includes externally funded projects for companies, national science funds and international R&D programmes (especially EU programmes).

### **Public funding**

Public funding comprises federal and provincial funding.

### **Projects**

Projects are defined as research units to be carried out within the framework of a working area (Area), or as cross-cutting projects and must be described in Project Sheets (see template) in the application; projects are divided into work packages. The size of the project must be appropriate to the planned activities. There are 3 types of projects:

- **Strategic research projects**

Strategic research projects are characterised by a high degree of novelty and excellence and are based on a Centre's long-term objectives beyond the short-term requirements of company partners. They are established in line with the core expertise of the Centre

and are suitable for expanding this expertise by creating unique selling propositions in an international context. Such research is generally far from development and implementation.

- **Multi-firm projects**

Multilateral research collaborations (multi-firm projects) are projects within the scope of a Centre's research programme involving more than one company partner.

- **Single-firm projects**

Bilateral research collaborations (single-firm projects) are projects within the scope of a Centre's research programme involving only one company partner. The share of such projects must be limited to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs

- **Province of domicile**

The province of domicile is the province in which the K Centre is based.

## 10 Annex II: Abbreviations

### Abbreviations

LOC	Letter of Commitment
FFG	Austrian Research Promotion Agency
FP	Funding period
FTE Guidelines	Federal guidelines for the promotion of the commercial and technological development of research and technology (GZ BMVIT-609.986/0011-III/I2/2007 and GZ BMWA-97.005/0002-C1/9/2007)
Programme Document	Programme document of the COMET Programme for Competence Centres of 1 July 2013
CP	Company partners
SP	Scientific partners