

FFG

Promoting Innovation.



Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Transport, Innovation
and Technology

Submission period: 18th of September 2018 to 5th of December 2018, 16:00

1st Call – BRIDGE Young Scientists



BRIDGE YOUNG SCIENTISTS

GUIDELINES

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FOREWORD

The BRIDGE Programme, launched in 2004 set out to provide funding for projects at the interface between scientific basic research at institutes and experimental development in businesses. The BRIDGE Programme has since developed into a stable force in the funding of projects at the interface between science and business.

The programme and its impact were evaluated in 2017. This evaluation showed, among other things, that the programme has a very positive effect in that it promotes the transfer of young scientists from science to industry.

In order to support this further, a special call is launched in 2018 as part of BRIDGE 1, which explicitly calls for a **stronger involvement of young scientists**.

1 CALL OBJECTIVES

BRIDGE Young Scientists is a special funding line of the BRIDGE 1 programme. In order to receive funding, projects must meet the formal criteria of BRIDGE 1 projects and additionally involve at least two young scientists. Young scientists include diploma students, doctoral students or junior postdocs who have graduated not more than one year prior to submission of the application.

In addition to regular project funding, the FFG also organises **workshops with networking opportunities** and qualification modules (e.g. current innovation methods, R&D project management etc.), which are mandatory for the young scientists. These measures are designed to create added value both for the researchers and the companies involved.

The total cost of the project must not exceed € 300,000.

The projects must be designed as BRIDGE 1 projects:

BRIDGE 1 focuses specifically on the funding of cooperation projects of the category “Industrial Research” which are aimed at transferring research results and ideas from Austrian science to Austrian companies. BRIDGE 1 is designed to bridge the gap between research and industrial exploitation.

Funded projects are to build on the basic research of scientific institutes and taken closer to potential commercialisation through collaborative research with businesses. The project must not be used to carry out pure contract research for the company involved.

The projects carried out as part of concrete research collaborations are to enable an effective exchange of research results and expertise. Another aim is to foster communication between science and industry, opening up new perspectives for all partners involved.

The funding of collaborative projects is designed to facilitate mutual access to each other’s expertise and help companies overcome their apprehension about academic research.

The programme will thus provide a foundation of expertise on which innovative Austrian companies can build their R&D strategies in line with the Austrian research, technology and innovation policy goals.

The overall aim is to **increase the innovative capacity** of the Austrian economy.

BRIDGE Young Scientists has the following objectives:

1. To further develop and transfer basic research findings to industrial application and to initiate and extend research collaborations between science and industry.
2. To intensify research performance in the field of high-level scientific research and to involve companies at early stages of industrial development.
3. To use the existing human resource potential for industrial research by facilitating the transfer of experts from academic to industrial research (intense involvement of diploma students, doctoral students and junior postdocs in projects).

2 CALL TOPICS

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The call is open for all research topics and scientific disciplines.

3 KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

BRIDGE Young Scientists projects are assigned to the **FFG funding instrument “Science Transfer”**.

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE	BRIDGE 1 – SCIENCE TRANSFER Instrument C6-B
Brief description	Funding will be granted for basic research projects conducted in cooperation between science and commercialisation partners. The majority of project work (min. 80 %) is carried out by the scientific partners. The project must originate in scientific research. The companies involved are obliged to provide match funding to meet the remaining costs of the scientific partners, if required. In addition to the Bridge 1 criteria, this call requires a stronger involvement of young scientists (at least 2 persons).
Topics	Open call, no specified topics
Funding amount	total project cost max. € 300,000
Funding rate	Up to 80%
Duration (months)	Max. 36 months
Cooperation required	Yes
Total budget	Min. € 3 million
Submission deadline	5 December 2018, 16:00
Language	German (English is also possible)
Contacts	Brigitte Robien, T: +43 (0)5 7755 - 1308 brigitte.robien@ffg.at Theresia Bischur, T: +43 (0)5 7755 - 1210 theresia.bischur@ffg.at Gabriele Küssler, T: +43 (0)5 7755 - 1504 gabriele.kuessler@ffg.at
Information on the Web	BRIDGE Programme

Table 1

4 CALL DOCUMENTS

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The full set of application documents must be submitted online **via eCall, [the FFG's electronic customer service centre](#), by the submission deadline**. No modifications, uploads etc. will be permitted in eCall after the submission deadline!

CALL DOCUMENTS	Guidelines, forms etc.
Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Guideline BRIDGE Young Scientists – 1st Call (this document) – Project Description template (see eCall “file attachments”)
General cost regulations	– Cost Guidelines applicable to the call, version 2.1 (cost accounting for FFG projects)
Information on the web	BRIDGE Programme

Table 2

4.1 What documents are required for submission?

The following documents must be **uploaded by the consortium leader** (templates available in eCall) as **part of the electronic application**:

DOCUMENTS FOR THE FUNDING APPLICATION	Description of relevant documents
Project description (scientific proposal by consortium leader)	– Complete template in eCall and upload in PDF format
Cost plan per partner	– Cost plan is drawn up based on online cost plans of individual partners
Annual data: obligatory submission of financial documents of all industrial partners (including international partners) via eCall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial statements (balance sheet, profit and loss account) of the 2 previous financial years – Preliminary financial statements or current account balance of the previous financial year – For new or restructured companies: business plan

Table 3

4.2 Additionality

The FFG must examine the incentive effect of the funding according to the relevant guideline ([FFG-Richtlinie OFFENSIV](#), effective as from 1 January 2015), which provides the legal basis for the BRIDGE 1 funding line.

The incentive effect of funding is taken to mean the impact of the funding granted, i.e. what effects will the funding have that would not be achieved without this support?

In the course of project submission, the funding applicants are therefore requested to explain whether or in what form the project would be carried out without financial support.

5 REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

BRIDGE Young Scientists projects are, by definition, subject to the FFG funding instrument “Science Transfer”.

5.1 What are Young Scientists?

Young scientists shall be taken to include diploma students, doctoral students or junior postdocs who have graduated not more than 1 year prior to submission of the application. The young scientists must be included in the cost plan of the scientific project partners upon project submission. The (expected) qualification must also be presented in the application.

If the candidate has not been specified yet, the name and topic of the candidate must be notified prior to payment of the 1st funding instalment (contractual requirement).

5.2 What are BRIDGE projects?

Open topic

The BRIDGE Programme is an open-topic programme, i.e. the projects submitted are not subject to any thematic restrictions.

Basic research

BRIDGE projects are defined as predominantly scientific research projects, which have their **origins and basis** in scientific research carried out at

university institutes or research institutions. This means that the project must be initiated by the scientific partners.

The **project** must predominantly involve high-level scientific research. However, it must also have a realistic commercialisation potential so that one or more companies are willing to **co-finance** or participate in the project as commercialisation partners, if required.

Cooperative

The projects must be designed as collaborative projects carried out by at least one scientific research institution and at least one company acting as commercialisation partner. The majority of the work must be carried out by the scientific partner.

- In order to ensure the scientific quality and basic research character of the project, **at least 80%** of the overall project costs must be incurred by the scientific partner.
- **A maximum of 20%** of the overall cost may be met by the participating companies in the form of in-kind contributions.
- There is no minimum limit for the participation of commercialisation partners. Please note that the project must be designed as a collaborative project where each partner must provide a meaningful contribution to the project. **The remaining costs of the scientific researchers must be met by the company/companies in the form of a cash contribution:**

If the project exclusively involves small enterprises to the extent of 20% (contributions in kind) no cash contribution is required! If the contributions by small enterprises are below 20%, or if the project does not exclusively involve small enterprises as commercialisation partners, then a cash contribution is required to meet the remaining costs of the scientific partners.

The following should be observed concerning the **number** of consortium partners:

- Between two and four consortium partners should be involved in BRIDGE projects in order to ensure optimum knowledge transfer. Larger consortia have access to other funding formats (e.g. Collective Research).
- If you wish to involve more than 4 partners in your project you must provide an explanation.

Duration

The duration of science transfer projects is limited to a **maximum of 36 months**.

Project volume

The maximum volume for BRIDGE Young Scientists projects is € 300,000.

5.3 Does my project fit into the programme?

The decision as to whether a project should be submitted for funding depends primarily on how far the **research work has progressed towards commercial exploitation**.

Science transfer projects are basic research projects and therefore **must not lead to direct commercial exploitation**. Upon successful completion, however, the project should result in development work which may subsequently lead to commercially exploitable results.

The following rule of thumb can be used as **guidance**:

There should be a **period of around 3 to 5 years** between the project and the production of commercially exploitable results.

For a definition of “Industrial Research” see [Annex I](#).

Clinical studies are not the focus of the BRIDGE Programme and are thus not eligible for funding. Clinical studies within the meaning of the Bridge call by definition include §2a (1) “clinical trials” and (3) “non-interventional studies” of the Austrian Medicinal Products Act (AMG) and §3 (2) “clinical trials” and (2a) “performance evaluation studies” of the Austrian Medical Devices Act (MPG).

5.4 What requirements must be met by the consortium?

The consortium must consist of **at least one scientific partner** and **at least one commercialisation partner**. The number of partners is not limited, but the following should be observed:

Between 2 and 4 consortium partners should be involved in BRIDGE projects in order to ensure optimum knowledge transfer. Larger consortia have access to other funding formats (e.g. Collective Research).

If you wish to involve more than 4 partners in your project you must provide an explanation.

The **consortium** appoints one partner as consortium leader. This partner submits the application for funding and acts as contact point for the FFG.

The collaborative character of the project will be underlined by the mandatory conclusion of a **Consortium Agreement** specifying the partners' rights and obligations.

The scientific partners must have the right to publish the results of their work conducted in the course of the project.

Newly established cooperations will stand a better chance in the evaluation process.

The consortium must meet these requirements throughout the project. If the consortium structure changes in the course of the project and thus no longer meets the requirements, the funding may be reclaimed.

5.5 Who should act as consortium leader?

The consortium lead can only be taken by a partner based in Austria.

In principle, each of the consortium partners involved may take the consortium lead and submit the application. Practice has shown, however, that the application should preferably be submitted by the scientific partner since that partner incurs the majority of the costs.

5.6 What are the responsibilities of the consortium leader?

The consortium leader is responsible for the entire project management and receives the funding.

The consortium leader is responsible for communications with the funding agency and the project partners for the entire duration of the project. This includes checking and submitting the reports and financial accounts of all partners in the consortium on the basis of the data and information provided by the consortium partners. 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,
- the funding received from the FFG and the match funding provided by the companies will be allocated in relation to the approved costs and will immediately be forwarded to the other scientific partners.

5.7 What are the responsibilities of the commercialisation partners?

The companies involved account for their share in the costs (in-kind contributions) **and** undertake to **provide match funding to cover the remaining costs** of the scientific partners in the form of **cash contributions**. Companies will also be subject to auditing and evaluation by the FFG.

5.8 Who is eligible to receive funding and/or to participate?

5.8.1 Who is eligible to receive funding and/or to participate?

Any legal entities, partnerships or sole proprietorships that are not part of the federal administration are eligible to receive funding and/or to participate.

5.8.2 Who can act as a scientific partner?

Scientific partners participating in BRIDGE projects must be research organisations in accordance with the Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01, 1.3.ee).

The scientific project partner must provide evidence that it is qualified to carry out **high-level scientific research** in the area relevant for the project. These scientific project partners can be universities, universities of applied sciences or non-university research institutions.

Scientific cooperation partners must provide evidence of their **qualification** in the field of scientific research and in relation to the project specific basic

research in the application. Applicants are required to list relevant previous projects funded by the FWF, FFG or EU and explain any differences to the research topics specified in the application.

5.8.3 Who can act as a commercialisation partner?

Commercialisation partners are usually companies that are able to **further develop** and **exploit** the project results within the framework of their normal business activities. Consortia that enable and promote commercial exploitation will stand a better chance in the evaluation process.

It is possible, however, that the industrial cooperation partner **applies** the project results within its own company, but does not intend to exploit them commercially. In this case the consortium will receive a lower rating in the evaluation process.

Professional associations do not qualify as suitable commercialisation partners; such associations have access to other funding options in the field of cooperative research.

5.8.4 Are Competence Centres (COMET, K Centres, CDG) also eligible to apply for funding?

COMET Centres, K Centres and CDGs may in principle submit applications for funding.

Projects submitted by consortia which already cooperate as part of funded COMET Centres or CDGs are only eligible for funding under the BRIDGE Programme if they address a new research topic. Projects submitted by COMET Centres and partners of CDG laboratories must address a **new research topic (“Non-K area”)** (clear distinction from the existing research project **must** be shown); if possible, companies should not already be part of the Competence Centre.

Newly established cooperations will stand a better chance in the evaluation process.

5.8.5 Can partners from outside Austria participate?

Consortia with foreign partners are possible. Foreign organisations may also be involved as subcontractors.

If research institutes or company partners from outside Austria participate in a project, however, it must be ensured that **total foreign participation does not exceed 30% of the overall project cost.**

The consortium leader must in any event be an institute or company based in Austria.

The **exclusive** participation of **non-Austrian commercialisation partners** is not in line with the goals of the BRIDGE Programme, since the research results must be made available to Austrian companies (cf. BRIDGE programme objectives). If the project does not involve an Austrian commercialisation partner, this must be explained and justified; in addition, the future benefit for Austrian companies must be demonstrated in a plausible manner.

Notwithstanding the above, the European EUREKA initiative supports cross-border collaborations across programmes. The relevant call guideline will specify whether EUREKA cooperation projects may be submitted.

5.9 How much support is granted?

The funding rate for science transfer projects is **between 60% and max. 80%** in the form of non-repayable subsidies; funding is always based on the overall project.

The projects fall under the category of **Industrial Research** according to the EU's Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation. The aid intensity for these projects is based exclusively on the **size of the companies involved; the largest company involved in the consortium is taken as a basis for calculating the maximum amount of funding:**

- The funding rate for **participation of large enterprises** is a **maximum of 60%** of the project costs.
- The funding rate for participation of **medium-sized enterprises** (max. 250 employees, max. € 50 million turnover, max. € 43 million balance sheet total) is a **maximum of 70%**.
- If the project involves only **small enterprises** (< 50 employees, < € 10 million turnover, < € 10 million balance sheet total) the aid intensity may be **up to 80%** of the project costs (see also calculation examples in [Annex II](#)).

5.10 How are the workshops for the young scientists organised?

The workshops are aimed at networking the scientists with each other and provide them with new skills and perspectives for future careers in research. The full or multi-day workshops cover topics such as current innovation methods, management of FFG projects, project presentations etc. More detailed information will be provided in good time.

Every young scientist involved in the project must attend at least one of the workshops offered during the project (contractual requirement).

The costs of participation (hours of attendance and travel costs) can be charged to the project. The costs for the workshops and accommodation (if applicable) are covered directly by the FFG.

5.11 What costs are eligible?

All costs and expenses attributed to the project are eligible, provided they result directly, actually and additionally (to the normal operational costs) during the duration of the funded research activity.

The **period when costs may be recognised** corresponds to the **contractual project period**, which commences with the start date and ends with the conclusion of the project.

Detailed information on eligible and non-eligible costs is given in the **FFG Cost Guidelines** (“Guidelines for the Accounting of Project Costs in Funding Applications and Reports”).

Partners involved in **BRIDGE projects** may not simultaneously be listed as subcontractors in the cost category “third-party costs”.

The following **deviating and/or supplementary provisions** apply in addition to the FFG Cost Guidelines:

1. Costs of **postdocs and doctoral students** can be charged according to the Collective Agreement for University Employees or at the FWF's applicable **personnel cost rates** (40 hrs/week are permitted for doctoral theses). These rates are considered as guide values
2. **Publication costs:**
Open access publication costs are eligible for funding if they are incurred during the funding period. The FFG uses the same approach as the FWF.
3. **Patent costs**
Costs incurred by participating SMEs in the course of patent application can be claimed as part of their in-kind contribution. Costs for patent maintenance and patent costs for universities are not eligible for funding.
4. Offers must be submitted for **third-party services** exceeding € 5,000.

5.12 What points should be considered in regulating the rights to the results?

Intellectual property rights relating to the project results belong to the consortium.

There are no special provisions for the allocation of the intellectual property rights within the consortium. The regulations of the Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01, 1.3.ee) must, however, be observed. According to this provision, any intellectual property rights and access to the results must be allocated to the different partners of the collaboration so as to adequately reflect their respective interests, work packages, and financial and other contributions to the project.

The cooperation between the partners and the allocation of intellectual property rights should be regulated in the course of the application process, and in any case prior to the commencement of work. Irrespective of the regulation of intellectual property rights, the scientific partners must be granted the **right to publish** the research results.

5.13 What criteria are used to assess applications for funding?

Each science transfer project (BRIDGE 1 project) will be evaluated by at least **one international scientific reviewer** and at least **one FFG reviewer** in terms of its technological and scientific content. **FFG financial experts** will additionally assess economic aspects relating to the commercialisation and financial viability of the project within the consortium. The evaluation will be carried out according to specified criteria.

5.13.1 Assessment criteria

The application will be evaluated according to the following **four main criteria**:

- Quality of the project
- Qualifications of the funding applicant/project partners
- Economic potential and exploitation
- Relevance of the project to the objectives of the call

The following table specifies the relevant **sub-criteria** and the questions to be used by the reviewers to assess them. In the course of the assessment, points are assigned to each criterion.

FUNDING CRITERIA (BRIDGE 1)	Quality of the project
Innovation content in relation to the state of the art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the state of the art (level of knowledge/technology) presented in an adequate and comprehensible form? - Is the project idea innovative? - How do you rate the innovation content of the application in relation to the current level of research/knowledge?
Scientific excellence, originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you rate the quality of the problem solving approach? - Does the scientific project exceed average standards? - Does the project provide scientific added value and can thus act as a model for similar projects?
Suitability of methods, quality of problem solving approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the goals described clearly? - Are the methods used for attaining the project goals adequate to the task and in accordance with the current state of knowledge? - Can the goals be achieved better/faster with other means?
Suitability of cost and work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the time and work schedule well structured, transparent and realistic? - Are the project partners well integrated with regard to their capacity and their expertise? Can the work be carried out within the specified time horizon? - Are the planned costs adequate and plausible? Is the infrastructure to be acquired necessary for the project?

Table 4

FUNDING CRITERIA (BRIDGE 1)	Economic potential and exploitation
Commercialisation potential/benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential customer benefit – what is the market potential for the project results from today's perspective (time horizon of 3 - 5 years)?
Market experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the commercialisation partner already gained experience in the target market?

Table 5

FUNDING CRITERIA (BRIDGE 1)	Qualifications of the applicants/project partners
Qualification of the researchers	- What are the researchers' qualifications in the subject area? Can they provide sufficient evidence of previous scientific work and publications?
Technical project management and implementation skills	- Do the consortium partners have the organisational expertise required for the project and has this expertise been adequately presented in the funding application? - What are their implementation skills? (Is the company partner a commercialisation partner or only a user?) Can the company partner further develop the project results towards future commercialisation?
Project resources (personnel and technical equipment)	- Are the personnel resources and technical equipment sufficient for the implementation of the project?
Financing of the BRIDGE project	- Can the companies involved provide match funding for the project? (Funding applicants who are/were involved in insolvency or extrajudicial reorganisation proceedings are usually not considered to meet the relevant criteria.)

Table 6

FUNDING CRITERIA (BRIDGE 1)	Relevance of the project to the programme
Basic research	- Are the planned project activities in accordance with the research category (industrial research)? Is there a clear focus on basic research work?
Future perspective/ structural effects	- Does the composition of scientific partners and companies provide for collaboration in the longer term? - Will the project lead to an effective and sustainable knowledge transfer (including at personnel level) for the future benefit of both partners?
Quality of cooperation	- Has the partnership been newly established or have there been longstanding relationships between the company and the institute? - Does the project involve contract research?

FUNDING CRITERIA (BRIDGE 1)	Relevance of the project to the programme
Gender relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have gender aspects (e.g. different patterns of use, physical differences) been taken into account in project planning? Can positive effects be expected? - Is the composition of the project team balanced in terms of gender mainstreaming? - Are there improvements to the gender ratios normal for the field? (gender balance should be taken into account equally for men and for women.)
Additionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the project be carried out irrespective of funding? If so, in what form?

Table 7

5.14 Is it necessary to mention other projects?

Applicants are required to list additional projects related to the proposed project in the Project Description in order to facilitate the evaluation. The results and expertise obtained must be presented. Relevant projects include:

- previous projects whose results provide the basis for the proposed project,
- ongoing or completed projects that are thematically related to the proposed project.

Double funding of costs that have already been funded is not permitted. The proposed project must be clearly differentiated from thematically related projects that have already received funding.

There are basically **no restrictions on the number of projects that can be submitted or carried out simultaneously**. The size and capacity of the institution will however be assessed in relation to the projects submitted in the course of the project evaluation.

5.15 Research 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 Research Integrity \(OeAWI\)](#).

By its membership, the FFG supports the observance of the standards of good scientific practice. During the formal checks on applications and in the event of suspected research misconduct the FFG may forward details and any

necessary supporting documents to the OeAWI's Committee on Research Integrity. The OeAWI will decide whether to initiate an independent investigation and, if necessary, will undertake the investigation.

If the review reveals details proving that the scientific quality of the project is insufficient or that research 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

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6.1 What is the procedure for submission?

Project applications may only be submitted online electronically **via [eCall - the FFG's electronic customer centre](#)**. Applications must be complete and submitted by the deadline for submission.

The application forms of the relevant call are to be used **without exception**. These will be made available for download via eCall.

The application for funding may not be submitted until **all partners** have **completed and submitted** their partner applications via eCall.

An application is considered to have been submitted when **it is finalised in eCall** by clicking the “Submit application” (“*Einreichung abschicken*”) button. When an application is received, an **acknowledgement** will be sent automatically by e-mail. It is **not possible** to submit **additional documents** (including individual parts of the application form) or to modify the application once the application has been submitted.

The actual submission must be undertaken by the consortium leader or by a duly authorised person. Proof that this person is entitled to represent the consortium leader must be provided to the FFG at any time on demand. If this cannot be done, the FFG reserves the right to reject the application in question for formal reasons.

A detailed [eCall Tutorial](#) is available online.

6.2 How will confidential project data be used?

The FFG processes the personal data of funding applicants and funding recipients provided by the data subjects as part of the application for funding, data collected by the FFG for the purpose of concluding the funding contract, and data generated by searches in the transparency portal according to Sec. 32 (5) of the Transparency Database Act (TDBG 2012) for the following purposes:

- Processing of the funding application and assessment of whether the general and specific funding requirements have been met,
- Conclusion of the funding contract and (if a funding contract has been concluded) compliance with the relevant contractual obligations, including but not limited to administration of the funding payments and monitoring of compliance with funding requirements,
- Compliance with statutory obligations, including but not limited to reporting obligations and control purposes in order to avoid double funding (i.e. Sec. 38 in conjunction with 18, 27, 28 ARR, as well as Sec. 12 FTFG and Sec. 9 FFG-G).

The legal basis of processing is therefore Art. 6 (1) (b) GDPR, i.e. performance of a contract, and Art 6 (1) (c) GDPR, i.e. compliance with legal obligations. The personal data will be disclosed to the following institutions in compliance with legal obligations:

- the federal ministries as owners of the FFG, other contracting authorities for the management of funding measures (e.g. other federal ministries, regional governments, KLIEN)
- third parties, which may include the Court of Audit, EU bodies, and other federal or regional funding agencies.

External experts may be commissioned to evaluate projects in individual cases. Such experts act as processors on behalf of the FFG and are required to take technical and organisational measures to ensure data security and data confidentiality.

Project content and results may only be published (e.g. on the website or in social media forums) with the consent of the funding recipient (Art 6 (1) (a) GDPR) unless the FFG has a legal obligation to do so.

The FFG must also obtain the consent of the data subject for any other data use exceeding these provisions.

The FFG is under a legal obligation to maintain secrecy concerning company and project information pursuant to Sec. 9 (4) of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency Act (FFG-G, Federal Law Gazette BGBl. I No. 73/2004).

The FFG will ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk in terms of confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of the systems by implementing technical and organisational measures within the meaning of Art. 32 GDPR that are sufficient and appropriate for protecting the data against accidental or unlawful destruction, loss and unauthorised access.

Further information about ensuring the confidentiality and security of personal data during the course of the project is available in the [eCall Tutorial](#).

6.3 What else is important to consider when submitting an application?

6.3.1 Project start

The earliest possible date for the start of a project is **following submission** of the application for funding.

The period when costs may be recognised corresponds to the contractual project period, which commences **after** the GP advisory board has made the funding decision for the project.

We recommend that the project should not be started until the FFG has announced the funding decision.

6.3.2 Length of the application? German or English?

The application should be submitted in German; English applications will also be accepted. This does not apply to the summary in the eCall online form where the two fields "**Projektkurzbeschreibung (deutsch)**" and "**Abstract (English)**" must be completed in **German** and English, respectively.

The project description (sections 1 - 3) is formally limited to **20 pages!** All sections in the application form must be completed.

7 PROJECT ASSESSMENT AND FUNDING DECISION

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The applications will be evaluated by external and FFG reviewers in the weeks following the submission deadline.

A funding decision can be expected after about **three months**

7.1 What is the formal check?

The formal check serves to examine the application for **formal correctness and completeness**. A checklist of the formal criteria can be found in the project description part of the funding application. The information contained in the application is not examined during the formal check.

If the formal requirements are not met and the deficiencies cannot be corrected, the application for funding will fail the formal check and will not enter the subsequent steps of the procedure.

7.2 How is the evaluation procedure organised?

The expert review is based on the criteria given in [section 5.13](#) and is undertaken by FFG reviewers and international experts on the basis of the documents submitted.

It is possible to **exclude reviewers** (individuals or staff of particular organisations) for justified reasons. eCall contains an entry field for this purpose.

An **evaluation committee** (BRIDGE advisory board) will discuss the projects based on the expert reviews and make a recommendation for funding (including conditions and/or additional requirements).

7.3 Who makes the funding decision?

The technical funding decision will be made by the advisory board of the FFG General Programmes, which will pay special attention to appropriate budgetary cover for the proposal. The advisory board will base its decision on the recommendation of the evaluation committee.

The final funding decision is the responsibility of the FFG Management and will be taken on the basis of the technical decision by the advisory board of the FFG General Programmes, including any conditions and additional requirements.

8 PROCEDURE AFTER THE FUNDING DECISION

8.1 Funding decision

The applicant is notified **via eCall** of whether the funding application has been accepted **immediately after the meeting at which the decision is made.**

8.2 What if my application is rejected?

The decision to reject the application will be communicated to the applicant **by eCall immediately after the meeting at which the decision is taken.**

The consortium leader will receive a letter **by post** stating in detail the reasons for the decision to reject the application.

The letter usually provides an indication whether it is sensible to submit another funding application for one of the next calls after having fulfilled specific conditions or made changes to the project configuration.

8.3 Resubmission

Resubmissions are project applications where the project goals and consortium remain **largely** the same. Such resubmissions are possible in principle, but must be marked as such via the corresponding eCall checkbox (also applies to rejected projects from other FFG Programmes).

Please note that **only two resubmissions** are allowed.

When resubmitting an application, applicants must **specify the changes** made to the original application in a **separate document** (additional eCall attachment) addressing the **points of criticism raised in the letter of rejection (formal criterion).**

If you are not sure whether your project proposal is a resubmission or a new application, we recommend that you mark it as a resubmission and highlight the changes and modifications.

All resubmitted applications for a BRIDGE project will again be examined by the original reviewer and additionally by a new external reviewer.

It is therefore not expedient to resubmit an (almost) unchanged application.

8.4 How is the funding contract concluded?

If funding is granted, the FFG sends the consortium a draft contract (**offer of funding**), which must be accepted within a specified period of time. If **all consortium partners** accept the terms and conditions listed in the draft contract within the specified period of time, a funding contract will be drawn up. The funding contract will be sent electronically via eCall and by post.

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

The funding contract must be duly executed and the original returned to the FFG.

8.5 How should requirements and conditions be taken into account?

Requirements or conditions may be formulated during the assessment of the application and become an integral part of the contract. These are designed to ensure the desired project result and thus the efficient use of the funds. Such conditions and obligations may include securing match-funding, providing evidence of employment relationships for project staff, evidence of company registration, references to cost structure, cost cuts etc.

8.5.1 Consortium agreement

A consortium agreement between the partners must be concluded **prior to the start** of a science transfer project.

The consortium leader must therefore confirm prior to payment of the first instalment that a **consortium agreement has been signed by all partners** prior to the start of the project.

The consortium agreement must meet all requirements of the call. The following issues must be regulated in particular:

Allocation of tasks, allocation of costs, project financing (acc. to funding contract), IPR and publication rights to the project results, possibility for the FFG to carry out cost audits at all project partners.

A [model consortium agreement](#) is available to assist in drawing up a consortium agreement. Use of this model agreement is however not mandatory.

8.6 How are the instalments of funding paid?

The **first instalment** will be paid once the funding contract has been signed and any requirements and conditions have been met.

Subsequent instalments will be transferred according to **project progress** after a review of the **interim reports** (including **interim accounts**) and after any further requirements have been satisfied, based on the contractual instalment payment plan. If the work carried out and the costs incurred comply with the project plan and if any additional requirements and conditions are met, the subsequent instalment will be paid within the following weeks.

If the interim report indicates a **delay in project progress** or if the costs have not been incurred as planned, the payment of the relevant instalment may be postponed or the instalment reduced accordingly.

The payment of an instalment may also be postponed if, and as long as, circumstances prevail that are deemed to prevent the due performance of the contract.

The **payment of funding** during the course of the project does **not** imply **approval of the costs**.

Before payment of the final instalment, the final report and the final accounts will be reviewed. The **costs are only approved once discharge has been granted** to the project following the audit by the FFG Project Controlling & Audit department.

STANDARD FFG INSTALMENT SCHEME	Project duration 0 - 18 months	Project duration 10 - 30 months	Project duration 31 - 36 months
Number of reports (interim and final reports)	2	2	3
1 st instalment (% of contractual funding)	50%	50%	30%
2 nd instalment (% of contractual funding)	30%	40%	30%
3 rd instalment (% of contractual funding)	0%	0%	30%
Final instalment (up to % of contractual funding)	20%	10%	10%

Table 8

8.7 What reports and accounts are required?

An **interim report** and **interim accounts** must be submitted **via eCall** within one month of the reporting deadlines specified in the funding contract. No interim accounts are necessary for projects with a duration of less than 18 months.

Within 3 months of the conclusion of the project a **final report** and the **final accounts** must be submitted **via eCall**.

All reports and accounts must include all the activities and associated costs of **all consortium partners**.

The **templates provided** in eCall are to be used in the preparation of the reports.

Detailed information on eligible and non-eligible costs are set out in the [FFG Cost Guidelines](#) (“Guidelines for the Accounting of Project Costs in Funding Applications and Reports”).

8.8 How should changes to the project be communicated?

The FFG must be notified of any substantial changes to the project **as soon as they become known**.

Any **changes to parameters specified in the contract** (project contents, partners in the consortium, costs, deadlines, funding period etc.) shall require a justified request to and **written approval by the FFG**.

The **request** for such a change, together with an appropriate description and justification, is to be submitted via an **eCall message** or in the **intermediate or final report**. Any necessary supporting documentation should be uploaded as an attachment to the eCall message.

A reallocation of costs can only be requested in the course of the interim and/or final report. Reasons for the request must be stated in the section "Details on costs & financing".

8.8.1 Changes in the consortium

The FFG must be informed of any changes involving consortium partners (e.g. changes in ownership, bankruptcy proceedings) **immediately after they become known**. In the event of changes in the **consortium structure** the FFG will examine whether the overall project still meets the eligibility criteria.

8.8.2 Can the funding period be extended?

If the project goals have not been achieved at the end of the funding period and if the approved level of costs has not been exceeded, the funding period may be extended **on a cost-neutral basis** by up to a **maximum of one year**. Any extension beyond that period is possible only in well-justified exceptional cases and requires a separate advisory board resolution.

An **application for extension of the funding period** must be submitted within the approved funding period via eCall.

Conversely, the duration of the **project may also be reduced** upon application (e.g. earlier conclusion of the project, foreseeable significant cost overrun).

8.9 What happens if a project cannot be completed successfully?

The FFG must be informed immediately if

- unsolvable technical problems arise during the project period,
- the project cannot be completed successfully due to other circumstances.

If the project is aborted, the funding recipient must prepare a final report including final accounts. If the amount of funding paid by the FFG exceeds the eligible costs, the FFG is entitled to reclaim funding.

8.10 What happens after the conclusion of the project?

After the final report and the final accounts have been examined, FFG Project Controlling & Audit will undertake an audit to establish whether the funding has been used for the intended purpose. The audit serves to establish the final amount of eligible costs and to examine whether the company partners have provided the agreed match funding for the scientific project partners.

The result of the audit will be communicated to the funding recipients in writing. If the result is positive, the FFG will confirm that the support has been used for the intended purpose; in the event of a negative result, procedures may be initiated to secure repayment of funding.

If the result is positive and if the level of cost initially envisioned has been reached, the final instalment specified in the funding contract will be transferred. If the project is underspent the level of support will be reduced accordingly. The level of support paid may be reduced for scientific reasons, as well as on formal and legal grounds.

The FFG will immediately reclaim any amounts the funding recipient has received without being entitled thereto, charging interest at a rate of 2% per annum above the applicable base rate of interest published by the Austrian National Bank from the date of disbursement of the funding.

The funding recipients must at any time allow the FFG auditors to inspect their documents and receipts, provide them with all necessary information concerning the funded project and grant them access to their laboratories, warehouses, offices, etc.

8.11 Are there cases where funding must be repaid?

Reasons for repayment include:

- provision of incomplete or incorrect information to the FFG
- failure on the part of company partners to provide the agreed match funding
- neglect of reporting obligations
- unapproved substantial changes in the project schedule
- bankruptcy of the funding recipient

For further details see the General Funding Conditions or the applicable FFG Guidelines.

9 LEGAL BASIS

At the national level, the programme is based on the Guidelines of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency for the Funding of Research, Technology, Development and Innovation ([FFG-Richtlinie OFFENSIV](#)).

At the European level, the programme is based on the COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (General Block Exemption Regulation) and the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION - Framework for state aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) of 27 June 2014 for specific parts of RTI funding, such as eligible costs or for distinguishing between economic and non-economic activities of research organisations.

11 FURTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

The FFG offers a wide range of funding options and support for participation in international programmes.

The following overview lists relevant funding options related to the present call. Please contact the FFG staff members listed below for further information.

RELEVANT FFG FUNDING OPTIONS	Contact	Link
General Programme Funding of open topic development projects for companies	Karin Ruzak Tel +43 (0)5 7755-1507 karin.ruzak@ffg.at	General Programme
Early Stage Individual projects of industrial research, open-topic funding	Daniela Mechtler Tel +43 (0)5 7755-1309 daniela.mechlter@ffg.at	Early Stage
EFREtop Industrial research	Ing. Mag. Harald Polak Tel +43 (0)5 7755-1101 harald.polak@ffg.at	EFREtop
Industrial PhD Programme	Mag. Doris Aufner Tel +43 (0)5 7755-2308 doris.aufner@ffg.at	Industrial PhD
Finding Talent Researchers – career grants	Mag. Christine Kreuter Tel +43 (0)5 7755-2709 christine.kreuter@ffg.at	Talents
Production of the Future Topic-specific funding of research and development projects for companies, research institutions	Lisa Berg Tel +43 (0)5 7755-1205 lisa.berg@ffg.at	Production of the Future
EUREKA, Eurostars	Dr. Olaf Hartmann Tel +43 (0)5 7755-4902 olaf.hartmann@ffg.at	EUREKA Eurostars

Table 9

12 Annex I: What is “Industrial Research”

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The research category “**Industrial Research**” is characterised by:

- an especially high degree of innovation
- an increased development risk
- following on from the research category “Basic Research”
- a lack of market focus

Industrial Research

“Industrial Research” denotes **planned research or critical investigation to acquire new knowledge and abilities** with the goal of developing new products, procedures or services or to effect significant improvements to existing products, procedures or services. It includes the creation of parts of complex systems necessary for industrial research and in particular for the validation of the technological basis, with the exception of prototypes, which fall under the research category “Experimental Development”.

The following questions may be **helpful in allocating** a project to the category “Industrial Research”:

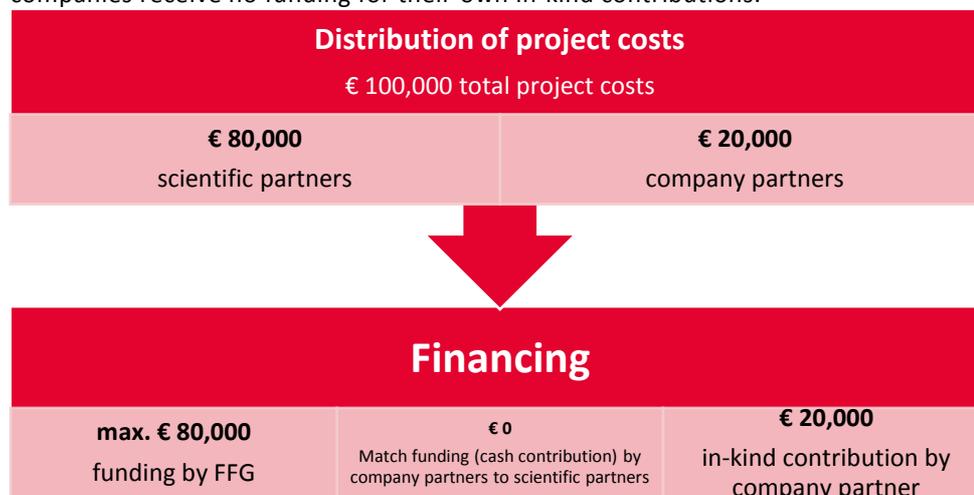
- Is the level of innovation particularly high?
- Will the new knowledge and abilities serve to develop new products, procedures or services?
- Will the new knowledge and abilities contribute to effecting significant improvements for existing products, procedures or services?
- Does the project exclude the production of a prototype?
- Does the project exclude direct commercial exploitation of the results?
- Is there (presently) no commercial market for the envisaged results?
- Will research institutions account for a large proportion of the costs?

13 Annex II: Calculation examples

13.1 Small enterprises

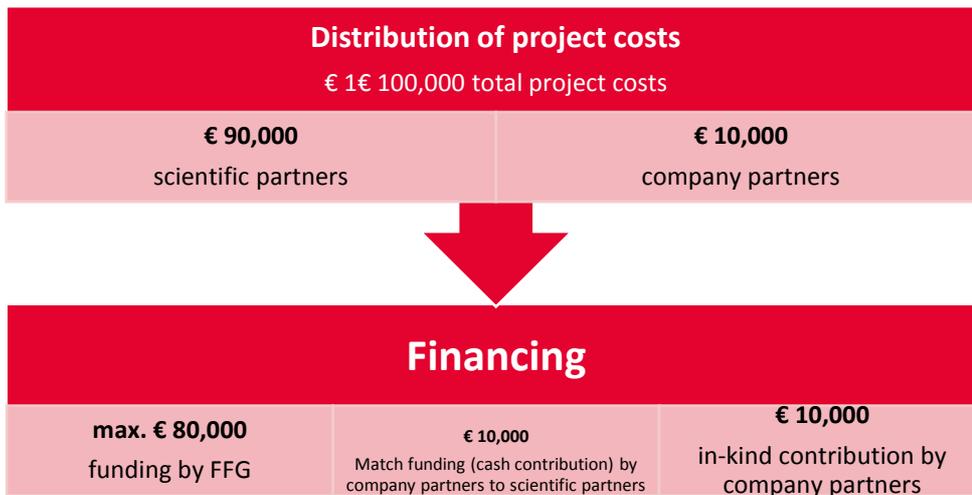
Example 1 (in-kind contribution by company is 20%):

If the total project costs amount to € 100,000, with € 80,000 being incurred by the scientific partners and € 20,000 by the commercialisation partners, the FFG funding will be a maximum of € 80,000 provided that the project exclusively involves small enterprises. The companies receive no funding for their own in-kind contributions.



Example 2 (in-kind contribution by company is less than 20%):

If the total project costs amount to € 100,000, with € 90,000 being incurred by the scientific partners and € 10,000 by the commercialisation partners, the FFG funding will be a maximum of € 80,000 provided that the project exclusively involves small enterprises. In order to cover the costs of the research institutions the commercialisation partners are required to provide a cash contribution of € 10,000. The commercialisation partners receive no funding for their own in-kind contributions.



13.2 Medium-sized enterprises

If the total project costs amount to € 100,000, with € 80,000 being incurred by the scientific partners and € 20,000 by the commercialisation partners, the FFG funding will be a maximum of € 70,000 provided that the project involves at least one medium-sized enterprise (and no large enterprise).

In order to cover the costs of the research institutions the commercialisation partners are required to provide a cash contribution of at least € 10,000. The commercialisation partners receive no funding for their own in-kind contributions.

13.3 Large enterprises

If the total project costs amount to € 100,000, with € 80,000 being incurred by the scientific partners and € 20,000 by the commercialisation partners, the FFG funding will be a maximum of € 60,000 provided that the project involves at least one large enterprise.

In order to cover the costs of the research institutions the commercialisation partners are required to provide a cash contribution of at least € 20,000. The commercialisation partners receive no funding for their own in-kind contributions.

14 Annex III: Why gender in the selection process?

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Gender budgeting has been introduced in Austria as a result of the budget reform (Federal Budget Act, BHG 2013). The principle of impact orientation with the aim of achieving effective gender equality for women and men entered into effect on 1 January 2013 as one of the new principles of federal budgeting (Art. 51 (8) of Federal Constitutional Law (B-VG), Art. 51 (9) (1)).

The allocation of public funds can be used to achieve an impact in this respect at two levels:

1. thematic impact at project level, including the exploitation of project results
2. social impact at the individual level

ad 1) ***Public funds are to be invested in projects of high quality designed to enhance the scientific and economic performance of Austria.***

Appropriate consideration of gender in research contributes to the **quality of research projects**: If, e.g. (groups of) persons are the research object and/or persons will use, apply or be affected by the research results, this must be reflected in the research design (research topics, methodology etc.). These aspects are included in the assessment criterion “Relevance of the project”. Applicants are required to provide relevant information about the state-of-the-art, research topics and methods in the section “Quality of the project” in the Project Description.

Appropriate consideration of gender aspects in the market perspective will enhance the **exploitation potential of the project results**.

This is taken into account in the assessment of the economic and exploitation potential (“Customer orientation/customer benefits”).

ad 2) ***Public funds are to be allocated in such a way as to achieve equality of women and men in research and contribute to attracting the brightest minds to research.***

The criterion “Qualification of the consortium” assesses the balanced composition of the project team in terms of gender mainstreaming. This issue must be addressed in section 6 of the Project Description.

The data on the composition of the project team are subsequently recorded in the project reports in the course of gender monitoring.