



**FFG**

Promoting Innovation.

CALL 2023  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 23 NOVEMBER 2023

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**COMET CENTRE (K1) 2023  
CALL GUIDELINE**

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This document is a translated version of the original German version. In cases of unclear formulation, the German version is the decisive document.

## 1 KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

The Call for COMET Centres (K1) 2023 makes available 40.8 million euros federal funding.

*Table 1 Overview of instruments available*

| Key fact                    | Detail   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Funding instrument</b>   | Competence Centre (C8-Z)   |
| <b>Short description</b>    | Funding is provided for competence centres performing research at a high international level in research programmes jointly defined by science and industry. |
| <b>Maximum funding in €</b> | Federal: max. € 6.8 m. or € 1.7 m. per year<br>Provincial: max. € 3.4 m. or € 0.85 m. per year<br>The annual limits must not be exceeded.                    |
| <b>Funding rate</b>         | 40 to 55% (depending on the type of research)  |
| <b>Remaining financing</b>  | Share of participating research institutions: min. 5%<br>Share of participating companies: min. 45%  |
| <b>Duration in months</b>   | 48 months (first funding period)   |
| <b>Cooperation required</b> | at least one research organisation and<br>at least five companies  |

The total duration is a maximum of eight years divided into two funding periods (four + four years). A mid-term evaluation is carried out in the fourth year after the start of the project.

*Table 2 budget - deadlines - contact*

| Further information                    | Details  |
|--|--|
| <b>Total budget</b>                    | 40,8 Million federal funding € plus provincial funding |
| <b>Deadline for submission</b>         | 23 November 2023, 12:00:00 Uhr (CET)                   |
| <b>Hearings</b>                        | 10 until 20 June 2024 (video conference)               |
| <b>Meeting of the evaluation panel</b> | 25/26 June 2024, funding recommendation                |
| <b>Project start</b>                   | 1 January, 1 April or 1 July 2025                      |
| <b>Language</b>                        | English  |

| Further information       | Details   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Contact</b>            | Tel. +43 (0)5 7755, extension<br>Otto Starzer, extension 2101;<br><a href="mailto:otto.starzer@ffg.at">otto.starzer@ffg.at</a><br>Reingard Repp, extension 2107;<br><a href="mailto:reingard.repp@ffg.at">reingard.repp@ffg.at</a><br>Ingrid Fleischhacker, extension 2102;<br><a href="mailto:ingrid.fleischhacker@ffg.at">ingrid.fleischhacker@ffg.at</a><br><br><b>Costs and financing:</b><br>Christa Meyer, extension 6080;<br><a href="mailto:christa.meyer@ffg.at">christa.meyer@ffg.at</a><br>Martina Petracs, extension 6081;<br><a href="mailto:martina.petracs@ffg.at">martina.petracs@ffg.at</a><br><br><b>eCall:</b><br>FFG Funding service, extension 0,<br><a href="mailto:funding@ffg.at">funding@ffg.at</a><br>A detailed <a href="#">eCall tutorial</a> is available.<br><br>Advisory interviews can be arranged. |
| <b>Information online</b> | <a href="http://www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-zentren-k1-ausschreibung-2023">www.ffg.at/ausschreibungen/comet-zentren-k1-ausschreibung-2023</a>  |
| <b>Submission portal</b>  | <a href="https://ecall.ffg.at">https://ecall.ffg.at</a>   |

Funding applications may only be submitted electronically via eCall, completely and before the deadline.

This competitive call addresses existing competence centres or competence projects as well as new consortia in science industry cooperation.

## 2 CALL OBJECTIVES

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### Strategic objectives of COMET

- Developing and focussing competences through long-term research cooperation between science and industry at the highest level.
- Strengthening Austria as a business location: accelerating technology transfer to industry should serve to create new products, processes and services, open up new markets and increase the innovative capacity of companies.
- Strengthening Austria as a research location: excellent cooperative research should trigger new research impulses and establish promising/emerging fields of research.
- Strengthening the competitiveness of science and industry by driving internationalisation as a sign of high quality cooperative research: involving internationally-renowned scientists, organisations and companies, positioning competence centres as internationally attractive cooperation partners, and ongoing benchmarking with top research institutions are designed to generate an edge in international competition.
- Establishing and developing human resources: increasingly attracting scientists of international renown, creating structured career models for scientists, and actively supporting intersectoral mobility for research personnel in order to intensify the transfer of know-how.

### Sustainability

The Call makes reference to the global Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDGs) and the European elements of the EU Green Deal. More detailed information can be found on the [FFG website](#).

The COMET Centre (K1) Call requires applicants to address the key sustainability goals to which the proposed project makes a concrete positive contribution. The planned sustainability effects must be described in the application and taken into account in the research design.

### 3 FOCUS OF THE CALL

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**Funding instrument:**

- C8-Z Competence Centre

This call relates exclusively to COMET Centres (K1) and is thematically open. It is based on a broad concept of innovation as defined in the federal RTI pact 2024-2026, which includes not only technological innovations, but also societal, social, creative, sustainable and organizational innovations (in the sense of the SDGs).




### 4 CALL DOCUMENTS












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Projects may only be submitted electronically via [eCall](#).

Templates and call documents provided on the [FFG website](#) (see download centre) have to be used.

*Table 3 Call documents - funding*

| Category       | Document type  |
|----------------|--|
| Call documents |  <b>Guidelines</b> COMET Centre (K1)  |
|                |  <b>Call Guidelines</b> COMET Centre (K1) 2023                                  |
|                |  <b><u>Cost Guideline Version 3.0</u></b><br>(cost recognition in FFG projects) |

| Category                             | Document type  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Funding application templates</b> | <p> <b>Project Description:</b><br/>Project description, thematic funding application</p> <p> <b>Financial Tables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The costs and finances have to correlate with the written explanations in the project description. (upload as Excel file)</li> <li>– The total costs and finances also have to be entered into the eCall</li> <li>– Obligatory master data: annual accounts of the past two years (applies to COMET Centre only).</li> </ul> <p> <b>Monitoring Tables:</b> Monitoring tables (upload as Excel file)</p>   |
| <b>Annex templates Annex 0-6</b>     | <p> <b>ANNEX 0: Review existing Centres</b><br/>only for existing COMET Centres; describe the fulfilment, respectively implementation, of the requirements and recommendations from the previous evaluation of the centre.</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 1: References:</b><br/>Literature used in drawing up the application</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 2: Project Sheets:</b><br/>Description of the projects</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 3: Partner Descriptions:</b><br/>Short description of the partners</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 4: CVs and List of Publications:</b><br/>Please upload all CVs and publications in a single file via eCall (no scan).</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 5: Letters of Commitment (LOC) Scientific Partners;</b><br/>Duly executed letters of commitment of all scientific partners including their relevant contributions (cash and in-kind)</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 6: Letters of Commitment (LOC) Company Partners:</b><br/>Duly executed letters of commitment of all company partners including their relevant contributions (cash and in-kind)</p> <p> <b>ANNEX 7: Declaration(s) of Federal Province(s):</b><br/>Written declaration(s) of the participating provinces (province of domicile must provide a declaration upon submission of the application, no template)</p> |

| Category                      | Document type  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Additional Information</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Annexes: Uploads max. 20MB per file.</li> <li>– The LOCs are to be scanned for the electronic application, the originals remain at the Consortium leader (COMET Centre).</li> </ul> <p>It is not permitted to enclose additional annexes.</p> |

## 5 FUNDING DECISION AND LEGAL BASIS

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The FFG Management will make the **funding decision** based on the funding recommendation of the evaluation panel.

The Call is based on the Guideline of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency for the funding of research, technology, development and innovation with the aim to strengthen structures for a powerful RTI ecosystem ([FFG- Structure Guideline 2022](#)).

The company size shall be established in accordance with the corresponding SME definition specified in EU competition law. More detailed information about the SME definition can be found on the [SME page of the FFG website](#).

All EU provisions shall be applicable as amended.

## 6 PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR PROVINCIAL FUNDING

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Each funding application **must include a written statement**, usually issued by the **federal province in which the Centre is based**, as well as **all other co-financing provinces**. In exceptional, justified cases, the statement by the co-financing provinces may be submitted up to a maximum of four weeks after submission.

The consortium leader initially contacts the federal province in which the COMET Centre is based in order to discuss the next steps.

The written statement is a reference letter accompanying the funding application in which the respective provincial government communicates its commitment to



provide funding and co-financing should the COMET Centre be approved. The written statement(s) must cover the entire amount of funding contributed by the federal province(s).

Where involvement is inconsistent with the interests of a federal province, a provincial government may also state in its written statement that it will not participate in a specific COMET Centre. In this case the federal government reserves the right to fund an approved COMET Centre without co-financing from the provincial government.

More detailed information about co-financing conditions and deadlines for the individual provinces must be obtained from the relevant [contact point](#) in a timely manner prior to submission of the funding application.

The so-called [Core Form](#), which contains key parameters about the project, must be submitted to this contact point **latest by the beginning of November 2023**. The submission deadlines may differ and must be confirmed by the contact point of the relevant federal province.

The full application must be submitted to the contact point of the relevant federal province by **23 November 2023** (submission deadline).

## 7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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This section contains information about additional funding opportunities and services which you may find useful in connection with funding applications or funded projects.

### 7.1 FFG service - Project Database

The public access [FFG Project Database](#) provides the opportunity to publish brief information about funded projects and an overview of the project partners involved. This enables you to present your project and your project partners to the interested public. The database can also be used to search for cooperation partners.

Once funding is granted, the applicants will be informed via the eCall system that they can publish specific brief information about their project in the FFG Project Database. The information will only be published if active consent is given in the eCall system.

More information on the Project Database can be found on the [FFG website](#).

## 7.2 BMK service - Open4Innovation

Additionally, the [open4innovation](#) platform of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) offers a knowledge base for companies, researchers etc. (community support, detailed information, success stories etc.).

## 7.3 Open Access publications

Research results obtained with the aid of public funding are to be put to the best use to provide maximum benefit to science, business and society. The Open Access principle should therefore be followed where possible for peer-reviewed publications produced with the support of FFG funding. The principle is "as open as possible, as closed as necessary", which also applies in European funding schemes. Publication costs are eligible for funding.

## 7.4 Handling of project data – data management plan

A data management plan (DMP) is a tool that supports the efficient and systematic management of all data generated throughout the duration of a project.

DMPs can be created, e.g., using the free tool [DMP Online](#). The [Guidelines on FAIR Data Management](#) of the European Commission also provide assistance in this respect.

A data management plan describes

- which data are collected, processed or generated within a project,
- how these data are handled within the project,
- what methods and standards are applied,
- how the data are stored and updated over the long term, and
- whether it is planned to make datasets available to third parties for reuse (i.e., open access to research data).

It is sensible to ensure public access to research data which provide the basis for peer-reviewed publications and whose publication is necessary to reproduce and verify the published results.

In the event of publication, the FAIR principle should be observed, i.e. data should be "findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable".

## 7.5 Additional FFG funding opportunities

You are interested in other funding opportunities provided by the FFG?

The FFG **Funding Service** is the central contact point for your enquiries about FFG funding and advisory services. Please feel free to contact us, we are happy to help.

**Contact:** [FFG Funding Service](#), T: +43 (0) 57755-0, E: [funding@ffg.at](mailto:funding@ffg.at).

Additional funding options can be found on the [FFG website](#).

## 8 ANNEX: CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION

The formal check serves to examine the application for accuracy and completeness.

**Please note:** If the formal requirements are not met and the deficiencies cannot be corrected, the funding application will be excluded from the further procedure and will be formally rejected without exception in accordance with the principle of equal treatment of applications.

A detailed checklist for the formal check can be found in the [Project Description](#).

Table 4 Checklist for the formal check of funding applications

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Items checked</b>   | <b>Can deficiency be corrected?</b> | <b>Consequence</b>                       |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Project Description is complete and correct language is used. | Project Description must be completed in full.<br>Language: English  | <i>no</i>                           | Rejection for formal reasons             |
| Other mandatory uploads to the Project Description.           | Financial Tables (xls)<br>Monitoring Tables (xls)  | <i>yes</i>                          | Rectification via eCall after submission |
| Mandatory annexes specified in the call are available.        | Annex 0 or to Annex 7 (see section 4)  | <i>yes</i>                          | Rectification via eCall after submission |
| Uploads to the master data in eCall (upload as pdf file)      | Annual accounts (balance sheet, P&L account) of the past two financial years are available. (existing Centres) | <i>yes</i>                          | Rectification via eCall after submission |
| Funding applicant is eligible to submit an application.       | See COMET Centre Guidelines  | <i>no</i>                           | Rejection for formal reasons             |
| project partners are eligible to participate in the Call      | See COMET Centre Guidelines  | <i>no</i>                           | Rejection for formal reasons             |
| Minimum requirements for the consortium                       | Min. one research and knowledge dissemination organisation and min. five independent companies                 | <i>no</i>                           | Rejection for formal reasons             |