

General Information on the Interim Evaluation of “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this translation. Nevertheless, the FFG cannot assume responsibility for any errors that may inadvertently have occurred. In the event of any discrepancy, the German version is to be taken as valid.

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0 PREAMBLE

The “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” initiative programme is unique in Europe. It focuses on equal opportunities and a modern research culture at the interface of science and industry. The aim is to provide an impetus to establish a new research culture in the Austrian science landscape.

The “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” were selected using an **innovative, two-stage selection process** based on the following **novel criteria of excellence**:

- Scientific quality of the research programme with a focus on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research as a prerequisite for innovation
- Career development in accordance with qualifications and potentials
- Team orientation: promoting the expertise and skills of the entire team
- Transparent, project-oriented research management
- Novel selection and evaluation processes raising the visibility of excellent achievements by taking into account different career paths

In 2009 eight “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” were selected for funding from eighteen applications submitted. The first stage of the selection process involved examining the **scientific quality of the research programme** and the professional expertise of the consortium in an international peer review. The best applications were invited for the second round based on a jury recommendation.

The second stage of the selection process focused on the quality of the detailed research programme as also on the **future potential** of the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”.

Emphasis was placed not only on the previous achievements of the research personalities, but also on their performance to be expected in the future, i.e. the potential that is visible from their careers so far.

The future potential analysis involved a detailed assessment of the concepts submitted on career and staff development and the management skills of the heads. The heads were also invited to a personal hearing giving them the opportunity to discuss and present their concepts.

This analysis also provides an incentive for a new management-oriented research culture meeting current requirements in terms of career profiles in research.

These modern approaches make the eight “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” unique in Europe. They are headed by highly qualified female experts and conduct innovative research in natural science, technology and engineering:

- **BRIC** - BioResorbable Implants for Children
Head: Prof. Dr. **Annelie-Martina Weinberg**, trauma surgeon
Funding recipient: Medical University of Graz
- **COSS** - Center for Optimized Structural Studies
Head: Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. **Kristina Djinovic-Carugo**
Department of Structural and Computational Biology
Funding recipient: Max F. Perutz Laboratories
- **CVAST** - Center for Visual Analytics Science and Technology
Head: Univ.-Prof. Dr. **Silvia Miksch**
Institute of Software Technology and Interactive Systems (ISIS)
Funding recipient: Vienna University of Technology
- **DiaLife** - Diamond and Carbon Materials in Life Science
Head: Mag. Dr. **Doris Steinmüller-Nethl**
Funding recipient: Innsbruck Medical University
- **OCUVAC** - Ocular Vaccines
Head: ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. **Talin Barisani-Asenbauer**
Outpatient Clinic at the Vienna University Clinic’s Department of Ophthalmology
Funding recipient: Medical University of Vienna
- **PlantBioP** - Plantproduced BioPharmaceuticals
Head: ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. **Herta Steinkellner**
Department of Applied Genetics and Cell Biology
Funding recipient: Vienna University of Natural Resources and Life Science
- **QE LaB** - Quality Engineering Lab
Head: Prof. Dr. **Ruth Breu**, Institute of Computer Science
Funding recipient: University of Innsbruck
- **THERAPEP** - THERApeutic application of neuroPEPtides
Head: Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. **Barbara Kofler**, research professor for receptor biochemistry and tumor metabolism, Salzburg University Clinic of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine
Funding recipient: Gemeinnützige Salzburger Landeskliniken Betriebsgesellschaft m.b.H.

Funding to the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” was initially granted for a period of four years. An interim evaluation will be carried out to decide on the extension of funding for another three years.

The present document is addressed to the eight “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” mentioned above and contains important information on the basic requirements for applying for the second funding period and the practice and procedure of the interim evaluation.

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

As specified in the Programme Document of the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” initiative programme an interim evaluation is carried out in the fourth year after the start of the project.

The interim evaluation is one of four evaluation stages provided for the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”. It includes an assessment of the achievements so far (ex-post evaluation) and an ex-ante evaluation of the entre’s plans for the next three years of the second funding period.

The interim evaluation will result in a **stop-or-go decision** whether to continue the funding of the centre in the second funding period.

Each Centre will be assessed in accordance with the specified criteria based on their own achievements and will not compete with the other “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”.

The duration of the centre can only be extended for another three years if the interim evaluation is positive.

	Review of application	Assessments	Interim evaluation	Final evaluation
When will the evaluation take place?	After application	Accompanying, annual assessments	In year 4	In year 7
What will be evaluated?	Short/Full application	Organisational and thematic structure of the Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise	Degree of goal achievement (years 1 – 4) of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”, concept for years 5 – 7	Overall success of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”
Reviewers	FFG internal /external experts	External experts	External experts	Internal/external experts
Result	Jury (Panels 1/2): recommendation regarding funding approval for a “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”	Recommendations concerning thematic and organisational structure of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”	Jury: Recommendation regarding approval of the 2 nd funding period	Conclusion of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”

Table 1: Evaluation stages of the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”

1.1 What issues will be assessed in the interim evaluation?

The following issues need to be assessed in accordance with the Programme Document:

- the implementation of requirements and recommendations contained in the funding contract of the 1st funding period
- success of research programme so far

- degree of goal achievement so far
- concept for years five to seven (= 2nd funding period)

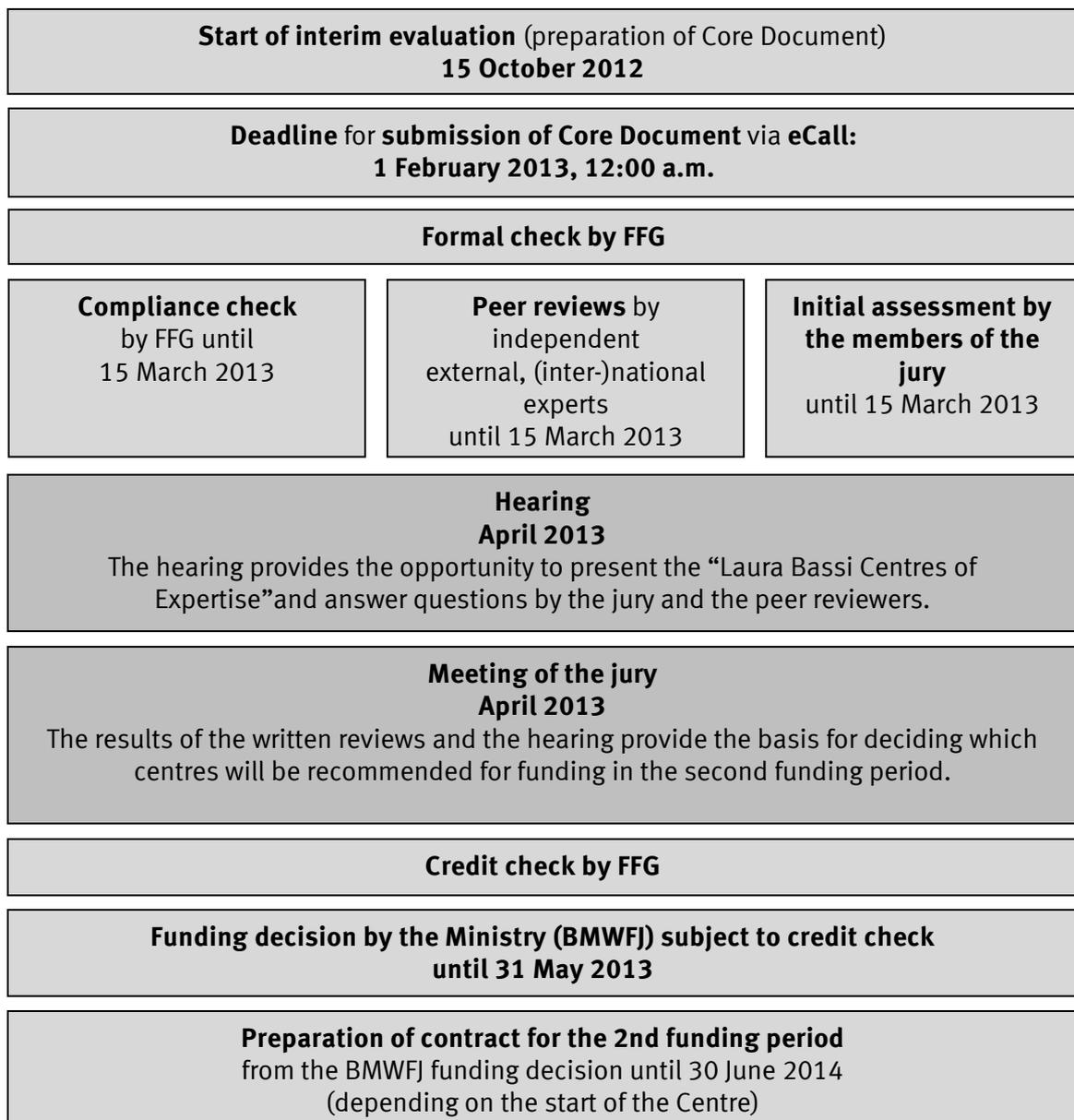
1.2 What is the procedure for the interim evaluation?

The thematic interim evaluation comprises a **written peer review of the Core Document** submitted and a subsequent **hearing**.

The individual stages of the interim evaluation will be explained in more detail in the corresponding chapters (especially Chapter 4).

The FFG programme management will be available for consultation, personal advice and support by prior appointment.

The interim evaluation consists of the following steps:



2 SECOND FUNDING PERIOD

2.1 At a glance

The terms and conditions valid for the first funding period also apply to the second funding period. The following table provides a summary of the key data. For more detailed information on the programme and its objectives, please refer to the Programme Document.

Key data	“Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”
Amount of funding	Funding is provided in the form of non-repayable grants and amounts to max. € 320,000 per year.
Funding rate	max. 60%
Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Funding: max. 60% • Industrial partners (companies): min. 35% (up to max. 50% in the form of contributions in-kind, i.e. materials and personnel, rest payable in cash) • Scientific partners (organisations): min. 5% (up to 100% may be provided in-kind, i.e. materials and personnel)
Duration of second funding period	3 years
Minimum consortium	at least 1 scientific partner (organisation) at least 1 industrial partner (company)
Submission deadline	1 February 2013 CET 12:00 a.m. via eCall
Language	English
Contact	<p>Programme Management: Agnieszka Molozej, T (0) 57755-2711; E agnieszka.molozej@ffg.at Beate Kendlbacher, T (0) 57755-2304; E beate.kendlbacher@ffg.at Susanne Reithofer, T (0) 57755-2606; E susanne.reithofer@ffg.at</p> <p>Information on costs and financing: Alexander Glechner, T (0) 5/7755-6082; E alexander.glechner@ffg.at Christa Jakes, T (0) 5/7755-6083; E christa.jakes@ffg.at</p>
Information on the Web	from 15 October 2012: http://www.ffg.at/laura-bassi-01

2.2 Requirements and funding conditions

2.2.1 What activities are eligible for funding?

The activities planned for the second funding period must continue the activities of the existing “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”. The application submitted for interim evaluation must include a concept for the continuation of the Centre in years five to seven.

The application must clearly show how the **research programme originally approved** will be implemented in the second funding period and what concrete activities will be carried out in the following four **fields of competence** included in the **future potential analysis**.

- Centre management
- Leadership and career
- Management of project environment
- Future orientation

As in the first funding period, the cooperative character must be emphasised by the conclusion of a mandatory **Consortium Agreement** specifying the rights and obligations of the partners.

2.2.2 What requirements must the consortium meet?

The application must in principle be submitted by the existing consortium. Any changes in the composition of the consortium must be explained in the project description. The consortium must consist of

- at least **1 scientific partner (organisation)** and
- at least **1 industrial partner (company)**

Evidence of participation in the consortium must be provided by a **Letter of Commitment (LOC)** including the respective financing contributions.

Subcontractors are not partners in the sense of a “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”. They have no right to exploit project results but provide defined tasks for partners, which are listed under the cost category “third-party costs”.

2.2.3 What costs are eligible?

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 the start of the second funding period of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”. 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 are given in the “Guidelines for the Accounting of Project Costs in Funding Applications and Reports” – known in brief as the Cost Guidelines, which may be found under the Internet address **www.ffg.at/kostenleitfaden**.

The following regulations apply in addition to the provisions specified in the Cost Guidelines, Version 1.3:

- The following costs are **not eligible** for “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”: building investments, investments in production machines and facilities
- Low-cost hospitality (e.g. snacks, catering) may be charged only in exceptional cases upon prior application
- The following costs are additionally eligible for “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”: public relations as well as coaching and training activities in line with the programme objectives

2.2.4 What points should be considered relating to IPR?

Intellectual property rights relating to the project results belong to the consortium. Before the first instalment of funding is paid in the second funding period, a duly executed **Consortium Agreement** must be submitted, which regulates the collaboration and especially the **intellectual property rights (IPR) relating to the project results of the second funding period**.

A **sample Consortium Agreement** is available at www.ffg.at/konsortialvertrag.

In the case of collaborations between commercial companies and research institutions, the research institutions are also entitled to take up 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.

2.3 Is it necessary to mention other projects?

Annex 2 of the Core Document must list those projects 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 other projects that have already been funded or that are underway or 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 **proves the consortium’s expertise** in the area.

2.4 Scientific integrity

Funding may only be granted to people 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 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.

3 SUBMISSION

3.1 What documents are relevant for submission?

The FFG has prepared specific templates for the Core Document to be submitted for interim evaluation of the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise”. These templates must be used without exception. The interim evaluation is based on the following documents:

DOCUMENTS FOR INTERIM EVALUATION	Web
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information on interim evaluation of “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” • Cost guidelines for the accounting of project costs in funding applications and reports 	http://www.ffg.at/laura-bassi-01
STRUCTURE OF CORE DOCUMENT	Web
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Description (PDF) • Monitoring Tables (Excel) • Cost Plan Overview (Excel) • Cost Plan Partner (Excel) • Annex 1 References (pdf) • Annex 2 Related Funded Research Projects (pdf) • Annex 3 CVs and List of Publications (pdf) • Annex 4 Letters of Commitment Scientific Partners (pdf) • Annex 5 Letters of Commitment Company Partners (pdf) 	http://www.ffg.at/laura-bassi-01

Additional documents may be requested in individual cases.

The Core Document and the Annexes must be submitted in **English**.

3.1.1 Cost Plan [Excel file]

The Cost Plan consists of the following two Excel files:

- Cost Plan Partner
- Cost Plan Overview

Please complete the two Excel files and then insert the “Cost Plan Partner” spreadsheets into the file “Cost Plan Overview”.

The data about costs and financing must correspond with the written explanations in the thematic part of the Core Document.

3.1.2 Monitoring Table [Excel file]

The spreadsheet “Monitoring Tables” provides information about the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise” and the degree of goal achievement based on the specified indicators.

The Excel file is structured as follows:

- List of Work Packages 1st Funding Period
- List of Work Packages 2nd Funding Period
- List of Partners
- Patents
- Publications
- Staff
- PhD & Master Thesis
- Indicators

The spreadsheet also contains explanations on how to fill in the tables.

3.2 What is the procedure for submission via eCall?

The submission of the Core Document for interim evaluation represents a funding application for the second funding period (= years five to seven) of the Laura Bassi Centre. This **funding application** will be treated as a new research project in the FFG’s administrative processes and must therefore be **newly submitted via eCall**. This enables effective implementation of the required checks and reviews.

3.2.1 Main application

You can **log into eCall** at <https://ecall.ffg.at> using the existing **user name** and **password** from the **first funding period**.

eCall has already created a **main application** for the **second funding period**, which is available under “Edit applications“ with the status “Create + edit full application”.

Some fields will have been pre-filled with data from the existing Laura Bassi Centre and need not be re-entered.

You should check, however, whether the **master data** are correct and up to date.

The **project data** and **partner list** should also be updated if necessary.

The **financial data** need only be entered for the second funding period (see Cost Plan Overview, Second Funding Period of the Core Document).

The individual parts of the **Core Document** will be uploaded under “**File attachments**“ according to the eCall directory structure.

Please use only the forms specifically prepared for the interim evaluation of “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” (see Chapter 3.1), which are available for download on the website.

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

An application is considered to have been submitted when **it is finalised in eCall** and **“Submit application”** has been clicked. When an application is received, an **acknowledgement** will be sent automatically by e-mail.

Applications must be **complete** and submitted **prior to the deadline**.

It is not necessary to submit the duly executed evaluation documents by post. The online submission is sufficient.

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

3.2.2 Partner applications

The **existing partner applications** will be **transferred** together with the eCall main application.

Existing partners thus need not be invited again. The partners must, however, **confirm** and **submit** the partner application in the status “Create + edit full application”. The consortium leader will be responsible for notification.

New partners will be invited to participate in the funding application via an e-mail generated by eCall. These partners must be registered and logged in to **fill out the partner application**. The partner application can **only** be opened and filled out via the **link sent by e-mail**.

To keep the consortium structure up to date, partners that do not participate in the second funding period must be disinvited and new consortium partners invited via eCall.

3.3 How is the confidential handling of project data ensured?

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

4 ASSESSMENT AND FUNDING DECISION

4.1 What criteria are used to assess applications for funding?

The assessment of “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” is based on the following **two main criteria**:

- Quality of the research programme
- Future potential analysis

The **first main criterion** of assessment, the **quality of the research programme**, comprises the following sub-criteria:

- State-of-the-art of research
- Objectives of the research programme
- Benefit of the research programme for science and industry

The **second main criterion** of assessment, the **future potential analysis**, comprises the following sub-criteria:

- Centre management
- Leadership and career
- Management of project environment
- Future orientation

The two main criteria will be assessed both ex-post and ex-ante:

- **Ex-post** evaluation: assessment of achievements so far
- **Ex-ante** evaluation: assessment of orientation and planning for years 5 to 7 (= second funding period)

Compliance with the criteria is assessed on a **five-point scale**:

- 4: very high
- 3: high
- 2: average
- 1: low
- 0: very low

The following table specifies the **main and sub-criteria** and the issues assessed.

Criteria		Assessment
Main criterion 1: Quality of the research programme (ex-post and ex-ante)		0-4
Sub-criteria	Compliance measured on the basis of	
1.1 State of the art of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation on international state of the art; modern research culture • Innovative content and methods • Inter- and transdisciplinary orientation 	
1.2 Objectives of the research programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of clear-cut objectives for the research programme (SMART: specific, measurable, advanced, realistic, time-limited) • Excellent research results with economic implications 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition of a consortium with great expertise in research and management; expertise, active contribution and synergy of partner organisations and the team for carrying out the research programme and meeting the relevant requirements • Indicators: Are the indicators achieved and specified for the continuation of the Centre reasonable and realistic in view of the research field and research environment? (publications, conference proceedings, patents, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects, fields involved, publications of scientists involved, self-defined indicators)
1.3 Exploitation of research results for science and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance and benefits for science • Relevance and benefits for business • Sustainability (medium and long-term perspective) • Added value of the research project as compared to a bundle of individual projects
Main criterion 2: Future potential analysis (ex-post and ex-ante)	
0-4	
Sub-criteria	Compliance measured on the basis of
Centre management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management at the organisational level (structure, procedures, functions) • Clear presentation and implementation of the cost and financing structure, budget compliance • Effective and efficient project management (definition of clear objectives (SMART), project planning including milestones and resource planning, priority setting, project controlling)
Leadership and career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management at staff member and team level (e.g. staff level: selection, definition of objectives, assessment of performance, annual appraisal interviews, feedback interviews, motivation interviews; team level: agreement of team objectives, task sharing, rules of cooperation, regular meetings, conflict management) • Staff member and team development (e.g. staff level: potential analysis, long-term individual staff development plans, development interviews, mentoring, part-time options; team level: development of professional methodical, group dynamic and intercultural team skills, knowledge transfer within the team, closed meetings, team coachings) • Percentage of female scientists adequate for the research field
Management of project environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted management of interests and expectations of the relevant project environments (clients, cooperation partners, network partners, funding providers, home institute etc.), careful balancing of conflicting expectations of the relevant project environments • Professional management of collaborations between the Centre and partner organisations (companies, research institutions) (establishment of long-term, stable relationships, adequate negotiation skills, clear formulation and sustainable implementation of agreements)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional presentation and targeted marketing (self-confident, context sensitive behaviour, response to questions and requests, provision of informative materials)
Future orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous, forward looking strategy development for the Centre and research work; development of visions through creative processes • Successful knowledge management, targeted learning, knowledge development and transfer between scientific and industrial partners

4.2 Checks by the FFG

All Core Documents submitted within the deadline of **1 February 2013, 12:00 a.m.** will be subjected to formal and compliance checks by the FFG.

The results of these checks will be notified to the members of the jury prior to the jury meeting.

4.2.1 What is the formal check?

During the formal check, the submitted Core Document is checked for **formal correctness and completeness**. The information contained in the Core Document is not examined during the formal check; this takes place during the assessment procedure. Should it transpire after the formal check that incorrect information has been given, the funding application for the second funding period of the respective “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise” may also be removed from consideration at a subsequent point in the procedure.

The **result** of the formal check will be communicated to the Laura Bassi Centres within **one week via eCall**.

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.

A “**Checklist of formal requirements**” is given in the project description of the Core Document.

4.2.2 What is the compliance check?

The FFG programme management will check the project for compliance with the relevant guidelines. The following aspects will be taken into account in the assessment:

- Status of the applicant (research institution, university/university of applied sciences or company) and all partners involved in the consortium
- Compliance with specific funding provisions:
 - funding amounts
 - funding rates
 - cost statements

In the event of approval, any conditions or recommendations specified as a result of the compliance check will be taken into account in formulating the recommendation for funding.

4.2.3 Credit check

The FFG will check the economic performance of the companies involved in the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” recommended for funding by the jury. This check will include an assessment of the financial situation of the companies (credit check) and the financial viability of the project. Insolvent companies are not eligible for funding.

4.3 How is the evaluation procedure organised?

The evaluation is carried out in accordance with the criteria listed in Chapter 4.1. and includes the following steps:

1. Peer review by (inter-)national experts in the field
2. Initial assessment by the jury
3. Hearing
4. Meeting of the jury

The **jury** will carry out an initial assessment based on the defined criteria and will provide an initial statement taking into account the written reviews.

4.3.1 Peer review

The peer review is carried out by **external, (inter-)national experts** (peers) from science, research management and human resources development based on the documents submitted. The peer reviewers assess the quality of the research programme and the consortium as well as the future potential of the “Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise” (see 4.1).

The following electronic documents will be made available to the peer reviewers via the eCall Jurytool as a basis for the review and for further information:

- Core Document, which constitutes the main source of information
- Minutes of the jury meeting held for the 1st funding period, including conditions and recommendations
- Application for the 1st funding period
- Project/Centre plan (= integral part of the contract), if required
- Consortium Agreement, if required
- Reports of the cost audits on site, if required
- Online evaluation form

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

This process will **result** in pooled anonymised reviews, which will be made available to the jury members prior to the hearing and the jury meeting.

4.3.2 Initial assessment by the jury

The Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth will establish a jury to carry out the interim evaluation. This jury will consist of three independent external, international experts from the following fields:

- 1 expert in science and innovation
- 1 expert in research management
- 1 expert in future potential analysis

with additional competencies concerning gender issues in research.

The FFG will nominate one jury member to act as Chair.

4.3.3 Hearing

The hearings are carried out by the **members of the jury** and persons with professional expertise (**international peers**) in the respective research field and in future potential analysis.

The detailed procedure and **date** of the hearing will be fixed by the FFG about two months prior to the hearing. The hearings will be conducted in English and are planned to take place in Vienna in the period from **mid- to late April 2013**. The hearing consists of a short presentation of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”, a poster session and an interview procedure. The questions of the hearing will be based on the review of the Core Document and are designed to discuss and complement the written presentations. Questions that have arisen in the course of the compliance check can also be asked in the hearing.

The jury and the peers present at the hearing will record the **results** in minutes in a closed session directly following the hearing.

4.3.4 Meeting of the jury

The meeting of the jury is planned to take place in Vienna in the period from mid- to late April 2013. For each “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise”, the jury will make a **recommendation whether or not to continue the Centre** based on the previous steps of the evaluation process. A positive evaluation may be supplemented with conditions and recommendations. A consistent justification will be available at the end of the meeting.

The **result** of the jury meeting will be a recommendation to the Federal Minister of Economy, Family and Youth on whether or not to support the Centre in the second funding period.

4.4 Who takes the funding decision?

The funding decision is the responsibility of the Federal Minister of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWF) and will be taken **on the basis of the funding recommendation made by the jury**.

5 PROCEDURE AFTER THE FUNDING DECISION

5.1 How is the funding contract for the 2nd funding period concluded?

If funding is granted, the FFG sends the consortium an **offer of funding**, which must be accepted within a certain time. If the consortium accepts the offer within the specified period of time, including any terms and conditions that may be imposed, a funding agreement will be prepared.

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

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

There is no legal right to receive funding until the funding contract has been concluded.

5.2 How should requirements and recommendations be taken into account?

Recommendations or binding requirements may be formulated during the assessment of the application. Requirements may be conditions for the conclusion of the funding agreement or payment of the planned instalments or conditions to be met during the course of the project.

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

5.3 How are the instalments of funding paid?

The first instalment will be paid once the funding agreement has been signed and any requirements and conditions have been met (prior to signing of the agreement).

Additional instalments will be transferred **according to project progress** and **based on the FFG instalment scheme**, after checking the interim reports (including interim accounts) specified in the funding agreement, and, if applicable, after any further requirements have been satisfied.

The FFG reserves the right to reduce funding in justified cases (e.g. actual costs lower than planned costs).

The **payment of funding** during the lifetime of the Laura Bassi Centre does **not** imply **approval of the costs**.

The FFG will carry out **on-site audits** during the funding period 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.

The **final instalment** corresponding to 10% of the funding approved will be retained and will only be transferred upon approval of the final project accounts. The payment amount will be based on the approved eligible costs and the funding rate in accordance with the funding agreement.

The **costs will be approved** once the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise” is **granted discharge** following the audit by the FFG Project Controlling & Audit Division.

FFG instalment scheme	
Project duration in years	3
Number of reports (interim reports and final report)	3
1st instalment (% of contractual funding)	30
2nd instalment (up to % of contractual funding)	30
3rd instalment (up to % of contractual funding)	30
Final instalment (up to % of contractual funding)	10

5.4 What reports and accounts are required?

As in the first funding period, an **interim report** and **interim accounts** must be submitted **via the reporting function of the eCall system** within one month of the reporting deadlines specified in the funding agreement.

Within two months of the project’s conclusion a **final report** and the **final accounts** must be presented, again **via the eCall reporting function**. A **duly executed confirmation of the correctness** of the electronic final report must be **sent by post**. The link to the relevant form will be activated in eCall after the final report is sent.

All reports and accounts must include the activities and associated costs of **all partners in the consortium** for which support has been paid by the FFG.

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

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“, obtainable at www.ffg.at/Kostenleitfaden.

In addition, the funding recipient undertakes to work together with the FFG and the responsible ministry to support PR work, as and when required. This relates in particular to the disclosure of non-confidential information and images for electronic dissemination portals and other media purposes.

5.5 How should changes to the project be communicated?

The FFG must be informed of **substantial changes to the project** or of **changes to the partners in the consortium** (e.g. changes in the ownership, bankruptcy proceedings) immediately after they become known.

Before any **changes** may be made **to points specified in the contract** (project contents, partners in the consortium, costs, timing etc.), a justified request to this effect must be submitted to and **approved by the FFG**.

The **request** for such a change, together with an appropriate description and justification for it, is to be placed via an **eCall message**. Any necessary supporting documentation should be uploaded as an attachment to the eCall message or sent by post.

It is possible to reallocate costs between cost categories (e. g. material costs to personnel costs), if required even between partners.

Minor cost reallocations should be justified, either in a report or via an eCall message. Minor cost reallocations **within the cost categories of a particular partner** are taken to mean the reallocation of amounts below 15 % of the partner's total costs or below EUR 15,000. Minor cost reallocations **between partners** are taken to mean the reallocation of amounts below 10 % of the total project costs and below EUR 100,000.

Major cost reallocations are all reallocations that cannot be considered as minor. Major cost reallocations must be requested in advance by means of the cost reallocation table (an FFG template) and a detailed explanation and justification. In the event of major cost reallocations between partners, the consent of the partners concerned must be submitted in the form of a duly signed letter, scanned and attached to the eCall message.

5.6 Can the funding period be extended?

If the goals of the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise” have not been reached 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** for up to a **maximum of one year**.

The **preconditions** for extension are that the funding recipient is not responsible for the project's delay and that the “Laura Bassi Centre of Expertise” is still eligible for funding.

An application for cost-neutral extension of the funding period must be placed by means of an eCall message within the approved project period.

5.7 What happens after the conclusion of the project?

After **the final report has been checked by external experts and the final accounts have been examined**, the FFG's Project Controlling & Audit Division will undertake an audit to establish whether the support has been used in accordance with the regulations. During the course of the **audit the final amount of eligible costs will be established**. The level of support paid may be reduced for scientific reasons, as well as on formal and legal grounds.

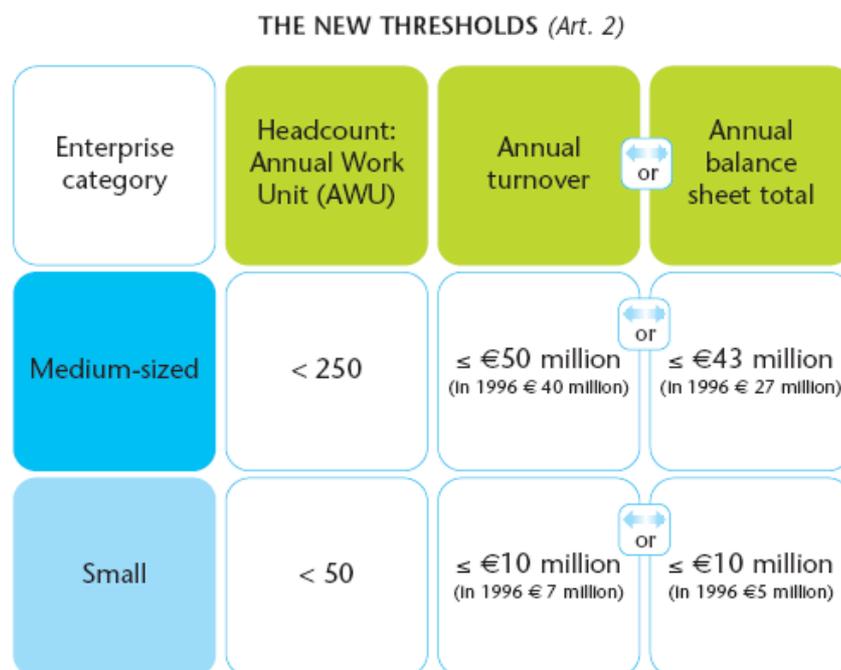
The **result** of the audit **will be communicated to the funding recipients in writing**. If the result is positive, the FFG will confirm that the support has been used in accordance with its regulations; in the event of a **negative** result, procedures may be initiated to secure **repayment** of funding.

If the result is **positive** and if the level of cost initially envisioned has been reached, the final instalment specified in the funding agreement will be transferred. **If the project is underspent** the level of support will be **reduced accordingly**.

6 Annex I: Abbreviations

LOC	Letter of Commitment
FFG	Austrian Research Promotion Agency (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH)
Programme Document	Programme Document for the Initiative Programme "Laura Bassi Centres of Expertise", January 2008

7 Annex II: SME Definition¹



¹ The new SME definition – User guide and model declaration, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_en.pdf