

RESEARCH Funding Program
Call Tech4People 2023

Open Call

Petra Zwirn

Edina Elezi

Vienna, April 2023

1. Name of Open Call

Call Tech4People 2023

2. Legal Framework

This open call – administered by the Vienna Business Agency. A service offered by the City of Vienna. (henceforth referred to as: "Vienna Business Agency") – is based on the Vienna Business Agency funding guidelines "Research/18 – 21+ Guidelines" (extended until 31.12.2023). These guidelines (henceforth referred to as such) are available for download at: www.wirtschaftsagentur.at. The Call Tech4People 2023 will be administered from within the framework of the RESEARCH funding program. The funding program will be treated in accordance with the provisions of the General Block Exemption Regulation ¹ (henceforth referred to as GBER), section 4 of the European Commission and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid ² (in short: "de minimis reg.").

3. Content Orientation and Objectives

3.1 *Opportunities and challenges of digital transformation*

In light of the direct and indirect effects of digital transformation on people that have been widely discussed for quite some time, the City of Vienna has taken up a clear position in favour of human-centric digitalisation. This means that a purely functional approach in terms of economic policy and wherever possible and necessary also from a legislative standpoint that is focused on what is technologically possible is countered by a design-focused view in the interest of digitalisation as a service to people.

The countless benefits of digitalisation – which in many ways are likely still not fully conceivable at this point – will only be utilisable if digitalisation is not seen as a seemingly dystopian law of nature that is largely devoid of social values and the possibilities of democratic influence. Instead, a better job must be done to make its direct benefits for people visible and, above all, useful.

The City of Vienna set down and specified these principles and objectives in a series of strategic papers and also backed them up with tangible implementation measures. These include the Digital Agenda 2025, which defines the

¹ Commission Regulation (EU) no. 651/2014 (GBER 2014: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651&from=FE>) of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 187/1 on 26.06.2014 (in short: "GBER 2014") together with the Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/1084 (regulation 2017: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017R1084&from=DE>) of 14 June 2017 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 156/1 on 20.06.2017 (in short: "AGVO regulation 2017") – together in short: "GBER". The following sections are particularly relevant: article 22 and 25, paragraph 2, sections b and c, 28 as well as 29 of the GBER.

² Commission Regulation (EU) no. 1407/2013 (de minimis reg.: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1407&from=LT>) of 18 Dezember 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the EC Treaty to de minimis aid; published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 352/1 on 24.12.2013 (in short: „de minimis reg.“).

idea that “Technology follows people, not the other way around” as a guiding principle³; the VIENNA 2030 – Economy & Innovation strategy, in the course of which the Viennese path of digitalisation was anchored as a central element of Vienna’s economic policy⁴; and the Vienna Manifesto on Digital Humanism⁵, which places particular emphasis on the human-centric approach: When developing new technologies, products, and services, the needs of various population groups as well as environmental and social aspects must be considered and integrated so that technological solutions do not arise that ignore people’s needs or possibly even run counter to people’s values.

Scientific and economic policy measures have already been taken with regard to the principles presented in this manifesto. Primarily measures that address scientific aspects were taken by way of funding calls of the scientific department of the City of Vienna and subsequently the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF). Together with the WWTF, the Vienna Business Agency implemented the Roadmaps for Digital Humanism funding programme, which was also aimed at businesses. The participation of businesses was significantly higher than expected, which – also in connection with the high-quality content of the submitted projects – underscored the relevance of this topic and also confirmed that there is tremendous potential for further steps in the Viennese business landscape.

The Vienna Business Agency is conducting this call on the basis of these fundamental principles and considerations. In particular, it is aimed at meeting the challenge of mapping out the directly perceptible benefits of digitalisation for people. This direct perceptibility is also an important precondition for ensuring that digitalisation is seen as something that is fundamentally positive and offers tremendous potential for improving the quality of life of individuals. Particularly in a society such as Austria’s that is highly sceptical towards technology, this is extremely important.

3.2 *Specific focus of the Tech4People 2023 call*

With this call, the Vienna Business Agency aims to support projects with social relevance that address current challenges in the field of digital transformation and that are likely to bring a positive, tangible impact. In any case, proposed solutions must (also) demonstrate a direct benefit for people in accordance with the information stated in item 3.1⁶. The basic principle that technologies are primarily adapted to people and not the other way around is also vital.

The call is aimed at R&D projects from the fields listed as **examples** below that have a direct positive impact on people:

³ [PO19-00224-DigitaleAgendaWien_Ue-en](#)

⁴ [AC15651933.pdf](#)

⁵ [Digital_Humanism_Manifesto-June_2019-DE-FINAL.indd \(tuwien.ac.at\)](#)

⁶ In this context, “direct” does not necessarily mean that products or services to be developed must only be targeted at end consumers. A benefit due to the presence of developments that are applied by third parties (e.g. digital prognostic tools in the medical field, the regulation of air quality in buildings, etc.) is also eligible for funding.

Health care, e-health

- Assistive technologies, ambient assisted living (AAL)
- Improved monitoring, prognostic, and diagnostic methods
- Methods and instruments for illness prevention
- Technologies and concepts for health care, nursing care, medical assistance, and rehabilitation

Education and media

- Defence against fake news and hate posts on social networks
- Digital systems for education, access to knowledge, and new possibilities for political and economic participation

Living and working

- Smart homes/smart buildings
- Robots as assistants or consulting service workers
- Robotics and artificial intelligence: new work, future work, people in the production of the future, human-robot collaboration, AI-based assistance systems, exoskeletons, sensor-based occupational safety systems, etc.

Security and data protection

- Cybersecurity
- Data protection/data sovereignty – right to private data and secure communication
- Personal safety (e.g. emergency call app)

Transport and mobility

- Learning systems, particularly involving interactions with humans (e.g. vehicle assistance systems)
- Safety

Climate protection

- Digital solutions for climate protection (intelligently controlled demand patterns, precision systems, etc.)
- Technical measures or guiding recommendations for action based on the measurement and monitoring of environmental impacts
- Regenerative economy: digital solutions that facilitate the responsible handling of resources (food tech, clean tech, green tech, climate tech, etc.)

4. Open Call Criteria

4.1 Basic Criteria

Under the *Tech4People 2023* call, following R&D projects ⁷ of companies that are located in Vienna or will establish a business location in Vienna for the purposes of implementing the project are eligible:

- Projects that also address current research questions and thus reach beyond pure product development and the current state of technology;
- Projects that demonstrate a basic strategy for economic implementation from which the city of Vienna has the potential for future economic gain;
- Projects that directly or indirectly result in product, service or process innovations.

In any case, the projects must have a primarily technological research and development content, with discernible risks of failure during implementation.

In accordance with EU definitions, eligible projects must fall within the fields of either "industrial research" (IR) or "experimental development" (ED) ⁸. Applicant businesses must come up with significant parts of the project-related R&D in-house and must also shoulder the majority of the risk associated with the realization of the project, in particular the risk associated with the economic implementation of the obtained R&D results.

4.2 Eligible Costs

Funding is provided for project-related costs such as R&D-related personnel costs that are incurred by the company (or by the cooperation partners in the case of a joint submission) in the form of internal or external personnel costs⁹, project-related material costs, and investment costs. A detailed list can be found in item 6 of the Research/18 – 21+ guidelines. It is particularly relevant to note that costs ¹⁰ related to the development of measurable indicators for the depiction of the climate impact are eligible up to a maximum amount of € 50,000.

All expenses must naturally stand in direct relation with the R&D project.

Expenses incurred by small and mid-sized businesses related to the protection of proprietary research and development results are also subject to funding ¹¹.

⁷ The eligible minimum project duration is 1 year, the maximum is 5 years.

⁸ See article 2, clause 84-86 of the GBER or appendix VII of the guidelines (effective from 01.01.2022).

⁹ *Personnel costs* are defined as the costs necessary to maintain employees for the applying business that are in direct relationship to R&D work. In the case of small businesses, the value of work performances by business owners and shareholders that are actively working on a project can be taken into consideration. *Expenses for external services*: see pt. 6 of the guidelines.

¹⁰ This applies to personnel costs and/or costs for external services.

¹¹ Costs in connection with the attainment, validation, or defense of patents and other immaterial assets are subject to a funding rate of 50%. See pt. 8 of the guidelines.

4.3 Funding Rate

Funding rates are dependent on research-grade classification as defined by EU provisions: Project elements (working packages) that are classified as experimental development (ED), are subject to a funding rate of 25% for large businesses, 35% for mid-sized businesses and 45% for small businesses. All project elements (working packages) classified as industrial research (IR) are subject to a funding rate of 50% for large businesses, 60% for mid-sized businesses, and 70% for small businesses.¹²

Endeavors should cause applying businesses to adopt maximum sustainability practices. Projects should furthermore be conducted using largely in-house research and development work, with the understanding that the applying business shall shoulder all associated technical and economic risks. Research facilities are thus only eligible as project partners. As knowledge transfer partners, research facilities are only eligible for a standard funding rate of 80%. Additional bonuses are not available to research facilities (see also pt. 8 of the Research/18 – 21+ guidelines).

5. Participants

Please review pt. 4 of the prevailing guidelines to determine if you are eligible to apply. Viennese, national, and international companies and companies in formation that meet the conditions defined in items 4.1. and 4.2. of the specified guidelines are eligible to submit applications as the lead partner¹³.

5.1 Cooperation Projects

In the case of cooperation projects, businesses may receive a bonus of up to 15 percentage points¹⁴, provided they fulfill the following criteria: Unlike contractual relationships, cooperation projects are not defined by the principal of paid service and service in return, but rather by mutual interest, whereby each partner within the framework of a cooperation contract predefines the rights and obligations assumed by each party. All partners of a jointly conducted research endeavor thus share the costs of and rights to all research results.

In instances of cooperation between at least two (independent) businesses, none of the individual businesses may bare more than 70% of the eligible costs. The endeavor must furthermore either include cooperation with at least one SME¹⁵ or be international in nature. In instances of cooperation between a business and a research facility, the research facility must shoulder at least 10% of eligible costs and, given that the investigation has been carried out in their facility, must be granted the right to publish results. In such cooperation arrangements, substantial portions of the engineering work and know-how development must be completed by the lead applicant.

¹² For further information please refer to the guidelines.

¹³ The companies must have a business site in Vienna at the latest upon the start of the project; see item 4.2.a. of the guidelines as well as Annex II of the specified guidelines.

¹⁴ Eligible up to a maximum of 80%. See also pt. 8 of the guidelines.

¹⁵ See pt. 4.2, note 2 of the aforementioned guidelines

5.2 Joint Application / Partner Application

If the proposed project is to be undertaken in cooperation with one or more partners, it is generally permissible to choose partners from all sectors and all geographic regions. It is, however, only possible to include the project costs of said cooperation partners in the joint funding application if the eligible partner is Vienna-based (for an exact definition see pt. 4.2 of the guidelines).

6. Maximum Funding

Maximum funding per project is € 500,000.

7. Available Budget

The total budget available for this open call is € 3,000,000.

8. Contracting Party

This open call is administered by the Vienna Business Agency, 1070, Mariahilfer Strasse 20. The funds available are provided by the Vienna Business Agency.

9. Application Period

Applications for this call can be submitted from Wednesday, April 5th, 2023, 12 am, until Monday, July 31st, 2023, 11.59 pm at <https://cockpit.wirtschaftsagentur.at>.

Applications can be completed in German or English and must be submitted online to the Vienna Business Agency within the period mentioned above. Application materials will be supplied upon successful registration at <https://cockpit.wirtschaftsagentur.at/Cockpit/Downloads> from the time that this call is announced until the end of the application deadline. The original copy of the "Certificate of Application Authenticity" (located on the last page of the online form), which must be signed by an authorized member of your business, is due by the application deadline and should be printed out, signed with a legally binding, authorized signature, scanned and attached to the digital submission. The certificate can also be sent via email to the Vienna Business Agency when a qualified electronic signature is used.

10. Evaluation

Applications must comply with the abovementioned objectives and requirements for submission. Applications will be evaluated according to evaluation criteria stated in pt. 14 of the guidelines, and according to a standardized evaluation system that can be found at www.wirtschaftsagentur.at. The evaluation will be made by an expert jury. Should there be doubts on behalf of an applicant regarding the impartiality of potential evaluators they have the option to exclude a maximum of two individuals or institutions by submitting the names and addresses of the same. The contents of the applications and the detailed evaluations will be accessible solely by the contracting party (i.e. Vienna Business Agency) and the jury members. The contracting party reserves the right to publish the names of

applicants who receive a positive grant decision. The project title, a short project description, the grant amount, and the jury's statement may likewise be published.

11. Further Procedure

Following the completion of the evaluations of applications that have met the open call requirements, applications will be ranked according to quality and recommended by the Vienna Business Agency committee for funding in accordance with the stipulations of the budgetary framework. In accordance with EU regulations, maximum aid intensities are hereby taken into consideration.

The municipal administration of the City of Vienna will award grants based on these recommendations. The specified subsidies are all maximum amounts.

12. Funds

12.1 Cash subsidies for R&D

Cash subsidies will be awarded for the realization of the best R&D projects. The allocation of funds will follow the rank assigned to the evaluated applications. Subsidies will be provided in the following amount until the budget for those subsidies has been depleted.

The subsidy amount will be calculated according to project type and the eligibility of project costs as determined during the evaluation process and pursuant to the guidelines.

12.2 Bonus for Women

In the case of a positive funding decision, projects that can be proven to be led by qualified females who are employed by the Vienna-based applicant businesses (lead applicants) will receive a € 10,000 bonus.¹⁶

12.3 Payment

The 50% advance payment and final payment shall be disbursed upon successful completion of the final accounting statement and presentation of the final report. Installments are possible under certain conditions¹⁷.

13. Further Information

Information about this open call as well as supporting documents (in particular the guidelines and the evaluation system) can be found at www.wirtschaftsagentur.at. For additional information, please contact Edina Elezi by email Elezi@wirtschaftsagentur.at or Petra Zwirn by email zwirn@wirtschaftsagentur.at.

¹⁶ According to pt. 8.5. of the guidelines.

¹⁷ According to pt. 16.3., 17.4. and 17.5. of the guidelines