

Funding Collaboration between Science and Industry: The Austrian Experience

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Brief Outline



- Funding Background in Austria
- Chapter 2.2. and Chapter 3 of the current R&D&I Framework: Austrian Experiences
- Short Recommendations for the Future Framework



Funding Background in Austria



Broad range from science to industry

- Bottom-up programmes for individual industrial research projects
- Structural programmes for science-industry cooperation (e.g. centres of excellence)
- Thematic programmes
- Emphasis on cooperation between research organisations and companies



Experiences: Definition of Research Organisations (2.2.)

- The existing definition for research organisations is quite clear.
- A clarification would be helpful that the dissemination of knowledge (not only technology transfer) is included.
- The status of knowledge transfer agencies and innovation intermediaries is currently not explicitly applied and therefore often precarious.



Experiences: Non-Economic versus Economic Activities (3.1.)

Non-economic activities versus economic activities

- The clarification in 3.1. is helpful; in general the primary activities of research organisations are of non-economic character.
- Most research organisations operate mainly non-economic activities, but carry out economic activities to a certain extend too.
- Research organisations have worked out guidelines for the distinction between the two kind of activities. Nowadays the separation of costs and funding of non-economic activities and economic activities is common practice for research organisations.



Experiences: Indirect State Aid to Undertakings (3.2.)



Contract Research (3.2.1.)

- Doing contract research at market prizes was a challenging process for universities as well as for undertakings.
- Selling their services at market prize or at a prize covering full costs has become common to research organisations in the meantime.
- In general research organisations have worked out guidelines and standardized contracts and fees for their research services.



Experiences: Indirect State Aid to Undertakings (3.2.)



Collaboration of Undertakings and Research Organisations (3.2.2.)

- According to 3.2.2., last paragraph, it has become clear that the output must be equally distributed to the input of the partners to be qualified as no State aid.
- The Austrian guidelines foresee the general requirement to present a contractual agreement between the partners concerning the allocation of the rights and contributions to the project.
- Most of the research organisations use guidelines and standardized contracts for collaboration projects.
- The National Contact Point Intellectual Property Rights observes and supports the services for a balanced allocation of IPR.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Definition of Research Organisations

- The definition of research organisations is quite clear, no great changes are needed.
- Clarifying the definition of research organisations applying to the technology and knowledge transfer agencies and innovation intermediaries makes sense. A definition for innovation intermediaries would be helpful.
- The proposal of the Issues Paper to develop a guidance for qualifying economic and non-economic activities seems to be too difficult to be executed in practice. Regarding to this item no changes are needed.



Conclusions and recommendations



Research infrastructure

- Funding of research infrastructures is an essential building block of the Europe 2020 strategy. Therefore funding criteria need to be worked out in the future Framework.
- Therefore we appreciate the proposal of the Commission to define R&D infrastructure.
- In the new Framework, a clarification should be given that R&D infrastructure used exclusively for non-economic activities is qualified as no State aid.



Conclusions and recommendations



Research infrastructure

- Dual use: R&D infrastructure of research organisations which is also used by undertakings either on the basis of contracts or in collaboration.
- We recommend to use the analogic phrases and abstracts as laid down in the current Framework 3.2.2., last paragraph.
- There should be simple rules for funding R&D infrastructure of research organisations, which can be used by undertakings.
- The Framework should foresee possibilities for subsidizing SMEs using the R&D infrastructure.



Conclusions and recommendations



Research infrastructure

- Funding R&D infrastructure could constitute State aid, nevertheless simple criteria are needed to encourage the investment in new research infrastructure.
- Innovation intermediaries could fulfil an important matching function for collaborative establishment and collaborative use of R&D infrastructure.
- New possibilities to fund R&D infrastructure established mainly by undertakings should be considered too.



Thank you for your attention!

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