

 **Bundesministerium**
Bildung, Wissenschaft
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Taiwan – Austria

Project funding for internationalisation between higher education institutions

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) of Austria and the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Taiwan

Programme Document

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1. Introduction

This new Project Funding Taiwan-Austria intends to promote long-term cooperation between higher education institutions (universities, private universities, universities of applied sciences, university colleges of teacher education and non-university research institutions in the area of basic research) in the competence of the BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research) in Vienna and the MOE (Ministry of Education) in Taipei.

The aim of the programme is to stimulate joint activities and to contribute to direct collaborations among universities, higher education and research institutions in Taiwan and Austria. It is based on a mutual interest to considerably improve knowledge exchange on an international level and to strengthen the profiles of the institutions involved.

Thus, the BMBWF and the MOE will financially support the initiating phase of the partnerships. The universities and research institutions are given the flexibility to implement the concrete collaboration according to their internationalization strategies.

This programme document shall serve as a common document that determines all procedural and technical regulations for implementing the Project Funding Taiwan-Austria.

2. Bilateral Administration

The OeAD – Austria’s Agency for Education and Internalisation – will be in charge of administering all relevant programme procedures on the Austrian side. The MOE will be in charge of the administration of all relevant programme procedures on the Taiwanese side. These two parties will maintain close contact to ensure a smooth implementation of the programme.

Furthermore, the administrative teams will provide information to applicants and give guidance in elaborating the partnerships. For better coordination throughout the whole administrative procedures, both parties will nominate responsible contact persons.

Responsible contact person in Austria:

Dipl.-Übers. Konstanze Pirker
Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD)
Department for International Cooperation in Higher Education
Ebendorferstraße 7, A-1010 Vienna, Austria
+43 1 534 08 471, taiwanprogramm@oead.at

Responsible contact persons in Taiwan:

Ms. Yunlin Hung
Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education
No.5, Zhongshan S. Rd., Zhongzheng Dist., Taipei City 10051, Taiwan (R.O.C.)
+886 2 7736 5893, yunlin806@mail.moe.gov.tw

Dr. Elisa Hsiang-yueh WANG
Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office
Wagramer Str. 19/11 OG, 1220 Vienna, Austria
+43 1 212 4720 88, bildung@taipei.at

3. Publication of the call documents

The call will be opened and closed at the same time. All official documents will be prepared bilaterally and published on the respective websites in English.

4. Fields of sciences and potential activities

The Project Funding Taiwan-Austria promotes the following fields of science:

- Natural Sciences
- Technical Sciences
- Agricultural Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Arts

Examples of activities and measures to initiate and intensify sustainable partnerships are:

- Meetings for the preparation of submission of international project applications [such as Erasmus + Mundus, at FFG (Austrian Research Promotion Agency) or at FWF (Der Wissenschaftsfonds) or at Taiwanese funding institutions];
- Support of exchange of teachers with a focus on resulting student and trainee exchange;
- Support for the exchange of teachers offering teaching content at the host institution, which is not offered there in the regular course;
- Meetings for the preparation of joint study programmes or regular exchange of students;

There will be no funds available from the Project Funding Taiwan-Austria for activities and measures that are already being supported by other funding programmes from Austria and/or EU funds (e.g. Erasmus+).

5. Eligibility and application process

Researchers at universities, universities of applied sciences and non-university research institutions in the areas of basic research are eligible for application. The minimum

requirement for the Austrian project coordinator is a PhD/Dr. degree. The minimum requirement for project members (3-5 project members from each partner) is an enrolment in a study programme (undergraduates, graduates).

The focus of the programme lies on new international partnerships. Follow-up applications of bilateral partnerships whose project coordinator already received funding from this programme to carry out a joint project are not eligible.

Language proficiency: Depending on the study or research project, applicants have to prove good knowledge of English, German or Mandarin in their specialized fields to ensure smooth communication among the partners.

6. Submission of proposals

6.1. Partners and project coordinators

It is up to the applicants to find suitable partners for cooperation activities. The proposals must be submitted at both the OeAD by the Austrian project coordinator and at the MOE by the Taiwanese project coordinator.

Every proposed partnership should nominate one project coordinator each in Austria and Taiwan. These project coordinators are the sole counterpart to the authorities and are responsible for the proper use of funds according to the call guidelines.

6.2. Forms and documents

The entire application for the research project must be submitted in English online at both authorities. The OeAD processes the call via an online application tool. In Taiwan, the proposals are to be submitted via project proposal.

The application must include the following documents/information:

- Brief academic CV for each project member (max. 3 pages)
- Project description including the methodological part (3-5 pages)
- Brief description of all partner institutions
- Brief description of the project tasks of all project members (Austrian and Taiwan)
- List of relevant publications of the last 2 years
- Further cooperation perspectives
- Time schedule (the total duration of the project covering 1-2 years), included in the project description
- A financing plan (with cost statements regarding all revenues and expenditures) which can be included in the online application form (Austria)
- Letter of intent (incl. authorized signature)

Incomplete applications and applications not complying with these criteria will not be accepted for the further selection process.

7. Project duration

The project duration for proposed partnerships is set to a period of one or two years. The project start shall be defined by the beneficiaries. All further project deadlines (interim and final reporting) will be based on the starting date and defined by the funding authorities.

8. Funding regulations

The programme is equally financed by the BMBWF and the MOE.

- **Visiting research stays in Taiwan and Austria are obligatory. The sending side will cover the travel expenses as well as the accommodation costs of its researchers.**

Only project members are eligible for a reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs for project-specific travels. Travel and subsistence costs include international and domestic travel costs. Therefore, the project coordinators have to report about all financial matters to their respective authorities.

Eligible Costs for Austrian researchers:

- Monthly grant rate: € 1.000,-- (max. 4 months)
- Short term stays: € 100,-- per day (up to a maximum of 10 days)
- Travel costs subsidy: maximum € 1.500,-- based on the submitted invoices
- Up to € 2.000,-- per project of the granted funding may be applied for project-related material costs.

We would like to point out that when planning the trip, the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness must be observed!

The reimbursement of air travels for Austrian researchers travelling to Taiwan will be made according to the actual costs incurred. Only flight tickets in the economy class or train tickets in the second class will be accepted. The use of a taxi instead of public transportation in Austria requires a written explanation. Supporting documents which have to be provided with the financial report are: Original ticket or, in the case of air travel, the boarding card and the invoice plus proof of payment.

Scholarships can only be awarded as part of approved projects. Only costs generated during the project period are considered eligible. This means that costs incurred before or after the project period will not be reimbursed. Unused funds have to be reimbursed to the project funding authority.

Eligible costs for Taiwanese researchers: see announcement of MOE

Travel and subsistence cost for Taiwanese researchers will be reimbursed according to internal rules of procedures of the MOE.

9. Evaluation

The selection follows a multistage process:

1. Examination of formal requirements and assessment of the application's plausibility
2. Expert evaluation procedure (peer-review)
3. Final joint decision of the two authorities BMBWF and MOE

9.1. Formal evaluation procedure and assessment of the application's plausibility

- All proposals are to be submitted to both national contact points. Proposals which are not submitted on both sides in time will not be considered for further procedures. After the call's closure, the OeAD and the MOE carry out a formal review of all documents. Furthermore, they prepare and exchange a list of all proposals received within two weeks. Among other information, the list should indicate which proposals are formally valid or invalid, and which will be considered for further procedures or not.

The formal criteria are as follows:

- Timely submission
- Completeness of application documents
- Bilateral submission

9.2. Expert evaluation procedure (peer-review)

Following the formal evaluation, all formally valid proposals will be submitted to recognized national experts in the fields of research represented by the proposals. An expert evaluation of each project will be carried out in Taiwan and in Austria at the same time. To receive comparable results, standardized evaluation sheets will be prepared and provided to the experts. Once the expert evaluations are completed, a summary of the results will be exchanged and used for the preparation of a joint selection committee.

In order to guarantee transparency throughout the decision process, the evaluation criteria will be published in the call documents. All experts have to declare that they do not have a conflict of interest at the time of their appointment.

Both authorities have to ensure that the anonymity of the experts involved is preserved throughout the whole decision-making process and beyond. The experts shall be given a sufficient timeframe for their evaluation. Based on experience in Austria, the assignment of experts and the completion of their evaluations may last about two to three months.

The experts will evaluate each proposal based on the following criteria:

- Scientific quality of the intended research project, including:
 - Feasibility of the joint research plan
 - Adequacy of the scientific method

- Competence and expertise of the scientists/research teams involved (max. 25 points)

- Plausibility of the described further cooperation perspective (max. 15 points)

- Project applications submitted by early-stage or mid-career researchers (10 points) OR project applications with the involvement of doctoral students, early-stage (5 points) or female researchers (5 points) will receive up to 10 points additionally. (max. 10 points)

Maximum score: 50 points

On the Taiwanese side, national evaluation criteria for bilateral projects will be applied.

9.3. Bilateral decision by a joint selection committee

Based on the results of national evaluations carried out in Austria and in Taiwan, a joint shortlist of projects to be funded will be constituted through consultations between the MOE and the BMBWF. The project selection will be carried out by the Austrian-Taiwanese Joint Commission.

10. Grant agreement

If a proposal is selected for funding by the joint selection committee a grant agreement between the beneficiaries and the authorities will be signed. This agreement determines all legal rights and obligations of all parties involved.

General provisions for Austrian subsidies are applicable:

- There is no legal claim to a grant even if all application requirements are fulfilled;
- The beneficiaries have to be present in Austria or in Taiwan to pursue their research activities;
- The scholarship rate is intended for single recipients only, not for accompanying family members;
- The beneficiary acknowledges that the funder and the executing agency are entitled to:
 - a) use the personal data generated in connection with the initiation and execution of the contract, if necessary, for the conclusion and execution of the grant contract, for control purposes and for the performance of tasks assigned to the budgetary authority by law;
 - b) collect and transmit the personal data required for the purposes of assessing the existence of the eligibility conditions and for verifying the proof of use, provided by him or her and in addition also through inquiries at other federal bodies concerned or another legal entity which grants or transacts relevant subsidies or third parties as well

as conducting transparency portal queries in accordance with Section 32 (5) Transparency Database Act 2012 (TDBG 2012), BGBl. I No. 99/2012.

- The beneficiary acknowledges that it may happen that data must be transmitted or disclosed especially to bodies and agents of the Court of Auditors (in particular pursuant to § 3 para. 2, § 4 para. 1 and § 13 para. 3 of the Court of Auditors Act 1948, Federal Law Gazette No. 144), the Federal Ministry of Finance (in particular according to §§ 57 to 61 and 47 BHG 2013, Federal Law Gazette I No. 139/2009 and § 14 ARR 2014) and the EU in accordance with EU law.

11. Reporting

After completion of the first project year, an interim report must be submitted within one month by the Austrian project coordinator to the OeAD and by the Taiwanese project coordinator to the MOE.

Project coordinators have to submit a final report to the OeAD at the end of the project. They agree that the report will be published (min. 5 pages).

11.1. The interim report

The interim report: a short, concise summary of all activities comprehensible to lay persons (1-2 pages).

Financial report: a breakdown of all costs directly connected to the project during the first project year. The financial breakdown has to be calculated according to the format of the budget sheet of the proposal.

11.2. The final report

The final report: a detailed summary of the project activities (min. 5 pages).

Financial report: a detailed list of all costs directly connected to the whole project period. The financial breakdown has to be calculated according to the format of the budget sheet of the proposal.

The reporting documents have to be sent in pdf format to the respective authorities. For better auditability, the financial report has to be provided as excel files.

12. Deadlines and Schedule

Time schedule	In Austria and Taiwan
Announcement of the call	March 20, 2024
Closing date for applications	May 15, 2024
Evaluation of the projects	August 30, 2024

Final selection by the committee	September 2024
Start of projects	October 2024

* The start of the projects depends on the future development of the Covid-19 situation in Austria and Taiwan. October 2024 is the earliest possible date.