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.
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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