VORZEIGEREGION
ENERGIE

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Guidelines Energy Model Region Call 2017

RTI initiative by the Climate and Energy Fund

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Preface

The transition to a more efficient power supply based primarily on renewable sources of energy requires radical new approaches and intensified efforts in research and innovation.

The ENERGY research and innovation strategy presented on 23 March 2017 places a particular focus on the implementation of large-scale solutions, development and test phases. A first step in this direction is the Climate and Energy Fund's RTI initiative on Energy Model Regions.

Austria is an international leader in the development of more efficient, more intelligent, and predominantly renewable energy systems. The Energy Model Region initiative is designed to extend this leadership further. Austrian citizens should be able to experience the use of innovative energy technologies at first hand. This arouses curiosity, with familiarity generating trust in, and acceptance of, innovative technologies.

We invite you to submit your innovative project and join us in shaping Austria's successful future.

Theresia Vogel
Managing Director Climate and Energy Fund

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1.0 Key Items at a Glance

Overview		
Brief description	The Energy Model Region serves to develop and demonstrate model solutions for intelligent, safe and affordable energy and transport systems for the future based on innovative energy technologies from Austria. Funding of 20 to 40 million euros will be made available for each model region over the duration of this RTI initiative. Funding will go to up to three thematically different model regions. At least one significant large-scale model region will be established as part of this initiative.	
Eligible projects	Clusters of R&D projects for the development and large-scale demonstration of energy technologies and energy-relevant transport technologies with the aim of up to 100 % renewable energy supply.	
Technology readiness levels	Model regions aimed at reaching technology readiness levels 8 to 9 at the end of the project will be given priority in this RTI initiative. Sub-projects of a model region may also aim at lower technology readiness levels (primarily 5-9).	
Budget	up to EUR 40 million (of which EUR 15 million from the 2016/2017 budgets and another EUR 25 million from the 2018 budget)	
Selection process	2-stage process with hearing	
Submission deadlines for 2nd Call	Stage 1 – cluster application: Stage 2 – funding applications for sub-projects:	31 July 2017, 12:00 noon 04 May 2018, following positive evaluation of the cluster application
Language	English	
Max. duration of model region[1]	8 years (implementation 2018–2025)	
Online information	www.ffg.at/vorzeigeregion-energie	

[1] Start of first sub-project to submission of final report for last sub-project. The durations of the individual sub-projects submitted in stage 2 are subject to the provisions of the relevant Thematic Guidelines.

1.1 Funding instruments for sub-projects

The RTI initiative Energy Model Region is carried out with research and environmental funding made available by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and Kommunalkredit Public Consulting (KPC).
The research funding instruments include "Innovation Lab", "Cooperative R&D Projects of Industrial Research and Experimental Development" and "Flagship Projects". Applications are submitted to and processed by the FFG.

Demonstration facilities which have a relevant environmental impact (reduction in energy consumption, innovative renewable energy supply, etc.) can apply for funding under the National Environmental Support Scheme. Applications are submitted to and processed by KPC.

Funding instruments available for sub-projects				
Research funding instruments (managed by FFG)				Environmental funding instrument (managed by KPC)
Instrument	Innovation Lab (optional)	Cooperative R&D Project	Flagship Project	Demonstration Facility National Environmental Support Scheme
Research category	Not applicable	Industrial Research (IR) or Experimental Development (ED). **Sub-projects submitted as Cooperative R&D Projects (IR) in stage 2 are limited to max. 20 % of total costs of the cluster project submitted.** [2]	Industrial Research (IR) and/or Experimental Development (ED). Both research categories can be included in one project; **IR must not exceed 50 % of total project costs.**	Not applicable
Max. funding [EUR)	5 million	100,000 to max. 2 million	min. 2 million	max. 3 million
Funding rate	50 %	35 – 85 %	35 – 85 %	40 % – 50 %
Project duration	max. 8 years	max. 3 years	2 to max. 4 years	Not applicable
Cooperation required	No	Yes	Yes	No

[2] These Cooperative R&D Projects of category IR provide the basis for the subsequent sub-projects of category ED in the Energy Model Region. The allocation to research category IR must be examined by the jury.

1.2 Process and submission

Projects are **selected** in a **two-stage** process consisting of a **cluster application (stage 1)** and funding applications for the **sub-projects (stage 2).**
In **stage 1**, a joint **cluster application** for the Energy Model Region must be submitted by the relevant cluster coordinator in coordination with the project partners. The application must be sent to the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) by 31 July 2017, 12:00 noon at the latest.
The full set of application documents must be submitted via eCall (https://ecall.ffg.at) by the specified deadline. Applications submitted after 31 July 2017, 12:00 noon, will not be taken into account and will be excluded from the selection process.

In order to clarify stipulations and requirements, the submission of a cluster project requires an **obligatory preliminary meeting** with the Climate and Energy Fund and the FFG **no later than 1 month prior to the submission deadline.**
In **stage 2**, funding applications may only be submitted for those sub-projects of a model region which are allocated to a positively assessed cluster application and have been recommended for submission by the evaluation panel. The funding applications of the sub-projects are submitted in coordination with the designated cluster coordinator.

Please note:
If the application does not meet the formal requirements for project submissions in accordance with the conditions and criteria of the relevant funding instrument and the call, and if the deficiencies are not rectifiable, the application will be **excluded from the further procedure** and will be **formally rejected without exception** in accordance with the principle of equal treatment of applications.

A detailed check list specifying the conditions and criteria of the relevant funding instrument and the call can be found at the beginning of the relevant application forms (Project Description). Funding may only be granted if it has an incentive effect. In stage 2 of the selection process, all project partners must therefore declare via eCall whether the funding leads to a change in their behaviour.

2.0 Strategic Focus and Goals

2.1 Programme strategy

Our energy systems are changing. They are being transformed into sustainable, more flexible, decentralised, integrated, and intelligent networked systems which elevate the consumer to the role of active participant. It is essential that this radical transformation can be managed cost-effectively and to the benefit of our entire economic system. These objectives are also being followed at European level through the Strategy Plan for Energy Technology (SET Plan), the technology policy pillar of the "Energy Union". The goal is to make Europe the world's leading region for renewable energies, and the pioneer of a zero-carbon economy.
With its focus on developing more efficient and intelligent energy systems based predominantly on renewables, Austria has quickly and successfully positioned itself as a leading energy pioneer, building up technological expertise and developing demonstration projects of international repute. The RTI initiative Energy Model

Region is intended to build on previous findings, existing technologies and solutions, as well as completed pilot projects, in order to drive forward development, system integration, and market entry. This strategy is designed to support and strengthen Austria's leading position in this field, and to open up opportunities for Austrian stakeholders.
This programme builds on the findings of the Smart Grids 2.0 (www.e2050.at/smartgrids) strategy process, and the experience gained from previous research, development and demonstration activities undertaken in Austria (e.g. Energy Research Programme, Smart Cities Demo, City of the Future, House of the Future) at national and/or European level.
The programme is directed towards all stakeholders engaged in research, development and innovation relevant to the energy transition.
The ENERGY research and innovation strategy presented on 23 March 2017 places a particular focus on the implementation of large-scale solutions, development and test phases. A first step in this direction is the Energy Model Region initiative organised by the Climate and Energy Fund.

2.2 Programme objectives

Energy model regions use innovative Austrian energy technologies to develop and demonstrate model solutions for tomorrow's intelligent, secure and affordable energy and transport systems. They demonstrate the efficient coordination of generation, consumption, system management and storage, in an overall system optimised for all the market participants, and with up to 100 % renewable energy supply from largely regional sources. With a reduction in the consumption of non-renewable resources, the challenge is to optimise the integration of renewable energies, as well as essential economic investments along the entire value chain.

This focuses on the key challenges of the energy transition, namely integrating the highest possible proportion of renewable energies, flexibility, a variety of security aspects, appropriate business processes and attractive service and business models, establishing new cooperative partnerships and including new stakeholders, as well as efficient technologies and system integration.

The declared objective of the Climate and Energy Fund is to support model regions, each focusing on a different topic, which develop and demonstrate solutions relevant to the central challenges of the energy transition.

In this context, the term **"region"** defines the reasonable and goal-related project limits with respect to the territory covered and the stakeholders involved. An appropriate scale and associated context are important, e.g. wind region, industrial region, federal province, economic region, Austrian sector, etc. Projects which transcend provincial boundaries are welcomed. Each model region should be designed for a specific energy system, set of framework requirements, potential for innovation, and opportunities for realisation in a particular region.
Designed to run over eight years, the long-term RTI initiative is intended to help secure and extend value creation in the field of innovative energy technologies in Austria, based on robust framework conditions and funding opportunities.
Against this background and to achieve the objectives of the Climate and Energy Fund, the following **3 objectives** are defined for the **Energy Model Region initiative** in accordance with the strategic focus of the programme. Substantially contributing to achieving these programme objectives is a precondition for a positive evaluation.

Objective 1: Development and model use of local energy and energy-related transport technologies for the large-scale field testing of intelligent system solutions in live operation.
The model region should demonstrate that, by applying Austrian innovations, an up to 100 % renewable energy supply is achievable, makes economic sense, and offers ecological advantages.

Objective 2: Strengthening and developing Austria as a lead market for innovative energy and energy-related transport technologies and services.
The lead market assists Austrian businesses in positioning themselves as lead suppliers and acts as a visible point of reference in the international market.

Objective 3: Involvement and active participation of users

The model region should demonstrate the use of energy technologies as close to actual operating conditions as possible. This requires the involvement of users – businesses, end users, local communities, etc.

Furthermore, Austrian citizens should be able to experience the use of innovative energy technologies in large-scale projects. This arouses curiosity, with familiarity generating trust in, and acceptance of, innovative technologies.

3.0 Purpose of the funding

3.1 Requirements for the model regions

The focus of model regions should be to develop prototypes, demonstration measures and pilot projects, as well as to test and validate new or improved products, processes and services in an environment representative of actual operating conditions (technology readiness level 5 -9; medium-term goal of achieving technology readiness level 8 to 9 by the end of the project).
Based on the Energy Model Region programme strategy (see also 1st Call), model regions should demonstrate the following:

- **Comprehensive pooling** of individual measures based on implementation-oriented overall strategies;
- Viable **supra-regional and multidisciplinary innovation structures** which are designed to find solutions to the key challenges of the energy transition;
- **An overall concept** for the model region, aligned to a vision and based on scenario analyses, including a comprehensive development and implementation strategy;
- **Modelling of entire value chains through to the customer** which are as commercially viable as possible under real conditions;
- **Pilot tests and demonstrations with a broad impact** involving relevant stakeholders (users, employees, members of the public) which demonstrate technological advantages and economic potentials, amongst others. The inclusion of stakeholders at an early stage is welcomed.
- **Transferability and scalability** of the developed solutions **to national and international markets**, e.g. good prospects of economic success in marketing the innovations (including patents) and high growth potential. Where further development of the legal or regulatory conditions is relevant, the approaches required must be outlined.
- The developed and demonstrated solutions must be **highly feasible**, i.e. scalable, easily integrated, reliable, etc.

Possible components of a model region include, for example:

- Intelligent power and heating systems which balance out the fluctuating availability of renewable energies and increase supply security, while guaranteeing reliable interaction between market stakeholders and infrastructures, and mobilising demand, production, and storage flexibility;
- System integration and further development of storage for wind and solar energy, innovative electrochemical storage, integrated energy (Power2Heat, Power2Gas, Power2X) etc.;

NOTE: Where pilot projects require exemptions or local authority permissions for their implementation (e.g. with respect to data protection, security, competition law, public procurement law), then this must be clarified with the relevant authorities and indicated in the proposal.

3.2 Expected results

The results of the model region should include the following:

- A model solution to **technologically and scientifically sophisticated, economic and socially significant problems and challenges** associated with the energy transition, and with significant potential to reduce greenhouse gases;
- **Pre-existing elements** (individual technologies, system architectures, business processes, pilot projects, available assets, etc.) **are combined to form comprehensive system solutions which are tested and validated in practice;**
- **White spots and other developments needed to implement the strategy are identified and applied in specific projects** (individual technologies, additional pilot projects, cross-sectional analyses, exchange of know-how, adoption and roll-out strategies, implementation projects, development of business models, cooperation platforms etc.);
- **Strategic knowledge about effectiveness** (integration of renewable energies, viability of business models, etc.) and efficiency (energy and resource **efficiency**, costs-benefits, etc.);
- **Further development, testing and validation** of new or improved technologies, products, processes and services under real operating conditions;
- Setting up of **large-scale, significant** and **internationally visible model regions** for Austrian energy technologies;
- **Accelerating market launch** of Austrian energy technologies through early involvement of users in the development process;
- Development of **integrated, scalable, comprehensive solutions** for tomorrow's energy systems **across several system levels and fields of technology** in accordance with the overall concept;
- Setting up of an **innovation ecosystem** with a medium-term stable structure and supporting environment which guarantees coordination of the consortium and sub-projects over the entire duration of the model region, and which provides a platform for developing and implementing the strategy. Most notably, this should encourage interdisciplinary and intersectoral co-creation processes involving relevant stakeholders (e.g. users, employees, members of the public), as well as the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups into the consortium. The expertise and, where necessary, requisite infrastructure for managing the innovation platforms must be established. The project must maintain the stakeholder network and ensure internal quality assurance and documentation, knowledge transfer and networking both within the consortium and with external partners. The model region must also be made visible in order to enhance its effectiveness (reaching the target groups required for implementation, national and international cooperations etc.).

3.3 Success factors in implementing the project

The proposals should specify the targeted (measurable) objectives for the particular model region and the planned sub-projects. The following factors are important:

- **Innovations** resulting from the initiative
  Criteria: prototypes, demonstrators, pilot applications, product improvements, business models, etc.
- The **innovative content** of the developed and demonstrated solutions must clearly surpass the current state-of-the-art
  Criteria: utility models, patent applications, patents, etc.
- **Public visibility** (national and international) for the developed and demonstrated solutions amongst expert audiences and society
  Criteria: publications in respected journals, presentations of project findings at conferences, trade shows and workshops, etc.
- The **market access activities** and further technological developments initiated by the model regions;
  Criteria: involvement of users (businesses, end users, communities, etc.) in developing and implementing the demonstrators, setting up innovation platforms, community building (expansion and strengthening of cooperation with business – especially SMEs and start-ups – and research institutions), follow-up projects etc.
- **Economic successes** resulting from the funded projects
  Criteria: spin-offs, number of jobs created or secured, new orders, new customers, revenue increases, etc.

3.4 Public involvement and dissemination of results

The model regions should be designed so that the public can experience the use of innovative energy technologies in large-scale projects. The participation and involvement of a significant portion of the population is intended to foster awareness, trust and acceptance of innovations in energy systems.
The resultant outcomes must be presented to the public. They should demonstrate that Austrian energy technologies make the energy and mobility transition technically feasible, economically sensible, and ecologically advantageous.
A targeted information and communication plan must be developed. It should focus on informing users and encouraging broad acceptance and demand for innovative energy technologies. Supra-regional and international visibility must be ensured.

3.5 Supplementary funding and financial assistance

It is in the applicant's own interest to investigate supplementary funding and financial assistance (EU, federal, provincial, municipal) available for the proposed project of the Energy Model Region initiative.
This applies, in particular, to the use of commercially available distributed energy generation and storage technologies, electric vehicles, infrastructure components, etc. which are not eligible for funding under the present call (see Section 5.8). The results of these investigations must be presented in the proposal.

3.6 Accompanying research

The Climate and Energy Fund is separately supporting accompanying research throughout the duration of the Energy Model Region initiative.
The objective is to increase the effectiveness of the RTI initiative, to achieve a high level of visibility and a broad impact both in Austria and abroad, as well as supporting the establishment of an innovation ecosystem. It serves as a quality control instrument and supports the Climate and Energy Fund in managing and developing the programme.

The three key duties of accompanying research are:

- Scientific support, including indicator development, continuous scientific monitoring and evaluation at both programme and model region level, and deriving recommendations for action;
- Cooperation and network building (national and international), including support for the model regions in standardisation processes and in discussions on shaping future legal and regulatory framework conditions by involving relevant stakeholders at both national and international level;
- Transfer of technology, expertise and scientific findings (national and international), at programme level in close coordination with the model regions, including design, implementation and support for measures to boost acceptance and participation, with the aim of enhancing trust in, and acceptance of, innovative energy technologies from Austria.

Close cooperation between the model regions and accompanying research is a basic precondition for funding approval.

4.0 Consortia

A precondition of funding is cooperation between several independent partners to tackle joint research tasks (overall project and associated sub-projects) which significantly exceed the current state-of-the-art and facilitate new applications. The Energy Model Region project must involve partners able and willing to apply the project outcomes widely.
Consequently, in addition to scientists, the partners in a model region should represent the key stakeholders in the value chain, including science, and reflect the specific project objectives. They should include, in particular, technology manufacturers and users, utilities, network operators, energy service providers, end users and research institutions. The inclusion of regional authorities, associations, private and municipal initiatives (e.g. citizen power plants, energy banks) is welcomed.

Relevant expertise (technological, but also design, marketing, business model innovation and participation, etc.) should be drawn upon in developing and implementing solutions. It may be useful to include project partners from sociological and/or legal fields for analysing the use and acceptance of innovative technologies and business models.
The consortium must be coordinated in a manner suitable for meeting the objectives of this RTI initiative, which guarantees implementation of the overall project for the particular model region and the long-term involvement of the consortium partners, and ensures that the consortium can grow or adapt to changing needs as the model region develops.

4.1 Requirements for the cluster coordinator

The applicant organisation of stage 1 (cluster coordinator) is an individual legal entity. The cluster coordinator may, but need not, be a coordinator or partner in one of the planned sub-projects.
Legal entities, partnerships and sole traders that are not part of the Austrian federal administration are eligible to submit an application, including:

- **Companies** of any legal form
- **Institutions of research and knowledge dissemination:**
  - Universities and universities of applied sciences;
  - Non-university research institutions;
  - Technology transfer institutions, innovation agents and other research-oriented organisations such as associations with a relevant purpose.
- **Other non-commercial institutions:**
  - Local authorities and autonomous bodies;
  - Non-profit making organisations (NPOs[3]).

The cluster coordinator must not be a civil law association and **must have at least a branch establishment in Austria.**

4.1.1 Obligations and duties of the cluster coordinator

The cluster coordinator has the following responsibilities and obligations:

- Comprehensive coordination of the entire model region as specified in the cluster application. This includes in particular the overall coordination of the sub-projects[4];
- Acting as contact for the FFG Programme Management, the Climate and Energy Fund, accompanying research and the wider public;
- Participation in hearings and submission of annual reports;
- Coordinating the submission of additional sub-projects according to the cluster application in the course of reporting and the annual hearing;
- Invitation of the sub-projects approved for submission following the hearing and annual report;
- Maintaining the quality and consistency of the annual reports at model region level;
- Overall risk management at model region level;
- Participation in accompanying research;
- Dissemination and presentation of the model region results at relevant events (workshops, conferences etc.) and publications.

The cluster coordinator has access to key results of the sub-projects and is continuously updated on the overall progress of the model region.

[3] "Non-profit making organisations" do not distribute profits to their owners, members or other natural persons or legal entities in accordance with their legal status or articles of association.

[4] The sub-projects are submitted by the coordinators of the Cooperative R&D Project or Flagship Project or the operating company of the Innovation Lab.

4.1.2 Coordination agreement

If a model region is approved for implementation, the FFG will send the cluster coordinator a draft coordination agreement, which is valid for a specified period of time. If the cluster coordinator accepts the draft agreement within the specified time the coordination agreement will be drawn up. The coordination agreement includes but is not limited to:

- project period;
- rights and duties;
- implementation obligations;
- consequences of non-performance;
- reporting and information obligations;
- participation in the hearing and public relations activities;
- representation of individual projects towards the Climate and Energy Fund and the FFG;
- cooperation with accompanying research and evaluation;
- confidentiality provisions;
- conflict of interest;
- liability provisions;
- rights to shortlist sub-projects for submission at the annual hearings;
- rights to invite sub-projects for submission following a positive assessment of the evaluation panel;
- list of participating sub-projects.

The cluster coordinator must return the duly signed original of the coordination agreement so that funding applications for sub-projects can be submitted in stage 2. Recommendations or binding requirements may be formulated in the course of the evaluation. These may include requirements to be met prior to the conclusion of the coordination agreement or conditions to be met during the course of the project.

4.2 Requirements for sub-projects

4.2.1 Requirements for partners in sub-projects

The provisions of the relevant Technical Guidelines apply (see Section 5.5.1).

4.2.2 Cluster agreement

The cluster coordinator must draw up a cluster agreement to coordinate the individual sub-projects and the associated project partners.
The cluster agreement must be drawn up prior to the preparation of the funding agreements for the sub-projects[5]. The FFG may demand presentation of the cluster agreement. The cluster agreement specifies the rights and obligations of the project partners between the individual sub-projects. The cluster agreement must not conflict with the funding agreements of the funding providers or the coordination agreement. There may also be consortium agreements within individual sub-projects.

The cluster agreement includes but is not limited to:
- rights and obligations towards the FFG and the funding provider;
- provisions on rights and obligations between the partners of the individual sub-projects;
- liability issues;
- planning, decision-making and control structures and processes;
- provisions on the expansion of the consortia;
- data protection and data management;
- settlement of disputes;
- exploitation of results.

[5] A Letter of Commitment (LOC) signed by all project partners is sufficient for submission of the **cluster application** in stage 1.

5.0 Administrative information

5.1 Milestones of the RTI initiative Energy Model Region

April 2017	Start of 2017 Call
31 July 2017	Submission deadline for stage 1 – cluster applications
October 2017	Selection of model region(s) and request for submission of funding applications for sub-projects within a specified time **STOP+GO decision Energy Model Region(s)**
04 May 2018	Submission deadline for stage 2 – funding applications for sub-projects
Q3/Q4 2018	Start of approved sub-projects
2019 + 2020	Approval of further sub-projects in the selected model regions in the course of the annual reporting process
2021–2025	Implementation and conclusion of the sub-projects of the selected model regions (no funding planned for additional sub-projects)

5.2 Confidentiality of project data

The FFG is under a legal obligation to maintain secrecy concerning company and project information pursuant to Sec. 9 para 4 of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency Act (FFG-G, Federal Law Gazette BGBl. I No. 73/2004). External experts who are involved in the assessment of individual projects are also subject to confidentiality obligations.
Project contents and results may only be published with the consent of the funding recipient. For more information see Section 4.4 ff.
Personal data may be used in accordance with Secs. 7 to 11 of the Data Protection Act (DSG 2000 Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I No. 165/1999):

- for the conclusion and performance of the funding contract,
- for fulfilling a statutory mandate,
- for control purposes.

This use may mean that the data must be transferred or disclosed in particular to bodies and authorised representatives of the Federal Audit Office, the Federal Minister of Finance and the EU. There is also the possibility to obtain information from the transparency portal according to Sec. 32 (5) of the Transparency Database Act (TDBG 2012).

5.3 Submission and selection process

The **two-stage selection process for the 2017 Call** consists of a **cluster application (stage 1)** and funding applications for the **sub-projects (stage 2)**.
Participation in an exploratory project funded under the 1st Call of the Energy Model Region initiative is not a prerequisite for participation in the present 2017 Call.
The submission of the application documents does not imply a right to receive funding. The documents submitted need not be returned to the applicants.
Applications must be submitted electronically via **eCall** (https://ecall.ffg.at) by the deadline specified for the relevant stage.

How does it work?

- Download and complete Project Description template via eCall;
- Upload the necessary documents;
- Finalise application in eCall and click "Submit application" ("Einreichung abschicken");
- Upon successful submission, a confirmation of receipt will be sent automatically by email;
- Not necessary: additional postal submission of duly executed copy.

It is not possible:

- to resubmit or modify individual parts of the application form;
- to revise the application after submission.

The application documents are to be submitted by the cluster coordinator or by a duly authorised representative. The FFG may request evidence that this person is authorised to represent the cluster coordinator. If you are unable to provide such evidence the FFG reserves the right to reject the application for formal reasons.

The eCall tutorial can be found at:
https://ecall.ffg.at/tutorial

5.4 Stage 1: Submission and selection of cluster application

5.4.1 Submission

The **cluster application** of **stage 1** must be submitted to the FFG in English by **31 July 2017, 12:00 noon** via eCall (https://ecall.ffg.at).

Applications submitted after 31 July 2017, 12:00 noon, will not be taken into account and will be excluded from the selection process.

The cluster application includes a presentation of the planned model region. The cluster coordinator of the model region must draw up and submit a joint cluster application in coordination with the partners of the sub-projects. The "Project Description – Cluster Application" template must be used for submission.
The cluster application is subjected to a formal check and examined for formal correctness and completeness.

The FFG will communicate the result of the formal check within 4 weeks via eCall.

- If the formal criteria are not met and the deficiencies cannot be corrected, the application for funding will not enter the subsequent steps of the procedure.
- If the deficiencies can be corrected, you may rectify these problems within a reasonable period of time.

Should it transpire after the formal check that incorrect information has been given, the funding application may also be removed from consideration at a subsequent point in the procedure.
The **check list for the formal check** can be found in the Project Description template.

5.4.2 Obligatory preliminary meeting

In order to clarify stipulations and requirements, the submission of a cluster application requires an obligatory preliminary meeting with the Climate and Energy Fund and the FFG no later than 1 month prior to the submission deadline (by 30 June 2017).

5.4.3 Selection process and evaluation

The cluster applications will be evaluated by an evaluation panel consisting of national and international experts according to the criteria below.
After the initial review according to the defined evaluation criteria and based on the written reviews, an additional **hearing** will be organised by the FFG. The hearing is not intended to supplement or replace the documents submitted, but enables the members of the evaluation panel to put questions to the applicants. The evaluation panel will give approval for submission of sub-projects for stage 2 taking into account the results of the hearing and the written reviews.
The evaluation panel may supplement its evaluation and selection recommendation for a positively assessed model region with additional recommendations and conditions.
The Executive Board of the Climate and Energy Fund will decide on approval for submission of funding applications for sub-projects based on the recommendation of the evaluation panel. The applicants will be notified of the decision in writing by the FFG.

It is possible to exclude members of the evaluation panel (individuals or staff of particular organisations) **in justified cases**. eCall contains an entry field for this purpose.

FFG experts will check the financial potential (credit rating and liquidity) of the cluster coordinator. Undertakings in difficulty[6] cannot act as cluster coordinators.

5.4.4 Evaluation criteria for stage 1 (cluster application)

Cluster applications are evaluated according to 4 criteria:

1. Quality of the project
2. 2. Suitability of funding applicant /project partners
3. Benefit and exploitation
4. Relevance of the project

The relevant evaluation criteria are shown in the table below. The projects are evaluated by awarding points for each criterion. In addition, a threshold value is defined for each criterion.

Evaluation criteria		
1. Quality of the project	**40**	**24**
1.1 Overall concept of the model region, e.g. plausibility of key research questions and resulting system relevance, stakeholder involvement (interdisciplinary, cross-sector etc.)		
1.2 Key innovation fields		
1.3 Work and time schedule, overall duration		
1.4 Cost plan		
1.5 Research programme in detail – sub-projects (including relevance and consistency of the sub-projects and contribution to the overall goal of the model region)		
2. Suitability of funding applicant / project partners	**20**	**12**
2.1 Consortium		
2.2 Project partners and involvement of stakeholders outside the consortium for the remaining duration		
3. Benefit and exploitation	**25**	**15**
3.1 User benefit and exploitation potential		
3.2 Impact and significance of the project results for the organisations involved in the project		
3.3 Exploitation strategy of the model region (including suitability for large-scale implementation, transferability and scalability, replicability, contribution to standardisation)		
3.4 Concept for subsequent use		
4. Relevance of the project	**15**	**9**
4.1 Relevance to the call		
4.2 International visibility		

[6] The decision whether an undertaking is considered to be "in difficulty" is made based on the definition contained in the General Block Exemption Regulation (OJ L 187 p. 19), which provides the European legal basis of the present funding scheme.

5.4.5 Listing additional projects

Applicants are required to list additional projects related to the proposed project in order to facilitate the evaluation. The results and expertise obtained must be presented. Relevant projects include:

- previous projects whose results provide the basis for the proposed project
- ongoing or completed projects (of the past 3 years) that are thematically related to the proposed project

Double funding of costs that have already been funded is not permissible. The proposed project must be clearly differentiated from thematically related projects that have already received funding.

5.5 Stage 2: submission and selection of sub-projects

If the cluster application has received a positive evaluation the cluster coordinator invites the relevant consortium leaders to submit the sub-projects approved for stage 2 of the 2017 Call.

5.5.1 Research funding from FFG

Projects may only be submitted electronically via eCall at https://ecall.ffg.at.
Applicants are required to use the specific templates provided. The funding conditions, application procedure and funding criteria are described in the relevant Technical Guidelines.

Call documents – research funding (download: www.ffg.at/vorzeigeregion-energie)	
Innovation Lab	· Technical Guidelines Innovation Lab · Project Description Innovation Lab
Cooperative R&D Project	· Technical Guidelines Cooperative R&D Projects · Project Description Cooperative R&D Projects · Declaration of SME Status (if required)*
Flagship Project	· Technical Guidelines Flagship Projects · Project Description Flagship Projects · Declaration of SME Status (if required)*
General cost regulations	· Cost Guidelines 2.0 (guidelines for reporting project costs)

*) If there is no information available in the Austrian Business Compass (e.g. for associations and start-ups), a Declaration of SME Status must be provided upon submission of the proposal. In the template provided by the FFG, applicants must (as far as possible) categorise their business for the last three years according to the SME definition.

5.5.2 Supplementary national environmental funding for demonstration facilities from KPC

Projects involving the implementation of a demonstration facility as an integral part of an Energy Model Region can apply for funding from Kommunalkredit Public Consulting GmbH (KPC) under the 2015 funding guidelines for the National Environmental Support Scheme (UFI).
Demonstration facilities are of a highly innovative character. They go beyond standard technologies and serve to demonstrate and introduce new or substantially improved technologies, advanced processes or innovative system components.
Application forms, information sheets, notes and supplementary provisions will be available for download at www.ffg.at/vorzeigeregion-energie from June 2017.

NOTE:
If the funded measure qualifies as an energy saving measure in terms of end consumption according to the Federal Energy Efficiency Act (EEffG) it will be credited to the Climate and Energy Fund as a strategic measure according to § 5 (1) 17 of the EEffG in proportion to the funding granted. Obligated third parties may claim the eligible measures (in whole or in part) only for the part of the project costs exceeding the funding granted by the Climate and Energy Fund. This applies in particular if the measures are transferred by the funding recipient to the third party for the purpose of crediting them towards individual obligations according to § 10 EEffG.

5.6 Scientific integrity

The FFG is a member of the Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity – OeAWI (http://www.oeawi.at/en/statutes.asp). This ensures that the rules of good scientific practice are observed.
If the evaluation process or project review reveals a potential lack of scientific integrity or misconduct the relevant documents can be sent to the OeAWI 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 a lack of scientific quality or misconduct (e.g. plagiarism), the application will be rejected for formal reasons. If funding has already been granted, the funding will be reduced, retained or reclaimed.

5.7 Implementation and monitoring

The implementation of the selected model regions is intended to demonstrate applications for new technologies and to participate in developing emerging and changing markets. The consortium must continuously update and develop the overall concept of the selected model region based on the findings obtained.
The integration of new project partners during implementation of the model region is expressly encouraged.

5.7.1 Reporting obligations, hearings and submission of additional sub-projects

Irrespective of the reporting obligations of the individual sub-projects, the cluster coordinator of the model region must submit an annual report via the FFG eCall system. Participation in a hearing is a mandatory part of the annual reporting obligations. Same as the hearings held in the course of the stage 1 application process, the hearing serves to answer questions from the members of the evaluation panel and the funding agency.
The reports and the hearing give the cluster coordinator the opportunity to report about the results of the past year and submit a concept for additional sub-projects to be approved.
The sub-projects planned for the following year and described in the report will be evaluated, similar to the stage 1 application process. Only the sub-projects of a model region that meet the programme goals and the overall objectives of the project may be submitted by the defined deadlines in 2019 and 2020. Following the examination of the report and the hearing, the evaluation panel can formulate supplementary recommendations or conditions.
Hearings for model regions which use the instruments "Flagship Project" and/or "Innovation Lab" should be scheduled in the same period as the hearings specified for the relevant instrument.
The cluster coordinator submits a final report after the end of the project.

5.7.2 Instruments for implementation of additional sub-projects

The Climate and Energy Fund plans to provide the following instruments for additional sub-projects submitted in 2019 and 2020:

- FFG funding instruments for research and development projects: Cooperative R&D Projects of Experimental Development[7], Flagship Projects (with experimental development accounting for min. 50 % of total costs), Pre-Commercial Procurement, and Innovation Partnerships (to be developed);
- Funding for investments in demonstration facilities is available under the funding guidelines for the National Environmental Support Scheme (UFI) in cooperation with KPC.

5.7.3 Project changes

Changes in the project (focus, consortium partners, costs, dates, etc.) must be immediately communicated to (and, where necessary, approved by) the FFG funding agency via eCall message and the annual reports.

5.8 Legal basis

The 2017 Call of the Energy Model Region initiative is subject to the following legal regulations:

- Guidelines for the Promotion of Industrial/ Technological Research, Technology Development and Innovation (RTI Guidelines 2015, Themen-FTI-RL) pursuant to Secs. 11.1 to 11.5 of the Research and Technology Promotion Act (FTFG) of the Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology (file no. BMVIT-609.986/0011-III/I2/2014) and of the Federal Minister for Science, Research and Economy (file no. BMWFW-97.005/0003-C1/9/2014);
- 2015 Funding Guidelines for the National Environmental Support Scheme (UFI Guideline 2015) pursuant to Secs 13 and 23 et seq. of the Environmental Aid Act (UFG) (Federal Law Gazette BGBl. No. 185/1993).

The company size shall be established in accordance with the corresponding SME definition specified in EU competition law (from 1 January 2005: SME definition according to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC dated 6 May 2003, OJ L 124 dated 20 May 2003, p. 36 – 41).

All EU regulations shall be applicable as amended.

5.9 Data protection and publication of funding granted

In the event of a positive funding decision, the Climate and Energy Fund reserves the right to publish the name of the funding applicants, the funding decision, the rate and amount of funding as well as the title and a brief description of the project. The Climate and Energy Fund also reserves the right to publish the names of the cluster coordinators, approval for stage 2 as well as the title and a brief description of the model region.
All project applications submitted will only be forwarded to the persons responsible for managing this RTI initiative and to the programme owner. All persons involved are bound by strict confidentiality rules.

5.10 Contribution to achieving the goals of the RTI initiative

The selected projects should contribute to the joint success of the RTI initiative Energy Model Region (see Section 2.0 Strategy and Goals and Section 3.3. Success Factors).
The model regions, including their sub-projects, are obliged to provide information for coordinating the overall programme topics and accompanying research and to actively participate in accompanying research activities.
The cluster coordinator and the funding recipients of the sub-projects are also obliged to actively participate in and contribute to the press and public relations activities for the Energy Model Region initiative organised by the Climate and Energy Fund. This includes in particular the provision of non-confidential project information and images for electronic dissemination portals and other media purposes.

[7] The present 2017 Call does not invite the submission of Cooperative R&D Projects of Industrial Research.

5.11 Open Access – notes on publication

Visibility and easy availability of innovative results are essential to increase the impact of the programme. Where possible, all project results achieved under the RTI initiative will thus be published and made available online at www.vorzeigeregion-energie.at by the Climate and Energy Fund in accordance with the principle of open access.
The projects funded under this Call and their results will be made available to the public in compliance with the Recommendation of the European Commission (2012/417/EU) on Open Access. The open access provisions do not apply to confidential information (e.g. related to patent applications or personal data).

To be able to present the project results in a clear and comprehensible manner, public relations guidelines for projects funded and carried out under the Energy Model Region initiative are made available (Reporting and Public Relations Guidelines), which also form an integral part of the agreement.

6.0 Contacts and advice

6.1 Programme mandate and responsibility

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6.2 Programme management

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6.3 Additional funding options

Additional funding options in the field of **energy** can be found here:
https://www.ffg.at/content/das-nationale-angebot-f-r-die-energie-und-umweltforschung

Additional funding options in the field of **information and communication technologies** can be found here:
https://www.ffg.at/content/das-nationale-angebot-f-r-die-informations-und-kommunikationstechnologien

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