

RTI-INFRASTRUCTURE 2026

DATE: 13.07.2026
CALL DOCUMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	THEMATIC ORIENTATION.....	3
3.	OBJECTIVES	3
4.	FRAMEWORK	3
5.	PROJECT CONSORTIUM	6
6.	PROCEDURE.....	6
7.	EVALUATION CRITERIA	8
8.	OBLIGATIONS OF THE BENEFICIARIES	8
9.	DISCONTINUATION AND FUNDING RECOVERY.....	9
10.	DATA PROTECTION.....	9
II.	LEGAL BASIS	10

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of this call, funding is provided for the **establishment and expansion of research infrastructure** in the field of **non-commercial use**.

The research infrastructure is intended to improve the technical facilities at higher education institutions, universities and non-university research organisations based in Lower Austria, enable outstanding research and contribute to raising the profile of the region. This enhances the attractiveness and competitiveness of Lower Austria as a centre of science and strengthens its innovative capacity. These benefits are further enhanced through the collaborative use of research infrastructure by multiple organisations.

KEY POINTS:

RTI-Field of action	Open for all fields of action
Funding Volume	€ 1.800.000,--
Funding per project	€ 200.000,-- to € 450.000,--
Funding rate	Max. 90% of eligible costs
Submission	13.07.2026 to 21.10.2026 (12:00)
Submission platform	https://calls.einreichsystem.at/
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2.THEMATIC ORIENTATION

This call invites applications for projects relating to all the fields of action defined in the RTI Strategy Lower Austria 2027:

- Health and nutrition
- Environment, climate and resources
- Digitalisation, smart manufacturing and materials
- Society and culture

3.OBJECTIVES

The projects are intended to contribute to the following **objectives**:

- Sustainable development of research capabilities in Lower Austria
- Increasing the region's visibility and raising its profile
- Expanding collaboration through the shared use of the proposed research infrastructure

4.FRAMEWORK

4.1. TYPE AND AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The funding is a grant. The funding rate is **up to 90% of eligible costs**.¹

The grant amount is a **minimum of €20.000 and a maximum of €450.000**.

4.2. SUBJECT MATTER OF THE FUNDING

Funding is available for the **acquisition** (establishment and expansion) and **commissioning of research infrastructure** (equipment, instruments and software for research purposes; excluding basic equipment or replacement investments) intended almost exclusively for non-commercial use. This includes both the purchase of individual items of equipment and of multiple components intended for joint use. Applications for funding may be submitted for both new and second-hand research infrastructure.

4.3. ELIGIBLE COSTS

In accordance with the principles of efficiency and effectiveness, expenses are only eligible for funding to the extent that they are necessary and reasonable in terms of their type and amount to achieve the funding purpose. Inappropriate calculations can be a reason for rejection despite the excellence of the content of the funding proposal.

Eligible costs are:

¹ The funding rate may also be lower, depending on the amount of the costs claimed. (e.g., costs claimed = €600.000; maximum funding amount = €450.000; funding rate = 75%).

- **Capitalisable acquisition costs** of the research infrastructure that are directly attributable to the funded project, are capitalised, and result in expenditure.
- **Non-capitalisable costs** associated with the **commissioning** of the research infrastructure are covered by a flat-rate allowance of 10% based on the acquisition costs². This includes, for example, the following costs:
 - Setting up and maintaining the infrastructure with the aim of establishing normal operation,
 - Developing services related to the research infrastructure,
 - Measures to raise the profile of the research infrastructure amongst other institutions and organisations, with the aim of enabling cross-institutional use of the research infrastructure, and
 - The organisation of workshops, or training and further education programmes to promote the exchange of knowledge and networking in relation to the research infrastructure.

4.4. EXCLUSION OF DOUBLE FUNDING

Double funding of the eligible costs as well as funding of the depreciation of the requested research infrastructure by additional third-party funds and subsidies must be excluded by the lead partner.

4.5. NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Invoices that are not addressed to the lead partner
- Payments not made by the lead partner, with the exception of payments made by financing banking institutions to obtain retention of title on behalf of the lead partner
- Discounts and rebates
- Value added tax, provided that the lead partner is entitled to deduct input tax
- Open (unpaid) liability discounts
- (Partial) amounts from payments for which credit notes were subsequently granted or charged back
- Costs for the acquisition of land
- Fees and charges (e.g., connection fees, public charges, power purchase rights)
- Contract preparation costs (lawyer, notary)
- Financing costs
- External services of affiliated companies or partner companies
- Cash payments > 5.000 Euro
- capital expenditure on building works that go beyond the modifications required to bring the research infrastructure into operation

² For example: For acquisition costs of €250,000, the additional lump sum is €25,000. With a funding rate of 90%, the amount of funding applied for is therefore €247,500 (= [250,000 + 25,000] × 0.9). The lower and upper limits of the permissible grant amount (€200,000 and €450,000 respectively) must be taken into account when submitting the application.

4.6. TYPE OF USE

The research infrastructure has to be used **almost exclusively for non-economic activities** (at least 80% of the total annual capacity).

Non-economic activities include:

- Training of more or better qualified employees
- Independent research and development to increase knowledge and understanding
- Dissemination of research results and knowledge transfer

Economic use is only possible if the activity is purely a secondary one. This is the case when:

- the economic activity is directly linked to and necessary for the operation of the research facility or research infrastructure, or
- it is inextricably linked to the main non-economic activity, and in both cases
- the extent of the economic use is limited. This is the case if the same inputs (e.g., materials, equipment, staff and fixed capital) are used for the economic activities as for the main non-economic activity, and if the capacity allocated to the economic activity does not exceed 20 per cent of the total annual capacity of the infrastructure in question.

Economic activities in the above sense are, for example, the rental of equipment and laboratories to companies, the provision of services for companies or contract research.

In order to exclude direct or indirect aid, the economic use must be charged at common market prices (full costs + profit margin).

4.7. USE OF FUNDS IN LOWER AUSTRIA

The research infrastructure must be procured exclusively for a research site in Lower Austria and must be commissioned and used exclusively at that site. A change of location is not permitted without the funding body's consent and may result in the funding being reclaimed (see point 9).

4.8. SERVICE LIFE

The service life (= depreciation period) must be stated in the funding proposal and is decisive for the duration of the reporting obligation (max. 10 years after the year of commissioning³).

4.9. USAGE CONCEPT

A usage concept for the entire planned service life (= depreciation period, but not exceeding 10 years) must be drawn up for the proposed research infrastructure. The first three years must be presented in detail.

4.10. COST ACCOUNTING

Evidence of the proper use of the funding must be provided as part of the reporting system and, if necessary, during financial audits (financial controls). In the reporting system, this evidence is provided

³ For example: Commissioning occurs in July 2027; reporting requirement extends from July 2027 to December 2037, unless the operational life is shorter.

in the form of structured cost center statements or lists of documents. In the financial audit, these cost center statements or lists of documents are used as the basis for the audit.

5. PROJECT CONSORTIUM

5.1. ELIGIBILITY

- **Eligible institutions:**
 - The lead partner can only be a university, university of applied sciences or non-university research institution⁴ located in Lower Austria.
- **Non-eligible institutions:**
 - Facilities directly majority-owned (>50%) by the State of Lower Austria
 - Industrial companies⁵

5.2. COOPERATIONS

The collaborative use of the research infrastructure by other institutions (whether located within or outside Lower Austria or Austria, as well as those not eligible to apply) is possible and encouraged. Evidence of the planned collaborative use must be provided in the form of letters of intent (LOIs) from the institutions. These LOIs must be attached to the funding application. The framework conditions for collaborative use must be set out in the application.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1. SUBMISSION

RTI calls are thematic calls for a limited period of time, where proposals for funding can be submitted. The application language is English; this applies to all parts of the application.⁶ Submission is possible from **13.07.2026** to **21.10.2026, 12.00 noon** via the GFF submission system (<https://calls.einreichsystem.at/>).

6.2. EX-ANTE EVALUIERUNG

EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND PROJECT SELECTION

All proposals submitted by the deadline will first be reviewed by GFF to ensure that they meet the formal criteria (see 7.1).

The GFF assembles a jury of independent external experts (see [Evaluation Guidelines](#)). For each project application, at least two expert reviews are prepared on the basis of the defined evaluation criteria (see 7.2). In a final jury meeting, a recommendation for funding is prepared on the basis of the expert reviews.

⁴ Non-university research institutions – regardless of their legal form or method of funding – are organisations whose main purpose is to carry out independent research. If such an institution also engages in commercial activities, separate accounts (covering funding, costs and revenue) are required.

⁵ For the purposes of this call document, 'industrial company' refers to commercial or self-employed economic entities that engage in the production of goods or the provision of services, as well as in long-term, independent, organised economic activities aimed at making a profit.

⁶ The application language English ensures the possibility of peer review by international scientific experts. A German-language application can only be approved in exceptional cases.

FUNDING DECISION

Based on the recommendation by the jury, the supervisory board of the GFF decides on the funding.

6.3. FUNDING PERIOD

FUNDING AGREEMENT

The funding agreement is concluded between GFF and the funding recipient on the basis of the legal basis applicable to this call (see section 11).

ACQUISITION

The research infrastructure may only be procured once the funding agreement has been signed. Any costs incurred prior to this are not eligible for funding.

COMMISSIONING

The research infrastructure must be commissioned no later than twelve months after the funding agreement has been signed. In justified exceptional cases, this deadline may be extended following consultation with the GFF and by submitting a written (informal) application.

REPORTING

The reporting obligation begins when the research infrastructure is commissioned and continues until the end of its useful life (see section 4.8).

The annual reports are prepared and submitted by the grantees in the GFF submission system (<https://calls.einreichsystem.at/>). Even after the project has ended, research outputs directly related to the funding should be reported via the submission system.

FUNDING RATES

The funding recipients can call up 50% of the funding amount relating to the acquisition costs of the research infrastructure at the time of purchase.

The remaining 50% of the funding amount relating to the acquisition costs will be paid out upon submission of the invoice(s) and confirmation that the research infrastructure has been commissioned.

The remaining funding relating to the commissioning of the research infrastructure will be paid out following review of the first project report.

PROJECT COMPLETION

The funding is formally concluded after the lead partner has submitted the final report to the GFF through the submission system (<https://calls.einreichsystem.at/>) and after the GFF has approved the report and disbursed any remaining funding by the GFF.

6.4. INTERIM AND EX-POST EVALUATION

Within the framework of announced interim and/or ex-post evaluations, the funding agency or a third party commissioned by it may conduct an audit to determine whether the funding is being used for its intended purpose.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

7.1. FORMAL REVIEW

- Completeness of the application
- Fulfillment of the thematic focus under section 2
- Fulfillment of the requirements under section 4 and 5
- If the project requires a positive ethics approval, this must be clearly stated in the application. In the event of funding, the ethics approval must be submitted by the start of the project. In justified exceptional cases, it may be submitted later.

Failure to meet one or more of the requirements may result in disqualification of the application even before the expert evaluation.

7.2. EXPERT EVALUATION

The evaluation is carried out on the basis of a point system by external independent experts (see 6.2). The evaluation is carried out on the basis of three main criteria (K1-3), each of which is subdivided into several subordinate sub-criteria.

The maximum number of points for an assessment is 15 points. The actual number of points is made up of the points awarded for each of the three main criteria. The maximum number of points per main criterion is 5 points ($3 \times \text{max. 5 points} = \text{max. 15 points}$). The actual number of points per main criterion is in turn determined from the points of the corresponding sub-criteria, for which a maximum of 5 points can also be awarded in each case. The points for the main criteria are calculated from the arithmetic mean of the sub-criteria, which in turn results in the maximum number of points.

The following main and sub-criteria are used for assessment:

- **Excellence [K1]**
 - Originality and innovation
 - Need and domain of application
 - Relevance and international connectivity
- **Implementation [K2]**
 - Quality and efficiency of the concept
 - Financial and resource planning
 - Institutional framework and strategic embedding
 - Staff composition and qualification
- **Impact [K3]**
 - Impact on science
 - Impact on the research location
 - Development of cooperations
 - Societal / economic / ecological / technological impact

8. OBLIGATIONS OF THE BENEFICIARIES

Beneficiaries are **required to comply** with the following points:

- Economic, economical, appropriate and transparent use of funds.

- Maintaining separate and comprehensive records to demonstrate the implementation of the funded project and retaining the records and supporting documentation during and for at least an additional ten years after the end of the project, unless there are legal requirements beyond that.
- Maintenance of an adequate accounting system.
- Submission of appropriate interim and final reports to the funding agency, in accordance with the schedule and reporting structure provided by the funding agency.
- Enabling of audits and evaluations on the part of the funding agency and third parties commissioned by it, as well as the obligation to provide corresponding information.
- Timely notification of all significant events relevant to the implementation of the funded project.
- Providing public relations information to the funding agency.
- Establishing the visibility of the funding agency and the province of Lower Austria as the funding agency in web presences, publications and events related to the funded activity (the use of the logos and funding information is regulated in the project contract).
- Observance of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), the [United Nations \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and the further strategic embedding of the [RTI Strategy Lower Austria 2021 - 2027](#).
- Compliance with the Federal Procurement Act 2018, Federal Law Gazette 1 No. 65/2018, as amended, and its implementing regulations; application of the Lower Austrian Procurement Review Act, Lower Austrian Law Gazette 7200-0, as amended, and its implementing regulations.
- Compliance with existing standards and imperatives in the areas of scientific integrity and scientific ethics.

9. DISCONTINUATION AND FUNDING RECOVERY

With regard to the reduction, evaluation and recovery of funding, the provisions of §13 of the [Guidelines for Funding under the Lower Austrian Cultural Promotion Act 1996 in the field of science, research and tertiary education](#) apply.

In addition, the following points can lead to a complete recovery and discontinuation of the funding:

- The research infrastructure was acquired prior to the signing of the funding agreement, or will not be put into operation within twelve months of the signing of the funding agreement without the consent of the funding agency.
- The research infrastructure was sold and/or the location was changed. Any justified exceptions need to be assessed with the funding agency.
- The share of economic use is more than 20% of the total annual capacity in one or more years.

10. DATA PROTECTION

10.1. RESPONSIBLE PERSON ACCORDING TO THE GDPR

Gesellschaft fuer Forschungsfoerderung NOE mbH, A-3100 St. Pölten, Hypogasse 1, 1st floor, T: +43 2742 27570-0, E: office@gff-noe.at (GFF) is responsible for processing your personal data Responsible person in connection with your funding application in accordance with Art. 7 Z7 GDPR.

10.2. PURPOSE AND LEGAL BASIS OF DATA PROCESSING

In order to process and fulfill the funding application, the GFF processes the following personal data from you: Names and professional contact details of the contact person at the funding applicants' institutions; Names, professional contact details and CVs of the scientific management and the project partners; Names and contact details of other scientific or technical staff.

The legal basis for this data processing is the fulfillment of the contract in accordance with Article 6 Paragraph 1 Letter b of the GDPR, so that the GFF can process and fulfill your funding application.

10.3. STORAGE PERIOD

The GFF stores your personal data until your funding application has been fully processed (from submission to termination of the funding contract, including any necessary data transfer to the state of Lower Austria, external experts and examiners, insofar as this is necessary to fulfill the funding application).

In addition, GFF only stores your personal data to the extent necessary to fulfill legal retention obligations or to pursue or defend against legal claims.

10.4. DATA RECIPIENT

We will transmit your personal data to the following third parties if this is necessary to fulfill your funding application:

- State of Lower Austria
- External experts
- External examiners

In addition, GFF uses contract processors who process the data on their behalf. The processors may only process the data provided to them in accordance with our instructions and to carry out services for us. The GFF contractually obliges these processors to ensure the confidentiality and security of the personal data processed as part of the order.

10.5. YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE GDPR

As the person responsible under the GDPR, you have the following rights towards GFF: (i) information (Art. 15 GDPR); (ii) correction (Article 16 GDPR); (iii) deletion (Article 17 GDPR); (iv) Restriction of processing (Article 18 GDPR); (v) objection (Art. 21 GDPR); (vi) data portability (Article 20 GDPR); (vii) Complaint to the responsible supervisory authority (Art. 77 GDPR), whereby in Austria the data protection authority (www.dsb.gv.at) is responsible.

II. LEGAL BASIS

- [Lower Austrian Cultural Promotion Act 1996](#)
- [Guidelines for Funding under the Lower Austrian Cultural Promotion Act 1996 in the Field of Science, Research and Tertiary Education](#)

No legal claim to the granting of a funding arises from the legal bases and the call document. The place of jurisdiction for all disputes arising from the granting of a funding is the Regional Court of St. Pölten.

This call document comes into force on **13.07.2026** and applies to funding applications in the call **RTI Infrastructure 2026**. Amendments and the current version will be published on the GFF website (<https://calls.einreichsystem.at/>).