

Expanding research programmes in cooperation with the Austrian Science Fund

József Pálincás and Klement Tockner, President of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), agreed on further publication of joint calls for research proposals in Vienna on July 14.

Within the Austrian and Hungarian bilateral scientific and technological cooperation programme, the parties support research projects in life sciences, agricultural studies, engineering sciences, biotechnology, environmental and energy studies. The [2017 joint call](#) was published in February with a deadline in April; evaluation of the proposals is underway.

The Austrian Science Fund is the major organization funding basic research in Austria. At the meeting, Klement Tockner and the president of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office gave an overview of the competitive funding portfolio of their organisations and the system of supporting basic research in their countries. Klement Tockner indicated that the annual budget of the science fund was EUR 200 million, this will be increased to EUR 300 million by the Austrian government in 2018.

The English presentation of József Pálincás is available here: [The National Research Development and Innovation Office and RDI Cooperation opportunities between Austria and Hungary](#) PDF (3 067 KB)

The presidents of the two organisations accepted the modifications proposed by FWF regarding the peer review process in the call. In principle, the two parties cooperate on the basis of a so-called Lead Agency agreement: proposals are evaluated by the funding organisation in the country where the higher amount is applied for. At the same time, applicants from both countries act according to the same rules, and the evaluation period becomes shorter. During the discussion, further support of researcher participation in the calls for proposals for excellent discovery research of the European Research Council (ERC) was particularly addressed. József Pálincás highlighted the success rate of Hungary in the ERC calls: Hungarian researchers have been granted more funding in these calls than national RDI spending would suggest in comparison with those of other countries. In the ERC calls between 2007 and 2017, i.e., in the period of the FP7 and the Horizon 2020 framework programmes, a total of 61 Hungarian research institutions received EUR 82 million altogether – a sum representing 40% of the total funding awarded to the recently joining EU13 countries (including Hungary).

Klement Tockner finally invited József Pálincás to have NKFIH join the initiative of FWF targeting cooperation of research funding organisations of Central European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia) through developing their existing joint calls for basic research proposals. József Pálincás expressed his willingness to support the initiative – highlighting that the Hungarian V4 presidency also provides an opportunity to cooperate this way.