

Call for proposals

of the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices Ljubljana and Sofia
for projects in

Research Cooperation and Networking between Austria and South Eastern Europe

Invitation for submission of proposals

The Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices Ljubljana/Slovenia and Sofia/Bulgaria (ASOs) coordinated by the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) launch a call for **scientific networking and project cooperation between institutions in Austria, the ASO countries¹ and in South Eastern Europe²** [more information: www.aso.zsi.at]. Funding is provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (bm:bwk) in the framework of its South Eastern European science cooperation initiative.

The total funding available for this call for proposals is **118.000 Euro**. Around **10 projects** will be supported following this call. The allowable funding per project must be justified by the content, work load, duration and number of teams involved. For projects with higher than average financial costs, co-financing is expected.

The funded activities shall enable researcher from Austria, Slovenia, Bulgaria and other South Eastern European countries to work together on mutually beneficial projects. The main goal is to promote networking and the exchange of research results and know-how, comparative studies and know-how exchange on European standards and practices in the specified areas. The activities should therefore build on already existing scientific results.

The contractor has to be a research institution³ either from Austria or from one of the ASO-countries Slovenia or Bulgaria.

The consortium composition compulsory has to include one partner from Austria, one partner either from Slovenia or Bulgaria and at least one partner from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo). Research institutions from other European countries can participate in the projects but without funding provided under this call (as so-called 'silent partners').

Proposals should contribute to significant regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe. The extent and quality of regional collaboration will be an important criteria for the evaluation.

The call aims to intensify the cooperation with research organisations in South Eastern Europe in the field **“Contribution of science to the EU-integration of the South Eastern European Countries – Research on the Education – Society Nexus and on the Science – Society Nexus”**.

The project activities must be implemented after signing the contract and before May 2007⁴.

¹ Slovenia and Bulgaria.

² Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo).

³ See “Eligibility for participation”. Eligible contractors are universities, non-university research institutions, tertiary education organisations.

⁴ See „Indicative Timetable“. Reporting and a joint presentation of results is foreseen in May 2007.

Objectives of the Programme

The primary programmatic objectives of this Call for Proposals “Research Cooperation and Networking between Austria and South Eastern Europe” are:

- promoting international scientific cooperation and networking between Austrian researchers, researchers of the ASO countries Slovenia and Bulgaria and from South Eastern European countries in the specified thematic areas⁵;
- strengthening the participation of researchers from South Eastern European countries in existing research networks of relevance in the specified thematic areas;
- developing future collaborative research projects (e.g. for joint participation in EU Framework Programmes) in the specified thematic areas;
- adapting, exploiting and disseminating scientific methods and/or research results between Austria, the ASO countries Slovenia and Bulgaria and South Eastern Europe in the specified thematic areas;
- comparative studies and know-how exchange on European standards and practices in the specified thematic areas.

These objectives could be met by carrying out activities such as scientific training measures, joint workshops, seminars and conferences, joint publications, joint efforts to adapt and use methods and/or the conduct of scientific studies of limited scope relevant for the target countries (case studies, comparative analysis, etc.). Curriculum development is explicitly not targeted.

Topics of the Programme

Aiming to promote networking, exchange and dissemination of know-how, this call addresses the following area of interest: **“Contribution of science to the EU-integration of South Eastern European Countries – Research on the Education – Society Nexus and on the Science – Society Nexus”**

Research on Education – Society Nexus

Projects could deal with topics such as education economy; education statistics; interfaces between education and economy; education and economic growth; efficiency of education from the point of view of the labour market; further job career after school leaving examination; interfaces between different layers of the education system; higher education and labour market; brain drain; access to education; educational policy; organisation of the education systems; systems of vocational education (VET); e-learning; social context of education; the role of education in society; gender and minorities perspectives in education; ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in education; systems of school evaluation and programme development; analysis of teaching and teacher education; alumni assessment; standards in lifelong learning; international interventions on education systems; implications of the Bologna process; etc.

Research on Science – Society Nexus

Projects could deal with topics such as impact of the European Research Area on the researchers in SEE; science in transition; research support and funding; access to funding bodies; models of finance and participation; efficiency of research projects; quality assurance in research; evaluation of research projects; usability of research results; scientific practice in higher education institutions; economic,

⁵ See “Topics of the programme”

social and policy frameworks of higher education and science; organisation and management of higher education and research institutions; role of intermediary organisations; technology transfer; personnel resources and gender aspects in science and research; gender and minorities perspectives in science; ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in science; etc.

Science and Technology Studies

Projects deriving from approaches in the history and philosophy of science, sociology of science shall try to understand how scientific knowledge is created, maintained, and used in the framework of EU integration of South Eastern European countries.

Submission of proposals

Application form

The application form for the proposals can be downloaded from
<http://www.aso.zsi.at/ausschreibung/list>
<http://www.aso.zsi.at/ausschreibung/list?lang=en> (in English)

A form “Power of Attorney”⁶ has to be duly signed by ALL project partners except the coordinator, certifying that all partners agree with the contents of the proposal as well as that the information is true and complete and the team available to execute the tasks assigned. This Power of Attorney authorises the coordinator to negotiate and conclude the contract on behalf of the consortium. It has to be signed by the legally responsible person of each institution (eg. rector, dean, head of the institute if legally responsible) and by the team leaders.

The “Power of Attorneys” of all partners have to be sent duly signed at least by postal mail.

General requirements (see also “Process of review – eligibility check”).

- The proposal has to be written in English.
- It must be within the scope of the call, meet the minimum partnership requirements and respect the eligibility criteria and allowable duration.
- It has to be submitted within the stated deadline, complete and in compliance with the given structure.
- The proposal must bear the original signature of the coordinators’ legally responsible person and the project manager and include letters “Power of Attorney” of all project partners duly signed.
- The proposal shall be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing the words “Research Cooperation and Networking between Austria and South-Eastern Europe”.
- Additionally an electronic version of the proposal has to be received by the deadline (15. February 2006) at the address aso@zsi.at.

Submission to

1. by mail:

Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices Ljubljana and Sofia
c/o Zentrum für Soziale Innovation
“Research Cooperation and Networking between Austria and South Eastern Europe”
Linke Wienzeile 246
1150 Vienna
Austria

⁶ An example-letter for such a „Power of Attorney“ is provided with the application form. Fax copies of the Power of Attorney are eligible.

(Alternatively, it is possible to personally hand in the proposals in a sealed envelope in the ASO offices in Ljubljana and Sofia or in the ZSI office (see contact details) until 15 February 2006, 17.00 o'clock.)

AND

2. by e-mail: aso@zsi.at

Indicative Timetable

Call for proposals	9 November 2005
Deadline for submission	15 February 2006
Date of post mark (It is recommended to send the proposal as registered mail and to keep the receipt.)	
An electronic version has to be sent ADDITIONALLY (e-mail to: aso@zsi.at).	15 February 2006
The principal applicant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt electronically (to the e-mail-address indicated in the proposal) within 2 weeks of the deadline for applications.	
Evaluation of proposals	March/April 2006
Awarding of project contracts	April/May 2006
Earliest start of projects	June 2006
Latest end of projects	31. May 2007
Interim Report	30. November 2006
Final Report	31. May 2007
Reporting and joint presentation of results	May 2007

Eligibility for participation

Eligible for application as *contractor* are institutions from Austria and the ASO-countries Slovenia and Bulgaria: universities (departments, institutes, research teams), non-university research institutions (e.g. Academies of Science) and other tertiary education organisations.

Not eligible are individual researchers, SMEs not primarily engaged in research, industry research centres and consultants.

A preliminary eligibility check will be performed by the programme management if requested in written form at least 4 weeks before the deadline (see contact details, aso@zsi.at).

Eligible as *project partners* are university-based or non-university-based research institutions and other tertiary education organisations respecting the following consortium composition (overall minimum three institutions):

Minimum one partner, Eligible as contractor	Austria
Minimum one partner from one of the ASO-countries ⁷ Eligible as contractor	Slovenia, Bulgaria
Minimum one partner from one of the SEE-countries ⁸	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo)

Also in a consortium of more than 3 partners these minimum requirements have to be respected.

Criteria for evaluating proposals

The general criteria to be applied in evaluating projects are as follows:

- the nature of the proposed activity (clear objectives, scientific relevance and quality, feasibility, potential benefit, impact);
- extent and quality of regional collaboration;
- qualification and expertise of the coordinator and the project partners;
- appropriate time schedule and workflow;
- cost and value for money, transparent budget, budget justifications.

Proposals should involve significant regional cooperation in the so-called “West Balkan countries” (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo)). Proposers are also encouraged to plan interdisciplinary activities and inter-institutional collaboration. A balanced ratio of projects from female and male coordinators and the participation of female scientists and young scientists⁹ is aimed at. Proposals shall demonstrate an added value for EU policies and EU integration.

Process of review

1. Eligibility check: The proposal will be checked for completeness and appropriateness by the programme management. Proposals which don't fulfil the conditions of the eligibility check will be dropped out. The criteria for the eligibility check are:

- The proposal has to be submitted within the stated deadline (post mark) by mail or personally AND electronically by e-mail (e-mail to: aso@zsi.at), must be complete (including all Power of Attorneys signed by the legally responsible persons!) and in compliance with the given structure.
- It must be within the scope of the call.
- The consortium has to include at least 3 partners respecting the structure defined in “Eligibility for participation”.
- Eligibility of the participating countries and of the contractors (eligible as contractors are only institutions from Austria, Slovenia and Bulgaria).
- Eligibility of all participating research institutions (see page 6).
- The project duration must be within the given project deadlines (earliest start of the project: June 2006, latest end of the project: May 2007).

⁷ Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices (ASOs) located in Sofia and Ljubljana, see contact details below.

⁸ South Eastern Europe

⁹ Scientists less than 35 years old.

2. An independent evaluation panel (regional and thematic experts) will judge the proposals against the "Criteria for evaluating proposals" stated in this call. The decision will be made under exclusion of the course of law.

3. Authors of rejected proposals will be given feedback why the project was not selected for funding.

Further administrative processes

For successful proposals, collaboration will be laid down in a contract which specifies the mutual rights and obligations. This contract is to be signed by the persons authorised to sign for the successful proposer and for the ZSI representing the donor.

The contractor will be responsible for carrying out the project in a timely and accountable manner. The contractor is also responsible for administering the funding.

An initial rate of 60% of the costs will be paid after signing the contract, 30% after the submission of the interim report (and after the payment of the second rate from the bm:bwk to the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices Ljubljana and Sofia) and the last 10% after the approval of the final report.

Interim report: a short status report of about 2 pages summarising the project progress, the problems occurred so far and implemented or planned solution alternative(s) to overcome the identified problems as well as a balance list of the expenses occurred so far. The interim report has to be submitted no later than 30.11.2006.

Final report: consisting of a financial report and a technical report. These reports have to be submitted at the latest 30 days after the end of the project.

Financial report: a balance list (stating income and expenditure), with a degree of differentiation which indicates payments for travel and accommodation, meals, administration expenses, personnel costs, etc. Original bills are not normally required but have to be recorded in the bookkeeping system for 10 years from the conclusion of the project. An audit has to be possible at any time.

Technical report: The technical report, as basis for the assessment of the activities, shall contain an executive summary, an overview of the activities indicating results, problems and a self-assessment of the results (approx. 4-6 pages). A list of participants involved in the main activities (including title, address, e-mail) has to be provided too. The contractor shall present the project in a seminar organised by the ASOs in Vienna in May 2007. A budget for this presentation (travel and accommodation) may be allocated in the budget planning.

Publications and other project results have to be included in the Final Report too.

Eligibility of costs

As a basic principle, project participants are requested to use existing resources, such as employed staff, office space and equipment to the maximum possible extent. Personnel costs which are covered by other financing sources are not eligible (exclusion of double financing). It is e.g. not eligible to calculate additional costs for already fully employed staff at universities (professors, assistants, etc.).

The funding must be justified in terms of the resources needed to achieve the aims and objectives of the proposed project. A balanced budget between the partners is encouraged.

Double funding of the same project activities is not permitted. Similar activities funded by other donors have to be stated.

Allowable costs are defined as follows:

Personnel Costs

The requested amount of remuneration should be reasonable in consideration of the standards of the country and subject to compliance with relevant laws of the country in which the position is located. The persons have to be named, the extent of the time spent on the project has to be quantified (amount of person-months or -days) and the gross costs (per month, per day or per hour) have to be given, if they are foreseen for financing in the proposal.

Travel and Subsistence

The most economical means of transport consistent with effective pursuit of the project should be used. Upgrades to business class are to be done at one's own expense. For transportation between the airport and hotel, the most economical means available should be used. In certain cases, travel by private automobile may be authorised, in which case a reimbursement of the value of a second class train ticket will be provided.

The cost of necessary visas and insurance required for these visa will be covered. Expenses incurred from side trips or other items unnecessary to the project and telephone calls during travel will not be covered.

Travel and subsistence costs must be justified for each journey and for each team. Actual travel costs should be reported after the end of the funded activity¹⁰. A budget for presentation of the project results in a seminar organised by the ASOs in Vienna in May 2007 (travel and accommodation) may be allocated for the contractor (1 person).

Equipment

Not eligible

Subcontracting

Not eligible

Consumables

For each team requesting costs for consumables of more than 200 Euro, all items shall be listed with approximate prices and justification.

Other costs

Costs for publication, printing, copying, communications, rental of meeting rooms, materials and supplies, banking fees etc. which cannot be classified under the previous items but are required for the implementation of the project must be identified and justified individually.

Overheads

For the occurring running costs of the institutions (indirect costs): a lump sum for overheads of max. 10% of the total eligible direct costs covered under this call may be charged. Overheads are intended to cover indirect costs necessary to run the project.

The funding will be provided in Euro. Calculations of currency exchange shall be based on the international exchange rate in effect on the date of the transaction or on justified exchange receipt or similar evidence.

¹⁰ See: Financial Report

For further information on this Call for Proposals, please contact:

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Please visit also the website on “Frequently Asked Questions” on the Call accessible via www.aso.zsi.at!

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