



Factsheet

Austrian Research and Technology Report 2026

RTI Strategy 2030 and RTI Pact

The **RTI Strategy 2030** constitutes the overarching framework for Austria's research, technology and innovation (RTI) policy. Through this strategy, the Federal Government reaffirms its commitment to stability, efficiency and enhanced performance within the RTI system.

The **implementation** of the strategy is coordinated **across federal ministries through three-year RTI Pacts based on the Research Financing Act (FoFinaG)**. The FoFinaG also provides the legal basis for the governance of the eleven key institutions in the field of non-university research and research funding.

Preparations for the implementation of the third adopted RTI Pact 2027–2029 are currently under way.

Overview of the central research and research funding institutions

Research institutions	2025: Income (in €1,000)	2025: Employees (headcount)
Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH (AIT)	230,162	1,678
Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA)	171,537	1,312
Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW)	291,081	1,943
Silicon Austria Labs GmbH (SAL)	64,398	388
Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft (LBG)	38,930	524
GeoSphere Austria (GSA)	N/A	511

Eleven central institutions strengthening R&D and innovation in Austria

Pursuant to the Research Financing Act (FoFinaG), **six non-university research institutions and five research funding institutions** are designated. These institutions are financed through performance or funding agreements concluded for the respective duration of each RTI Pact. The development of these central institutions is subject to a **monitoring process**, the results of which form an integral part of the annual Austrian Research and Technology Report.

As a result of increased public funding and financing through the RTI Pact, all central institutions have been able to maintain a **sustained growth trajectory** in recent years.

Research funding institutions	2025: Funding/ present value in €1,000
Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (aws)	889,000
Christian Doppler Research Association (CDG)	30,392
Austrian Science Fund (FWF)	353,676
Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD)	125,028
Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)	635,399

Austria's higher education institutions as key drivers of competitiveness and resilience

The **RTI system and the higher education system (mutually) reinforce one another**. To ensure that Austria's higher education sector is well positioned for the future, the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) has launched the development of a Higher Education Strategy 2040.

To further strengthen this interaction, key measures have already been incorporated into the performance agreements for the period 2025–2027. These measures focus in particular on making academic careers more attractive through improved framework conditions, more transparent career pathways and a modernised system of performance assessment. They also place greater emphasis on knowledge transfer and innovation, with higher education institu-

tions expected to integrate research outcomes more strongly into society and the economy and to support the creation of start-ups and spin-offs.

Universities of applied sciences are also being further strengthened. Since the 2025/26 academic year, an additional 800 federally funded study places have been made available, particularly in STEM disciplines, digitalisation, sustainability and other fields with a high demand for skilled professionals.

In the Times Higher Education
World University Rankings 2026, the
University of Vienna ranked number

95

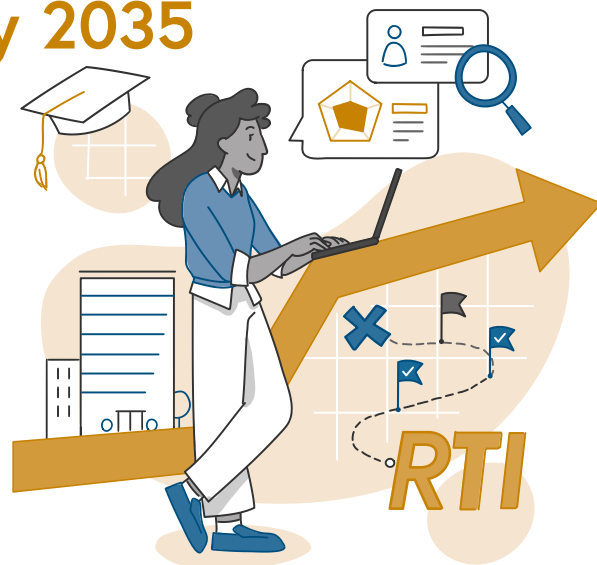
Enhancing competitiveness through the Industrial Strategy 2035

Research, technology and innovation (RTI) constitute a core part of Austria's new Industrial Strategy 2035, which was drafted under the lead of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism (BMWET). The strategy's objective is **to position Austria among the world's ten most competitive industrial nations by 2035**.

To this end, the strategy directs a clear focus on:

- Strengthening industrial innovation capacity
- Increasing innovation output
- Accelerating the technology transfer from research to practical application.

RTI is embedded as a cross-cutting element of industrial policy across all fields of action.



Campaign for key technologies

For the first time, **nine key technologies and areas of industrial strengths have been identified**:

1. Artificial intelligence and data innovation
2. Chips, electronic components and systems
3. Advanced production technologies and robotics
4. Quantum technology and photonics
5. Advanced materials
6. Life sciences and biotechnology
7. Energy and environmental technologies
8. Mobility technologies
9. Space and aviation technologies

For the period 2026–2029, approximately **€2.6 billion** will be made available for the **campaign for key technologies** to specifically support research, development, scale-up and industrial deployment.

Key RTI-related elements include:

- The development of ecosystems in strategically important key technology fields (e.g. quantum technologies)
- Strengthening technology transfer and strategic public procurement

Key initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism (BMWET) in this context include the funding programme “Industrial Key Technologies – Leading Companies 2030”, the new Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) key technology programme “Leading businesses”, and the “Start-up and Scale-up Fund of Funds”.

RTI measures at national level

At the national level, a range of RTI-related measures with significant added value for science, business and society have been implemented or are scheduled for implementation in the near future, including:

- AI Factory
- Transformation Initiative
- Market Entry (Markt.Einstieg)
- STEM Regions Initiative
- Establishment of centres for research and science communication
- Austrian Research Infrastructure Action Plan 2030

RTI Evaluation Culture

For many years, **Austria's RTI policy** has been characterised by a **strong evaluation culture focused on quality and transparency**. A distinctive feature in this regard is the Austrian Platform for Research and Technology Policy Evaluation (fteval), which maintains a repository of evaluations of RTI programmes, institutions and policy measures.

The Austrian Research and Technology Report 2026 includes a selection of these evaluations.

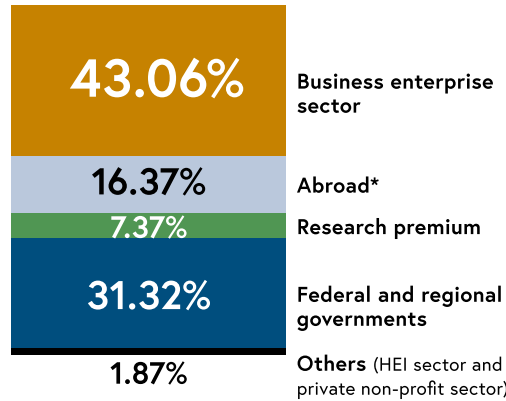
Funding of R&D and innovation

Austria's expenditure on R&D is expected to reach a new record high in 2026

According to the 2026 Global Estimate, expenditure on research and experimental development is expected to reach

€17.63 billion

* Mainly comprises R&D funded by foreign companies for their domestic subsidiaries as well as returns from EU Framework Programmes for research.



The increase in public-sector funding in particular has been a major contributor to Austria's high research intensity throughout the current decade.

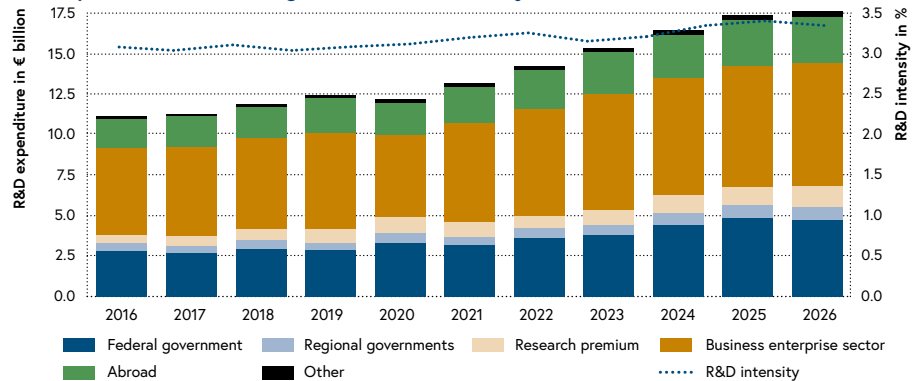
At the same time, there has been a steady rise in foreign funding.

Research intensity 2026

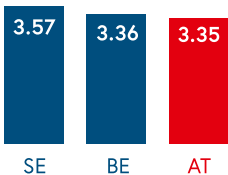
3.34%

Austria's research intensity has been above the 3% target set by the EU for all Member States for the **13th year** since 2014 and has increased almost continuously over this period.

Development of R&D funding and research intensity in Austria, 2016–2026



Note: The category "Other" combines the two categories "Other public funding" (incl. higher education sector) and "Private non-profit sector".
Source: Statistik Austria, global estimate 23 April 2026



Source: Eurostat (2025)

Research intensity 2024 in international comparison

In an EU comparison, Sweden and Belgium led in terms of R&D intensity in 2024, with 3.57% and 3.36% respectively. Austria ranked third, with an R&D intensity of 3.35%.

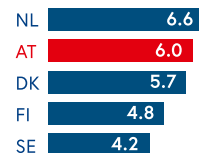
Austria's position in global/international rankings



Austria's position as an RTI location in international comparison

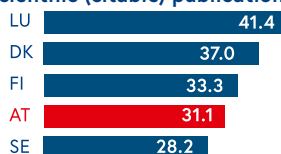
European Research Council Grants under Horizon Europe per million inhabitants, 2024

Across all three ERC grant categories – ERC Starting Grants, ERC Consolidator Grants and ERC Advanced Grants – Austria secured **6 ERC grants per million inhabitants in 2024 (2023: 5.4), therefore ranking second internationally** (2023: 6th place). With this result, Austria continues to meet the RTI Strategy 2030 target of remaining among the top ten countries internationally.



Source: Data from the FFG EU-Performance Monitor (2026), data: 1/2026

Scientific (citable) publications in quantum technologies, normalised by population, 2024

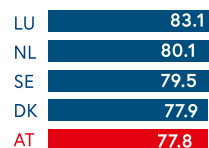


With **31.1 publications in the field of quantum technologies per million inhabitants**, Austria ranked fourth in 2024, while significantly increasing its publication output. With approximately 41.4 publications per million inhabitants, Luxembourg ranked first, followed by Denmark (37.0) and Finland (33.3). The EU-27 average increased to 15.5 in 2024 (2023: 12.7).

Source: Scopus (2026), World Bank

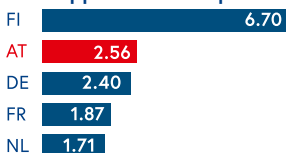
IMD World Talent Ranking, 2025 (Switzerland = 100)

In the RTI Strategy 2030, Austria has set itself the goal of ranking among the top three countries in this indicator. Austria once again ranked fifth in the **IMD World Talent Ranking 2025**, while Luxembourg took first place. Austria improved by one position in both the “Readiness” and “Appeal” dimensions, ranking fifth among the EU-27 countries in each category.



Source: IMD World Competitiveness Center (2025)

Patent applications in quantum technologies per 10,000 R&D employees, 2023

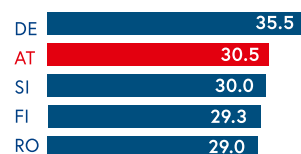


In 2023, Austria increased the number of patent applications in the field of quantum technologies to **24** (2022: 16). Relative to the number of R&D personnel, Austria ranked **second among** the EU-27 countries, with 2.56 patent applications per 10,000 R&D personnel. Austria thus not only outperformed Germany (2.40), but also exceeded the EU-27 average (1.98) and innovation leader countries such as the Netherlands (1.71).

Source: European Patent Office (2025), OECD (2025)

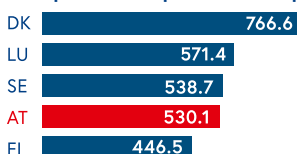
Share of graduates in STEM fields in international comparison (in %), 2023

In terms of the **share of graduates in STEM fields** in international comparison, Austria recorded a decline of 0.6 percentage points in 2023. Nevertheless, with **30.5%** (2022: 31.1%), Austria once again ranked **second in the EU-27 comparison**, ahead of Slovenia (30.0%). Germany continues to lead the ranking with 35.5%, maintaining first place.



Source: UNESCO (2024)

Public-private co-publications per million inhabitants, 2025

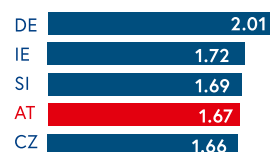


In 2025, Austria ranked **fourth** by number of **public-private co-publications with domestic and international participation**, with 530.1 co-publications per million inhabitants. The top three positions were held by Denmark (766.6), Luxembourg (571.4) and Sweden (538.7).

Source: European Commission (2025)

Economic Complexity Index, 2023

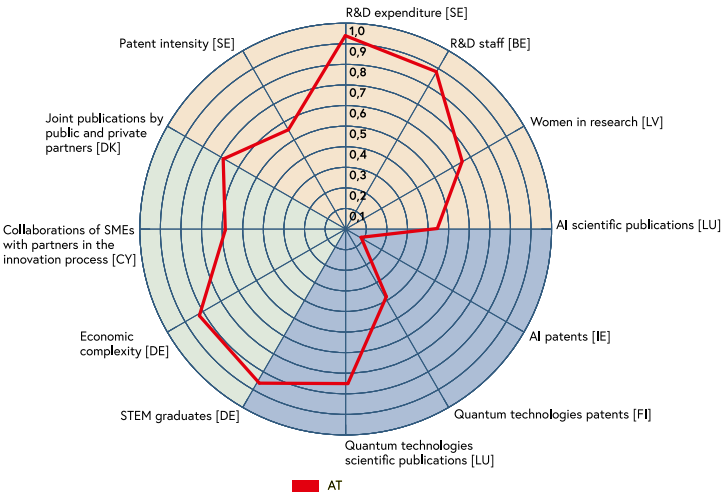
Austria's economic complexity stood at **1.67** in 2023. With this value, the Austrian economy continues to **rank among the leading group**, placing fourth in the EU country comparison and characterised by a very high level of complexity. In the global comparison, Austria also maintains a strong position, ranking tenth worldwide. As the share of complex products in a country's total export volume increases, the value of economic complexity also rises.



Source: The Growth Lab at Harvard University (2024)

Austria's innovation performance and capability in the EU-27 comparison

Austria's position in relation to the top performance level in selected RTI and science indicators

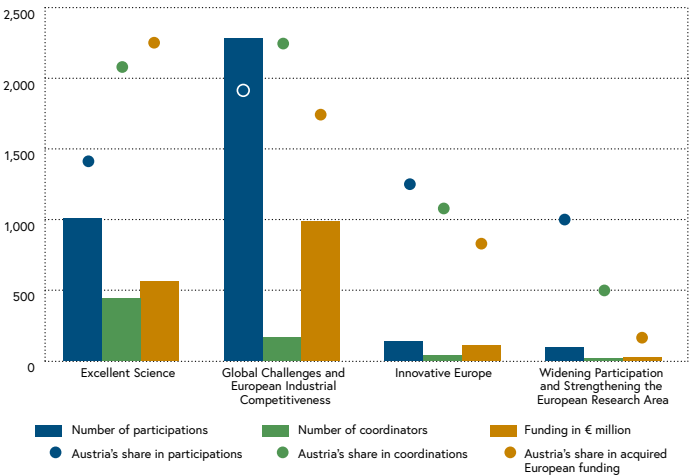


The radar chart reveals that **Austria is close to the EU top performance level in R&D expenditure and R&D personnel**. Austria also ranks among the top-performing countries in scientific publications in **quantum technologies, STEM graduates and economic complexity**.

The orange segment of the figure comprises fundamental indicators of performance in research and development, while the blue segment presents indicators on the state of digitalisation and the green segment shows indicators of innovation capacity. The red line visualises Austria's distance from the leading country in each indicator within the EU-27.

Austria's performance in Horizon Europe

Austria's absolute and relative participations, coordinations and funding volumes by Horizon Europe programme pillars



Austrian researchers and R&D institutions continue to perform strongly in **Horizon Europe**. As of mid-January 2026, Austria has secured **€1.68 billion in funding** and achieved **3,529 project participations**. Despite a slight decline in the success rate to **19.7% (-1.4 percentage points)**, Austria ranks **7th EU-wide** (2025: 7th place).

The highest share of funding is attributed to the higher education sector (42%), followed by non-university research institutions (28%) and business enterprises (22%).

Austrian universities and non-university research institutions with a strong focus on basic research perform particularly well in the European Research Council (ERC). In the collaborative programmes under Pillar 2, Austria's strengths are further consolidated in the clusters "Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society", "Climate, Energy and Mobility", and "Digitalisation, Industry and Space".

Source: FFG, adjusted data from eCorda as of 11 January 2026

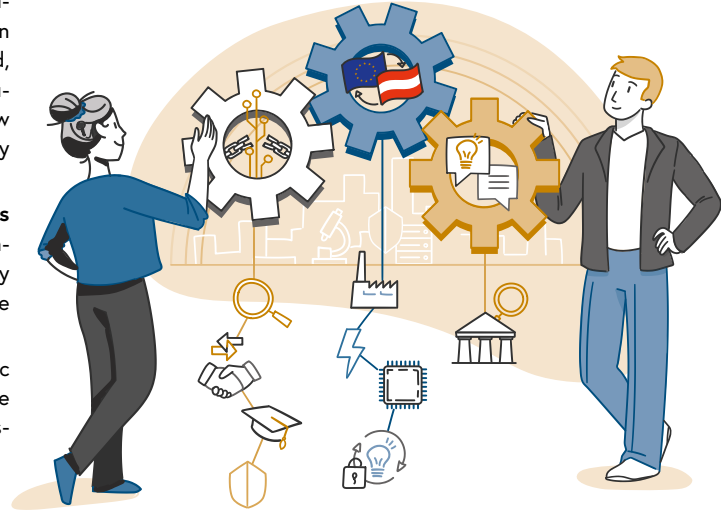
In the field of Erasmus+, the post-pandemic recovery continues. Approved student and staff mobilities increased from around **7,500 (2021)** to approximately **11,700 (2024)**. Austrian higher education institutions are also successfully represented in the excellence formats "European Universities", "Erasmus Mundus" and "Centres of Vocational Excellence".

Resilience and technological sovereignty

Resilience and technological sovereignty have become central guiding principles of Austria's RTI policy. Across federal ministries, an increasing number of coordinated measures are being implemented, with a current focus on cybersecurity in research, science communication and trust-building, the security of supply for critical raw materials, and strengthening Austria's position in key technology fields such as the semiconductor industry.

Over recent years, Austria's RTI system has demonstrated its resilience: A differentiated research system, established cooperation structures, stable public funding and institutional adaptability have enabled the system to absorb external shocks – such as the COVID-19 pandemic – comparatively well.

Looking ahead, detailed real-time data foundations, strategic foresight processes, a targeted positioning within European value chains, and agile RTI governance structures are becoming increasingly important in addressing future challenges.



Research security

The European Commission's "Global Approach to Research and Innovation" promotes open international cooperation as the standard, guided by the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary". This approach is based on reciprocity, fair competitive conditions, and the safeguarding of research integrity, academic freedom and intellectual property rights. **Research security refers to the anticipation and management of risks related to:**

- Unwanted transfer of critical knowledge and technologies
- Malicious interference by third countries
- Violations of ethical principles or integrity

Against the backdrop of increasing geopolitical tensions and diverse forms of foreign interference, research security has become a central issue in international R&D cooperation. The Austrian Federal Government pursues a strategic, risk-based approach. Through a network of more than 70 contact points and a Cyber Resilience Plan (2025–2027) funded by the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) with €45 million, Austrian universities and research institutions are supported in developing institutional risk management systems.

Digital sovereignty is closely linked to research security. The Federal Ministry of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure (BMIMI) therefore supports research organisations such as Silicon Austria Labs (SAL), which focuses on cybersecurity, data protection, compliance and export controls. Binding guidelines, training programmes and access control based on the "need-to-know" principle have been implemented. AI ethics and HR processes are also structurally embedded. In addition, research security is integrated into funding guidelines.

At national level, a systematic assessment of potential risks and uncertainties, as well as alternative development pathways, is conducted through semi-annual monitoring of future topics and technology impact assessments for Parliament. At European level, strategic foresight is increasingly linked to industrial and technology policy processes, for example in the context of key technologies, critical raw materials and the European Chips Act. Risk management in the RTI domain has thus become a shared responsibility.

Peace and conflict research

An initiative of the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) in the field of peace and conflict research aims to strengthen research at European level on geopolitical challenges, Europe's role, and issues of peace and security.

In light of increasing disinformation and fragile trust in science and democracy, science communication and science engagement are gaining importance as key elements of resilience. Corresponding measures were explicitly included for the first time in the performance agreements of public universities for 2025–2027. In addition, two new centres for research and science communication have been established:

- **Q. Your Space for Science – Experiencing and Understanding Science:** Located in the Aula der Wissenschaften, Austria's largest competence centre for contemporary science communication is being rolled-out. It is operated by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW), the University of Vienna and the Vienna University of Technology.
- **VISTA Science Experience Center at ISTA:** Through an interactive exhibition format and trained science mediators, science and research are made accessible and engaging for the public.