GUIDE
RTI INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING INDUSTRY

2025 Annual Programme

A programme of the Climate and Energy Fund
of the Austrian federal government

Vienna, October 2025

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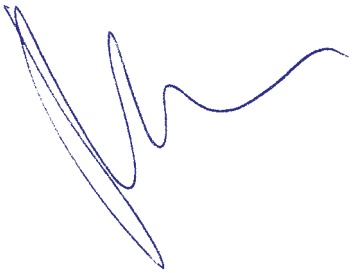
INTRODUCTION

Austrian industry faces the dual challenge of reducing its CO_2 emissions yet at the same time strengthening its competitiveness on the global market. This is precisely where the RTI initiative for transforming industry comes in – by supporting innovative approaches that can make a significant contribution to both Austrian economic strength and climate neutrality.

Our tender will help companies further develop their ideas and demonstrate them under real conditions. The aim is not only to bring these climate-friendly solutions to market, but also to scale them up quickly. Cooperation between research and industry and the mutual transfer of knowledge are key to this process.

It also calls for innovation across the entire value chain: from components and machines for climate-neutral technologies to clean industrial processes and new, sustainable business models. We are not only looking for representatives of energy-intensive industries, but also for technology providers.

The European and Austrian economy needs new impetus, and you can contribute to this with your innovative strength – we look forward to your submission!



Bernd Vogl

Managing Director of the Climate and Energy Fund

1. THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS AT A GLANCE

The Climate and Energy Fund is making a maximum of EUR 60 million available for the 2025 call for proposals.

Table 1: Key details of this call for proposals

Objectives	The call for proposals aims to contribute to climate neutrality in industry while safeguarding the attractiveness of the location at the same time. The objective is to increase the innovation capacity of Austrian companies and research institutions as well as their competitiveness in international value chains for sustainable net-zero technologies.
Target group	• Companies, particularly those in industry and construction according to Statistics Austria's classification of economic activities (sections B to F of Austrian Statistical Classification of Economic Activities ÖNACE 2025); including energy supply companies • Technology providers and suppliers along the value chain • Institutions for research and knowledge dissemination
Submission deadline	**29 April 2026, 12:00 p.m. (noon)**
Compulsory preliminary discussion	• Pilot and demonstration plants (P&T plants) as well as combined projects: registration by 31 March 2026 at the latest Individual online appointments on Tuesday afternoons from 14 October 2025 to 7 April 2026 Registration at www.umweltfoerderung.at/betriebe/fti • Flagship projects: registration by 31 March 2026 at the latest Make an appointment with the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) contacts listed below who are responsible for Priority area I.
FFG funding processing and submission advice	**Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (FFG) mbH (Austrian Research Promotion Agency)** Priority area I – Innovation: Research & development projects (R&D projects), combined projects Dr.in techn. Shima Goudarzi, shima.goudarzi@ffg.at Tel.: +43 577 55-5044 DIin Gertrud Aichberger, gertrud.aichberger@ffg.at, Tel.: +43 577 55-5043 Sarah-Salome Sidra, MSc, sarah-salome.sidra@ffg.at Tel.: +43 57755-5050 Priority area II – Qualification Mag.a Sonja Gossar, sonja.gossar@ffg.at Tel.: +43 577 55-2312 Priority area III – R&D infrastructure Joachim Haumann joachim.haumann@ffg.at Tel.: +43 577 55-2412
KPC funding processing and submission advice	**Kommunalkredit Public Consulting (KPC) GmbH** Priority area I – Innovation: Pilot and demonstration plants, combined projects Renewable Resources team Tel.: +43 1 316 31-719 Email address for the support programme: fti-tdi@kommunalkredit.at DI Christof Horvath, c.horvath@kommunalkredit.at DI Benedikt Preschern, b.preschern@kommunalkredit.at
Call for proposals website	FFG: www.ffg.at/FTI-TdI_Ausschreibung_2025 for R&D projects, combined projects, qualification network, R&D infrastructure KPC: www.umweltfoerderung.at/fti for pilot and demonstration plants, combined projects
Proposal language	English: Priority areas I and III German: Priority area II

Table 2: Overview of the priority areas in the call for proposals

Priority area in the call for proposals	Brief description	Funding instrument(s) and legal basis	Technology readiness level (TRL)	Provisional budget	Compulsory preliminary discussion	Hearing	Processing agency
I-Innovation	**R&D project** Preliminary research work for subsequent implementation or demonstration of the innovation	Cooperative R&D project	Experimental development (TRL 5-8)	EUR 15 million	No	No	FFG
		Flagship project	Experimental development (TRL 5-8) Proportion of industrial research (TRL 2-TRL 4) ≤50% of total project costs		Yes	Yes	
	Pilot and demonstration plant Project trials innovation in the real-world environment as the basis for large-scale technological application	InvestFRL UFI 2022	Experimental development (TRL 5-8)	EUR 12.5 million	Yes	No	KPC
	Combined project: R&D project and pilot and demonstration plant Combined project trials innovation in the real-world environment with accompanying research as the basis for large-scale technological application	See R&D project and pilot and demonstration plant	See R&D project and pilot and demonstration plant	EUR 22.5 million	Yes	Yes, provided that the R&D project is implemented as the Flagship project	FFG and KPC
II-Qualification	Establishing research and technical expertise within the company	Qualification network	/	EUR 1 million	No	No	FFG
III-R&D infrastructure	Establishing a research and development infrastructure	R&D infrastructure	/	EUR 9 million	No	No	FFG

Table 3: Overview of available instruments

Funding instrument	Minimum/maximum funding per project in EUR	Funding rate	Term in months	Cooperation requirement
Cooperative R&D project Experimental development	Max. 2 million	Max. 60%	Max. 36	Yes
Flagship project Predominantly experimental development (proportion of industrial research permitted)	Minimum of 2 million	Max. 60% (experimental development) or maximum of 85% (industrial research)	Max. 48	Yes
Pilot and demonstration plant InvestFRL UFI 2022, experimental development	Max. 6 million	Max. 45%	Max. 48	No
Qualification network Qualification measures to increase research, technology, development, innovation and digital skills	Max. 200,000	Max. 100%	Max. 24	Yes
R&D infrastructure Type of use "economic use"	Max. 5 million	Max. 50%	Max. 60	No

2. RTI INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING INDUSTRY

2.1 THE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry makes an important contribution to national and European efforts to position Austria and Europe as successful, climate-neutral and competitive industrial locations internationally.

Support is provided through funding for:

- Research and demonstration projects and combinations of these to accelerate the transfer from research to market
- Qualification networks for establishing skills
- Establishment of a high-quality R&D infrastructure for application-oriented research

Aside from technical aspects, there is also scope for investigating and validating socio-economic issues, legal and social considerations, and future market and business models. However, this is only permitted within the framework of R&D projects aimed at further technological development.

The services of the NEFI innovation laboratory are available for project development. Coordinating the content of the project application with the NEFI innovation laboratory's innovation hubs is recommended before the application is submitted (see Chapter 4).

2.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry has set itself the following strategic objectives:

- **Objective 1: Demonstrate climate-neutral industrial production in Austria**
  The programme supports Austria's manufacturing industry in its research and demonstration projects on the path towards climate-neutral industrial production. Innovative solutions should serve to scale up large-scale industrial transformation within the framework of showcase projects and significantly and permanently help to reduce energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and process-related greenhouse gas emissions that can only be prevented with significant expense. The technology pathways outlined in Annex I are of particular strategic relevance for Austria as a place for industry.
- **Objective 2: Improve the competitiveness of the Austrian manufacturing industry in the global market**
  The programme supports Austrian companies with development, production preparation and testing for innovative sustainable net-zero technologies, in order to increase their market opportunities in the international environment. This involves in particular the objectives defined in the EU Net-Zero Industry Act and net-zero technologies. (see Annex II).
- **Objective 3: Diversify Austria's positioning in international value chains and strengthen Austria's resilience as an industrial location**
  Investments in further development for net-zero technologies are aimed at accelerating portfolio and product diversification and strategic (re)alignment of Austrian companies towards key technologies and at strengthening Austria's position in global value chains. The objectives and net-zero technologies defined in the EU Net-Zero Industry Act (see Annex II) are also of particular relevance.

2.3 OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Five operational objectives have been defined for this call for proposals in order to achieve the strategic objectives:

Projects under **Priority area 1 – Innovation** (see Chapter 3.1) must contribute to at least two of the operational objectives 1, 2 and 3 in order for the funding application to receive a positive evaluation.

- **Objective 1: Accelerate and improve the application of sustainable net-zero technologies and innovative climate-neutral system solutions**
  The increased use and systemic integration of innovative climate-neutral solutions in industry should contribute to climate protection effects across locations and sectors, taking into account the circular economy.
- **Objective 2: Strengthen the portfolio and product diversification of Austrian manufacturing companies, including Austrian providers of sustainable net-zero technologies**
  Product innovations should open up new market segments in the field of sustainable net-zero technologies.
- **Objective 3: Develop scalable innovations and trial them in a real-world environment prior to market launch**
  Highly innovative approaches and net-zero technologies will be developed further and trialled for large-scale technological application in industry (TRL 6-8) in order to lay the foundations for commercial production.

Projects under **Priority area 2 – Qualification** (see Chapter 3.2) must make a contribution to operational objective 4.

- **Objective 4: Establish research and technical expertise in sustainable net-zero technologies or climate-neutral solutions for industry in Austrian companies**
  Research, technology, development, innovation and digital (RTDI+D) skills will be enhanced in industry, with the involvement of underrepresented groups of people in RTI, through knowledge transfer and cooperation between stakeholders in industry and research.

Projects under **Priority area 3 – R&D infrastructure** (see Chapter 3.3) must make a contribution to operational objective 5.

- **Objective 5: Strengthen Austria's position as a research location for innovations in climate-neutral industry and develop net-zero technologies**
  Premium R&D infrastructure will be established at the highest international level in order to further establish Austria's international attractiveness as a location for companies and research institutions.

Table 4: Overview of operational objectives

Priority area in the call for proposals	Funding instrument(s) and legal basis	Operational objective
I-Innovation	Flagship project Cooperative R&D project Pilot and demonstration plant (InvestFRL UFI 2022)	Objective 1: Accelerate and improve the application of sustainable net-zero technologies and innovative climate-neutral system solutions Objective 2: Strengthen the portfolio and product diversification of Austrian manufacturing companies, including Austrian providers of sustainable net-zero technologies Objective 3: Develop scalable innovations and trial them in a real-world environment prior to market launch
II-Qualification	Qualification network	Objective 4: Establish research and technical expertise in sustainable net-zero technologies or climate-neutral solutions for industry in Austrian companies
III-R&D infrastructure	R&D infrastructure	Objective 5: Strengthen Austria's position as a research location for innovations in climate-neutral industry and develop net-zero technologies

2.4 TARGET GROUPS OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

This call for proposals is aimed at the following target groups:

- Companies with any legal form, particularly those in industry and construction according to Statistics Austria's classification of economic activities (sections B to F of Austrian Statistical Classification of Economic Activities ÖNACE 2025; this also includes energy supply companies)
- Technology providers and suppliers along the value chain
- Other not-for-profit institutions
- Institutions for research and knowledge dissemination

2.5 GENDER AND DIVERSITY ASPECTS

The call for proposals takes particular account of gender and diversity aspects in order to strengthen the participation of women[1] and other underrepresented groups in innovation projects. This contributes toward increasing the innovation potential and supports the development of solutions that meet the diverse needs of different target groups better.

- The following aspects must be addressed when submitting funding applications in relation to underrepresented groups in RTI, especially women in technology:
    a. The composition of the project team
    b. The activities in the project (e.g. proportion of female speakers at events, consideration of the diversity of the target group when communicating the results)
    c. The impact of the project on stakeholders who are directly affected by, or benefit from, it (e.g. people who work in the company or who use the technology/system)

  All projects must specify in the application how they take gender and diversity aspects into account in these three areas. Where aspects b. and/or c are not relevant to a project, this must be further explained in the application.
- Additional aspects must be addressed for qualification networks, see Chapter 3.2.

1 "Women" here refers to all female-socialised people, as gender is relevant in RTI as a social construct. Non-binary perspectives are also important and can additionally be addressed.

3. PRIORITY AREAS IN THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The call for proposals is aligned with the EU's Clean Industrial Deal, which aims to accelerate climate neutrality in Europe in the next few years while promoting the competitiveness of European industry at the same time.

For Transforming Industry towards Climate Neutrality, the RTI initiative supports innovative projects along those technology pathways that have high potential for a permanent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Austria's manufacturing industry: Electrification & energy efficiency, circular economy, industrial symbiosis, CO_2-neutral gases & hydrogen, carbon capturing, utilisation and storage, as well as flexibilisation (see Annex I).

In order to strengthen the competitiveness of the Austrian manufacturing industry and Austria's position in international value chains, the call for proposals also supports innovative projects in the field of net-zero technologies. The RTI initiative refers here to the net-zero technologies listed in the EU Net-Zero Industry Act. These include technologies for renewable energy sources, energy system-related energy efficiency technologies, battery and energy storage technologies, carbon capturing and storage system technologies and technologies for sustainable alternative fuels. (see Annex II).

This call for proposals covers **three** priority areas within this framework:

- Innovation
- Qualification
- R&D infrastructure

The operational objectives for the individual tender priorities are described in Chapter 2.3.

3.1 "INNOVATION" PRIORITY AREA

In this call for proposals, R&D projects and pilot and demonstration plants can either be submitted individually or in combination.

3.1.1 R&D PROJECT

Cooperative R&D projects are being sought with high technology readiness levels (TRLs) that represent important innovation steps for subsequent implementation projects.

The cooperative projects are intended to enable close collaboration between one or more industrial partners and research institutions.

The projects can be combined with pilot and trial projects funded elsewhere (e.g. EU Innovation Fund, Transforming Industry under the UFG, environmental funding in Austria, etc. within the scope of this call for proposals – see Chapter 8.3). In that case, this must be specified in the R&D project proposal or documented in an appendix to the project proposal.

Instruments for which proposals are invited (see Table 3):

- Cooperative R&D project in experimental development (TRL 5-8)
  - TRL 5: Functional evidence of the technology in simulated industrial use
  - TRL 6: Demonstration of the technology in simulated industrial use
  - TRL 7: Demonstration of the prototype (system) in simulated industrial use
  - TRL 8: System fully technically developed, approved or certified
- Flagship project in experimental development
  - Work packages for industrial research activities can be funded in flagship projects. However, the proportion of industrial research (TRL <5) may not exceed 50% of the total project costs.

3.1.2 PILOT AND DEMONSTRATION PLANT

Pilot and demonstration plants are being sought that go beyond standard technologies and serve to test or introduce new or significantly improved technologies, advanced processes or innovative system components. Since pilot and demonstration plants involve an increased development risk, failure of the pilot and demonstration plant is accepted in justified cases.

Pilot and demonstration plants with technology readiness levels 5 to 8 are supported.
The pilot and demonstration plant's objective is to prepare for the next scaling steps.

Pilot and demonstration plants can be implemented either by individual companies or as part of a consortium with other corporate partners and/or research institutions.

The pilot and demonstration plant can be combined with existing R&D projects outside of this call for proposals (in particular from the 2024 RTI Initiative for the Transformation of Industry call for proposals, as well as from other research funding programmes such as energy research, circular economy and production technologies, FFG basic programmes, etc. – see Chapter 8.3).

Demonstration of the innovative nature of the pilot and demonstration plant and of the environmental impact is a prerequisite for funding to be granted (see Chapter 7.1).

Funding instrument for which proposals are invited (see Table 3):

- Pilot and demonstration plant in accordance with KPC detailed information and technical data sheet

3.1.3 COMBINED PROJECT

Cooperative R&D projects or flagship projects can be combined with one or more pilot and demonstration plants. The combined project provides the basis for the next scaling steps towards large-scale technological application in industrial use.

Combined projects use two funding instrument groups based on different guidelines (the FFG's "Challenge" guidelines and KPC's UFI guideline on "eco-innovations"), but are largely regarded as an integrated whole in the context of the consultation and selection process and in the further project process. The focus here is on innovation and future emission savings effects (see also selection criteria in Chapter 7.1). Reference must also be made in the respective application to any other relevant application(s).

Funding instruments for which proposals are invited (see Table 3):

- Cooperative R&D project in experimental development
- Flagship project in experimental development (industrial research: maximum of 50% of total project costs)
- Pilot and demonstration plant in accordance with KPC detailed information and technical data sheet

3.2 "QUALIFICATION" PRIORITY AREA

The qualification networks for which proposals are invited should develop and implement training measures on innovative net-zero technologies or climate-neutral solutions for industry that are not yet available on the market. Research institutions facilitate customised application-oriented content for Austrian companies in the consortium.

The transfer of knowledge between scientific partners and industry enables rapid dissemination of the latest scientific findings and technologies, which are necessary in particular in manufacturing companies in order to manage the transition to climate neutrality and to position themselves in new sustainable value chains.

The establishment of specialist expertise in Austrian companies belonging to the target group of this call for proposals should be expedited in the medium and long term.

Prerequisites:

- Collaboration between at least **four independent partners**. In all cases, the consortium must include:
  - one institution for research and knowledge dissemination as part of its scientific activity as consortium leader;
  - three independent companies with a branch in Austria.
  - Furthermore, additional scientific partners, companies and other organisations may also be part of the consortium.
- The content of the qualification networks must be clearly differentiated from existing qualification measures. The differentiation must be outlined in the application.
- Gender and diversity aspects:
  - The application must outline specific measures to attract underrepresented groups in RTI, in particular women in technology, both as speakers and as training participants in the qualification networks, thereby achieving a level of representation that is higher than the standard for the industry. Other diversity dimensions, such as migration background and disability, may also be the focus of these measures.
    - > The application must demonstrate that there is experience and expertise in the project team (or through involvement of third-party service providers) to implement these measures.
  - It is recommended to provide for training on the topic of "gender, diversity and equal opportunities". When it comes to innovation agendas in particular, it is important for companies to leverage the full potential of their workforce and product or service design. Addressing the topics of gender, diversity and equal opportunities creates knowledge and highlights opportunities for action and potential within the company.

Funding instrument for which proposals are invited (see Table 3):

- Qualification network

3.3 "R&D INFRASTRUCTURE" PRIORITY AREA

R&D infrastructure projects are projects for the acquisition, establishment and expansion of high-quality R&D infrastructure for application-oriented research. The infrastructure must be open for use by other organisations, and access must be granted under transparent conditions free from discrimination.

Only R&D infrastructure projects of the **"economic use" type** may be submitted.

The following are eligible to apply for the "economic use" type:

- Institutions for research and knowledge dissemination
  - Universities
  - Universities of applied sciences
  - Non-university research institutions
  - Technology transfer institutions, innovation brokers and other science-oriented organisations, such as associations with a corresponding purpose.
- Company
- Other institutions that are legal entities (e.g. non-scientific associations)

Supplements to the instrument guide

- The maximum funding amount per project is EUR 5 million.
- The total costs of the project applied for must exceed EUR 500,000.
- The term of the project is up to 60 months. The funding period may be extended by a maximum of one year at no additional cost if the project objectives have not yet been achieved and the approved budget has not yet been exceeded.
- Additional instalments in accordance with item 5.4 of the instrument guide are possible in exceptional cases following approval from FFG. A justification must be provided for this in the description of the usage strategy in the eCall, and a comprehensible instalment plan must be presented that is consistent with the funding plan. The final instalment in the instalment plan must in any case amount to at least 10% of the amount of funding approved.

Funding instrument for which proposals are invited (see Table 3):

- R&D infrastructure

4. COLLABORATION WITH THE NEFI INNOVATION LABORATORY

The NEFI – New Energy for Industry innovation laboratory, which is funded as part of the 2023 call for proposals under the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry, serves as a national point of contact and international gateway that aims to help innovations that are "Made in Austria" in the field of industrial climate neutrality achieve a more rapid breakthrough.

The associated innovation laboratory will inject significant momentum into the transformation of Austria's manufacturing industry towards climate neutrality and sustainable net-zero technologies and serve as a catalyst supporting the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry.

The innovation laboratory fulfils the following tasks with this:

- Innovation ecosystem for the development of specific projects for the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry.
- Collaboration between Austrian solution providers and manufacturing companies (as the actual users of the technologies) in partnership with research institutes.
- Establishing links in the field of climate-neutral industrial production at the global and in particular the European level.
- Monitoring global trends and carrying out regular needs analyses to deliver solutions with significant innovation potential.
- Delivering communication, networking and knowledge transfer in a way that takes account of the needs of users and harnesses existing results, success stories and networks.
- Providing easy access to a development and testing environment to facilitate innovation projects that span sector or technology boundaries.
- Impact assessments, particularly those estimating the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that can be achieved, the potential offered by solutions in terms of added value and property rights, and the potential for these solutions to be replicated, scaled up and transferred to other applications.
- Monitoring and managing data for projects funded as part of the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry.

Participation in the monitoring and impact assessment (see Chapter 5 for details) is mandatory for all projects in Priority area I Innovation.

Agreement with the innovation laboratory or the topic-related innovation hubs prior to submitting an application is recommended but is not mandatory.

The six innovation hubs are led by leading experts in their respective fields and support projects throughout the entire innovation process. They are organised in accordance with the following topics:

- Electrification and energy efficiency
- Circular economy
- Industrial symbiosis
- CO_2-neutral gases and hydrogen
- Carbon capture, utilisation and storage
- Flexibilisation

Contacts at the NEFI – New Energy for Industry innovation laboratory:

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5. MONITORING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The accompanying project monitoring and a project impact assessment serve to ensure quality and support the Climate and Energy Fund with programme management and development. The scientific support, which includes the development of indicators, ongoing scientific project monitoring and project impact assessment, is an essential component in the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry. The methods developed as part of the RTI initiative for the Flagship Region Energy are also being applied in the present programme and are undergoing continuous development and being adapted to the needs of the various projects and topics. The innovation laboratory of the NEFI innovation network is the body responsible for the monitoring and the impact assessment for the projects as part of the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry.

The collaboration with the innovation laboratory within the scope of the monitoring and the impact assessment is therefore a **mandatory component of the projects funded under Priority area I Innovation**.

The NEFI innovation laboratory supports the RTI initiative with techno-economic impact assessments for the technological and non-technological solutions that are developed. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are recorded here along the three dimensions of climate, macroeconomy and resilience.

The innovation laboratory monitors the projects under the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry with respect to their scientific output and their activities in public relations and dissemination of results.

Participation in the monitoring programme takes place in addition to the reporting obligations to the FFG and KPC processing agencies as defined in the instrument guidelines and funding agreements (see the Reporting Guidelines on the FFG website: www.ffg.at/FTI-TdI/berichtslegung).

The monitoring takes place primarily at the start and the end of the project in order to save time. Corresponding staff resources must be calculated and made available in the project application. Providing resources in the amount of about 0.5 person months per year is recommended, although this amount may be higher or lower depending on the complexity of the projects. The alignment with the NEFI monitoring system can take place as early as the application phase in order to ensure maximum efficiency and seamless integration of the monitoring processes. The results of the monitoring activities and of the impact assessment are available to the projects so that they can put their solutions to use.

6. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

6.1 REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR SUBMISSION

All documents relevant to the call for proposals can be found here:

- FFG website: www.ffg.at/FTI-TdI_Ausschreibung_2025
- KPC website: www.umweltfoerderung.at/fti

Table 5: Documents for the call for proposals

Funding instrument or other information	Available proposal documents
Cooperative R&D project (FFG)	Instrument guide for cooperative R&D projects (German, Version 5.2) Instrument guide for cooperative R&D projects (English, Version 5.2)
Flagship project (FFG)	Instrument guide for flagship projects (German, Version 5.2) Instrument guide for flagship projects (English, Version 5.2)
Pilot and demonstration plant (KPC)	Detailed information (German), Technical data sheet (German) www.umweltfoerderung.at/betriebe/fti
Qualification network (FFG)	Instrument guide for qualification networks (German, Version 1.3)
R&D infrastructure (FFG)	Instrument guide for R&D infrastructure, economic use (German, Version 1.1) Instrument guide for R&D infrastructure, economic use (Englisch, Version 1.1)
General rules on costs (FFG)	Cost guidelines (German Version 3.2): www.ffg.at/recht-finanzen/kostenleitfaden

6.2 SUBMISSION PROCESS

R&D project (combined or standalone), qualification network, R&D infrastructure:

The application documents must be submitted exclusively online via eCall to FFG as the processing agency responsible. The proposal submitted must comprise the following **online** elements, which must be entered under the following menu items in eCall:

- **Content description** comprises an outline of the project's content.
- **Work plan** comprises an outline of the work packages and other project management elements such as the time management plan (Gantt chart), tasks, milestones and results.
- **Consortium** describes the expertise of the individual consortium members.
- **Costs and financing** describes all cost categories for each consortium member. The totals for each work package will be displayed automatically in the online work plan.

Any attachments to the electronic proposal must be uploaded as necessary. When combining with a pilot and demonstration plant, reference must be made to this in the FFG application (with the project title).

Pilot and demonstration plants (combined or standalone):

Separate applications must be submitted to KPC for each pilot and demonstration plant: www.umweltfoerderung.at/betriebe/fti. For combined projects, the eCall number of the R&D project must be stated in the application for the pilot and demonstration plant.

Only funding applications submitted to the processing agencies in full and on time will be considered. Incomplete funding applications cannot be considered when awarding the funds.

6.3 COMPULSORY PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Before the submission, a mandatory consultation with FFG and/or KPC staff must be held for the following project types to clarify the requirements and targets:

- for flagship projects (with FFG), pilot and demonstration plants (with KPC) and for combined projects (with FFG and KPC)

An optional preliminary discussion can be held with FFG for the following project types:

- for qualification networks, cooperative R&D projects and for R&D infrastructure;

The compulsory preliminary discussions must be arranged by 31 March 2026 at the latest via the online tool at www.umweltfoerderung.at/betriebe/fti (for combined projects and P&D facilities) or by email to the respective FFG contact for Priority area I (for flagship projects). Optional preliminary discussions can be arranged individually with the relevant FFG contacts.

Online appointments for the mandatory preliminary discussion for pilot and demonstration plants and combined projects are available on Tuesday afternoons from 14 October 2025 until 7 April 2026. For flagship projects, appointments are arranged directly with the FFG.

At least two working days before a preliminary meeting, the completed project outline (template available at: www.umweltfoerderung.at/betriebe/fti and www.ffg.at/FTI-TdI_Ausschreibung_2025) must be returned to the processing agencies responsible (FFG and/or KPC).

A preliminary discussion is intended to provide optimum support for applicants in preparing their project application for the current call for proposals. Preliminary discussions are also generally recommended for project formats that do not provide for a compulsory preliminary discussion.

6.4 SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The call for proposals ends on **29 April 2026** at 12:00 p.m. (noon).

7. FROM PROJECT SELECTION TO PAYMENT OF THE FUNDING

7.1 PROJECT SELECTION AND FUNDING DECISION

Formal review:

During the formal review, the funding or financing application is checked for formal correctness and completeness. If the formal requirements are not met and the deficiencies cannot be rectified, the funding or financing application will be excluded from the further procedure without exception and formally rejected during the formal review due to the required equal treatment of all funding or financing applications.

Selection criteria:

R&D project, qualification network, R&D infrastructure:
The assessment criteria defined in the FFG's instrument guidelines are decisive when selecting the projects (see Table 5).

Pilot and demonstration plant:
The selection criteria for the pilot and demonstration plant are based on the EU Innovation Fund criteria in order to facilitate any future scaling at EU level. When submitting their application, applicants must demonstrate the development risks involved and the format in which research questions will be investigated within the pilot and demonstration plant (e.g. in cooperation with a national or international R&D project or as part of an internal company research project). The qualitative criteria (including the innovative nature) of the pilot and demonstration plant will be assessed by a jury.

Table 6: Selection criteria for the pilot and demonstration plant

Criterion	Weighting
1. Quantitative criterion:	**40%**
a) Environmental impact • Greenhouse gas reduction compared to an existing or reference plant at the plant location • Scalability of the environmental impact • Plausibility check on the calculation for greenhouse gas emission avoidance • Plausibility of the selected reference model	40%
2. Qualitative criteria:	**60%**
b) Relevance for the call for proposals [2] • Relevance of the project in achieving the objectives of the call for proposals	10%
c) Appropriate nature of the costs of the measures • Cost/benefit ratio • Quality of the cost accounting	10%

2 Zero points for the relevance criterion will result in the project being rejected

Criterion	Weighting
d) Innovation content • The extent to which the innovation in the project goes beyond the state of the art measured in the EU (existing products, procedures, etc.). • A project or product is considered innovative if, compared to the state of the art: • it differs significantly in terms of quality, carbon footprint or use of resources, • and/or it is not widely available on the EU market, • and/or it promises significantly better results, • and/or it has been technologically or systemically developed (higher TRL/SRL), • and/or it ideally outperforms existing innovations, whereby the state of the art encompasses both the state currently available commercially (comparable products/processes) and the most developed proprietary technological solution. • Examples: • New products/services requiring comprehensive adjustments in production/the supply chain • Replacements for existing products, processes or business models • New or combined technologies • Switching production to renewable energy sources • Application of existing technology in new areas • Integration of existing technologies despite low level of maturity currently	30%
e) Benefit and utilisation • Technical maturity: • Technical feasibility of GHG avoidance in the project environment • Understanding of the technology and technical risks as well as proposed measures for risk mitigation • Quality, transparency and consistency of the application information • Financial maturity: • Transparency of the business model, business plan and financial model • Understanding of the business and financial project risks as well as proposed measures for risk mitigation • Operational maturity: • Transparency and level of detail of the project implementation plan, including relevant milestones • Status and transparency of the approval plan (if required) • Understanding of implementation risks, including risks arising from external dependencies as well as proposed measures for risk mitigation • Scalability: • Scalability in terms of efficiency gains and various environmental impacts • Replicability and contribution toward strengthening Europe's industrial competitiveness	10%

Combined project (R&D project with pilot and demonstration plant):

Both the R&D project and the pilot and demonstration plant must be evaluated positively based on the above criteria in order to be put forward for funding. The innovative content of the pilot and demonstration plant will be assessed in combination with the R&D project.

Collaboration bonus: Combined projects receive a 10% collaboration bonus as part of the jury's judging process.

Risk and contingency plan: An R&D project or a pilot and demonstration plant may also be continued as a standalone project if the associated pilot and demonstration plant or the associated R&D project is rejected. However, this would in all cases require approval from FFG or KPC based on a revised project plan; in particular, those work packages focusing on the pilot and demonstration plant or R&D project would need to be adapted accordingly. A new submission for the rejected pilot and demonstration plant or rejected R&D project is possible within the framework of the next call for proposals.

The timetable must present a realistic schedule for implementing the planned scope of both parts of the project (R&D project and pilot and demonstration plant) within the term proposed. The prerequisites to successful delivery (e.g. licences from the authorities) must be described in the project proposal. Risks to implementation and risks of delays must be included in the risk and contingency plan. The application must explain how the risk in the R&D project or pilot and demonstration plant will be handled if the pilot

and demonstration plant or R&D project is funded in a modified form or rejected during the detailed review by the KPC or FFG (e.g. through appropriate stop-and-go decisions, milestones). During the course of the project, any delays or changes to the project parts approved in the funding contract (R&D project or pilot and demonstration plant) must be reported to both processing agencies without delay; they will then carry out a coordinated audit of the rest of the project process.

Exploitation strategies:

A convincing exploitation strategy is particularly important for a successful project application. To demonstrate the plausibility of the prospective application, a quantification of the benefits for the target group (e.g. potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and the project participants (e.g. opening up new business opportunities) is explicitly recommended.

Jury:

The ranking of the projects on the shortlist is decided based on the recommendation of an external committee of experts.

Decision on funding:

The Presidium of the Climate and Energy Fund decides on the funding based on the funding recommendation from the committee of experts.

7.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUNDING AGREEMENT

Details on establishing an FFG funding agreement can be found in the respective instrument guide.

On the KPC funding agreement:

- An information letter with the key information relevant to funding will be sent after completion of the formal technical project review (e.g. amount of funding, amount of costs eligible for funding) and in any case before the final judging of the projects.
- In the event that the funding decision by the Presidium of the Climate and Energy Fund is positive, KPC will send the consortium a funding agreement. The parties applying for the funding must accept the agreement within six months of it being sent by returning the signed declaration of acceptance.

7.3 REPORTING OBLIGATIONS AND PAYMENT OF THE FUNDING

All projects must compile a publishable final report, which will be published on the Climate and Energy Fund's website. Templates for the publishable final report can be found on the Climate and Energy Fund website under Guidelines & Templates: www.klimafonds.gv.at/foerderungen/richtlinien-vorlagen

For **R&D projects** (with or without pilot and demonstration plants), **qualification networks and R&D infrastructure projects**, activity reports must also be compiled in addition to the publishable final report. Information on the reporting and public relations can be found in the reporting guide on the FFG website (www.ffg.at/FTI-TdI/berichtslegung). For R&D infrastructure projects, in accordance with item 2.13 of the instrument guide, annual monitoring reports must be submitted from the date of commissioning for the entire depreciation and amortisation period for the R&D infrastructure acquired.

For **pilot and demonstration plants** (with or without an R&D project), a final statement of account must also be submitted to KPC in addition to the publishable final report. The funding can only be paid out following successful implementation of the measure that has been applied for.

Project accounting for pilot and demonstration plants:

- At the time of the final statement of account, at least one comparative quote must be submitted to prove the reasonable nature of the costs for the essential plant components and cost items.
- In the case of affiliated companies and partner companies as suppliers, as well as bodies and shareholders involving the same people as clients and contractors, or other possibilities for influencing the business decisions of clients, three comparative quotes (a total of four price quotations) must be submitted by providers independent of the funding recipients. Exceptions may be made to this rule in justified cases.
- These obligations apply to all material plant components and cost items, as well as to services the costs of which exceed EUR 10,000 and at the same time more than 5% of the approved project costs.
- If applicants are subject to the provisions of the Austrian Federal Procurement Act, these provisions must be complied with. The relevant evidence and documents must be submitted as part of the final statement of account. It should be noted that even in the case of direct awards, the principles of the procurement procedure must be taken into account and transparent information must be provided before payment is made for the funded projects, including information on the estimated contractual value, the quotes obtained and the suitability of the bidders (Section 41(1) in conjunction with Section 19(1) to (4) Federal Procurement Act 2018).

8. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

8.1 LEGAL BASIS

The following applies to **flagship projects, cooperative R&D projects, qualification networks and R&D infrastructure**: The call for proposals is based on the Guidelines for Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH on the promotion of research, technology, development and innovation to tackle societal challenges (the FFG Challenge Guidelines 2024–2026).

The following applies to **pilot and demonstration plants**: The legal basis for the award of this funding is Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (General Block Exemption Regulation) OJ L 187 of 26.06.2014 p. 1 as amended by Regulation (EU) No 2023/1315 OJ L 167 of 30.06.2023 p. 1 and in implementation of this Regulation, the respective provisions of the Investment Subsidy Guidelines 2022 for Environmental Funding in Austria (InvestFRL UFI 2022) as amended.

The relevant definition of an SME under EU competition law applies with regard to company size. An aid to classification can be found on FFG's SME page.

The relevant versions of all EU rules and regulations are to be applied.

8.2 DATA PROTECTION AND PUBLICATION OF THE PLEDGED FUNDING

Personal data is processed in accordance with Art 6 et seq of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 – GDPR)

1. To comply with legal obligations applicable to FFG, KPC and the Climate and Energy Fund (Art 6(1)c GDPR);
2. Where there is no legal obligation, in order to safeguard legitimate interests of FFG, KPC and the Climate and Energy Fund (Art 6(1)f GDPR), specifically the conclusion and processing of the funding agreement and for monitoring purposes.

This use may require data to be transmitted or disclosed in particular to executive bodies and authorised representatives of the Court of Audit Austria, to the Federal Ministry of Finance or to the EU. There is also the possibility of submitting a request to the transparency portal in accordance with Section 32(5) of the Transparency Database Act 2012 (TDBG 2012).

All project proposals submitted will only be presented for review to the individuals tasked with processing this research programme and to the programme owner. All individuals involved are obliged to maintain confidentiality.

The following applies in addition in the case of FFG: FFG is obliged by law not to disclose information on companies or projects – in accordance with Section 9(4) of the Act Establishing Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH-Errichtungsgesetz), Federal Law Gazette I no. 73/2004. This confidentiality obligation also covers external experts who evaluate the projects.

The following also applies to projects funded by KPC: In the event of a positive decision on funding, the information from the funding application may be used to create funding reports and for statistical analyses. KPC also reserves the right to publish data on applicants and the funded project after approval of the funding in accordance with Section 12 (2) no. 10 of the Investment Funding Guidelines 2022 for Environmental Funding in Austria – provided that this is required for performing the tasks assigned by statute. Details on use of the data are governed in the funding agreement.

Publication of the funding decision

Should it decide to award funding, the Climate and Energy Fund reserves the right to publish the name of the applicants for the funding, the fact that funding has been awarded, the funding rate, the amount of funding, the title of the project and a short description of it in order to take account of the Climate and Energy Fund's legitimate interest in ensuring transparency in funding matters (Art. 6(1)f GDPR).

8.3 COMBINING WITH, OR DIFFERENTIATING FROM, OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

The programme involves a higher level of implementation compared with other RTI initiatives (e.g. circular economy and production technologies, energy research).

R&D projects from other support programmes (e.g. FFG basic programme, circular economy and production technologies, energy research, Clean Energy Transition Partnership) can be combined with a standalone pilot and demonstration plant from the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry.

At the same time, standalone R&D projects from the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry can also be combined with implementation projects from other support programmes (e.g. Transforming Industry under the Environmental Subsidy Act (UFG), Environmental Funding in Austria).

Pilot and demonstration plants which are funded as part of the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry deliver important results that provide the basis for scaling innovation towards "first of a kind" concepts and preparing submissions to support programmes to support market launch (e.g. Transforming Industry under the UFG, AWS Twin Transition, EU Innovation Fund).

The RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry differs from the Transforming Industry under the UFG support programme in terms of both restrictions on the target group and the innovative content required for the project. As part of the Transforming Industry under the UFG project, investment costs incurred by energy-intensive industries in climate-friendly technologies (capex – capital expenditure) and ongoing costs (opex – operational expenditure) or the additional costs of renewable energy carriers compared to fossil fuels are funded. Proposals are invited for investment subsidies (CAPEX only) and transformation subsidies (CAPEX and OPEX) under the Transforming Industry under the UFG programme.

Any links with other support programmes must be described in the documents submitted.

Double funding is not permitted.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

9.1 THE FFG PROJECT DATABASE SERVICE

FFG provides a service that involves publishing brief information pieces about funded projects and an overview of the parties involved in projects in a publicly accessible FFG Project Database, This enables funded projects and their project partners to better position themselves for the interested public. The database can also be used to find partners to collaborate with.

Once a decision has been made to award funding, applicants will be told via the eCall system about the possibility of publishing brief, defined information pieces on their project in the FFG Project Database. Nothing will be published without an applicant actively giving their consent in the eCall system.

More details are available on FFG's page on its Project Database.

9.2 THE BMIMI OPEN4INNOVATION SERVICE

In addition, the BMIMI open4innovation platform provides a knowledge base for companies, researchers, etc. (Community support, more detailed information, success stories, etc.).

9.3 OPEN ACCESS PUBLICATIONS

The research results obtained with public funding must be put to the best possible use for science, industry and society. With this in mind, open access should be sought as far as possible for peer-reviewed publications produced with the support of funding awarded by the FFG. As with European funding, the applicable principle here is "as open as possible, as closed as necessary".

Publication costs count as eligible project costs.

In line with the Climate and Energy Fund's general objectives and duties as set out in Sections 1 and 3 of the Climate and Energy Fund Act (Klima- und Energiefondsgesetz), with the specific nature of this support programme, which aims in particular to publish project and contact details to disseminate project results, and in accordance with the recommendation of the European Commission (2012/417/EU) regarding open access, the projects funded under this call for proposals and their results are to be made available to the general public. This does not apply to confidential content (e.g. in connection with patent applications). The funding recipient is obliged to ensure that the reports submitted to the Climate and Energy Fund for publication do not contain sensitive data of any kind (Art. 9 GDPR) or personal data relating to criminal convictions or offences (Art. 10 GDPR).

Furthermore, the funding recipient is obliged to ensure that all other agreements and approvals of third parties (in particular image rights) that are required for the publication by the Climate and Energy Fund to be permissible have been obtained and to indemnify and hold the Climate and Energy Fund harmless in this respect. As one of the key promotion objectives of this support programme is to disseminate project results, the Climate and Energy Fund will publish these project results and project information in order to take account of its legitimate interest in the transparency of funding matters and to achieve its objectives (Sections 1 and 3 of the Climate and Energy Fund Act; Art. 6(1)f GDPR).

The visibility and ready availability of innovative results are important factors in increasing the impact of the programme. In line with the open-access principle therefore, the Climate and Energy Fund will publish as many project results from this RTI initiative as possible and make them accessible online at www.klimafonds.gv.at.

In order to prepare the project results effectively and comprehensibly, notes on public relations work for projects funded and carried out as part of the RTI Initiative for Transforming Industry are to be made available in a "Guide to reporting and project-related public relations work", which shall form an integral part of the agreement.

9.4 HANDLING PROJECT DATA – DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

A data management plan (DMP) is a management tool that helps users handle the information generated in their projects in an efficient and systematic way.

A DMP can be created using the free tool DMP Online, for example. The European Commission also offers support via its "Guidelines on FAIR Data Management".

A data management plan describes:

- what data are to be collected, compiled or generated in the project,
- how these data are to be handled,
- what methods and standards are to be applied in this process,
- how the data are to be secured, backed up and managed over the long term,
- whether there are plans to make data records accessible to and usable by third parties ("open access to research data").

It makes sense for research data to be openly available if they form the basis for peer-reviewed publications and must be published in the interests of the reproducibility and verifiability of the published results.

If data is to be published, it is expected to be "findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable". It is a good idea to store data in established, internationally recognised repositories (see also the re3data website) in order to make the data as easy as possible to find.

10. ANNEXES

10.1 ANNEX I

List of technology pathways to a climate-neutral industry, as well as the associated development, advancement and demonstration of technical and non-technical solutions addressed in this call for proposals:

- Electrification and energy efficiency
  - Electrification through the use of heat pumps for processes up to approx. 200°C
  - Electricity-based and CO_2-neutral process heat generation for high-temperature applications (from approx. 200°C and above)
  - Integration of thermal and electrical storage systems to increase efficiency
  - Efficient energy distribution and utilisation at industrial locations
  - Increased efficiency through process adaptations and modified reaction environments
- Circular economy
  - Smart object sorting and development of innovative energy-efficient recycling processes
  - New sorting processes for separating critical products or substances (identification, detection and removal of critical substances)
  - Development of recycling value chains for future waste energy system components (e.g. PV modules, rotor blades, electronics)
  - Processing complex suspensions using new reactor technologies to increase the recovery of recyclable materials from waste material streams
  - Energy-efficient recovery of recyclable materials using membrane technologies and selective separation, including waste material streams from biorefineries and municipal and industrial wastewater or sludge
  - Development of cascading utilisation pathways for organic waste materials through innovative carbon and nutrient cycles
  - Optimisation of cascading plastics recycling (use of best and waste material streams) in combination with mechanical and chemical plastics recycling, taking into account the carbon cycle
- Industrial symbiosis
  - Optimisation methods and digital tools for intensifying industrial-industrial (IIS) or industrial-urban symbiosis (IUS)
  - Simulation methods and decision support tools for designing technological processing and implementation pathways
  - Innovative business models and aspects of "Industry 5.0" for industrial-industrial or industrial-urban symbiosis
  - Infrastructure development and optimisation
  - Possibilities and limitations of AI in terms of identifying, leveraging and optimising industrial symbioses for cascading raw material usage and energy supply
- CO_2-neutral gases and hydrogen
  - Green hydrogen through electrolysis
  - Direct production of CO_2-neutral gases and hydrogen using alternative, electrochemical and photochemical or chemical-catalytic processes
  - Power-to-X technologies, conversion chains and efficient integration concepts
  - Biomethane fed into the gas grid
  - Storage technologies for hydrogen

- Carbon capture, utilisation and storage
  - Efficient integration into production processes
  - Synergies between precombustion technologies and hydrogen production
  - Further development of chemical-catalytic, electrochemical and photochemical processes
  - (Further) development of efficient carbon capture technologies with a focus on solvents from renewable resources and solvent regeneration
  - Mineral carbonation as a CCS option
  - Should be capable of being combined with H_2 topics where appropriate
- Flexibilisation
  - Simulation and optimisation methods, as well as digital tools for improving flexibility in industrial environments
  - Industrial demand forecasting modelling to intensify flexibilisation
  - Technologies and methods for collecting, processing and analysing data
  - Business models and technology integration
  - Infrastructure development to increase flexibilisation potentials
  - Development and demonstration of standardised flexibilisation measures and tools for small-scale manufacturing
  - Market and grid-friendly flexibilisation concepts
  - Integration of digital tools for flexibilisation with existing SCADA systems (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition)
  - All climate-neutral technologies are also drivers for flexibilisation, such as storage technologies, heat pumps and PtX technologies

The technology pathways were identified as part of the climate neutrality scenarios from the NEFI innovation network, and the six NEFI innovation hubs were established on this basis. The innovation hubs are led by leading experts in their respective fields and support projects throughout the entire innovation process. Details on the technology pathways for a climate-neutral industry in Austria are addressed in the Hub Scoping Papers, which can be found on the NEFI website.

It is also important to note the industry-specific future technologies for transforming industry identified in the "transform.industry" study.

10.2 ANNEX II

List of net-zero technologies in accordance with Article 4 of the EU Net-Zero Industry Act[3] that are addressed by this call for proposals:

a) solar technologies, including PV, solar thermal electric and solar thermal technologies;
b) onshore wind and offshore renewable technologies;
c) battery and energy storage technologies;
d) heat pumps and geothermal energy technologies;
e) hydrogen technologies, including electrolysers and fuel cells;
f) sustainable biogas and biomethane technologies;
g) CCS technologies;
h) electricity grid technologies, including electric charging technologies for transport and technologies to digitalise the grid;
i) nuclear fission energy technologies, including nuclear fuel cycle technologies;
j) sustainable alternative fuels technologies;
k) hydropower technologies;
l) renewable energy technologies, not covered under the previous categories;
m) energy system-related energy efficiency technologies, including heat grid technologies;
n) renewable fuels of non-biological origin technologies;
o) biotech climate and energy solutions;
p) transformative industrial technologies for decarbonisation not covered under the previous categories;
q) CO_2 transport and utilisation technologies;
r) wind propulsion and electric propulsion technologies for transport;
s) nuclear technologies not covered under previous categories.

According to Article 3 of the EU Net-Zero Industry Act, the term 'net-zero technologies" refers to the technologies listed in Article 4, where these are end-products or specific components or specialised machinery primarily used for the manufacture of these products.

3 Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology manufacturing ecosystem and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724

Imprint

Owner, publisher and media owner:
Climate and Energy Fund
Leopold-Ungar-Platz 2 / 1 / no. 142, 1190 Vienna, Austria

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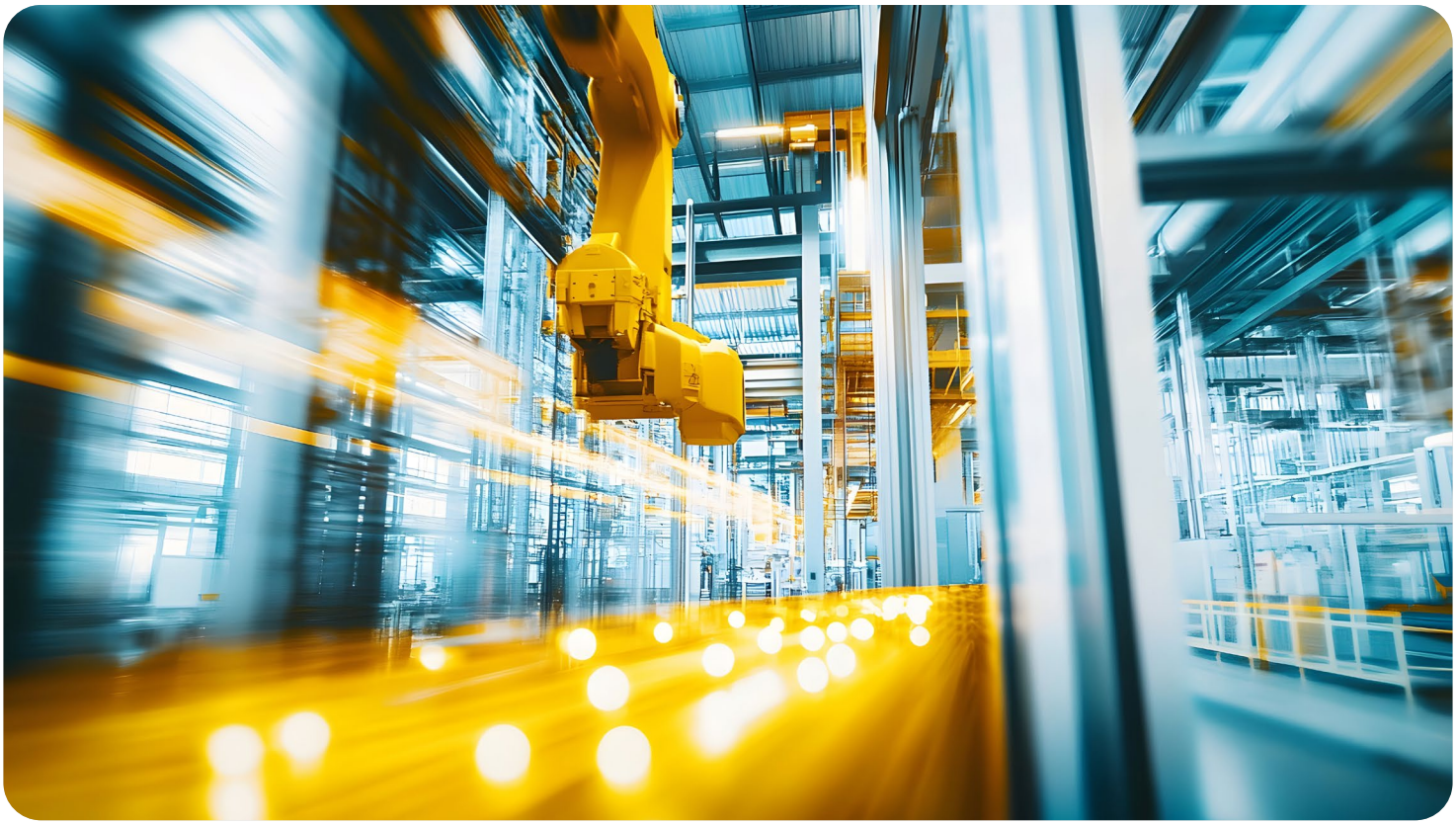
Graphic design:
Waldhör KG, www.projektfabrik.at

Photos:
stock.adobe.com

Produced in:
Vienna, October 2025



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