Federal Ministry
Women, Science
and Research
Republic of Austria

Federal Ministry
Innovation, Mobility
and Infrastructure
Republic of Austria

Federal Ministry
Economy, Energy
and Tourism
Republic of Austria

Factsheet

Austrian Research and Technology Report 2025

RTI for strengthening Austria's competitiveness as a knowledge-based, economic and innovation location

Europe – and consequently Austria as a location for business, research, technology and innovation (RTI) – are facing growing competitive pressure in light of rapidly and unpredictably shifting global developments, shaped above all by US trade policy and China's knowledge and economic policy.

Research, development and innovation are gaining more importance, as it becomes imperative to tackle socio-ecological and economic challenges through innovative solutions – for the benefit of today's population as well as future generations.

Austria's RTI policy is guided by the **Research, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2030** (RTI Strategy 2030), which serves as the overarching framework for strengthening Austria as a forward-looking and sustainable location for RTI with three main objectives:

- Become an international innovation leader and strengthen Austria's position as an RTI location
- Focus on effectiveness and excellence
- Focus on knowledge, talents and skills

As also outlined in the current government programme, the RTI Strategy reflects a clear **commitment to efficiency and improved performance** across the RTI system. Key initiatives include the Excellence Initiative, the Technology Initiative and leveraging the opportunities of a common Europe.

In accordance with the federal ministries and based on the Research Financing Act (FoFinaG), the RTI Strategy is implemented through three-year RTI Pacts. So far two RTI Pacts have been adopted: the first encompasses the period 2021–2023 and the second covers the years 2024–2026. The third RTI Pact for 2027–2029 is scheduled to be adopted by the end of 2025.

In line with the FoFinaG, eleven non-university research and research funding institutions receive financing via performance or financing agreements linked to each RTI Pact period. The development of these key institutions is monitored as part of the FoFinaG, which forms a core part of the annual Research and Technology Report.

Greater planning certainty and increased funding for these key institutions are intended to strengthen both basic research and application-oriented, cooperative research, as well as innovation and the transfer of knowledge to business and society.

This results in different roles within the RTI system, which must be fulfilled efficiently and effectively by various stakeholders and actors. The FoFinaG monitoring process addresses these roles and highlights both the performance and a range of institutional development measures relating to the eleven central research and research funding institutions.

Research institutions	2024: Income (in €1,000)	2024: Employees (headcount)
Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH (AIT)	218,005	1,494
Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA)	155,943	1,188
Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW)	257,881	1,863
Silicon Austria Labs GmbH (SAL)	62,025	350
Ludwig Boltzmann Society (LBG)	38,370	515
GeoSphere Austria (GSA)	n.a.	510

Research funding institutions	2024: Funding/present value in €1,000
Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (aws)	430,000
Christian Doppler Research Association (CDG)	25,839
Austrian Science Fund (FWF)	440,089
Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD)	112,580
Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)	795,613

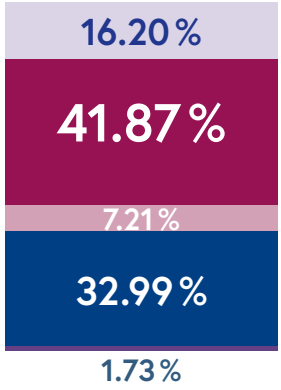
Funding of R&D and innovation

New record of research expenditure

According to Statistics Austria's global estimate, R&D expenditure for 2024 amounted to

€ 16.13 billion.

Note: The shares in the bar chart refer to the sources of funding. * Mainly comprises R&D funded by foreign companies for their domestic subsidiaries as well as returns from EU Framework Programmes for research.



Abroad*

Business enterprises

Research premium

Federal & regional governments

Others (HEI sector and private non-profit sector)

In recent years, public sector expenditure on R&D has increased significantly. The public sector plays a crucial role in providing effective support during challenging times.

Federal funding increased from 24.33 % to 28.64 % of GDP since 2021.

Funding from abroad has remained relatively stable.

Research intensity

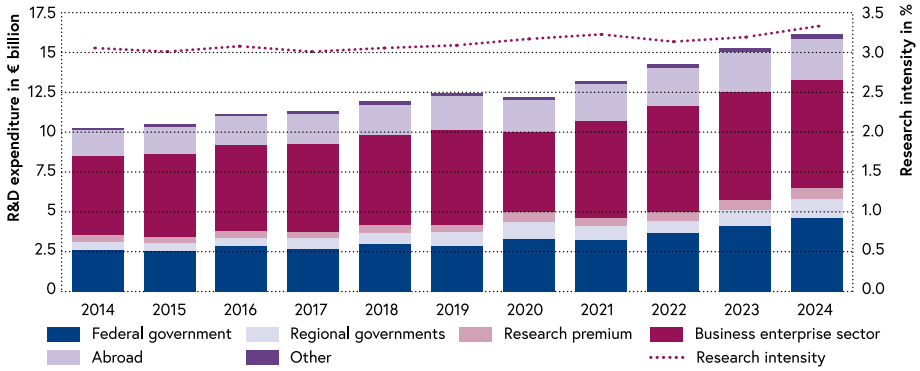
11 ×

in a row, Austria has exceeded the European target value of 3 %.

3.35 %

Austria's estimated R&D intensity achieved a new high.

Development of R&D funding and of research intensity in Austria, 2014–2024



Source: Statistics Austria, global estimate from 22 April 2025.

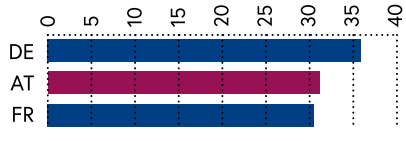
Higher education institutions as key players

With the conclusion of the performance agreements, Austrian public universities will have a **budget of approximately € 16 billion for the new period 2025–2027.** This marks an increase of € 3.9 billion or 31.7 % compared to the previous period (2022–2024). This increase not only offsets inflation but also reflects a continued strong political commitment to supporting the universities' growth and development.

The expansion of the university of applied sciences sector is another key priority – this shall be achieved mainly by increasing the number of STEM study places in order to train the future skilled workforce and to support the transformation of the economy and society through practice-oriented education and training.

In international comparison, Austria performs well in terms of the share of **STEM graduates.** It is evident that countries with a strong dual vocational education system generally lead in this area. Austria further improved its share of STEM graduates in 2022, reaching 31.1 % (2021: 30.6 %), once again ranking second among the EU-27 countries.

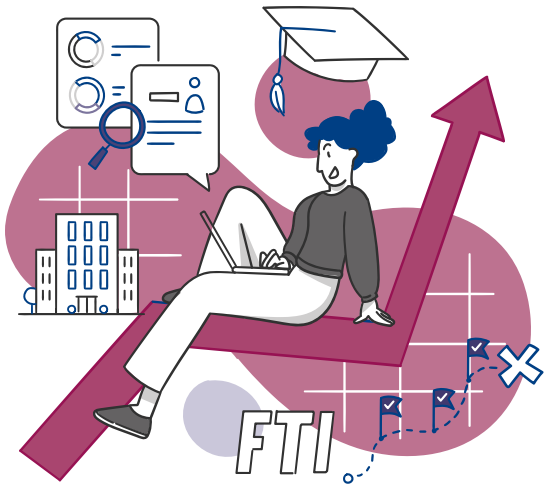
Share of STEM graduates in 2022 in %



Source: Unesco (2024).

Current RTI-relevant sub-strategies at federal level

Austria set the goal to position itself as an international leader in technology and innovation. **In line with the RTI Strategy 2030, numerous federal level sub-strategies and initiatives** support this ambition – some with a thematically open attitude and cross-cutting impact, and others with a thematic focus aimed at specific groups of stakeholders.



Recently implemented RTI sub-strategies and initiatives with significant developments include:

- excellent=austria (Excellence Initiative)
- Austrian Research Infrastructure Action Plan 2030
- DNAustria
- STEM Regions
- Chips Act
- Diversitec – Leading Innovation
- National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) – Dimension: Research, Innovation and Competitiveness
- AI Implementation Plan 2024
- Creative Industries Council
- Innovation Programme for the Creative Industries 2030
- Start-up Council
- aws Spin-off Initiative

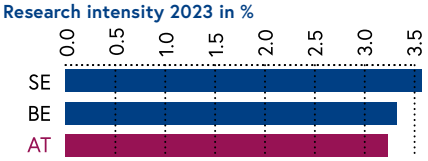
Austria's RTI policy has long been shaped by a strong **culture of evaluation,** with a clear focus on quality and transparency. Programmes, institutions and instruments are regularly assessed in terms of target achievement, impact and efficiency. Selected examples are presented in the Austrian Research and Technology Report 2025.

Austria's position as an RTI location in international comparison

Austria's position in global/international rankings

Global Innovation Index 2024	ranked 17th	of 133
European Innovation Scoreboard 2024	ranked 6th	of 27

Research intensity 2023 in %

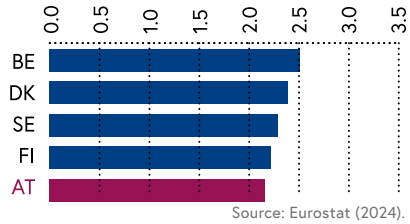


Source: Eurostat (2024), Statistics Austria (2024).

In an EU-wide comparison of research intensity, Sweden and Belgium led in 2023 with 3.57% and 3.32% respectively. Austria ranked third, with a **research intensity** of 3.23%. This represents a slight improvement for Austria compared to the previous year.

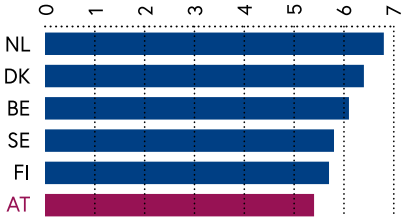
With **R&D personnel** accounting for 2.13% of the workforce in 2023, Austria ranks fifth in the EU-27. This places Austria among the top performers, like in the previous year behind Belgium (2.48%), Denmark (2.36%), Sweden (2.26%) and Finland (2.19%). In 2023, Austria continued its upward trend of increasing R&D personnel, surpassing the 2% share for the second time. The share increased by 0.11 percentage points compared to the previous year – the highest growth among the top five countries.

Share of R&D personnel 2023 in %



Source: Eurostat (2024).

Number of ERC grants awarded in 2023

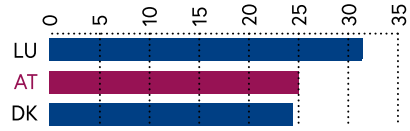


Source: FFG EU Performance Monitor (2025) as of January 2025.

Austria performs strongly in securing prestigious **European Research Council (ERC) grants.** In 2023, Austria obtained 5.4 ERC grants per million inhabitants (2022: 5.1), ranking sixth among EU countries. This result means Austria has already met the target set in the RTI Strategy 2030 to be among the top 10.

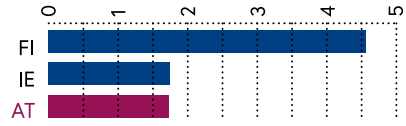
Austria is placing strategic emphasis on quantum technologies as a key future technology. With 25 **scientific (citable) publications** per million inhabitants, Austria ranked second in the EU-27 in 2023, maintaining its position among the top three countries for the fourth consecutive year. Additionally, Austria ranked among the top five EU-27 countries in 2023 for scientific publications in other key technology areas, including advanced microelectronics/semiconductors, advanced manufacturing technologies and robotics, and advanced sensor technologies.

Number of scientific (citable) publications per million inhabitants in 2023



Source: Scopus (2025), World Bank (2024).

Number of patent applications in 2022 per 10,000 R&D employees

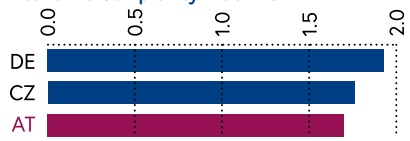


Source: European Patent Office (2025), OECD (2025).

Austria's strong performance in basic research in the field of quantum technologies is also reflected in the **number of patent applications** per 10,000 R&D employees. In 2022, Austria increased the number of patent applications in quantum technologies by 6.7%, ranking third in the EU-27 with 1.73 patent applications per 10,000 R&D employees.

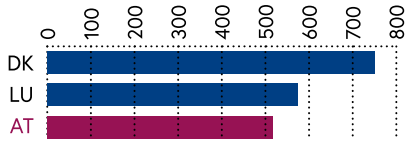
Innovative capacity is also shaped by the **diversity and complexity of the product portfolio.** With an Economic Complexity Index score of 1.7, Austria ranks third among EU countries, placing it among the top-ranking group.

Economic Complexity Index 2024



Source: The Growth Lab at Harvard University (2024).

Number of joint publications by public and private partners in 2023 per million inhabitants



Source: European Commission (2024).

Austria also performs strongly in terms of **joint publications by public and private partners** per million inhabitants. With 517.8 joint publications in 2023, Austria ranked third behind Luxembourg (575.8) and the leading country, Denmark (750.8). This represents yet again an improvement of one position compared to the previous year.

Key technologies as a critical competitive factor in science and industry

Key technologies play a central role in competitiveness, boosting productivity and addressing societal challenges. As such, they are a vital element of modern industrial and innovation policy.

The goal is to support the transformation of economic sectors and to facilitate structural change in a targeted manner. Austria has sectoral strengths that offer innovation potential and opportunities for long-term competitiveness. Austria's strengths are particularly evident in the following areas:

- Advanced production technologies and advanced materials
- Microelectronics/semiconductors
- Life sciences
- Environmental and energy technologies
- In the field of science, in quantum technologies and photonics as well

Austrian higher education institutions and non-university research institutions contribute to these future-oriented key technology areas through diverse research focuses and a broad range of educational programmes.

National funding programmes and EU initiatives place strong emphasis on the research and development of key technologies:

- FWF through its Clusters of Excellence and Emerging Fields
- FFG, particularly in the areas of energy generation and storage, as well as sustainable and digital technologies
- Christian Doppler Laboratories, Josef Ressel Centers, and COMET Centers
- Institutes of LBG and OeAW
- Horizon Europe, European Partnerships, and IPCEI
- The Chips Act and STEP
- AI Factory

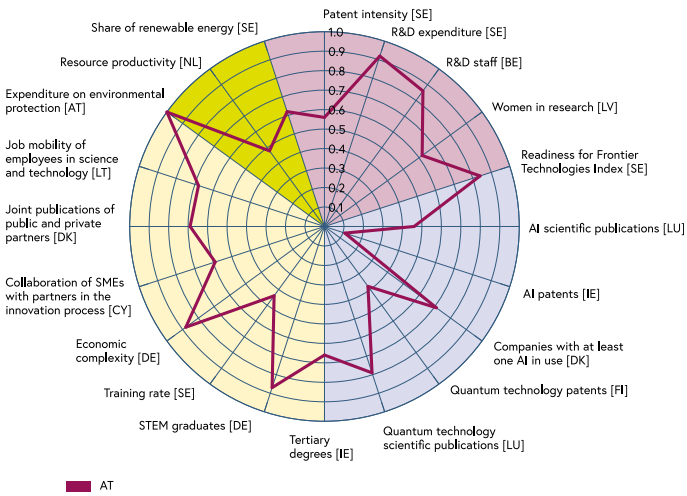
Leading companies in Austria are key players in the cooperative development and implementation of strategic key technology areas. Alongside large corporations and SMEs, start-ups and spin-offs also play a crucial role in shaping an internationally competitive, forward-looking innovation ecosystem.

Austria's innovation capability

Austria's position in relation to the European top tier in selected RTI and science indicators

The red segment of the radar chart comprises core indicators of research and development performance. The blue segment covers indicators related to digitalisation, with a particular focus on the use of AI. The yellow segment illustrates indicators of innovation capacity, while the green segment depicts indicators related to environmental sustainability.

The radar chart clearly demonstrates **Austria's strong performance** in several key areas, including R&D expenditure, R&D personnel, readiness to adopt emerging technologies (Readiness for Frontier Technologies Index), quantum research publications, STEM graduates, economic complexity and environmental protection expenditure.



Note: Reference value of 1 corresponds to the peak value of the leading EU country (in brackets). Illustration: iit.

Austria as key actor and beneficiary in the implementation of European RTI policy

30 years of EU membership

On 1 January 1995, Austria joined the European Union. This accession had wide-ranging effects across many policy and societal domains, including science, research, technological development and innovation. Within just a few years, Austria shifted from being a net contributor to a **net beneficiary** in this area. This was supported by an active national research policy that provided substantial funding for R&D.

Austria has played and continues to play an active role in shaping the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area, working with national stakeholders to implement EU-coordinated policies across a broad range of activities. EU membership initiated numerous reforms and behavioural shifts that continue to enhance the excellence, competitiveness, and internationalisation of Austrian science, research and innovation even today.

European Research Area

In addition to the Framework Programme, the implementation of the **National Action Plan for the European Research Area** is progressing steadily, for example within the initiatives "Building Trust in Science" and "Participation in European R&I Partnerships":

- Funding of 61 citizen science projects through Sparkling Science 2.0
- Participation in the pilot project "Plastic Pirates go Europe!"
- Hosting the European Citizen Science Association conference
- Engaging in Mutual Learning Exercises on citizen science
- Enhanced communication and coordination with stakeholders
- Strengthening national coordination and participation in European processes
- Establishing and maintaining continuous monitoring by the FFG

Austria's performance in Horizon Europe

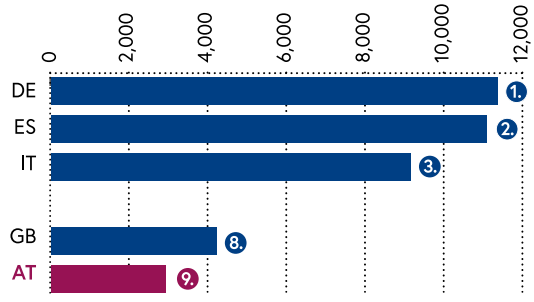
The EU's ninth Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe, launched its first calls in spring 2021 and will allocate a total of approximately €95 billion to strengthen European research, innovation as well as the European Research Area through 2027.

As of 12 January 2025, after the first four years of implementation and **over 2,900 registered Austrian participations**, the following figures have emerged:

- Austrian institutions have secured **nearly €1.4 billion** in EU funding, accounting for around 3.3% of the total available funds.
- **3.4% of all projects** are or were coordinated by Austrian participants.
- A total of **2,907 Austrian participations** have been recorded in Horizon Europe projects, representing 2.9% of the 98,918 total participations.

This positions Austria ninth in Europe, clearly behind the UK in eighth place (4,206 participations), but ahead of Portugal (2,803), Sweden (2,768), Denmark (2,477), Finland (2,396), and Switzerland (2,306).

Horizon Europe participations (as of January 2025)



Source: eCORDA.

The increasing number of **Austrian project coordinations** is particularly encouraging as well as the **above-average success rate of Austrian applications** and the **broad involvement of the business sector, higher education institutions** and **non-university research institutions.** Austrian participants have been especially active in Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe, particularly in "Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society" (Cluster 2), "Digital, Industry and Space" (Cluster 4) and "Climate, Energy and Mobility" (Cluster 5).