

Vienna Loyalty Fund



Funding Guidelines for International Association Congresses in Vienna

Valid from 1 January 2024

MEETING
DESTINATION
VIENNA

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Imprint

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1 Goals

1.1 General objective

In 2019, meetings in Vienna generated around one billion euros in added value for the city per year; in a long-term comparison, one in eight overnight stays in Vienna was attributable to a conference. In the record year 2018, Vienna's meetings industry was responsible for more than 21,000 year-round jobs and generated tax revenue in excess of the 300-million-euro mark across Austria.

Attendees are particularly high spenders: While the average guest in Vienna spends a total of 276 euros per day (2019 value), at 541 euros per day, congress guests spend almost twice as much.

In its status as an international meeting destination, Vienna plays an important role in the city's Economy and Innovation Strategy 2030 and in the Vienna Tourist Board's Visitor Economy Strategy. In addition to direct economic and networking effects, meetings are also an opportunity to draw international attention to the city's individual areas of strength and individual sectors.

Association congresses are of central importance for Vienna's tourism industry and should be promoted according to their roles as an economic asset, as a driving force for the internationalization of the city, and as a trigger for local value creation.

1.2 Target group

The programme is aimed at all organizers mentioned in point 3 planning to hold and stage an event in Vienna as defined in point 4.

2 Legal basis

2.1 National legal basis

The national legal basis of the present Funding Guidelines is the Experts Committee of Congress Promotion of the Vienna Tourist Board resolution of 7 December 2022.

This funding guideline is – subject to possible revisions due to corresponding body resolutions or premature discontinuation – valid for funding applications received as of 1 January 2024.

2.2 Applicable law/Place of jurisdiction/ Language of these funding guidelines

All legal relationships arising based on these Funding Guidelines will be governed exclusively by Austrian law as well as by the provisions of EU law applicable to these Funding Guidelines or otherwise relevant.

The place of jurisdiction for all legal disputes arising from or in connection with these Funding Guidelines is the competent court in Vienna.

The German version of these Funding Guidelines is authoritative and legally binding – this English version is only for information.

2.3 Exclusion of a legal claim

The decision to award funding is made according to the budget funds available on the basis of these Funding Guidelines (see also point 8.5). There is no legal claim to the granting of funding.

2.4 EU law

Funding under this programme is based on the de minimis Regulation. The following legal basis for state aid, as amended from time to time, therefore applies:

Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid; published in the Official Journal of the European Union L, 2023/2831, on 15.12.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2831/oj> (in short: "de minimis Regulation").

The de minimis regulation is valid until 31 December 2030.

De minimis subsidies are de minimis state aid that is exempted from state aid control because it is considered to have no effect on EU competition and interstate trade.

3 Which organizers are eligible?

3.1 Eligible applicants

The following organizers (as defined in this guideline) are eligible to apply, provided they are not excluded in point 3.2, who plan and carry out (have carried out) an event as defined in point 4 and bear the economic risk and thus all costs for this event:

- a) Associations in the meaning of the Austrian *Vereinsgesetz* (Associations Act) (except political parties in the meaning of the Austrian *Parteiengesetz* [Political Parties Act] or comparable foreign political parties), foundations and funds in the meaning of the Austrian *Bundes-Stiftungs- und Fondsgesetz* (Federal Foundations and Funds Act) 2015 and comparable provincial regulations, foundations in the meaning of the Austrian *Privatstiftungsgesetz* (Private Foundations Act) that were set up for charitable purposes in the meaning of section 35 Austrian *Bundesabgabenordnung* (Federal Tax Code), companies with legal capacity (under private law) that operate on a not-for-profit basis in accordance with their articles of association, and all similar foreign organizations (with legal capacity).
- b) Where such organizers are demonstrably commissioned to stage an event by one of the legal entities specified in section 3.1.a. above and demonstrably bear the financial liability associated with executing the event – in addition to the legal entities specified in section 3.1.a. above:
 - i) Domestic and foreign legal persons under public law (including universities in the meaning of the Austrian *Universitätsgesetz* [Universities Act] 2002), provided that the legal person is not the federal government, a provincial government or a local or regional authority, or comparable foreign central, regional or local authorities or international organizations (see ÖNACE code U99), and
 - ii) Private higher education institutions (private universities) accredited in accordance with the Austrian *Privathochschulgesetz* (Private Higher Education Act) and universities of applied sciences accredited in accordance with the Austrian *Fachhochschulgesetz* (University of Applied Sciences Act), including in cases where the provider is a central, regional or local authority, and foreign institutions comparable with such private higher education institutions (private universities) and universities of applied sciences.

Agencies (in the meaning of these Guidelines) are eligible to apply if they can demonstrate that they are working on behalf of an organizer in the meaning of section 3.1 above. A maximum of one agency per event is eligible to apply. Working on behalf of an organizer means that the agency executes the event either in the name of or for the account of the event organizer.

3.2 Ineligible applicants

The following organizers are not eligible to apply:

- a) Entities not mentioned under point 3.1,
- b) Applicants with pending insolvency proceedings.

4 Subject of funding

4.1 Eligible events

Funding is available for returning international congresses hosted by associations (provided that they meet the requirements stated in section 5.1 below) that will take place in Vienna from January 1, 2025 onwards.

International congresses are meetings of primarily international visitors with the aim of sharing information related to a particular profession. The aims of the meeting include sharing (the latest) specialist knowledge and maintaining commercial and social contacts (networking). These Guidelines define international congresses hosted by associations as international congresses where the majority (more than 50%) of the in-person participants (not virtual participants) have traveled to the event from abroad. International congresses hosted by associations are also characterized by the fact that they recur at defined intervals (either in the same location or in different locations).

The reference period within which the event must return to Vienna in the meaning of these Guidelines is ten years. The reference period begins with the year in which the last (previous) event was held, but not before January 1, 2024.

A returning event is only eligible for funding if it is demonstrably shown to be the same event or a continuation of the previous event. A change in the event organizer is permitted. However, events that are merely similar or comparable (to the previous event) are not eligible for funding.

The submission is possible no earlier than 5 years before the actual event. In any case, however, by no later than 3 weeks prior to the event.

The funding supports international association congresses (association meetings, events with (registered) participants known to the organizer), which strengthen Vienna as a business and innovation location.

5 Overview of funding opportunities

5.1 Funding modules

Funding can only be applied for by the eligible applicants (cf. Point 3.1) if the following requirements are met:

- a) Location: The event takes place in a Viennese hotel or a Viennese (event) location operating commercially on the market against payment of room rental/a conference flat rate.
- b) Duration of event: at least three congress days.
- c) Participants: At least 2,500 participants must be present on site.
- d) The number of international (i.e. from abroad) in-person participants must account for more than 50% of the total number of in-person participants.
- e) Overnight stays: The number of international overnight stays in Viennese hotels for the purposes of participation in the event must be at least 50% of the total number of participants in the event on site.
- f) Events that fall within the funding period (cf. Point 4.1)

The resulting funding amounts correspond to the actual costs paid by the organizer, but not more than the maximum funding amount shown in the table.

5.2 Funding table at a glance

The maximum amount of funding per participant category is shown in the table below.

Total in-person participants	Max. funding EUR
2,500–4,999	10,000
5,000–7,499	12,500
7,500 and above	15,000

6 Eligible costs, cost recognition period and assessment bases

6.1 Eligible costs

Funding is provided for variable costs that are incurred or have been incurred directly in connection with organizing the event (see point 4) and are paid to third parties. As a rule, these are the costs paid to the event location or hotel and other service providers such as hotels, A/V companies or caterers.

To be eligible, these variable costs must:

- a) be clearly itemized,
- b) be directly related to the event (only third-party costs),
- c) not be excessive or outside the range of what is customary in the locality,
- d) be borne by the organizer (exception: agencies (demonstrably) acting on behalf of the organizer),
- e) be proved to have been paid at the time of the final settlement (cancellation costs will not be reimbursed),
- f) be evidenced by invoices (in accordance with the legal requirements),
- g) be included exclusively as net costs, unless the organizer is demonstrably not VAT exempt, and
- h) comprise invoices with a total net amount of EUR 500 or more per invoice.

Evidence of the costs actually paid by the organizer (up to the respective maximum funding amount) must be provided.

6.2 Cost recognition period

The planned start and end of the event must be stated when applying.

The maximum cost recognition period for an event extends from the time of the first event-related invoice – but no earlier than 1 January 2025 – to no later than three months after the end of the event.

Advance payments already made before 1 January 2025 and relating to events after 1 January 2025 as well as final settlement after this date will be recognized from 1 October 2024 at the latest if the other requirements are met.

6.3 Assessment bases

- a) The assessment basis is the sum of the event-related costs (see point 6.1).
- b) The amount of funding corresponds to the actual costs paid, but not more than the maximum amount of funding indicated according to the respective category of the number of participants (see point 5).
- c) Points 6.3.a to 6.3.b apply both to the submission (the preliminary funding commitment) and to the accounting or payment (cf. points 8 and 9).

7 Combination & Cumulation of funding

7.1 Combination of subsidies

Subsidies handled by the Vienna Tourist Board can in principle be combined with other public subsidies if:

- a) this is possible under the EU state aid law cumulation provisions (cf. point 7.2),
- b) a financing risk that is reasonable for the organizer remains in his/her/its sphere of influence,
- c) the financing mobilized for the project through several subsidies of different types (grants, guarantees, loans) does not exceed the planned costs of the overall project,
- d) the combination of subsidies does not lead to the substitution of other public funds, and
- e) doing so does not promote project elements that already receive cash subsidies from other public funds of the City of Vienna.

The combination of funding with other forms of financial support from the Vienna Tourist Board, with the exception of funding from the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 and any funding programs that succeed it, is expressly excluded.

Irrespective of the other provisions of this section and section 7.2., the following applies to the combination of funding with that from the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 or any subsequent support program: if the event also receives funding from the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 or any subsequent support program, the same costs claimed in order to obtain funding from the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 or any subsequent support program may not be submitted again. The guidelines for the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 contain a converse provision.

Funding paid to an applicant, including any associated enterprises (analogous application of the term "single undertaking" in the meaning of Article 2[2] of the De Minimis Regulation), under this funding program, including in cases where the applicant performs a non-economic activity*, is limited to a maximum of EUR 300,000 over three tax years, also taking into account all funding received from other Vienna Tourist Board support programs.

7.2 Cumulation of aid provisions

The de minimis aid awarded under this programme may be:

- a) cumulated with other de minimis aid, provided that, pursuant to Article 3 of the de minimis regulation, the total amount of de minimis aid granted by a Member State (i.e., by Austrian funding bodies) to a "single undertaking" does not exceed EUR 300,000 over a period of three fiscal years.
- b) cumulated with other aid awarded by third parties on the basis of block exemption regulations for the same eligible costs, provided that the maximum aid intensities or amounts are not thereby exceeded.

* Assessment as to whether an activity is non-economic will be carried out on the basis of the Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2016/C 262/01).

8 Submission process

8.1 Submission

Applications can be submitted from January 1, 2023 and must be sent to funding@vienna.info. All of the information and documentation submitted must be complete and correct.

8.2 Required information and documents

The following information and documents must be enclosed with the digital submission as PDF files:

1. **Event data sheet**
(see form in download area)
 - a) title, date, and duration of the event,
 - b) planned number of participants on site in Vienna,
 - c) planned number of total international overnight stays,
 - d) expected total costs of the event for the organizer,
 - e) type of event and industry classification,
 - f) company address, contact details, VAT number, legal form, and account details,
2. **Location offer or location contract**
3. **In case of submission in another name**
(see form in download area)
In case of submission in another name, corresponding powers of attorney/evidence
4. **De minimis declaration**
(see form in download area)
The de minimis declaration is a document in which organizers disclose the amount of all de minimis subsidies applied for or granted in Austria in the current and the last two tax years and confirm this in the company's name.
5. **Consent**
(see form in download area)
Consent to these Guidelines and consent to the processing of personal data

A valid submission can be made at the earliest five years before the start of the event. The submission documents must be received in full no later than three weeks before the start of the event. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

8.3 Obligation to report changes

After receiving a provisional commitment, the organizers are obliged to notify the Vienna Convention Bureau without delay and in writing of quantitative or qualitative changes in connection with the event without being requested to do so.

Significant changes must be communicated in writing without unnecessary delay as soon as they become known, together with any resulting changes in costs and/or associated changes to the event period on which the funding is based.

If the event is postponed within the eligible period (cf. Point 4.1), no new application needs to be submitted.

8.4 Formal assessment

The Vienna Tourist Board carries out a preliminary examination of all applications, paying particular attention to whether the formal criteria listed in the previous points are fulfilled and there is a sufficient basis for evaluation. The following applies:

- a) Failure to meet necessary conditions will result in exclusion from the process, and
- b) Failure to fully meet the formal requirements or submit the de minimis declaration will result in a corresponding one-off additional request.
- c) Should this additional requirement not be met within 6 weeks, the application will be excluded from funding.

8.5 Ranking

- a) Submitted online applications will be ranked according to the date of their receipt.
- b) The "First-Come First-Served" principle applies: As soon as the funds distributed and approved/committed under this funding measure have reached the stipulated funding volume, the funding will be deemed to have been exhausted. The amount of subsidies available are determined annually.
- c) A ranking on the waiting list is not possible.

8.6 Funding decision

Following submission, a preliminary funding decision is made based on the preliminary key figures including a preliminary funding amount.

The organizer is notified in written form of the provisional decision to grant funding.

The actual funding decision and the actual funding amount will be determined after the event has been held and all information has been submitted.

9 Billing & Payment

9.1 Settlement documents

The following event information and documents are required within three months of the end of the event and are to be submitted exclusively to the Vienna Tourist Board in digital form as pdf files.

- a) Settlement form
- b) Invoices in accordance with the legal requirements (see points 4–6). For all cost items to be settled, the settlement form must be completed in full and corresponding invoice and payment receipts must be enclosed:
 - i) Location invoice,
 - ii) Invoices for other event-related services (accommodation, A/V, catering, etc.),
- c) Statistics of participants (number & national or international origin).

Statistics on the origin of the participants must be submitted. The Vienna Tourist Board reserves the right to verify the accuracy of the participant statistics on a random basis by means of the participant lists. The verification will be carried out by an auditor nominated by the Vienna Tourist Board on a confidential basis.

If no settlement documentation whatsoever has been received within three months after the actual end of the event concerned, the claim to funding and therefore provisional approval of the funding will lapse.

If the documents submitted by the organizer for the final account are defective, and do not provide a sufficient basis for evaluation, a one-time additional demand will be made. If this additional demand is not met within four weeks, the granting of funding will be revoked in accordance with point 11.1.d.

If the event also receives funding from the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 or any subsequent funding program, settlement for the funding from the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 or any subsequent program must be carried out at the same time as settlement for funding from the Vienna Loyalty Fund (reconciliation of costs [invoices/receipts]).

9.2 Payment

After reviewing the complete documentation submitted (see point 9.1), the funding amount will be recalculated based on the actual costs of the event that have been reviewed and recognized as eligible for funding. The organizer will be informed of the final funding amount in writing.

The subsidy amount is paid out in the form of a transfer by the Vienna Tourist Board to the organizer's company account.

10 Publication & Retention obligations

10.1 Publication

In the event of funding approval, the organizer must prominently display the Vienna Tourist Board sponsorship with the Meeting Destination Vienna logo in all marketing measures related to the sponsored event whenever it makes sense and is thematically coherent.

In the event of a funding commitment, unless otherwise provided for by federal or regional or EU law, the Vienna Tourist Board, the City of Vienna, and the Viennese Chamber of Commerce are entitled after the event ends to communicate non-personal data on funded events and their funding amounts in the overall context of funding reporting.

10.2 Retention of documents

Organizers must keep all documents submitted in connection with the application and all documents relevant to it, as well as the Vienna Tourist Board's documents relevant to the granting of the subsidy and its administration and submitted by the Vienna Tourist Board, properly, carefully, and in an appropriate form. This obligation ends 10 years after the payment of the subsidy according to point 9.2.

This duty of retention includes, in particular, documents suitable for clarifying the following facts:

- a) the net amounts used for the funding assessment,
- b) the amount of the respective funding, and
- c) other de minimis aid specified in the application and applied for or granted in the current tax year as well as in the last two preceding tax years before the application is submitted.

Within the retention period, organizers must grant the Vienna Tourist Board, the Municipality of the City of Vienna, the Vienna City Audit Office, the Federal Audit Office, the European Union bodies or representatives of the aforementioned bodies access to these documents at any time. In particular, organizers must, upon request, provide, transmit or make available these documents in the original or as copies – and in electronic form. If necessary, the aforementioned bodies or their representatives must also be granted access to their premises, offices, warehouses, etc. for inspection purposes.

11 Revocation & Repayment

The following grounds for revocation apply mutatis mutandis to all eligible legal entities.

11.1 Reasons for revocation

If one or more of the items below occurs and becomes known within 10 years of the payment according to point 9.2, the promised funding will be revoked:

- a) the funding was used inappropriately,
- b) any requirements or conditions for the granting of a funding under these Funding Guidelines are not fulfilled,
- c) controls by the Vienna Tourist Board, the Municipality of the City of Vienna, the Vienna City Audit Office, the Federal Audit Office, the organs of the European Union, or agents of the aforementioned bodies are refused or obstructed,
- d) information on circumstances that were decisive for the granting of the subsidy subsequently turn out to be incomplete or incorrect, obscured or omitted, in particular if, contrary to the information provided in the application:
 - i) the event has been changed so significantly that it no longer meets the basic requirements for this form of funding,
 - ii) the event was not held, or
 - iii) the funded event took place outside Vienna.
- e) the organizer revokes a declaration of consent in accordance with point 12.1 (data protection).

11.2 Announcement of the revocation

If there is a reason for revocation, the revocation must be issued no later than six months after the period specified in point 11.1 expires. In the event of revocation, the grant amount received – plus 4% interest p.a. from the date of transfer – must be repaid within four weeks.

Further claims under civil law remain unaffected by this.

12 Data protection

12.1 Processing of personal data

The organizers are obliged to consent to the processing of all the personal data required in the course of applying for, implementing, and monitoring funding by the Vienna Tourist Board. The Funding Agreement provides that these data are also processed by the following bodies for the purposes of implementing the funding (reviewing and granting):

- a) the City of Vienna, the Vienna City Audit Office, and the funding agencies of the City of Vienna,
- b) the funding agencies of the Republic of Austria and the federal provinces and the Federal Audit Office, and
- c) the institutions of the European Union (European Commission, European Court of Auditors)

The data is stored for a period of 10 years due to legal requirements.

Organizers have the right to revoke declarations of consent at any time by notifying the Vienna Tourist Board in writing. A revocation should be addressed to the data protection officer of the Vienna Tourist Board at datenschutz@wien.info. If a declaration of consent is revoked, all uses of data which are inadmissible without the consent in question will be discontinued within the framework of the legal deadlines at the Vienna Tourist Board.

The revocation of a declaration of consent by the organizer leads to the revocation of the funding award and the reclaiming of grants already paid out, in accordance with point 11.1.e.

13 Compliance with anti-discrimination provisions

Grants under these Funding Guidelines are awarded exclusively to legal entities that comply with the prohibition of discrimination pursuant to Section 2 of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act (LGBL 35/2004 as amended) and the prohibition of discrimination pursuant to Section 4 para. 3 of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act. The organizers must comply with all statutory provisions and legal bases to be observed in connection with the application, the granting and processing of the funding as well as its control and the like. The organizers must assume any damages resulting from the non-observance of the prohibition of discrimination (Section 2 and Section 4 para. 3 of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act) or other provisions with which the organizer must comply in connection with the handling of funding or the implementation of the funded project and undertake to fully indemnify and hold harmless the Vienna Tourist Board and the City of Vienna against third-party claims.

A translation of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act can be found [here](#).

14 Contact & Submission Point

Vienna Tourist Board
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