Vienna Meeting Fund 2025–2028

Funding Guidelines



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Valid from 1 May 2024

Imprint

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Table of contents

GOALS General objective · p. 4 Target group · p. 4

2 LEGAL BASIS

National legal basis - p. 5 Applicable law/Place of jurisdiction/ Language of these funding guidelines - p. 5 Exclusion of a legal claim - p. 5 EU law - p. 5

3 WHICH ORGANIZERS ARE ELIGIBLE?

Eligible applicants · p. 6 Ineligible applicants · p. 6

4 SUBJECT OF FUNDING

Eligible events · p. 7 Explicitly excluded events · p. 7

5 OVERVIEW OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES Funding modules · p. 8

Funding table at a glance · p. 9

ELIGIBLE COSTS, COST RECOGNITION PERIOD AND ASSESSMENT BASES Eligible costs · p. 10 Cost recognition period · p. 10 Assessment bases · p. 10

COMBINATION AND CUMULATION OF FUNDING Combination of subsidies - p. 11 Cumulation of aid provisions - p. 11

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Online submission \cdot p. 12 Required information and documents \cdot p. 12 Obligation to report changes \cdot p. 12 Formal assessment \cdot p. 13 Ranking \cdot p. 13 Funding decision \cdot p. 13

9

BILLING AND PAYMENT Settlement documents · p. 14 Payment · p. 14

10 PUBLICATION AND RETENTION OBLIGATIONS

Publication · p. 15 Retention of documents · p. 15

REVOCATION AND REPAYMENT

Reasons for revocation \cdot p. 16 Announcement of the revocation \cdot p. 16

DATA PROTECTION Processing of personal data · p. 17

13 COMPLIANCE WITH ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROVISIONS

14 CONTACT AND SUBMISSION POINT

1 Goals

1.1 General objective

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

(Association) congresses and corporate events 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.

In a long-term comparison, every 8th overnight stay in Vienna was attributable to a conference. Participants are particularly big spenders: while a visitor to Vienna spends an average of EUR 276 per day (2019 data), congress guests spend almost twice as much at EUR 541 per day. In the latest Vienna Meeting Industry Report 2022, events already reached 80% of the 2019 level (before coronavirus). Vienna's meetings industry generated around EUR 738 million in added value for the whole of Austria in 2022, securing 13,000 jobs throughout the year.

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) has once again ranked Vienna as the world's leading meeting destination for 2022. The Union of International Associations (UIA) ranks Vienna in second place with a total of 252 international association congresses in 2022. It is important to take this momentum with us and to see this good result as a mandate to continue positioning Vienna as a congress, business and science location full of energy.

Given the ever-increasing global competition in the meetings sector, a sufficiently resourced funding instrument represents a USP that strengthens Vienna's positioning and is an important and therefore relevant argument for the Meeting Destination Vienna to continue to assert itself as a location for meetings in the acquisition process. The two peak seasons in the meeting segment were deliberately omitted and the promotion period was limited to 8 calendar months. This allows for seasonal equalization and redirection of demand. The promotion of the low seasons potentially leads to better capacity utilization of Vienna's conference and event locations, including the hotel industry, in the low seasons.

The aim is also to encourage as many event organizers as possible to act sustainably. For this reason, the organisation of sustainably qualified meetings is additionally remunerated.

1.2 Target group

The program is aimed at all national and international legal entities (organizers, see point 3) that are planning and holding 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 corresponding resolution of this funding measure of the Vienna City Council of 22.04.2024, under e-Recht-445297-2024-GFW.

These Funding Guidelines are valid for submissions from 01.05.2024 to 03.12.2028, subject to possible revisions due to relevant board resolutions or early termination.

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

All legal relationships arising on the basis of 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 shall be 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").

De minimis subsidies are small amounts of state aid that are exempt 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 (within the meaning of these Funding Guidelines) are eligible to apply, provided they are not excluded in point 3.2, who plan and carry out an event within the meaning of point 4 and bear the economic risk and thus all costs for this event:

- a) Legal entities under private and public law,
- b) Natural persons,
- c) Joint partnerships with legal capacity,
- d) Societies with legal capacity (federations/ associations), and
- e) International organisations (Ö-NACE U99).

Agencies (within the meaning of these Funding Guidelines) are eligible to apply if they themselves act as organizers or are demonstrably acting on behalf of the organizer within the meaning of point 3.1. A maximum of one agency per event is eligible to apply. Acting on behalf of an organizer means that the agency carries out the event either on behalf of or for the account of the organizer.

3.2 Ineligible applicants

The following organizers are not eligible to apply:

- a) Applicants with pending insolvency proceedings,
- b) The federal government, regional governments, and municipalities as well as area municipalities under public law (Gebietskörperschaften),
- c) Political parties within the meaning of the Political Parties Act 2012 or comparable foreign organisations,
- d) All entities that do not have legal capacity, and
- e) Applicants who have intentionally provided incorrect information in previous applications for grant funding under this program or its predecessors (Vienna Meeting Fund 2021–2023, Vienna Meeting Fund 2022–2024) for a period of three years from the date of application at that time.

4 Subject of funding

4.1 Eligible events

Funding is available for international events lasting several days (program elements on at least two consecutive event days) that take place between 01.01.2025 and 31.12.2028.

Funding is only available for international events with a subject-specific agenda that take place in the eight months of January, February, March, April, July, August, November and December. Events that extend into the four months not mentioned (May, June, September, October) must include at least 50% of the event days in the 8 months mentioned in order to be eligible for funding (e.g. 30.4.–1.5. yes, 30.10.–1.11. no).

International events are gatherings of predominantly international participants to exchange professional information. International events within the meaning of these Funding Guidelines are defined as events where at least 50% of the participants on site (and not virtually) have traveled from abroad (country of residence outside Austria).

The following international business events – events with (registered) participants known to the organizer – that strengthen Vienna as a location for business and innovation are supported with funding:

- a) (Association) Congresses & Meetings and
- b) Corporate Events & Meetings

4.2 Explicitly excluded events

- a) Evening events (e.g. galas, award ceremonies, Christmas parties, networking events), and
- b) Exhibitions & fairs as well as cultural and sporting events.

5 Overview of funding opportunities

5.1 Funding modules

Two modules are defined within the framework of the funding measure. Module 2 is based on Module 1. Funding for Module 2 can therefore only be applied for if the requirements for Module 1 are also met.

Qualification for Funding Module 1

Event takes place on site in Vienna with at least 50% international participants (i.e. those who have traveled from abroad)

- a) Location: The event takes place in a Viennese hotel or a Viennese (event) location operating commercially on the market against payment of a room rental/conference flat rate. For the purposes of these guidelines, a location is only commercially active on the market if it can be rented by third parties (including non-affiliated companies) for an event and has a corresponding public appearance. In the event that the organizer and the operator of the location are the same person, the part of the costs attributable to the location will not be funded. In this case, only third-party costs of non-affiliated companies are eligible for funding (see the definition of "a single undertaking" within the meaning of Art. 2 (2) of the de minimis Regulation).
- b) Duration of the event: several days, the majority of the program takes place during the day (before 6 p.m.).
- c) Participants: at least 50 participants must be present on site.
- d) The number of international participants on site traveled from abroad must be at least 50% of the total number of participants on site and must stay overnight in Viennese hotels.
- e) Events that take place during the funding period (see point 4.1).

Qualification for Funding Module 2 Event is also carried out sustainably

In addition to the requirements for Module 1, the following applies:

- a) The event is throughout organized as a sustainable event.
- b) An event is deemed to have been organized sustainably within the meaning of these guidelines if it has either been awarded the "ÖkoEvent" label or has been certified with the "Österreichisches Umweltzeichen" (Austrian Ecolabel; UZ 62 Green Meetings and Green Events).*
- c) Proof of receipt of the label or certificate must be provided at the time of settlement.

The module(s) for which funding is requested must be declared upon submission

The funding amount resulting from modules 1 and 2 corresponds to the costs actually paid by the organizer, but not exceeding the maximum funding amount shown in the funding table.

* Detailed information on "ÖkoEvent" and the Austrian Ecolabel can be found here: https://www.oekoevent.at

https://www.umweltzeichen.at/de/green-meetings-und-events/home

5.2 Funding table at a glance

Years 2025–2028	Module 1	Module 2	
	Event takes place on site in Vienna; at least 50% of participants travel from abroad	Event is verifiably sustainable	
Number of participants on-site	Max. funding in EUR Module 1	Max. funding in EUR Module 2	Max. funding in EUR OVERALL
50-99	2,400	600	3,000
100–199	4,800	1,200	6,000
200–499	8,000	2,000	10,000
500-999	12,800	3,200	16,000
1,000–1,999	19,200	4,800	24,000
2,000–2,999	25,600	6,400	32,000
3,000–4,999	32,000	8,000	40,000
More than 5,000	48,000	12,000	60,000

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 (non-affiliated companies, see the definition of "a single undertaking" within the meaning of Art. 2 (2) of the de minimis Regulation). As a rule, these are the costs paid to the event location or hotel and other service providers such as technical 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.

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

6.2 Cost recognition period

When submitting an application, the start and end dates of the event - according to the planning - must be stated.

The maximum cost recognition period per event extends from the entry into force of these Funding Guidelines (advance payments already made before 01.01.2025 and relating to events from 01.01.2025) until no later than three months after the end of the event.

6.3 Assessment bases

There are two Funding Modules (see point 5) with a common assessment basis. The assessment basis for both funding modules is the sum of the event-related costs (see point 6.1).

- a) The funding amount corresponds to the costs actually paid, but no more than the maximum funding amount shown according to the respective number of participants category (see point 5.2).
- b) If the event is held and demonstrably qualifies as a sustainable event (Module 2), the additional funding amount according to funding table 5.2 will be paid out.
- c) Points 6.3.a to 6.3.b apply both to the submission (the preliminary funding approval) and to the settlement or payment (see points 9 to 11).

7 Combination and Cumulation of funding

7.1 Combination of subsidies

Subsidies handled by the Vienna Tourist Board (Wiener Tourismusverband) 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 funding 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 subsidies with other monetary subsidies of the Vienna Tourist Board is explicitly excluded.

Irrespective of the other regulations in this point and point 7.2, the following applies to the combination of subsidies with the Vienna Loyalty Fund or any subsequent subsidy program: If the event also receives a grant from the Vienna Loyalty Fund or any subsequent funding program, the costs already submitted there cannot be claimed again to the extent of the funding granted for them. The Vienna Loyalty Fund guidelines contain a mirror-image provision.

In addition, it is stipulated that grants from this funding program for a funding applicant, even if it is not economically active¹, is limited to EUR 300,000 over a period of three fiscal years, including its affiliated companies (analogous application of the term "a single undertaking" within the meaning of Art. 2 (2) of the de minimis Regulation), taking into account all other grants from other funding programs of the Vienna Tourist Board.

7.2 Cumulation of aid provisions

The de minimis aid granted under this program may be

- a) cumulated with other de minimis aid, provided that, in accordance with Article 3 of the de minimis Regulation, the total amount of de minimis aid granted to a "single undertaking" by a Member State (note: i.e. by Austrian funding bodies) does not exceed EUR 300,000 over the last three years.
- b) cumulated with other aid granted by third parties on the basis of group exemption regulations for the same eligible costs, provided that the maximum aid intensities or maximum amounts are not exceeded.
- c) be cumulated with other aid granted by a third party on the basis of group exemption regulations which is not granted in respect of specific eligible costs and cannot be allocated to such costs.

¹ 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 Online submission

Applications are possible on an ongoing basis until 03.12.2028 or until the funds are exhausted (cumulative committed funding amounts, ranked according to receipt and already approved, see point 8.5) and must be submitted exclusively at meeting.vienna.info. The required information and documents must be filled out completely and correctly.

8.2 Required information and documents

The following information must be completed in full in the online submission portal:

- a) Title, date and duration of the event,
- b) Planned number of participants on site in Vienna,
- c) Conference location,
- d) Planned total number of overnight stays,
- e) Expected total costs of the event for the organizer,
- f) Type of event and industry sector,
- g) Company address, contact details, VAT number, legal form and account details, and
- h) Consent to these guidelines & consent to the processing of personal data.

The following documents must be uploaded to the online submission portal as part of the submission process:

- a) Location offer or location contract,
- b) De minimis declaration: The de minimis declaration is a document in which the organizer discloses the amount of all de minimis funding applied for or granted in Austria in the last three years prior to the date of submission of this declaration and confirms this in the form of a company name, and
- c) in the case of a submission in another name, corresponding powers of attorney / evidence.

The submission documents must be received at least 3 weeks before the start of the event. Submissions received later will not be considered.

If not all of the above-mentioned information or documents required for the examination of the funding application are submitted in the course of the application, the Vienna Tourist Board reserves the right to request them within a reasonable period of time (in any case before the start of the event). If the additional request is not met in full and on time, the application will be rejected (see the ranking of applications set out in point 8.5). The Vienna Tourist Board reserves the right to make further additional requests in case that further questions regarding eligibility arise as a result of the additional submissions. The provisions regarding supplementary claims apply accordingly when answering such questions.

8.3 Obligation to report changes

Upon receipt of a preliminary funding confirmation, the organizers are obliged to notify any quantitative or qualitative changes in connection with the event immediately and without request in writing at funding@vienna.info.

Significant changes must be communicated in writing before the start of the event, immediately after becoming known, without undue delay, including any resulting cost changes and/or associated changes to the event period on which the funding is based.

If the event is postponed within the defined cost recognition period, 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 the fulfillment of the formal criteria listed in the previous points and the existence of 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 to 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) Applications that are submitted are ranked according to the date on which they are received.
- b) "First-come first-served" applies: As soon as the funds distributed and approved/preliminary approved under this funding have reached the specified funding volume, the funding is deemed to have been exhausted.
- c) A ranking on the waiting list is not possible.

8.6 Funding decision

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

The organizer will receive notification of the decision to provisionally grant funding in writing.

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 and Payment

9.1 Settlement documents

The following event information and documents are required within 3 months of the end of the event and must be submitted to the Vienna Tourist Board via the digital settlement portal:

- a) Settlement form (see download area),
- b) Invoices and proof of payment in accordance with legal requirements (bank transfer voucher and/or bank statement):
 - i) Location invoice,
 - ii) Invoices for other external (not from affiliated companies) event-related services (accommodation, technical equipment, catering, etc.), up to the amount of the provisionally approved funding amount.
- c) Statistics of participants (number & national or international origin), see download area,
- d) Proof of the ÖkoEvent label or the Austrian Ecolabel certificate for the event for which the application is being submitted (Module 2 only).

If the documents submitted by the organizer for the final account are inadequate, so that they do not provide a sufficient basis for evaluation, an additional claim will be made within a deadline of 4 weeks. Failure to comply with the additional claim within the deadline shall result in the automatic loss of any otherwise existing entitlement to funding. The Vienna Tourist Board reserves the right to make further additional claims in the event that further questions regarding eligibility for funding arise as a result of the subsequent submissions. Statistics on the origin of the participants must be submitted as proof for Module 1. The Vienna Tourist Board reserves the right to check the accuracy of the participant statistics on a random basis using the participant lists of the registered, actually present participants. The verification shall be carried out on a confidential basis by an auditor commissioned by the Vienna Tourist Board.

If no accounting documents are submitted within a period of three months after the event has taken place, this will result in the automatic loss of any otherwise existing entitlement to funding. A written revocation by the Vienna Tourist Board will not be issued separately in this case.

9.2 Payment

After reviewing the complete documentation submitted (see point 9.1), the funding amount will be recalculated on the basis of 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 funding amount shall be paid out in the form of a bank transfer by the Vienna Tourist Board to the organizer's company account specified in the application or to the authorized agency's company account specified in the application.

10 Publication and Retention obligations

10.1 Publication

As part of all marketing measures in connection with the subsidized event, the organizer must prominently display the Vienna Tourist Board logo where it makes sense and is thematically consistent.

Unless otherwise stipulated by national, regional or EU law, the Vienna Tourist Board and the City of Vienna are entitled to communicate non-personal data on subsidized events and their subsidy amounts in the overall context of the subsidy reporting after the conclusion of the event.

10.2 Retention of documents

Organizers are obliged to keep all documents submitted in connection with the application and all relevant documents, as well as documents of the Vienna Tourist Board that are relevant for the granting of the subsidy and its administration and that were submitted by the Vienna Tourist Board, properly, carefully and in an appropriate form. This obligation ends 10 years after payment of the subsidy in accordance with point 9.2.

This retention obligation includes, in particular, documents that are suitable for clarifying the following facts:

- a) net amounts used for the funding assessment,
- b) the amount of the respective funding amount,
- c) other de minimis aid specified in the application that was applied for or granted in the last three years before the application was submitted, and
- d) participant lists of the registered participants.

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 shall, upon request, make these documents available, transmit them or make them available for inspection in the original or as copies – also in electronic form. If necessary, the aforementioned bodies or their representatives must also be granted access to their business, office and storage premises, etc. for inspection purposes.

11 Revocation and Repayment

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

11.1 Reasons for revocation

In the event that one or more of the points below occur and become known up to 10 years after disbursement in accordance with point 9.2, the funding granted will be revoked if

- a) the funding was used contrary to its intended purpose,
- b) the requirements or conditions for the granting of funding in accordance with these guidelines are not met or are not fulfilled,
- c) inspections 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 funding subsequently proves to be incomplete or incorrect, is omitted or ceases to apply, in particular if, contrary to the information provided in the application:
 - i) the timing of the event is delayed until after 31.12.2028,
 - ii) the event has been changed so significantly that it no longer meets the basis for the funding approval in this form,
 - iii) the event was not held, or
 - iv) the funded event was held outside Vienna.
- e) the organizer does not ensure the lawfulness of the processing of personal data in its sphere under data protection law (see point 12).

11.2 Announcement of revocation

If there is a reason for revocation, the revocation must be issued no later than 6 months after expiry of the period specified in point 11.1. In the event of revocation, the funding amount received – plus default interest of 9,2 percentage points above the applicable base interest rate p.a. from the date of transfer – must be repaid within 4 weeks.

Further claims under civil law remain unaffected by this.

12 Data protection

12.1 Processing of personal data

The organizer is obliged to ensure that all personal data of third parties disclosed in the course of the funding application, implementation and monitoring is processed in accordance with data protection law. The legal basis (in particular the Vienna Funding Transparency Act/Wiener Fördertransparenzgesetz) and the funding agreement stipulate that the data will also be processed by the following bodies for the purposes of funding implementation (review 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 or must be stored for a period of 10 years in accordance with statutory provisions.

In the event of an audit by the aforementioned entities or by internal or external auditors of the Vienna Tourist Board, the organizer may be obliged to make the data related to the funding accessible.

If the lawfulness of the processing under data protection law is not ensured, this will result in the revocation of the funding granted and the reclaiming of subsidies already paid out in accordance with point 11.1.e.

Further information, in particular on the rights of data subjects, can be found in our privacy policy at https://www.wien.info/en/privacy-policy.

13 Compliance with anti-discrimination provisions

Funding under these guidelines is provided exclusively to natural and legal persons who comply with the prohibition of discrimination pursuant to Section 2 of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act (Wiener Antidiskriminierungsgesetz; LGBI. 35/2004 as amended) and the prohibition of discrimination pursuant to Section 4 (3) of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act. The organizers are obliged to comply with all legal requirements and legal principles to be observed in connection with the application, the granting and processing of the funding as well as its monitoring and other similar matters. The organizers shall be liable for any damage resulting from non-compliance with the prohibition of discrimination and disadvantage (Section 2 and Section 4 (3) of the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act) or other provisions to be complied with by the organizer in connection with the handling of the funding or the implementation of the funded project and commit to fully hold harmless and indemnify the Vienna Tourist Board and the City of Vienna against claims by third parties.

14 Contact and Submission Point

Vienna Tourist Board Vienna Convention Bureau Invalidenstrasse 6 1030 Vienna meeting.vienna.info funding@vienna.info Phone +43 1 211 14 555