

Policy roundtable within the Eu-SPRI Annual Conference “The Future of STI – The Future of STI Policy”, 7-9 June 2017, Vienna

Session: Thursday, June 8th 2017, 9.00 am – 11.00 am

Title of policy roundtable session

National funding agencies in Europe: a comparative view

Description

The evaluation of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) as the federal one-stop-shop for industrial RDTI support, as well as the Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft mbH (aws) as the federal promotional services agency (including loans, guarantees but also subsidy programmes) leaves ample room to discuss the position of such agencies within the Innovation System.

Between 2002 and 2004, these two agencies came into existence as new players in the Austrian Innovation System to replace/integrate eight predecessor agencies. The following years saw a rapid expansion of new mission-oriented STI policies, which led to considerably broader portfolios by introducing new instruments and modes of delivery as well as an increase in budgets. The considerable heterogeneity of their portfolios results in challenges and opportunities at the same time. Different modes of policy coordination within one agency are partly a result of the past, but also due to the different intervention logics and policy instruments applied. On the other hand, the agencies face demands for increasing their effectiveness and efficiency, which contradict each other to a certain extent. While target-group specific interventions (following the mission-orientation) underline a selective approach with rather specific processes and instruments, the efficiency argument supports a standardisation of processes and instruments across the portfolios of the agencies as much as sensible. This trade-off cannot be solved easily.

This policy roundtable format shall be used to discuss the development of innovation agencies in the light of the (global) challenges ahead calling for more transformative STI policies. Here, not only the reactions of the ministries (principals) shall be captured in this session, but also views of the international scholars and policy makers at the conference as an additional input to the discussion of the results and at the same time giving a vivid and concrete example for similar processes happening in other countries. A reflection of the results in the light of new models and practices in STI policy seems to be a timely

contribution and might further the discussion using an example with immediate policy relevance.

Background information

The evaluation of FFG and aws focuses on the institutions and their context and how they developed since their founding in 2002 and 2004 respectively, particularly in the light of the initial goals for this structural reform: (1) reducing complexity, (2) solving coordination problems, (3) increasing the steering by policy to reach target groups, and (4) enhancing the potential to implement political goals (effectiveness and efficiency).

Organiser information

First organiser: Austrian Institute for SME Research (KMU Forschung Austria)

Sonja Sheikh (deputy director) and Peter Kaufmann (senior researcher)

Second organiser: Fraunhofer Institute ISI, Karlsruhe

Knut Koschatzky (head of department) and Susanne Bühner (senior researcher)

Short presentation of the evaluation results

Austrian Institute for SME Research and Fraunhofer ISI, followed by comments by the auditorium, and a concluding panel discussion, involving the following representatives of the owners/principals of both agencies and experts.

Profiles of discussants

Rupert Pichler, Head of the Department for RTD Government Support, Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Florian Eichberger, Department for Location Policies and Internal Market, Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFW)

Jakob Edler, Professor of Innovation Policy and Strategy, Executive Director Manchester Institute of Innovation Research

N.N. a Scandinavian innovation system representative