

Press release

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AIT CONTINUES TO EXPAND EXCELLENCE IN APPLIED RESEARCH

Austria's largest non-university research institution presents a solid balance sheet for 2023.

The AIT Austrian Institute of Technology presents a successful balance sheet for the 2023 financial year. With an increase in external revenue of 13.9 percent (to EUR 117.4 million) and acquired income of over EUR 35 million from EU programmes, the institute underlines its central role in Austria's and Europe's research landscape. With more than 1,500 employees and strong networking with science, universities and industry, the AIT is Austria's largest research and technology organisation and carries out applied research with a claim to excellence, which is crucial for overcoming decarbonisation and the digital transformation.

Chairman of the Supervisory Board Peter Schwab: AIT is more relevant than ever

The AIT Austrian Institute of Technology increased its operating income by 9.2 per cent to EUR 199.7 million in the 2023 financial year - the first year of the new three-member management team. Earnings before taxes of EUR 5.59 million were generated, which will be immediately channelled into investments for the future. "The AIT is more relevant than ever - not only for the economy and industry, but also for society and Austria as a business location. This is particularly evident in the fact that the current research priorities are closely aligned with the major challenges we face," says AIT Supervisory Board Chairman Peter Schwab at the annual press conference of Austria's largest research and technology organisation, which currently has 1,527 employees. Schwab identifies a great need in industry for guidance and support through first-class expertise in areas such as digitalisation, decarbonisation and artificial intelligence. "Our thanks go to the two owner representatives BMK and IV as well as the outstanding employees," says Schwab.

Important node in the Austrian and European innovation system

"We develop solutions for industry, business and society," emphasises Brigitte Bach, spokesperson for the AIT management. The AIT is an important node in the Austrian and European innovation system. This is also reflected in the high level of participation in European research programmes: in 2023 alone, AIT brought more than EUR 35 million to Austria in 46 projects. "In terms of participation in the EU research programme HORIZON EUROPE, the AIT is among the top 3 in Austria with 95 projects and EU funding of EUR 57 million to date," says Bach.

"Applied research makes a decisive contribution to jobs, prosperity and Austria's technological sovereignty," explains Bach. The institute concentrates on the two closely interlinked research areas of "Sustainable and resilient infrastructures" - which includes areas such as energy systems of the future, sustainable mobility and selected areas of the healthcare system - and "Digital transformation of industry, the economy and society" - from cyber security issues to innovative automation solutions and human-machine interaction. "This focus enables us to achieve critical dimensions and ensure the effectiveness of research," says Bach.

Long-term interdisciplinary research

The AIT sees itself as a bridge between basic research and industrial implementation. "We turn scientific ideas into innovations. Our strength lies in long-term, interdisciplinary research, which enables us to master complex systems and accompany them from the idea to market launch," reports Andreas Kugi, Scientific Director of the AIT. "We are continuing to expand excellence in applied research," he states as the primary goal for the coming years. To this end, networking with universities and partners from business and industry is to be further strengthened.

AIT establishes a cross-thematic AI focus

One of the main thrusts is the expansion of areas of strength, such as quantum communication, battery technologies, AI-based automation, concepts of human-machine interaction or microbe-based bioeconomy. In particular, Kugi emphasises the importance of lighthouse projects and the appointment of Principal Scientists, who establish new fields of research at AIT as outstanding research personalities. In many cases, artificial intelligence methods play a decisive role - for example in the transformation of energy systems or in the development of innovative automation solutions.

"In order to fully utilise the potential of artificial intelligence while guaranteeing a high level of agility, we have set up our own AIT AI Task Force to deal with all aspects of this technology," says Kugi.

Solid annual financial statements 2023: AIT is well positioned for the next step

AIT is successful on the market with this strategy, which is reflected in a solid balance sheet for the financial year. In the 2023 financial year, AIT recorded an increase in incoming orders of 5% to EUR 101.7 million. The order backlog stood at EUR 259.8 million at the end of the year (up 12.4%), which represents a solid basis for the current financial year 2024.

"The financial results for 2023 confirm our strong position. Despite high investments in our research infrastructure, we are on solid financial ground," reports Alexander Svejkovsky, Managing Director and CFO of the AIT. AIT's external revenue increased significantly in the previous year: revenue from contract research rose by 8.3% to EUR 68.86 million, while revenue from co-financed projects increased by 22.9% to EUR 48.54 million. The contribution from the shareholder BMK, which serves to strengthen research capacities in strategic areas, totalled EUR 56.1 million (up 4.4%). In addition, the AIT received funds totalling around EUR 9 million from the performance agreement with the BMK to finance the R&D infrastructure.

"The economic environment is challenging - also because the funds have not been valorised in the current period of the Research Funding Act. In order to cover future expenditure, for example for the pioneering fields of AI and battery technologies, the AIT has therefore strategically allocated EUR 1.5 million as retained earnings for future investments. We are preparing for growth in the next performance agreement period," says Svejkovsky.

New technology talks

The Technology Talks, which have been organised by the AIT together with partners as part of the European Forum Alpbach since 1983, are reinventing themselves: this year, the summit meeting of the research community will take place under the new name "Technology Talks Austria" on 12 and 13 September in Vienna's Museumsquartier (following the FFG Forum on 11 September). In subsequent years, a rotation to other central locations in Austria is planned.

The guiding theme of the Technology Talks Austria 2024 is the role of research, technology and innovation (RTI) in the "triple transition" - the simultaneous "green" and "green transition".

digital transformation that is people-centred. We are looking for solutions for industry, business and society.

This topic will be discussed in an innovative mix of concise keynote speeches by internationally renowned speakers, diverse plenary debates and in-depth workshops. A multi-stakeholder perspective is adopted in all formats: The groups of science/research, business/industry and politics/public authorities are always involved. The aim of the debates is in particular to draw conclusions for European and Austrian RTI policy.

About the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology

Research and development is the central driver of innovation for industry, the economy and society, secures jobs and prosperity and thus strengthens Austria as a business location. Applied research also provides solutions for the major challenges of our time. The AIT Austrian Institute of Technology is Austria's largest research and technology organisation with currently 1,527 employees working on the key infrastructure issues of the future. The AIT focuses on the two interlinked research priorities of "sustainable and resilient infrastructures", particularly in the areas of energy, transport and health, and the "digital transformation of industry and society", working closely with industry and clients from public institutions. www.ait.ac.at

About the Technology Talks Austria

The technology talks are organised by the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology in close cooperation with BMK (Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology), BMBWF (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research), BMAW (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy), IV (Federation of Austrian Industries) and FFG (Austrian Research Promotion Agency).

The following are involved as Scientific Partners: TU Austria (TU Vienna, TU Graz, Montanuniversität Leoben), acatech (German Academy of Science and Engineering), Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), Christian Doppler Gesellschaft (CDG), Institute for Science and Technology (IST) Austria, Forschung Austria (including Joanneum Research, Salzburg Research, Silicon Austria Labs, Austrian Cooperative Research, Forschung Burgenland, Upper Austrian Research).

www.technology-talks-austria.at

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