

RESEARCH

On A Firm Foundation Towards System Competence In The Infrastructure Topics Of The Future

With a profit from ordinary activities of EUR +2.1 million, for the fourth time running the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT) presented a positive balance sheet. By 2020 Austria's largest non-academic research facility plans to employ up to 250 new staff and increase sales to EUR 200 million.

"The high level of orders and the development of administrative costs in recent years show that we are on the right way. After three strong years of consolidation we are now investing profits into the strategic development of the company, said managing director Anton Plimon in a summary of the favourable balance sheet profit of the Austrian Institute of Technology for 2011. Also for 2012 Plimon expects positive figures for Austria's largest non-academic research facility.

From 2008 to 2010, when the institute was established, the highest possible profit from ordinary activities was used to stabilise the equity basis. After three strong years of consolidation it is now possible to focus more on reinvesting annual profits into the main areas of research in infrastructure issues of the future. In the reporting year the profit from ordinary activities was EUR +2.1 million. Plimon commented, "AIT is not focused on profit maximisation but on a highly cross-linked system competence of infrastructure issues, and on how these can be brought in line with the requirements of our partners in the industry and our customers. That this strategy is succeeding is shown by, among other things, the trend towards large projects from leading Austrian and European companies.

Thus, in 2011 it was possible to raise the level of projects subsidised by EU research monies quite significantly, by 13 per cent. The total order value was further increased and rose in the previous year by 6.2 per cent to EUR 129.3 million (2010: EUR 121.8 million). One reason for the company's stable development is the strategy evaluation that was carried

out. "It was very satisfactory", said Plimon. "The Energy and Safety & Security departments achieved very good results. The Mobility department is stable; we have particular expectations in the new head, Mrs. Christine Tissot, who brings market experience as general manager of Renault. In the Health & Environment department we made minor adjustments in the last quarter of 2011. The Foresight & Policy Development department must become a more integrating factor for AIT."

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS ARE KEPT LOW

The merger with Österreichische Forschungs- und Prüfzentrum Arsenal GmbH (ÖFPZ) was a major step in restructuring the AIT enterprise structure. Legally, the ÖFPZ stood behind the Energy and Mobility departments until 31 December 2011. Since the beginning of this year, all five departments have the common name AIT Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH. This measure reduces overlap and administrative costs by EUR 300,000 per year.

Hannes Androsch, President/Chairman of the supervisory board of the Austrian Institute of Technology, who, like the entire supervisory board, was confirmed for the next five years in the shareholders' meeting of 8 May 2012, takes a look into the future: "In the next years AIT will continue to focus. To reinforce its role as an important network node for Austrian industry, research partners and the government, a critical mass must be reached. AIT should and must grow in those areas where it is successful. By 2020, up to 250 additional staff could work in the



departments, thereby creating two or three lighthouse topics that are visible internationally. This is the only way for AIT to be an international door opener for the Austrian economy, also with regard to the big infrastructure issues of our time!" AIT's targeted sales for 2020 are EUR 200 million.

RECRUITING HIGH-LEVEL PLAYERS FOR RESEARCH

As a partner of Austrian industry, but also at the international level, the scientific work of AIT showed only positive results last year, which is also reflected in the highly attractive projects supported by the EU that were obtained in 2011. "With 900 fixed staff and up to 250 freelancers we were able to acquire a whole series of new projects eligible for

EU subsidies," said the managing director of AIT, Wolfgang Knoll. "Thanks to our focussing we have a great strength: We know when to say "yes" and when to not pursue a project. Presently, the main challenge is to recruit high-level players. To this end, AIT has developed and rolled out a high-quality career model which enables us to hire top international people", said Knoll, who wants to attract top international experts in the field of research to Austria.

The success of an industrial site and the quality of life very much depend on an efficient and powerful infrastructure. The present changes in the system require new technological solutions and, at the same time, create new business opportunities for innovative companies in the decades to come. Against this background, AIT wants more and more to

*Controlling AIT's fate:
Wolfgang Knoll, Hannes
Androsch, Anton Plimon und
Alexander Svejkovsky*

STRATEGIC RESEARCH AREAS AND RESEARCH FIELDS



AIT conducts research on the infrastructure issues of the future in 11 research areas and five departments

enable the realisation of infrastructure solutions and to offer the technologies, methods and tools for tomorrow's infrastructure.

2011: INVENTUM PATENT PRIZE FOR ONE OF 15 PATENTS GRANTED

Besides a large number of publications in expert media, doctoral candidates and lectures, granted patents also belong to the major performance indicators of Austria's largest non-academic research facility. In 2011, 15 patents were granted to AIT. The development of the world's smallest intraoral 3D dental scanner took third place in the "Inventum" patent prize, awarded last year for the first time.

AIT conducts research in the infrastructure issues of the future in 11 research areas and five departments. "With this setup we are clearly focussed and achieve the critical mass necessary to play in the top league, and thanks to the research-strategic advisory board we do

research on the right issues," says Mr. Knoll. In 2011, the Austrian Institute of Technology was able to obtain top projects from EU subsidy programmes, such as the EU project "PRECYSE" (Prevention, Protection and Reaction to Cyber Attacks to Critical Infrastructures). The project demonstrates the strategic bias and implementation of AIT. It kicked off in autumn 2011 and is scheduled to last for three years. The Safety & Security department of AIT is a central partner in this European project. The EU provides subsidies of EUR 3.3 million to the project: 75 per cent of total costs. The project's goal is to develop new technologies and tools to increase the protection of critical IKT systems against cyber attacks. The operators of such infrastructures, for example electricity or traffic control centres, are thus able to better appraise potential risks and to operate IKT infrastructures in a safer manner than now. The research results are tested, among others, in Valencia's traffic control system.