



Austria

**Competence Centre
Business Plan**

Summary of the business idea (competence centre) (What will the competence centre do, who will launch it? What human and financial resources will it have access to, who is the target group?):

<p>Location of Centre (physical or virtual location):</p>	<p>The Energy Finance Competence Centre (EFCC) will be set up in the form of a virtual information hub on the newly established Crowdfunding platform crowd17.at. This will serve as the focal point to enable projects to finance energy efficiency projects in Austria via the crowd.</p>
<p>Legal status of competence centre:</p>	<p>The Centre will be integrated into ConPlusUltra's and CONDA's existing organizational structures and activities, so the EFCC will not lead to the setup of a new organization, but be incorporated into the new platform as a virtual competence centre.</p>
<p>Services offered by competence centre (what is your unique selling point?):</p>	<p>The main goal of establishing the EFCC is to promote the E-FIX approach (developed procedures and tools) through spreading the gained knowledge and experience. The Centre will support interested stakeholders and developers with their project development and in this sense provide the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive technical assistance and project advisory services in the form of a one-stop shop for sustainable energy projects. In that way, the Centre will cover the needs of both the public and private sector, as well as general public. • Funding and financing support: the competence center will analyse the financing possibilities and, depending on the project requirements, propose financing options, taking into account not only the available public funds, but also a combination of innovative financial instruments e.g. Crowdfunding, EPC, ELENA/PDA etc. The development of a white-label platform for crowdfunding projects will enhance standardised offers for individual campaign designs and appropriate setups of crowd-sourced projects in combination with other financing instruments. • Organise information events and trainings for ambassadors and interested stakeholders: Training materials and developed tools from the E-FIX project will be hosted on the platform and be made available for training and capacity building purposes. Project developers will have the opportunity to learn about the whole step-by-step process in project



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	financing, financial mechanisms and moreover, on Crowdfunding/Crowdinvesting
Competition (who else is offering similar services in your market? Is there demand on the local market for your product?):	<p>In Austria, a diversity of crowdfunding platforms exist, but there are only few (2 to our knowledge) that also consider the financing of sustainable energy projects (Crowd4Climate, Greenrocket). However, there is no virtual information platform on CF and innovative financing mechanisms available that offers a combination of information/training materials and guidance in setting up campaigns and offering a CF white-label platform for promoting energy-specific projects.</p> <p>E-FIX methodology and tools developed and rolled-out among various stakeholders were addressing energy efficiency and renewable energy potentials in the area of public infrastructure, industrial/business processes and building technologies which are close to the investors, and where they can benefit on the financial output.</p> <p>However, the conclusion from the project implementation and pilot financing campaigns developed was that there is a general CF/CI demand, but for EE/RES projects it can be mainly found in the area of public infrastructure. As a result, the EFCC will focus its further activities, in line with the objectives proposed in the Austrian E-FIX Action Plan, on promoting innovative financing schemes for sustainable energy projects among communities, public buildings and infrastructure operators (e.g. establish one-stop shops with regional utilities/agencies for sustainable energy projects), moreover for greening schools and support environmental & energy projects with crowdfunding initiatives.</p>
Organisational Structure (what management structure is foreseen? How many staff members will there be? Attach organigram):	<p>Austrian project partners envisage to establish a virtual Energy Financing Competence Centre via the crowd17.at platform. It will be established with staff resources from mainly ConPlusUltra and CONDA, and potentially from other sources provided through CONDA platform partners and service providers. At least one technical expert (from ConPlusUltra, or external) and an economical/financial expert (WU Vienna, or external) and/or marketing specialist for conducting CF campaigns (CONDA) will be required, depending on the TA support required by a specific client. Experts from these organisations will be also called-in to conduct workshops and capacity-building activities within the EFCC (planned 2 regular annual events), depending on additional funds and financing sources to be leveraged.</p>
Target group (who are you trying to target with your services?):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Energy managers ● Financing managers ● Experts with both, technical and financial background



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy project developers and potential investors • Generally, representatives and stakeholders from public and private sector (public agencies, funding institutions, banks)
Marketing Strategy (How will you reach your target group?):	<p>EFCC will be promoted mainly through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowd17.at web platform • Websites of the partners • Social and professional networks (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), • Networks of stakeholders, ambassadors and experts • Multipliers from public and private sector (Public Agencies, Funds, Chambers, Impact Investors).
Financial planning (how much money is required to launch the centre? How will funds be mobilised? How much will staff cost?):	<p>EFCC running costs will be temporarily covered by CONDA (crowd17 platform operator) and ConPlusUltra (content provider) with an annual in-kind contribution of approx. 10.000 EUR, and with possibilities sought for extra funding/sponsoring. There will be no costs associated for content users and participation in events offered through the EFCC.</p> <p>However, in case of project development support required by potential developers, which will require technical/financial due diligences, and assessments, crowdfunding and marketing campaigns to be developed, clients will be charged for the provision of services.</p>
SWOT Analysis (What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for your competence centre?):	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First online one stop-shop for financing of energy related projects through the crowd in Austria; • Long-term expertise in campaign design, development and communication through web-based CF/CI platforms in Austria • In house experts covering the field of innovative energy technologies and project financing- profound knowledge in energy project development and implementation of numerous EU and national projects; • Comprehensive offering of knowledge transfer and information dissemination through workshops, bilateral consultations, trainings; • Good relationships with relevant stakeholders within the Austrian energy and financing sectors; <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CF/CI is still a niche market and a rather expensive source of financing, if not complemented/blended with other funding opportunities • Setup of virtual competence centre needs additional financial resources (funding, sponsoring) which can



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	<p>be provided only in a temporary period out of own internal funds;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small number of experts available in the own organisations, requiring networking and engaging experts from outside; <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online access to information, virtual setup will allow to adapt to the market needs and new developments quickly. • New policy programmes and legislation in place expected to push the demand for integrated energy projects, incl. those with a focus on green investment strategies • New funding opportunities (EU, national) available to require a variety of financing instruments to be put in place • Opportunity to shape and influence national legislation regarding innovative financing mechanisms. <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness and interest among relevant stakeholders on innovative financing mechanisms; • Not enough interest from the national authorities and decision makers to participate in activities organized by the EFCC; • Possible competition in form of other energy agencies, consultants to implement similar hubs/platforms.
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