

OPB support initiative ready to go

- **Tailored packages for OPBs in Vienna from 1 April**
- **New Vienna Online funding programme**
- **A strong balance sheet of previous coronavirus aid packages**

Vienna, 23 March 2021 – Exactly 370 days ago, the City of Vienna launched its first coronavirus aid package, the 'Home Office' working-from-home funding programme. Since then, the city has provided 50 support measures and more than 500 million euros for issues relating to labour, the economy, health, social concerns and culture. The new 2021 economic support package is already up and running, and additional funding opportunities will be available through the Vienna Business Agency and the waff (Vienna Employment Promotion Fund) from April 2021. The new funding measures are aimed at one-person businesses (OPBs) and digitalisation.

Vienna goes ahead: tailored packages for OPBs in Vienna

Vienna is home to around 65,000 OPBs. The City of Vienna has developed a specific OPB assistance programme to support these companies. The Vienna Business Agency's funding pot contains 10 million euros dedicated to OPBs, with amounts of up to €7,000 available to OPBs that have been obliged to explore new fields of business or make changes to their business models as a result of the coronavirus. "We are going ahead! This is the next step in stimulating innovation in our companies: the Vienna Business Agency is offering 70 million euros to Viennese companies this year", declares Mayor Michael Ludwig.

The waff is also offering funding to one-person businesses for the first time. Up to €2,000 in funding plus 80% of course costs are available for training and development designed to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies. Eligible fields include commercial and business management (e.g. bookkeeping, managerial accounting, data protection, European Business Competence* License, taxation law, cash basis accounting, office management), digital skills (e.g. optimising social media presence, ECDL, Excel courses, e-accounting, Photoshop, digital communication) and language skills (e.g. English and German language courses, Business English and Business German). "We are allocating 1.5 million euros to the new OPB training and development programme via the waff. This is intended to help our OPBs to not only survive the crisis, but to go on to become entrepreneurs who may subsequently employ additional staff", City Councillor for Economy, Peter Hanke, describes the programme's objectives. Hanke adds that there is already significant interest in this funding programme, which will be launched on 1 April.

"In this time of crisis, it is particularly important for OPBs to strengthen their business competencies and keep up to date. I am very excited that the waff has succeeded in getting

a completely new range of offers up and running for this target group in such a short time. The waff is working closely with the Vienna Economic Chamber to supply the best possible information about the new funding opportunity to Vienna's one-person businesses. waff funding for OPBs is another indication of the highly effective social partnerships currently active in Vienna. That's the firm footing we need here in Vienna if we are to overcome the crisis together", says Mayor Michael Ludwig.

"With this OPB funding programme, we have successfully created an unbureaucratic offer which can provide assistance without delay. These entrepreneurs are the backbone of the Viennese economy, and our future employers. That's why I am so pleased that our newly-conceived funding options are available already. OPBs are currently subject to a state-imposed process of change as a result of anti-COVID-19 measures, and many are uncertain as to whether their business models have a future. This is the focus of our funding programme, and we hope to provide a new perspective on the situation. In light of this, it is particularly important to ensure that some of the applicant's actual working hours are also eligible for funding. Time is money for an OPB!", says Markus Ornig, economic spokesperson for NEOS.

Future-fit with digitalisation: a new round of Vienna Online Next

A new edition of 2020's successful Vienna Online funding programme is now available. The City of Vienna initially allocated a total of 15 million euros to support the digitalisation of Viennese companies and their online presence, with up to €10,000 available per company. In response to this initiative, 2,399 companies submitted applications within the first month. A new round of funding is available now, with 3 million euros allocated to the Vienna Online Next package. Companies can receive up to €20,000 in funding to implement new digital sales concepts and access new markets. This should prevent a withdrawal to exclusively online operations, with associated vacancies, instead supporting attractive, vibrant commercial spaces. Companies that have previously operated entirely online will be able to access this funding to develop their sales strategies and branch out into brick-and-mortar trade. "We are planning to encourage digitalisation to strengthen companies and shops, ensuring their survival for the sake of our city. This is also an important element of Vienna's overall attractiveness", says Peter Hanke emphatically.

A strong balance sheet of previous coronavirus aid packages

In 2020, the Vienna Business Agency provided a total of eight additional coronavirus-related funding programmes together with ongoing support for companies in Vienna. The Agency's 2020 coronavirus funding programmes supported 4,332 projects proposed by companies in Vienna with a total 32 million euros of funding, digitalising 7,000 jobs and ensuring they were retained for the business location Vienna. These companies generated total investments of 62 million euros. In addition, the Vienna Business Agency assisted Viennese entrepreneurs in surviving the crisis with around 30,000 consultation sessions. "These figures show that every euro we invested in funding during 2020 generated almost double the amount for our

economy. Digitalisation remains the most important factor in our companies remaining competitive and fit for the future. With the Vienna Online Next programme, we are launching a new era for our companies, and Vienna as a location", says Peter Hanke, City Councillor for Economy.

Another five coronavirus aid packages have been offered by the City of Vienna through the waff, totalling around 69 million euros. The City has invested an additional 31.5 million euros to expand the Jobs plus Training initiative and support the new Viennese Education Fund, offering 4,100 unemployed Viennese residents the chance to enjoy top-quality training in healthcare, nursing and social professions. These programmes will run until the end of 2023, and the initiative will give participants a real opportunity to secure a future-proof job. The City's 17-million-euro coronavirus training package comprised a range of measures designed to support unemployed young Viennese residents. A sum of 10 million euros provided an additional 5,172 places in industry-wide training (UEBA) programmes, facilitated the purchase of 1,000 new laptops for distance learning and enabled new apprenticeship programmes to be added to the UEBA range. The City of Vienna allocated 3 million euros for young, unemployed Viennese residents to obtain qualifications. 716 young people have already made use of consultancy services in this area and 559 have obtained a qualification passport for an actual professional goal. 78 young people have already joined the "Youth and future professions" foundation, with another 150 expected in 2021. The new fund will assist a total of 800 young, unemployed people living in Vienna to access new job opportunities in the careers of the future by 2024. Around 200 apprentices from 40 companies have joined the Wiener Ausbildungsverbund (Vienna Training Association) so far. These young people are seeking apprentice training companies in the hotel and restaurant industries where they can continue their training. The initiative also funded an additional 1,750 places in the 50plus employment campaign. The programme will run until the end of 2022, and has already placed around 900 over-50-year-old, unemployed Viennese residents in new jobs.

All new Vienna Business Agency funding opportunities can be found at <https://wiengehtweiter.at>. waff application documents are available at www.waff.at or by contacting the Vienna information line for careers and training on 0800 86 86 86.

Upcoming funding packages from the Vienna Business Agency and waff:

1 April 2021

- OPB funding, €7,000 per project, 10 million euros (Business Agency)
- Innovate4Vienna, €150,000 per project, 4 million euros (Business Agency)
- waff training and development programme for OPBs, €2,000 for training in business competencies, 1.5 million euros.

1 May 2021

- Vienna Online Next, €20,000 per project, 3 million euros (Business Agency)

Enquiries:

Oliver-John Perry
Media spokesperson for City Councillor Peter Hanke
+43 1 4000 81330
oliver-john.perry@wien.gv.at

Ralph Waldhauser
Head of Communications at the NEOS Wien City Hall Club
+43 664 849 15 40
ralph.waldhauser@neos.eu

Paul Weis
Media spokesperson for the Mayor
+43 1 4000 818546
paul.weis@wien.gv.at