

## Successful: Vienna supports quality journalism

The Vienna Media Initiative funding programme, which offers a total of €7.5 million of funding, supports high-quality innovations and improved diversity in Vienna's media landscape

The Vienna Media Initiative funding programme was set up in the autumn of 2019. The projects submitted to date enrich the city with a media landscape that is becoming increasingly varied, high in quality and diverse. The funding programme's objective is to promote diversity in the media scene, support quality journalism and respond to the increasing digitalisation of our world.

*"The coronavirus pandemic has underlined once again just how important funding programmes are for Vienna's media landscape. Particularly in times of global uncertainty, it is evident that well researched, objectively presented and wide-ranging information is a cornerstone in the foundations that underpin our society. I am proud that, with the help of the Vienna Media Initiative, we have been able to help put a number of lighthouse projects into practice,"* said Mayor Michael Ludwig.

The third round of the Vienna Media Initiative programme, which has just come to a close, received a total of 42 projects, with applicants ranging from renowned media houses to fresh start-ups. Of these, 26 convinced the top-class jury and received funding of up to €100,000.

Peter Hanke, City Councillor for the Media and Economic Affairs, said: *"I'm pleased that innovative, quality journalism isn't standing still but instead remains a major topic, especially in challenging times like these. We see the rapidly growing interest in the Vienna Media Initiative as evidence that we have created an attractive package at just the right time, suitable for large media houses and newcomers alike."*

### Innovative, women-led projects

Innovative, high-quality journalism is more important than ever before and, as recent applications show, is increasingly in the hands of women. In the third round, half of the 14 applications to granted funding via the Media Project channel were led by women. For example, the **Biber Newcomer Netzwerk** with Melisa Erkurt, author of "Generation Haram", produces stories for young people in Vienna using a journalistic Instagram format. The magazine **Period.** sounds the depths of digital journalism and provides answers to questions including how technological progress is transforming the world of work, what cryptocurrencies have to do with carbon emissions, and the role of gender in the nursing care debate. The **Kurier**, a daily newspaper based in Vienna, is diversifying its service offering and now provides the most important news items in simple German, so that people who would otherwise face language barriers have access to the news.

The submissions received in the third round were reviewed by a first-rate jury of experts including renowned media expert Annette Hillebrand, Prof. Christopher Buschow of the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, and communications scientist Matthias Karmasin from the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW).

### **Rounds to date deliver successful outcome**

The range of submissions received since the launch of the Vienna Media Initiative in late 2019 is certainly impressive. Almost all daily and weekly media outlets have submitted new ideas for reporting formats. Supplementing these ideas are smaller innovative projects primarily aimed at specific target groups. A total of 73 projects have received funding to date.

This shows the vital significance of independent reporting in the media landscape. The funding programme's support makes it possible to reimagine the entire landscape and make it more attractive than ever before. The Vienna Media Initiative provides funding for high-quality innovations from large media houses (Media Project/Medienprojekt channel: up to €100,000) and ideas from start-ups (Media Start/Medienstart channel: up to €10,000). A total of €7.5 million of funding is available over the programme's three-year term, with €2.5 million disbursed in 2021.

The Vienna Business Agency's website – [www.viennabusinessagency.at](http://www.viennabusinessagency.at) – provides full information on the funding programmes.

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