



WIFO 2027: Strategy for effective economic research

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1. WIFO's mission

WIFO is a non-profit, independent economic research institute. Through highest quality research, economic policy advice and communication, the Institute builds a bridge between basic academic research and economic policy application. It creates scientific evidence to inform economic policy and business decision-makers as well as the general public. In this way, it makes a significant contribution to solving economic and socio-political challenges. WIFO prepares empirical analyses with scientific integrity and state-of-the-art methods. It communicates its results in scientific publications, policy reports and with the help of broad-based public relations work.

2. WIFO's claim, goals and profile

WIFO strives for **quality and thematic leadership** in Austria in all three dimensions of its activities: in applied economic research, in economic policy advice as well as in communicating and providing information to the public. WIFO aims to be the first point of contact in Austria for economic policy makers as well as the general public interested in economic policy, and to contribute regularly to the scientific debate in internationally recognized and peer-reviewed scientific journals.

At the European level and in international organizations such as the OECD or IMF, WIFO aims to be increasingly recognised as a leading research institute that makes relevant economic policy and scientific contributions of outstanding quality, addressing concrete challenges and creating factual bases for decision-making. WIFO strives to further enhance its reputation as a reliable cooperation partner that meets the highest scientific standards and brings in-depth knowledge of European institutions and economic policies.

WIFO is committed to an **independent, evidence-based, and transparent position** on economic policy issues, free from particular interests. As a matter of principle, results of publicly funded research are published, both for reasons of transparency and to promote a general understanding of economic interrelationships.

WIFO aims to achieve **impact** with its work. I.e, its research results should have a recognisable impact on the actions of politics, business and science, for example as input to economic policy measures, entrepreneurial decisions or further scientific research. Accordingly, the attainment of objectives is measured by indicators such as citations of studies and scientific articles, citation-based institutional rankings, media mentions and assessments by stakeholders.

To achieve its goals, the Institute relies on the outstanding **skills of its staff**, a high-quality **modelling and data infrastructure**, and the ability to quickly combine these two strengths to answer research questions. Impact also requires thematic relevance, scientific quality and research independence, as well as visibility of research results. Effective and efficient organisational structures bring WIFO's strengths to the fore and form the essence of WIFO's *Research, Personnel, Data, Models, Governance and Outreach sub-strategies*.

What distinguishes WIFO from other relevant institutions? Compared to other economic research institutes in Austria, WIFO's profile has a significant **breadth in terms of content and methodology**. This enables a comprehensive and balanced view of major economic policy challenges. In contrast to many purely academic institutions, WIFO conducts research with a clear policy orientation, continually maintaining and updating models and databases and working in flexible teams to ensure an ongoing ability to react quickly to new challenges. Its staff have profound **knowledge of institutions** as well as many years of experience in policy consulting and communication. Unlike many economic policy institutions, WIFO **specialises in research tasks** and actively informs the public about all results. Compared to private consultancies or institutions mainly financed by interest groups, WIFO strongly embodies a **public interest orientation and scientific integrity**.

WIFO's profile is defined by a **comprehensive portfolio of services**, including short- and medium-term analyses and forecasts of economic development, evidence-based economic policy advice, the provision of quality-assured factual information and data for economic policy-makers, the public, international institutions and rating agencies, ex-ante simulations and ex-post evaluations of the impact of economic policy measures, and the design and implementation of business surveys.

3. Research relevance and high quality

For WIFO, research means the analysis of applied economic problems with the aim of developing relevant findings for Austrian and European economic policy makers. The provision and maintenance of the datasets and models required for this are integral components of WIFO's research strategy. The dissemination of results is considered in all research activities from the outset.

WIFO's research focuses on topics relevant to economic policy, consistent quality assurance, the preservation of independence, international cooperation and the continuous development of WIFO's research strengths.

Focus on relevant topics: WIFO research programme

WIFO focuses its research, on the one hand, on topics that are significant for the creation of factual bases for decision-making and, on the other hand, on economic and socio-political challenges for Austria, the EU and the world. The topics are updated at least every three years in the WIFO research programme. In addition to its five main research groups, WIFO also maintains temporary cross-disciplinary research platforms.

WIFO tries to cover the broad spectrum of relevant economic science and policy issues in the best possible way. WIFO bundles the competencies of its staff as well as its model and data infrastructure in flexible, cross-research area project teams. This makes it possible to quickly provide answers to new research questions. This approach makes it possible to identify synergies and trade-offs between economic, ecological and social goals and to identify bottlenecks for further development by distilling the most essential aspects from economic policy problems and challenges.

Research quality assurance

WIFO strives for the highest quality in its research and consulting work. The core of quality assurance is a mandatory peer review system of all research projects. In addition, the Institute has an international Scientific Advisory Board that provides external quality control of its research programme. Finally, WIFO works closely with researchers from universities to exchange information on the latest developments in methods. WIFO adheres to the rules of good scientific practice as recommended by international research institutions and the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (ÖAWI).

WIFO sees successful third-party funding (especially in competitive procedures with scientific peer review), publications of scientific articles and active participation in scientific conferences as evidence of its scientific quality.

The processing of third-party funded projects is professionally supported by the Research Service department, among others.

Evidence-based, transparent and independent

WIFO is committed to independent, transparent and evidence-based positions on economic policy issues and is free of special interests. In the context of commissioned research, WIFO only accepts assignments that can be processed by WIFO's scientists together with any scientific cooperation partners in a completely open manner. Research results and recommendations relevant to economic policy are based on a critical review of broad evidence, which in particular examines the scope and robustness of the underlying methodological approach. Limits of validity as well as assumptions behind the available evidence are made transparent.

In its research work, WIFO acts in the public interest and independently of party politics. The independence of the Institute is underlined by a broad sponsorship by institutions with different interests and tasks. The results of publicly financed research are always published.

Internationalisation of research

WIFO is involved in the international research community and applies for international projects together with partner institutions. This helps to strengthen WIFO's independence and scientific quality. Memberships in international consortia promote scientific exchange and the consideration of international best practice. WIFO continues to develop its internationality by promoting research semesters abroad, by inviting international guests, through cross-border networking activities and through its internationally staffed Scientific Advisory Board. The Institute has its own *internationalisation strategy*, which is promoted through continuous development with stakeholders and the Scientific Advisory Board.

Maintenance and further development of the WIFO model and data infrastructure

WIFO maintains detailed and versatile models for the analysis of micro-, macro-, regional and environmental economic issues and is constantly developing them together with cooperation partners at home and abroad. More details can be found in the *Models sub-strategy*.

Besides models and empirical analysis methods, data is the most important basis for empirical economic research. WIFO maintains and develops the data stock relevant to its work and ensures its

quality through professional research data management. WIFO develops methods for handling complex mass data and for linking previously separate data sources. The Institute's data competence in terms of content is essentially supported by the research assistants. Finally, WIFO strives to increasingly visualise data and data-related results in a descriptive manner. New technological developments with regard to the analysis of large amounts of data are undertaken by the Data Science Group in collaboration with the Competence Center Business Cycle and Enterprise Surveys unit. More details can be found in the *Data sub-strategy*.

4. Visibility in science, business and society

The aim of WIFO's *outreach strategy* is to firmly anchor the research results and economic policy recommendations of the Institute in economic policy and scientific discourses and processes and to generate impact in science, business and society. WIFO defines impact as the active use of its research results and recommendations by target groups in Austria and the European Union.

The target groups of WIFO's outreach activities are political decision-makers, interest groups, companies, scientific communities and the general public.

WIFO's outreach activities focus on Austrian stakeholders and/or an Austrian audience. WIFO also strives for greater international visibility, especially in the EU and above all in German-speaking countries. This is achieved through participation in international research and advisory networks or bodies, participation in international conferences, publication and peer review activities in international journals, cooperation with an internationally staffed Scientific Advisory Board, a bilingual website, cross-border media work, English-language publication and communication formats and much more.

In line with WIFO's communication policy, as many scientists as possible are visible as experts in the German-speaking public and contribute to the debate on economic policy challenges. The Institute promotes and supports this commitment.

The Institute's staff coordinate internally on important topics before public pronouncements can be made by individual staff members.

Publications

WIFO publishes its research results in national and international scientific journals and economic policy publications. WIFO has its own publication portfolio in order to broadly introduce its research results into the public discussion process. Since different target groups are to be addressed, the Institute maintains various formats that are regularly evaluated and adapted.

WIFO pursues an open access strategy.

Once a year, WIFO reports comprehensively in its annual report on central research results, activities and economic policy events, as well as on organisational or personnel changes.

Media and outreach strategy

The aim of WIFO's *media strategy* is to make the Institute's diverse research visible to the general public. To ensure professional media work, the Institute maintains its own unit for Communication and Publishing.

WIFO's scientific content is placed in TV, radio, print and online news media through classical press work. At the same time, the Institute sends out a regular newsletter and is active on social media channels.

Regular interviews in German-language TV, radio, print and online media are part of the job profile of all WIFO researchers. In addition, WIFO economists shape the economic policy discourse in public through regular guest commentaries in print and online media. The focus is on media known for their well-informed reporting and with substantial coverage.

In addition, it is part of the job profile of WIFO scientists to actively participate in committees that shape economic policy and/or are relevant in the scientific community.

WIFO's website is a central communication and information tool of the Institute. It is designed to be as user-friendly as possible and is regularly evaluated and modernised. The Institute's most important publications and data are available there free of charge and without barriers.

WIFO events

WIFO organises a weekly internal seminar, a regular WIFO research seminar, scientific and economic policy conferences and scientific workshops. The aim is an in-depth exchange with the scientific community and economic policy stakeholders. The tasks of WIFO scientists include contributing expertise at scientific and economic policy events in the form of lectures or co-presentations as well as participation in panel discussions and other transfer events.

5. Organisational and personnel strategy

The **employees** are WIFO's most important resource. As the leading economic research institute in Austria, the success of WIFO is built on the experience and expertise of its staff. WIFO promotes a culture of openness and diversity, characterised by respect, tolerance and appreciation.

The Institute's goal is to attract, promote and retain the best employees. WIFO strives to offer the most attractive working conditions possible and to allow employees the **greatest possible self-determination** in the organisation of their work. In an expert organisation, this requires motivated and autonomous cooperation in cross-departmental teams as well as the willingness to take on temporary tasks and functions. A prerequisite for this is the greatest possible transparency at all levels, for example, in decision-making processes regarding temporary employment or the coordination of resources.

In all personnel policy activities, the WIFO Directorate always takes into account **equal opportunities for all persons** at the Institute and, among other things, promotes measures for the **effective advancement of women** aimed at appropriate participation in decision-making processes as well as increasing the proportion of women in science.

Scientific staff members are expected to meet a wide range of requirements. These include the ability to independently acquire, manage and process projects and to communicate their results to clients, political decision-makers, various stakeholders, the general public and the scientific community, including through the publication of scientific papers. The research assistance is characterised in particular by its expertise in technical data and its ability to deal with complex datasets, working in collaboration with different departments to ensure the provision of the WIFO service portfolio.

The Institute strives for **efficient administration** in order to have as many resources as possible available for research, consultation and communication. The administrative staff enable a digital, efficient and legally secure Institute management that meets the requirements of the scientific activities.

The central organisational units of WIFO are the five **Research Groups**. They are set up according to economic sub-disciplines and implement the respective research programme with the available resources. These research units are supported by **functionally specialised service units**. An external international Scientific Advisory Board is available to the Institute. WIFO Associates and WIFO Fellows collaborate with the Institute. In addition, WIFO has a Board of Trustees that promotes the scientific work of the Institute.

The **process organisation** in the Institute takes into account the fact that economic policy advice usually requires the combination of different competences. In addition, a high reaction speed and an efficient organisation of research are important in the face of immediate challenges. The core instrument of the process organisation at WIFO is therefore the organisation of work in the form of **projects** in which flexible teams with clear responsibilities and a transparent division of labour work together on a temporary basis. Depending on the topic in question, the project teams are also drawn up across research areas and are temporarily led by a project manager.

WIFO is committed to **strategic human resources development** with the long-term goal of helping employees become more highly qualified, thereby ensuring they contribute to the institute's success in the best possible way and facilitating motivation for their work at WIFO. In addition, the scientific area is strengthened by promoting young researchers through pre-doctoral and post-doctoral positions, as well as through cooperation with other research institutions, especially Austrian universities.

Finally, WIFO aims to document its resource consumption transparently and minimise it even further. More details can be found in the *Green Institute sub-strategy*.

