AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
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AIT Balance Sheet 2021

Profits enable record investments in European competitive research infrastructure

The AIT Austrian Institute of Technology reports excellent results for the balance sheet year 2021. Operating revenue has increased by 6.5% to EUR 171.79 million, and earnings before taxes are EUR 5.83 million (2020: EURO 2.73 million). The increasing sales are paired with a growth of the order backlog to the extent of 2% to 193.0 million EURO.

"The profit will flow into the further expansion of the research infrastructure: in ongoing investment projects, more than EUR 30 million are currently being invested in new highly specialized laboratories," announced AIT Supervisory Board Chairman Peter Schwab at AIT's annual press conference on Tuesday.

New chairman of the supervisory board Peter Schwab

Peter Schwab, member of the Management Board of voestalpine AG, took over the chairmanship of the AIT Supervisory Board from his predecessor Hannes Androsch in May 2021. "The handover worked excellently, I was able to take over AIT in top condition. Since its reestablishment in 2008, the AIT has undergone an excellent development - as also confirmed by the figures for 2021," Schwab said. He thanked the approximately 1,400 highly qualified and motivated employees. "They are the basis of success."

AIT sees itself as a strong partner to industry in research topics that reach years into the future, and in many cases meets the standards of cutting-edge research, Schwab emphasized. In his view, the focus on future technologies is also an important contribution to coming out of the prevailing crisis in good shape and ensures success for the future. "A key challenge for future funding is that the base endowment must be hedged against high inflation," Schwab said.

Further development of the strategy

Preparation for the next strategy cycle 2024-2026 will start in the first half of 2023 with the shareholder vision of the owners - 50.46% of the shares in AIT are held by the Ministry of Climate and Innovation (BMK), 49.54% by the Association for Research and Innovation (VFFI) in the Federation of Austrian Industries.

The Strategic Research Advisory Board (SRAB) was newly appointed as an advisory body for the Supervisory Board. The members are internationally highly respected scientists with experience in the management of large research organizations:

- Lynn Gladden (Executive Chair of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council / EPSRC)
- Detlef Günther (Vice President of ETH Zurich)
- Andrew Wee (National University of Singapore)
- Kirsten Dunlop (CEO of Climate KIC)
- Anke Kaysser-Pyzalla (Chairwoman of the German Aerospace Center/DLR)
- Thomas Hofmann (President of the Technical University of Munich)

Another quality assurance element for the strategy process is the evaluation of the AIT Centers by independent and internationally staffed evaluation panels, which will also take place in the spring of next year.

"The AIT strategy is forward-looking and addresses the issues that concern us all," says Schwab. These include climate change and decarbonization on the one hand, and digitization and artificial intelligence on the other. "AIT enables cutting-edge research and offers researchers unique research infrastructures and attractive working conditions, making the institute a top employer in Europe in the fields of research, innovation and technology," emphasized the chairman of the supervisory board, who thanked the two owners BMK and VFFI.

Record investments in strategic future fields

"Only those who have unique, European-competitive research infrastructure can play in the league of the best and support industry as a strong partner," says Anton Plimon, AIT Managing Director. With the currently implemented investments of a record amount of more than EUR 30 million, the AIT is strengthening the research infrastructure in future-oriented research areas that are essential for innovations and the transformation of large systems.

"The interplay between research in individual disciplines, comprehensive systems knowledge and laboratory infrastructure is firmly inscribed in our DNA. This understanding makes us unique in Europe in many areas and is a competitive differentiator for AIT," Anton Plimon explained.

An appropriate research infrastructure is an essential basis for cooperation with partners from research, business and the public sector and is now being further expanded in a number of key areas.

Energy research: Establishment of the DC Lab

AIT has been driving energy research for many years. On the one hand, this concerns technologies that make energy use more efficient (for example, industrial heat pumps). On the other hand, it is about innovations in the energy system itself, for example in sector coupling and the increased integration of renewable energy sources. For the development and testing of components and grids, AIT has laboratories that are competitive throughout Europe, such as the SmartEST laboratory or the high-current laboratory. These are now being expanded to include a direct current (DC) laboratory, which represents a unique infrastructure in Austria for the further development of DC systems. Direct current is becoming increasingly important for areas such as photovoltaics, electricity storage, electric vehicles or data centers.

Climate-neutral mobility and battery research

AIT's Battery Lab develops more powerful and safer batteries of the future as well as environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. This research, in which AIT can draw on around 15 years of expertise, relates to several time horizons and different technologies - because there will always be different battery types for different applications. On the one hand, the lithium-ion batteries that dominate today are being further developed - for example, a replacement

is being sought for problematic materials such as cobalt. On the other hand, "solid state batteries" are being developed in the now newly created laboratory: Solid-state batteries no longer require a liquid electrolyte, which should increase safety and age resistance in a few years. In transferring such technologies to industrial production, AIT draws on its many years of expertise from the Research Pilot Line. In addition, research is being conducted into completely new types of batteries. A great deal of basic research is still needed into new materials such as magnesium instead of lithium.

Light metals research at LKR Ranshofen

Light metals are crucial for future low-emission vehicles and aircraft. The lighter a vehicle is, the less drive energy is required and the lower the emissions. Aluminum and magnesium are also valuable recycling materials. At the Light Metals Competence Center LKR Ranshofen, high-strength aluminum and magnesium alloys that meet the highest stability requirements are being developed, along with efficient, sustainable manufacturing processes. The materials are used to manufacture special wires that can be processed into light metal components using a 3D printing process. In this process, the wires are melted with the aid of an adapted welding robot and applied to a substrate in layers. In this way, even larger components with a complicated structure can be manufactured quickly and cost-effectively.

Major investments at the Seibersdorf site

AIT is also currently making major investments at its subsidiary Seibersdorf Laboratories. For example, the laboratory for electromagnetic compatibility (EMC), which is one of the leading laboratories of its kind in Europe, is being expanded. The highly successful Radiopharmaceuticals unit is also being expanded with a new building and new laboratory infrastructure, which will broaden the portfolio of therapeutic products in medicine.

Solid 2022 financial statements and full order books

As Alexander Svejkovsky, CFO of AIT, showed on the basis of the income statement, revenues grew in all relevant revenue streams in the reporting year 2021. External revenues (contract research co-financed research) increased by

9.4% to EUR 97 million. Compared to the previous year, order backlogs also increased by around 2% to EUR 193.0 million.
The 6.5 % growth in operating revenue to EUR 171.79 million was offset by significantly lower growth in operating expenses (up 4.6 % to EUR 166.19 million) in 2021. This resulted in an operating profit of EUR 5.6 million.
EUR. Taking into account the financial result (EUR 0.2 million), the result before taxes was EUR 5.83 million.

"What we are particularly pleased about this year is our strong position in the acquisition of new projects in the new Horizon Europe program," Svejkovsky emphasized.

The push for AIT's startup program is now also bearing fruit. One example is the company CellEctric, founded by Klemens Wassermann, which allows a much faster and simpler diagnosis of sepsis (blood poisoning). Wassermann began developing the underlying technologies ten years ago as a doctoral student at AIT. After the spin-off, the company has already been awarded numerous prizes.

AIT research: Impact strongly increased

Based on the excellent laboratory infrastructure, AIT employees, who come from more than 40 countries, produce top scientific results. The "Scientific & Performance Indicators" for 2021 show that the impact factor of scientific publications has risen significantly to a new record of 1,348 (previous year: 1,052).

As Wolfgang Knoll, AIT Managing Director, explains, this results from two positive developments. First, the number of publications in scientifically referenced journals with an impact factor has risen by almost a fifth to 288. Secondly, the impact factor per publication has increased further - this is currently five, whereas five years ago it was around three. "Above all, the number of publications with a very high impact factor has increased significantly. This shows that AIT's scientific altitude is improving all the time and that we are at the forefront of research in the areas that are relevant to us," says Knoll.

As further very pleasing developments, he highlights that the number of patents granted remains at a high level of 35, and the same applies to the number of employees at the AIT who have completed their habilitation (33). In 2021, the number of "Invited

Lectures", lectures and publications at conferences by AIT researchers also increased significantly.

Promoting talent

184 young researchers are currently working on their doctoral theses at AIT, 48% of whom come from international countries. In order to further improve the supervision of doctoral candidates and to be able to succeed in the tough international competition for the best minds, the PhD program has been restructured. For example, there are joint work programs with the TU Vienna, the TU Munich, the Université Gustave Eiffel (Paris) and Tufts University in Boston (USA).

Gender & Diversity

Knoll also highlighted the initiatives in the area of "Gender & Diversity. In the previous year, the "Female Leadership Development Program" was launched, in which 19 female AIT employees received in-depth training in a ten-month program to prepare them for future leadership or project management tasks.

Inquiries

Mag. Michael H. Hlava
AIT Austrian Institute of Technology
Head of Corporate and Marketing Communications
+43 (0)50550-4014, M +43 664 620 77 66
michael.h.hlava@ait.ac.at I www.ait.ac.at

Daniel Pepl, MAS MBA
AIT Austrian Institute of Technology
Corporate and Marketing Communications
+43 (0)50550-4040, M +43 664 620 78 05
daniel.pepl@ait.ac.at I www.ait.ac.at

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