



Vienna Science
and Technology Fund

Call Specifications

Empirical Social Sciences 2022 – Quantitative Data Research

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1. About this document

This document specifies the process, criteria, and instrument of a specific WWTF call. It is aimed at applicants wishing to submit a proposal in an Empirical Social Sciences Call 2022 – Quantitative Data Research. For further information regarding the thematic scope of the call, funding and submission guidelines, as well as references to WWTF policies, please also consider the following documents:

Call Fiche	Summarizes the most important aspects of the call	https://www.wwtf.at/funding/programmes/ESS/#ESS22
Submission Guideline	Guide to entering and uploading information into the submission system	https://www.wwtf.at/funding/programmes/ESS/#ESS22
WWTF Funding Guideline	General Guideline for WWTF funding activities	https://www.wwtf.at/upload/WWTF_Richtlinie_081121.pdf.pdf
Guideline for Good Scientific Practice	Guidelines by the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity	https://www.wwtf.at/upload/broschure_gwp-richtlinien_web_2017.pdf
Open Science Policy	Open Science Policy of WWTF	https://www.wwtf.at/upload/wwtf_open-science-policy_09032022.pdf
Gender Mainstreaming	Including sex and gender considerations in WWTF proposals and research teams	https://www.wwtf.at/upload/sex_gender_considerations_wwtf1.pdf
Reporting and Accounting Guideline	Specifies reporting and accounting for funded projects	https://www.wwtf.at/upload/anhang_berichtswesen_und_abrechnungsmodalitaeten_04112020.pdf

For the submission of proposals, please go to <https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/>

2. Scope of the call

This is a pilot call launched by the WWTF in the area of empirical social sciences. The thematic scope of the call is further outlined in the [Call Fiche](#).

- Proposals arising from or involving other disciplines are also welcome, provided that they aim to address current societal issues through research involving large data sets and approach the topic from a social science perspective research questions may focus on topics such as economics, education, demographics, firms, innovation, labour, media, migration, mobility, political systems, public health (no clinical or pharmaceutical research), etc.

- Proposals that strive for a comprehensive understanding of the topic through collaborations across different scientific disciplines are highly encouraged.
- Proposals should address fundamental scientific questions that contribute to the international academic state-of-the-art, rather than shorter-term, application-oriented questions.

2.1. Recent developments as background for this call

This call, which aims to further the quantitative empirical social sciences in Vienna, is underpinned by several key national and international developments. We would encourage you to consider the following points when conceptualizing your proposal:

- The increasing relevance and importance of larger data sets in academic research in the field of social sciences. A clear tendency towards the increasing use of larger, high-quality data sets in high ranked journals can be observed.
- The use of *administrative data* in the social sciences, i.e., the secondary use of already existing data for research purposes. Such data are often created for administrative purposes in the context of businesses (digital economy) and public administration. Compared to survey, these data are often offer several advantages in depicting social reality.
- A main motivation for this call has been the establishment of the Austrian Microdata Center in 2022. Until now, access to administrative data and “registers” in Austria for scientific research purposes in Austria has been very limited. In contrast, in other European countries, this has been standard practice for quite some time. Consequently, important insights in many fields of social science research have often come from these other countries. This has been both an obstacle for researchers in Austria to adequately publish research in international journals as well as to provide context-specific policy advice. Recent legal and institutional changes in Austria, in particular the amendment of the *Bundesstatistikgesetz*, has now enabled access to registers or other data of Statistik Austria at the microdata level for research purposes via the Austrian Microdata Center (AMDC). This also allows linking and matching of data sets at a micro data level and thus offers hitherto unforeseen research opportunities in Austria.
- Administrative data owned by the state and public authorities could be an important source for research data. In principle, a 2018 amendment of the *Forschungsorganisationsgesetz* allows for research with these data if the data is released by the responsible ministry in a special legal process. While no administrative register has yet been opened for research purposes, the release of several administrative registers is expected in the coming months and made accessible via the Austrian Microdata Center. In the past, such data have been partly available for researchers through individual application at some institutions, e.g., the *Arbeitsmarktdatenbank* or social security data.

2.2. Criteria for data used in the projects

- As this call targets the social sciences, the main unit of analysis should be individuals and legal entities (organisations, etc.). This should be reflected in the data that constitute the core of the research. These data must refer to social activities. Projects may also include other data not related to societal

activities, provided these data are not at the core of the project but rather assist in understanding the social sciences research question.

- As the appropriate sample size for a study is highly dependent on the underlying research questions of the project, WWTF cannot provide concrete numbers of required sample sizes. However, research with sample sizes that primarily aim for exploratory results and thus only permit limited conclusions regarding a larger population is not eligible for funding. If population-wide data are accessible, they should be used in the project.
- An evaluation criterion for the projects is the "novelty" of the data sets, which should match one of the following categories: (i) new data sets generated by the proposed projects (given that the project does not simply replicate existing data but rather provides substantial added value compared to existing studies); (ii) existing data sets that have thus far not been highly researched and thus have the potential to create substantial (rather than incremental) findings; or (iii) link new and/or existing data from different sources in unique ways to create a new data set. WWTF acknowledges that the use of new data sets requires more time/resources. Please consider this when planning the project.

2.3. Potential data sources

This call is open to all researchers in the social sciences who make use of large data. Potential data sources include:

- **Register data** from national Statistical Offices or the European Statistical Office (see below).
- **Administrative data** (or "*real world data*" as it is sometimes labelled) collected by the state and public institutions as well as by private organisation necessary for the management of operations. Data may also be obtained from private companies as "big data" (social media data, telecommunications data, logistics data, scanner data, etc.).
- Large **panel studies** with sample sizes that allow for accurate conclusions about the (sub-)population. Panel studies may be conducted in the context of the proposed project. Furthermore, data from existing larger-scale panels may be used and explored.
- While the use of **Survey Data** is in principle allowed, please note that this call requires high standards of quality for such surveys. Surveys must go beyond the usual sample sizes in the Austrian context and must yield results that cannot be derived from other data sources such as registers. Surveys must allow for a comprehensive understanding of the research subject rather than addressing only a limited set of research questions. Also, novelty is a key criterion, i.e., surveys funded in this call should not have been conducted in a similar fashion in the past. Surveys should have a long-term character and aim to address research questions beyond short term topics. Surveys can be funded if the survey data are matched with register/administrative data (matching survey data with registers will be possible with Austria Microdata Center data under certain conditions).
- Any **other large data sets** that fit the criteria in 2.2.

In case applicants aim to use **register data**, we invite applicants to take note of the new opportunities enabled by the **Austrian Microdata Center** which will start operations in July 2022. The AMDC will provide access to data previously not accessible for scientific research at a microdata level. It also allows for the linking of different registers as well as for the matching of one's own survey data with such data.

While the full service of AMDC is not expected to be available at the official start date, information about the types and features of available data can already be accessed by potential applicants to develop research ideas for this call. Statistik Austria will support WWTF providing adequate information for applicants in this call.¹

Please note that data access to AMDC requires a two-step application process: For institutions listed in §31 (8) of the *Bundesstatistikgesetz*, a short, formal accreditation process is required. Other institutions must first undergo full accreditation. Applications for project-based access to data can subsequently be made to Statistik Austria. WWTF does not require an approval for data access by Statistik Austria at the Short Proposal phase. Only projects invited to the full proposal phase will be required to seek clearance by Statistik Austria. The full proposal phase will take place between October 2022 and January 2023, by which time Statistik Austria will have established processes for the accreditation of institutions and the submission of projects. In case applicants aim to access AMDC data, we recommend making use of the information and services of *Statistik Austria*, and attending information events regarding data access via AMDC.

In case applicants aim to work with **household panel data**, please consider the **Austrian Socioeconomic Panel (ASEP)** which is currently being established. While WWTF does not directly fund ASEP (i.e., the infrastructure), WWTF will consider research projects that base their research on this panel with the aim of expanding the scope of the panel.

2.4. Data management and open data

WWTF requires applicants to reflect on data management in the application process (i.e., in the proposals) in order to raise awareness for more extensive data management plans in the course of the projects. WWTF does not require an extensive data management plan at the application stage. However, we strongly encourage developing a data management plan at the project start in case that the data generated in projects are suitable for extended re-use.

Data produced in the context of an WWTF funded project (i.e., owned by the involved researchers)² should be made accessible according to the FAIR principles³ via a repository to facilitate the reproduction of the results. Repositories should be listed in re3data⁴ and certified repositories are preferred⁵. WWTF also recommends contacting the repositories early in the research process about the prerequisites for archiving (e.g., regarding data protection requirements). Furthermore, the data itself should serve as infrastructure for future research. The data should have a licence that allows for further re-use (CC BY or similar licences).

For further details please see WWTF's [Open Science Policy](#).

3. Steps of the application process

WWTF project calls are organized as a two-stage process:

¹ For specific information, please send an email to amdc@statistik.gv.at

² Data of the AMDC are excluded as all data remain at Statistik Austria at any time.

³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/sdata201618>

⁴ <https://www.re3data.org/>

⁵ For instance, <https://aussda.at> certified with the CoreTrustSeal.

- **Short Proposals:** short outline of the project idea and the approach. Detailed budget is not required.
- **Full proposals:** proposals selected by the jury are invited to submit an extended proposal, including detailed project budget.

4. Submission

Applications must be submitted via the [WWTF Funding Portal](#) within the deadlines defined on the [Call Fiche](#). Please note that we are rolling out our new funding portal. Existing users can login with their credentials.

- One of the contributing researchers must register at WWTF's Funding Portal and provide the necessary data and files.
- The structure and content of the application are described in more detail in the [Submission Guide-line](#).
- Important: Signatures of the core team members (PIs and Co-PIs) (“affirmations”) and the authorized signatory at each institution (“authorization”) are required in the application process (both for the short and the full proposals). Please contact your institution's research service and inform yourself about your institute's internal processes and timelines.
- All application information will be processed through the online system. No hard copies of documents are required.
- We recommend registering and creating a proposal even in the case that you are not sure if you want to submit a proposal in order to learn what the requirements are. All proposals not submitted will be deleted shortly after the call deadline.
- The application must be written in English because all projects will be reviewed internationally.
- Please inform yourself about internal deadlines at the host institutions.

5. Eligibility of applicants and roles in the project

The general eligibility of applicants is specified in the [WWTF Funding Guideline](#).

A project's **Core Team** may include **up to three Principal Investigators (PIs)**.

- Core team members may share equal management and scientific roles in the projects.
- The core team must have an excellent scientific track record demonstrating the ability to conduct the proposed research project.
- Each **Core Team** member must submit a CV, which will form part of the evaluation.
- Core Team members may appear in a key role (i.e., PI, Co-PI or Core Team Member) in a maximum of two proposals in this call. In case of three or more proposals with the same PI, WWTF will accept the first two proposals submitted. Involvement in other past / ongoing / granted WWTF projects does not impact upon eligibility to apply in this call.

One PI must be the designated **Principal Investigator and Coordinator (PI&C)**. He/she should be an expert in an area relevant to the topic of the proposal.

- For legal and administrative reasons (funding contract, reporting), WWTF requires a PI&C to be defined.
- The PI&C must have an affiliation at a Viennese research institution, which will serve as a legal contract partner.
- Included are researchers moving to Vienna who will have a Viennese affiliation in case of funding.
- The PI&C must have an excellent scientific track record and a proven capability to manage projects.

Additional **project partners and collaborators** are possible as research team members. They can be added by name in the full proposal stage.

- Industry partners are not eligible for funding, however, can be part of the project team (financing via in-kind contributions)
- Non-academic collaboration partners (e.g., NGOs) may be part of the research team. However, the PI&C and most of the team members in the proposal should have a strong academic background.

Research partners outside Vienna:

- Project partners can be affiliated to institutions in or outside Vienna (including international partners). Partners outside Vienna are optional and not a requirement for application.
- Project partners outside of Vienna may receive up to 20% of the total requested funding, for Lower Austria see section 6.
- This call operates under the “Joint Projects” agreement with the federal state of Lower Austria, i.e., different criteria and conditions exist for partners from Lower Austria (see section 6).

WWTF especially encourages young and female scientists to apply as PI.

6. Specifics of Joint Projects with partners in Lower Austria

WWTF welcomes **joint project (JP) applications** between Viennese and Lower Austrian universities and research institutions in this call. The aims of this initiative are to promote research cooperation between Lower Austria and Vienna on equal terms and to strengthen cooperation of research institutions in the Vienna region. Applying with a joint project is neither an advantage nor disadvantage in terms of the projects' evaluation. Project proposals will be assessed based on their scientific quality only.

- To incentivize the cooperation, the total maximum funding amount for a JP consortium is € 650,000 (i.e., an additional € 50,000 compared to the maximum for the regular WWTF project).
- The Principal Investigator & Coordinator must be affiliated to a Vienna research institution.
- At least one core team member must be affiliated to a research institution in Lower Austria.
- The share of the overall funding allocated to an institution in Lower Austria must be between 20% and 49%. In case that the share is <20%, the project is considered as a regular WWTF project, thus, the application is not eligible to the higher maximum funding amount.

- The Lower Austrian share is financed by the Province of Lower Austria. Hence, the Lower Austrian project partner must comply with the Lower Austrian Culture Promotion Act 1996 and the directives issued on the basis thereof.⁶ Details will be regulated in the funding contract.
- Partners outside Vienna or Lower Austria are also possible and may request up to 20% of the total budget. However, the share of the budget allocated to partner(s) in Vienna must not be lower than 51%.
- Regional branches of Viennese Institutions (e.g., BOKU, VetMed, AIT) located in Lower Austria are considered as Vienna-based in the context of WWTF funding activities.
- A conversion between JPs and normal WWTF projects is not possible between short and full proposal phase.

7. Content and structure of the proposal

The content and structure of the proposal are defined and specified in the online submission system. Please register to learn more about the details. An overview of the main parts of the short and full proposals is listed below:

Short Proposal	Full proposal
Abstract (EN)	Abstract (EN/DE)
Project description (about 4-5 pages): outline of the main scientific idea and approach	Project description (about 12-15 pages) (upload of PDF, template with structure is provided)
Project core team (with CVs and publications lists) (upload of PDF, template with structure is provided)	Project team and further collaboration partners (with CVs and publications lists for the core team members) (upload of PDF, template with structure is provided)
Budget overview	Detailed budget
Signatures (from the researchers and the institutions)	Signatures (from the researchers and the institutions)

For more details, please see [Submission Guideline](#).

8. Funding and evaluation criteria

The following criteria are used in the evaluation.

⁶ http://www.noe.gv.at/noe/Kunst-Kultur/Richtlinien_zum_Noel_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz_1996_3.pdf

- **Scope:** is the project within the scope of the call as described in the call specifications? Projects which are not within the thematic scope will be immediately rejected by the jury, regardless the possible scientific quality.

The key criteria in the evaluation of proposals are **scientific quality and relevance**. In detail this means:

- **Innovative character of the proposed research project:** Does the proposed research work meet the highest relevant international quality standards? Does the project show scientific originality and innovative aspects? Are the methods and research approaches appropriate and innovative?
 - Specific to this call is the use of **new data sets**, which will also be criteria for evaluation. Novelty may lie in the access of data sets that haven't used for research so far; in the new linkage of data sets or in the creation of new data sets.
- **Scientific excellence and academic potential of the applicant(s):** accomplishments and potential of the applicants to conduct the proposed research (measured by academic age).
- **Relevance:** What are the mid- to long term academic and societal impacts in particular with regard to Vienna?

Further criteria:

- **Team composition and interdisciplinary collaboration:** teams should include an appropriate mix of expertise, bringing together researchers from complementary scientific disciplines. A clear description of the roles of the individual partners and a clear project management plan must be presented.
- **Feasibility:** is the timeframe sufficient for carrying out the project? Are the proposed resources suitable to achieve the goals? Is the budget adequate?
- **Consideration of gender aspects:** The relevance of potential sex-specific and gender-related aspects of the proposed projects should be considered and explained throughout the proposal.

Other aspects:

- **Career breaks** such as for parental leave, care duties and longer illnesses will be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals. Please indicate the time periods to allow them to be considered.
- For WWTF's **gender** guideline, see section 10 below.

9. Eligible Costs

All costs that are directly attributable to the project and are regarded as commonly required in the respective scientific field are eligible for funding. Please also consider your organization's internal guidelines for eligible expenses/costs.

9.1. Personnel costs

WWTF is dedicated to funding researchers. Hence, the larger share of the project's budget should be allocated to personnel costs for researchers working on the project.

- Eligible forms of employment contracts are full-time and part-time contracts as well as marginal employments (“Arbeitsvertrag”). Contracts for services (“Werkvertrag”) are only permitted if the nature of the work means that it cannot be performed through employment contracts.
- All persons employed through a WWTF-funded project should receive a fair employment contract with at least a minimum wage according to the “Kollektivvertrag” (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities / extra university research institutions or – for staff employed at institutions with no collective agreement – according to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, wage scheme available online).
- Salaries higher than those stipulated in the collective agreement are possible, subject to the agreement from the host institution and justification due to experience of the researcher.
- The maximum employment is set to 100%. When planning the budget, please use full-time equivalent (FTE) salaries and be aware that the PhD salary listed by FWF is for a 75% position.
- Personnel costs cannot be claimed for permanent senior staff who are fully financed by the institution. Exceptions are made for institutions whose basic institutional block funding for research is less than 40% of the overall budget of the organisation.
- The budget calculation in the submission systems automatically includes an inflation adjustment of 3% p.a.
- Applications for personnel costs must be in one of the following categories:
 - **Senior Personnel:** highly qualified scientists, usually permanently employed
 - **Post Doc:** or equivalent qualification, including Senior Postdocs
 - **PhD Student:** or equivalent qualification level
 - **Diploma Student:** Bachelor or Master students
 - **Office/Technician:** administrative or technicians (proportional funding only)
- Personnel costs cannot be claimed for permanent senior staff who are already fully financed by the institution. Exceptions are in cases (e.g., non-university research institutions and Universities of Applied Sciences) where senior staff has to acquire third party funding for co-financing their own position. In these cases, permanently employed senior staff may claim up to 20% of their annual salary from WWTF.

9.2. Non-Personnel costs

- Non-personnel should not exceed 30% of the overall budget.
- Running costs for basic infrastructure (telephone costs, rents) as well as costs for the acquisition of infrastructure and basic equipment are not eligible for funding as it should fall under the category overhead costs.
- **Data production and access:** Costs for data access (e.g., at the Austrian Microdata Center) as well as for conducting surveys and panels can be covered. The grant also covers costs incurring for data preparation in order to make the data accessible via a repository.

- **Equipment:** Smaller equipment can be purchased within the scope of the grant. General office software is not eligible for funding. This includes devices up to 1,500 € each as well as software specific to the projects. Funding by WWTF under this scheme is not intended to cover investment in general and larger infrastructure, however *pro rata* depreciation rates over the project duration for equipment necessary to the project may be funded.
- **Consumables:** Costs for project-related expenses like consumables. WWTF does not fund consumables that are general and not project-specific (e.g., paper, printer toner)
- **Travel costs:** Costs for travel and accommodation for scientific meetings and conferences, field work, expeditions may be funded. Please also consider the regulations of your organization for travel costs.
- **Publication costs:** costs incurred for publication activities, e.g., printing costs, article processing charges (for open access), data management, etc. This also includes costs for archiving research data in open repositories. Please also consider the [Open Science Policy](#). [Open Access Policy](#).
- **Workshop/conferences/...:** Costs for organizing events, workshops, and conferences as well as invitations are eligible.
- **Other costs:** e.g., third-party costs, namely, for external collaboration, consulting, studies, and software development may be funded to a small degree. In general, it is assumed that the funding of individuals will be predominantly through employment contracts at the participating institutions and not through other types of employment.

9.3. Indirect costs (Overheads)

WWTF pays a maximum of 20% overhead. Overhead is calculated as 20% of the direct costs of the project. Please note, WWTF offers the 20% overhead lump sum to compensate for all administration costs. That means that flat fees for payroll or project accounting charged to the project accounts are non-eligible direct costs. The total funding volume is calculated as direct plus indirect costs.

Applicants are required to comply with the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

10. Gender aspects in the application phase

WWTF has a [Gender Guideline](#) which must be considered in the application. Examples of questions that should be considered during drafting the proposal are:

- Equal opportunities in research
 - Please take gender balance/equality in the project consortium and team into consideration, at all levels and in decision-making positions, e.g., what steps have been taken to approach / achieve it?
 - Do working conditions allow all members of staff to combine work and family life in a satisfactory manner?
 - Are there mechanisms in place to manage and monitor gender equality aspects, e.g., workforce statistics?

- Gender in research content and in the research ideas phase
 - Has the relevance of gender to the research topic been considered? In particular, as this call is a social sciences call with focus on societal issues, the consideration of gender in research is key and should be adequately described in the project outline.
 - Have literature and other sources relating to gender differences in the research field been consulted?
- Proposal phase
 - Does the methodology ensure that (possible) gender differences will be investigated: that sex/ gender differentiated data will be collected and analysed throughout the research cycle and will be part of the final publication?
 - Does the proposal explicitly and comprehensively explain how gender issues will be handled?
 - In case there is no potential sex and/or gender dimension to be considered, is this briefly addressed in the proposal?
- Research phase
 - If there are further groups involved in the project, are they gender balanced?
 - Are questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data?
 - Is data analysed according to the sex variable? Are other relevant variables analysed with respect to sex?

11. Guidelines for good scientific practice and ethics

Compliance with the **rules for good scientific practice**, including the observance of ethical aspects in research, is mandatory. This pertains to the application process and, in case of funding, the actual research work.

- WWTF is member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI) and thus committed to their standards for good scientific practice. Hence, applicants must comply to OeAWI standards.⁷
- In case of suspected scientific misconduct WWTF will employ the ombudsperson at the applicant's institution or request OeAWI to investigate the case.
- Based on the outcome of investigations by the ombudsperson or OeAWI, WWTF reserves the right to exclude the applicants and the application from the involved and future calls.

Project proposals may include **ethical aspects** that require the approval from an ethics committee/institutional review board.

⁷ <https://oeawi.at/en/guidelines/>

- If the approval from the ethics committee/institutional review board is required for the planned project this must be clearly stated at the short proposal stage. The approval (“Votum”) must be submitted online with the full proposal.
- Should it not be possible to obtain a final ethical approval before the full proposal deadline due to reasons which are beyond the control of the applicant, the applicant must explain the reasons in the application and send the preliminary approval to the responsible call manager before the jury meeting.
- The approval by the ethics committee should be specific for the planned WWTF project; therefore, the title of the project should be the same as on the approval (minor deviations are possible). If the title of the approved research differs significantly from the proposed project, a statement must be provided (in the online submission system), confirming that the approval will cover the planned research.
- If the main applicant for the ethical approval is not the PI or a co-PI/Core-Team Member of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement must be included in the proposal, in which the PI or co-PI/Core-Team Member confirms that he/she is authorized to conduct the planned research within this ethical approval.
- If the planned research is covered by an existing approval, the applicants must submit the extension of the approval (“Verlängerung der Gültigkeit des Votums”). The above also applies for extensions.
- Non-compliance will result in the rejection of the proposal on formal grounds.

12. Open science and gender mainstreaming

WWTF requires compliance with its [Open Access Policy](#) as well as with its [Gender Guideline](#).

13. Selection and decision processes

Applications must be submitted via the Funding Portal in the specified timeframes. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

As a signatory of the Declaration on Research Assessment – DORA, WWTF is practising responsible and fair research assessment.

The following paragraphs explain the processes in more detail.

The core element of WWTF’s decision making processes is an **international jury** mandated to make a funding recommendation to the WWTF boards.

- Depending on the call (size, scope etc) the jury is comprised of 6-12 outstanding international experts that have no current affiliation to an Austrian institution,
- Jury members are selected by WWTF according to their expertise with regard to the call topics and having no known conflict of interest prior to the submission deadline. For details see section on reviewers below.

- Members of the jury will be published after the WWTF Board of Directors finalize the formal funding decision.
- Please note that WWTF does not allow the opportunity for rebuttals to recommendations by the jury panel or decisions by the WWTF Board of Directors

13.1. Formal eligibility check by WWTF

WWTF office conducts a formal eligibility check of the proposal based on the criteria outlined in the [WWTF Funding Guideline](#), the [Call Fiche](#) and this document. This includes:

- All projects will be checked for plagiarism with software.
- Applicants may not be in a key role (that is, as PI or Co-PI) in more than two proposals.
- All required signatures from the appropriate persons are uploaded.

Substantial deficiencies and missing items in the application will lead to the exclusion of funding applications from further evaluation and rejection on formal grounds. The strict timelines of the call do not allow for proposals to be sent back to the applicants for improvements and supplements (no rebuttal).

13.2. Evaluation of short proposals

- Each proposal is independently assessed by at least two jury members based on the evaluation criteria:
 - Quality: scientific originality and excellence of the proposed research project.
 - Scope: is the project within the scope of the call as described by the call fiche?
 - Innovative character: is the research idea novel and innovative? This includes methodological questions and data used.
 - Potential of the applicants: accomplishments and potential of the applicants to conduct the research. Young and/or female scientists are especially encouraged to apply and particularly as Principal Investigators.
 - Consideration of gender aspects: Please also refer to the [Gender Guideline](#).
- The jury decides in a meeting (on-site or online) if a proposal should be invited to submit a full proposal. This usually takes place 1-2 months after the submission deadline.
- All applicants will be promptly informed about the decision. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a short jury statement explaining the decision. Successful applicants will be informed that they are invited to submit a full-length proposal.

13.3. Evaluation of full proposals

- All duly submitted full proposals are checked again for formal aspects. Proposals which do not meet the formal requirements will be rejected at this stage.
- The information provided in the full proposal must be consistent and in accordance with the short proposal, extending it by providing more details and providing additional information. Major

deviations to the short proposal must be justified explicitly. If major deviations cannot be duly explained, it may be rejected by the jury at this stage.

Eligible full proposals will undergo a **review process**.

- WWTF will obtain a minimum of two (usually 3-4) written reviews for each proposal.
- Reviewers are recognized international experts in the topic(s) of the proposals. WWTF does not contact reviewers based in Austria. WWTF aims for diversity in the cohort of reviewers for a call (gender, age, countries).
- All reviewers will be checked for potential conflicts of interests with the applicants by WWTF office. As a rule, reviewers shall not have close professional relations to the applicants (including all team members of the proposals). Practically, this excludes reviewers that have published with the applicants within the last five years or have had a collaboration in a research project in this timeframe. In case of very close cooperation with the applicant(s) over a longer period of time, the reviewer will not be contacted. Joint publications in edited volumes/proceedings, “community papers” with more than 30 authors or common attendances in workshops and conferences do not qualify as conflict of interest. Additionally, reviewers are asked to disclose any potential conflict of interest.
- Reviewers will receive a standardized review questionnaire by WWTF and be asked to provide their assessment via this document.
- The expert reviewers remain anonymous to the applicants.
- Jury members nominate reviewers. In addition, in the full proposal submissions, applicants are asked to suggest 5 experts, whom they deem qualified to review the proposal. WWTF office will check the reviewers for potential conflict of interests. WWTF office is free to choose / not to choose any of the suggested experts.
- Applicants may also exclude up to 3 persons without stating any reasons. Reviewers on the negative list will not be contacted.

13.4. Full proposal jury meeting

The jury may be extended by additional members in case supplementary expertise is needed to cover the topics of the proposals. At least two jury members are assigned to each proposal and act as rapporteurs for the proposals. The jury will convene about 3-4 months after the submission deadline of the full proposals to select and recommend applications for funding.

- The basis for the evaluation by the jury are the full proposals as well as the reviews. The arguments brought forward in the review reports will be carefully balanced with the jury’s own expertise.
- The result is a recommendation for each project: “to be funded” or “not to be funded”.

13.5. Formal funding decision

The jury recommendation will be **formally confirmed** first by the WWTF Advisory Board and then approved by the WWTF Board of Directors.

- Applicants will be promptly informed about the decision.

- The decision may include budget cuts as well as additional conditions and recommendations.
- Applicants will receive anonymized full text reviews. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a short statement by the jury explaining the main reasons why the project was not selected for funding.

14. Funding contract

In case of funding, WWTF office will contact the PI to initiate the funding contract process.

- The PI will be provided with the necessary documents and information for the contract.
- Projects may start immediately but should not start later than 6 months after the formal funding decision by the WWTF Board of Directors has been made.
- The formal funding contract will be signed between WWTF and the host institution of the PI (for universities according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002). The contract provides the PI with the scientific responsibility and financial authority for conducting the project.
- A project involving different institutions may conclude a cooperation agreement.
- Throughout the project's duration, WWTF will transfer the funding instalments annually in advance to the PI's Home Institution. The PI is responsible for distributing the allocated funds to the partners and partner institutions (if applicable).

15. Monitoring and reporting

Funded teams are committed to delivering reports and participating in evaluation and monitoring. WWTF offers the possibility to adapt the work plan according to project needs. For details see the [📄 Reporting and Accounting Guideline](#).