WWTF

VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

Call Specifications

Life Sciences Call 2022 - Public Health

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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 a Life Sciences Call 2022 – Public Health. 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/up-load/LS22_callfiche.pdf
Submission Guideline	Guide to entering and uploading infor-mation into the submission system	https://www.wwtf.at/up-load/LS22_SubmissionGuideline.pdf
WWTF Funding Guideline	General Guideline for WWTF funding activi-ties	https://www.wwtf.at/about/guidlines/
Guideline for good scientific practice		
Open Access Policy		
Guidelines for Sex and Gender considerations in WWTF pro-posals and research teams		
Reporting and Accounting Guideline	Specifies reporting and accounting for funded projects	

2. Thematic scope of the call

This call is issued within the WWTF Programme Life Sciences.

The thematic scope of the call is outlined in detail in the 🗎 Call Fiche.

3. Steps of the application process

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

- **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 **online submission system** at https://funding.wwtf.at/ within the deadlines defined on the ☐ Call Fiche.

- One of the contributing researchers must register at WWTF's online submission system and provide the necessary data and files.

- The structure and content of the application are described in more detail in the ☐ Submission Guideline.

- Important: Signatures of the core team members ("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.

- 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.

- No industry involvement is required. Industry partners are not eligible for funding.

- Non-academic collaboration partners (e.g., NGOs) may be part of the research team. However, the PI&C and the majority 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. It is indicated on the Call Fiche whether this cooperation scheme applies for the current call.

- To incentivize the cooperation, the total maximum funding amount for a JP consortium is € 550,000 (i.e., an additional € 50,000 compared to the maximum for the regular WWTF project).

- The PI&C 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.[1] Details will be regulated in the funding contract.

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[1] http://www.noe.gv.at/noe/Kunst-Kultur/Richtlinien_zum_Noe_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz_1996_3.pdf

- 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.

- **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?

- **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.
- **Feasiblity:** 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 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

- 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.

- Non-personnel should not exceed 30% of the overall budget.

- **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), etc. This also includes costs for archiving research data in open repositories. Please also consider the ⬜ 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

    - If the research involves humans as research objects, has the relevance of gender to the research topic been analysed?
    - 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 (e.g., samples, testing groups), 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. See https://oeawi.at/en/guidelines/.

- 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.

- 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. Selection and decision processes

Applications must be submitted via the online submission system in the specified timeframes. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

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

12.1. 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 required signatures from the appropriate persons are uploaded.

- All projects will be checked for plagiarism with software.

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 does not allow for proposals to be sent back to the applicants for improvements and supplements.

12.2. Evaluation of short proposals

- Each proposal is independently assessed by at least two jury members based on the evaluation criteria.

- 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.

12.3. 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 an 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.

12.4. Full proposal jury meeting

The jury will convene about 3-4 months after the submission deadline of the full proposals to select full proposals to recommend for funding. 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 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".

12.5. 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.

13. Funding contract

In case of funding, WWTF office will contact the PI to draw up the funding contract.

- The PI will be provided with the necessary documents for the contracts.

- 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.

14. 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.