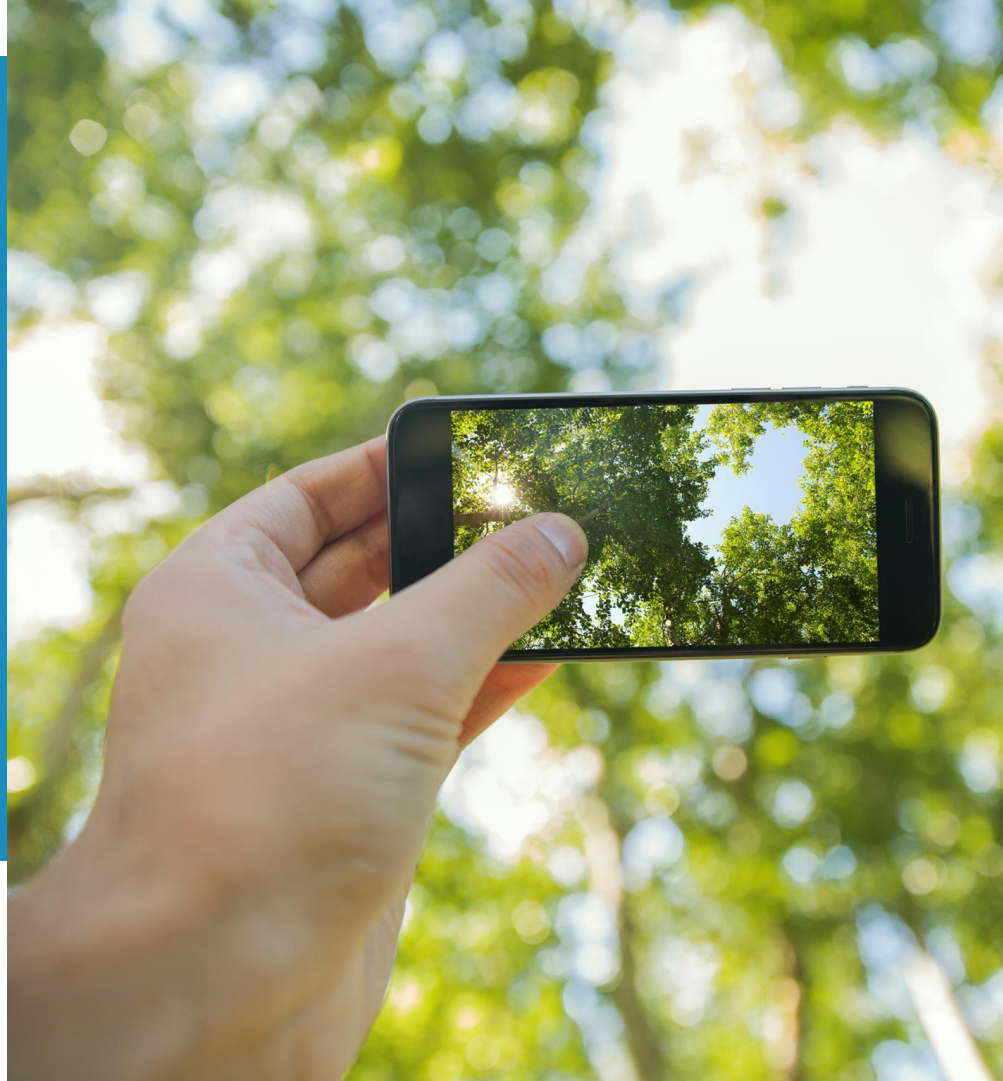


Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators Call 2023

Proposers' Day

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Agenda

- ▶ Overview WWTF
- ▶ Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators Call 2023 „Information and Communication Technology“

WWTF | Key facts

- ▶ Largest private non-profit research funder in Austria
- ▶ Founded in 2001; funding activities since 2003: more than **240 m € have been awarded** (Banking Foundation, City of Vienna)
- ▶ WWTF Mission:
 - ▶ We fund top scientific research in Vienna
 - ▶ We provide substantial funding for larger research projects and international research group leaders coming to Vienna
 - ▶ We run competitive calls according to highest international standards

The current call (I)

What do we fund?

Life Sciences (*2003)

**Information- and Communication Technology
(*2008)**

Cognitive Sciences (*2008)

Environmental Systems Research (*2017)

Instruments

Projects

**Vienna Research
Groups**

Supporting
Instruments

The current call (II): Call 2023 “ICT”

- Issued within the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- proposed field of research should contribute to the scientific advancement of the ICT field and demonstrate relevance to industry with a strong potential for mid-term technological and societal impact
 - “industry” is understood in a broad sense (industries of all kinds including service sectors)
 - “mid-term” stands for impact that does not have to show immediate results and can still encompass some more years of scientific research
 - open to all topics and fields of ICT (some typical topics that are relevant for Vienna include among others systems engineering, automatization, new forms of production, data sciences approaches, autonomous driving, new digital business models or quantum software engineering)

The current call (III)

Call 2022 “ICT”

- addresses Vienna-based universities and research institutions that intend to hire an excellent young researcher from abroad for setting-up and managing an independent research group
- 14th call within Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators Programme
- 2023: up to 3 positions with max. funding of € 1.6 million each

Past Calls

2010 Life Sciences:

- Funding Volume 4.5 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 3

2011 ICT

- Funding Volume 3 Mio. €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2012 Mathematics and

- Funding Volume 3 Mio. €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2013 Cognitive Sciences

- Funding Volume 1.5 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 1

2014 Life Sciences

- Funding Volume 4.8 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 3

2015 Computational Biosciences

- Funding Volume 3.2 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2016 Complexity Science

- Funding Volume 1.6 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 1

2017 Mathematics and ...

- Funding Volume 3.2 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2018 ICT

- Funding Volume 4.8 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 3

2019 ICT Interdisciplinary Data Science

- Funding Volume 3.2 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2020 Computational Biosciences

- Funding Volume 3.2 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2021 Cognitive Sciences

- Funding Volume 3.2 Mio €
- Funded VRG Leaders: 2

2022 VRG

- Funding Volume: tba
- Funded VRG Leaders: tba



VRG23 | Important documents

Call 2023 Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators

The 14th Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators call 2023 is issued for up to three group leader positions as part of the WWTF's **Information and Communication Technology** programme.

- It addresses Vienna-based universities and research institutions that intend to hire an excellent young researcher from abroad for setting up and managing an independent research group. Active recruitment procedures are mandatory.
- This group must address substantial state-of-the-art scientific research questions in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and at the same time demonstrate mid-term relevance to industry.
- WWTF especially encourages Vienna-based research institutions to propose female group leaders.

- WWTF takes unconventional research careers into consideration.
- WWTF in total grants up to three positions with up to € 1.6 million per research group for six to eight years of funding.

Please submit proposals online by 2pm, March 15th, 2023.

All interested parties are cordially invited to an online Proposers' Day on 18th of January, 10am-12 noon (please contact us for registration).

Please check wwtf.at for further information.

More details on the reverse

Vienna Science and Technology Fund
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1080 Vienna, Austria
T +43 1 402 31 43 35
office@wwtf.at
wwtf.at

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Vienna Science and Technology Fund

Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators

Call Specifications

Information and Communication Technology 2023

Version: October 2022

Wiener Wissenschafts-,
Forschungs- und Technologiefonds
Vienna Science and Technology Fund

Schicklegasse 31/2, 1080 Vienna, office@wwtf.at, www.wwtf.at, +43 1 402 31 43

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Vienna Science and Technology Fund

Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators

Submission Guideline

Information and Communication Technology 2023

Version: October 2022

Wiener Wissenschafts-,
Forschungs- und Technologiefonds
Vienna Science and Technology Fund

Schicklegasse 31/2, 1080 Vienna, office@wwtf.at, www.wwtf.at, +43 1 402 31 43

→ Download here: <https://www.wwtf.at/funding/programmes/vrg/index.php?lang=DE#VRG23>

Characteristics of a Vienna Research Group (I)

Typically, the first “genuinely independent” group led by a young researcher. The WWTF funding (6-8 years) should enable the group members to take the next step in their career.

Milestones:

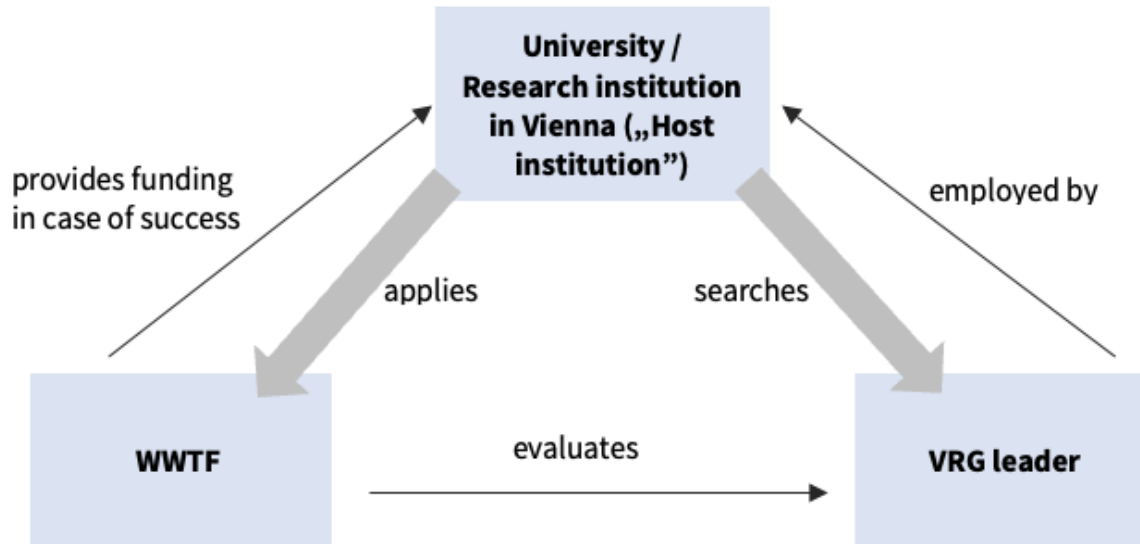
- (i) first phase mainly financed by WWTF (4-5 years)
- (ii) an interim evaluation after the first phase
- (iii) increased in-kind contributions of the home institution in the second phase (i.e. years 6, 6-7 or 6-8)

Characteristics of a Vienna Research Group (II)

Vienna Research Group leaders...

- assume leadership responsibility for group members
- are independent in designing their research work and recruiting staff
- apply for additional third-party funding over the years
- are currently based abroad and not employed in Austria at the date of application submission
- come from abroad: (i) no current employment contract with an Austrian institution three months before the submission deadline until the submission deadline, (ii) being employed at a foreign research institution for at least two years in the last three years counting from the submission deadline
- are up to 8 years after PhD (care duties may extend this period), counting from the submission deadline

Roles in the process



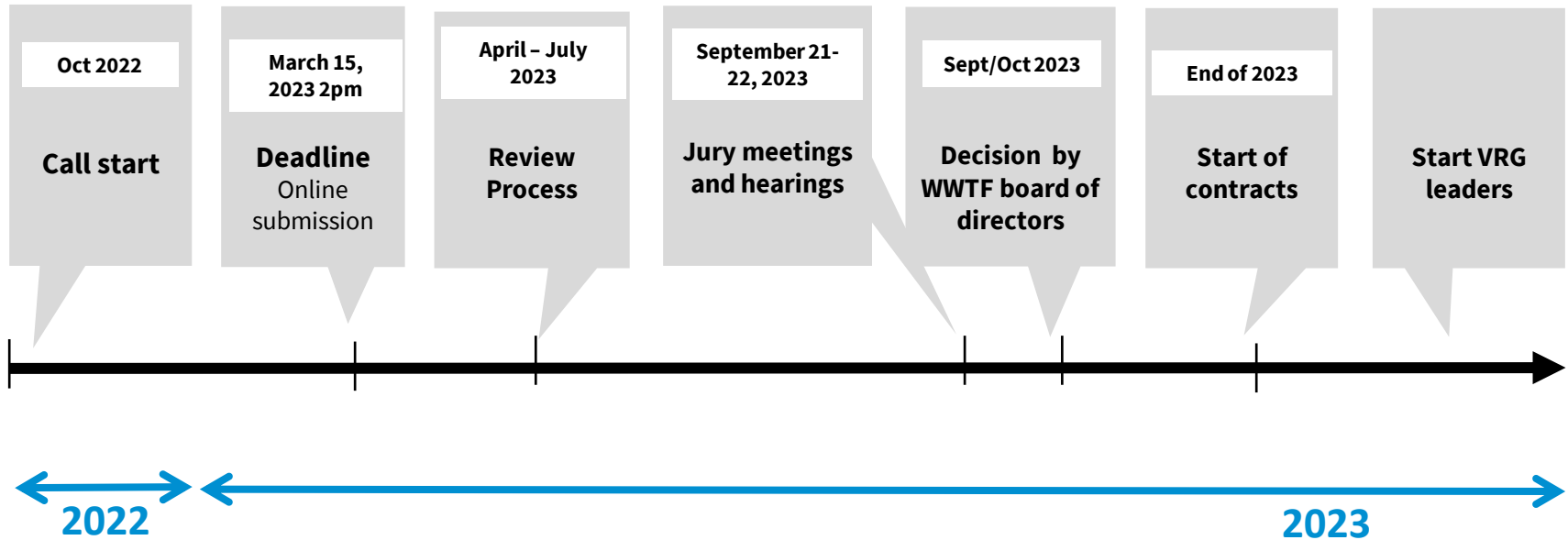
Key Facts (I)

- The prospective host institution in Vienna must provide a **clear-cut career plan**, i.e. steps leading to a tenured position (e.g. “Qualifizierungsvereinbarung”)
- The call process comprises
 - the submission of a **concise research proposal**
 - followed by a **hearing** of selected candidates on **21st – 22nd September 2023** in Vienna (if travel is possible)
- Obligatory job advertisement (by host institution) e.g. in a high impact journal that is relevant for the topic and/or via professional societies/ mailing lists
- WWTF especially encourages Vienna-based research institutions to propose female group leaders
 - **Successful appointment of a woman** → financial benefit for the Vienna host institution in order to support their gender mainstreaming activities

Key Facts (II): Finances

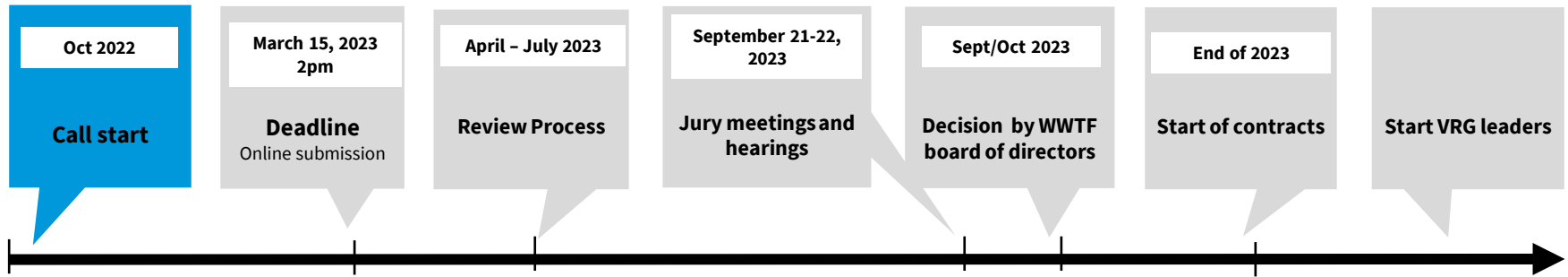
- The financial emphasis should lie on the **funding of scientific personnel** → should be balanced in relation to infrastructure/material costs
- **In-kind vs. overhead**: Basic infrastructure such as office equipment, rent, telephone, internet, basic lab equipment does NOT count as in-kind but is covered by the overheads (covered by WWTF)!
- The budget allocations with eventual partner institutions must already be specified at the application stage
- WWTF does **not** cover **any travel expenses** for candidates who are invited to the hearings. Compensation of travel expenses e.g. via FFG <https://www.ffg.at/career-grants> (Career grants)

Timeline



VRG jury and applicants

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VRG jury

- About 6-7 excellent international scientists/experts with call-relevant expertise
- Duties within the process
 - Selecting proposals to be reviewed
 - Nominating reviewers
 - Inviting candidates to the hearing
 - Evaluating the performance at the hearing
 - Comparing assessment and formulating the funding recommendation

Applicants

- Universities and research institutions in Vienna (via a proponent)
- Suggestion of
 - excellent young researchers from abroad¹⁾
 - Up to 8 years after PhD at application date (in case of care duties up to 4 years longer)
- Active search for female researches highly welcome

1) (i) no current employment contract with an Austrian institution three months before the submission deadline until the submission deadline, (ii) being employed at a foreign research institution for at least two years in the last three years counting from the submission deadline

Submission deadline and formal eligibility check

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Submission

- Submission via WWTF **new Funding Portal** → **no hard copy required**
- **Submission Guideline**
- No funding of private companies
 - Self funded business partners are possible and welcome
 - Project relevant services from companies can be calculated as consumables (if these services can not be provided within the projects with reasonable effort)

Formal eligibility check

- Timely submission of proposal
- **Submission must include all relevant signatures = Proponent, Host Institution, Group Leader** (not on one page)
- In-kind contribution: >20% of total sum
- Overhead costs: the regulations of the host institutions must be observed
- Maximum number of pages (limited by characters and uploads)
- Compliance with the academic age limits
- From abroad
- Active promotion (eg. mailing lists,...)

Review process and peer review

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Review process

- Proposals that lie outside the subject area as well as those that do not meet quality standards are not recommended for the review process by the jury
- Unsuccessful applicants will be briefly informed
- In case proposals are admitted to the review process: reservation of both hearing days absolutely necessary (if hearing is in Vienna: booking of a flexible ticket)

Peer review process

- 2-4 written reviews per proposal will be obtained
- Reviews only by international peers; remain anonymous
- Review reports form the basis of the jury's discussion for the invitation to the hearing as well as the funding decision after the hearing

Hearing, jury meeting and decision

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Hearing

- Invitation to hearing (selection after review process)
- Short-presentation in Vienna (if possible)

Jury meeting

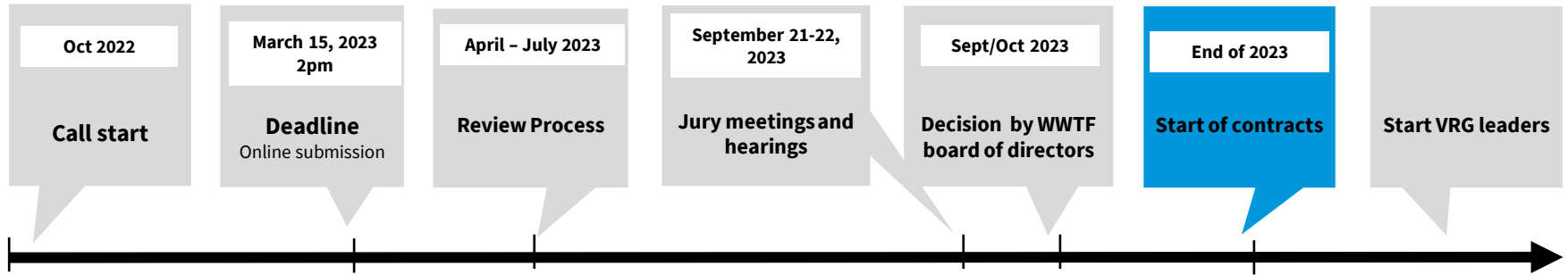
- Main evaluation criteria (see Call Specifications):
 - **Scope**
 - **Quality of the proposed VRG leader**
 - **Quality of the proposed research**
 - **Fit to the research environment offered**
 - **Other**
- WWTF does not cover travelling expenses. Compensation of travel expenses e.g. via FFG Career Grants

Decision

- Decision by WWTF boards
- All applicants receive a decision letter (acceptances and rejections) with anonymous reviews

Employment contract and funding contract

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Employment contract

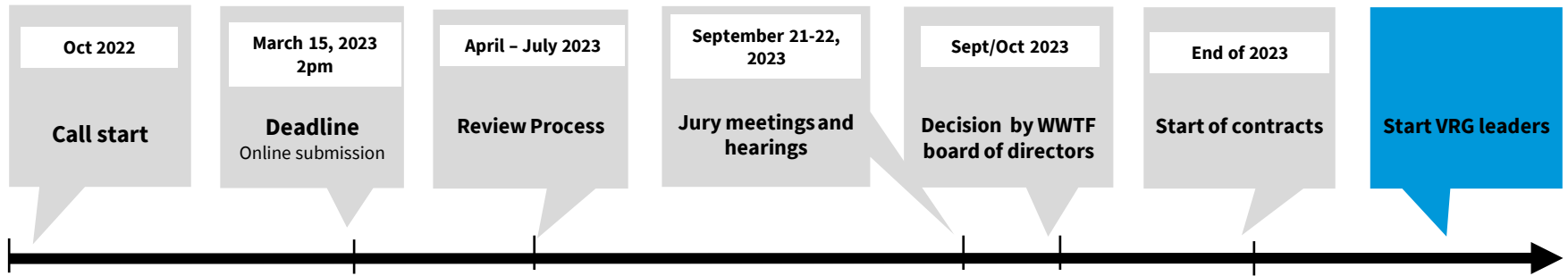
- The employment contract must be made available to WWTF no later than 2 months after the decision of the WWTF board of directors
- Clarification until when a qualifying agreement will be offered
- Agreement on a coordinated evaluation of the candidate between the host institution and WWTF
- If the employment contract cannot be achieved within 2 months, the funding will be offered to a reserve candidate

Funding contract

- Funding contract between WWTF and the host institution of the VRG leader (§ 27 according to UG2002 for universities)
- VRG leader has scientific and financial responsibility

Project start, duration and completion

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- **Project start:**
 - Latest start date: 18 months after decision by WWTF board of directors
- During **project duration:**
 - WWTF pays funding rates every twelve months in advance to the host institution
 - Short annual electronic reports to WWTF as prerequisite for payment installments
 - Site visit by WWTF
- After **project completion :**
 - Comprehensive final report

Online submission system (I)

New WWTF Funding Portal: <https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/>

- New funding portal allows for managing your personal information
 - Other people (proponent) is invited and can view the proposal at any time
 - Potential VRG group leader can invite experts to upload a Letter of Reference that are not accessible for the VRG leader
- There is a “Save”-button but all entries are saved automatically (refresh webpage)

We aim to expand the system’s features in due course in order to make it easier for you. Please be patient if problems arise with the new system!

Funding portal

1. Log-in and register via <https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/>
2. Create a new proposal
3. Invite others and enter information about them
4. Fill out the proposal

More information → [VRG23 Submission Guideline](#)

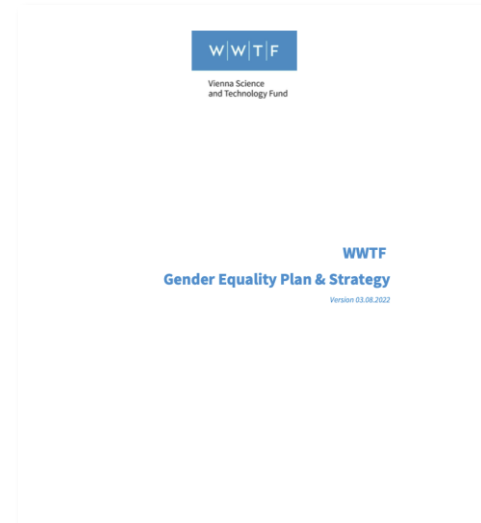
Overview key facts

- Complete PDF containing all information is generated automatically after submission
- Signature sheet can be downloaded at any time (“Overview” must be inserted)
- Signatures do not have to be all on one sheet! Max of 3 pages can be uploaded → signatures are for WWTF office to check formal eligibility; digital signatures possible
- For signatures, please follow your institutional policies (“Forschungsservice”)
- Some useful rules:
 - Keep applications short and precise!
 - Use a language aimed at the scientific community
 - Ambitious but feasible
 - In English

WWTF | Gender Equality Strategy & Plan (I)

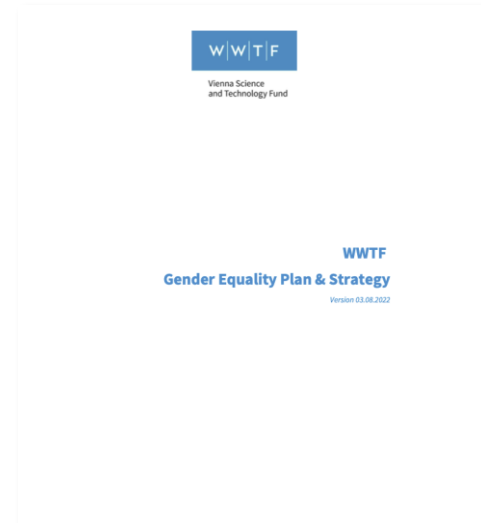
WWTF aims to:

- ▶ play an active role in closing the gender gap in science and research
- ▶ further improve processes and conditions to increase the proportion of female scientists, their resources and career opportunities
- ▶ reach and sustain gender equality
- ▶ avoid bias in the assessment and evaluation process

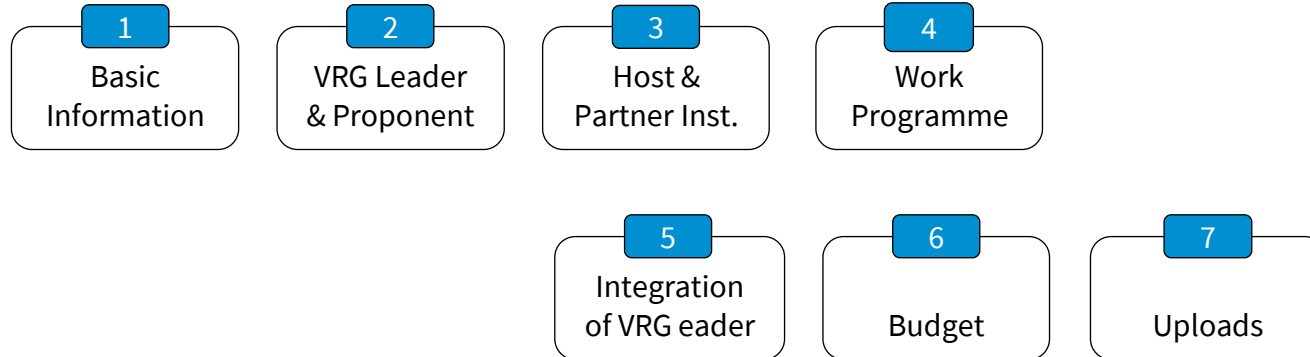


WWTF | Gender Equality Strategy & Plan (II)

- ▶ Evaluation criteria that account for career breaks & atypical career paths (e.g. care duties)
- ▶ WWTF encourages **balanced teams** & more female researchers to apply as PIs of research projects
- ▶ Childcare and / or career coaching costs for female funded personnel may be included to a small extent
- ▶ Consideration of research in content
- ▶ Guidance is given in the call specifications and further documents (checklist)



Proposal Structure



1. Basic Information

- **Project ID** (*will be set after submission*), **Project Title**
- **Keywords** (*at least three*), **Project Duration**
- **Scientific Disciplines** (*ÖFOS categories, up to 100%*)
- **Suggested Peer Reviewers (5) and excluded peer evaluators** (*optional, up to 3*)
 - Only visible for WWTF and jury
 - Please take care that these persons do not have a conflict of interest with the group leader / the proponent
 - Note: only peer reviewers with a non-Austrian affiliation will be considered for peer review

2. VRG Leader & Proponent

- Details about **VRG leader**
 - Previous career steps
 - Highlights of recent work
 - Description of (scientific) leadership potential
 - Motivation for application as Vienna Research Group Leader
- **Proponent**
 - ...is the scientist at the Vienna host institution responsible for the coordination of the proposal and will support the applicant at every stage of the application.
He/she is also responsible for the integration of the applicant in case of funding

→ Please refer to the Submission Guideline for details!

3. Host & Partner Institution(s)

- **Host Institution**
 - Description (specific department or institute)
 - Motivation to bring the proposed Group Leader to Vienna
- **Description and relevance of partner institutions**
 - Note: these institutions must be different to those of the proponent and his/her host institution and are substantial in the project (receiving or giving (monetary) contributions/funds)
 - Option to allocate resources to this institution in the “Budget” chapter
- **Optional: Wider Research Network**

4. Work Programme

- **Scientific abstract**
 - This will be used to ask reviewers if they regard the proposal as within their scope of expertise.
- **Work programme:** one single PDF file upload (*maximum 8 pages*)
 - 1) the state of the art in the proposed field and scientific challenges in the next years
 - 2) the research plan
- **Potential ethical aspects**
- **Open science statement** → WWTF Open Science Policy
- **Disclosure of other applications for funding**
- **Relevant references** (maximum 20; 10 most relevant references)

5. Integration of VRG leader (I)

- VRG candidate selection process, including gender mainstreaming
- Advertisement procedures
 - The international **publication of a job announcement** and/or distribution via mailing lists/professional societies is obligatory
 - Please upload only one job announcement as an example
- Status and career advancement steps of the group leader during the funding period
 - Please explain in detail the steps leading to a **tenure position** (e.g. the exact process of reaching a “Qualifizierungsvereinbarung” including time frames). These details will form the foundation of contractual elaborations in the case of funding
- Interim evaluation process of the Group Leader
- Career perspectives of the Group Leader after the funding period
- Integration of the Group Leader

6. Budget (I)

- Calculation tables (*personnel costs, non-personnel costs, budget per region, cost overview*)
- Description of the envisioned group
- Description of the equipment and consumables
- Statement of the monetary and in-kind contributions
 - Please be aware that the cash and in-kind contributions are just the contributions from the host institution
- Overhead policy: max. 20% of the fundable direct costs

6. Budget (II)

- All figures are in €
- Please avoid short term employments
- Minimum wage according to the „Kollektivvertrag“ (collective agreement) or following the standards of the Austrian Science Fund FWF
 - Attention: Wage for „Studentische Mitarbeiter*in“ is calculated by FWF for 20 hours and a „DoktorandIn“ for 30 hours per week
- Wages above Kollektivvertrag are possible and must be described. No additional wages for people who are already 100% employed. An increase of employment up to 100% through WWTF funding is possible
- Total funding applied for will automatically be calculated including a 6% annual salary increase

→ Please also consult the Submission Guideline and the Call Specifications

7. Uploads

- Affirmations and Authorization = signatures
 - One PDF file containing the scanned sheets with all the required signatures (*digital signature possible*)
- Uploads
 - Letter of references (*upon invitation, not visible to candidate*)
 - Photo of candidate (*for internal use only*)
 - Other (*max 5 documents, max 3 pages per document*)

Contact and consultation

- All documents are available at www.wwtf.at
- Personal consultation upon appointment:

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