



Vienna Science  
and Technology Fund

# Call Specifications

**Life Sciences Call 2023**

**“Understanding biology with AI/ML”**

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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 who wish to submit a proposal in the Life Sciences Call 2023. 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:

<a href="#">Call Fiche</a>	Summarizes the most important aspects of the call
<a href="#">Submission Guideline</a>	Guide to creating, editing, and submitting a proposal in the WWTF Funding Portal
<a href="#">WWTF Funding Guideline</a>	General guideline for WWTF funding activities
<a href="#">Guideline for Good Scientific Practice</a>	Guidelines by the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity
<a href="#">Open Science Policy</a>	Open Science Policy of WWTF
<a href="#">Gender Equality Strategy &amp; Plan</a>	Gender Equality Strategy & Plan of WWTF
<a href="#">Reporting and Accounting Guideline</a>	Specifies reporting and accounting for funded projects

For the submission of the proposal, please go to the [WWTF Funding Portal](#).

## 2. Scope of the call

This call is issued within WWTF's Life Sciences Programme. The thematic scope of the call is outlined in detail in the [Call Fiche](#). Please also consider the following aspects:

- The primary focus of projects in this call should be on gaining biological or biomedical insights, enabled by the application of innovative AI/ML methods on appropriately large datasets. The development of new methods and advancement of existing AI/ML methods will be regarded positively but are not essential in this call.
- New biological or clinical datasets may be generated or assembled as part of the project. Alternatively, the project may draw upon and/or further develop (e.g., process, curate) existing datasets to address new questions in the life sciences field.
- All data types are permitted in projects in this call. This may include, but is not restricted to: sequence, structure, image, phenotype, screening, text, knowledge bases and graphs, interaction network, and

multimodal formats. Data should be gathered, processed and/or used to address a biological, biomedical, or clinical question.

- AI/ML methods applied in the project should be modern, innovative and go beyond classical statistical methods. The AI/ML methods used may include, but are not restricted to: deep learning, representation learning, kernel methods, network and complexity methods, etc. AI/ML approaches should be an integral part of the project and go beyond purely technical or trivial applications.

## **2.1. Interdisciplinary collaboration**

A central focus of this call is to promote collaboration between experimental life scientists or clinicians and computational scientists. The interdisciplinary expertise required for the proposed research project may be based within the same research group or traverse research groups and institutions. Plans for collaboration between expertise groups must be demonstrated throughout all critical stages of the project, from formulation of the research question, experimental design to data analyses. Applicants are required to explicitly address communication and joint work plans amongst collaborators in the proposal.

Should the project potentially involve legal or ethical issues (e.g., access and usage of data, or development and application of AI/ML technology), applicants may consider including partners from law and social sciences. Funding for these partners may also be requested to a small extent.

## **2.2. Benchmarking and validation**

Should new AI/ML methods be developed in the project, applicants are requested to describe how benchmarking will be performed against existing methods if possible. If no comparable AI/ML methods exist, this should be explained.

Plans to experimentally validate new models or predictions arising from AI/ML approaches should be considered but are not required in projects. However, data and code should be made available (see below) to facilitate reproducibility and testing of findings and predictions.

## **2.3. Research data and data management**

“Research data” in the context of WWTF funded projects include, but are not limited to:

- study protocols
- observations and measurements
- results of experiments
- metadata
- software codes
- hyperparameters
- images

All research data produced in the context of WWTF-funded projects (i.e., owned by the involved researcher) should be made accessible according to the FAIR principles<sup>1</sup> via a repository to facilitate the reproduction of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

results. Repositories should be listed in re3data, with preference for certified repositories<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the data itself should facilitate future research and have a licence that allows for re-use (CC BY or similar licenses). Research data should be made publicly available upon publication (i.e., not only upon request to the authors).

WWTF requires applicants to reflect on data management in the application process. Should new datasets be generated/assembled or existing data sets further processed/curated in the course of the project, applicants are strongly recommended to develop a data management plan. Data management plans should consider documentation and metadata that accompanies data, ethical and legal aspects, and description of processes to store, preserve and share the data. A data management plan is not required at the Short Proposal stage. However, applicants invited to the Full Proposal stage will be strongly encouraged to develop a data management plan that addresses these aspects.

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:

- **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** at <https://fundingportal.wwtf.at/> by the deadlines defined in the [Call Fiche](#).

- All core team members (i.e., coordinating PI and co-PIs) may access and edit the proposal. Only the coordinating PI can submit the proposal.
- The structure of the proposal and steps for completing the application in the WWTF Funding Portal are described in more detail in the [Submission Guideline](#).
- Important: Signatures of the authorized signatory at each partner institution (“authorization”) are required in the application process (both for the short and the full proposals). Please contact your institution’s research service in advance and inform yourself about your institute’s internal processes and timelines.
- All application information will be processed through the [WWTF Funding Portal](#). No hard copies of documents are required.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.re3data.org/>

- We recommend registering and creating a proposal even if you are not completely certain that you will submit a proposal. Creating a proposal will allow you to see the specific requirements. Proposals that have been created but not submitted will be deleted shortly after the submission deadline.
- Applications must be written in English.

## 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)**. This includes one Coordinating Principal Investigator and up to two co-PIs.

- Core team members may share equal management and scientific roles in the project.
- The core team must have an excellent scientific track record that demonstrates the ability to conduct the proposed research project.
- WWTF especially encourages young and female scientists to apply as PI.
- Each core team member must submit a CV, which will form part of the evaluation.
- A researcher may appear as a core team member (i.e., coordinating PI, co-PI) 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 designated as **Coordinating Principal Investigator (PI&C)**.

- For legal and administrative reasons (funding contract, reporting), WWTF requires a PI&C to be named. The PI&C will be the contact person for WWTF regarding all aspects of the project.
- The PI&C must have an affiliation at a Viennese research institution, which will serve as a legal contract partner. This also applies to researchers moving to Vienna, who will have a Viennese affiliation in case of funding.
- The PI&C should be an expert in an area relevant to the topic of the proposal. He/she must have an excellent scientific track record and a proven capability to manage projects.

Up to two **co-PIs** may also be named in the core team.

- WWTF recognizes that co-PIs may have equally significant scientific roles in the project. However, the PI&C will be regarded as the main contact person for the project.
- Co-PIs may be based in Vienna, Lower Austria or elsewhere (in Austria or internationally) in fulfilment of the requirements of regular WWTF projects or Joint Projects (see below).

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

- No industry involvement is required. Industry partners are not eligible for funding but may partake with in-kind funding.
- Non-academic collaboration partners (e.g., NGOs) may be part of the research team. However, the core team members and majority of additional team members in the proposal should have an academic background.

**Research partners outside Vienna:**

- For regular WWTF projects, project partners outside of Vienna may receive up to 20% of the total requested funding.
- This call operates under the “Joint Projects” agreement with the Province of Lower Austria. For the criteria and conditions that exist for partners from Lower Austria, see [Section 6](#).

## 6. 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.

- To incentivize the cooperation, the total maximum funding amount for a JP consortium is € 880,000 (i.e., an additional € 80,000 compared to the maximum for the regular WWTF project).
- The PI&C must be affiliated to a research institution in Vienna.
- At least one co-PI 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 and is thus not eligible for 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 regular WWTF projects is not possible between the short and full proposal phases.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.noef.gv.at/noef/Wissenschaft-Forschung/Richtlinien\\_zum\\_Noef\\_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz\\_1996\\_2.pdf](https://www.noef.gv.at/noef/Wissenschaft-Forschung/Richtlinien_zum_Noef_Kulturfoerderungsgesetz_1996_2.pdf)

## 7. Content and structure of the proposal

The content and structure of the proposal are defined and specified in the online Funding Portal. 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
Scientific abstract	Lay summary and scientific abstract
Project description (about 4-5 pages): outline of the main scientific research idea and approach	Project description (about 12-15 pages): elaboration of the research idea and approach (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 core 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: required from the institutions of the core team members	Signatures: required from all participating institutes

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 Fiche and Call Specifications? Projects that are not within the thematic scope will be immediately rejected by the jury, regardless of scientific quality.

The key criteria in the evaluation of proposals are **scientific quality and interdisciplinarity:**

- **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 (with respect to academic age).
- **Team composition and interdisciplinary collaboration:** Teams should include an appropriate mix of expertise, bringing together researchers in experimental life sciences or clinical sciences and computational sciences. A clear description of the roles of the individual partners and a clear project



management plan must be presented. This should demonstrate how both life science researchers or clinicians and computational scientists will contribute to critical stages of developing and executing the project, and how communication will be fostered throughout the project lifetime.

Further criteria:

- **Relevance and impact:** What are the mid- to long-term academic impacts of the advancements expected from the project?
- **Feasibility:** Is the timeframe sufficient for carrying out the project? Are the proposed resources suitable to achieve the goals? Is the budget adequate?
- **Data management plan:** How will research data be managed and shared? Has the sustainability and impact of new resources been considered? Please also consider WWTF's [Open Science Policy](#).
- **Scientific training:** Does the project promote the interdisciplinary training of junior researchers (undergraduate and PhD students, postdocs) across experimental biology, clinical sciences and/or computational biology?
- **Gender aspects:** Have sex- and/or gender-related aspects of the research field and research question been considered in the project? Has gender balance in the research team been adequately addressed? For WWTF's **Gender Equality Strategy & Plan** and considerations for drafting the proposal, see [Section 10](#) below.

Please note that **career breaks** such as for parental leave, care duty and prolonged illness will be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals. In order for these to be considered, please provide the relevant time periods.

## 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. For staff employed at institutions without a collective agreement, the minimum wage should adhere to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF salary scheme available online).

- Salaries higher than those stipulated in the collective agreement are permitted, subject to the agreement from the host institution and justification based on qualifications of the researcher.
- Due to projected inflation rates, the budget calculation for salaries in the Funding Portal automatically includes an increase of 6% p.a. for the duration of the project.
- Applications for personnel costs must be in one of the following categories:
  - **Senior Personnel:** highly qualified and experienced scientists, usually in leadership/managerial positions and 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 apply in cases where senior staff must acquire third party funding for co-financing their own position (e.g., non-university research institutions and Universities of Applied Sciences). 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 these should be covered by the category “overhead costs”.
- Non-personnel costs should not exceed 40% of the overall budget.
- **Equipment:** Smaller equipment can be purchased with funds from the grant. This includes devices up to € 1,500 each, as well as software specific to the projects. General office software is not eligible for funding. 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 such as consumables are permitted. 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. are allowed. This also includes costs for archiving research data in open repositories. Please also consider WWTF’s [Open Science Policy](#).
- **Workshop and conferences:** Costs for organizing events, workshops, and conferences as well as for hosting invited speakers are eligible.

- **Other costs:** Third-party costs, namely, for external collaboration, consulting, studies, and software development may be funded to a limited extent. In general, individuals should be predominantly funded through employment contracts at the participating institutions and not through other types of employment. Under special conditions, costs for childcare and/or career coaching for female WWTF-funded personnel may be requested to a small degree.

### 9.3. Indirect costs (overheads)

WWTF pays a maximum of 20% overhead. Overhead is calculated as a percentage of the direct costs of the project (i.e., personnel + non-personnel costs). Please note that WWTF offers the maximum 20% overhead lump sum to compensate for all administration costs. This means that flat fees for payroll or project accounting 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's [Gender Strategy and Gender Equality Plan](#) must be considered throughout the application. Please note that WWTF requests jury members and reviewers to take into account both gender and specific roles in research team composition, as well as gender in research content, during evaluation processes.

The following questions should be considered during development of the proposal:

- Equal opportunities in research
  - Please take into consideration gender balance/equality in the project consortium at all levels, including 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?
  - If the research does not directly involve humans, have potentially differentiated relations of men and women to the research subject (e.g., relevance, impact of findings) been sufficiently considered?
  - 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?
- If there are no identifiable gender aspects after a detailed review by the applicants, this must be justified, e.g., by providing reasons to demonstrate that no sex, gender, and other relevant differences have been found.
- Research phase
  - If there are further aspects of the project in which sex/gender could be a factor (e.g., samples, testing groups), are these gender-balanced?
  - Are questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in the data?
  - Is data analysed in a manner that considers sex as a variable? Are other relevant variables analysed with respect to sex?

Further resources are listed in the footnote.<sup>4</sup>

## 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 with OeAWI standards<sup>5</sup>.
- 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 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.

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<sup>4</sup> Gender in Research Toolkit by Yellow Window: <https://www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch>  
Gendered Innovations, Stanford University: <http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/methods-sex-and-gender-analysis.html>  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research: <https://www.cihr-irsc-igh-isfh.ca/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://oeawi.at/en/guidelines/>

- 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 Funding Portal), confirming that the approval will cover the planned research.
- If the main applicant for the ethical approval is not a core team member (i.e., PI&C or co-PI) of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement must be included in the proposal, in which a 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

WWTF requires compliance with its [Open Science Policy](#). This document outlines the rights, roles and responsibilities of WWTF, researchers, and research organizations.

## 13. Selection and decision process

Applications must be submitted via the online Funding Portal within 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 in the call topic. They have no known conflict of interest prior to the submission deadline. For details, see section on evaluation below.
- Names of jury members 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 either 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 all proposals 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.
- Submission of the same or highly similar research ideas at other funding organizations, which must be explicitly declared in the full proposal. Application for funding at other organizations is permitted and will not impact the evaluation. In case of funding, applicants will be asked by which organization they wish to be funded, as double funding is not permitted by WWTF.

Substantial deficiencies and missing sections in the application will lead to the exclusion of the application from further evaluation and rejection on formal grounds. The strict timeline of the call does not allow for proposals to be sent back to the applicants for amendments.

### **13.2. 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 short proposal should be invited to the full proposal stage. This usually takes place 1-2 months after the short proposal 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 that do not meet the formal requirements will be rejected at this stage.
- The information provided in the full proposal must be consistent with the short proposal and extend it by providing more information and details. Major deviations to the short proposal must be justified explicitly. If major deviations cannot be satisfactorily 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 2 (usually 3-4) written reviews for each proposal.
- Reviewers are 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 by the WWTF office for potential conflicts of interests with the applicants. As a rule, reviewers should not have close professional relations to any of the applicants in the project team. 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 also be excluded. Joint publications in an edited volumes/proceeding, “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 exclusion list will not be contacted.

#### **13.4. 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 2 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".

#### **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&C to draw up the funding contract.

- The PI&C will be provided with the necessary documents for the contract.
- Projects may start immediately and should start no later than 6 months after the formal funding decision by the WWTF Board of Directors.

- The formal funding contract will be signed between WWTF and the host institution of the PI&C. In Joint Projects, the host institution of the co-PI in Lower Austria is an additional contract partner.
- For universities, this is a project according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002. The institution then authorizes the respective PI to sign for the full scientific and financial responsibility of the project.

## **15. Monitoring and reporting**

Funded teams commit themselves 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](#).