

# URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

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Environmental  
Systems Research 2024

# Urban Environments

## Environmental Systems Research Call 2024

→ This is an **interdisciplinary** call for **cutting-edge research projects** that address **fundamental** questions relevant to **human-environment** interaction in **urban and peri-urban** systems.

### Scope of the Call

This call invites researchers from all disciplines (e.g., social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, etc.) to submit interdisciplinary research proposals that advance knowledge of urban and peri-urban environmental systems. Projects should pursue novel and fundamental research questions, and focus on quantitative approaches. Projects that bring together modelling, field and/or experimental approaches in a meaningful interdisciplinary fashion are strongly encouraged. Mixed-methods and/or the integration of societal actors are welcome but are not a formal prerequisite for this call. Vienna may be used as a case-study for densely populated areas, but the scope of the call is not limited to the City of Vienna.

### Who can apply?

- Principal Investigators (PI) from all disciplines
- An interdisciplinary team of 2-3 researchers
- The coordinating PI must be based at a university or non-university research institution in Vienna
- Co-PIs may be based outside of Vienna (funding limited to 20% of the overall sum)
- Co-PIs from Lower Austria may apply for up to 49% of the overall funding (Joint Projects)
- The PI must demonstrate capacity to carry out high-quality research

### Project Duration

24 – 48 months

### Funding

- Call volume: € 5.5 Mio
- Project size: € 400,000 to € 700,000 (Joint Projects up to € 770,000)
- Personnel and non-personnel costs can be claimed
- Max. 30% non-personnel costs
- Up to 20% overhead costs

### Timeline

- Short Proposal deadline: January 16, 2024, 2pm CET
- Full Proposal deadline: April 30, 2024, 2pm CET
- Expected funding decision: October 2024
- Project start: latest April 2025

### Process

- This is a two-stage selection process
- Full proposals are only accepted upon invitation
- International Jury
- International Peer-Review
- Application via WWTF Funding Portal

# Call Specifications

## Urban Environments

### Environmental Systems Research Call 2024

Version: 10/2023

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## Table of content

<b>1. About this document</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Scope of the call</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1. Quantitative Approach	3
2.2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration	3
2.3. Urban and Peri-Urban Areas	3
2.4. Research Data and Data Management	3
<b>3. Submission</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Eligibility of applicants and roles in the project</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Specifics of Joint Projects with partners in Lower Austria</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Content and structure of the proposal</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7. Funding and evaluation criteria</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8. Eligible costs</b>	<b>8</b>
8.1. Personnel costs	8
8.2. Non-personnel costs	9
8.3. Indirect costs (overheads)	10
<b>9. Gender aspects in the application phase</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>10. Guidelines for good scientific practice and ethics</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>11. Open Science</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>12. Selection and decision process</b>	<b>13</b>
12.1. Formal eligibility check by WWTF	13
12.2. Evaluation of short proposals	13
12.3. Evaluation of full proposals	14
12.4. Full proposal jury meeting	14
12.5. Formal funding decision	15
<b>13. Funding contract</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>14. Community Building</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>15. Monitoring and reporting</b>	<b>16</b>

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## 1. About this document

This document specifies the process, criteria, and instrument of this call. It is aimed at applicants wishing to submit a proposal in the Environmental Systems Research Call 2024. For further information regarding the funding and submission guidelines, as well as references to WWTF policies, please also consider the following documents:

<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

WWTF started the Environmental Systems Programme in 2017 to strengthen the local research community in this area. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> project call issued within WWTF' Environmental Systems Programme after 2017 and 2020. In this call, WWTF is interested in funding cutting-edge research projects that address fundamental questions relevant to human-environment interaction in urban and peri-urban systems.

- This call invites researchers from all disciplines (e.g. social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, etc.) to submit interdisciplinary research proposals that advance knowledge of urban and peri-urban environmental systems.
- Projects should pursue novel and fundamental research questions, and focus on quantitative approaches.
- Projects that bring together modelling, field and/or experimental approaches in a meaningful interdisciplinary fashion are strongly encouraged.
- Mixed-methods and/or the integration of societal actors (transdisciplinary approaches) are welcome but are not a formal prerequisite for this call.

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- Vienna may be used as a case-study for densely populated areas, but the scope of the call is not limited to the City of Vienna.

## **2.1. Quantitative Approach**

All projects should focus on using quantitative research approaches and methods. A key focus of this call is the methodological approach used to better understand urban environments. Thus, projects that bring together modelling, field and/or experimental approaches in a meaningful interdisciplinary fashion are strongly encouraged. The complementarity of the methods used in the project should be described accordingly.

Should a project additionally require qualitative, mixed-methods approach and/or integration of societal actors, this is also welcome upon appropriate justification.

## **2.2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration and beyond**

A central focus of this call is to promote collaboration between social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and other disciplines. 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 to demonstrate how meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration will be managed throughout the project.

Should a project additionally require the integration of societal actors, this is also welcome. Transdisciplinary approaches have to be described to show feasibility.

## **2.3. Urban and Peri-Urban Areas**

By 2050 approximately 70% of the human population will live in densely populated areas. While environmental issues do not stop at city borders, densely populated areas and the respective hinterland (peri-urban) present unique environmental needs and challenges of high scientific and societal relevance. In response, the current call specifically invites teams to propose projects within an urban and peri-urban framework.

## **2.4. 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

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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 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 license 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. Due to the quantitative approaches required in this call, it is expected that projects will involve either the generation/assembly of existing data or the processing/curation of existing data. Applicants are therefore strongly recommended to develop a data management plan in the course of the project. 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. Submission

This call follows a two-stage process:

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

**Short Proposal deadline:** January 16, 2024, 2pm CET

**Full Proposal deadline:** April 30, 2024, 2 pm CET

#### Important Information for your Submission

- Applications must be submitted via the [WWTF Funding Portal](#). All application information will be processed via this system. **No hard copies** of documents are required.
- All core team members i.e., coordinating PI (PI&C) and co-PIs, may access and edit the proposal. **Only the PI&C 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](#).

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

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

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- **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.
  - 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**.

## 4. 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 a PI&C and up to two co-PIs. In this call, it is a requirement that the core team has at least two researchers.

- 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.
- 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., PI&C, 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 **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.



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- 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 or financial contribution.
- 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 (see Section 8).

#### **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 below.

## **5. 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.

- To incentivize the cooperation, the total maximum funding amount for a JP consortium is € 770,000 (i.e., an additional € 70,000 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.<sup>3</sup> Details will be specified 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%.

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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)

- 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.

## 6. 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 description and scientific abstract
Project description (about 4-5 pages): outline of the main scientific 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 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](#).

## 7. 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 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

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originality and innovative aspects? Are the methods and research approaches appropriate, complementary 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).
- **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, responsibilities, and competencies of all core team members.

Further criteria:

- **Relevance and impact:** What are the mid- to long-term academic impacts of the advancements expected from the project?
- **Feasibility:** A clear project management plan must be presented. Is the timeframe sufficient for carrying out the project? Are the proposed resources suitable to achieve the goals? Is the budget adequate?
- **Data management:** 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](#).
- **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 9 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.

## 8. 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.

### 8.1. 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

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Austrian Universities / non-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 possible, 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 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 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.

## 8.2. 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 should **not exceed 30% 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 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.

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- **Publication costs:** Costs incurred for publication activities, e.g., printing costs, article processing charges (for open science), etc. are allowed. This also includes costs for archiving research data in open repositories. Please also consider WWTF's [Open Science Policy](#).
  - **Workshop/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.

### 8.3. Indirect costs (overheads)

WWTF pays a maximum of 20% overheads. 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, **please check with your respective institutional guidelines when compiling your budget calculations.**

## 9. 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?

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- **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 your data?
    - Is data analysed according to the sex variable? Are other relevant variables analysed with respect to sex?

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

## 10. 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.

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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/>

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- 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.<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 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 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.

## 11. Open Science

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

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

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## 12. Selection and decision process

Applications must be submitted via the online Funding Portal 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 in the call topic. They have no known conflict of interest prior to the submission deadline. For details, see section on evaluation below.
- The 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.

### 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](#) 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.

### 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 short proposal should be invited to the full proposal stage. This usually takes place 1-2 months after the short proposal submission deadline.



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- 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 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 two (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 provide their assessment through a standardized online questionnaire.
- 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

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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&C to draw up the funding contract.

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

## **14. Community building**

WWTF is highly committed to supporting the growing Environmental Systems Research community in Vienna. To this end, several community building activities will be offered throughout the funding cycle. Funded teams will be invited to participate in these activities to foster collaborations between and beyond WWTF funded projects.

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## **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](#).