W|W|T|F

Guide for Writing a Full Proposal

Life Sciences Call 2019

June 2019

About WWTF

The Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF) is the only larger Austrian private non-profit organization established to promote science and research. WWTF started its funding activities in 2003. According to its statutes, WWTF aims to fund excellent scientific research(ers) following the highest international standards in order to promote Vienna as a city of science and research.

WWTF provides substantial funding for larger multi-annual research projects at home institutions located in Vienna ("Project Funding"), as well as striving to attract excellent researchers from abroad to Vienna ("Vienna Research Groups for Young Investigators"). WWTF runs calls resulting in a strong competition for funding.

Currently, WWTF runs the following thematic programmes: "Life Sciences" (*2003), "Mathematics *and* ..." (*2004), "Information and Communication Technology" (*2008), "Cognitive Sciences" (*2011), and "Environmental Systems Research" (*2016). The financial resources of WWTF originate from the "*Privatstiftung zur Verwaltung von Anteilsrechten*" and from the City of Vienna.

While the thematic funding programmes are established in close coordination with Viennese RTD policy and initiatives, the review and selection processes lie strictly in the hands of international scientists not employed in Austria. For each call, an appropriate international expert jury is formed. Additionally, for each application entering the full proposal stage a number of written peer reviews are obtained.

Important Issues

The **Call Fiche** including contact information of the WWTF call managers is available at www.wwtf.at.

The **Principal Investigator and Coordinator (PI)** of a WWTF project must have a Viennese home institution to which the project is affiliated to. This includes researchers moving to Vienna who will have a Viennese affiliation and work place in case of funding. Project **partners** outside of Vienna may receive up to 20% of the total funding applied for. Partners outside Vienna are optional.

For **universities**, WWTF projects are treated according to §27 of the Universities Act 2002. Therefore, authorizing signatures from the university / scientific institution acting as hosting institution are required for the submission. In case of funding, the home institution will be the formal contract partner for WWTF with the PI taking full scientific and financial responsibility.

WWTF funding may be used for all project-related costs; however, the main focus should be on funding scientific personnel. Everybody employed through a WWTF-funded project should receive a fair contract with at least a *minimum wage* according to the "Kollektivvertrag" (collective agreement) of the Austrian Universities or – for staff employed at non-university institutions – according to the standards of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, available online). The maximum employment is set to 100%. When planning the budget, please use full-time equivalent (FTE) salaries and be aware that the PhD salary listed by FWF is for a 75% position.

Personnel costs cannot be claimed for permanent senior staff that is fully financed by the institution. Exceptions are made for institutions whose basic institutional block funding is less than 40% of the overall budget of the organisation. In these cases, permanently employed senior staff may claim up to 20% of their annual salary from WWTF.

The personnel categories are:

- *Senior Personnel:* highly qualified scientists, usually already permanently employed
- *Post Doc:* or equivalent qualification, including Senior Postdocs
- *PhD Student:* or equivalent qualification
- *Diploma Student:* Bachelor or Master students
- *Office/Technician:* office staff or technical staff (proportional funding only)

The funding by WWTF under this scheme is not intended to cover investment in general infrastructure, however pro rata depreciation rates for the project duration are fundable for **equipment** necessary for the project. WWTF funding also covers **materials,** consumables and software (as well as small devices up to 1,500 € each), **travelling costs** (incurred for attending project related scientific events and meetings), **publication costs** (including costs for patent filing and open access publication), **workshops / conferences** and **other project related costs**. However, non-personnel costs must be balanced, as WWTF focuses on fund-

ing people, and should not exceed the limit stated on the call fiche of the funding volume applied for.

WWTF pays a **maximum of 20% overhead**. Overhead ("indirect costs") is calculated as 20% of the direct costs of the project. The total funding volume is calculated as direct + indirect costs. Kindly comply with the overhead regulations of the involved institutions.

Compliance with the rules for good scientific practice including the appreciation of ethical aspects in research is mandatory even at the proposal stage.

- If approval from the ethics committee/institutional review board is required for the planned project this has to be clearly stated at the short proposal stage and the approval ("Votum") **has to be submitted online with the full proposal (PDF upload).**
- The approval by the ethics committee has to 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, the PI has to include a statement (in the online submission system) confirming that the approval covers the planned research.
- Should it be impossible to have a final approval before the full proposal deadline due to reasons which are beyond the control of the applicant, such as constraints imposed by the local ethics committee, the applicant must explain the reasons in the provided text-box in the submission system and send the preliminary approval the call manager at the latest two months after the full proposal deadline.
- If the main applicant for the ethical approval is not the PI or co-PI/Core-Team Member of the WWTF proposal, a clear statement has to be included in the online proposal whereby the PI or co-PI/Core-Team Member confirms that he/she is authorized to conduct the planned research within this ethical approval.
- If the planned research is covered by an existing approval, the applicants have to submit the extension of the approval ("Verlängerung der Gültigkeit des Votums"). The above also applies for extensions.

Non-compliance will result in a rejection of the proposal on formal grounds and will therefore not be further processed or sent for evaluation.

Please also consider WWTF's open access policy available online.

Funding Criteria

This WWTF call aims to support teams of scientists that would like to conduct multi-annual innovative interdisciplinary scientific research projects.

The key selection criterion for this call is **scientific quality**, i.e., both the applicant and the submitted proposal must be scientifically outstanding. The **innovative aspects** of a project are also major criteria in the review of the proposals.

Please note that a researcher can appear in a key role (that is, as PI, Co-PI or Core Team Member) in two proposals at most.

Evaluation Process

Evaluation procedure in detail:

1. Formal eligibility check by WWTF:

The proposals will be screened for formal eligibility by the WWTF office to check if the following criteria are met:

a. Eligibility: the principal investigator must be affiliated to a Viennese university of non-university research institution; the research institutions of the applicants must be eligible for this type of funding
b. Applicants may not be in a key role (that is, as PI, Co-PI/Core Team Member) in more than two proposals
c. Duly submitted via the online submission system
d. Requested funding within the defined range
e. All parts of the proposal completed, including the required uploads
f. All required signatures (and stamps) uploaded

2. Evaluation of the full proposals:

The evaluation of full proposals is carried out through a combination of remote written assessment by international peers and a jury of international experts who convene in Vienna. At least **two jury members** are assigned to each proposal which at first undergoes **written peer review** by at least three international reviewers. The content of the full proposal must be consistent and in accordance with the successful short proposal, extending it by providing full details about the approach, state of the art, etc.

3. Jury meeting in Vienna: This is the most significant step in the assessment. There will be a comprehensive evaluation of all proposals on the basis of written peer reviews and the jury's own expertise resulting in a recommendation "to be funded" or "not to be funded" for each proposal.

4. Formal funding decision (confirmation of jury recommendation) by WWTF Boards in December 2019.

Applicants that have submitted a full proposal will receive anonymized full text reviews and a summary of the jury discussion after the formal funding decision.

w|w|t|f
VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

How to use WWTF's Online Submission System

1. Go to https://funding.wwtf.at
2. **Log in**, choose the call, and select your proposal.
3. **Full proposal**: Fill in requested information in *online forms* and *upload requested files* (in PDF format). You can save the current status of your proposal at any time and access the system multiple times and edit the provided information!
4. **Submit proposal**: The submit button becomes active only after all requested information has been filled in and uploaded (signalled by a green check mark next to the chapter title); Please be aware that after submission no changes are possible!
   Note: The submission system closes at 2 pm on the day of the deadline. The upload limit of the "Research Project" and additional PDF uploads is 8MB (excluding the ethical approval(s)).

Required Structure of a WWTF Full Proposal

Applications to WWTF undergo an assessment by international scientists, therefore all proposals must be written in **English**, except the "General Description" in German. Please write precisely and to the point but include sufficient detail to allow an evaluation by international peers.

The information for the full proposal consists of a part that is written "offline" and has to be uploaded as one PDF document as well as information that has to be filled in directly in the online submission system.

Offline / word processing part of the proposal:

- Some parts of the full proposal must be written offline with a word processing programme to allow images, tables, etc. and then uploaded (as a PDF file) to the WWTF submission system. A template is provided for this part of the proposal, which you can find in section 2. Research Project in the submission system.
- You may use the word-processing software of your choice but we kindly ask you to use a **common font type such as Arial and a font size of 11pt. Line spacing should be between 1.3 and 1.5**. If these style recommendations are drastically changed, thereby causing legibility issues, this might be cause for formal rejection of the proposal.
- Please **do not add any headers or footers** (such as page numbers, proposal number, title of proposal) to the file since this information will be added automatically upon upload of the PDF.
- You **may include figures, tables**, etc. to improve the scientific presentation. Please note that the **size limit for the proposal is 8 MB**.
- The length of the offline part of the **full proposal may not exceed 15 pages**. Please note that the system blocks the upload if this page count is exceeded.

WWTF
VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

- Bear in mind that the **full proposal is an extension of the short proposal** you have already submitted. Thus, substantial changes of the project may impact the evaluation of the project by the jury.

Online part of the proposal:

- The title of the research project, keywords and the key applicants (PI, Co-PI, core team members) cannot be changed. No substitution, deletions or additions of key applicants are allowed.
- All character limits include spaces.

1. Project Summary (online)

- **Basic information** of the project such as the title are transferred from the short proposal. The project duration can be changed, however major deviations from the short proposal must be thoroughly justified.
- **Scientific abstract** (up to 1,500 characters including spaces) in English will be the first information jury members and peer reviewers read.
- **General description** (up to 1,500 characters including spaces) in **German** is mandatory and will be used by WWTF for public relations work (such as the WWTF webpage), but will not be visible in the final electronic proposal and print-out (for the panel and peer reviewers). We ask you to write a simplified summary and not simply translate the scientific abstract into German.
- **Suggested peers** (reviewers): Applicants must suggest five international peers from fields of competences who are able to review the proposal. Suggested reviewers who you have previously worked with (publication activity, research cooperation, etc.) will not be considered due potential conflicts of interest. Please provide up to five keywords or phrases that describe the reviewers' fields of competence to allow for a balanced set of reviewers to be chosen.
- **Excluded peers** (reviewers) (optional, max. 3): Applicants may, without stating any reasons, exclude up to three peers (i.e. individual researchers and not institutions) from reviewing your proposal. The names will be stored in the WWTF database and will not be visible in the electronic proposal or print-out. Please note that we will review internationally only, hence, no reviewer with an Austrian affiliation or with very close links to Austrian research will receive the proposal.

WWTF
VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

2. Research Project (max. 15 pages including figures, PDF upload, a template is provided in the submission system)

Page numbers are indications about the expected length of each part, however, we allow for some flexibility between subchapters if this allows for a more precise presentation of the project. However, please note that the omission of individual parts may result in a negative evaluation.

1. **Introduction** (about 2-3 pages)
    a. Subject of the research
    b. State of the art and key scientific challenges

2. **Hypotheses, objectives and expected results** (about 3 pages)
    a. Biological/Biomedical research questions and hypotheses
    b. Objectives of the project
    c. Expected results

3. **Innovativeness and relevance** (about 2 pages)
    a. Innovativeness of the proposed research
    b. Added value of the multimodal approach
    c. Relevance for the field of multimodal imaging

4. **Methodological approach** (about 4-5 pages)
    a. Research methods (including details on sample preparation and imaging probes)
    b. Experimental workflow (compatibility of imaging samples in different modalities)
    c. Description of data analysis and data integration methods
    d. Research plan (including Gantt chart)
    e. Feasibility, risk management and mitigation
    f. Data management plan (including dissemination of results and public archiving of image data)

5. **Roles of personnel** (about 1 page)
    a. Interdisciplinary collaborative aspects
    b. Project management

6. **Key references** (about 1.5 pages)

Online form

Upload "Research Project"

WWTF
VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

Potential ethical aspects (max. 750 characters)

Confirmation if an approval of an ethics committee / institutional review board is required or not. If yes, upload the ethical approval(s) as a single PDF. There is no page limit, but the document may not exceed 5MB. This PDF is only for internal use and will not be sent to the panel or the peer reviewers.

3. Project Team

Persons and their roles filled into the system for the short proposals (PI, Co-PI, core team members) cannot be changed or deleted. The roles and responsibilities of each of these persons as well as their specific competencies for the proposed project can be described in detail (max. 500 characters). The CV uploaded in the short proposal stage can be replaced; however the use of the WWTF CV Template is mandatory also at this stage. The template can be downloaded in this section of the proposal in the submission system.

Further persons not in a "key role" (all but PI, Co-PI, core team members) can be added. This is relevant to calculate the project budget. Placeholders for future team members can be added by selecting "N.N." from the *Title* drop-down and allocated a budget in the next section, multiple N.N.s should be numbered in the surname box.

Staff categories: "Senior personnel", "Post-Doc", "PhD student", "Diploma student", "Office, technician"

To add an additional person from a different institution other than the institutions of the three persons from the core team, you first have to add an additional partner institution. In total, a maximum of 5 institutions can be entered.

WWTF
VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

- **Gender Management Policy** (up to 750 characters including spaces): Please describe how your project manages gender equality issues for example in job announcements, recruitment of staff and working environment.

- **Plans for Human Resources Development** (up to 750 characters including spaces): Please describe how your project contributes to human resources development of the team members (e.g., providing opportunities for research, staff exchange, teaching and mentoring).

4. Project Budget

- **Planning of personnel costs (Table 1)** includes the names and staff category of all persons listed in part "3. Project Team" which are automatically filled in. First choose the funding source (WWTF, in-kind, WWTF & in-kind) and then add the average yearly time commitment for each project year. The average yearly time commitment for the funding source category "in-kind" is set to a minimum of 5%. Finally, for those persons where WWTF funding is requested, fill in the salary corresponding to a **100% employment**[1] (full time equivalent) in the corresponding column. The total funding applied for each person will then be automatically calculated, including a 3% annual salary increase. At the end of Table 1 you will see the total personnel costs applied for from WWTF. Costs are calculated in **thousands of Euro**, e.g. 305.60 k Euro = 305,600 Euro.

- **Planning of non-personnel costs (Table 2)**, project related costs for equipment, consumables, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ …, and other costs) has to include a concise description of costs per cost category/ institution as well as the funding applied for. The budget for non-personnel costs is limited to max. 40% of overall WWTF funding.

- **Total funding applied for per institution (Table 3)** details the direct costs that will be automatically filled in using the information provided in tables 1 and 2. Add the overhead percentage (i.e., indirect costs) per involved institution as an integer between 0 (no overheads claimed) and 20 (20% overheads claimed). Finally, Table 3 will give you an overview on the total funding applied for from WWTF per involved institution. Up to 20% of the budget may be allocated to institutions outside of Vienna. *There should not be any significant deviations in the requested volume in the short proposal. Exceptions are accepted but require an explanation in the section "Explanation of Cost Planning".*

- You are also asked to tick a checkbox that you are aware of the **overhead policy** of your institution.

- **Explanation of Cost Planning** (max. 3.000 characters): WWTF provides substantial funding for scientific projects covering all project related direct costs plus a maximum of 20% overheads (i.e., „indirect costs"). Therefore, WWTF requires an explanation of

---

[1] Please be aware that the PhD salary listed by the FWF is for a 75% or a 30 hours position.

your cost planning and detailed calculations of personnel costs (which should comprise the major part of the project related costs) as well as planning of project related costs for equipment, consumables, travelling, publications, organization of workshops/ conferences/ … and other project related costs

- Last but not least you must **disclose other applications for funding** of the same project: Is this project (or parts of it) already subject to ongoing requests for funding?

5. Affirmations and Authorization

Affirmations are the signatures of the core project team members. Additionally, WWTF requires collecting the signatures of the authorized person(s) of all participating institutions to which the persons signing the "Authorization" are affiliated to in case of funding.

Multiple copies may be used for signing. Scanned pages are accepted. **Please upload one PDF containing all the required signatures.**

Hard-copies of the proposal or the signatures are not required.

Institution	Signing person	Date, stamp, signature
University/Research Institute 1		
University/Research Institute 2		
University/Research Institute 3		

The names of the person(s) signing the authorization for each hosting institution have to be inserted into the provided textboxes in the system.

Then download the forms ("Download Part II/5 as PDF document") and have these signed, together with the date and a legible stamp. If multiple signatures are required from one institution you can use the same form multiple times or add the additional signatures below the provided boxes. Multiple copies of the forms may be used for signing. A maximum of 6 pages may be uploaded in this section.

Additional institutions also have to sign the section "Authorizations" for the submission of the full proposal.

WWTF
VIENNA SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY FUND

In Case of Funding

The **Formal Funding Contract** will be between WWTF and the Home Institution of the Principal Investigator (for universities according to §27 of the University Law 2002), the PI has full scientific and financial responsibility. Projects may start immediately but should **not start later than 6 months** after the formal funding decision has been made. During the project duration WWTF pays funding rates half a year in advance to the PI's Home Institution. The PI is then responsible for the distribution to the partner institutions (if applicable).

WWTF monitoring during the runtime of the projects includes annual online reports delivered by the PI to WWTF with an overview on the scientific results achieved, personnel employment and funding spent as well as project outputs. WWTF office also makes site-visits to learn about the project progress and working environment of the personnel employed. WWTF offers the possibility to adapt the work plan according to project needs.

After the project has ended a comprehensive final report must be submitted online. WWTF may organize an **ex-post evaluation** by international peers ("Evaluation Day") for all projects funded within a specific call.